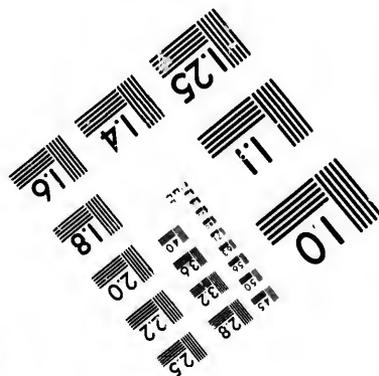
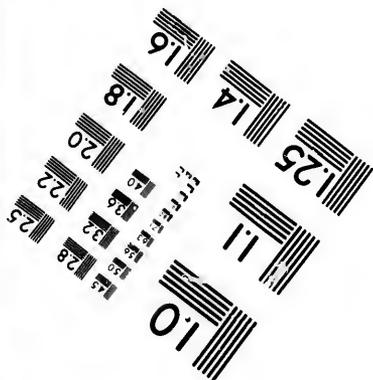
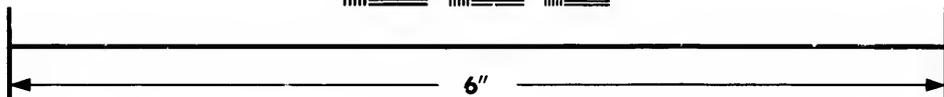
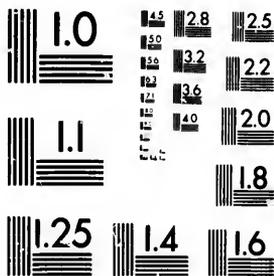


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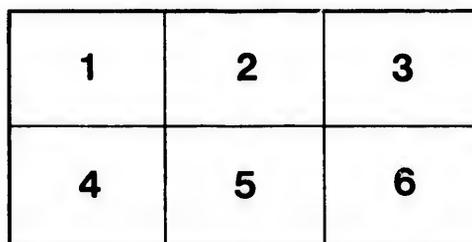
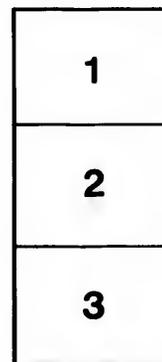
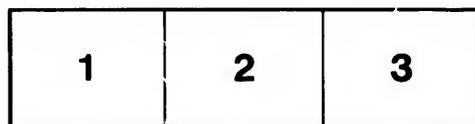
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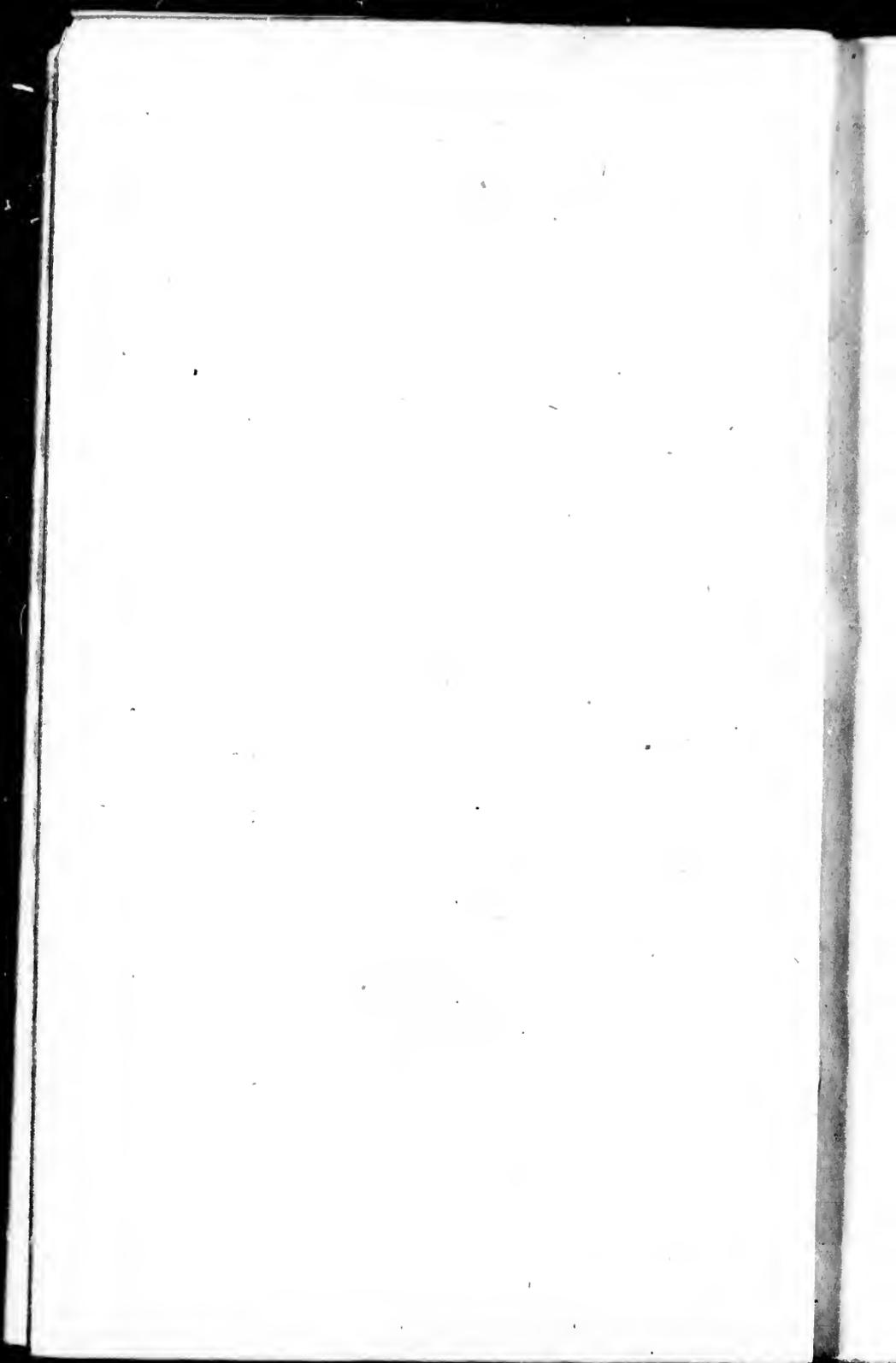


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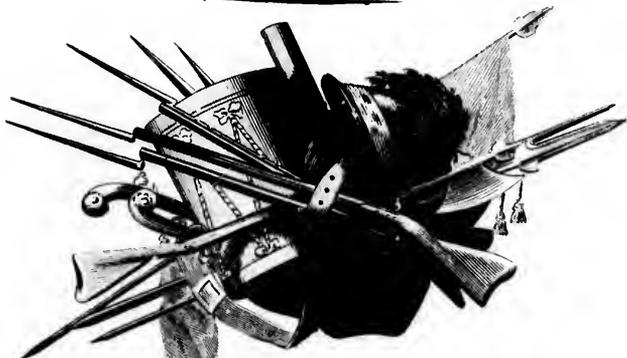
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OF THE
W A R
WITH
AMERICA, FRANCE, SPAIN;
AND
H O L L A N D ;

commencing in 1775 and ending in 1783

By JOHN ANDREWS L.L.D.

In Four Volumes with Portraits, Maps and Charts

Vol. III.



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 H I S T O R Y

OF THE

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 C H A P. XXX.
Parliamentary Debates relating to America.

1777.

PREVIOUS to the recess, two motions were made in the House of Commons relating to America; the one by Mr. Hartley, the other by Mr. Wilkes. The first of these gentlemen moved, that several resolutions should pass in condemnation of the American war; the second, that the Declaratory Act, passed in the year sixty-six, should be repealed: but they were both rejected.

From the twentieth of November, when the sessions were opened, to the tenth of December, the business relating to the pecuniary supplies had been carried on with such expedition, that little short of nine millions were already voted for the service of the ensuing year. Accustomed as the public long had been to immense grants of money, it was startled at the readiness and facility with which the

national income was profused in the support of measures which were by no means universally approved. In former times, it was said, money was the last thing granted; long deliberations took place antecedent to concessions of any kind from the people. But their representatives seemed to set little value on the approbation or disapprobation of their constituents, and were become much more zealous candidates for Court favours, than for the applause of their country.

On the tenth of December, it was moved on the side of ministry, that the House should be adjourned to the twentieth of January. The reasons alleged for this motion were, that the sums necessary for the subsequent year being voted, and the customary business at the close of the year concluded, no further measures could be resolved upon, till the issue of the last campaign in America was fully known. No events of any consequence were expected, or likely to happen, before the expiration of the recess proposed, and it was only then that Parliament would be duly attended.

Opposition, on the other hand, condemned in the severest terms, the idea of so early and so long a recess from public business, at a time when the attention of all people was so seriously taken up with the perilous situation of the realm. Such was the alarming state of affairs at present, that no man could tell from one day to another, how soon the advice and assistance of Parliament might be required for objects of the greatest moment. Such a recess, at such a crisis, was an act full of the most unaccountable temerity: it was unexampled, and inexcusable. The nation had often experienced great dangers, but none to compare with those with which it was now threatened on every side. We were plunged in a civil, unnatural, unnecessary war; we were overwhelmed with expences; we had
hitherto

hitherto met with little else than disappointment and disgrace; we were conscious, in spite of all ministerial affectation to the contrary, that the whole House of Bourbon was preparing to assail us with all its power: we knew all this; and yet at a season when the collective wisdom of the nation should be pondering on the means of warding off the blows that were so visibly aimed at this country, the meeting of Parliament had been deferred to the latter days of November, and was now, in the early part of December, suspended to the close of January. Was this paying a due attention to the business of the state? Was it showing a proper respect to the public? Was it manifesting a true sense of the circumstances of this country?—It was the reverse of all this. It betrayed indolence, or incapacity. It was a proof that either the danger was not fully comprehended, or that motives too shameful to be acknowledged, prevented men from exerting themselves in the manner its greatness and proximity so evidently required. Ministry foresaw the storm that was coming upon them from all quarters; they knew themselves unable to face the difficulties to which they had exposed the kingdom from abroad; and they dreaded the account that would be demanded from them at home. In this dilemma their perplexity was such, that they seized every pretext to put off the evil hour; but it would arrive, and would even gather double strength from this imprudent delay. The sooner it was faced, the easier it would be met: It was rash to procrastinate those deliberations which a few weeks, perhaps a few days, would enforce upon them; it was weak to put off those discussions, which, however disagreeable, they must soon or late submit to.

The ministerial answer was, that a longer continuance of the session would be of no utility in

the main point proposed at present, which was the preparations requisite for the defence of the nation against any foreign attacks. As to debates, and examinations, enough of them would arise in the inquiry already agreed upon. Measures respecting America could not be taken till the situation of affairs in that country was laid before them, in a clear and explicit manner. Till then, it would be nugatory to propose any thing decisive on that subject, or upon any other that was connected with it. It would be time when mature intelligence was arrived, to proceed to those concessions and arrangements regarding the Colonies, that might be found proper and equitable.

To this reply, opposition rejoined with great vehemence, that whatever treaties might be entered into with America, the present ministry had no right to imagine the Colonies would consent to treat with men who had used them with so much duplicity, and whose real intentions they were too experimentally acquainted with, to place any confidence in their professions of friendship. Ministry stood respecting America in the worst of all political situations; they were neither feared nor esteemed. It was not, therefore, for such men to talk of negotiating with those who would not trust them: such mistrust was of itself a sufficient obstacle to their consenting to any treaty.

The preparations carrying on for the security of the realm, were, it was said, dwelt upon by ministry with much more satisfaction to themselves, than to the judicious part of the nation. They ought to have taken place, and use of them ought to have been made long ago, had ministry acted consistently with the plan they had adopted for America. But their infatuation was such, as to deride the fundamental principles of politics, and ignorantly to flatter themselves that France and Spain would be so unmind-

unmindful of what they considered as their interest, as to remain inactive spectators of the most favourable opportunity that could ever have arisen of breaking the strength of their capital and most dangerous enemy.

In the eagerness of their pursuits, ministry had thrown away all those considerations which other politicians had thought necessary to keep in view. It had been usual with former ministries, in compliance with the general dictates of prudence, to form such connections as might co-operate in their schemes, and prove a support, in case of need. But Britain, through the incapacity and self-sufficiency of its present rulers, was destitute of any allies that could deserve such a name. The ministry would not surely have the confidence to bestow that appellation on those Princes whose troops we had hired. We were absolutely an abandoned and forlorn people, surrounded by open and secret enemies, and hardly possessing the good wishes of any state in Europe.

With these, and many other allegations of the same kind, did the opposers of ministry combat the motion of adjournment; but it was carried, upon a division, by one hundred and fifty-five votes, against sixty-eight.

In the House of Peers, besides some motions by the Lords in opposition, conformable to those made by the same party in the House of Commons, Lord Chatham moved, that copies of the orders and instructions to General Burgoyne should be laid before them. In the speech with which he accompanied this motion, he represented the conduct of ministry in the most odious light. He arraigned, in a particular manner, the meanness and degeneracy prevailing among those, who, from the eminence of their rank, ought to be above all influence. To this base and selfish disposition, he ascribed the disunion of this country, the mistrust of

all men for each other, the dissolving of all connections, and the enmity now brought about between those who were formerly bound together by the same views. Instead of that open, manly rule of acting, which rendered individuals respectable to each other, however they might differ in their political principles, a clandestine, insidious spirit of intrigue had gone forth, destructive of every principle of integrity, and which tended ultimately to eradicate all those sentiments upon which alone men ought to value themselves.

This degeneracy of mind had, he said, infected all parts of the community; it was found among the lowest, as well as the highest orders. As there stood nearest that ministerial fountain of corruption, which contaminated almost all those who approached it, they were accordingly the most guilty. To these he attributed the calamities that were afflicting every part of the British empire. It was owing to their passive acquiescence, that individuals unworthy of trust and confidence, were precipitating it to ruin.

A system, he continued, had been lately taken up by an ill-designing, perfidious set of men, whose aim was to sow the seeds of discord among all the principal people in the kingdom. Their system was to engross all authority and power, by fomenting divisions among those individuals whose merit and character entitled them to pre-eminence. By such treacherous arts, the minds of many who were upright and well intentioned, were alienated from each other, and prevented from that cordial association of interests and ideas, which is so necessary in the formation of a permanent and respectable government.

Ministry answered the charges against them with equal warmth. That of improper influence was denied with much vehemence. They were influenced by

by no other motive than that of conviction of the propriety of their conduct. It was an easy and popular task to accuse men of being led by private views; but proofs were not so readily produced. They had done their duty to the utmost of their knowledge; they had stood up for the dignity of the crown and kingdom of Great Britain; they still continued to think it beneath the majesty of the British legislature, to be forced into concessions of which it did not approve. In a struggle between this country and its Colonies, it was the part of a native of Britain to espouse its cause preferably to theirs. But the maxims of opposition were quite of a contradictory cast, and inculcated the sacrifice of this country's interest to that of its Colonies.

After a violent contest, wherein great asperity of language had been used on either side, the question being put, Lord Chatham's motion was rejected by a majority of forty votes to nineteen.

Not discouraged by this rejection, he made a second motion for an address to lay before the House, the orders and directions relating to the employment of the Indians.

The extreme severity with which he reprobated this measure, was highly offensive to those who sided with administration. After assigning various reasons for adopting it, they charged Lord Chatham himself with having set them the example in the last war.

To this it was replied, that the employment of the Indians at that time, was a measure of the greatest propriety:—It was no more than a necessary retaliation upon the French, who made use of their assistance in a much greater degree: it was therefore perfectly justifiable by the laws of nations. But the present employment of these barbarians had nothing to authorise it; and was dictated by an un-

manly spirit of revenge. This motion was negatived in the same manner as the preceding.

When the question of adjournment came to be agitated, it occasioned no less heat and altercation than in the House of Commons. In the vehemence of debate it was insinuated, that the opinions and advice of persons in the opposition, merited no influence in the councils of this kingdom, from their total deficiency in that spirit and fortitude which had always characterised the nation. The reply was, that the imprudence of the present ministers, their obstinacy, their ignorance in the first principles of government, were all notoriously proved by the disappointments, the losses, the misfortunes daily experienced abroad, and the dangers to which the realm was evidently exposed at home. Mistaking rashness for spirit, they had plunged this country into calamities, some of which were irremediable. Could such men deserve the confidence unhappily reposed in them, after having so repeatedly disgraced those councils, wherein they had the arrogance to presume that none but themselves were worthy of having a share?

After a long and acrimonious debate, attended alternately with several taunts of this nature, the motion for the adjournment passed by a majority of forty-seven to seventeen.

C H A P. XXXI.

Transactions in Great Britain relating to America.

1777—1778.

DURING the long and unexpected recess that divided this memorable session, many domestic events happened of a nature to claim the attention, and exercise the animosities of both parties.

The American deputies at Paris, had ineffectually endeavoured to settle an exchange of prisoners, on the footing usually established between nations at war, with the British Ambassador at the Court of France. They wrote a letter of complaint upon this subject to the ministry at London. It contained a charge of a heavy nature, and which occasioned many complaints from those who did not approve of severities being inflicted upon the American prisoners, beyond those to which individuals captured in war are reciprocally subject.

It represented that a number of American prisoners had been sent to the Coast of Africa and to the East Indies, to serve as soldiers there, against their will, and in order to avoid worse treatment. Whatever truth or exaggeration were contained in this remonstrance, it produced much discontent among the partisans of America.

Representations were made at the same time, that the American prisoners in England were used with much more rigour than was consistent with humanity; that they were in great want and distress, through the barbarous neglect of those who were appointed to the care and management of the prisons wherein they were confined.

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The case of these unhappy people, was, with great humanity, brought before the consideration of the House of Lords, by the Earl of Abingdon. He proposed that an enquiry should be made relative to their complaints, and that due care should be taken to screen them from ill usage. This, together with a very liberal subscription in their favour throughout the kingdom, relieved them from their distresses, and did honour to the character of the nation.

In the mean time, the misfortune that had attended the army under General Burgoyne, was become an object of very serious consideration. Though it was to return to England, yet it was to remain useless for the purpose for which it had been intended. Until another army of equal force could be provided, one of the most important objects of the American war was of necessity to be neglected. An additional aggravation to this calamity, was the danger to which the Province of Canada was again exposed, from the attacks of the people of New England. It was highly probable they would not forego this opportunity of invading it, while enfeebled by the loss of such a considerable force, and in all likelihood unable to resist such a one, as they would have it in their power to employ against it.

But it was not only the mortification of being deprived of the service of this army in America, that perplexed the ministry : it was almost equally chagrined at the little progress made even by the victories obtained in other parts, towards the objects proposed. It viewed with equal concern and surprize, a brave General, at the head of a successful army, obliged to act with the same circumspection in the midst of conquest, as if he had been defeated, and been obliged to take refuge in that city, of which his advantages over the enemy had, in fact, given him the possession.

This was a situation totally new and highly embarrassing.—It shewed that there was a radical chain of difficulties in the enterprize before them, which threatened to be indissoluble: as soon as one was overcome, another started up. The nature of both country and people seemed to correspond in this respect: whatever straits they had been reduced to, still they had found means to surmount them against all expectation, and when they were looked upon as past all possibility of deliverance.

Another obstacle began at this period to shew itself, which occasioned no less alarm. This was the difficulty of recruiting the troops in America. Exclusive of the immense distance of the scene of war, and of the enormous expence of sending armies across the ocean to another hemisphere, the question now was, where to provide a sufficiency of men to replace those multitudes that fell in battle, or were lost through the many other causes that concurred to their destruction.

The recruiting parties in Great Britain and Ireland, found no alteration in the temper of the commonalty; the same aversion still subsisted to engage in the service, with the prospect of being sent to America.

In Germany various obstructions were daily arising to prevent supplies of soldiers from that quarter. The immense armies kept on foot by the two principal powers in that part of Europe, the Emperor, and the King of Prussia, demanded continual levies throughout the empire. It was not therefore without jealousy, that both these powers saw some of the resources diminished, from whence they were used to refresh their armies. One of them actually denied a passage through his dominions, to a body of men that had been raised for the service of Britain; and a general unwillingness appeared every where to countenance

countenance any assistance that might be afforded to this country.

The prospect nearer home was not less productive of anxiety. Intelligence was daily arriving of the prodigious preparations that were hastening in every port of France. The American privateers were now welcomed in such a manner, as indicated how soon their country would receive that full and explicit support for which it had so long solicited.

Occurrences of various kinds contributed to show with what heartiness the French espoused the cause of the Americans. These were received, caressed, and feasted by individuals of all degrees, in the harbours into which they conducted their prizes: they were treated on the footing of the most cordial friends and allies, and considered as men embarked in the same quarrel against one common enemy.

These various objects made no alteration in the councils of this kingdom. The plan of conquering America still continued in full force. It seemed to be resolved, that no disappointment should shake the resolutions taken to that purpose, and that no situation, however distressing, should compel this country to yield to any other terms than those it had at first proposed.

In order to support so resolute a determination, it was necessary to make such a provision of internal strength, as might enable the nation to withstand all attempts from its neighbours, as well as to continue its exertions on the other side of the Atlantic.

The dangers which the realm apprehended from the House of Bourbon, would not permit the sending out any more troops to America, till those remaining at home had been duly replaced in the different posts and garrisons, where they were stationed for the defence of the kingdom; and from whence it would have been highly imprudent to remove them at so critical a juncture.

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The indispensable necessity of making new levies, and the difficulty of carrying such a measure into execution, were equally obvious. Parliament, however obsequious it had proved hitherto, did not appear so willing to go the same lengths in hostile measures, since the unhappy failure of the expedition under General Burgoyne. Many of those who had warmly coincided with coercive measures, began to despair of their efficacy. Even among the ministry, there were some who expressed much less fervour in their prosecution since that unfortunate event.

To pursue effectually the ends proposed, a considerable force was to be raised within the kingdom itself, exclusive of those supplies of men that were furnished from foreign parts. The pressure of circumstances rendered such an attempt inevitable; but that obstacle which appeared of most magnitude, was how to compass such an intention, without applying to Parliament, and without offending it.

It was suggested upon this occasion, that an application might be made without impropriety, to that numerous party which had in so many parts of the kingdom, shewn themselves the strenuous abettors and supporters of those councils that had promoted coercive measures. The warmth and vigour professed and recommended by this party, were notorious, and afforded no ill-founded presumption, that if called upon to second their words by their deeds, they would not be found remiss.

Were such an application to succeed, it would open the most flattering prospects. It would create a new resource for the military list. It would diminish the expence of levying men, which was no inconsiderable one; it would revive the martial spirit of the nation, which, though naturally bold and intrepid, was in general averse to the military profession. A diffusion of this spirit was become the

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more necessary, as the dangers threatened from abroad would ere long, probably, oblige the people of this island to have recourse to arms themselves, in a greater degree than had been requisite for many years.

It might perhaps be objected, that such a measure would diminish the numbers of individuals employed in those branches of business, that were productive of such immense profits to the nation. But this was an argument equally applicable to all countries. Were motives of this nature to preponderate in all cases, they would banish at last all sentiments of honour and magnanimity, and infallibly terminate in rendering a people spiritless and incapable of self-defence, which was the worst calamity that could befall them.

Such a measure might possibly affect the well-being of a country, that had nothing to depend on but what was imported from abroad, and acquired through the greatest efforts of domestic industry. But this was by no means the case of Great Britain. It was a large, fertile, and populous island, full of all the necessaries and conveniences of life, and abounding in brave and resolute men, a great proportion of whom were far from being indispensably needed for the purposes of external commerce, of inland trade.

But were some inconveniency to result from the employment of our own people, it would be only temporary. The end for which it was submitted to, would amply compensate for the inconsiderable deficiencies it might for a while occasion. Other nations were subject to such inconveniencies, and some were less able to endure them than ourselves. The enemies that now compelled us to adopt this measure from the just apprehensions we entertained of their malevolent designs, were precisely in our own situation. Their military strength consisted of their own people; however extensive their commercial views,
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and the many schemes they had at different periods projected for the enlargement of their numerous branches of trade, still they thought it the wisest policy, to put as few arms as possible into the hands of mercenaries, and to trust the honour and safety of their country to the care and courage of the natives.

These considerations, together with the pressingness of the occasion, induced those who principally directed among the ministry, to make trial of the temper and disposition of their numerous adherents. It was chiefly to prevent this trial from being obstructed, that so early a recess had been resolved. Had it taken place while the Houses were sitting, opposition might have been so inimical to it, as to have frustrated the whole scheme. It could not be denied, that it seemed to deviate from the constitutional method of raising a military force. The rigid assertors of the rights of Parliament, would probably represent it as an incroachment on their privileges: this might induce such members as were otherwise inclined to favour the views of ministry respecting America, to take such an alarm, as to throw their whole weight on this emergency into the scale of opposition.

For this reason, a recess of more than common duration, appeared absolutely requisite to give time for the intended experiment to operate without interruption. Should it prove successful, as there was strong reason to hope it would, the necessity of the times would be a powerful argument in its justification, and silence the objections which at another season would be heard to its prejudice.

The determination being thus settled, those friends to ministry whose attachment could be most relied on, and whose influence or abilities could be most serviceable, were employed in those places where
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their respective interest lay to prepare the minds of the people for what was intended.

The expectations formed by ministry, were answered beyond what the most sanguine had dared to presage. The connections that had taken place between France and the Colonies, made a considerable alteration in the dispositions of people. Many who had once been their zealous friends, were now become their foes from that circumstance alone. Convinced that they would, from the nature of their country, have been able to resist the endeavours of Britain to subdue them, they thought that they needed no other assistance; and that to have recourse to the inveterate enemies of this country, betrayed a malevolent disposition, and was dictated by choice much more than by necessity.

In this persuasion were multitudes throughout the kingdom, when this application was made by the ministerial party, in the several towns where they possessed influence and credit, either by their property, or their connections with people in business.

Among those places that seconded the views of ministry, Liverpool and Manchester stood the foremost. They acted with a zeal that gave spirit at once to the whole undertaking, and filled its well-wishers with the most sanguine hope of carrying it through to the utmost of the extent proposed. They each engaged to raise a complete regiment of a thousand men. The same alacrity was displayed in various other places; and numerous subscriptions were opened almost every where for the levying and embodying of men for the public service.

It would have afforded great satisfaction to the ministry, could the city of London have been prevailed on to take the lead in a measure of this kind. The vast assistance it could have given, the weight of its countenance, the influence of its example, would have powerfully contributed to forward and
authorise

authorise it in the most effectual manner. But the differences that had of late years arisen between the Court and City relating to America, had alienated them from each other, and produced a coolness bordering upon enmity.

Motives were not however wanting to induce the ministry to make a trial there. The manifold branches of business connected with the carrying on of the war, and especially the prodigious contracts with government, had procured it an extensive influence ever since the commencement of hostilities.

The friends of government in the city had formed themselves into a body, to which they gave the name of the Associated Livery; but they were better known by that of the White Hart Association, from the tavern where their meetings were held.— They were at this period very numerous, and exercised great sway in the city, from the power they had of obliging or detriming individuals in trade.

There were other societies framed by the popular party, in opposition to this; but they met with so many discouragements, and were so disunited, that they were entirely overborne by the superior weight of their antagonists. These acted more under guidance and direction, and were supported by the whole strength of ministry: while the former, professing the utmost independence of principle and conduct, were apt frequently to be at variance; the latter, through pliancy and acquiescence in the dictates of their leaders, were kept more firmly together, and acquired that preponderance which is the natural result of concert and unanimity.

The heads of this powerful body were carefully applied to on this important occasion, and much reliance was placed on the exertions they were able to make. They themselves doubted not their sufficiency to carry the point proposed. Full of this

confidence, they advertised a meeting of their associates, depending on so general and efficient a support, as to bring it about with little, if any opposition.

But the misfortunes that had lately befallen the British arms in America, the unprosperous aspect of the military operations there, the continual disappointments attending every ministerial measure, and the imminent danger in which the prosecution of their designs had involved the nation; all these had of late made such an impression on the public, that an averfeness to the American war had taken possession of the minds of far the greater majority of those on whom they had so confidently relied.

In consequence of this disposition, the meeting, contrary to their expectation, was but thinly attended; and to their utter astonishment, such as were present, manifested so little inclination to correspond with their intentions, that upon weighing the matter seriously among themselves, they did not judge proper to lay the real intent of the meeting before those who composed it, and it separated without the least transaction of any business.

The proposal intended by ministry was, that the city of London should raise and maintain five thousand men, who were to serve three years, or till the conclusion of the war. But the manner in which their agents were disappointed at this meeting, discouraged these so much, that at a Court which was called by the Lord Mayor upon this occasion, no mention was made of this tendency, and it was only moved, that a bounty should be granted by the city to those who enlisted into the service, either by sea or land.

Various arguments were adduced in support of the motion. The danger with which this country was menaced by its most powerful and inveterate enemies, rendered it an indispensable duty in the metro-

metropolis of the British empire to prove its ardour in the common cause, by exerting itself in the most vigorous and exemplary manner for the service of the state. The losses we had lately suffered in America, and the necessity of reducing that country to obedience, called for every assistance which a brave and generous people could possibly afford. In such a critical season as the present, every individual ought cheerfully to contribute to the utmost of his abilities. The city of London had always acted a conspicuous part on such occasions, and it behoved its inhabitants not to fall short of the spirited precedents set them by their ancestors.

This exhortation had no effect upon the assembly. It was replied, that it was totally inconsistent to apply to the city of London for its support of measures which it had so long, and so lately disapproved of, in the most explicit and most unreserved manner. That having invariably recommended peace and reconciliation, it was an insult to request its concurrence in war and bloodshed. It had sustained so much damage from the conduct of ministry, and experience had so fully convinced all discerning people of their unfitness to direct the affairs of this nation, that the city of London was the last place where they should seek for abettors. True it was, the citizens of this metropolis had always stood forth in dangerous times, and signalized themselves in defence of their country: but this was under wise councils and able ministers. The same motives that influenced their behaviour on such occasions, now induced them to deny their assistance to those who requested it. They had freely and zealously granted it to those who deserved it; and would for the same reason refuse it to such as were unworthy of it.

In the Court of Aldermen, eleven members supported this motion against nine, who rejected it.—

But in the Common Council, it was thrown out by a majority of one hundred and eighty, to no more than thirty.

Notwithstanding this heavy disappointment, the ministerial party continued firm in their determination not to give up the point. The want of loyalty in the Corporation of London, should not, they said, prevent individuals from testifying it in their private capacity. While subscriptions were encouraged for the Americans taken with arms in their hands against this country, it was but just that those who were well affected to government should also subscribe to its support.

In consequence of this determination, a subscription was opened at the London Tavern, and a Committee chosen to manage the business. As the whole of this affair was conducted by persons in affluent circumstances, a large sum was soon subscribed.

The adherents to ministry at Bristol imitated those at London, and were foiled precisely in the same manner. They acted also with no less zeal after their public failure. They opened subscriptions, and filled them with a liberality exceeding that of London, when the proportions of wealth and importance between those two cities are taken into consideration.

Similar attempts were made for the service of government in different counties, with no better success. In Norfolk particularly, the opposition to ministry was so powerful, that instead of procuring any assistance, the endeavours of their friends occasioned a petition to Parliament from the freeholders of that county, conceived in terms of the highest energy and freedom, and wherein they reprobated the American war with the utmost explicitness and asperity.

In Scotland, a remarkable readiness was shown in concurring with the designs of government. The
martial

martial spirit of the Scotch nation prompted it to very vigorous exertions upon this occasion. The cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, besides large subscriptions, furnished each a regiment of a thousand men. Several regiments were also raised in the Highlands.

These free subscriptions, and voluntary levies of men, did not take place, however, without the severest animadversions from those who disapproved of them. Their number was very considerable: they did not deny the exigency of the times; but they condemned without reserve the manner of proceeding which had been adopted, and represented it as pregnant with consequences of a very pernicious tendency.

This measure was the very first object that met with the censure of opposition on the meeting of Parliament after the recess. Sir Philip Jennings Clerke began the inquiry into this business, by observing, that as the people of this country had been told that the American war was the war of Parliament, they could not fail being greatly alarmed at hearing that a large body of men had been raised during the recess, not only without the knowledge or advice of Parliament, but without intimation being given on the part of ministry that any such design was in agitation.

Parliament had, on the contrary, been informed, that terms of reconciliation to be proposed to the Colonies, would be laid before them at their next meeting. But instead of a treaty for the restoring of peace, ministry met the Parliament with a new army; and what was worse, an army raised without the consent of Parliament, and against both the spirit and letter of the constitution.

The object of Parliamentary inquiry at present, was to know into whose hands the sword was entrusted? However necessary it might be to raise troops, it

was the duty of Parliament to see that the sword should be given to those only upon whose fidelity they could rely.

He moved, in consequence, that an account should be laid before the House of the number of troops ordered to be raised during the late adjournment, specifying the different corps, with the names of their officers and commanders, the length of time these had served, and the rank they had obtained in the army.

The motion was acceded to on the part of ministry, and the House informed at the same time, that the intention of the long adjournment which had taken place, had been fully answered, by the activity that had been exerted in the various departments of the public service, and by the zeal and readiness with which great numbers in the nation had contributed to forward it in their private capacity. Free and spontaneous subscriptions had been opened in various places, for the exigencies of the state at this critical time. They were a seasonable proof how much true patriotism remained in this nation, and they showed no less an approbation of the conduct of ministry. It was with particular satisfaction that ministers now saw, that untoward accidents had not affected the good opinion of the public respecting the rectitude of their measures; and that crosses and disappointments were viewed in their true light, as contingencies independent on human sagacity. Every man who felt for the reputation of this country, must rejoice to see the courage of the people augment in proportion with their difficulties and dangers. Such a disposition must, in the issue, render them invincible.

Opposition contended, on the other hand, that however flattering a representation ministry might think proper to make of the measure in question, it was a direct attack upon the constitution, and was
replete

replete with danger. Were it otherwise, why should it so industriously have been concealed from Parliament? Why should ministry recur to so unusual a recess, but in order to execute it without obstruction? They were conscious how strongly it must have been opposed, and did not dare to trust to Parliament for its consent to so unwarrantable a design.

Were the executive power in this kingdom authorised in raising such a number of troops without the concurrence of Parliament, the fences of popular liberty would immediately be broken down. It was an easy matter to frame pretexts for levying or increasing the number of forces; but were maxims of this kind once admitted, such armies would be raised, as would soon introduce that arbitrary government in this country, which had been established in so many parts of Europe precisely by the same means.

The plea of necessity, founded on the dangerous state of the nation, and the war now waging in America, was an object of Parliamentary decision only. They were the sole judges whether the money of the nation should be granted for the purposes pleaded by ministry: it was their ancient, unalienable right. Through venality, through undue influence, ministers might pervert the representatives of the people, and draw what sums they pleased from the public; but still they ought to beware of departing from long established forms. Representatives, however pliant, would still insist on being consulted as usual, and would not give up that privilege, however improperly they might use it.

Ministry had, in this instance, been guilty of a manifest and notorious breach of the constitution: they had assumed a power which belonged to Parliament exclusively,—that of granting the public money. They had incurred expences on account of the public, and which, of course, the public must

they had done it without the participation of Parliament, and for aught they knew, against its inclination.

In answer to these objections, it was alledged by ministry, that the pressures of the times were so great, that none but captious and unreasonable men would condemn a measure evidently so useful and beneficial. The sense of the nation was, that the American war should be prosecuted with all imaginable vigour. Could a measure that seconded this intention so effectually, be construed as dangerous to the liberty of a people with whose wishes it so directly corresponded?

The withholding it from the knowledge of Parliament, was no subject of reprehension: ministers themselves were but partially acquainted with the scope and extent of the measure, and could not in its undigested state bring it as a matter of discussion before Parliament.

The accusation of unlawfulness and infringement of the privileges of Parliament, was unjust, and ill-founded. The measures carried on in America, had been approved of in a manner perfectly constitutional: could the concurrence of the people in furthering the views of their representatives, be considered in any light as repugnant to the constitution?

The transaction, instead of meeting with blame, ought to be treated with commendation: nothing sinister accompanied it. The plain, unequivocal intent of those who acted upon this occasion, could not possibly be any other than to render their country all the services in their power. Warmth in the cause of Great Britain against the pretensions and behaviour of the Colonies, had roused the spirit of multitudes throughout the nation to uncommon exertions in its defence, and in the maintenance of its honour.

honour and just claims; was there any reprehensibility in a case of this nature? Was not such a transaction highly conducive to the reputation of a people? Was it not a proof of their magnanimity in the hour of danger, of their attachment to government, and of their strongest approbation of those who directed its councils?

Precedents militated powerfully in support of the measure:—In the rebellion of seventeen hundred and forty-five, several Noblemen and Commoners raised troops at their own expence; subscriptions were openly set on foot, and persons went from house to house, collecting money for the use of the public. No compulsion was employed, but such was the temper of the times, that whoever refused to contribute according to his circumstances, was reputed a disloyal subject. The measure was opposed by the disaffected party of that period, and, like the present, condemned as unconstitutional; but it was no less strenuously vindicated by one of the greatest luminaries of the law, the late Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, who was well known to be a staunch friend to the constitution of this country.

During the late triumphant war, several regiments had been raised by the Crown, and large sums subscribed by the city of London, and other places, for the levying of troops. This was done under the ministry of Mr. Pitt, now Lord Chatham, whose constitutional principles were unquestionable. The measure, instead of meeting with the least disapprobation, was highly applauded by Parliament, and those who engaged in it received the public thanks of government.

Neither the Bill of Rights, nor the Mutiny Act itself, it was asserted by several lawyers of great eminence, were contrary to this measure: no construction of them could imply a legal disability in the Crown to use proper means for the defence of

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the realm, in cases of great exigency. These necessarily superseded the common forms. Were these to be literally adhered to, without any respect to circumstances, they might eventually prove the ruin of the state. Contributions, while voluntary, could not be deemed unconstitutional. Were they not even strictly conformable to the letter of the law, yet their meaning and intent were perfectly consistent with the spirit of the constitution. They were given to quell a rebellion, which was the greatest of all civil calamities, and in the suppression of which all means were justifiable.

It was answered by opposition, that the precedents alledged in justification of the measure, were not apposite to the present case. When the public was in manifest and imminent danger, necessity might excuse a deviation from formalities. By this rule only, the proceedings in the rebellion of forty-five could be authorised. The realm, the constitution, the liberties of the nation, were then evidently at stake; the rebel army was advancing towards the capital, and the disaffected were numerous, and every where preparing to rise. In such perilous circumstances, a transient suspension of the laws became necessary for their preservation, and every method adopted for the security of the state was just and reasonable.

But what comparison could be formed between that and the present instance? The enemy against whom these new levied forces were designed, was situated in another hemisphere; a large fleet was infesting his coast, and a numerous army was invading the heart of his country. Could any pressing danger be pleaded from such an enemy? Could such a case authorise ministry to adjourn a Parliament clearly to the intent of acting without its advice?

What

What happened in the commencement of the last war, was not more favourable to the ministerial pretensions:—The regiments then raised by the Crown, were authorized by Parliament. An act of credit had been passed, enabling the King to take such measures as were proper for the common defence, and addresses had been presented to the same purport.

The money subscribed at that time was not applied to the levying of forces independent of Parliament, but to grant enlisting bounties to recruits for the army, and seamen for the navy. But in the present case, fifteen or sixteen thousand men were to be levied, without any interference of Parliament; and an assembly of men, unauthorized for such a purpose, assumed the power of granting money to the ministry, to be disposed of at its own option, and free from all Parliamentary controul.

The Bill of Rights did by no means allow money to be raised for the use of the Crown, otherwise than by grant from Parliament. But the case now debated was a direct contravention of that bill; money was granted to the Crown without the least intervention of Parliament, for the most dangerous of all purposes,—the raising of troops without Parliamentary authority.

This donation of money to the Crown from private individuals, had always been considered as a dangerous method of supplying the wants of the sovereign. Even those Parliaments, whose loyalty and attachment to the persons of their Princes were the least questionable, had been cautious to restrain these voluntary gifts within stated limits. On the restoration of Charles the Second, when all orders of subjects were eager to testify their affection to him by voluntary contributions of money, Parliament foreseeing the pernicious tendency of such a proceeding, fixed a term after which they were

were to cease, and a sum which they were not to exceed. The generosity of a Peer was not to extend beyond four hundred pounds, and that of a Commoner above two hundred.

It was particularly noticed by opposition, that this measure contradicted an argument often alledged in vindication of the exclusive right claimed by Parliament to tax the Colonies :—Were they to be allowed to grant money to the crown, it would in time become independent of Parliament for supplies, and the constitution of this country be materially endangered : this was an argument reiteratedly adduced in defence of the ministerial proceedings in the Colonies : it was used both in and out of Parliament by all their partisans, as an unanswerable proof of the judiciousness of their conduct, in suffering no other assembly of men throughout the British empire, to levy money for the use of the crown. With what face, therefore, could ministry, after pleading that motive for debarring the Provincial Assemblies in America from granting aids to the crown by virtue of their own authority, pretend to legalize the opening of subscriptions, by private individuals, for the benefit of the crown ?

The express intention of the Mutiny Act, was to prevent the crown from maintaining an army without the assistance of Parliament ; but if the means of maintaining it were permitted to be furnished through any other than a parliamentary channel, the act might soon be invalidated, and its intention wholly frustrated.

Gifts to the crown, from whatever source they flowed, could not be considered in any other light than that of aids, when given for public uses ; they were therefore a manifest breach of the rights of Parliament, which had reserved to itself exclusively, the sole privilege of supplying the wants of the crown. The connection between Crown and Parliament was
founded

founded upon that privilege; were any other body of subjects, public or private, allowed to participate it, of what utility could Parliament prove in the most essential of all its concerns,—the protection of public liberty? If others were authorised to give or to raise money for the crown without consulting them, it was obvious that ways enough might be found to levy sufficient sums for the furtherance of unconstitutional designs.

This method of obtaining money from the public, had always been condemned by the soundest lawyers. When it subsisted under the title of benevolence, it was in fact a tyrannical extortion, and wise men saw the necessity of putting a stop to the practice, whatever appellation it might assume. Contributions of this kind, though voluntary, perhaps, and uncompelled at first, soon slid into precedents; and from requests, became in time requisitions, to which people were bound to submit. For this reason the wisdom of Parliament thought fit to suppress them by two successive acts framed for that particular purpose.

An attempt, resembling the method of obtaining money practised by the present ministry, had been made in the time of James the First; but though no compulsion was used, and people were left entirely to their option, the measure underwent a severe reprehension from one of the ablest lawyers of that age, the celebrated St. John, afterwards Lord Chief Justice. He had the courage, at a time when adulation was more prevalent than it has been ever since, to oppose it with undaunted firmness. He expressed himself on this occasion with such freedom of language, as laid him open to a prosecution in the Star Chamber. It was carried on with great violence, and every means were employed to bring him to a heavy condemnation; but he maintained his ground with so much judgment and fortitude, that

that notwithstanding the whole interest of the Court was exerted against him, he was acquitted, and thereby established a remarkable and decisive precedent of the illegality of such a method of raising money.

The plan observed in levying these new regiments, was at the same time complained of as expensive, injudicious, and inequitable. Instead of forming additional regiments, those already subsisting, ought to have been recruited to their full complement, according to the manner that had been practised in the last and former wars: this would have proved an effectual supply, and rendered an essential and much wanted service to the army. Fresh levies incorporated with veteran soldiers, soon acquired that military spirit, and those habits of regularity and discipline, which they had continually before their eyes; but a new raised body of men, totally unacquainted with the use of arms, were long in forming themselves to quickness and precision in the various duties of their profession, for want of that assistance and incitement which are derived from constant example.

The generosity of those who filled up the subscriptions, and raised the new regiments, had been much extolled. Had the latter applied their money to the purpose of furnishing recruits for the old regiments, nobody could have doubted their patriotism: such a plan would have proved of evident utility, as every five thousand pounds thus employed, would, at five pounds bounty a man, have supplied the army with a thousand good recruits. But the method which had been adopted, was unsatisfactory, and afforded suspicions that interest alone had prompted those who were concerned in it. Individuals in possession of contracts to supply the army with necessaries, could not certainly benefit themselves more readily, than by contributing

tributing to additional levies : what they bestowed with one hand, was received with ample profits in the other. In the same manner each of these new regiments produced, by the sale of commissions, three or four times the sum expended in raising it.

This method of conducting the business was attended with another glaring impropriety. The rule of promotion, according to seniority, had been set aside in a manner that could not be justified :—Officers who had spent their lives in the service, saw their juniors lifted over them without the least pretence for such a preference : equity should have dictated, that in the raising of new regiments, the Lieutenant Colonels ought to have been employed according to their standing. By acting otherwise, injustice had been done to the army, and very high discontents must be expected to follow.

A variety of other arguments was produced by opposition, to invalidate and expose the impropriety, the inequitableness, and the danger of this measure. They made a considerable impression, and induced many members, who voted usually for ministry, to side against them on this occasion. On a motion that a sum of money should be granted for cloathing the new forces, it was carried on a division, by a majority of two hundred and twenty-three, to one hundred and thirty ; so much was the minority increased through the disapprobation of the business in agitation.

In the House of Lords, the opposition to this measure was no less violent than in the House of Commons. The Earl of Abingdon distinguished himself remarkably on this side of the question. He contended with great spirit and vigour against its lawfulness and propriety, and moved that the Judges should be summoned to give their opinion on this matter.

To

To this motion it was objected, that the attendance of the Judges could only be required on points of law, whereas this was a constitutional question : that a motion by a single Peer was not of sufficient weight for such a requisition; which ought to be made by an order of the whole House.

The Lords in opposition replied, that while Parliament sat, the Judges were always supposed to attend the Upper House, writs being issued at every new Parliament to that intent. From the importance of their other avocations, their presence was excused, and only expected on a special summons ; but when a motion was made for their attendance, it was customary to grant it.

This motion being overruled by the majority, Lord Abingdon proceeded to move *several* resolutions against the measure in debate, which were seconded with great warmth and earnestness by the other Lords in opposition.

It was asserted, that to raise troops during the sitting of Parliament, without its consent, was a direct violation of its fundamental rights: the very essence of its power and privileges consisted in judging of the necessities of the kingdom, and in providing, according to its discretion, for every public emergency that arose: to take any measures of this nature during a parliamentary session, without its advice and participation, was in fact to deprive it of its authority, and therefore a manifest breach of the constitution. The subscriptions opened at London, and Bristol, were audacious infringements of the exclusive powers constitutionally enjoyed by Parliament in all matters that related to the granting of money to the crown; and tended in their consequences to establish a precedent utterly subversive of the constitution.

Those who contended for the measure, alledged, that it was by no means repugnant either to the spirit

rit or letter of the Bill of Rights, which was justly considered as the foundation of the British government ever since the revolution. That Bill declared in express terms, that the Crown should not keep an army on foot in time of peace: was not this an implication that it might lawfully do it in time of war? Was not the present war a most dangerous one in every point of view? Was not the kingdom menaced on every side? Was it not therefore an indispenfible duty in the Crown to provide for the security of the nation in the most effectual, and consequently, in the most expeditious manner? Could any method be more effectual and expeditious than that in which both the king and his subjects concurred with so much readiness and confidence? If unanimity was due to any measure, it ought certainly to accompany one that shewed so much patriotism and zeal in the people. A disposition of this kind could not meet with too much encouragement: it was by popular exertions of this nature, that states had often been extricated from difficulties, which would otherwise have totally overwhelmed them. To cast any aspersions on the measure, would be to throw a damp on the spirit of the people, which might be attended with very detrimental consequences in future. Exertions of this kind might possibly come to be wanted much more than at present; but when the obstructions that were thrown in the way of this measure were remembered, they would greatly cool the ardour of the public, and retard its readiness to adopt them.

It was further insisted, that it was the undoubted prerogative of the Crown to levy an army, as it was the privilege of Parliament to consider of the propriety of the measure, and to grant or refuse money for its support. A denial on their part implied a disapprobation, and the troops were of course disbanded. It was experimentally inconsistent with

good policy, to take the advice of Parliament previous to such a measure. In raising armies at home, or in giving subsidies abroad, it was not customary to consult that assembly. To secure its authority, it was sufficient that it could render both measures void by the refusal of supplies to make them good.

It was lawful for any subject to give the King either land or money: it had been frequently done without animadversion. To compare the present subscriptions to the benevolences of old, was a gross misrepresentation:—The money raised in former ages, under that pretence, was actually extorted; whoever refused the payment he had been assailed, was liable to imprisonment. Was it equitable to draw comparisons between such tyrannical proceedings, and those adopted in the present exigency? What could be more laudable, and therefore more lawful, than the subscriptions and the levies of men now so cheerfully, and so liberally carrying on by those who wished well to government? It was a donation to the state, of which the Crown was, in truth, no more than a trustee: it was unfeignedly employed for the service of the public, and no suspicion was harboured of its being diverted to any other use. Why then oppose it with such warmth? All parties concurred in acknowledging the necessity of union, and a vigorous co-operation; what stronger proof could be given of a general willingness to second the views approved of by the nation in the persons of its representatives, than this zealous and voluntary assistance of individuals, uncompelled, and directed by no other prospect than that of promoting the welfare of the state?

The measure was not new; it had occasionally been put in practice without any evil consequence. What injury could possibly result from it? The additional

ditional bounty-money arising from the subscriptions, was an inducement to enlist, that could not fail to procure recruits sooner than without such an encouragement. Where the service of the community was so indisputably the ultimate object proposed, instead of enquiring whether some latent mischief might not lurk at the bottom of this measure, people ought to rejoice to find such a spirit of unanimity in the common defence, so widely diffused; instead of apprehending danger from it, the nation ought to congratulate itself that such a liberality of sentiments animated so many of its members.

It was a melancholy reflection, that the rage of party should so far mislead men, as to make them condemn at home, what, when done abroad, would command their highest applause: voluntary contributions of subjects, had, at all times, and in all governments, been considered as highly meritorious. History abounded with proofs of the salutary effects they had produced; but no instance could be mentioned of any nations having had cause to repent of its generosity in cases of exigency like the present.

After a long and interesting debate, wherein much eloquence and knowledge was displayed on each side of the question, the question being put on the resolutions moved by the Earl of Abingdon, they were rejected by a majority of ninety to thirty.

C H A P. XXXII.

Parliamentary Debates relating to America.

1778.

THE decision of the important question concerning the subscriptions and new levies, was next followed by the enquiry into the state of the nation, moved for, and carried by Mr. Fox previous to the recess.

On the second day of February, as it had been appointed, he opened the business in a long and interesting discourse, wherein he adverted to every part of the subject with great order, precision, and perspicuity.

He reviewed the ministerial conduct of American affairs, from the date of those measures that gave birth to hostilities, to the period when these commenced; recapitulating the events they had produced. He requested of the House, seriously and impartially to attend to the great subject under their deliberation, the actual state of Great Britain, and in what manner she might be brought out of the difficulties in which she was so deeply and so dangerously involved.

He observed, that it was not possible for any country to decline from such a summit of prosperity and grandeur, with so much rapidity, as had been the fate of Great Britain, without some radical error in the administration of its affairs. That error consisted in a false perception of the situation and circumstances of the Colonies, and an ignorance of the disposition and character of the Colonists. It had not been considered how strongly they were linked together by one common interest, and how jealously

they would look on any attempt to introduce alterations among them in matters of government.

It was owing to this fatal inadvertence, that the British ministry rashly engaged in a quarrel with one of the Colonies, which in the issue involved them gradually in a contest with all. They did not foresee the magnitude of that opposition with which they would have to contend: the consequence was, that unable to face it with a force adequate to its suppression, it gathered a strength and vigour which emboldened the Colonies to go such lengths as they had done.

The British ministry seemed in this instance to be totally unaware, that to aim at an increase of power without the means of enforcing it, can only serve to augment the strength of opposition, and to diminish that authority which was not before disputed.

Thus were the Colonies driven, by the imprudent haughtiness of Britain, into an hostile union against her. The severe acts of the year seventy-four had never passed but for the ministerial ignorance of the true state of the Colonies and their inhabitants; otherwise they would unquestionably have adopted lenity, instead of that fruitless system of compulsion, which only exposed them to contempt, when it was found they were unable to carry their threats into execution.

The Quebec act completed the enmity of which the foundation had been laid by the preceding. It silenced all the well-wishers to Britain among the Americans. They now clearly saw, what were the ultimate intentions of the British ministry; and they united accordingly in the firmest determination to oppose them at all events.

In the midst of this universal dissatisfaction, an opening to reconciliation was made by a respectful application from the Colony of New York; but

that also was rejected with the same arrogance which had dictated all the former measures.

After the sword had been drawn; after the British and American blood had been shed at Lexington, and at Bunker's Hill, the Colonies were still unwilling to proceed to those extremities, to which it was so long foretold they would have recourse, in case Britain refused the satisfaction they required. They made the most submissive overtures for reconciliation; they presented a petition containing the most reasonable demands; but the world too well knew in what manner it was rejected, and what were the consequences of the refusal.

Experience had now shewn, that notwithstanding the great force employed by sea and land against the Colonies, while victories were gained, no impression was made: they still maintained their ground against the principal army, and had totally defeated and captured another. Every day brought fresh proof, that the obstacles in the way of our military operations in America, were insurmountable; coercion was therefore impracticable, and an accommodation indispensable.

While our affairs were in so unprosperous a situation in America, they wore a no less alarming aspect at home. The standing military establishment was diminished by the continual drafts of men for America, while the nation was in hourly expectation of a rupture with the House of Bourbon.

In consequence of this exposition of unquestionable facts, he moved, That no hopes remaining of a subjugation of the Colonies, and the danger to which the realm was exposed at home, being great and imminent, none of the troops remaining for the defence of Britain and its European dependencies, should be sent to America.

The speech, of which the above is the substance, continued two full hours, and was heard with uncommon

common silence and attention. But, contrary to the expectation of the opposition, neither the speech nor the motion produced any reply from the ministerial party; the question was called for as soon as he had finished, and the motion rejected by a silent majority of two hundred and fifty-nine, against a minority that amounted, upon this occasion, to no less than one hundred and sixty-five.

On the sixth of February, a motion was made by Mr. Burke, for copies of such papers as had passed between the ministry and the Generals in America; and such also as related to the employment of the Indians. He accompanied his motion with a speech of above three hours length.

The intent of this speech was to expose the inhumanity, ill policy, and inutility of employing the Indians in the war that was waging against the Colonies. He depicted, in strong colours, the native barbarity of their disposition, and the horrible cruelties they exercised upon the persons of their captives. He asserted, that as allies, their assistance could be of no weight from the smallness of their numbers. The only use they were fit for, was murder and devastation. He exculpated Congress from the imputation of having first endeavoured to engage the Indians on their side: they had, on the contrary, stipulated with them for a neutrality.—The expence of maintaining these savages, was excessive; one of them cost more than five regular soldiers. They had not only dishonoured, but ruined the cause of Britain; their barbarities had compelled all the inhabitants of the country in the neighbourhood of the late northern army, to take up arms for the immediate preservation of their lives and families. It was through the accession of these exasperated multitudes, that General Gates was enabled to enclose that army on every side, and to reduce it to such extremities, as to force it to sur-
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render. He adverted with great severity to the endeavours that had been made in two of the southern Colonies to excite an insurrection of the negroes against the white people. Such an hatred to Britain had been produced by that measure in the Province of Virginia, that it had taken a determination to resist singly, were all the other Colonies to submit. No measure adopted by ministry had given a deeper wound to the interest of Britain in America than this employment of the Indian savages. It had no less disparaged the character of the nation among foreigners, whose surprize at our conduct in this instance, must have been the greater, as it had hitherto been remarkable for its humanity. He concluded by asserting, that it was incumbent on Parliament to make strict inquiry into this matter, and solemnly to reprobate and disavow so inhuman a measure, so derogatory to the reputation of a civilized people, and at the same time so repugnant to policy, tending in its nature to render enmity perpetual, and to preclude all hopes of a reconciliation.

Such was the general intent of this celebrated speech. It made a very powerful impression, and it was received with greater applause than any he had ever spoken. One member, in particular, wished it to be printed, and affixed to the doors of churches, together with the proclamation for a general fast. Another congratulated ministry on the exclusion of strangers upon this day, as the indignation of the public might thereby have been roused to such a pitch, as to menace their personal safety.

The reply of ministry to these heavy charges was, that such a neutrality as had been represented, was impracticable in fact. That from the temper and maxims of the Indians, no alternative was left between their alliance and their enmity. No war ever had

had been, or could be carried on in America, without the intervention of the Indians. Their dispositions always led them to mix in the quarrels of the Europeans settled in their country. Had they been employed by neither party, they would have acted an hostile part to both, whenever opportunities were afforded. It was therefore wiser to secure their friendship, than to remain exposed to the danger that must have arisen from neglecting them.

It was asserted, that the animadversion concerning the encouragement of negroes to revolt against their masters, had no just foundation: they had been promised their liberty on repairing to the royal standard, but had by no means been incited to act any otherwise than as soldiers in the field: massacres and assassinations were the base and groundless suggestions of those who laboured to describe every act of the ministry, and their adherents, in the most odious colours.

After a most violent debate, Mr. Burke's motion was rejected, by a majority of two hundred and twenty-three, to one hundred and thirty-seven.

Notwithstanding the rejection of these, and other motions, the opposition continued the inquiry with great perseverance and assiduity. On the eleventh of February, Mr. Fox resumed the business in the House of Commons; and from different calculations, stated the number of men lost to the army, in killed, disabled, deserted, and from various other causes, since the commencement of hostilities, at about twenty thousand; and the expences incurred, at twenty-five millions.

On this ground he appealed to the sense of the nation, whether it was prudent, after such a fruitless profusion of blood and treasure, to continue a war pregnant with losses and disappointments of every denomination. If we had not succeeded against the enemy while undisciplined, and new to military

military business, how could we promise ourselves better success, now that he had profited by the experience of three campaigns.

Ministry condemned with great warmth, the attempt to lay before the public in so explicit a manner, the circumstances of the American war. The critical situation of this country, rendered any disclosure of our affairs highly impolitic, especially as it was so strongly insinuated that we were at the eve of still greater dangers.

This was answered by observing, that the very intent of the inquiry upon which the house was sitting, demanded an elucidation of these circumstances. The apprehensions expressed by ministry of the detriment that might result from exposing the situation of this country in point of strength, were no valid argument against a proper examination:—Precedent was against them. In the midst of war it had been usual to inquire into the actual state of the national forces, by land or sea; into the conduct of Admirals and Generals: into the causes of defeats and losses.

Among other points of discussion it was noticed, that ministry intended to make a change of Generals in America, and that great hopes were formed from this projected alteration. But it was asserted, that whoever was entrusted with the conduct of the war, would not prove more successful than the present commanders. The same difficulties would produce the same vexations and disappointments. If they acted with resolution and spirit, they would be taxed with temerity and precipitation; if circumstances compelled them to use care and circumspection, they would then be charged with timidity,—with tardiness,—with a design to protract the war for the sake of emolument. The obstinacy of ministers would never ascribe miscarriages to their true cause, which was the impossibility of succeeding, from the many
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insuperable obstacles that stood in the way of all the skilfulness and bravery that could be exerted. Neither courage nor abilities had been wanting; all had been done that expert commanders could have planned, and valiant soldiers executed; but victories and advantages were necessarily purchased at so dear a price in that country, that no enterprize, however judiciously conducted, was free from uncommon and peculiar dangers and obstructions.—The miscarriages of the war were owing to the nature of it, and were absolutely unavoidable: difficulties were connected with each other by an indissoluble chain, and the surmounting of one immediately produced another. The war had now lasted sufficiently to convince us, that the conquest of America was an attempt which the power of Britain, great as it was, would not be able to compass. Prudence, therefore, dictated as speedily a retreat from this destructive field as was consistent with honour. This, happily for the nation, had not been lost; but its wisdom would be justly controverted, were it, after such reiterated experience of their inutility, to persist in those ruinous efforts that had cost it such numbers of brave men, and such immense sums of money.

The issue of this long and animated debate was, that the various resolutions moved by Mr. Fox were negatived; and that notwithstanding the increase of the minority, it became evident that ministry was yet possessed of an ascendancy in the House which opposition would not be able to encounter. It remained, however, immovably determined to proceed, and to dispute every inch of ground on which a contest could be supported.

In the House of Lords, the debates were not less assiduous on this important subject. The Duke of Richmond distinguished himself particularly on the side of opposition, and conducted it with a mixture
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of coolness and animation, that commanded much notice and applause.

After a laborious disquisition on the most interesting circumstances relating to the present state Feb. 2, of the kingdom, he summed up his arguments, by laying before the House the vast armaments that were carrying on with such unusual earnestness and diligence in all the ports of France and Spain; the absence of a considerable part of our land and sea-forces on the other side of the ocean; the inadequateness of the number of troops remaining in the kingdom, and its dependencies, for their necessary defence; and the probability of their being shortly attacked.

This representation was in consequence followed by a motion similar to that of Mr. Fox in the other House:—That a large part of the military establishment for the guard of the realm, having already been drafted for foreign service, what now remained, should be left entire for home defence; as sending more abroad, would reduce the realm to so weak a condition, as to expose it to insult and invasion.

Administration opposed this motion for the same reason that had been brought against it in the House of Commons,—the impolicy of laying our circumstances open to foreign powers. It was also censured as interfering with the Royal prerogative of directing the employment of the military force of the realm. Nor was the army to be considered as the principal strength of this nation; it consisted much more in its navy: while that was in a flourishing condition, no danger need be apprehended from abroad; and happily for this country, never had its fleets been abler to command respect and terror than at present. Were the motion to pass, it would be an absolute relinquishment of our claims in America, as it would be a confession of our incapacity to enforce them.

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The reply of opposition was, that the situation of this country with respect to its internal defence, was perfectly known abroad: matters of this kind could be made a secret of in no country. It was absurd therefore in administration to oppose any motion on that ground. The House of Bourbon was well acquainted with the weakness of our present circumstances, in every point, notwithstanding the futile endeavours of ministry to conceal them. It was in consequence of that knowledge, the stile of the French Court was now become so lofty. Whatever ministers might pretend to the contrary, they knew what was preparing for them on the neighbouring shore, and that France was that instant meditating in what manner to begin the rupture with Britain. The shadow of peace still subsisting between them, would vanish in a few weeks, and leave them destitute of that feeble, as well as false pretence, that we had nothing to apprehend from abroad, which they had long continued to urge with so scandalous an obstinacy.

Great dissatisfaction was expressed on this occasion at the behaviour of ministry. It was represented as aiming to deceive the public, and to conceal from it what it had the clearest right to know,—its real circumstances, and how far its security had been provided for, in a crisis that might, without exaggeration, be said to teem with dangers of greater magnitude than had ever menaced this country.

It was an insult to the nation, to expect that an administration which had brought it to the very brink of perdition, should meet with the same confidence as if their measures had been crowned with success. The misfortunes and disappointments which had befallen this nation of late, were notoriously the result of their imprudence. It was natural, therefore, that ministers should be called to account for every step they had taken, and still more, for

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those they intended to take in the present alarming posture of public affairs.

On putting the question, the Duke of Richmond's motion was rejected, upon a division, by a majority of ninety-three, to thirty-one.

This rejection did not, however, abate his activity. In a subsequent Committee of the House upon this subject, he stated the following facts:—That since the commencement of hostilities, five hundred and fifty-nine merchant ships had fallen into the hands of the Americans, the value of which had been proved to amount to no less than two millions six hundred thousand pounds: that of two hundred ships employed every year in the trade to Africa, before the present troubles, the average worth of each being about nine thousand pounds, only forty remained in that branch, which was therefore diminished one million four hundred and forty thousand pounds annually. The price of insurance to the West Indies, and to North America, was increased from two to five per cent. with convoy, but without it, to fifteen. Seamen's wages were raised from thirty shillings, to three pounds a month; the price of pot-ash was advanced from eight shillings, to three pounds ten shillings the hundred weight; that of spermaceti oil, from thirty-five pounds the ton, to seventy; tar, from eight shillings the barrel, to thirty: the price of sugars, and other West India commodities, and of naval stores from North America, was greatly augmented.—These losses and distresses were occasioned through the captures made by the American ships of war and privateers. From authentic accounts, the number of these amounted to one hundred and seventy-three, carrying two thousand five hundred and fifty-six guns, and about fourteen thousand seamen.

In answer to these positions, it was alledged on the ministerial side, that if the commerce of Great Britain had suffered by the war, that of the Colonies had suffered still more. This country had, upon the whole, the advantage in this respect.— The number of American prizes amounted at this day to upwards of nine hundred; worth, upon a medium, two thousand pounds each, and making altogether, eighteen hundred thousand pounds; adding to these the value of the fisheries, from which the Americans were now precluded, the damage done to the Colonies was not less than two millions two hundred thousand pounds.

The statement of their losses made by the merchants, as adduced by the Duke of Richmond, was represented as much beyond reality. It was censured as erroneous in the list of ships taken by the enemy, and no less in the estimate of their value. If some branches of trade were diminished, the deficiency had been replaced by the increase of others. It was undeniable and well ascertained, that a variety of new channels of trade had been lately opened, highly to the benefit of this country. That great detriment was occasioned to the Americans by the numerous captures of their vessels, was a fact uncontroverted, and proved by the distresses to which the whole Continent was reduced, and complaining of, from one extremity to the other.

After a well supported contest, several resolutions moved by the Duke of Richmond, in consequence of the statements and representations he had laid before the House, were negatived, by putting the previous question upon them.

During these Parliamentary debates, great heats and discontents were created throughout the nation by the subscriptions and levies of troops without consulting Parliament. No part of England signally hazarded its warmth against this measure with more freedom

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freedom and explicitness than the county of Norfolk. It presented a petition, or rather a remonstrance to Parliament, subscribed by five thousand four hundred individuals: the contents of it were peculiarly pointed and striking, and showed a people that were determined to speak their minds without respect of persons.

An empire, they said, was lost; a great contingent in arms, was either to be conquered or abandoned. The nation had been deceived and deluded with regard to the nature, the cause, and the importance of the American troubles, as well as concerning the means of quieting them. Acts of Parliament had been made only to be repealed; armies sent out to enforce them, only to be returned to this country under capitulations. The glory of the nation ought no longer to be exposed to disgrace, nor Englishmen to hardships and perils abroad, without better hopes that they should not, by the same errors, be liable to the same calamities and disgraces, that had befallen so many of those who had already been sent forth. Without wise councils at home, neither empire nor reputation could be preserved abroad.

Such was the general scope of this celebrated petition. It was presented to the House on the seventeenth of February, the day fixed upon by ministry for opening a conciliatory plan with America.

After some preparatory observations. the plan proposed by the minister, was to enable the Crown to appoint Commissioners to treat with the Colonies concerning the means of putting an end to the present contest between them and Great Britain. The intention was to name five persons to this commission, and to invest them with very ample powers. They were to be authorized to treat with Congress as a lawful assembly, representing and acting for America; with any of the Provincial Assemblies, upon

upon the constitutions they had assumed; and with any individuals, in their present civil or military capacities: they were empowered to order a suspension of arms; to suspend the operation of all laws; to grant pardons, immunities, and rewards; to restore all, or any of the Colonies, to the forms of their constitutions previous to the present troubles, and to nominate the governors, and all other officers, in those where the Crown had exercised that nomination.

Should the Americans claim the title of Independent States, in treating with the Commissioners, it was to be allowed them until the treaty had been ratified by the King and Parliament. The Commissioners were to negotiate, upon a re-union of the empire, for a reasonable contribution to its common exigencies, on the part of the Colonies; but this demand was not to be insisted on, and to be given up, rather than not terminate the quarrel.

The minister accompanied this proposal with a long and accurate discourse upon the subject. He concluded by asserting, that his concessions did not proceed from necessity, but were dictated by reason and propriety. Great Britain was by no means disabled from continuing the war; there was no deficiency of troops; many more might still be raised; and the navy was in full force: the revenue to support all these was very little impaired, and the funds for the service of the year would shortly be provided, at a moderate interest.

The House was struck with astonishment at the contents of this speech.—As the stile and substance were so different from those that had so frequently been made upon this subject, it was conjectured that some powerful motive had induced ministry to adopt such an alteration of measures.

This idea was confirmed by the positive assertion of Mr. Fox, that a treaty had been signed at Paris,

tween the Colonies and the French ministry, by which it recognised their independence.

The proposals of the minister met with no opposition: but it was observed, at the same time, that they came too late to produce any reasonable hope of their answering the end proposed. The Americans had now settled their independency upon so strong and solid a foundation, that it could not be expected they would be prevailed upon to part with it for any offers that Britain could make. Its negotiations would not prove more effectual than its arms, and nothing would now shake the resolution of a people who had suffered so much, and made such exertions to accomplish that object. Their situation was no longer uncertain and precarious; they stood upon firm ground; they were supported not only by their own strength, but also by that of the powerfulest allies they could possibly have found. They knew their advantages too well to relinquish them. If they had obstinately persisted in opposing the whole might of Britain, while unassisted, and while it was imagined by many that they would not be able to make good their resistance, they certainly would not give up the fruits of their perseverance, now that they could enjoy them with security.

The Americans were too full of resentment for the treatment they had met, to harbour those sentiments of cordiality that were necessary to incline them to such a reconciliation as was proposed.— They would undoubtedly accept of peace upon terms of equality and independence; and might, perhaps, when the remembrance of the injuries they had received was subsided, form amicable engagements with this country; but no more could be looked for at present, than a simple pacification. A return to obedience ought not to enter into our ideas,

ideas, if we seriously meant to put an end to hostilities.

Many severe things were said upon this occasion against the ministry; but the general opinion was, that having given up the article of taxation, which was in truth the only point deserving of contention, a peace ought speedily to be concluded at any rate, and without insisting on such terms as would unquestionably be refused, and only occasion a prolongation of the war.

Great offence was taken at the ministry's real or pretended ignorance, whether a treaty was in agitation or existence between France and the Colonies. It was however agreed on all sides, that nothing could be more probable in the present circumstances. Matters were now brought to that maturity which the Court of France had so long in contemplation. America had now obtained a degree of weight by her successes in the late campaign, which would enable the House of Bourbon to turn the scale with facility against Great Britain. Until these had taken place, and their preparations were completed, the French had delayed their open interference; but both these views being fulfilled, they were now ready to enter upon the scene of action avowedly, and without any further dissimulation.

Much indignation was expressed upon this occasion, by a great number of members, at the inflexible disgrace which a conciliatory proposition of such a nature as the present, would bring on the councils and character of this nation. Sooner than submit to such an indignity, the resources of this country ought, they said, to be tried to their utmost bearing: with prudence and management they would be found sufficient to reduce America to the duty it owed to Great Britain. Nothing would degrade us more, than after lavishing so much treasure, and sacrificing so many thousands of our

bravest men, to acknowledge the independence of subjects who had so insultingly bid us defiance, and refused all terms but those of their own prescribing. Such a proposal would only serve to render the Americans totally untractable. It would add fresh spirit to their councils, and courage to their people; while it would, on the other hand, depress the resolution of our armies, and relax the vigour with which they had hitherto exerted themselves for the cause and the honour of their country. It would no less abate the reliance upon us, of the well-affected among the Americans, and slacken their zeal in our service. But what was of still worse consequence, this proposal would make no impression on the Americans; they would reject it, and thereby expose us to the derision of all Europe.

After undergoing various alterations, the Conciliatory Bill was passed with the unanimous consent of all parties, on the second of March. Some of these alterations, however, were much disapproved of by the opposition, as bringing the powers vested in the commissioners within too narrow a compass. Persons entrusted with a negotiation, upon which so much depended, and which was carried on at such a distance, ought, said they, to have been fully authorised, not only to treat, but to conclude finally upon all matters. Many would arise which would require an immediate decision. A reference to superior authority at home, would necessarily leave many things unsettled. This would be tying up the hands of the commissioners, and giving disgust to the Americans. Whoever were employed to negotiate with them, must, from their being on the spot, be better able to act from their own judgment and determination of what was advisable, than by the direction of individuals in Europe.

On the eleventh of March, in a resumption of the Committee of Inquiry into the state of the nation,

tion, a resolution was moved by Mr. Fox, that the navy, in its actual condition, was not equal to the defence of these kingdoms in the present critical posture of affairs.

It was asserted upon this occasion, that the sums expended upon the navy during the last eight years, exceeded in a double proportion, those that had been expended on it during the whole eight years of the last war.

The debates on the resolution were exceedingly earnest and animated. Much assertion and contradiction was used by both parties. As it was a subject wherein the nation was deeply interested, those who spoke on either side of the question, neglected nothing to support their different opinions ; but, as usual, in cases of an intricate nature, where truth lies involved in a mist of investigation and perplexity, though much eloquence and knowledge were displayed, yet a complete elucidation of the subject was not attained. As the business was disagreeable to ministry, it was defeated by putting the previous question.

The same warmth accompanied, in the House of Lords, the debates upon this, and the various other subjects that had been so animatedly discussed in the House of Commons. The criticalness of the times seemed to infuse additional spirit into all parties, and to have summoned them to the utmost exertion of their abilities.

An incident of a particular kind happened about this time in the House of Lords. Some time after the convention at Saratoga, General Gates wrote a letter in a very pathetic stile, and of a very interesting nature, to the Earl of Thanet, a nobleman with whom he had formerly lived upon a footing of great intimacy. The letter related chiefly to the unhappy situation of affairs between Great Britain and America.

After lamenting the misfortunes that had befallen his native country, and the danger to which it was exposed, he stated the necessity of speedily applying the only remedy remaining, for the cure of the many evils that afflicted or threatened Great Britain. This remedy was an acknowledgment of American Independence. This, he insisted, the Colonies would never part with. "A wise minister," he said, "by rescinding the resolutions passed to support that system which no power on earth can establish, will endeavour to preserve so much of the empire in prosperity and honour, as the circumstances of the times, and the mal-administration of those who ruled before him, have left to his government."

"The United States of America," he continued, "are willing to be the friends, but never will submit to be the slaves of the parent country. They are by consanguinity, by language, and by the affection which naturally springs from these, more attached to England than to any other country under the sun. Therefore spurn not the blessing which which yet remains; instantly withdraw your fleets and armies; cultivate the commerce and friendship of America. Thus, and thus only, can England hope to be great and happy. Seek that in a commercial alliance; seek it ere it be too late; for there only you must expect to find it."

The Earl of Thanet produced this letter in the House of Lords, on the sixteenth of February, and requested permission that it might be read. But this was strongly opposed by administration. They alledged it would be highly improper, and beneath the dignity of the House, to admit of any correspondence with any general or officer acting for the rebellious Colonies, and that the letter might be of such a tenour, as would render the reading of it exceedingly offensive.

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It was, however, after some controversy, read to the House; and the Duke of Richmond moved that it should lie on the table. This motion excited a warm debate. It was argued by ministry, that coming from a rebel general, actually in arms against the state, it deserved no admission. It was, besides, a private letter, containing only the opinions of an individual. It had not the public sanction of Congress, and could not therefore, in any respect, become a ground for deliberation. Nor were its contents of a nature to merit attention: they were such as had been reiteratedly condemned by the House, as inimical to the honour and interest of the nation. The letter asserted that the Americans would never recede from their declaration of Independency, and advised a withdrawing of the British fleets and armies: these were subjects on which that House, and the nation had already decided, and should not depart from, in compliance with the admonition of an enemy.

It was alledged, on the other hand, that the character of General Gates was above any slight or disrespect that might be thrown upon it on account of his acting in the service of the Colonies. He was greatly esteemed in America; and the signal advantages he had lately obtained, had acquired him great importance and weight with Congress. Such a man's opinions and counsel were not to be undervalued. He was an Englishman, and felt for his country, though in arms against it for a people who had adopted him, and honoured him with their confidence. The correspondence of such persons, and the information resulting from it, conveyed with much more certainty the sentiments and dispositions of the people on the American continent, than the partial and interested intelligence arising from those who had, unfortunately for this country, been so much consulted and relied upon by ministry. As it

was now the declared intention of government to open a treaty with America, every kind of information relating to it ought to be received, especially when it came through so respectable and authentic a channel. To reject it, would be equally imprudent and insulting; they ought to be fully acquainted with the minds of the people, with whom they were about to negotiate on such weighty matters; and it ill became them to affect scorn and disdain towards one who expressed concern and affection for Britain, and who, in the midst of victory and triumph over its armies, still remembered with gratitude and compunction the country to which he owed his birth.

Notwithstanding the many reasons that were offered in support of this motion, it was rejected, to the great concern of several, who flattered themselves that this letter might have afforded an opening to a favourable accommodation.

This rejection was followed by a resumption of the Committee of Inquiry into the state of the nation. Several motions were proposed by the Duke of Richmond, tending to state the number of troops, together with their operations during the several campaigns in America.

But he was again opposed by administration, upon the ground of the injudiciousness and indiscretion we should be guilty of in exposing our national deficiency and weakness to the inspection of the enemy.

This reply greatly exasperated the Lords in opposition. They complained of the perpetual repetition of this argument against all the motions made on their part, as if it carried any validity; whereas ministry must be conscious it had none. The enemy knew the embarrassed state of our circumstances as well as ourselves; and the mere refusal of ministers to authenticate transactions that were undeniable, only shewed a backwardness to acknowledge truths that
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were not favourable to them. Such behaviour amounted to a denial to establish those matters of fact, without which the House could form no resolutions: this was defeating the very intent of the inquiry they were now making into the circumstances of the public. If ministry was resolved to proceed in this manner, it were better at once to dissolve the committee, and put an end to an inquiry, from which they seemed determined that no utility should arise.

The answer to these complaints was, that it would be full time after the enquiry was completed, to form resolutions on the matter before them. It would then be entire and connected, and enable them to conclude with more knowledge of the subject, and safety in their judgment, than by deciding upon detached pieces of information.

In consequence of this allegation, the Duke of Richmond's motions, on the previous question being put, were negatived without a division, by the usual majority, to the great indignation of the minority, and of their adherents, who represented this method of proceeding, as a plain indication, that ministry was pre-determined to overturn all reasoning by dint of numbers.

On the nineteenth of February, the Committee of Inquiry being resumed in the House of Peers, the Duke of Richmond stated, in a very precise and correct manner, the expences incurred by the war; which now amounted to twenty-three millions, eight hundred and ninety-four thousand pounds, and upwards. He shewed, at the same time, that were a pacification to take place, no less than nine millions more would be requisite to bring all matters relating to this war to a final settlement. Thus, exclusive of the damages occasioned by hostilities, and other consequences of the war, it would at all events have

have cost this nation, in less than the space of four years, the enormous sum of thirty-three millions.

He followed this statement, as he had done the others, with a chain of resolutions resulting from it, and which were negatived in the same manner as the former, and for the same reason. They acknowledged themselves so fully convinced of its propriety, that had they conceived what the views of opposition had been, in proposing an inquiry into the state of the nation, they would never have consented to it.

On the twenty-fifth of February, an examination of the state of the navy was proposed by the Duke of Bolton; but opposed by administration on the same footing of impropriety as the preceding motions.

A violent and acrimonious altercation ensued upon this refusal. Among other arguments employed by opposition, a precedent was quoted from the reign of Queen Anne. During the great and important war, in which the nation was engaged with the House of Bourbon, an account of the succession to the Crown of Spain, a very circumstantial and public inquiry was made by Parliament into the condition of the navy. It was conducted with the utmost regularity and strictness, notwithstanding Prince George of Denmark, husband to the Queen, was at the head of the Admiralty. But the quotation of this precedent was of no effect, and after a long debate, the motion was rejected.

The times, it was said, were very different.—Great Britain was then in the plenitude of triumph; the Duke of Marlborough had, by a continual series of victories and conquests, entirely broken the power of France. Lewis the Fourteenth was suing for peace; and this country was the umpire of Europe. But our situation at present was the very reverse. We had been unsuccessful in a war abroad, that was
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now drawing nearer home, and threatened to involve us in the most serious danger. Was this a season to disclose either our military, or naval affairs to the enemy? Whatever they might be, the commonest maxims of policy would teach us to conceal them. However they were prosperous, the enemy should, if possible, be taught to look upon them as above their reality: if they were unfavourable, the motive was still stronger to conceal them.

The Conciliatory Bill was now brought up to the House of Lords, where it passed without any opposition; but not without some severe remarks on the humiliation the kingdom submitted to, in acceding to such proposals. A nation lately triumphant and formidable to all Europe, was now reduced to the necessity of subscribing to the demands of its revolted subjects, and of making concessions that too notoriously manifested how low it was fallen from that state of greatness and glory, which had so long rendered it the terror of the greatest powers in the world. Such were the animadversions with which this measure was received, not only in Parliament, but throughout the nation.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Declaration of France in favour of America.

1778.

WHILE these disputes and fermentations were taking place in England, France was preparing to throw off that appearance of peace, which still remained between the two countries. It was now determined in her councils, that an open declaration of her intentions relating to America, was indispensable; as it could not be doubted, that after the connections which had been formed between the French ministry and the Congress, the ministry of Britain would immediately proceed to hostilities.

Notwithstanding the Americans maintained their ground with great courage and vigour, the Court of France was not wholly unapprehensive, that if left much longer to themselves, the difficulties that were accumulating upon them, might be productive of impatience, and incline them to such a reconciliation with the parent state, as might frustrate those expectations of a total dismemberment of the British empire, which were the sanguine and ultimate views which it had proposed by espousing the cause of the Colonies.

They had now experienced three years of such calamities, as they had never known since their first foundation. From a life of tranquility and ease, they had been suddenly launched into the midst of perplexities of every denomination. Though numbers of them encountered the hardships and dangers of this direful quarrel, with unshaken patience and resolution, a still greater number began to grow uneasy at its duration, and earnestly to wish for an accom-

accommodation upon any terms that might secure their independence. This was an object which they were universally resolved to maintain at all perils; but they were no less disposed to reconciliation, upon conditions in any other respect advantageous to Great Britain.

A reconciliation of this nature was greatly dreaded by the Court of France at the present juncture. The failure of the expedition against the northern Colonies, had awakened her fears upon this subject. She apprehended that a conviction of the impracticability of such an attempt as the conquest of America, would at last induce the British ministry to enter into a negotiation with the Congress, and terminate the contest by an amicable treaty.

Nor did the determination of that ministry to persist in coercive measures, alter the ideas of the French politicians. The repeated experience of the inefficacy of these measures, had made such an impression on the British Parliament, that notwithstanding the vast influence of government, it began to relax of the firmness with which it had so long adhered to directions, and to exhibit a strong disposition to put an end to a quarrel, which, it was clear, would shortly be attended with dangers of the most serious magnitude.

Impelled by these considerations, the Court of France had immediately, on receiving intelligence of the convention of Saratoga, taken the resolution to act an open and decisive part in this quarrel. It was the universal desire of the whole French nation. The commercial intercourse now subsisting between them and the Americans, had opened such flattering prospects to the mercantile classes in France, that they unanimously concurred in seconding the views of the Court, and in expressing the most fervent wishes, that the strictest union should be formed with the Colonies.

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This intercourse had not, however, proved hitherto so successful as it had been at first expected. Hurried by an imprudent avidity of gain, numbers of the principal merchants in the sea ports of France, had ventured to load their vessels with valuable cargoes for America; but far the greater part of them were taken by the British cruizers.

These disappointments, though they fell heavy upon individuals, did not discourage the generality of people in business. They doubted not, by means of the triple alliance that was to be formed between America, France, and Spain, shortly to become masters at sea, and carry their commerce to such an extent, as would amply compensate for these temporary losses. In this expectation, they waited with impatience for the period, when the House of Bourbon would openly join the United States of America, and support them in a resolute and decisive manner, by attacking Great Britain at home, and employing that immense naval strength against her, which had been so long preparing.

The American Commissioners at Paris, had, by this time, succeeded so well in the objects of their mission; that nothing now remained on the part of France and America, but to give a formal notification to the world, of the designs they had long concerted, and had in a great measure carried into execution.

Towards the close of the year seventy-seven, preliminaries of a treaty of alliance between France and America, were agreed upon, and a copy of them dispatched to Congress, with advice that the articles were digesting, and would speedily be settled. This was done to anticipate any overtures by the British ministry, and to prevent them, if made, from producing any effect, by convincing the Congress that they might depend upon the fullest assistance.

On the sixth of February, seventy-eight, the treaty was finally concluded, and signed by the contracting parties, to the great satisfaction of the whole French nation. It now saw the completion of those wishes, it had so long cherished,—a dismemberment of the British empire, and the commercial advantages arising from the possession of its Colonies, transferred to themselves.

It was stipulated by this celebrated treaty, that should Great Britain, in resentment of the connection formed between the French and the Americans, proceed to hostilities against France, or intercept its navigation and commerce with America, they should make it a common cause, and assist each other against Great Britain to the utmost of their respective power.

It was declared that the direct and essential end of this treaty of alliance, was to maintain effectually the liberty, sovereignty, and independence of the United States of America.

Were these States to reduce those parts of North America still possessed by Britain, they were to be confederated with, or dependant upon them.

Should France take possession of any of the islands in the West Indies belonging to Great Britain, they were to become her property.

Neither France nor the United States, were to conclude any peace or truce with Great Britain without the formal consent of the other, and they mutually engaged not to lay down their arms until the Independence of those States should have been formally, or virtually secured, by the treaty that terminated the war.

The contracting parties agreed to invite and admit those powers that had received injuries from Great Britain, to make a common cause with them, and to accede to the present alliance against it.

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The United States guaranteed to France all her present possessions in the West Indies, together with those she might acquire by treaty at the end of the war; and France guaranteed to the United States, their independence and sovereignty, absolute and unlimited, the countries and dominions they possessed, and those they might acquire in America from Britain, during the present war.

Such was the substance of a treaty that completed one of the most astonishing revolutions ever mentioned in history,—the separation of a people, who, though divided by the ocean, were descended from the same original, retained the same language, laws, government, politics, religion, customs, habits, manners, inclination, and character. United by these many powerful ties, they had continued during a space verging towards two centuries, on a footing of such close friendship and union of interest, as raised them to the highest summit of prosperity. This public connection was still further cemented by the numerous benefits and endearments arising from consanguinity, and the remarkable affection and intimacy that subsisted between individuals. In whatever part of the world they met, they reciprocally considered each other as Englishmen, and behaved with a cordiality and warmth for their mutual welfare, that showed how truly they were united in sentiments, and how sincerely attached to each other. What was still more surprising, this separation was succeeded by the strictest alliance and adherence of one part of them, to the ancient and inveterate enemy of both, whom they had a few years before jointly contributed to humble, and who now was happy to find an occasion of making himself amends for former losses, by sowing the seeds of implacability between them, and by rendering the one an instrument of his vengeance upon the other.

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It was not difficult to foresee that this treaty would defeat all attempts to any accommodation between Great Britain and the Americans, that did not correspond with the utmost of their demands; they would now consider all offers from hence as resulting from necessity, and by no means from good-will, and a sincere desire to be reconciled: they would interpret them as the mere effect of fear and weakness, and reject them with scorn and haughtiness.

The first step taken by the Court of France, immediately after the conclusion of this treaty, was to notify it in due form to the Court of Great Britain. The terms of the notification were highly mortifying, and gave great offence. It stated the declaration of independency on the part of America, and their actual possession of it, as a sufficient ground to recognise it. It avowed the connections that had already taken place between France and America, and assigned them as a just foundation for a treaty of friendship and commerce. It particularly made a merit that no exclusive advantages had been stipulated in favour of the French nation. Notwithstanding the evident injury done to Great Britain by this treaty, the notification expressed a sincere desire in the Court of France to cultivate a good understanding with it, and expressed an expectation that the British Court would take effectual measures to prevent its interruption. This notification concluded, however, with an insinuation, that the Court of France was determined to protect the commerce of its subjects in America, and had, in consequence, concerted measures for that purpose with the United States of that continent.

Such a notification was, in fact, a declaration of war. It could not be expected that Great Britain would tamely put up with such an insult, as declaring her revolted subjects a free and independent

nation, and acknowledging a determination to support them in their pretensions.

The reception of this paper was notified by the minister to the House of Commons on the sixteenth of March.—This notice was accompanied by a message from the King, giving them to understand that he should be under the necessity of resenting so unprovoked and unjust an aggression on the honour of his Crown, and the interests of his kingdoms, contrary to solemn and reiterated assurances, subversive of the law of nations, and highly injurious to the rights of every sovereign power. Relying with proper confidence on the zeal and support of the nation, he was resolved to exert all the force and resources of this country, which, he doubted not, its enemies would find fully sufficient to maintain its reputation and power against all their attacks.

An address was moved by the minister, in answer to this message, to assure the King of the readiness of his people to stand by him in asserting the dignity of his Crown, and the honour of the nation, and to submit with cheerfulness and spirit to the expences that would be requisite for this necessary purpose.

The propriety of the substance and intent of the address was not controverted; but it was warmly contended by opposition that the present ministry ought no longer to be entrusted with the conduct of public affairs. Their incapacity and imprudence had involved the realm into so many difficulties, that it would be the height of tameness and imbecility to acquiesce in the continuance of their power. If they had showed themselves inadequate to the management of the nation's concerns, in the transactions that had preceded, was it reasonable to imagine that they would acquit themselves with more ability and success in the much more arduous business that would now devolve upon the hands of those who were to be at
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the helm in the tempestuous season that was approaching?

An immediate acknowledgment of the independency of America, was deemed by many the only measure est to extricate this country out of its difficulties. America had alone resisted all its efforts to subdue it; was it consistent with reason, to think that it would not resist them still more effectually, when supported by the whole power of the House of Bourbon?

By a timely acknowledgment of this independency, we might still do that with a good grace which we should be under the necessity of doing at last through compulsion. Many advantages would result from instantly adopting this measure. A dangerous, unequal war would be avoided, in which the most that could be hoped, was the preservation of what we still possessed. But what was of incomparably more importance, the close correspondence that must ensue between the French and the Americans, in case of a war, would be obviated. This correspondence would necessarily produce a variety of connections between individuals. The French, from their habitual dexterity in such matters, would gradually infuse their sentiments, and diffuse their manners and language among the Colonists, to a degree that would, in a great measure, obliterate the remembrance of the country from which they originated, and transform them into a people as opposite to us in character, as they were now become in interests and politics. A prolongation of the war would manifestly be attended with these consequences; and would, besides, lay them under such a load of debt and obligation to France, as they would not be able to shake off, and which must necessarily subject them to the heaviest and most slavish influence of that kingdom while it lasted.

By acknowledging their independence, before they had been compelled to enter into exclusive agreements with France, their trade would remain free and open with all the world. This, of course, would lessen their correspondence with France, and leave them at liberty to form such connections as corresponded most with their interests. Long experience had taught them that Britain was the country where these would be best consulted. By renewing the communication upon business, other channels of intercourse would be opened. A mutual exchange of benefits and good offices, would, by degrees, revive the memory of former friendship. The conviction that Britain had given up all her projects of domination and superiority over the Colonies, would, by removing public mistrust, facilitate the renovation of private intimacy. Thus, in no considerable lapse of time, Britain and America would be thoroughly and sincerely reconciled; and we should reap the fruits of this reconciliation by recovering the largest share in their trade, and by securing their good will and readiness to unite with us as faithful and cordial allies.

Such a situation was certainly more worthy of our option than that of subjection founded upon conquest, on a supposition that such a scheme were practicable. But we had been fully taught, by dear bought experience, that it would not succeed; the sooner, therefore, we relinquished it, the more willing we should find the Americans to give us credit, for leaving them in the peaceable unmolested possession of what they demanded.

Such were the allegations and sentiments of the opposition in Parliament, and of multitudes, perhaps the majority of the nation, at this time. But the ministerial party maintained a contrary opinion. Nothing, said they, could be more spiritless and disgraceful than to bend in this object and submit
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ive manner, beneath the authority of France. It was incumbent on Great Britain, at all events, to resent the arrogance and injustice of that Court. Our resources, even in our present difficulties, were superior to those of that country; and the whole world was in expectation that we should not remain passive after such treatment.

But were we disposed to grant, without further hesitation, all the requisitions of the Americans, how could we, in honour and equity, relinquish the protection of the well-affected to this country among them, who were, by very intelligent people, affirmed to be the larger number? Were it not more eligible, on the very strength of such an affirmation, to make trial of its veracity, and to put arms into the hands of all those who professed themselves our friends? Whatever might be the risk, we could not abandon them, without exposing our reputation, and losing that character of fidelity to our engagements, for which we had hitherto been so justly respected.

After a debate that lasted till near three in the morning, the address, without the clause proposed for the removal of ministry, was carried on a division, by a majority of two hundred and sixty-three, to one hundred and thirteen.

In the House of Lords, the debates were still more violent, and accompanied with an acrimony of language, and a freedom of thought, that seemed to scorn all restraint.

The Duke of Manchester led the way, and insisted in the most resolute and decisive terms, on the dissolution of the present ministry, as a condition of approving of any address that recommended a prosecution of war. He recalled upon this occasion, all the arguments so often adduced in proof of their incapacity, especially the continual warnings and predictions of what would happen in consequence

of their obstinacy, all which were at the present moment literally verified.

He was warmly seconded by the Lords in opposition. They explicitly complained of an occult, but irresistible influence, that governed unseen, and directed all those unhappy operations that had brought this country to the distressful situation it now experienced. To this hidden power, ministry had for years submitted with an acquiescence and servility unknown to former days, and unworthy of the character of Englishmen. This was the grievance it behoved all parties to contribute in removing. Ostensible alterations of men had not effected a change of measures; these still continued under the same concealed guidance; and whoever had the courage to oppose it, was sure of being discarded.

Ministry denied the charge of yielding to this secret influence, with great animation and strength of expression, and disclaimed all impulse in their conduct, but that of their own persuasion of its rectitude: they were ready to meet any examination of their conduct: if they had erred, it was from mistake in their own judgment, but by no means through an implicit, or venal acquiescence, as it had been insinuated, in the judgment and dictates of others.

The present time required unanimity in the common defence. The address proposed to the House, recommended, in fact, no more. It was utterly unseasonable, at this critical hour, to make such an object a point of discussion. Without unanimity the affairs of the kingdom, greatly as they were embarrassed, would be thrown into such confusion, as to endanger its very existence. It would be time enough, after providing for the general safety, to institute an inquiry into the conduct of ministers: but it would betray more personal pique than public spirit, to call them to an account at a time when
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all the abilities of men of all parties, would be wanted for the immediate service of the state.

Men who professed impartiality ought to distinguish between misconduct and misfortune. True it was, their plans had miscarried; but that was no proof they were imprudently framed. Many causes independent of ministerial vigilance and sagacity, might concur in defeating the best conceived designs. It was rash and inequitable in opposition, to condemn the framers of public measures, merely on account of their failure. The public was well acquainted with the difficulty of the task imposed upon them; but the national honour was so deeply concerned in it, that unbiassed people were equally convinced of the necessity of not shrinking from it; and would readily forgive them, if, after having acted the part of men, they had not executed what was found impracticable.

It was replied by opposition, that it was principally at such critical times as the present, that it became the duty of Parliament to insist upon the removal of obnoxious ministers. Facts were stronger than all argumentation; and they proved, beyond the power of denial, that ministers were unfortunate in all their enterprizes. This was a sufficient reason for the public to withdraw its confidence from them. The times were too pressing to enquire into the causes of their miscarriages; these were so perpetual and unvarying, that the patience of the nation was exhausted. They showed there must be a radical source of impropriety at the bottom of all their projects, that rendered them impracticable. It was indispensable, therefore, to commit the management of affairs into other hands. They could not be worse administered than at present: and a change of men was the only chance left to produce an alteration for the better.

It was observed at the same time, that notwithstanding the provocation given by France, by this public declaration in favour of the Colonies, there was no apparent and immediate necessity for plunging into a war with so formidable a power, in the embarrassed situation of this kingdom. The treatment we had received from France was very mortifying; but if we were wise, we should suppress our resentment at the present hour, and reserve it for a more convenient opportunity. In the continual vicissitude of political events on the continent of Europe, we need not wait long for a favourable occasion of returning the blow given us by France in the present instance.

Nor should we forget, that we had ourselves, on former occasions, acted a part similar to that of which we now so grievously complained. When the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands threw off the yoke of Spain, England befriended them in the same manner France did now the United States of America. When France itself was torn by civil dissensions, we made it our business to interfere, and to espouse the cause of one of the parties. The frequency of the practice had rendered it a common rule of European politics. Every ministry was watchful of what passed among its neighbours, to the well known intent of profiting by their divisions. It was by a strict and constant observance of this maxim, that some of the greatest princes and ministers had made so splendid a figure. Queen Elizabeth in England, and Cardinal Richelieu in France, had ruled with so much prosperity, and risen to such fame, by never losing sight of it. The safest way of revenging ourselves, would be by following their example.

Instead of a vain and fruitless reprobation of the conduct of France, which it was highly probable this country would have adopted, had this ancient rival

rival afforded the like opportunity of doing her injury, we ought rather to turn our indignation upon that ministry, whose imbecility had brought so many calamities upon the nation; and to use, at the same time, the surest and most obvious means of extricating ourselves. Prudence pointed at a recognition of American independency, as the most effectual. Whatever system we now proposed for our conduct abroad, unless we took this previous step, we should still continue in a track of error and difficulty. There was much more of danger in rejecting, than of dishonour in adopting it: by the first we laid ourselves open to a combination of enemies, too powerful to encounter successfully in our present situation; by the second, we shewed our discretion in yielding to necessity, which was a duty incumbent on all sound politicians, and which the wisest and bravest of men had often times, by their practice, clearly proved they accounted no disgrace.

This was one of the severest altercations that ever fell out in the House of Lords; it was attended with particular virulence and personality. On putting the question, the address was carried, divested of any censure on ministry, by a majority, upon the division, of one hundred, against thirty-six.

During these parliamentary debates, the speculative part of society, both in England and foreign parts, was contemplating the progress of the war, and employed in considerations how Great Britain would extricate herself out of the many embarrassments that were daily accumulating upon her from all quarters.

It seemed to be universally agreed, that the failure of the expedition terminated by the convention of Saratoga, would absolutely prove decisive, and turn the scale of fortune in such a manner, as to put an end to all attempts on that part of the continent

continent. It had twice withstood the attacks of Britain; first at Boston, and now on its back settlements. In both attacks, commanders and troops of great skill and bravery had miscarried, after every exertion of which expert officers and valiant soldiers were capable. They had yielded to the meer necessity of abandoning enterprizes, which, from their very nature, were impracticable; but were at the same time of such a complection, that nothing but experience could have discovered the difficulties with which they would be attended. Such was the general opinion entertained by politicians at home and abroad.

As no impression could be made on the Northern Colonies, they were now delivered from those apprehensions that had kept them in continual alarms, and obliged them to retain their whole strength for their home defence. They could now look abroad with safety, and extend their assistance to the Southern Provinces of the continent. This opened a prospect to the American confederacy, of which the commencement of the campaign just ended so much to their advantage, afforded them no sort of hope.

Nor was the situation of affairs in those parts that still continued the scene of war, more favourable to the views of Great Britain. Notwithstanding a series of perpetual successes in the field, and in every operation of any importance, she saw a victorious army, that had proved irresistible in battle, immured, as it were, within the narrow compass of a single city, inclosed on all sides by the enemy it had repeatedly defeated, and compelled to act the part of a garrison besieged.

This intrepid body of men, after overcoming every difficulty that spirit and resolution could master, began at last to perceive that they were waging a war in a country, where every victory they obtained, while it added to their glory, tended still more to their destruction. Beyond the ground
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where they fought and defeated their enemies, all was hostile and dangerous in the most alarming degree. They conquered to no other end than to preserve their reputation: their most brilliant actions were always the most fatal; and they reaped no other emolument from the invincible efforts they were continually obliged to make, than the satisfaction of having acquitted themselves like men, who were determined that the honour of their country should remain unsullied.

But it was evident, at the same time, that these exertions must necessarily terminate in the ruin of those who made them. Remote from the center of that empire of which they were fighting the battles; an immense ocean rolled between them and the only part of the globe from whence they were to receive assistance.

Hitherto the danger of the seas, and the inclemency of seasons, had been the principal impediment of communication with the seat of that power from which they were to derive their strength and support; but other obstacles were now preparing, much more serious and perplexing.

The dominion of the ocean, for near two centuries in the possession of that power, was now about to be disputed by the two greatest potentates in Europe. The supplies of every denomination, which the British armies so much wanted, and from which they were cut off in America, were now to force a passage of three thousand miles, through seas crowded with fleets and squadrons, stationed in every latitude to intercept them.

From this prospect of the obstacles that would be thrown in the way of all assistance from Britain, it was concluded that her efforts to continue hostilities in America, would meet with so many discouragements, that she would at last be compelled to relinquish the attempt of subduing that continent. :

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Through the superior excellence of her seamen and her naval commanders, and the intrepid spirit of her people, it was not doubted that she would face her numerous enemies with unconquerable courage, and possibly balance the fate of war; but the extraordinary efforts that would be required to compass this essential point, must necessarily prevent her from bestowing a portion of pains and attention sufficient to embrace successfully the many other objects she had in view at the present hour. Some of them must of consequence be abandoned, others neglected, or feebly attended, in order to enable her to collect her strength for great and decisive occasions.

From the combined review of these various considerations, no doubt was entertained, that the issue of the war would be unprosperous to Great Britain, so far as related to North America; and that she would find it necessary to sacrifice this immense portion of her empire, in order to secure her possession of the rest.

Certain it is, that France entered into this war with every advantage that could possibly be desired. She chose her own time; she had the command of local opportunities; circumstances were favourable to her in every respect. Never had the French ministry manifested more prudence than upon this occasion. It employed the intermediate leisure between the demise of the late king, to the present epocha, in the silent, but effectual re-establishment of the French marine, which had been much neglected in the latter years of the preceding reign. It waited with a patience unusual to the temper of that nation, until preparations were brought to that maturity, which was requisite to enable it to enter efficaciously the field of action. The enemy to be encountered, was enfeebled by ill successes abroad, and still more by dissensions at home: these were
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daily becoming so serious, as to occasion apprehensions that they would terminate fatally for the public repose.

To these considerations were added, the general partiality of Europe, to every power that harboured hostile designs against Great Britain. Her treatment of America had, through the artful representations of her enemies, indisposed all the humane and benevolent part of society, and rendered them inimical to her interests, and desirous to see an humiliation of her greatness. She was depicted as the tyrant of America, and the oppressive invader of the rights of nations on the ocean.

C H A P. XXXIV.

Transactions in consequence of the Declaration of France.

1778.

THE declaration of France in favour of America, though it exasperated the nation, did not in the least surprize it. The preparations that had so long been making in all the ports of that kingdom, were no secret, and it was impossible to mistake their intentions.

The public was, upon this occasion, no less divided in its opinions respecting that event, than the Parliament had shewn itself, in the debates that were carried on with so much vehemence in both Houses. It revived the antipathy to a power, of which the ambition was so well known, and had cost this nation such immense treasures, and so much blood to repress. The prospect of the further sacrifices of men and money, that would now be required to oppose its hostile views, kindled afresh the resentment of old injuries, and in some measure prepared the people to unite with zeal and cheerfulness, in the efforts that now became immediately necessary to face this ancient and natural enemy.

The people of France imagined, that on declaring themselves the friends and protectors of America, the consternation in England would have been such, as instantly to have induced the British ministry to accelerate an accommodation with America upon any terms; and that the spirit of this nation would have been so depressed, as to have sunk at once into despair, and compelled government, from its conviction

conviction of the general despondency, to have subscribed to any conditions that France and America should have jointly dictated.

Such was the opinion entertained and propagated by the French, and their numerous partisans throughout Europe. But there were also many who dissented from them; and who from a more strict and impartial inspection into the character of the British nation, foresaw and foretold that this accession of France to the cause of America, instead of bringing about a pacification, would, on the contrary, increase and prolong the war, and in its consequences extend it perhaps to every part of the globe.

A nation, it was said, so long accustomed to give laws on the ocean, would not yield, without a severe contest, the superiority to any other on that element. Some there were, who alledged the decline of the dominion of Holland on the sea; and predicted that Great Britain would, in its turn, experience the same reverse. But these were told that the difference between Great Britain and the Seven Provinces was such as precluded all kind of comparison. The three kingdoms included in the British islands, composed an immense tract of land, inhabited by a people who lived on the produce of its soil, which was known in most parts to vie in fertility, and to exceed in cultivation, the most plentiful regions in Europe. Its commerce with foreign countries was founded on its own commodities. Its natural productions were so valuable, as to excel in their kind those of all other places; and its fabrications were so esteemed, as to be every where in particular request. Its situation as an island, afforded a multitude of advantages for the carrying on of naval business, which no other part of Europe possessed in equal proportion. Its harbours were more numerous and convenient, and the adjoining

adjoining seas afforded greater profit by their fisheries, than any others in Europe. Add to this, the number and courage of the natives, their strength and expertness at sea, their high spirit, their prodigious riches, the excellence of their government, the resources they possessed within themselves, the activity and perseverance of their disposition. All these were objects of consideration, that ought to be duly weighed, before people ventured to pronounce that their fate would be similar to that of the Dutch, and that after having astonished the world by their transient greatness at sea, they would, like them, lose it, and no longer remain that formidable power, which had rendered them so long conspicuous.

The Dutch were undoubtedly a brave and illustrious people. Their struggles against Spain for the establishment of their liberty, and their resistance of the invasions of France, would always be remembered highly to their honour. But their country was neither extensive nor fertile. It drew its subsistence entirely from abroad. Its commerce was precarious, as it did not arise from the produce of its own soil, and depended on the want of industry in other nations. The progress made by these in the improvement of their own country, and in manufacturing the materials of their own growth, had proportionably lessened the commerce of Holland. It would in time revert to its primitive inconsiderableness, should Europe continue the cultivation of trade and agriculture with the same attention and care it had done for many years.

Such were the discussions that took place about this time in various parts of Europe, in those especially where people were solicitous to find reasons to hope that Great Britain would sink under the heavy trial that was preparing for her. Those who represented her as in a declining condition, were by
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far the more numerous party; and such was the envy and malevolence at that time predominant against Great Britain, that it was not without the highest displeasure and indignation, they heard the reasonings of the fewer opponents of their opinions.

It was not, therefore, without surprize, they were informed, that in consequence of the notification from the Court of France to that of Great Britain, this latter was resolutely preparing to dispute the empire of America, and that of the ocean, with the two greatest powers in Europe; and that far from seeming intimidated by the arduous contest in which they were going to engage, the people appeared, on the contrary, to have gathered fresh spirit from the dangers that now threatened them, and to display a greater alacrity and readiness to exert themselves, than they had ever done since the beginning of the contest.

The truth was, that the altercation with the Colonies had not sufficiently alarmed the nation, to occasion apprehensions of any sort. It was considered much more as a ministerial, than as a national concern. Instead of bearing the Americans any resentment, on account of their resistance, it was applauded by numbers; and till the declaration of Independency, the majority of people was rather inclined to favour, than to condemn them. The spirit with which the Colonists opposed the designs of ministry, retraced to the nation at large the resolution with which their ancestors had, in times past, stood up in defence of their liberties. In this light, the opposition of America met with many warm supporters both in speech and writing. As the right of taxation was a subject of a very complicated nature, it was hardly a matter of less doubt and dispute on this, than on the other side of the Atlantic. It was by the cool and moderate, considered as a mere point of speculation, of which, as no clear de-

cision of it could be obtained through dint of argument, the final settlement ought, for the preservation of peace and friendship between the parent state and its dependencies, to be left to an amicable meeting of both parties, composed of individuals, reciprocally authorized to terminate the difference; and whose character should at the same time be so acceptable to each side, as to afford no room to suspect any undue influence to bias them in their determinations.

Nor did even the taking up arms by the Colonies excite any anger among the generality. Not expecting they would submit to the pretensions of Britain, their resistance was viewed but as a natural consequence of the coercion used with them; and those who wished them success, were not perhaps the least considerable part of the nation.

The declaration of Independence effected an alteration of sentiments. It was esteemed by many of the most judicious persons in this country, a measure wholly unnecessary, and without recurring to which, America might have compassed every point proposed, by continuing its resistance to Britain, on the same footing it had begun. This measure occasioned an alienation from its interests in the minds of many of its former adherents. It was looked upon as a wanton abuse of the success, with which it had opposed the efforts of the British ministry to bring them to submission, and as an ungrateful return for the warmth with which their cause had been espoused in Parliament, and by such multitudes as in the ideas of many amounted to a plurality.

Their conduct in this instance, though highly disapproved, did not, however, create any violent exasperation. It was still hoped, that if a reconciliation with them could not be obtained upon a system of subordination to Britain, still it would
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take place on a conviction of the natural advantages to be derived from a connection with a people who were in every respect a part of themselves, and with whom they had lived in perfect amity till this unhappy difference.

A variety of motives contributed to cherish this expectation. The Colonists must have been fully persuaded, that after what had past, no apprehensions could be reasonably entertained on their part, that Britain, after a conclusion of the present quarrel, would ever be so unwise as to renew an attempt which had proved so unsuccessful. An accommodation founded on a reciprocation of benefits, and on a footing of equality, was deemed an object no less desirable to the one party, than to the other. Such a correspondence with any other country, as must prove inimical to Britain, appeared a business of too much intricacy, and attended with too many changes and deviations from their former usages and precedents, to meet with their concurrence.—Language, religion, government, and long established notions, ways, and manners, would, it was thought, form an insuperable bar to their preferring a foreign connection to that of Britain.

Such were the general ideas prevailing in this country, when the Colonies renounced their dependence. The support they received from other parts, did not at first alter these ideas, as it was natural they should strive to procure the supplies they wanted wherever they could be found.

But when it was seen, that besides necessaries of this kind, which they were not blamed for purchasing from whoever had them to sell, they began to harbour designs of the most inimical nature to this country, it became indispensibly necessary to view them in a hostile light. It was with great repugnance that sentiments of this nature were adopt-

ed, as it was with much grief perceived that the hopes of a cordial reconciliation were now at an end, and that after having cast off their subordination, they had also determined to dissolve the ties of friendship that had so long subsisted between them and Great Britain, and to side with its most inveterate enemies.

The declaration of France completed the revolution that had been gradually taking place in the opinions of men on their being repeatedly apprized of the determination of Congress to break asunder all the bonds of former amity, and to unite themselves in the closest manner with that kingdom.

Great courage and undauntedness was manifested upon this critical emergency, by the cool and considerate part of the nation. As in all countries there are people upon whom events of this sort are apt to make much more impression than they ought, all due precautions were taken to remove their apprehensions, and to shew them, that the danger was far less than they imagined, and that with prudence and management this country would be fully able to cope with its numerous enemies.

Those of whom it chiefly behoved government to keep up the spirit on this occasion, were the holders of national stock, and the moneyed men, from whom the funds for public exigencies were to be supplied. They were not a little alarmed, at first, by the declaration of France: but they soon recovered from their fears, on a mature consideration of the respective state of the finances in France and in England. Such resources were manifested to them to be in the possession of this country, as would empower it for a long duration to maintain the most vigorous contest; and notwithstanding the pretences of the French ministry, there appeared good grounds to suspect that a failure of means would incline them to a pacification

cification much more speedily than was either their expectation or intent.

The French, in the mean time, pursuant to the precedent in the late war, resolved to perplex the councils of this country with the terrors of an invasion. Multitudes of regiments were assembled from all parts of that kingdom, and marched down to the sea side, where they formed large encampments opposite to the shores of Britain.

Though an invasion was by no means apprehended at the present hour, as it could not, in good policy, take place, till a superiority was obtained at sea; yet to quiet the apprehensions of the people, and to shew all Europe, as well as the French, that Britain was well prepared to meet them, orders were issued to draw out and embody the militia, which, happily for this country, was now composed of men in every respect as well exercised and disciplined as any regular troops.

Great complaints, however, were made, that a squadron of twelve ships of the line, under command of the Count d'Estaing, had sailed from Toulon unobstructed. America was undoubtedly the object of its destination; but no squadron had been employed either to dispute its passage through the Straits of Gibraltar, or to follow and watch its motions. It was much to be feared the inferiority of the naval force under Lord Howe, would expose him to be totally defeated, and the whole fleet of transports to be taken or destroyed by the enemy, which would, of course, occasion the entire ruin of the army now employed in America.

This matter was taken up with great warmth in Parliament; and much censure passed on ministry for not acting with more vigilance in a case of such importance. It was represented that the armament at Toulon had been so long preparing, that its

strength and intent had, for many months past, been the universal object of attention in all Europe.

To this it was replied, that the difficulty of manning, in due time, a squadron of sufficient force to intercept the French Admiral, had enabled him to sail, unmolested, through the Straits. The trade of the kingdom was so extensive, and such a number of seamen abroad at this time, that without divesting the fleet destined for the guard of the realm of its necessary complement of men, it would have been impracticable to fit out a force for the purpose of disputing the passage; but that a powerful squadron was now in readiness to follow him, and would arrive in America time enough to join the fleet and forces there, and to defeat all the attempts of the enemy.

In the mean time, the reality and imminence of the dangers with which the kingdom was surrounded, engaged the attention of both Houses in the most serious manner. The Commons unanimously passed a vote of credit, to enable the King to put the nation in a state of immediate defence; and in the House of Lords a motion was made by the Duke of Richmond to recall the fleet and army from America, and to station both where they might protect those parts of the British dominions that lay most exposed to the enemy.

This motion occasioned a severe debate. Those Lords who espoused the Duke's opinion, supported it with many strong arguments, drawn from the necessity of consulting the preservation of the realm, which was now threatened itself so evidently, that unless it was placed in a posture of the most vigorous resistance, it would be most certainly the first object, against which a foreign attack would be directed.

Those who disapproved of the motion, contended that the remaining strength of regular forces, added

to the militia, which in its present state was little, if at all inferior to them, would compose so numerous and formidable an army, as need not apprehend any invasion whatever; and that the fleet was in a condition to meet that of France with every reasonable hope of success.

While secured in this manner from any hostile attempt at home, there was no occasion despairingly to throw up all hopes of succeeding abroad. The relinquishment of our Colonies would lower us in the estimation of all Europe. It was expected that the least we could do, was nobly to struggle for a dominion so long our own. Were we to lose it, we still ought to preserve our reputation. But this would certainly be lost by the abandonment of our American dependencies in the manner proposed; it would be like retreating from the field of battle on the very appearance of the foe. The arrogance and presumption of the French on such behaviour in the English nation, would become intolerable:—they would represent, and would indeed have a right to think us a timorous, degenerate race; they would in consequence, treat us with all manner of scorn, and proceed from insult to insult, till they had compelled us to throw away this pliant forbearing disposition, and to resume our former character of firmness and resolution. Were it not better, therefore, never to lay it down, but to continue vigorously in the pursuit of the measures we had already adopted? Should they fail;—should the chances of war prove unfavourable, we should still have acted a bold and intrepid part, and our reputation would remain unfulfilled: we could always treat with arms in our hands; and the consciousness of our valour, and our determination never to yield to ignoble terms, would not fail, in the issue to obtain such as were honourable.

Such were the reasons offered by those who disapproved of the proposal to abandon America. The majority sided with them, and it was determined to support the contest with the utmost perseverance.

In the mean time the inquiry into the state of the nation continued with unabated assiduity in both Houses. In the House of Peers, the Duke of Richmond, its principal conductor, assisted in what related to the naval department by the Duke of Bolton and the Earls of Effingham and Bristol, had brought all matters relating to it into such a clear and perspicuous arrangement, as afforded satisfaction to all parties. Though it had proved offensive in some respects to ministry, yet the information it afforded was highly useful and requisite at the time; it led to particulars that greatly wanted elucidation, and placed the general affairs of the nation in their proper light.

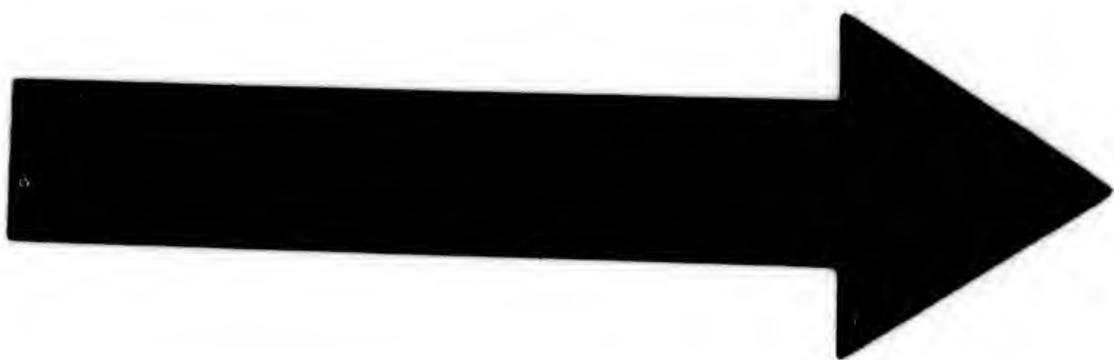
He now put an end to that laborious and intricate inquiry, by one of the most resolute and animated speeches that ever had been pronounced in that assembly. Its professed intent was to lay before the Throne the real undisguised situation of the kingdom, as resulting from that inquiry; the profusion in the administration of the finances, the defective state of the navy, and its incompetence to the exigencies of the state at this perilous season, the astonishing accumulation of the public debt in three years war. Such, he asserted, were the consequences of the imprudence and incapacity of the present ministers. They had misled the King, tarnished the lustre of the British crown, dismembered the empire, wasted the public treasures, impaired the credit and commerce of the nation, disgraced its arms, and weakened its naval power. After exciting a civil war between the two principal parts of the British empire, they had, by their obstinate refusal

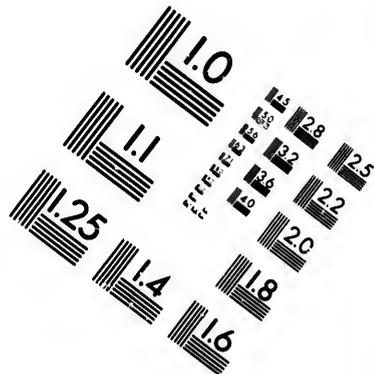
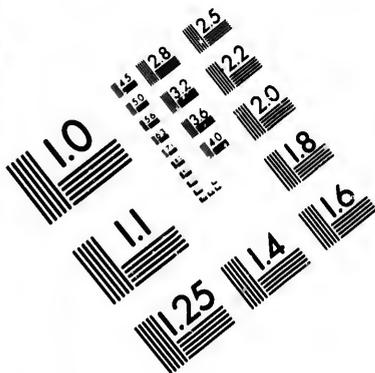
refusal of proffered reconciliation, driven the one part into an alliance with the greatest enemy of this country, and involved it in the greatest dangers it had ever experienced.

After a variety of other expressions no less pointed and severe, he insisted, as he had done before, that the only measure of safety was to recall the British forces from the Colonies, and to conclude an accommodation with them upon the most advantageous terms that could be obtained. For those reasons he moved an address to that purpose.

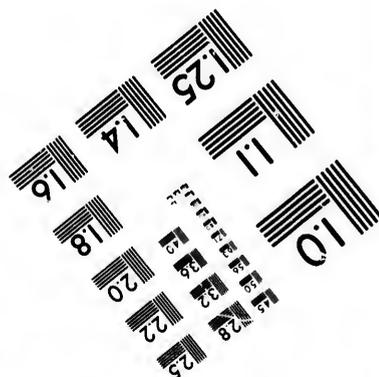
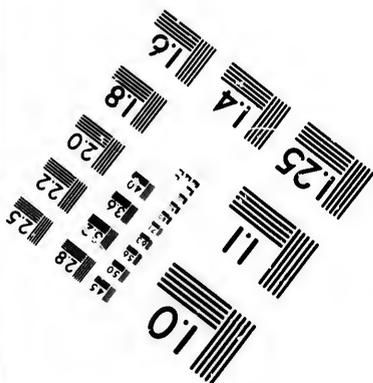
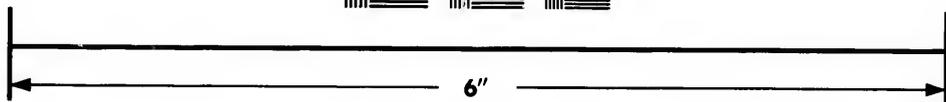
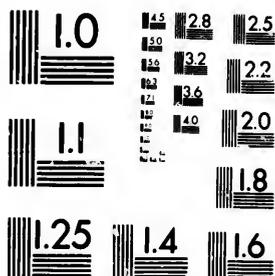
In this opinion, however, opposition was not unanimous. The Earl of Chatham resisted it with a strength of determination, and a vehemence of speech, that were peculiar on this occasion. The Earl of Shelburne, whose eloquence and abilities had long rendered him conspicuous, embraced similar sentiments. They jointly considered the independency of America as the termination of British grandeur. The latter emphatically styled it the "setting for ever of the British sun." All dangers and all trials were to be encountered sooner than submit to such a dismemberment. Great Britain was in possession of ample resources to prevent such a disaster. The numbers and spirit of her people, their riches and their strength were greater than her foes suspected, and even than she herself could well ascertain till they had been justly tried. The greatness to which she had risen, was the work of her bold and daring genius. It was by soaring above timid rules, and venturing out of the ordinary track of common politicians, the noble and stupendous fabric of British power had been erected, and her dominions extended to every quarter of the globe. The same councils that had raised her so high, would still preserve her glory unimpaired, if they were followed with the same spirit that first dictated them.

Those





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Those who adhered to the Duke of Richmond's opinion, allowed the general truth and rectitude of what was alledged; but they asserted, at the same time, that no circumstances in any former period of the British history, bore any resemblance to the present. We contended in past quarrels with our enemies; but we now were contending with our friends; the partners of our ancient good fortune; the companions of our better days. While they composed one people with us, we were jointly invincible; but they were become our bitterest foes. They were the true descendants of our ancestors: intrepid and firm in their determinations, they had resolved to submit no longer to our authority; and the times were so favourable to their pretensions, that notwithstanding our power by sea and land, they had withstood us contrary to our expectations, and to those of many others. They were now strengthened with the additional assistance of all our natural enemies, while we had not a single ally.

Such a situation called for prudence much more than valour. We had exhibited sufficient specimens of this; but as it avowedly was want of wisdom that involved us in a contest with our Colonies, to persevere in it without any reasonable prospect of overcoming them, would be but a continuance of our infatuation, the less pardonable, as experience had taught us the inutility of such an attempt.

But these reasonings did not avail, and the majority was against the address as before. A protest was signed, however, upon this occasion, by twenty Peers; wherein they condemned, with the utmost freedom and asperity of language, the design to persist in the measures carried on in the Colonies.

It was during the debate of this day, that the Earl of Chatham, while engaged in a warm speech against the acknowledgment of American independency, was seized with a fainting fit that put an end to his discourse. It was the last that he ever spoke in that House. He died about a month after, on the eleventh of May, in his seventieth year, leaving behind him the character of one of the greatest orators and statesmen, this, or any other country had ever produced. The greatest honours were paid to his memory. His eminent services to this country, and the high degree of splendour and power to which it arose under his administration, were gratefully and earnestly commemorated in both Houses of Parliament, especially in that of Commons. His remains were interred, and a magnificent monument erected to his remembrance in Westminster Abbey, at the public expence. Nor did the gratitude of the nation rest here. As from the excessive disinterestedness of his character, he had left his family in circumstances unequal to the dignity to which he had been raised; provision was made for the payment of his debts, and an honourable income was settled upon his posterity.

On the third of June a period was put to this memorable session; not, however, without the loud complaints of the opposition. The dissolution of Parliament, at a time when events were hourly expected of the most serious importance, was represented as highly improper. In such a complication of difficulties and perils, the people required some visible object to animate their hopes, and infuse into them sentiments of courage and firmness. It was now, they said, past all denial, that the present ministry had utterly lost the confidence of the public: none but such as benefited immediately through their means, expressed any adherence to them; the Parliament was therefore

the only body of men, on which the nation could, with any safety, rely, in this day of terror: it was there, only, those individuals would be found, whose wisdom and uprightness would remedy the many evils occasioned by the errors of ministry. Such were the sentiments of a large proportion of the public at this period of universal anxiety.

C H A P. XXXV.

Transactions and Military Operations in America.

1778.

WHILE the Parliament of Great Britain was taken up in the many discussions that employed the attention and abilities of its members during this important session, the agents of Congress were no less busily occupied in forming connections with the enemies of this country, and preparing obstacles to those designs against them, which, from the perseveringness of its character, they doubted not it would labour to enforce to the last.

Soon after the declaration of Independency, the Congress had determined to employ for this purpose the most active and able individuals it could procure. Several were accordingly sent to the different courts and states of Europe, where they acquitted themselves of the business committed to their charge, with great acuteness and dexterity.

The courts to which these commissioners were dispatched, were those of France, Spain, Vienna, Prussia, and Tuscany. These were the powers of whom they chiefly suspected the friendship and good wishes to Great Britain: the two first, especially, they confidently relied upon as sure allies.

The instructions given by Congress to their commissioners, were to assure these respective courts, that notwithstanding the endeavours that might be made on the part of Great Britain, to represent the Colonies as disposed to return to the obedience of that crown, it was their firm determination, at all events, to maintain their independence.

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They were to use every means in their power to procure the assistance of the Emperor of Germany, the Kings of Prussia, Spain, and France, in preventing Russian, German, and other foreign troops from being sent to North America for hostile purposes against the United States, and for obtaining a recall of those already sent.

They were particularly commissioned to use their utmost efforts to induce the Court of France to assist the United States against Britain, either by attacking the King's Electoral dominions in Germany, or the possessions of Great Britain in the West, or in the East Indies.

They proposed, that in case Britain could be dispossessed of Newfoundland, Cape Breton, and Nova Scotia, by the united efforts of France and the United States, those islands should remain to these, and the fishery be divided between both, to the exclusion of Great Britain.

As a further motive to the Court of France to espouse their cause, should the preceding inducement not prove sufficient, they were to offer an absolute cession to this crown of the property of the British islands in the West Indies, taken by the joint force of France and the United States. They engaged in this case to furnish, at their own expence, a sufficient quantity of provisions to carry on such an expedition against those islands, together with a certain number of well-appointed frigates.

The commissioners were to form a treaty with the Court of Spain, as similar, as it was practicable and convenient, to that made with France.

Should the Court of Spain incline to join with the United States in a war with Great Britain, they offered their assistance in reducing Pensacola to the possession of Spain, provided the subjects of the United States should enjoy the free and uninterrupted

rupted navigation of the river Mississippi, and the use of the harbour of Pensacola.

They further offered, in case the Court of Portugal should have, in compliance with the request of the British ministry, expelled the shipping of the United States from its ports, or confiscated its vessels, to declare war against that kingdom, if that measure should be agreeable to, and meet with the support of France and Spain.

The Commissioners at the Court of Prussia, were to propose such a treaty of commerce and friendship with that Monarch as should not be unacceptable to France or Spain.

Such were the directions of Congress to its Commissioners in the capital courts of Europe: but exclusive of these, other agents were employed in various other places, and nothing was neglected to establish the interest of the American States, wherever it was deemed necessary.

While these transactions were occupying the attention of the politicians in Europe, the British and American armies were confined to their winter quarters. Valley Forge, where General Washington was posted in a hutted camp, had nothing to recommend it but its position. From thence he could observe all the motions, and be quickly apprized of every design of the British commander. Notwithstanding his actual inferiority in point of number, he lay in a country, where, on the least emergency, he could be reinforced with a strength sufficient to attempt any enterprize that he might think proper to project. The suddenness of his attack at Germantown was not forgotten, and the fertility of his mind in the invention of plans and means to harass and attack, were experimentally known. The Americans too, were no longer new and inexpert in military matters. In the course of three years, they had so well profited by continual

nual experience, that they were well inured to the service, and displayed, occasionally, equal courage and skill.

Against such a General, and such men, it was necessary to keep a perpetual guard, especially as it was in these unexpected onsets they were most dextrous and to be apprehended. To obviate all dangers of this kind, the British General directed redoubts and lines to be constructed around the city of Philadelphia, by which it was effectually secured against any surprize.

The army that had been under the command of General Burgoyne was now at Boston; from whence, on its arrival thither, it had expected, according to the articles of capitulation, to have been shortly transported to England; but difficulties totally unforeseen and unexpected, now stood in its way.

It had been requested by the British commander, that the embarkation of this army should take place either at New York, or at Rhode Island, for the greater conveniency of the shipping, instead of Boston, from whence, according to the letter of the Convention, they were to take their departure.— As it was not doubted that this proposal would be complied with, the ships were now arrived in the harbour of Rhode Island, and waiting there for the arrival of the troops: but to their great surprize, the Congress positively refused them the permission to embark, under pretence of its suspecting that sinister designs were intended on their part. This proposal, it was insinuated, was made in order to have an opportunity of joining the other British troops, and then framing a pretext to break or evade the terms of the Convention, and thus to remain in America to act against the United States. They urged as a proof that their suspicions were well grounded, that the twenty-six transports waiting to take them on board, were not sufficient for so large a body as
near

near six thousand men, of which they consisted, especially in a winter voyage to Europe; and that it was highly improbable that they could already have been provided with the necessary quantity of stores, and other demands requisite for that purpose, on so short a notice, and in the present circumstances of the British fleet and army respecting provisions.

The officers of this army had made heavy complaints of improper treatment in regard to their quarters, which were not conformable to what they had been promised in the capitulation. General Burgoyne happening on this occasion to use some strong expressions, they were construed into a formal complaint that the Americans had violated the articles of capitulation. This they directly declared a matter of the most serious nature: they interpreted this complaint as an implied intention to consider the Convention as no longer binding, the moment they were out of the power of the Americans. Such a declaration, it was urged on the part of Congress, made in the present circumstance of their being in detention, would be considered as a justification of their acting as if absolved from all the obligation of observing the capitulation, as soon as they were at large.

Equally astonished and exasperated at this treatment, General Burgoyne took all due pains to explain the passage in his letter that had occasioned it. The meaning of it, he insisted, was only to complain of improper usage, and to require a more punctual adherence to the articles of capitulation. The officers, to obviate all difficulties, unanimously signed their parole, and offered, with the General, to put their hands to any paper acknowledging the validity of the Convention.

But these expostulations were fruitless. Congress, in this matter, seemed to act from a previous deter-

mination to recede, on no account, from the measure it had adopted. This occasioned a variety of severe strictures on its conduct. The political part of the world considered their behaviour as a deed of inevitable necessity for their preservation. Notwithstanding the total defeat of the expedition under General Burgoyne, the army he commanded might, on its return to England, have easily been replaced by a like number; the addition of which to the forces at Philadelphia and New York, would have proved a very considerable supply at this juncture, and enabled the British army to have begun the approaching campaign with much greater advantages than they could expect, until they had received reinforcements.

These were represented as the real motives that induced the Congress to pass a resolution in the beginning of the year seventy-eight, by which the departure of General Burgoyne, and the army under him, was suspended till the Court of Great Britain had notified to Congress in explicit and formal terms, its ratification of the Convention at Saratoga. In this manner a body of near six thousand veterans were detained prisoners, and the apprehensions of the British army's being reinforced with a like number completely removed.

On the return of spring, the British troops in Philadelphia made several successful excursions, in order to procure forage, and open the communications necessary for the conveyance of supplies.— Among those who signalized themselves on these occasions, were Colonels Mawhood, Abercromby, and Major Maitland. The first made a descent on the coast of Jersey, near a place called Salem, where he dispersed a considerable force collected there to oppose him. The second, on notice of a chosen body of the enemy having taken possession of an advantageous ground, at no great distance from Philadelphia,

Philadelphia, attacked them by surprize, and compelled them to retire with considerable loss. The third, proceeding up the river, above Philadelphia, destroyed all the enemy's shipping that was stationed between that city and Trenton. The loss they sustained was exceedingly great. Some expeditions of the like nature were made by the British troops quartered in Rhode Island, and were attended with equal success.

The Americans complained that the British soldiery committed the greatest excesses upon these occasions, and acted in a manner unwarranted by the laws of nations. However true or exaggerated these complaints might be, they made a powerful impression over the whole continent, and rendered the British military extremely odious.

In the mean time, the Congress was indefatigable in recurring to every method which it could devise, to encourage the people resolutely to prepare for the the next campaign. It was confidently circulated throughout the Colonies, that, in all probability, this would be the last. Such measures were represented to have been taken, as would compel Britain to look at home, and consult her safety with so much attention, as would prevent her from dividing it abroad. Such friendships and alliances would be formed, as would entirely change the face of affairs, and render Britain the sole object of defence to its inhabitants.

Inspired by these assurances, which were in some measure well-founded, and not in the least doubted by the Americans, they began accordingly to flatter themselves that an end of their sufferings was approaching, and that in the space of a few months, they would obtain the peaceable and unmolested possession of their independency.

General Washington was fully convinced that the following campaign, if not entirely decisive, would

bring matters to such an issue, as would essentially influence the remainder of the war. In order to avail himself of every advantage that fortune or good conduct could procure, he determined to effect such a reformation in the discipline of his army, as might at once remove all impediments to its quickest motions. All heavy and superfluous baggage was struck off; portmanteaus and sacks were substituted in lieu of chests and boxes, and pack-horses, instead of waggons: no kind of incumbrance escaped his notice, and he gave himself the example, by dismissing everykind of superfluity from his own attendance.

In order to increase, at the same time, a martial spirit among the upper classes, it was recommended by a public resolution of Congress, to all the young gentlemen of the different Colonies, to form themselves into companies of cavalry, to serve at their own expence during the campaign, promising them such treatment and attention as were due to their rank.

While the Congress was making the arrangements necessary for a resolute defence, the British army was equally taken up in preparing for a vigorous prosecution of the next campaign. They promised themselves a reinforcement of twenty thousand men, and entertained no doubt, with such an addition of strength, to put a complete period to the war before the end of the year.

From the continual hostilities in which they were engaged, they had now contracted an interest in the war, which made them consider it as their own, and rendered them eager to terminate it in the manner that had been first held out to them,—by conquest, and a total subjection of the enemy to the terms prescribed by Britain.

Such was the disposition of the British army, when the intelligence arrived about the middle of April,

April, of the conciliatory bill brought into Parliament by the minister.

The surprise and indignation expressed by the whole army on this occasion, showed how little they expected an alteration of sentiments in England, and how warmly they felt for the cause. It grieved them that the stile of superiority, which they had hitherto assumed with the Americans, was to be laid aside, and that they were to be treated on terms of equality. The aspiring hopes they had cherished of being soon able to crush all resistance, were now to be converted into concessions to an enemy they held in contempt, and looked upon as more than half conquered.

Such were the sentiments with which the British military received the intelligence of the conciliatory bill. Both officers and soldiers equally concurred in the warmest expressions and denotations of anger and resentment. Some even tore their cockades off their hats, and trampled them under their feet; they considered themselves as men deprived of their honour, and as if a victory had been unjustly snatched out of their hands.

If the natives of Britain felt such emotions, those of the American Loyalists were inexpressibly greater. They now saw themselves divested for ever of all the hopes they had formed of being reinstated in their former stations and possessions. In firm confidence of this, they had openly taken up arms in the cause of Britain. Banishment from their own country, and abandonment by another, was now, said they, to be their future fate.

As soon as this bill was arrived, it was carefully circulated among the Colonists by the agents to the British government; but it proved of little effect, and met with small notice. Congress, in order to show their disregard of it, ordered it to be publicly printed in the newspapers. Governor Tryon had sent several copies of it to General Washington, re-

questing that he would permit them to be circulated in his army. The General returned him an answer, inclosing a printed copy of it in a public paper, with the resolutions of the Congress in consequence of it.

These resolutions were, that whoever should presume to make any separate agreement with the Commissioners appointed by Great Britain should be deemed a public enemy to America; that the United States could not with any propriety hold any correspondence with the Commissioners, unless the British fleets and armies were previously withdrawn, or the independency of the United States formally acknowledged. The Congress warned at the same time the Colonies not to suffer themselves to be deceived into security by any offers, but to use their most strenuous exertions to send their respective proportions of troops to the field with all diligence. In these resolutions Congress was unanimous.

The general answer from those among the Americans to whom the conciliatory bill was addressed, was—That the day of reconciliation upon such terms was past; that the barbarous method with which Britain had prosecuted hostilities, had extinguished the filial regard once professed for that country. The haughtiness assumed upon all occasions of intercourse, sufficiently showed of what little esteem and value the Americans were in the eye of those who held the reins of power in Britain: they could not, therefore, with common prudence, any more than consistent with their feelings, commit themselves again to the direction of those by whom they were so much disregarded, and by whom they had been so much ill used.

In the beginning of May, Mr. Simeon Deane arrived from France at York Town, the residence of the Congress ever since the British army had taken possession of Philadelphia. He brought with him
copies

copies of the two treaties of commerce and alliance between France and the United States, in order to receive the ratification of Congress. He laid before them all the particulars relating to the negotiation, and a variety of other interesting accounts.

The contents of these several dispatches were immediately communicated to the public, and special care was taken to represent the conduct of France in the most advantageous colours. They were told that in these transactions no advantage had been taken of the difficult situation of the Americans, to extort such conditions from them as necessity alone could have induced them to grant. France had, on the contrary, acted with the highest honour and generosity. Desirous that the treaties once made should be durable, and the amity between both nations subsist for ever, the French ministry had determined that they should each find their interest in the continuance, as well as in the commencement of it. The terms therefore were such, as if they had been made with a state in the fulness of strength and power. France, in short, had engaged to assist America with all her might, and consented, at the same time, that whenever Britain offered terms of peace, the United States might accept of them: the only condition required by France on their part was, that they should never return to the obedience of that Crown.

Besides the intelligence relating to the alliance with France, the people were also informed that the independence of America was a favourite object with all the commercial powers in Europe. They had waited for an acknowledgment of the independence of America by France, and would soon follow the example of that kingdom. Spain, there was no doubt, would be determined by the conduct of the elder branch of the House of Bourbon; the Emperor, and the King of Prussia, were entirely

favourable. The Prussian ministry, in particular, had informed one of the American plenipotentiaries, that the United States need not be apprehensive that Great Britain would receive any further reinforcements of troops from the European powers. Russia and Denmark would send none: some hundreds might be furnished by those German Princes who had troops in America in the British pay; but even these would be found with difficulty, as every obstruction would be thrown in the way of raising recruits for that service. So averse to it was the Court of Prussia, that the troops of Hesse and Hanau, in British pay, were not allowed a passage through that monarch's dominions. That monarch had even promised to be the second power in Europe to acknowledge their independency.

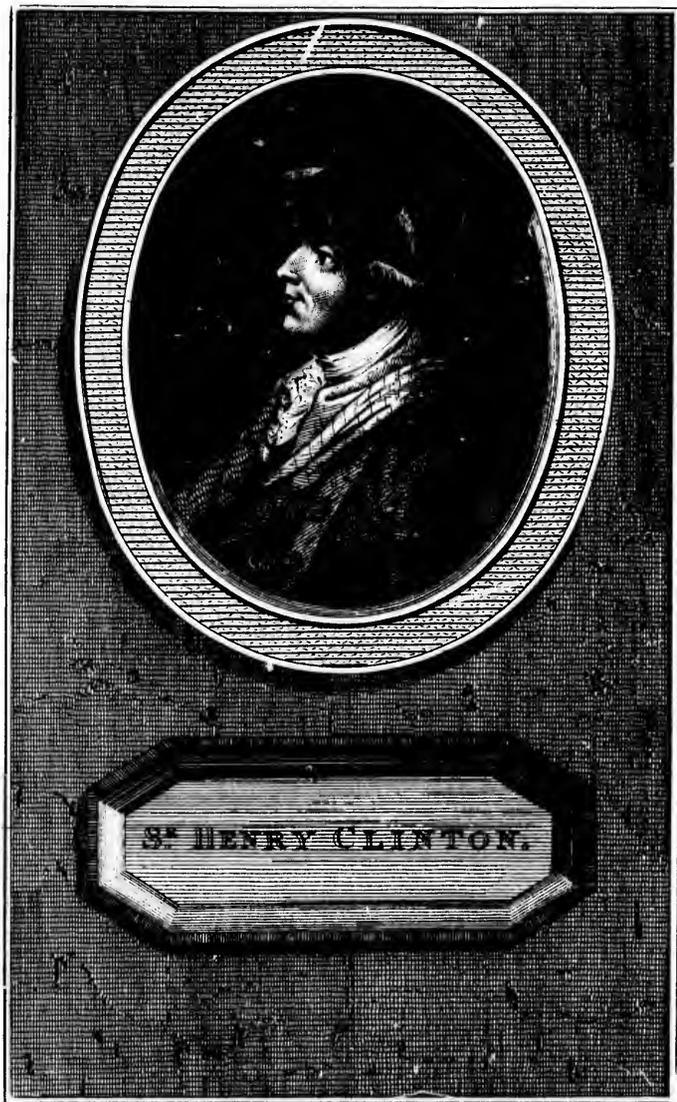
In addition to this information, they were assured, that it was the opinion of all those who were conversant in the affairs of Britain, that she could not hold out more than one campaign in America; that her resources were near exhausted, as her credit was so much reduced; that the most serious dangers were impending upon her; upwards of three-score thousand men were encamped on the coasts of Normandy and Brittany, ready for an immediate descent upon England; that the navy of the House of Bourbon amounted already to no less than two hundred and seventy sail, ready for sea, and was daily increasing; that in the midst of so many enemies, Britain had not a single friend; the character of those who governed that haughty people had indisposed all the world against them, and their humiliation was the universal wish of every state in Europe, without exception.

Such were the representations of Congress to the people of the Colonies at large: they were received with the highest exultation over the whole continent. A day was appointed by General Washington

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W. G. Kneller.

ton for the whole army to celebrate the alliance with France, and it was observed with great military magnificence and solemnity.

About the end of May, Sir William Howe took his departure for England, leaving the command of the army to Sir Henry Clinton. Previous to his quitting Philadelphia, a most splendid festival and entertainment was given him by the army, as a testimony of the high respect and affection they bore to his person and character.

In the beginning of June, the Commissioners appointed by the conciliatory bill arrived from England. They were the Earl of Carlisle, Mr. Eden, and Governor Johnstone. Immediately on their arrival, they directed their secretary, Doctor Ferguson, to repair to Congress, in order to notify their arrival, and to present their commission, with other papers, and to open the negotiations with them; but he was refused a passport, and they were obliged to send them by another conveyance.

In the letter which was addressed to the Congress by the Commissioners, they assured them of an earnest desire to re-establish the tranquility of the empire on a basis of equal freedom; they reminded them that cordial reconciliation had in others, as well as the British nation, succeeded to divisions no less violent than those which now agitated it. They acquainted them that the acts of Parliament relating to America, which were now transmitted to them, had passed unanimously, and showed the disposition of Great Britain "to come up to every wish that America had expressed, either in the hour of temperate deliberation, or of the utmost apprehension of danger to liberty."

More effectually to demonstrate their good intentions, they declared themselves ready to consent to an immediate cessation of hostilities by sea and land; to restore a free intercourse, and to renew the com-

mon benefits of naturalization throughout the several parts of the empire; to extend every freedom to trade that the respective interests of both parties could require; to agree that no military force should be kept up in the different states of North America, without the consent of the General Congress, or of the particular assemblies; to concur in such measures as would be requisite to discharge the debts of America, and to raise the credit and value of the paper circulation; to perpetuate the common union by a reciprocal deputation of agents from the different states, who should have the privilege of a seat and voice in the Parliament of Great Britain; or if sent from Britain, in that case to have a seat and voice in the Assembly of the different States to which they might be deputed respectively, in order to attend to the several interests of those by whom they were deputed; to establish the right and power of the respective legislatures in each particular state, of settling its revenue, and its civil and military establishment, and of exercising a perfect freedom of legislation and internal government, so that the British states throughout North America, acting with us in peace and war, under one common sovereign, might have the irrevocable enjoyment of every privilege that was short of a total separation of interest, or consistent with that union of force on which the common safety of their religion and liberty depended.

After making these offers, they proceeded to take notice "of the insidious interposition of a power, which had, from the first settlement of the Colonies, been actuated with equal enmity to them and to Britain. The assistance and alliance now proffered by France, were, it was well known, framed by that power in consequence of the plans of accommodation previously concerted in Great Britain, and with a view to prevent a reconciliation, and prolong the war between them."

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They trusted, however, "That the inhabitants of North America, connected with those of Britain by the nearest ties of consanguinity, speaking the same language, interested in the preservation of similar institutions, remembering the former happy intercourse of good offices, and forgetting recent animosities, would shrink from the thought of becoming an accession of force to the late common enemy of both; and would prefer a firm and free coalition with the parent state, to an insincere and unnatural foreign alliance."

They expressed, at the same time, a desire to meet the Congress, either collectively, or by deputation, at Philadelphia, New York, or any other place that might be agreed upon.

When that part of the letter was read, which mentioned the insidiousness of France, the reading was interrupted, and a motion made to proceed no further. The debates on this motion lasted three days; when, after much consideration, the reading of it was resumed, and those papers also read that accompanied it.

They were referred to a committee, who, after a short deliberation, drew up a letter in answer to them, which received the unanimous approbation of Congress.

This letter informed the commissioners, that "Nothing but an earnest desire to spare the effusion of human blood, could have induced them to read a paper containing expressions disrespectful to the King of France, their great and good ally; or to consider propositions so derogatory to the honour of an independent nation."

"The acts of the British Parliament, the commission from the King of Great Britain; and the letter from the commissioners, supposed," it was said, "the people of the United States of North America to be subjects of the British Crown, and
were

were founded on the idea of dependence, which was utterly inadmissible."

"Congress was nevertheless inclined to peace, notwithstanding the unjust claims from which the war originated, and savage manner in which it had been conducted. They would therefore be ready to enter upon the consideration of a treaty of peace and commerce, not inconsistent with treaties already subsisting, whenever the King of Great Britain should demonstrate a sincere disposition for that purpose. The only solid proof of such a disposition, would be an explicit acknowledgment of the Independence of the United States of America, or the withdrawing his fleets and armies."

This answer terminated the correspondence between the Congress and the Commissioners; and put, at once, an end to all ideas of bringing about an accommodation. But several individuals exerted themselves in the justification of that body, and of the American cause, in sundry publications, which attracted much notice at that time.

Though Congress did not directly interfere in these matters; they were glad to see the abilities of their adherents employed in supporting their measures. It was the more acceptable, as the commissioners had, upon failure of the intended negotiation with that Assembly, appealed to the people of the Colonies at large, and laid before them a variety of reasonings and inducements to engage their concurrence in the terms proposed by Great Britain for reconciliation.

At the time of the appointment of this commission, an opinion was very current amongst those who sided with ministry, that the majority of people in America were well effected to the cause of Britain. They who were in this persuasion, used their utmost efforts to diffuse it; and it was in pursuance of this idea, that the commissioners made their

their public appeal to the inhabitants of the continent.

This conduct subjected the commissioners to severe reprehensions from those who took up the cause of Congress and Independence. They reproached them with endeavouring to breed dissention and disturbances in the Colonies, under a pretence of labouring to restore tranquility.

In order to counteract the allegations of the commissioners, it was represented, that the Colonies having concluded a treaty with France on the footing of a free and independent people, they would become the scorn and ridicule of all nations, were they without necessity to return to their former subserviency to Great Britain. Nor would they less justly be branded with the character of a fickle faithless people, unworthy of trust, and undeserving of support. They would henceforth be abandoned and despised by all Europe; and should they, after such an ignominious accommodation with Great Britain, again experience ill treatment, no state or power would give them any countenance, were they to implore it with ever so many promises and solicitations. Mean while, they would lie at the mercy of Britain, whose resentment would be exerted with the more readiness, from the conviction that the Colonies would meet with no relief from any quarter. Neither was the commission of sufficient validity for the purposes it held out. The powers it conferred were not conclusive and final; a parliamentary ratification would be necessary to give efficacy to any treaty; and that treaty would be at the option of any future Parliament to rescind, should the terms appear inadequate to the pretensions it might think proper to form, or beneath the dignity of the paramount and ruling state.

Many were the publications of this nature that came forth upon this occasion. Those who principally

cipally distinguished themselves in the composition of them, were, Mr. Samuel Adams, of Boston; and Mr. Drayton, of South Carolina; both members of Congress, and the author of Common Sense.

That event, which more than any other contributed to set the commission in a disadvantageous light, was the evacuation of Philadelphia. Before an answer from Congress could reach the commissioners, General Clinton evacuated that city, after the British forces had remained in possession of it about nine months.

This evacuation was looked upon by the Americans as the first decisive step to the relinquishment of America. They boasted, that notwithstanding the superiority of military advantages on the side of the British army, it found itself inadequate to the task of a second campaign in Pennsylvania, and would not venture to penetrate any more into the inland parts of the continent. They now represented the concessions made on the part of Britain, as proceeding from the consciousness of her inability to insist upon her former terms. They considered her strength as broken upon the American continent, and inferred from the British army's retreating from the principal scene of action, that expecting no further reinforcements to arrive, it withdrew to a place of security, in order to be at hand to quit America, in case the exigencies of Britain should require its immediate departure.

The evacuation of Philadelphia took place on the eighteenth of June. After having made all necessary preparations, the army marched out of the city at three in the morning, and crossed the Delaware before noon, with all its baggage and incumbrances, through the judicious dispositions of Lord Howe to accelerate its motions, and to secure its passage.

A dif-

A difficult pass, at a place called Mount Holly, lay in its march. Here a strong body of the enemy was posted, to stop the progress of the British army until the arrival of the main body with General Washington.

Before Sir Henry Clinton had quitted Philadelphia, the American General had discovered his design, and had, in consequence, dispatched expresses into the Jerseys, to collect all the force of the country, in order to harass the British troops on every side, and throw every obstruction in their way.

General Maxwell, with a large detachment of American regulars, crossed the Delaware, and joined the Jersey militia to this intent. They broke down the bridges, and raised a multiplicity of impediments to retard the march of the British army; but from its superiority, they did not dare to make a stand at Mount Holly, as they had at first intended.

But notwithstanding this difficulty was overcome, a multitude of others remained. The repairing of the bridges was a work of prodigious fatigue, from the vast number of brooks, creeks, and watry passages that lay in their road, and from the excessive heat of the weather and climate.

In setting out on this dangerous retreat, the British General clearly perceived that it would be indispensibly necessary to provide for all possible contingencies. His way lay entirely through an enemy's country, where every thing was hostile in the extreme, and from whence no assistance or help of any sort was to be expected. The country was every where intersected with hills, woods, defiles, rivers, and difficult situations. The numbers of the enemy were now become formidable; should they unhappily possess themselves of some of the principal passes, it might prove a business of some length to force them. In this conviction, a very large quantity of provisions had been prepared; and though a necessary

fary article, was not a little incumbrance. The baggage that accompanied the army, was immense. The carriages and packhorses loaded with it, and the other necessaries, extended twelve miles.

From these various causes, the march of the British army was necessarily slow, and afforded the enemy time to collect a sufficient force to render its movements very dangerous.

In the mean time General Washington had passed the Delaware, with the main body of the Continental army, and was hourly joined by the regular forces and militia that could be gathered from all parts. General Gates, at the head of the northern troops, was advancing with all speed to join him.

Upon his arrival at Allan's Town, Sir Henry Clinton received intelligence, that the enemy were directing their route towards the Rariton in great force. As to attempt the passage of that river with so many incumbrances attending him, and so many impediments to oppose him, would prove an enterprise of great danger, he determined to pursue his march across that part of the country which led to Sandy Hook, from whence a passage to New York might easily be effected.

Having taken this resolution, the army struck into the road leading to the Navesink, a river that empties itself into the ocean, near a town called Shrewsbury, in the neighbourhood of Sandy Hook. General Washington, on being apprized of this motion, followed the British army with all possible speed, in order to overtake it, before it had gained the upper country, in the line of its march, where it would be impossible to attack it with any prospect of success.

To this intent the Marquis Fayette was detached with some chosen troops, to harass the rear of the British army, and to prevent its moving with that
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telerity which was requisite to reach that advantageous ground. General Lee, at the head of a large force, followed close to support him in case of need; and General Washington himself, with the main body, moved in great order and circumspection to sustain the whole.

On the twenty-seventh of June, Sir Henry Clinton arrived near a place called Freehold. From the great numbers of the enemy's light troops that hovered on his rear, judging that their army was approaching, he encamped on the strong grounds in the neighbourhood, where it would not be easy for the enemy to surprize him.

General Washington, on reconnoitring his situation, resolved to attack him as soon as he had quitted it to resume his march. He spent the night in making the necessary preparations; his troops lay upon their arms; and he ordered General Lee to be ready with the division under his command, to begin the attack at break of day.

Sir Henry Clinton foreseeing that his march would be interrupted, determined to disengage that part of his army which lay nearest the enemy of all incumbrance. To this intent he assigned the care of the baggage to the division commanded by General Knyphausen, with orders to set forwards early in the morning, that it might proceed without molestation from the enemy.

Some hours after the departure of this division, Sir Henry Clinton followed it. He had remained behind, to give it time to gain some distance, and to cover it from the enemy, whose attacks he justly suspected would be directed against his baggage, from the difficulty of protecting it effectually, considering the length of ground it occupied.

Soon after he had resumed his march, the enemies were perceived in motion on several quarters. When the rear guard of the British army had de-

descended from the heights, where they had encamped, into the adjacent plain, the American troops appeared immediately in great force, and took possession of them. Large parties of them also descended into the plain, and having made the requisite dispositions for an attack, they began at ten o'clock to cannonade the rear of the British army.

In the mean time, General Washington had pushed forwards several strong detachments on the right and left of the British army, in order to overtake the division under General Knyphausen. It was at this time engaged in defiles that continued some miles, and lay, of course, greatly exposed to the enemy.

In order to oblige these detachments to desist from their intention, Sir Henry Clinton determined instantly to make so vigorous an attack upon the enemy, that had engaged his rear, as to compel them to return with the quickest diligence, to support their own people.

The plain where the action was now begun, was three miles long, and one broad. This enabled a body of dragoons in the British army, to act to advantage. They charged a party of horse under Marquis Fayette, and drove them back in confusion upon their own infantry.

As all things seemed to tend towards a general action, a reinforcement was ordered from General Knyphausen's division; and the army was formed in order of battle on the plain. Sir Henry Clinton's intention was to make a resolute onset on that part of the American army that had ventured into the plain, before it could be joined by the remainder. This was yet at some distance, and had two defiles to pass before it could come up. The whole of the American army consisted of more than twenty thousand men; but no more had passed these defiles
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than what the British forces in the front line under Lord Cornwallis were able to cope with.

When the American division in the plain, saw the British troops formed, and advancing upon them, they re-ascended the hill, and took a strong position towards its summit; but the British troops followed them with so much speed, and attacked them so vigorously, that their first line was broken immediately. The second stood with more firmness; but was also put to the rout. They both rallied, however, and posted themselves with a morass in their front. The necessity of obtaining decisive success, obliged the British General to make a third charge, upon a large body of the enemy that had taken possession of a post, where, if they had been suffered to remain, the British army would have been greatly annoyed. This body was accordingly charged and dispersed, and the ground cleared on all sides for the army's motions.

The end proposed by Sir Henry Clinton in attacking the enemy, was now completely obtained. The two detachments that in the morning passed on both his flanks, had, as he expected, made an attempt on the baggage; but the division that guarded it, received them with so much firmness, that they could make no impression; and the spirited attack and repulse of that part of the American army which was opposed to General Clinton's division, compelled them to return with all speed to support it.

After gaining these advantages, Sir Henry Clinton found it absolutely necessary to give his troops some repose. The intense heat of the weather and season, added to the excessive fatigue of the day, had proved so fatal, that no less than fifty-nine men fell dead in the ranks, without receiving a wound. He took for this purpose the position from whence the Americans had been first dislodged, after their quitting the plain. Here he remained till ten at

night; at which time, in order to avoid the intolerable sultriness of the climate during the day, he resumed his march by moonlight, in order to rejoin the first division of his army, which was now at a considerable distance, and in perfect security, by the success of that part of the army under his own command.

Thus ended the action of the twenty-eighth of June; in which the bravery of the British troops, and their patience in enduring the most dreadful excesses of toil, were equally manifested. They had forced an enemy incomparably superior in number, from two strong positions. Had not General Washington joined them on their retreating to the ground behind the morass, they would probably have been dislodged a third time. The junction of their main body prevented an entire defeat; and General Washington made immediately such a disposition, as rendered it unsafe to re-commence the attack.

It was this position, and the measures he had taken, together with the vast superiority of his numbers, that induced the British General to move from the ground where he had rested his troops. He continued his march leisurely the whole of the next day, in hope that the American army might follow him. He proceeded in this manner, till he had reached the borders of the Navesink. Here he waited two days, intending, if General Washington had advanced at any considerable distance from the post where he had left him, to have turned suddenly back, and attacked him.

But the American General did not think it prudent to risk an engagement with the whole British army collected. Its retreat in presence of the American army, was indeed considered as a very signal success, and equal to a victory in the present juncture. The conduct of General Washington on this occasion, gained him great applause. By the diligence

gence with which he brought up the main body, he had preserved the rest of his army from being entirely cut off; and by his subsequent movements had placed it so advantageously, as to secure it from any attack. He had even resolved, on the very superior strength of his army, to have acted offensively, and was greatly disappointed next morning, on finding the British troops had resumed their march.

The behaviour of the Americans in this engagement, shewed they were much improved in military knowledge. After the recovery of the surprize they had been thrown into by the defeat of their first division through the spirited and unexpected charge of the British troops, they behaved with great resolution and steadiness. Their officers, particularly, displayed much expertness and intrepidity in rallying them, after they had been twice broken.

Sir Henry Clinton, on perceiving that the enemy did not follow him, continued his march to the sea side. The fleet under Lord Howe, was now arrived from the Delaware, and lay at anchor off Sandy Hook. The peninsula of this name had, during the preceding winter, through a violent storm and inundation, been disjoined from the main land. By the directions of the Admiral, a bridge of boats was constructed with the utmost expedition; and on the fifth day of July the whole army passed over the channel into Sandy Hook island, from whence it was conveyed to New York.

The slain and wounded on the British side in this action, did not exceed three hundred, of whom fifty-nine died, as already mentioned, through excess of heat and fatigue; among those who fell, Colonel Monkton was chiefly regretted. He was an officer of remarkable intrepidity. His fate was peculiar. He had been dangerously wounded in

various engagements, and once had been left for dead in the field. The loss of the enemy was reputed much more considerable.

General Washington, after detaching some light troops to follow the British army, and observe its motions, directed his march towards the North River, where a great force had been collected in order to join him, and where, it was now expected, that some operations of importance would shortly take place.

The action at Freehold occasioned a violent breach between General Washington and General Lee. This latter was charged with disobedience and misconduct, in retreating from before the British division, which he had attacked in the morning on the plain. A court martial was held upon him, and he was sentenced to a temporary suspension from his command.

In the mean time, the squadron under Count D'Estaing, which had left Toulon on the fourteenth of April, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar the fifteenth of May, and arrived on the coast of Virginia in the beginning of July, while the British fleet was employed in conveying the army over to Sandy Hook island, and from thence to New York.

Had the French squadron steered for the mouth of the Delaware, or Sandy Hook, the destruction of both the British fleet and army would have been inevitable. The fleet was in no condition for resistance, consisting only of the transports, with two ships of the line, and a few frigates. The army would then have been inclosed by the Americans at land, and the French at sea. Hemmed in by mountains, and an impassable tract of country, it would have found it impossible to force its way to New York. Destitute of provisions, and cut off from all communication, it must undoubtedly have been compelled at last to surrender. Had this proved
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the case, the fate of the war would have been completely decided; and Britain would have received such a blow, as she has not felt for a long course of ages, and might not for a length of years have recovered.

Notwithstanding this signal escape from so great a disaster, dangers of every kind yet remained to be encountered. On the eleventh of July the French squadron came in sight of the British fleet off Sandy Hook. It consisted of one ship of ninety guns, one of eighty, six of seventy-four, and four of sixty-four, besides several large frigates. Exclusive of its complement of seamen, it had six thousand marines and soldiers on board.

To oppose this formidable squadron, there were at present at New York, no more than six ships of sixty-four guns, three of fifty, and two of forty, with some frigates and sloops. They were not in good condition, having long been absent from England, and their crews were very deficient in number. They had, however, a material superiority over the enemy, in that of their commander and his officers.

The British fleet was happily so stationed, as to command the entrance of the harbour of Sandy Hook, which is covered by a bar, and affords but a narrow inlet. The intention of the French Admiral, was to force his way through: but when he drew near the British squadron, and had observed its position, and apparent determination to stand his utmost efforts, notwithstanding its manifest inferiority in every respect, the consciousness of the great capacity and courage of its commander, the sight of the dispositions he had made, the knowledge of the desperate exertions of valour he would have to encounter, and the uncertainty whether the passage through the gut was practicable for ships of the size of those that composed his squadron; all these

motives engaged him to decline a trial, which, if unsuccessful, might endanger the safety of his squadron, and bring disgrace and ruin upon the arms of France, on their very first outset.

Never did the intrepidity of the British nation display itself with more lustre than upon this memorable occasion. The people belonging to the fleet of transports, and merchantmen, lying at New York, vied with each other who should be foremost in his offers of service. A thousand of the best and stoutest seamen were selected to do duty on board the men of war. Those to whom they had been preferred, insisted upon accompanying them; and numbers, in spite of all endeavours to restrain them, found means to join their companions. The masters and seamen of the trading vessels, acted with equal zeal and readiness; and there was no species of service, which was not courted as a favour by individuals of all classes and denominations. One seafaring man particularly, offered to convert his vessel into a fireship, without pay or reward, and to conduct her himself into the midst of the enemy.

The courage of the officers and soldiers of the army was not less conspicuous. Wounds, and the consequences of the extreme fatigue and hardships they had recently undergone, were forgotten. The strife was universal, who should repair on board the men of war to serve as marines: the contest was so eager, that no other method could be contrived to decide it, than by casting lots among the common men, as well as among the officers.

When the extraordinary spirit exerted upon this memorable emergency is taken into due consideration, the arrival of the French squadron on the coast of North America at this juncture, may be accounted one of the most fortunate circumstances of the war. It gave the British nation one of the most illustrious opportunities that it has had for ages, of signalizing

ing that intrepid character for which it has at all times been renowned. The greatness of the danger was such, that it was an act of high courage even in a brave nation, to face it with that coolness and deliberation which was so unanimously exhibited. It shewed what great resources true valour can find, and how difficult it is to overcome men who are determined to leave nothing undone for their defence.

While these measures were carrying on at New York, the French squadron lay at anchor about four miles off Sandy Hook. Here it continued about a fortnight, in expectation of meeting with some opportunity of being more serviceable to the common cause of France and America, than it had hitherto been able to prove. But it did no more than capture some vessels, which fell into its possession from their ignorance of a French fleet being in those seas.

The hopes of relief at New York, were founded on the expectation of seeing the arrival of Admiral Byron's squadron, consisting of eleven sail of seventy-four guns, and one of ninety. It had left Portsmouth on the twentieth of May; but the ministry not being fully apprized of Count D'Estaing's destination, dispatched an express to recall it to Plymouth; from whence it did not sail till the ninth of June, after advice had been received of the French squadron's steering for North America.

The voyage of this squadron was extremely unfortunate. It met with a continuity of bad weather, and was so shattered by storms, as to be disabled for action. It arrived, after a tedious passage, scattered and detached on different parts of the coast of America.

On the twenty-second of July, the French fleet under Count D'Estaing, got under way. The wind blowing from the sea, the water rose thirty feet on
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bar, and no doubt was made at New York of the French Admiral's seizing so favourable an opportunity of trying the passage into the harbour. Every preparation was made to receive him, and all people waited with anxiety for an event by which so much would have been decided: but contrary to expectation, he did not think it adviseable to make the attempt; and without approaching to reconnoitre any further, he directly stood off to sea.

This departure of the French fleet, was a second deliverance of the highest consequence to the affairs of Great Britain in that quarter. In the space of the following week two ships of fifty guns, one of sixty-four, and another of seventy-four, successively arrived at Sandy Hook, all which must have unavoidably fallen into the enemy's hands, had he remained on that station.

Thus, fortunately for this country, was that plan entirely frustrated on which the Court of France had placed so much dependence. The capture of the whole British fleet in the Delaware, and the consequent loss of the army, was looked upon at Paris as next to a certainty. Doubtless the measures were so well concerted, that such an event was highly probable, and it was owing merely to accidents that it did not take place in the fullest extent it had been expected.

After failing in the principal intent of his expedition, it now behoved the French Admiral to exert himself, in order to make amends for the little success that had hitherto attended him. The object at which he now proposed to direct his operations was Rhode Island. While he lay at Sandy Hook, an attack was projected upon that place between him and the Congress, and it was in execution of that intent he departed so unexpectedly.

As he had a body of six thousand marines and soldiers on board, it was proposed that he should
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make a descent with them on the southern extremity of that island, while a body of the Americans made another towards the north. The squadron meanwhile, was to enter the harbour of Newport, destroy the shipping there, and assault the works and batteries along the shore.

On the twenty-ninth of July, the French squadron anchored without the bar, fronting Newport, and blocked up the passage between the several isles that lie around Rhode Island, the principal one. Sir Robert Pigot, who commanded the British troops there, had made every requisite preparation for a brave defence. The several vessels that were necessarily destroyed, to prevent their being taken by the enemy, furnished him with an excellent supply of men for the service of the artillery, and the vessels themselves were sunk in those inlets and channels which would have afforded the enemy a convenient station for attacking the works.

The charge of attacking Rhode Island on the side of the continent, was committed to General Sullivan, an officer whose conduct since the beginning of the war had obtained him great reputation. The troops were chiefly composed of people from the New England Provinces.

On the eighth of August the French squadron entered the harbour of Newport, and coasting the town, discharged their broadsides into it, and received the fire of the batteries on shore; but little execution was done on either side. They anchored a little way above the town, in order to be ready to co-operate with the New England forces, which were preparing to land on the north side of the island.

In the mean time, Lord Howe, on receiving intelligence of the attack upon Rhode Island, resolved to make the utmost efforts he was able for its preservation. His naval force now consisted of one
seventy-

seventy-four, seven sixty-four, and five fifty gun ships. The great superiority of the French in weight of metal, rendered any attempt against them very hazardous, but the pressingness of the occasion, together with his intrepidity, determined him to undertake it.

At the head of this squadron he sailed from New York; but from contrary winds, could not reach Rhode Island till the ninth of August, the day after the French squadron had entered the harbour of Newport.

On the appearance of the British fleet, the French Admiral resolved immediately to sail out of the harbour and attack it. To this purpose the wind proving fair the next morning, the tenth of August, he put to sea. Having the weather-gage, and Lord Howe being unwilling to leave him in possession of that advantage, a contest ensued for it, which lasted the whole day; the French Admiral, notwithstanding his superiority, striving for it with no less eagerness. The wind still continuing unfavourable, on the eleventh, the British Admiral finding it impracticable to gain the weather-gage, resolved forthwith to attack the enemy, without contending for it any longer. Having formed his squadron with that great professional skill and judgment which was so much applauded on this occasion, he bravely prepared to engage. But the wind, which already blew with considerable force, increased suddenly to such a degree, as entirely to frustrate his design. It gradually augmented to a violent storm, which lasted two days and nights. It separated both fleets, and did them so much damage, that most of the ships were rendered totally unfit for action.

The violence of this tempest fell chiefly upon the French squadron. Several of its ships were dismasted. The Languedoc, of ninety guns, the Admiral's ship, had none standing, when she was met
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in that condition by the *Renown* of fifty guns, commanded by Captain Dawson. He attacked her immediately with so much courage and dexterity, that had not darkness interposed, together with the gale, which had not yet sufficiently abated, no doubt was entertained she must have struck: her rudder was shot away, and she had suffered other essential damage. Captain Dawson lay closely to her during the night, purposing to renew the attack by break of day; but as soon as it returned, he discovered six French ships of the line bearing down upon him, which necessarily obliged him to retire.

The very same day, Commodore Hotham, in the *Preston*, also of fifty guns, fell in with the *Tonnant*, an eighty gun ship, with only her mainmast remaining. He attacked her, but was compelled by the coming on of night, to discontinue the engagement till next morning, when the appearance of several French ships obliged him to withdraw.

But the engagement that happened between the *Isis* of fifty guns, and a French ship of seventy-four, was perhaps the most remarkable action that took place during the war. Neither of them had suffered through the storm; but notwithstanding the prodigious inequality between them, the *Isis* maintained so resolute a fight, that after a close engagement within pistol-shot, that lasted an hour and a half, the French ship was obliged to put before the wind, and croud away with a press of sail. The commander of the *Isis* was Captain Raynor, whose heroic bravery in this brilliant action, did both him and his country the highest honour, and was acknowledged by the French themselves, with unfeigned astonishment and admiration.

The French squadron returned to Rhode Island on the twentieth of August in such a shattered condition,

dition, that dreading an attack from Lord Howe, they did not think it safe to remain there. They sailed on the twenty-second for Boston, in order to repair their ships in a place of security.

The British Squadron had suffered much less in the storm than the French. It was obliged, however to make some stay at New York for the purpose of refitting. As soon as this was effected, Lord Howe sailed immediately in quest of the French fleet; but he found it in Boston harbour. Resolving however to attack it, if it were practicable, he carefully reconnoitred its situation; but it was so powerfully protected by batteries and defences raised on every side, that any attempt was judged entirely useless.

While Count D'Estaing was sailing out of Newport harbour to attack the British fleet under Lord Howe, General Sullivan landed on the northern point of Rhode Island. The force he had with him consisted of about ten thousand men. On the seventeenth of August, they begun their operations by erecting batteries, and making their approaches to the British lines. General Pigot was no less attentive in taking every measure to frustrate their exertions. His garrison was sufficiently numerous, and in excellent order and spirits; and the situation of the place, together with the works that had been constructed for its defence, rendered it very capable of making an effectual resistance.

The southern part of Rhode Island, where the town of Newport stands, is divided from the northern by a narrow ridge of land, which forms a kind of isthmus. Along this ridge, which stretches from the eastern to the western shore, the British troops had formed lines and redoubts that entirely secured the southern division of the island from any apprehension of an enemy that could only carry on his attacks by land.

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Had Count D'Estaing, as it had been proposed, co-operated with General Sullivan, and landed a body of men on the southern shore, while he was making a diversion on the north, the position of General Pigot would have been extremely critical. The Americans complained bitterly of his conduct upon this occasion. He was at the time when Lord Howe arrived with his squadron, completely master of the harbour; the British shipping there had been either sunk or burnt, to prevent their being captured by the enemy. It would have been impracticable for the British squadron to force a passage into the harbour against so great a superiority. Every advantage was manifestly on his side, and the success of the enterprize seemed clearly within his reach. His motive for relinquishing it, was the uncertain honour of defeating the British fleet. But it would have been time enough to have encountered Lord Howe after having obliged General Pigot to surrender Rhode Island. Such were the ideas of the Americans on this occasion,

The conduct of Count D'Estaing gave such offence to the people of New England that were with General Sullivan, that they abandoned the enterprize, and returned home highly disgusted at their disappointment. This desertion reduced him to an inferiority in point of number to the garrison he was besieging; and compelled him to think seriously of making a retreat.

He broke up his encampment accordingly on the twenty-sixth of August. But on perceiving his intentions, the garrison sallied out upon him, and assailed him with so much vigour, that he was constrained to make several resolute stands before he could bring off his troops. With much difficulty he made good his retreat to some advantageous ground on the north of the island, where he posted himself so securely as to remain out of all danger.

He then passed his troops over to the continent, and put an end to an expedition, which, though it procured him great personal honour, was attended with much fruitless trouble and danger, and brought Count D'Estaing and his countrymen into much disreputation.

It was fortunate for General Sullivan to have effected his retreat in this manner. Immediately on his departure, Sir Henry Clinton arrived in Rhode Island with a body of four thousand men. Such a reinforcement to the garrison, would have enabled him to obtain the completest success over that officer: his retreat would have been cut off, and the town of Providence destroyed, a place of which the neighbourhood occasioned perpetual alarms at Rhode Island, from the armaments and enterprizes that were continually projected and carried on from that quarter.

This was the design intended by Sir Henry Clinton, and which he would, in all probability, have executed, had not contrary winds delayed his arrival. It was however no small success to the British arms at this critical juncture to have defeated the attempts of the Americans by land, and those of the French at sea, notwithstanding their immense superiority, and the vast expectations it had created all over the continent.

No commander had ever set forth with greater views, and with greater prospects of fulfilling them; and perhaps none was ever more completely disappointed. In France it was thought, that if he were not able to surprize the British fleet and army, still he would unquestionably have it in his power to distress the former in such a manner, as would disable and dispirit the latter so effectually, as to put an end to all its operations, and open such a field of action to the Americans, as to render them totally masters of the field every where, and at liberty

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to prosecute what measures they pleased without interruption.

Such were the hopes with which Count D'Estaing quitted France; nor did he, when he first arrived on the coast of America, find any motive to alter them. Though the prime object of his destination had not been answered, which was to come unawares on the British fleet and army, yet his strength was such, that in all appearance, no naval force that could be brought against him would be able to withstand it.

Elate with this prospect, he confidently entered the scene of action; but he met with an adversary who stopped his progress in the very outset, and convinced him, that if he met with success, it must be purchased at the dearest rate. He beheld an enemy, whom at first, he thought unable to defend himself, acquiring gradually, through dint of superior abilities, and indefatigable exertions, the power of acting on the offensive. Inferior in size of ships, in weight of metal, in number of men, this enemy boldly came forth to encounter him in the open sea, trusting solely to his courage and capacity for the issue of so unequal a contest. Instead of a broken and disheartened foe, flying before him, and glad to abscond wherever a shelter could be found, he saw himself, through the diligence, the sagacity, and the daringness of his rival's motions, under a necessity of avoiding him, for his own preservation. After being successively disappointed and defeated in every attempt he had formed, to complete his mortification, he was compelled to seek refuge among those whom he had been sent to assist, in order to escape the pursuit of this active and resolute foe.

Thus terminated the projects that were to have been executed by Count D'Estaing; who, though a brave and experienced officer, was certainly very unable to enter the field of competition

with so great a naval commander as Lord Howe.— Instead of viewing the banners of France flying triumphantly at New York, as had been expected, the Americans were obliged to protect them in the road of Boston, where the French squadron now remained, utterly incapable of service.

Unfortunate accidents doubtless contributed to the disasters of the French; but these accidents were in a great measure occasioned by the movements as they were certainly improved to the utmost, by the vigilance and dexterity of the British Admiral. It was admitted by good judges, that it was through the ability of the rival he had to face, much more than through any other cause, the designs and measures of the French commander were so unprosperous throughout the whole campaign.

C H A P. XXXVI.

Military Operations in North America.

1778.

AFTER the retreat of the French squadron under Count D'Estaing into Boston, the apprehensions arising from it being subsided, it was determined at New York to improve this opportunity of its inability to act, by attacking some of those harbours whence the Americans committed such depredations on the British shipping.

A fleet of transports, with a body of troops on board, under the command of General Grey, and a convoy of some frigates, under Captain Fanshawe, sailed to Buzzard's Bay, on the coast of New England, in the neighbourhood of Rhode Island. This bay was full of creeks and inlets, where small privateers, from the shallowness of the water, could always escape the pursuit of large vessels. For that reason they took their station near them, and were continually on the look-out for vessels sailing that way to Long Island and New York.

The troops were landed on the fifth of September, on both sides of the river, on which the towns of Bedford and Fairhaven are situated. Here they destroyed a great number of magazines and storehouses, with about seventy sail of privateers and merchantmen. The loss was the greater, as these latter had their cargoes on board, and were on the point of sailing.

From hence they proceeded to Martha's Vineyard, an island fertile and populous, where they collected about ten thousand sheep, and three hundred head of cattle. Both these expeditions, though not brilliant, were of essential utility in protecting

trade of New York, and furnishing a considerable supply to the forces there.

In consequence of the hostilities committed by the French in the American seas, it was now resolved to dispossess them of the two islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, which had by the last treaty of peace been left to them, to cure and dry their fish, and afford other necessaries and conveniencies to their shipping employed in the fishery on the banks of Newfoundland. As these islands were in no state of defence, they were easily reduced. The inhabitants and garrison, in number altogether about three thousand, were transported to France, and the settlement entirely destroyed. This happened about the middle of September.

In the mean time an expedition took place from New York up the North River. Lord Cornwallis proceeded on the western, and General Knyphausen on the eastern side, and the river itself was occupied by armed vessels and flat-boats, for the communication and passage of the troops from the one side to the other, in case their co-operation should be needed.

General Washington's army was stationed in the same manner; but from his inferiority in shipping, it was with much difficulty the divided parts of it could be drawn together. He was at this time encamped in a strong position on the eastern side of the North River; but the British forces were so advantageously posted, that he did not think proper to make any movements to interrupt their operations in the Jerseys: such an attempt would have compelled him to risk a general engagement, which it was his constant study to avoid.

The principal event during this expedition was the destruction of a regiment of American cavalry, known by the name of Mrs. Washington's Light Horse. It was commanded by Colonel Baylor, a gentleman

gentleman of rank and interest in Virginia, where it had been raised. It had been detached, with a body of militia, to interrupt the foraging parties belonging to the division of the British army under Lord Cornwallis. On receiving intelligence of the facility of surprizing them, from their unguarded situation, he ordered General Grey to advance on one side, while Colonel Campbell, with a detachment from the corps under General Knyphausen, crossed the North River, and came upon them from another.

The whole body of militia and light horse would have been completely surprized, had not some deserters from the British troops informed them of their danger. The militia had time to escape; but Sept. 28, General Grey pushed forwards with such 1778. expedition, that he came unawares upon the light-horsemen. They were surrounded in the village where they lay, and most of them were either killed or taken. Great complaints were made on this occasion by the Americans; they represented the behaviour of the British troops as inhuman, and contrary to the laws of war observed among civilized nations. They accused them of having massacred in cold blood men who made no resistance, and begged for quarter.

The success that had attended the expedition to Bedford and Fairhaven, suggested another to Little Egg Harbour, on the coast of New Jersey, from the very same motives. It was a place noted for privateers, that did much mischief along that shore, and were as troublesome on the south, as the others had been on the north side of New York.— Captain Ferguson, with a select party, embarked under the convoy of Captain Collins, with some frigates and gallies. The enemy being apprized of their coming, sent out as many of their vessels and privateers to sea as could be got ready, in order to

avoid capture, and hauled the remainder into the river Mullicus, as far up the country as it was practicable.

The enemy relied for protection on the difficulty of passing through the many bars and shoals that obstructed the river, and were totally unknown to the British troops and seamen. But the labour and perseverance of these surmounted all obstacles; they made their way to the place where the shipping had been conveyed, which was at twenty miles distance from the sea. The enemy, to intimidate them, had thrown up the appearance of batteries and breast-works on the water-side, well manned with the country militia, who seemed prepared to make a resolute defence: but they were soon compelled to retire by the artillery that had been brought up in the gun-boats, and the troops landing, completely dispersed them.

A number of vessels were found at this place, mostly British prizes, some of considerable value.— But as from various causes, the bringing them off would have consumed much time, and exposed the detachment to much danger, they were all destroyed, together with the settlement itself, in order to prevent its becoming again a receptacle for privateers.

Being informed that part of a celebrated military corps among the Americans, known by the name of Pulaski's Legion, was cantoned at a few miles distance, they undertook to surprize them, and did it so effectually, as to put a great number to the sword, and to retire without loss to their shipping. The enemy having collected some reinforcements, endeavoured to cut off their retreat; but having previously secured a bridge and a defile, they maintained their ground successfully, and compelled the enemy to withdraw. This transaction took place in the beginning of October.

On this occasion, as well as that of the surprisal of Baylor's light horse, the British troops were charged with having barbarously refused quarter to the Americans. The answer to this charge was, that both these attacks were made in the night, when little order or discipline could be observed, and that unhappily the British troops were under a persuasion that no quarter was intended to be given them.

But whatever irregularities might have happened upon these occasions, they were nothing to those that were committed in the back settlements, in the course of the military operations that were carried on in those parts, during the present campaign.

At the time when General Gates commanded the American army at Saratoga, the Indians in those quarters sent him deputies with their public congratulations on his success, and assurances of their friendly wishes to the cause he supported. But on the close of that campaign, when the American forces were withdrawn from that neighbourhood, the British agents began again to be active among the Indian tribes: they distributed considerable presents to their chiefs, and neglected nothing to raise a powerful party among the most warlike and enterprising of these ferocious people.

In this they were zealously assisted by those numbers of refugees, who had fled from the Colonies, and were meditating plans of revenge against the adverse party. Excited by their own avidity, and by the persuasions and influence of the agents and refugees, the Indians began by committing depredations on the people in the back settlements, in small bodies, that were led on by the refugees, who best knew how to conduct them where most spoil was to be had. As their incursions were very successful, they proved an incitement to others: they became gradually more frequent, and were carried

on by larger numbers : the situation of the inhabitants on the frontiers of the northern, and middle Colonies, became thereby exceedingly wretched and deplorable.

Two men principally signalized themselves in these destructive expeditions. The one was Colonel Butler, a native of Connecticut, who acted in the capacity of an Agent, and a Chief among the Indians, over whom he had acquired and exercised great authority. The name of the other was Brandt. His father was of German origin, and his mother an Indian :—He was a man of uncommon resolution ; but of a fierce and cruel disposition. Under these two commanders the Indians and Refugees committed the most dreadful devastations and barbarities.

What rendered the condition of the Colonists who adhered to Congress the more calamitous, was, that many of those who dwelt among them, favoured their enemies, and gave them intelligence of all that passed. This enabled them to take their measures in so opposite a manner, as always to be sure of success.

Along the eastern branch of the Susquehanna, lies a pleasant and fertile country. It had been claimed as part of Pennsylvania ; but the Colony of Connecticut, relying upon the authority of an ancient charter, had, since the last war, made a large settlement on the banks of that beautiful river. The name of it was Wioming : it consisted of eight townships, five square miles each.

The Pennsylvanians, after protesting against this proceeding, as an encroachment upon their territories, and finding that remonstrances had no effect on the people of Connecticut, resolved to have recourse to violence, and to expel the new settlers from the lands of which they considered them as the usurpers : they had accordingly used force, and the

others

others had repelled it. Notwithstanding the dissention between Great Britain and America, this intestine quarrel still continued, till the preceding became so serious, that the latter was suspended by mutual consent.

This settlement, in the mean time, became so flourishing and populous, that it sent a thousand men as its proportion to the Continental army, besides adequate supplies of provisions. They had been no less careful of their internal defence against the irruptions that might be apprehended from the Indians: they had erected four sufficiently strong forts, in order to guard against any dangers of that kind. The zeal of the party that sided with Congress, had, however, much outgone its discretion, in sending such a number of men out of a settlement where they were so much wanted: those who opposed Congress, formed a numerous and active party, and were now determined to avail themselves of the absence of so considerable a number of their enemies.

During the preceding campaign, several inroads were made upon them by the Indians, accompanied with some Refugees; and it was not without much trouble and bloodshed they were driven off; but the enmity of these Indians was now become much more dangerous, from the numbers of their own people who had abandoned the settlement, in consequence of intestine divisions, and the treatment they received from the ruling party. As they went off with a full determination of wreaking their vengeance, they were industrious in seeking the means of effecting it.

In order to secure themselves from the machinations of their adversaries, the ruling party had compelled a number of strangers lately come into the settlement to depart, on suspicion of their harbouring hostile intentions. Some of them they had seized,

ed, and sent to Connecticut, to be capitally prosecuted. This transaction kindled new rage in their opponents, and added fresh activity to the schemes they were forming.

To deceive the people in the settlement into security, and to put them off their guard, the Indians affected uncommon demonstrations of friendship, and of a sincere desire to be thoroughly reconciled and to preserve the peace. To this intent they sent a few of the most artful and dexterous, who were, under pretence of being charged with their amicable assurances, to observe the circumstances and posture of the settlement, and bring all the intelligence they could collect.

After having, some time previous to the execution of their designs, carried on this deception, the Refugees and Indians collected all their force in the beginning of July; it consisted of thirteen hundred Refugees, and about three hundred Indians. The former had painted and clad themselves like the latter, with a view either to concealment, or to assume a more intimidating appearance.

They began their operations by investing one of the forts; which, it was said, being chiefly garrisoned by their secret partisans, was betrayed into their hands. They took another by storm, where they gave quarter only to the women and children. They next summoned the principal fort, called Kingston, to surrender, threatening, in case of refusal, to give no quarter. The commanding officer, who was a near relation of the Refugee commander, and bore also the name of Butler, proposed a parley, in hope of coming to some accommodation: his proposal was accepted, and a place of meeting appointed. Not thinking it prudent, however, to trust himself into their hands, he went accompanied by four hundred men well armed.

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On his arrival at the place of appointment, no person was present : he still advanced, in expectation of being met ; when looking round, he perceived at the foot of a mountain, at some distance from him, a flag, which, as he approached, withdrew, as if those who were with it, mistrusted him. But as he drew near to it, he suddenly found himself surrounded and attacked on all sides, by four times his numbers. He defended himself near an hour, with so much bravery, that they seemed to be giving way : when unexpectedly one of his men, either through fear or treachery, cried out that he had ordered a retreat. This instantly threw his party into confusion ; they were broken every where, and slaughtered without mercy. Himself, with about seventy, escaped to a small fort.

On this success, the enemy marched to fort Kingston, into which, to shew the garrison the proofs of their victory, and the inutility of making any defence, they sent in the scalps of those they had slain, amounting to about two hundred.

The officer who commanded, willing, in this terrible extremity, to make the best terms he could for his remaining garrison, and the other people in the fort, ventured out with a flag, and waited on Colonel Butler, to know what terms he would grant on a surrender. His reply was, the hatchet. With this barbarous and dreadful answer, the officer returned to his garrison ; who, knowing what they were to expect, had no other prospect left than to sell their lives as dearly as possible : they defended themselves accordingly, until they were nearly all, either killed or wounded ; the rest, unable to continue the defence, were forced to surrender at discretion.

The enemy carried off some of the prisoners : the rest they shut up in the houses, which being set on fire, they perished in the flames. They acted with the same barbarity on taking the last fort, which

which surrendered in a few minutes, without any stipulations: they massacred, with remarkable instances of inhumanity, about seventy of the militia, and shutting up the others, with the women and children in the buildings of the fort, they committed them to the flames.

After the perpetration of these cruelties, they proceeded to destroy all the houses, farms, and settlements that came within their reach; such only excepted, as belonged to those of their own party. This destruction was extended to the crops on the ground, and to every production of the earth: they killed and maimed the cattle; in short, they left nothing undestroyed that could be of any use. Thus was this flourishing colony rendered in a few days a scene of universal desolation.

To these enormities, they added others still more horrible:—They burned alive three officers, their prisoners, with circumstances of refined barbarity. Such was the excess of party rage, that even the most powerful and endearing ties of nature were violated upon. One of the Refugees murdered his father-in-law, his own sisters, and their children, and even his own mother. Another, who had often threatened the life of his father, now executed this horrid resolution: with his own hand he butchered his father, mother, brothers, and sisters; stripped off their scalps, and cut off his father's head.

Such were the accounts published by the Americans of the destruction of the flourishing Colony of Wyoming, by those of their countrymen who accompanied Colonel Butler in this bloody expedition. Unhappily they have not been contradicted. However shocking to relate, such horrors ought not to pass unnoticed. They serve to admonish mankind, to what excesses of iniquity human nature, even in civilized society, may be impelled by the animosities arising from civil feuds, and warn them to beware of harbouring such resentments

ments against those who differ from them in opinion, as may tend to obliterate the remembrance of the reciprocal obligation men are under of observing, in the worst of times, the laws of honour and generosity.

The fate of this unhappy Colony made the deeper impression on the minds of the Americans, as they were not at the present time in a condition to inflict that vengeance upon its authors, which their crimes so justly deserved. It was, however, universally determined, that they should be severely punished at a convenient season.

In order, at the same time, to obviate a repetition of such horrors, in the back settlements of the middle and southern Colonies, as had just been experienced on the frontiers of Pennsylvania, an expedition was set on foot, the intent of which was to extirpate the primary cause of these sanguinary executions.

On the banks of the Upper Mississippi, in a pleasant and fertile country, inhabited by an Indian nation called the Illinois, the French from Canada were in possession of several thriving plantations and settlements, which, by their situation, enabled them to acquire and exercise great influence among the many Indian tribes in the neighbouring parts.

This French settlement was under the direction of a man, who had rendered himself peculiarly remarkable by the warmth and inveteracy with which he had acted against the Colonies since the commencement of hostilities. Being an agent for government among the Indians, he neglected nothing to excite them to exert themselves to the utmost against the Colonists. Among other inducements, he was noted for the liberality with which he rewarded those who brought in scalps. The depredations committed by the Indians, upon the inhabitants of the back settlements of the middle and southern Colonies,

lonies, were chiefly attributed to his instigations: He was now projecting an invasion of these settlements by the Indians situated on the Ohio and the Mississippi.

The person chosen to conduct an expedition against this French settlement, was Colonel Clarke, a brave and prudent officer. It lay at a great distance, no less than twelve hundred miles, most of which was wild and uncultivated. He set out at the head of three hundred chosen men, and sailing down the Ohio, along that immense extent of country, through which this celebrated river winds its course, he arrived without meeting any obstruction, at the great cataract which interrupts its navigation into the Mississippi. Here his party landed, and directed its march northward. After a long march through a desert country, their provisions were at last entirely consumed, and they endured two days hard fatigue without taking any sustenance.

They were, however, by this time, in the precincts of the settlement, which was the object of their expedition. Hunger added to their resolution, and they determined to succeed, or perish in the attempt. The name of the principal place in this remote settlement, was *Kaskakias*: it consisted of between two and three hundred houses. Here the Governor and principal people resided, and it was in a good state of defence.

The intention of Colonel Clarke, was, therefore, to come upon it by surprize. He lay concealed in a neighbouring forest during the day; and at midnight he distributed his party into several small divisions, which entered the town while the inhabitants were all at rest in their houses: they took possession of the fort in the same manner. The suddenness of the surprize prevented all resistance. From the remoteness of their situation, the people of this settlement thinking themselves in perfect security,

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were under no apprehensions of any attack; and little imagined that any enemy would have the patience, and undergo the toil of seeking them out at the distance of twelve hundred miles.

The inhabitants were all secured to a man, in order to prevent intelligence being carried to the other places in the settlement. Parties were immediately detached to seize upon these: they all surrendered; and an oath of allegiance to the United States was exacted from the inhabitants of the whole settlement. It was taken with the more readiness, as they were now informed of the alliance between France and the Colonies.

Colonel Clarke behaved throughout the whole of this transaction with great mildness and humanity. The only action of severity, was the seizing of the Governor, and sending him prisoner to Virginia, as an individual whose personal enmity to the Colonists, rendered it proper to secure him. His papers were seized at the same time, and transmitted to Congress; as containing proofs of the orders he had received for encouraging and employing the Indians against the back settlements.

Having executed this first and principal part of his expedition with so much celerity and success, Colonel Clarke now prepared to fulfill the remainder of his commission, which was to take proper vengeance on the Indians for the many acts of cruelty they had committed on the Colonists. He advanced with equal courage and circumspection into the midst of the country occupied by some of their most fierce and warlike tribes. He came severally upon them with so much quickness and secrecy, as to put it out of their power to resist him: he retaliated upon them the destruction they had so often carried into the Colonies: he sought them out with unwearied diligence, in their most hidden concealments, and struck them with such universal terror, that all

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who could escape, fled to the remotest recesses of the immense tracts they inhabited.

The slaughter made among the Indians in this expedition, not only thinned their numbers considerably, but broke their spirit in no less degree. The inhabitants of the frontiers were now entirely relieved from their fears, and determined, at the same time, to take such measures for their future defence, as should put an effectual stop to all attempts on the part of those savage enemies.

The destruction of Wioming still hung upon the minds of the Colonists. They who had acted the principal part in it, inhabited a tract lying beyond the mountains to the western side of the Upper Delaware. It was spacious and well cultivated: the people were an intermixture of Indians and Refugees, and bore, as their actions had shewn, an inveterate hatred to the inhabitants of the United Colonies. The force that was sent against them, consisted of a regiment from the American army, and a considerable body of riflemen and rangers.

The intent was to surprize these people, and to treat them in the same manner they had done the unhappy inhabitants of Wioming. To this purpose they proceeded with the utmost cautiousness and vigilance; marching chiefly by night, and concealing themselves by day. But the enemy, who knew the resolution that had been taken, to inflict the severest chastisement upon them for their enormities at Wioming, and dreaded the consequences of a surprize, kept a continual watch upon their borders. On the approach of this force, finding themselves unable to resist it, they withdrew, and abandoned their possessions to the fury of a justly exasperated foe, who spread destruction without mercy throughout the whole extent of the country.

In these reciprocal expeditions against each other, by the Americans who sided with, and those who opposed

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opposed Congress, was exhibited a spirit of rancour and revenge, that animated both parties to the most violent exertions of their respective courage and abilities. They underwent the severest toil and fatigue with invincible patience, and bore the most trying hardships with unwearied fortitude. Loaded with the ammunition, stores, and provisions necessary for such expeditions, they waded through swamps and marshes, and made their way through forests that seemed almost impassable without such incumbrances. Oftentimes, after struggling during a whole days march, with all these various difficulties, they were constrained to pass the night without shelter, exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather, and not daring to make a fire, or even sometimes to use any light, for fear of being discovered.

When engaged in fight, their fury and inveteracy was such, that death, and slaughter were the only objects they had in view : they fought like men who expected no quarter, and thought it their duty to give none. They looked upon their enemies as criminals, whom they were commissioned to punish without mercy. Such an idea divested them at once of all sentiments of humanity, and led them to the commission of all sorts of barbarities, without feeling the least remorse.

C H A P. XXXVII.

*Arrival of a Minister from France to the Congress.—
Transactions of the Commissioners in America.*

1778.

DURING the transactions that have been related, several events of importance were taking place at Philadelphia, now become again the residence of Congress, since its evacuation by the British troops.

A Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States of America, was sent over by the Court of France in Count D'Estaing's fleet; his name was Monsieur Gerard, one of the Secretaries to the King's Council of State. He was received with great solemnity by the Congress, to whom he delivered a August 6, letter from the King of France, written 1778. in the following terms :

“ Very dear great Friends and Allies,

“ The treaties which we have signed with you in consequence of the proposals your Commissioners made to us in your behalf, are a certain assurance of our affection for the United States in general, and for each of them in particular, as well as of the interest we take, and constantly shall take, in their happiness and prosperity. It is to convince you more particularly of this, that we have nominated the Sieur Gerard, Secretary of our Council of State, to reside among you in the quality of our Minister Plenipotentiary. He is the better acquainted with our sentiments toward you, and the more capable of testifying the same to you, as he
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was entrusted on our part to negotiate with your Commissioners, and signed with them the treaties which cement our union. We pray you to give just credit to all he shall communicate to you from us, more especially when he shall assure you of our affection and constant friendship for you. We pray God, very dear great Friends and Allies, to have you in his holy keeping.

Your good Friend and Ally,

Verfailles,

L O U I S.

March 28, 1778.

(Undersigned)

GRAVIER DE VERGENNES."

The direction to this letter was, "To our very dear great Friends, the President and Members of the General Congress of North America."

After this letter had been read, the Minister made the following speech to the Congress:

"GENTLEMEN,

"The connection formed by the King, my master, with the United States of America, is so agreeable to him, that he could no longer delay sending me to remain among you, for the purpose of cementing it.

"It will give his Majesty great satisfaction to learn that the sentiments which have shone forth on this occasion, justify that confidence with which he has been inspired by the zeal and character of the Commissioners of the United States in France, the wisdom and fortitude which have directed the resolutions of Congress, and the courage and perseverance of the people they represent; a confidence which you know, Gentlemen, has been the basis of that truly amicable and disinterested system on which he has treated with the United States.

“ It is not his Majesty’s fault that the engagements he has entered into did not establish your independence and repose without the further effusion of blood, and without aggravating the calamities of mankind, whose happiness it is his highest ambition to promote and secure. But since the hostile measures and designs of the common enemy have given to engagements purely eventual, an immediate, positive, permanent, and indissoluble force, it is the opinion of the King, my master, that the allies should turn their whole attention to fulfill those engagements in the manner the most useful to the common cause, and best calculated to obtain that peace which is the object of the alliance.

“ It is upon this principle his Majesty has hastened to send you a powerful assistance; which you owe only to his friendship, to the sincere regard he has for every thing which relates to the advantage of the United States, and to his desire of contributing with efficacy to establish your repose and prosperity upon an honourable and solid foundation.— And further, it is his expectation, that the principles which may be adopted by the respective governments will tend to strengthen those bonds of union which have originated in the mutual interest of the two nations.

“ The principal object of my instructions is to connect the interests of France with those of the States. I flatter myself, Gentlemen, that my past conduct in the affairs which concern them, has already convinced you of the determination I feel to endeavour to obey my instructions in such manner as to deserve the confidence of Congress, the friendship of its members, and the esteem of the citizens of America.”

The answer returned by the President of the Congress was as follows:—

“ SIR,

“SIR,

“ The treaties between his Most Christian Majesty and the United States of America, so fully demonstrate his wisdom and magnanimity, as to command the reverence of all nations. The virtuous citizens of America in particular, can never forget his beneficent attention to their violated rights, nor cease to acknowledge the hand of a gracious Providence, in raising them up so powerful and illustrious a friend. It is the hope and opinion of Congress, that the confidence his Majesty reposes in the firmness of these States, will receive additional strength from every day's experience.

“ This Assembly is convinced, Sir, that had it rested solely with the Most Christian King, not only the independence of these States would have been universally acknowledged, but their tranquility fully established. We lament that lust of domination which gave birth to the present war, and has prolonged and extended the miseries of mankind. We ardently wish to sheath the sword, and spare the further effusion of blood ; but we are determined, by every means in our power, to fulfill those eventual engagements which have acquired positive and permanent force, from the hostile designs and measures of the common enemy.

“ Congress have reason to believe, that the assistance so wisely and generously sent, will bring Great Britain to a sense of justice and moderation, promote the common interests of France and America, and secure peace and tranquility on the most firm and honourable foundation. Neither can it be doubted, that those who administer the powers of government within the several States of this union, will cement that connection with the subjects of France, the beneficial effects of which have already been so sensibly felt.

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“ Sir,

SIR,

“ Sir, from the experience we have had of your exertions to promote the true interests of our country, as well as your own, it is with the highest satisfaction Congress receive, as the first Minister from his Most Christian Majesty, a gentleman whose past conduct affords a happy presage, that he will merit the confidence of this body, the friendship of its members, and the esteem of the citizens of America.”

The arrival and reception of the minister from France, made a remarkable impression on the minds of the Americans. They now felt the weight and importance to which they had arisen among the European nations. “ Thus,” said they, “ in one of their publications at that time, “ has a new and noble sight been exhibited in this new world; the Representatives of the United States of America, solemnly giving public audience to a Minister Plenipotentiary from the most powerful Prince in Europe. Four years ago, such an event, at so near a day, was not in the view even of imagination. It is the Almighty who raiseth up: He has stationed America among the powers of the earth, and clothed her in robes of sovereignty.”

The presence of this minister, the strong assurances of support which he brought, the arrival of the fleet under Count D’Estaing, the evacuation of Philadelphia, and the retreat of the army, were events which happening altogether, elevated the spirit of the Americans to such a degree, that they no longer considered their destiny as any ways precarious: they looked upon their independence as thoroughly established, and viewed the sending of the Commissioners from England as an insult.

It was from these motives that they continued to insist with such firmness on the immediate acknowledgement of their independence, or the withdrawing

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ing of the fleet and army from their country, as the preliminary step to any treaty.

Governor Johnstone, whose abilities had recommended him to the place of one of the Commissioners, was extensively connected among the principal personages on the American continent, where he had been some years before promoted to the government of a province. He had always acted a strenuous part in defence of the claims of America, no man in Parliament having espoused their cause with more warmth and decision.

He had, on his arrival in America, opened a correspondence with some of the principal Members of Congress, on a footing of private friendship, from which he hoped to derive essential utility to the public commission with which he was invested. His letters contained the warmest elogiums on the character and behaviour of the Americans, and were entirely calculated to bring about a cordial reconciliation.

The more to conciliate their good-will and confidence, he had carefully abstained from all justification of the propriety or policy of the conduct adopted by Great Britain. He preserved, on the contrary, an entire appearance of neutrality in the dispute between the parent state and its colonies, and confined himself to deplore the fatal effects it had produced.

This method of proceeding appeared certainly very judicious, yet in the issue did not answer expectation. By whatever motives the Congress were determined, they disapproved of it. A few days after the correspondence had been opened with the Commissioners, they came to a resolution, that some of the letters addressed to individuals of the United States, had been found to contain ideas insidiously calculated to delude and divide the people. They therefore earnestly recommended to the government of the respective States, and strictly directed the

Commander in Chief, and other officers, to take the most effectual measures for putting a stop to so dangerous and criminal a correspondence.

This resolution was shortly followed by another, by which all letters of a public nature, received by any Members of Congress from the agents or subjects of the King of Great Britain, should be laid before that Assembly. In consequence of this order, several letters were laid before them. In one from Governor Johnstone to General Joseph Reed, this passage was particularly observed:—"The man who can be instrumental in bringing us all to act once more in harmony, and unite together the various powers which this contest has drawn forth, will deserve more from the King and people, from patriotism, humanity, friendship, and all the tender ties that are affected by the quarrel and reconciliation, than ever was yet bestowed on human kind."

In another letter written by him to Mr. Robert Morris, the following passage fell under the same notice:—"I believe the men who have conducted the affairs of America incapable of being influenced by improper motives: but in all such transactions there is risk; and I think that whoever ventures, should be secured, at the same time that honour and emolument should naturally follow the fortunes of those who have steered the vessel in the storm, and brought her safely into port. I think Washington and the President have a right to every favour that grateful nations can bestow, if they could once more unite our interests, and spare the miseries and devastations of war."

But that which gave Congress the most offence, was the following transaction, as stated by General Reed.—A few days after the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British troops, he received a message from a Lady, expressing a desire to see him, on business which could not be committed to writing.—

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He attended the Lady according to appointment. After some previous conversation respecting the business and character of the British Commissioners, and particularly of Governor Johnstone, the Lady enlarged upon the great talents of that gentleman, and added, that in several conversations, he had expressed the most favourable sentiments of him; and that it was particularly wished to engage his interest to promote the object of their commission, the re-union of the two countries, if consistent with his principles and his judgment; that in such case, it could not be deemed unbecoming or improper in the British government to take a favourable notice of such conduct; and that were he to become instrumental in the performance of such a service, he might depend on a reward of ten thousand pounds, and any office in the Colonies in the King's gift." The reply of Mr. Reed was, that he was not worth purchasing: but that such as he was, the King of Great Britain was not rich enough to do it.

Having deliberated upon this transaction, and the foregoing paragraphs, the Congress published a declaration, by which they were laid before the public as direct attempts to bribe them, and corrupt their integrity: they interdicted at the same time all intercourse and correspondence with Governor Johnstone.

This declaration, which was sent by a flag to the Commissioners, produced a very severe answer from Governor Johnstone. He charged Congress with endeavouring to asperse his character; and among other reproaches, he attributed their conduct, in the present instance, to a fixed determination to frustrate the intent of the commission appointed for the restoration of peace and concord between Great Britain and the Colonies.

The other Commissioners issued upon this occasion a counter-declaration, wherein they disclaimed
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all participation and knowledge of those matters that had been specified by Congress in their resolutions. They expressed, at the same time, the highest opinion of the abilities of Governor Johnstone, of the uprightness of his intentions, and of the equitableness and generosity of those sentiments and principles upon which he was desirous of founding a reconciliation between the disunited parts of the British empire.

They next proceeded to represent the connection entered into with France, as repugnant to the real interest of the Colonies; and asserted, that they were greatly deceived in thinking themselves under obligations to that power; as the advantages it held out to them, originated merely from the determination taken in Britain to offer such terms of reconciliation to the Colonies as they could not refuse.

They accused the Congress of having, in consequence of the treaties with France, acted with rashness and precipitation. They represented that Assembly as incompetent to decide by its sole authority, upon matters of such importance as those they had assumed the power of bringing to a conclusion. Their constituents ought in so weighty a case to have been consulted, and the sense of their different Provinces taken, in their respective meetings, previous to a final decision.

Though Congress did not itself publish any answer to this declaration, it was severely animadverted upon by those who took up the pen in their defence. The Commissioners had advanced several facts in proof of their assertion, that the French treaty with America, was entirely due to the apprehensions entertained by the Court of France, that the conciliatory proposals made by the British ministry would be accepted by the Americans. These facts, the writers on the side of Congress laboured with great industry

industry to invalidate, and to prove, at the same time, that the very reverse of what the commissioners had asserted was true: that instead of France being influenced by the conciliatory bill to treat with Congress, it was Great Britain that was induced by that treaty to offer terms of conciliation to the Colonies.

The principal view of the Commissioners in publishing that, and their other declarations, was to make an impression upon the minds of the people at large throughout the continent; but they were not more successful with them than they had been with Congress. They were given to understand that the people were of the same mind with that body; that the members of the Provincial Assemblies throughout the whole continent were resolutely determined to abide by their declaration of independence; that it was in conformity with this unanimous resolution, Congress had refused to treat with them upon any other terms; the individuals who composed it were instructed by their constituents in the most positive, explicit terms, at every hazard to maintain the independence of America. Upon this point all America was inflexible: should any man in Congress dare to express himself in favour of a contrary proposal, he would endanger his very life.

The Commissioners were now persuaded that all hopes of detaching any of the Colonies, or any considerable district, or body of men, from the general confederacy, were vain. In this persuasion, they thought it necessary to adopt a different system of acting from that which they had hitherto pursued; and as conciliatory offers would not prevail, to have recourse to the most hostile and severe.

The prosecution of harsh measures had long been considered and recommended by the friends to the plan of coercion, as the readiest and most effectual. They would bring such distress on the Colonies, as
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would not fail to compel them to submit. They represented that vast continent as peculiarly open to incursions and ravages: its coasts were of so immense an extent, that they could not possibly be guarded against an enemy that was master at sea; there were innumerable bays, creeks, and inlets, where to make descents unobstructed. The rivers were such as afforded a navigation for ships of force far into the interior parts of the country: by such means it would be easy to penetrate to most of the towns and settlements, and to spread destruction into the heart of every province on the continent.

In pursuance of this determination, the commissioners published, in the beginning of October, a proclamation, which was addressed, in specific terms, to the Congress, to the Provincial Assemblies, and to the Inhabitants of the Colonies at large.

Herein they took a retrospect of the transactions and conduct of Congress, charging them with an obstinate rejection of the proffers of reconciliation on the part of Britain, and representing them as unauthorized to exercise the powers they had assumed. They recapitulated their own endeavours to bring about a restoration of peace and happiness to America, and gave notice of their intent to return to England, as their stay in a country where their commission had been treated with so little notice and respect, was inconsistent with the dignity of the power which they represented. They professed, however, the same readiness as ever, to promote the objects of their mission, and to continue the conciliatory offers that were its principal motive.

After several earnest admonitions directed to the public bodies, and different orders of men, civil, military, and religious in general, and to all the individuals throughout the Colonies in particular, they proceeded to inform them of the alteration they should be under the necessity of making, in the future

tute method of carrying on the war, should the Colonies persist in their resistance to Great Britain, and in the unnatural connection they had formed with France.

“The policy, as well as the benevolence of Great Britain,” said they, “has hitherto checked the extremes of war, when they tended to distress a people, still considered as fellow subjects, and to desolate a country shortly to become again a source of mutual advantage; but when that country professes the unnatural design, not only of estranging herself from us, but of mortgaging herself and her resources to our enemies, the whole contest is changed; and the question is, how far Great Britain may, by every means in her power, destroy or render useless, a connection contrived for her ruin, and for the aggrandisement of France?”

“Under such circumstances, the laws of self-preservation must direct the conduct of Great Britain; and if the British Colonies are to become an accession of power to France, will direct her to render that accession of as little avail as possible to her enemy.”

“It will now become the Colonies,” added they, “to call to mind their own solemn appeals to Heaven, in the beginning of this contest, that they took up arms only for the redress of grievances; and that it would be their wish, as well as their interest, to remain for ever connected with Great Britain. We again ask them, Whether all their grievances, real or supposed, have not been amply and fully redressed? And we insist that the offers we have made, leave nothing to be wished in point either of immediate liberty, or of permanent security. If these offers are now rejected, we withdraw from the exercise of a commission, with which we have in vain been honoured. The same liberality will no longer

longer be due from Great Britain; nor can it either in justice or policy be expected from her."

In order to mitigate the severity of this and the foregoing declaration, they next proceeded to grant and proclaim a general pardon for all treasonable offences committed during the present contest, from its commencement to the present time, without any exception whatsoever; and they offered to the Colonies at large, or separately, a general or separate peace, with the revival of their ancient governments, secured against any future infringements, and protected for ever from taxation by Great Britain.

The publishing of this proclamation produced an immediate warning from Congress, to all the inhabitants of the Colonies, who lived in places exposed to descents and ravages, to remove on the appearance of danger to the distance of at least thirty miles, together with their cattle and all their moveable property.

"This," it was added, in the words of the warning, "could not be thought a hardship in such times of public calamity, when so many of their gallant countrymen were daily exposed to the toils and perils of the field, fighting in defence of the public."

This warning was accompanied with a resolution of Congress, by which it was recommended, that "Whenever the British troops proceeded to burn or destroy any town, the people should, in the same manner, ravage, burn, and destroy the houses and properties of all tories, and enemies to the independence of America, and secure their persons; without treating them, however, or their families, with any cruelty."

In addition to this warning, they issued a manifesto, conceived in the strongest and most pointed terms that were applicable to the object they had in view.

It set forth, that the inhabitants of America had been driven by the oppressive measures of Great Britain to take up arms, and declare themselves independent.

“Confiding in the justice of their cause,” said they: “Confiding in him who disposes of human events, although weak and unprovided, they set the power of their enemies at defiance. In this confidence they had continued three bloody campaigns.”

“Considering themselves as children of that Being who is the common father of all, they had been desirous to alleviate, at least, as they could not prevent, the calamities of war.”

But they asserted, that the conduct of those who acted in the service of Great Britain, had been the very reverse.

After several heavy charges, and expressing themselves with the utmost acrimony respecting various particulars, they concluded by declaring, “That if any of their enemies should presume to execute the threats contained in their late proclamation, they would take such exemplary vengeance, as should deter others from a like conduct.”

This manifesto was accompanied with a variety of publications from private individuals, all written with great strength of stile, and animation of thought. Their general aim was to impress the commissioners with the fullest belief, that an attempt to procure a return of obedience to Great Britain on the part of the Colonies, was totally fruitless and impracticable.

But exclusive of this object, they launched into a number of discussions relating to the conduct of Britain, which they reprobated with unreserved asperity of language and manner. They spared no character, and represented every transaction in the most opprobrious light.

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Among these publications, was a letter addressed to the commissioners, on the subjects of their late proclamation. They were examined with a freedom and boldness that set all restraint at defiance. The truth was, the Americans considered it as an effort that ought never to be repeated; and were determined, by their treatment of it, to discourage and banish for ever all ideas of renewing any attempt of the like nature.

After going through every paragraph of the proclamation, with the utmost latitude of thought and expression, when the letter came to that part of it which denounces threats of revenge and devastation; "Thus," it says, "after three years of constant hostilities, of a war prosecuted in a manner which has astonished all Europe, censured and reprobated by your ablest senators, we are now told that Great Britain will no longer extend her mercy towards this country."

"But were you able to satiate your revengeful appetites, by rioting in slaughter and desolation along our sea coasts, it would but more completely rivet our union with France: America would then be rendered more dependent on her, and other European powers, for a thousand articles which she might otherwise be willing to import from Britain. This step alone seems wanting to complete the ruin of your country."

In this manner did the Americans vent themselves upon every subject that was brought in agitation relating to them. Convinced that all the endeavours of Britain, to reduce them, would be thrown away, they took unbounded liberties with every object wherein she was concerned; and looking upon her as an irreconcilable foe, they took a peculiar delight in representing her as utterly undone.

The inutility of the commission from which so much had been expected in England, became daily
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more evident. It was with difficulty the Congress could bring themselves to treat it with any remnant of respect, or even decorum. Shortly after the retreat of the British army to New York, the commissioners wrote a letter to Congress, in answer to that wherein they notified their resolution to admit of no treaty, without a previous acknowledgment of the independence of America: but Congress resolved that no answer should be given to it; and by way of slight, published the letter and their resolution.

Nor could they, in their private capacity, escape the animadversion of individuals. As they had in their public declarations reflected upon the conduct of France with great freedom of expression, the Marquis Fayette construed it as an insult, which he was bound personally to resent. He wrote, accordingly, a letter to the Earl of Carlisle, as the principal member of the commission, wherein he complained of the reflections cast upon his country, demanding reparation, and challenging that nobleman to meet him in the field, with General Clinton for his second.

From the unreasonableness and impropriety of such a challenge, it was attended with no consequence; and only served to shew the spirit and zeal of that young nobleman for the honour of his country. It was, however, a mortification to persons invested with a public character, to find themselves called to account in a manner which seemed to diminish their importance.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

Military Operations in America.

1778.

DURING these transactions in the north and middle Colonies, some hostilities had taken place between the people of Georgia and East Florida; but as neither of these Colonies were possessed of much internal strength, their accidental incursions upon each others territories, though they indicated their respective warmth in the cause they had espoused, produced no events of any material consequence.

An expedition was, however, projected by the Americans, and partly carried into execution, in the spring of this year. Its intent was to establish a communication with the Spanish government at New Orleans, and to pave the way for a reduction of the British possessions in West Florida.

The person entrusted with this expedition, was Captain Willing, a resolute and enterprising man. At the head of no very numerous party, but consisting of men chosen by himself, he fell down the Mississippi, and came totally unawares upon the British settlements on the east of that river, in a country that made a part of West Florida; but was situated at too great a distance to receive any protection, on this occasion, from the forces that were stationed there.

The American officer treated them with great generosity. Upon submitting to the government of the United States, their property remained untouched, and they were placed upon the footing of all those who paid obedience to Congress.

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This conquest, though of little importance in itself, awakened the attention of the people at New York to the southern parts of America. As the winter was now approaching, during which it would be unadvisable to form enterprizes against the northern Provinces, those in the south became, of course, the most eligible objects.

Among these, Georgia seemed to offer the least difficulties, and to promise, at the same time, great advantages from a reduction. It abounded in a production of the utmost utility. This was rice, which, in the present circumstances of the British army, was a principal necessary of life, and an effectual substitute for a variety of those provisions which they could only receive from Europe.

Other motives concurred in rendering this attempt highly seasonable; the vicinity of Georgia to Carolina, would, in case of its being reduced, open an entrance into this latter province, and materially disturb the commerce it carried on with Europe, to the great emolument of America; of which it had proved a powerful support since the commencement of hostilities, by the constant and plentiful exportation of its commodities to all parts.

The command of this expedition was given to Colonel Campbell, an officer of known courage and ability. He embarked at New York, with a competent force, under the convoy of some ships of war, commanded by Commodore Hyde Parker.

In order to give additional strength to this enterprize, it was determined that an attack upon Georgia should be made from another quarter. To this intent, General Prevost was directed to advance from the side of East Florida, where he commanded, with all the troops that he could collect, leaving no more than were absolutely requisite for the immediate protection of that Colony. Happily, its situation was such, as exposed it to very little

apprehensions of any attack from the Americans, at this time.

The forces that sailed from New York, arrived at the entrance of the river Savannah, about the end of December. In order to obtain information of the condition and circumstances of the place, and the strength and situation of the enemy, a party of light infantry and sailors were sent up a creek in flat-bottomed boats: they luckily seized and brought off two men, by whom they were informed, that the batteries that had been erected to guard the river, were, from being out of repair, become unserviceable; that the garrison was very weak; but that troops were hourly expected.

Upon this intelligence, preparations were immediately made for a descent. The armed vessels led the way, followed by the transports: the water was so shallow, that a number of them grounded; but through the judicious exertions of Captain Stanhope of the navy, who served as a volunteer upon this occasion, this obstruction was quickly surmounted. The transports were got off the flats, and the troops were embarked in the flat boats, in which they rowed up the river, and took their station off the landing place. It being dark at their arrival, and the enemy appearing by the fires on the shore to be prepared for defence, it was found necessary to wait for the return of day.

The place at which it was intended to land, was of great natural strength. Its access was extremely difficult; and had it been properly fortified, would have proved impracticable: but it was the only place at which a landing could be attempted: the whole extent of land that lay between it and the isle of Tybee, at the entrance of the river, consisting of swamps and marshes, intersected by deep and large creeks, impassable at the lowest water.

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The division that lay off the landing place during the night, made good its landing at break of day. It was commanded by Colonel Maitland. A narrow causeway, six hundred yards long, and flanked with a ditch on each side, led from this spot to a house seated upon a high and ridgy ground. This house Colonel Maitland resolved instantly to secure: to this purpose a body of light infantry formed directly, as soon as landed, and moved forwards with all speed along the causeway. On their approach to the house, they received a heavy fire from a party of the enemy, stationed on their way, by which Captain Cameron, who headed the light infantry, was killed. But his men, provoked at the loss of their commander, rushed upon them so quickly, that they had no time to charge again, and were forced to betake themselves to a neighbouring wood.

Having secured the landing place, the remainder of the troops came ashore, and took post on the ground near the house, at the head of the causeway. From hence they commanded an extensive view of the country, and could observe all the motions of the enemy. A large reinforcement was just arrived, and was at this very time forming in order of battle, between the town and the British troops.

Colonel Campbell, who deserted them from the height where he was posted, resolved to advance forwards and attack them without delay, before they had time either to take a more advantageous position, or to fortify that which they had taken.

Having secured his communication with the landing place, the Colonel led his troops up the main road towards the town. On its left, he was guarded by a thick wood in a swampy ground; on its right stood several plantations, which were occupied by the light infantry which he detached for that purpose.

From the many ditches and inclosures, and other impediments of that nature in the way of the British troops, notwithstanding they begun their movements early in the morning, it was three in the afternoon before they could clear these obstructions, and gain the open grounds.

On their approaching the enemy, they found him posted apparently to much advantage. They had chosen a situation, wheron if they had been attacked, it would have been very difficult to force them.— They were drawn up in exceeding good order, covered by swamps on their right and left; across the road, in the centre of their front, between two marshy spots, a deep trench was cut, and about a hundred yards abreast of this trench, a rivulet ran in the same direction, the bridge over which they had broken down: several pieces of cannon were planted on their flanks and centre.

This disposition of the enemy threatened an obstinate dispute, before they could be dislodged.— While Colonel Campbell was making the necessary arrangements for this purpose, his good fortune threw a negro into his hands, from whom he received such intelligence as decided at once the fortune of the day.

This negro, upon examination, was found to be acquainted with a private path through a swampy forest on the enemy's right. It happened fortunately that the way to this path lay behind a hollow, through which the troops might march unobserved by the enemy.

Upon this intelligence, Sir James Baird was directed by the Colonel to march through this path with the light infantry, to turn the enemy's right wing, and assail them in the rear.

While this movement was performing, the artillery was brought up, and formed in the hollow, in such a position as to be ready, at a proper warning,

to be hauled up to the rising ground before it, from whence it would command the right of the enemy, and protect the troops in the wood.

As soon as Colonel Campbell judged that the light infantry had cleared its passage through the path, and begun their attack upon the rear, he directed the artillery to move up to the ground in its front, and the whole line to advance upon the enemy with all speed: the charge was so brisk and resolute, that they were quickly broken and dispersed.

By this time, Sir James Baird, at the head of the light infantry, had made good his way through the wood, and was proceeding to execute his orders, when he met with a body of militia, with cannon, drawn up on an advantageous ground, to secure the right flank of their army from any attack on that quarter: he charged them with so much vigour, that they were soon routed, with the loss of their cannon.

Retreating to their main body, they met it in the utmost disorder and confusion: the light infantry fell upon both, pursued them with great execution, and entirely completed the victory.

The success of the day was remarkable in every respect. Before evening, the enemy was defeated in battle; besides those that were slain, amounting to about one hundred and twenty, near five hundred were made prisoners, of whom thirty-eight were commissioned officers; the capital of the Province, its fort, with all its artillery, ammunition, and stores, a large quantity of provisions, and all the shipping in the river, fell into the possession of the victorious army.

The conduct of Colonel Campbell upon this occasion did him the highest honour; not only on account of the military skill he had displayed, but the care he took that no irregularities should be committed by the soldiery. Notwithstanding the

American troops retreated through the town of Savannah, and many of the inhabitants were in the streets, none suffered in the pursuit but such as had arms in their hands, and were found in actual resistance, and every care was taken to prevent the houses from being plundered.

It had been determined by the enemy, that if the town could not be preserved, it should, after the example of New York, be set on fire, to prevent its being of any utility to the British troops; but upon information of this design, the British commander took such effectual precautions that nothing of that kind was attempted.

The spirit and activity with which both officers and soldiers exerted themselves in this expedition, was truly conspicuous. Without horses to draw their artillery, nor waggons to carry their provisions, they still found means to pursue the broken remains of the enemy's forces, and to compel them to retire into Carolina.

On this success of the British army, many of the inhabitants joined the Colonel, and declared in favour of Britain. They resorted to him in such numbers, that he was enabled to form them into companies of horse and foot: they were employed in patrolling the country, and in watching the enemy's motions in the neighbouring province of Carolina.

After thus defeating the united forces of the adverse party in Carolina and Georgia, Colonel Campbell, and Commodore Parker, were of opinion that this would prove a favourable opportunity to issue a proclamation, inviting the inhabitants to return to their allegiance to the British government, on the terms offered by the Commissioners, and to assist in the suppression of those who resisted it.

Their persuasion was justified by the event: the inhabitants, as soon as it was issued, flocked from
all

all parts of the province to the King's standard, and cordially took the oaths, and embraced the profers made to them.

Further to establish the public security, and check every attempt to disturb the peace of individuals, pecuniary rewards were offered for apprehending of committee and assembly men, and others who came into the province with an intent to interrupt its tranquility, by raising insurrections, or molesting the inhabitants.

Such was the diligence used upon this occasion by the British commanders, that in the space of ten days from the landing of the troops, the whole province of Georgia was entirely recovered out of the hands of the enemy, its frontiers secured from invasion, and such a disposition of the forces formed, as effectually shut up all the avenues leading from South Carolina: its internal government was settled at the same time on a footing that seemed to afford general satisfaction to all parties concerned.

During these transactions, General Prevost was advancing with all the troops he had been able to collect in East Florida. He had a multitude of difficulties to encounter on his march: the want of provisions, and the difficulty of procuring them was such, that all his troops, both officers and soldiers, were constrained for several days to live upon oysters only; they submitted to this hardship, as well as to those resulting from constant fatigue, aggravated by the excessive heat of the weather, with the most exemplary patience and cheerfulness.— After overcoming these obstructions, they arrived at length in sight of Sunbury, the only place remaining to the Americans in Georgia. After a slight defence, as all communication and hope of relief was cut off, it surrendered at discretion; and General Prevost continuing his march, arrived at Savannah,

Savannah, where the command devolved to him, as senior officer.

In the mean time, Count D'Estaing had exerted himself so diligently at Boston, that his squadron was now completely refitted, and in a condition to put to sea.

He had employed the leisure he had in that city, to ingratiate himself with the people of that Colony, by those arts and methods in which the French are such complete masters. He had flattered them with complimentary discourses, and lavished every possible commendation on their character and conduct in the present contest, and especially on the measure of renouncing their political connection with Great Britain, and forming an alliance with France. He gave them frequent treats and entertainments, wherein nothing was omitted to impress them with advantageous notions of French taste and magnificence. In one of these particularly, which was given on board the *Languedoc*, in order to recommend himself the more powerfully to his new allies, and to show how highly he respected their alliance, he fixed the picture of General Washington in the most conspicuous part of the place of entertainment, in a superb frame, decorated with laurels.

By these, and the like methods, he obtained the favour and benevolence of the ruling people, and the genteeler classes, and not a little accelerated the assistance he wanted in a variety of respects.

Nor was he unmindful, at the same time, of a very essential part of the commission with which he was charged, and which was a material object in his expedition to America: this was to revive the interest of France in her ancient Colony of Canada, and to excite the people to detach themselves from the obedience to Great Britain, and to return to that of
France,

France, or join themselves to the United States of America.

In pursuance of this design, a declaration was published, addressed in the name of the King of France to the French inhabitants of Canada, and of every other part of America formerly subject to that Crown.

This declaration contained the highest praises of the valour of the Americans; it laid before the inhabitants of Canada the mortification they must endure in bearing arms against the allies of their parent state; it represented to them in the strongest terms, the ties formed by origin, language, manners, government, and religion, between the Canadians and the French, and lamented the misfortunes which had occasioned a disjunction of that Colony from France; it recalled to their remembrance the brave resistance they had made during the many wars they had been engaged in against England, especially the last; it reminded them of their favourite warriors and generals, particularly the valiant Montcalm, who fell at their head, in the defence of their country: it earnestly entreated them to reflect seriously on their disagreeable subjection to strangers, living in another hemisphere, differing from them in every possible respect, who could consider them no otherwise than as a conquered people, and would always, of course, treat them accordingly. It concluded, by formally notifying, that the Count D'Estaing was authorized and commanded by the King of France, to declare in his name, that all his former subjects in North America, who should renounce their allegiance to Great Britain, might depend on his protection and support. This declaration was dated the twenty-eighth of October.

Great hopes were conceived of this declaration; nor were they ill founded, considering the natural attach-

attachment of all people for the land of their origin. Had Count D'Estaing succeeded in his original design, a recovery of Canada by France would probably have been one of the consequences, or, at least an union of it with their American allies.

But notwithstanding the failure of his principal intent, the Americans considered his expedition, though attended with many disappointments, as a decisive event in their favour. It was one of the causes that had induced Britain to offer terms of accommodation; it had occasioned the evacuation of Philadelphia; it had, by necessitating the British ministry to send Admiral Byron's squadron to the coast of America, given the French a superiority in the European seas; it had prevented a detachment from the British fleet at New York from sailing to the assistance of their West India islands; it would, in all probability, compel the British troops to abandon America, through the destitution of supplies and reinforcements, which would now be wanted for the defence of those islands. These were great and manifest advantages, and amply counter-balanced the failures in other respects.

Notwithstanding the endeavours of Count D'Estaing to render himself and his nation acceptable to the New England people, the inveteracy to the French, traditionally inherent in the lower classes, could not be restrained from breaking out in Boston, in a manner that might have been attended with the most serious consequences to the interests of both France and America, had not the prudence of the magistracy interposed, on the one hand, and the sagacity of Count D'Estaing co-operated on the other.

A desperate fray happened in that city between the populace and the French sailors, in which these were very roughly handled, and had much the worse. A number of them were hurt and wounded, and

and some, it was reported, were killed. By the diligent intervention of the ruling men, the tumult was appeased, and a proclamation was issued by the Council of State, enjoining the magistrates to make a strict search after the offenders, and offering a considerable reward for the discovery of those who were concerned in causing the riot; but it produced no effect, and the authors remained concealed, if indeed there were any real desire to bring them to light.

In order to obviate any resentment on the part of the French, for the treatment they had received from the Americans, the whole affray was imputed to some English sailors and soldiers, that had deserted, and enlisted in the American service. The French Admiral was too prudent not to admit the idea, and appeared perfectly satisfied with that apology, and the other measures that were taken to remove the evil impressions that must naturally arise among his countrymen, for the usage they met with from a people whom they were come to protect from their enemies.

Precisely at the same time, a disturbance of the like nature happened at Charlestown, in South Carolina, between the French and American seamen; but it was carried to much greater extremities: they engaged on both sides with small arms, and even with cannon. A number of people were killed and wounded.

This matter was considered in a very serious light by the legislative body of the province; a very considerable recompence was promised for the discovery of the promoters of this riot; the strictest injunctions were laid on the magistrates, and all persons in authority, to exert their utmost vigilance in discountenancing all national reflections against the natives of France, from which, it seems, these riots proceeded.

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These disturbances were the unavoidable effects of an antipathy against the French, which could not easily be eradicated from the breast of a people who originated from England, and had from their infancy been bred in a strong aversion to the ancient and inveterate enemy of a country which they had so long been taught to consider as their own. In spite of the precautions taken by the more provident and circumspectful among the Americans, by far the major part retained this hatred, and were at little pains to conceal it, even upon such occasions as required them to suppress it for their immediate interest.

Whatever necessity they were under to affect amity and attachment to the French, this inimical disposition to them, had taken such profound root, that it was only on public occurrences, where the united concerns of France and America were in question, that they could prevail upon themselves to dissemble it. The French themselves were too penetrating not to perceive it; but the objects they had in view, induced them to pass over in silence many transactions highly mortifying to their national vanity. As those in authority among them were from various causes more enabled to exert it, than persons invested with it among their new allies, they used all their influence and sway among their inferiors, to prevent them from showing their resentment, and did it so effectually, as to leave no apprehensions in the minds of those who presided over the affairs of America, that any ill consequences would ensue from these riots. They were conscious that their enemies were not without hopes that accidents of this kind might prove the means of creating dissensions of a more extensive nature, and from that reason, they were the more earnest in their endeavours to frustrate such an expectation.

C H A P. XXXIX.

Military Operations in the West Indies.

1778.

THE squadron under the command of Admiral Byron, after meeting with a most tempestuous passage from England, had put into Halifax, from whence it arrived at New York about the middle of September.

His first care, on hearing of the French fleet under Count D'Estaing being at Boston, was to put his own into such a condition, as might enable him to watch his motions; but it was so terribly shattered by the storms he had endured, that a full month was consumed in repairing it.

The same ill fortune that had attended him ever since his departure from England, still awaited him on the coast of America. As soon as he was arrived in Boston bay, he was assailed by a storm, in which his squadron suffered again so much, that it was obliged to take shelter at Rhode Island.

While the British Admiral was detained by the necessity of repairing the damages his ships had sustained, Count D'Estaing embraced that opportunity of quitting the harbour of Boston unmolested, and sailing for the the West Indies.

The French Admiral previous to his departure, began to feel extreme anxiety from the shortness of provisions. There had been a great scarcity throughout the whole Province of Massachusetts, owing to the numerous captures of those vessels employed in the procuring of corn and flour, of which that Colony does not produce a sufficiency for its own consumption. Had this scarcity continued

nued, the French Squadron would have been compelled to quit Boston in the greatest distress, from the impossibility of subsisting there any longer.— Fortunately for both the French and the Americans, the New England privateers happened to fall in with such a number of provision vessels on their way from Europe to New York, as restored plenty to the whole country: not only the markets were fresh stocked, but the abundance was such, that the government was enabled to victual the French fleet for a twelvemonth. With this ample supply, the French Admiral left Boston on the third of November, and proceeded on his expedition to the south.

As the object of this expedition was obvious, it was incumbent on the British commander at New York, to send such reinforcements to the West Indies as might counteract it, and put the islands belonging to Great Britain in those parts, into such a posture of defence, as might effectually protect them from the attempts of the enemy.

The circumstances of the war, and the method of carrying it on, had undergone a material change since the commencement of the campaign. As the system of offensive operations was different from what it had been during the two preceding years, and did not require the forces to be collected into so large a body as commonly, it became, of course, easier to employ them in separate detachments, which by the rapidity of their motions, as they went by sea, would be able to make the more effectual and forcible impression, from its being sudden and unexpected.

This alteration in the system of hostilities, afforded, at the same time, a greater facility of providing for the safety of the West India islands. A selection was accordingly made of some of the best troops in the service, to the number of about five thousand men, who embarked at New York, in a fleet

fleet of sixty transports; they were commanded by General Grant, and escorted by Commodore Hotham, with five men of war of the line, and some frigates.

The protection of the British West India islands, was, indeed, a business that admitted of no longer delay. Frequent representations had been made to the ministry by the merchants in England, and the possessors of estates in those islands, of their defenceless situation, and of the facility with which a very little force would be able to reduce them, should those hostilities break out between Great Britain and France which were now daily expected.

This anxiety was further increased by the continual preparations that were carrying forwards in the neighbouring French and Spanish islands. Martinico, the principal of the French Caribbee islands, was at this period under the government of one of the most active and enterprizing men that France had ever sent to the West Indies. He was constantly employed in forming projects against the possessions of Britain in those seas, and longed to signalize himself by reducing them to the power of France.

Among those isles that had been ceded to Great Britain by the last treaty of peace, was Dominico. Its situation between Guadaloupe and Martinico, and commanding a view of both, rendered it an acquisition of great importance in time of war. It had, for that reason, been carefully fortified, and provided with artillery; but from some unaccountable neglect, it had nothing that could be called a garrison.

This defenceless state of the island was well known to the Marquis De Bouille, the Governor of Martinico above-mentioned. He embarked at Martinico at the head of two thousand land forces, about the beginning of September, and made a descent at

Dominico, where he found no more than one hundred regulars, and a few companies of militia to oppose him. The resistance in such circumstances could not be great. As all endeavours to preserve the place were evidently useless, it only remained to procure as favourable a capitulation as could be obtained.

The Marquis De Bouille acted upon this occasion with a moderation that did much honour to his character. He granted every demand that was made. The garrison were treated with all the honours of war, and the inhabitants secured in the possession of all their property of every denomination. They were allowed to retain their internal government in all its forms: no change was to be made in the laws or the administration of justice. If at the termination of the war, the island should be ceded to France, they were to have the option of retaining their present system of government, or of conforming to that established in the French islands. The only alteration they experienced, was, the transferring their obedience from Great Britain to France, as they were left in the unmolested enjoyment of all their rights, both civil and religious.

The Marquis De Bouille observed this capitulation with the strictest fidelity: no kind of plunder or irregularity was permitted. As a recompence for their services upon this occasion, he distributed a pecuniary gratification among the soldiers and volunteers who had accompanied him upon this expedition.

One hundred and sixty-four pieces of excellent cannon, and twenty-four brass mortars, were found on the fortifications and in the magazines of this island, besides a large quantity of military stores. The French themselves testified the utmost surprize at finding such a number of warlike preparations, with so few hands to make any use of them.

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The only thing wanted was a garrison : this deficiency was amply supplied by the Marquis De Bouille. Sensible of the importance of the conquest he had made, he left a garrison on his departure, of fifteen hundred of the best troops he had.

When the news of the loss of Dominico was brought to England, it revived the complaints of those who had so often remonstrated against the smallness of the force provided for the defence of that, and the other islands. The general indignation it excited, appeared the more justly founded, as the importance of this island was clearly understood, from the uncommon attention that had been bestowed in fortifying it. Why the principal requisite, a sufficient military force, had not been stationed in a place of such consequence, was a matter of universal astonishment.

In aggravation of the grief that was felt upon this occasion, Admiral Barrington lay at this time no further off than Barbadoes, with two ships of the line and some frigates. His orders were to remain in that station till he received further instructions. He waited, accordingly, two months without receiving any, or even being apprized that hostilities had commenced between Great Britain and France.

As soon as he was informed of the attack upon Dominico, he thought himself no longer bound to remain passive for want of instructions, and sailed with all possible speed to its assistance. The force he had was fully sufficient to have frustrated the attempt, had it been practicable for the garrison to have prevented the French troops from making a descent; but that being effected, the Marquis De Bouille had nothing to apprehend from Admiral Barrington's superiority in shipping, as he could, on hearing of his approach, retire in a few hours to Martinico, and the Admiral had no troops to attack those that now were masters of the island.

Notwithstanding the arrival of Admiral Barrington deterred the French commander from making any further enterprizes at the present, the success he had met with, was an ample reward for his activity. The possession of Dominico by the English, had broken the chain of communication between the French islands, in a manner that exposed them to a multiplicity of inconveniencies, especially in time of war. This recovery of it at so critical a season, restored them to their former situation, and greatly embarrassed that of the English islands.

On receiving intelligence of the capture of Dominica, by the French, Sir Henry Clinton was convinced of the immediate necessity of sending the speediest succours, to prevent any further disasters. It was become the more indispensable, from the unfortunate detention of the squadron under Admiral Byron, to be refitted in consequence of the detriment it had received in the storm before Boston.

The danger to which the armament destined for the West Indies would be exposed, was obvious. The French squadron was hourly expected to sail from Boston, and its track being the same as of that which was preparing to sail from New York, it was much to be apprehended the former might fall in with the latter. The occasion, however, was so pressing, that it was determined to dispatch it at all hazards.

But the good fortune of this fleet was singular. It sailed from Sandy Hook the very day on which the French squadron, under Count D'Estaing, took its departure from Boston. As their destination was the same, they sailed in a parallel direction during great part of the voyage, very near each other; but happily for the British fleet, without knowing any thing of their proximity. To complete this good fortune, a violent storm arose, which dispersed the French squadron, and drove it to such a distance,

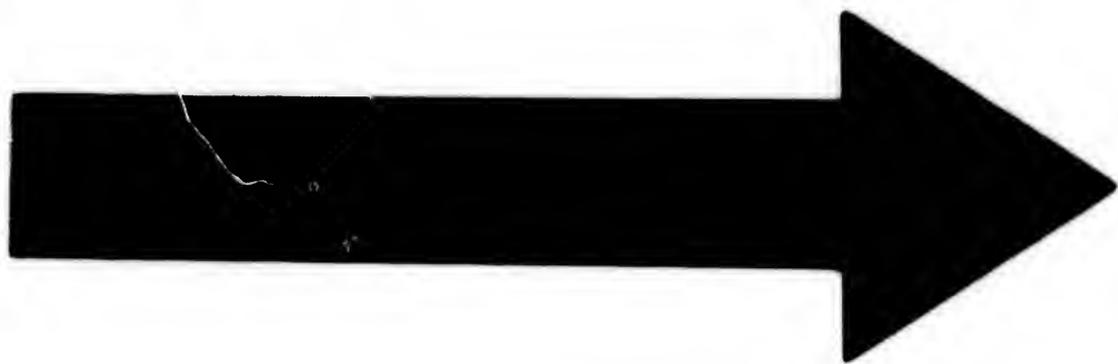
as prevented its falling in with the fleet under Commodore Hotham. He arrived safely at Barbadoes, and joined Admiral Barrington, before the Count D'Estaing had reached any of the islands.

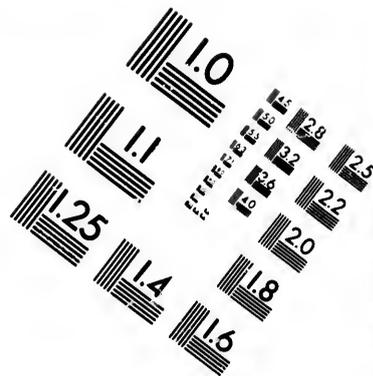
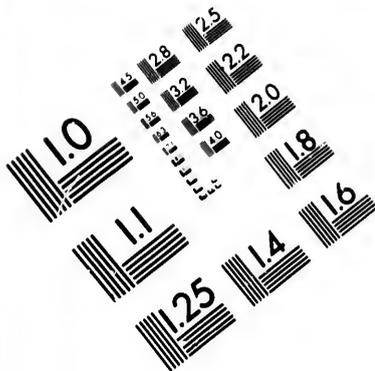
It was immediately determined to seize this critical opportunity, and to attack, before his arrival, the isle of St. Lucia, lying to the north west of Barbadoes, and in sight of Martinico. To this purpose, General Meadows, with a body of light infantry and grenadiers, was dispatched to make a descent at a bay called Cul de Sac; where he landed accordingly on the thirteenth of December. The heights on the north side of this bay, were occupied by the Chevalier De Micoud, the French commandant of the island, with a body of regulars and the militia. Notwithstanding the advantages of the ground where he was posted, the General quickly forced him to retire with the loss of his artillery, and seized upon a battery at the entrance of the harbour.

The way being thus cleared for the remainder of the forces, they landed under General Prescott, and joining with those under General Meadows, they advanced together towards the chief place in the island. The French commandant made the best defence he was able; but was obliged to retreat before the superiority of force that attacked him.

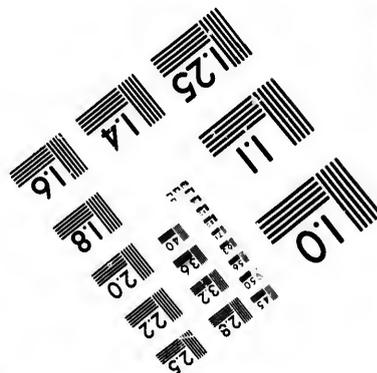
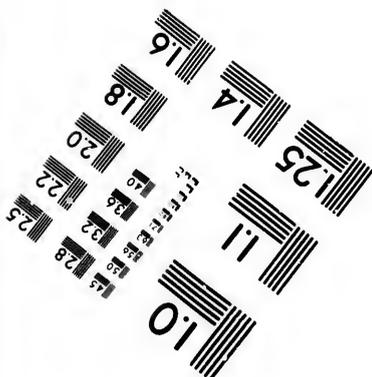
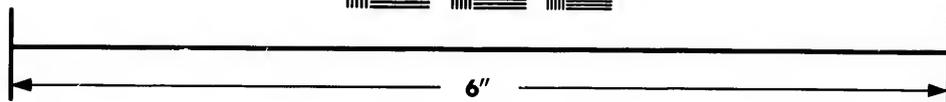
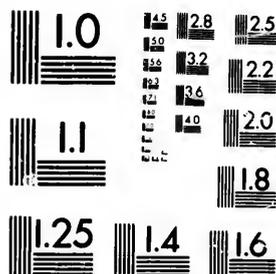
As fast as the enemy retired from their posts, they were occupied and put in a state of defence with the utmost expedition, as if the immediate necessity of taking these precautions had been foreseen.

General Meadows had, by this time, taken possession of a post of great importance, called Vigie, commanding the north side of Carenage Harbour. General Sir Henry Calder, with a strong body, was stationed at the landing place, to preserve the communication with the fleet. From thence he sent several detachments to seize the posts on the adja-





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cent mountains that commanded the south side of Cul de Sac Bay.

The utility of these measures appeared much sooner than it had been imagined. Scarce had they been accomplished, when a large fleet was discovered, steering towards the island. It consisted of the squadron commanded by Count D'Estaing, attended by a great number of frigates, privateers, and transports; on board of which was embarked a force of no less than nine thousand men. They were chiefly regulars, drawn from the garrisons of the French islands, or brought from France in his own ships. They had been waiting for him at Martinico, where they had been collected by the Marquis De Bouille, after his capture of Dominico, in hopes of being able, in conjunction with the troops under Count D'Estaing, to make a conquest of all, or most of the British islands, before any succours could arrive for their protection.

The French Admiral was now in his way to the Grenades, with which he meant to begin his operations, when he received information of the capture of St. Lucia by the squadron under Admiral Barrington. This he considered as a welcome intelligence, as he doubted not, from his great and decisive superiority of naval and military strength, to defeat, with facility, the British force at that island. As it was the whole of what they had in the West Indies, it afforded him the higher satisfaction that it was collected in one place, as he flattered himself he should have it in his power to take such measures as would secure an entire capture of both the troops and shipping.

In this expectation he hastened with all diligence in order to come upon them before they had notice of his approach, and could have time to prepare for his reception.

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Fortunately for the British fleet, it drew towards evening as he approached the island; and he thought it most advisable, from his ignorance of its position, and the general situation of the British forces on shore, to put off any attack till next day.

This afforded leisure to Admiral Barrington to make the necessary dispositions to encounter the enemy. The whole night was employed in warping the transports into the bottom of Cul de Sac Bay, where they would lie out of all danger; and in forming the ships of war into a line at its entrance. His squadron was composed of one ship of seventy-four guns, one of seventy, two of sixty-four, two of fifty, and three frigates. On the two points of land, at the entrance of the Bay, batteries were planted.

To the north of Cul de Sac Bay, lies another called Carenage, a place much more convenient and secure than the former. Hither it was, upon that account, the British Admiral intended to have moved with his whole fleet, had he not been prevented by the sudden appearance of the French.

Count D'Estaing, who knew the advantages of this bay, resolved to take possession of it, in order to prevent his being anticipated. To this purpose, on the next morning, he stood in for it with his whole fleet: but on his approach, he received so heavy a fire from the batteries which had been seized by the British troops, that he was compelled to sheer off. His own ship, the Languedoc, suffered most on this occasion. This unexpected resistance at a place which they still thought their own, threw the French squadron into much confusion; it bore away, and remained some time inactive. After recovering from this surprize, Count D'Estaing bore down in a line of battle on the British squadron in Cul de Sac Bay. Here a warm engagement ensued; but he met with so firm and de-

terminated a resistance, that he was compelled to retire.

This first attack was made at eleven in the morning: it was renewed at four in the afternoon, when it lasted longer, and the French made a heavier fire than in the morning; but with no better success: they were obliged to withdraw in great disorder, and with no little damage.

This was a severe disappointment to a man of Count D'Estaing's high spirit; and who looked upon a total defeat and capture of the British Squadron as a certainty. On the next morning, he stood in again towards the bay, apparently with an intention to make a third attack; but after forming his line, and seemingly preparing to engage, he suddenly stood off again, and came to an anchor that evening in Gros Ilet Bay, to the north of that of Carenage,

Between this latter and the former, lies another called Choc Bay. Here the French Admiral, during the night, and in the course of the next morning, landed all his troops; resolving to make a vigorous attack upon the British Squadron from the heights in the neighbourhood of Cul de Sac Bay. He had proposed a bombardment of the whole fleet from those heights, and was advancing with all speed to occupy them for that purpose, when he found them already possessed by the detachments under Sir Henry Calder.

Disappointed in this expectation, he then determined to make an attempt upon the corps stationed under General Meadows, on the peninsula called Vigie, which forms the northern side of Carenage Bay. This corps had thrown up an intrenchment across the isthmus joining that peninsula to the main island. Count D'Estaing divided his army in two parts; the one to attack this intrenchment, the other to observe the motions of the detachments
under

under Generals Grant, Prescott, and Calder, and to prevent them from giving succour to General Meadows.

The body with which he intended to assault the troops on the peninsula, was composed of the best soldiers in his army, about five thousand in number. They marched to the attack in three columns; the right, commanded by the Count D'Estaing; the center, by an officer of the celebrated name of Lovendal; and the left, by the Marquis De Bouille. The corps under General Meadows did not exceed thirteen hundred men; but they were a part of those intrepid troops that had so greatly signalized themselves in America.

As the French advanced to the attack, their flanks lay exposed to the fire of several batteries, which had been erected on that side of Carenage Bay which is opposite to the peninsula. They pressed onwards with great spirit and impetuosity. The British troops, according to orders, permitted them to come up to the very intrenchments without firing; when they made a heavy and well-directed discharge that did most dreadful execution. They then received them at the point of the bayonet. Notwithstanding the French continued the assault with the most undaunted resolution, they were repulsed every where with terrible slaughter, and obliged to retire at some distance to recover themselves.

They then returned to the charge with no less intrepidity than before; and were again received with the same cool and determined courage: the slaughter was renewed, and they were again thrown into disorder, and compelled to withdraw.

Not discouraged by this second repulse, they rallied, and made a third charge; but the destruction made in the two first, had so weakened them, that they were soon broken, and thrown into such confusion, that they could stand their ground no longer,

longer, and were forced to make a retreat with the utmost precipitation.

They were so completely defeated, that they left their dead and wounded in the field of battle, and were obliged to ask permission to inter the first, and carry off the last, which was granted them, on condition these should be considered as prisoners.

The conduct of General Meadows on this memorable day, displayed such professional ability, as obtained him the highest commendation both of friends and enemies. It was acknowledged by the French officers, that they had never been witnesses of a more able and soldier-like defence. Nor was his personal bravery less conspicuous: he received a wound in the very commencement of the action; but would neither withdraw, nor suffer it to be dressed, till it was entirely over.

The loss of the French, in killed and wounded, amounted to no less than fifteen hundred men, by their own account. This exceeded the number of those they attacked by two hundred. It shews, that though they were repulsed, it was not till they had made every effort of which valiant soldiers are capable. A proof of the eagerness and determination with which they made their attack, was, that seventy of their grenadiers were killed within the intrenchments in the first charge.

Some of the very best troops in the British and French service were engaged on this day. It is no exaggeration to say, that those who came from America had not their superiors in the world. Those whom Count D'Estaing brought from France, were known to be chosen men. They both sustained the military reputation of their respective countries, in a manner that reflected equal honour upon both. The attack and defence were conducted with a magnanimity and contempt of danger worthy of the high-spirited character of both nations.

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The expectations of the French and Americans had been raised so high upon this occasion, that they entertained no doubt of the total destruction of the British military and naval power, and the consequent reduction of every island they possessed in the West Indies.

Elate with these hopes, a croud of French and American privateers had joined Count D'Estaing from various quarters, and were hourly encreasing, with the view of partaking in the conquest and the spoil.

Certain it is, that notwithstanding the great loss he had sustained in the late action, he had a formidable force still remaining. Besides his squadron of twelve ships of the line, he had now ten frigates, and several other ships of force; and his land forces were much more numerous than the British troops on the island.

With these advantages, he made no further attempt for its recovery, though he remained ashore during the space of ten days after the engagement. From this inaction, the British commanders began to imagine that his intention was to form a blockade, with a view to cut off supplies, and compel them to surrender for want of provisions; but to their great astonishment, he embarked his troops in the night of the twenty-eighth of December, and sailed to Martinico on the following day.

As soon as Count D'Estaing had left the island, the commandant, and principal inhabitants, desired to capitulate. The favourable terms granted to the inhabitants of Dominico, induced the British commanders to act with the same spirit of indulgence and moderation. The conditions were such as the inhabitants had every motive to be satisfied with, considering they were entirely at the discretion of the enemy: but they were dictated by that spirit of emulation not to be outdone in courtesy and generosity,

fty, which has of late years so honourably characterized the reciprocal conduct of the British and French nations in the midst of their hostilities.

This was the second disappointment the French Admiral had met with, contrary to his own and the general expectation, which was certainly well founded. But those who had formed such sanguine hopes from his enterprising disposition, and the force he carried out with him, did not sufficiently consider the men he would have to contend with both by sea and land. They were such as seemed peculiarly fitted for the arduous tasks which the difficulty of the times imposed upon them, and happily for their country, were completely qualified to face those many trials in which its unpropitious destiny had now involved it so universally.

C H A P. XI.

Proceedings in England.—Transactions at Sea.

1778.

GREAT Britain was now placed in such a situation as she had not experienced during the course of many centuries: she was now alone, and unassisted, to contend with the greatest power in Europe, while on the other side of the Atlantic, she had to combat with the united strength of her Colonies. In this perilous contest, she had not only these avowed and open enemies to resist, but the secret enmity of almost all Europe to counteract.

But what chiefly aggravated the calamity of her situation, was the domestic disunion under which she laboured more than at any other period since the civil wars during the last century. The kingdom was full of discontent, and the parties that opposed each other, did it with a virulence and acrimony that seemed to threaten it would at last terminate in actual violence.

In this embarrassed and distracted state was the British nation when the French ministry took up arms in favour of America. The eyes of all Europe were now turned upon this island; some with an anxious curiosity to behold by what means she would extricate herself out of such a complication of difficulties, but most with a secret desire to see her crushed beneath the weight of the burthens and hardships that fate seemed to have assigned to this period of her existence.

The war she had been waging with her Colonies, had, in the ideas of her numerous enemies, nearly exhausted her resources. To the enormous debt
which

which the prosecution of the preceding war had so largely contributed to accumulate, she had in the course of no more than three years hostilities on the continent of North America, added the immense sum of between thirty and forty millions. In what manner she would be able to continue such ruinous expences, on the accession of the formidable enemy she would have to encounter, was a matter not easy to conceive. It was looked upon as impracticable by her enemies, and it was from that persuasion they were forming those clandestine confederacies, through which they flattered themselves to overwhelm her at once, and put a final and decisive period to that power of which their jealousy had so long envied her the possession.

What induced numbers throughout the European nations to look upon her ruin as inevitable, was the very greatness of her spirit, and the inflexibility with which it was apprehended she would persist in maintaining her ground against all her foes. It was impossible, in their opinion, thus assaulted from so many quarters, that she would be able to bear, much less to repel the blows that would be given her by such powerful adversaries. They concluded, of course, that after a valiant, but fruitless resistance, she would sink under the repeated efforts of such a potent combination, and be reduced to a state of humility and weakness, unprecedented in her history, since the formation of her various parts into one kingdom.

Her situation was singular in various respects; she was divided at home; she was engaged in war with a large body of her own subjects, in another part of the world; her ancient enemies were preparing to attack her at her own doors, and she had not a single ally.

The means of facing this multiplicity of trials, were not, however, so much wanting as it was generally appre-

apprehended abroad. The commerce of the nation still continued to flourish, in despite of all obstructions; the circulation of business at home retained nearly its usual activity, and the revenue was but little impaired.

The great deficiency was that of unanimity. The nation abounded in men of the most eminent abilities, but they differed in almost every point that was brought into discussion. Without enquiring into the motives that led them to oppose each other with such inflexible violence, it was certainly to this unhappy disposition of the times one may safely attribute the readiness with which all the enemies of Britain confederated against her.

The nation at large called for unanimity in their rulers; and without adverting to former errors, were warm in their desires and requisitions for a revival of that spirit, and those exertions, which had always characterised it in times of danger. They seemed to be willing to overlook all past misconduct, on condition of acting henceforth with vigour and decision, and of showing the enemies that were threatening the kingdom on every side, that it was able to make head against all their efforts.

The very greatness and diffusion of the enmity professed against this country, instead of depressing the spirit of its inhabitants, seemed, on the contrary, to have raised it to a higher pitch than usual. The naval classes, especially, were animated with the firmest hopes of rising superior to all the endeavours of the foe to overcome them on their own element.

Various were the measures said to be in consultation at this critical period. The detaching of America from France, was, as being the most desirable, obviously the chief. But the commission appointed for that purpose, afforded little expectation of success. When it was reflected, that France offered whatever America could demand, either for the security

curity of her independence, or the advantages of her commerce, the terms sent out by the Commissioners appeared totally inadequate to the procuring of a reconciliation.

An acknowledgment of this independence would indisputably have been a sure and ready method of terminating all differences. But a measure of this nature was inadmissible in a great and high-spirited nation. Doubtless it would have been attended with very beneficial consequences, and saved this nation many lives, and immense treasures; but those who proposed it could not deny, that it would injure that reputation of courage and magnanimity, for which the British nation had so long been renowned.

This measure was therefore rejected as inglorious, and unworthy of the councils of this kingdom.— The proffers made to the Americans were adjudged reasonable; they placed them upon the same footing as the people of this country; nothing more, in justice, could be desired; if they were refused, it would show they were determined, at all events, upon a total separation. Were this to be the case, Britain could not absolutely subscribe passively to such a treatment without infamy. Her honour would then require that she should strive with her utmost might to reduce her refractory subjects on the one hand, and to obtain reparation on the other, from those who had insulted her so glaringly as to assume their patronage and protection.

It was during some time, in contemplation to devise some expedient to induce France to abandon the Colonies, and observe a strict neutrality; but this soon appeared a forlorn hope. Great Britain had no inducement of sufficient weight to prevail upon France to relinquish the system she had pursued with so much steadiness ever since the breaking out of hostilities in America. No inducement, indeed,

deed, could in the nature of things, prove an equivalent to the dismemberment of the British empire. The French knew their interest too well, to depart from the measures which they had so successfully accomplished. It was now become their principal study to prevent Great Britain from undoing what they had been so solicitous to bring about, and the completion of which was considered as the greatest blow that could possibly have befallen their ancient and most formidable rival.

The honour and personal character of those who directed the affairs of France, were no less deeply concerned in adhering to the engagements formed with the Americans. In this matter, both the reputation and interest of that kingdom were too closely bound together, to discover the least glimpse of any method of drawing them out of the track they had hitherto so advantageously pursued.

In this season of danger, the City of London approached the throne with an address upon the uncertain and alarming situation of public affairs: the style of it was equally elegant and pathetic. It recapitulated with great force, the unhappy measures by which the nation had been gradually brought to its present difficulties; it expressed strong apprehensions of the inefficacy of the concessions that were intended to be transmitted to America, but still recommended the most earnest attention and endeavours to put as speedily an end as possible to so calamitous a contest.

It was not only the desire of the City of London, but of all the realm, to see the termination of this unfortunate quarrel. But all expectations of this kind were becoming daily more fruitless. A few days after the French ambassador had signified the acknowledgment of the independency of America on the part of France, orders were issued by that Court for the seizure of all the British vessels in the ports of that kingdom. This was done in conse-

quence of the message sent from the King to both Houses of Parliament on receiving that notification, and of the addresses which that message had produced.

These orders were followed by others of a similar kind in England; but little damage accrued to the mercantile interest on either side of the water. As an approaching rupture was equally suspected in both countries, the commercial intercourse between them had much decreased, and there were few trading vessels employed reciprocally by either.

But an event which decided at once the necessity of embracing the most vigorous measures, was the determination taken at the Court of France, to recognise in due form, and in the face of all Europe, the sovereignty of the United States of America. This was done by giving a public audience at Versailles to the three American Deputies who had negotiated and signed about a month before, the treaties of alliance and commerce between France and the British Colonies: these were Doctor Franklin, whose name, long before well known in Europe, was now become more celebrated than ever. The second in this commission was Mr. Silas Deane, a gentleman of acknowledged abilities; and the third was Mr. Arthur Lee, who had so ably supported the cause of his countrymen in England, under the signature of *Junius Americanus*.

They were received by the King of France in quality of Ambassadors from the United States of America. They were introduced to his presence with all the formalities usual on such occasions, and they were treated with the same respect and honours that are paid to the Ambassadors of crowned heads. This memorable event took place on the twenty-first day of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight.

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A transaction of this nature was too mortifying to the Court of Great Britain, for that of France to doubt in what manner the news of it would be received. Sensible what the consequences must necessarily prove, it immediately turned its whole attention to the arrangement of those vast preparations it had been making with an eye to those measures they were now to support.

In England, war now evidently appeared the only object in universal contemplation. The conduct of France left no alternative. Her coasts were lined with troops, and her harbours were filled with ships of war, and the wishes of the whole French nation seemed unanimous for a trial with Britain which of the two countries should enjoy the sovereignty of the sea.

The militia were now drawn out and embodied through all the counties in England. Encampments were formed, where equal proportions of the regular troops were intermixed with them; the utmost care and assiduity were exerted to inure them to the strictest discipline; they were kept in constant exercise and practice of all that could be learned of the science of war, short of real action. The proficiency they made was astonishing; expert judges were of opinion, that those officers and soldiers among the regulars excepted, who had seen actual service, the militia were in no wise inferior to them.

Still, however, the nation placed its principal reliance on its ancient and natural defence, its navy and seamen. It was with much concern they beheld that great bulwark of the kingdom in a far less flourishing state than the criticalness of the times demanded. The indispensable necessity of providing for the immediate preservation of the army in America, and the distant possessions of Britain, had occasioned a diminution of its naval force at home, which enabled the enemy to appear in the

Channel with a confidence to which they were little used.

The Parliamentary complaints of the neglect of the navy, were now renewed by the people throughout the whole kingdom. The national pride could not with patience endure the sight of any equality at sea in that enemy whom so much blood and treasure had been profused to reduce to an inferiority. Never, it was asserted, had this island stood in so much need of a powerful naval force; and never had it on the eve of any war, been found in such a state of weakness upon that element, without the command of which it could not pretend to be in any real security.

Happily, the commanders to which the fleet was to be entrusted, were men of acknowledged bravery and experience. The chief in command was Admiral Keppel, an officer who had served with great distinction, and acquired uncommon reputation during the last war. Admirals Sir Robert Harland, and Sir Hugh Palliser, served under him, both of them officers of undoubted courage and capacity.

Arriving at Portsmouth towards the end of March, Admiral Keppel exerted himself with so much industry and diligence, that exclusive of those ships which it was found necessary to dispatch to the coast of North America under Admiral Byron, a fleet of twenty sail of the line was got in complete readiness by the beginning of June, and ten more in a forward state of preparation.

At the head of this fleet, Admiral Keppel failed from Portsmouth on the thirteenth of June, in order to protect the return home of the vast number of commercial shipping expected from all parts of the world, and at the same time to watch the motions of the French fleet at Brest.

France had been at an immense care and expence in its naval preparations at this port. They were such

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such as left no doubt that she had some great object in immediate contemplation. The province of Brittany, in which that port is situated, was full of troops, and a large quantity of transports were in readiness in the several harbours around its coast.

On the arrival of the British fleet off the coast of France, two French frigates approached it, in order to make their observations. Notwithstanding no formal declaration of war had taken place, yet the hostile circumstances both kingdoms were in towards each other, superseded all considerations of that nature, and the necessity of obtaining intelligence of the strength and position of the enemy, rendered it indispensable to stop them.

These two frigates were the *Licorne*, of thirty-two guns, and the *Belle Poule*, of twenty-six. In consequence of a signal to give chase, the *Milford* frigate overtook the *Licorne* towards the close of the day, and requested the French Captain to come under the British Admiral's stern; upon his refusal, a ship of the line came up, and compelled him to come into the fleet.

Next morning, the *Licorne* seeming by her motions to be altering her course, a shot was fired across her way, as a signal for keeping it. Hereupon, she discharged a broadside, and a volley of small-arms into the *America*, of sixty-four guns, that lay close to her, and immediately struck. The behaviour of the French Captain was the more astonishing, as Lord Longford, Captain of the *America*, was at that instant engaged in conversation with him, in terms of such civility, as excluded all ideas of such treatment. The roughness of this behaviour was not however returned, though it certainly merited a severe chastisement.

The *Arctusa* frigate, of twenty-six guns, commanded by Captain Marshal, with the *Alert* cutter, was mean while in pursuit of the *Belle Poule*, that

was also accompanied by a schooner. He pursued the French frigate till they were both out of sight of the fleet. On his coming up, he informed the French Captain of his orders to bring him to the Admiral, and requested his compliance.— This being refused, the *Arethusa* fired a shot across the *Belle Poule*, which she returned with a discharge of her broadside. The engagement thus begun, continued more than two hours, with uncommon warmth and fury. It being the first action of a war, which both parties looked upon as the most important and decisive that had ever been waged between the two nations at sea, they equally exerted all their skill and valour, in order to obtain the honour of being victorious in this first trial.

The *Belle Poule* was greatly superior not only in number, (a superiority the French always have) but in the weight of her metal: her guns were all twelve-pounders; those of the *Arethusa* only six: Notwithstanding this inferiority, she maintained so desperate a fight, that the French frigate suffered a much greater loss of men than the English. The slain and wounded on board the former, amounted, by their own account, to near one hundred; on board the latter, they were not half that proportion.

Captain Fairfax, in the *Alert*, during the engagement between the two frigates, attacked the French schooner, which being of much the same force, the dispute continued two hours with great bravery on both sides, when she struck to the English cutter.

The *Arethusa* received so much damage, that she became almost unmanageable: the Captain endeavoured to put her into such a position, as to continue the engagement; but was unable to do it. Being at the same time upon the enemy's coast, and close on the shore, the danger of grounding in such a situation, obliged him to act with the more caution,

as it was midnight. The Belle Poule, in the mean time, stood into a small bay, surrounded with rocks, where she was protected from all attacks: she had suffered so much, that the Captain, apprehending that she could not stand another engagement, had resolved, in case he found himself in danger of one, to run her aground; but her situation prevented any such attempt; and as soon as it was daylight, a number of boats came out from shore, and towed her into a place of safety.

Such was the issue of the first engagement of this war. It took place on the seventeenth of June. Notwithstanding the evident and great superiority on the side of the French, this action was extolled by them as a proof of singular bravery, and the account of it received with as much triumph, as if it had been a victory. All France resounded with the praises of the officers and company of the Belle Poule, and represented them as men who had retrieved the honour of France, so much impaired at sea by the defeats of the last war.

The Court of France was too prudent not to countenance this general enthusiasm. Rewards and promotions were bestowed on the commander and officers of the Belle Poule; the widows and families of those who had fallen in that action, were liberally pensioned, as well as the wounded; and a pecuniary gratification was distributed among the seamen.

It was thought a necessary policy in the beginning of a war of such importance, to hold out considerable rewards to those who signalized themselves. The royal munificence on this occasion, was extremely well-timed among a people, who exceed all others in the alacrity with which they enter upon any enterprize that is accompanied with splendor. It excited an emulation among all the naval chiefs in France, that continued throughout the whole war. The effects of it were visible in that improvement

of their naval skilfulness, which became observable in a degree unprecedented in any former period.

On the eighteenth of June, the day following the engagement with the *Belle Poule*, another frigate fell in with the British fleet; and was captured by the Admiral's orders, on account of the behaviour of the *Licorne*. Yet he did not think himself authorised to detain their merchantmen. Several of them passed through his fleet unmolested, notwithstanding a report was prevalent, and generally credited as not being ill founded, that the frigates he had seized, were, together with the *Belle Poule*, sent out to cruize, in order to intercept the trade from the Straits, with that from Spain and Portugal, amounting to near eighty sail, and which were at that time hourly expected in those latitudes, on their return homewards.

The capture of these French frigates produced such intelligence to the Admiral, as proved of the utmost importance, at the same time that it was highly alarming. He was informed that the fleet at Brest consisted of thirty-two ships of the line, and twelve frigates. This was in every respect a most fortunate discovery, as he had no more with him than twenty ships of the line, and three frigates. The superiority of the enemy being such, as neither skill nor courage could oppose in his present circumstances; and as the consequences of a defeat must have been fatal to this country, he thought himself bound in prudence, to return to Portsmouth for a reinforcement.

He arrived at this port on the twenty-seventh of June, and remained there till the ships from the Mediterranean, and the Spanish and Portuguese trade, and the summer fleet from the West Indies coming home, brought him a supply of seamen, and enabled him to put to sea again, with an addition of ten ships of the line. But still there was a great
deficiency

deficiency of frigates, owing to the great numbers that were on the American station, and the necessity of manning the ships of the line preferably to all others.

The Court of France did not fail to represent the engagement between the *Belle Poule* and the *Arctusa*, and the seizure of the other frigates, as a breach of the peace on the side of Great Britain. Orders were accordingly issued out for making reprisals on the shipping of Great Britain; and to encourage the seafaring classes, a new regulation in regard to the distribution of prize-money was published throughout France, more favourable to the generality than those that had been formerly observed.

France having thus proceeded to every length that could be done, it was judged necessary in England to follow her example, by making the same arrangements as usual in the case of captures, and issuing letters of marque.

In the mean time, the preparations at Brest being fully completed, the French fleet put to sea on the eighth of July. It consisted of thirty-two sail of the line, besides a large number of frigates. Count D'Orvilliers commanded in chief. The other principal officers in this fleet, were Counts Duchassault, De Guichen, and De Grasse; Monsieur De Rochecoart, and Monsieur De la Motte Piquet. In order to animate the fleet, and to shew the greatness of the objects proposed by the war, and how much it relied on the courage and exertions of its officers and people, the Court had sent a Prince of the blood royal to serve on board of this fleet; this was the Duke of Chartres, son and heir to the Duke of Orleans, first Prince of the blood royal of France in the collateral line. He commanded one of the divisions of this fleet in quality of Admiral.

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On the ninth day of July, the British fleet sailed out of Portsmouth in three divisions; the first commanded by Sir Robert Harland, the third by Sir Hugh Palliser, and the center by Admiral Keppel, accompanied by Admiral Campbell, an officer of great courage and merit.

The French had been informed that the British fleet was greatly inferior to their own; which was but too true at the time when they received this information. Being yet unapprized of the reinforcement it was returned with, the French Admiral sailed at first in quest of it, intending to attack it while in the weak condition it had been represented to him.

As the British Admiral was equally intent on coming to action as soon as possible, they were not long before they met. On the twenty third of July, they came in sight. But the appearance of the British ships soon convinced the French Admiral of his mistake, and he immediately determined to avoid an engagement no less cautiously, than he had eagerly fought it before.

Herein he was favoured by the approach of night: All the British Admir'd could do on his side, was to form the line of battle in expectation the enemy would do the same. During the night, the wind changed so favourably for the French, as to give them the weather gage. This putting the choice of coming to action, or of declining it, intirely in their own power, deprived the British Admiral of the opportunity of forcing them to engage, as he had proposed.

There still remained some hopes of compassing this purpose. A gale had arisen during the night, which blew so fresh, as partly to disperse the French fleet: two of their capital ships were driven so far to leeward, that they could not come up with the
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main body. The British Admiral, who now plainly perceived that the enemy was studious to avoid him, resolved to avail himself of the situation of these two ships, to bring on a general engagement.

To this intent, he made his utmost efforts to cut off, and capture these ships, not doubting the French Admiral would give him battle sooner than submit to so great a loss, without endeavouring to prevent it: but such was the fixed determination to risk no general action, that the two French ships were left wholly to extricate themselves by their own exertions. They had the good fortune to escape; but they were not able to effect a re-union with the French fleet; which, by the separation of these two, was reduced to an equality in point of number, to the ships of the line in the British fleet.

During the space of four days, the French had the option of coming to action; but constantly exerted their utmost care and industry to avoid it. The British fleet continued the whole time beating up against the wind, evidently with a resolution to attack them. But notwithstanding the vigour and skill manifested in this pursuit, the British Admiral had the mortification to see his endeavours continually eluded by the vigilance and precaution of the enemy not to lose the least advantage that wind and weather could afford.

The motives which influenced the French to decline coming to action, were the daily expectation of a strong reinforcement, both of ships of the line and frigates, and the hope of intercepting, by means of these latter, the commercial fleets which must pass through the track they were stationed in, on their way to the British ports. A defeat would have frustrated all these hopes, and put an end at once to all endeavours of this kind, by obliging the
French

French to recal those frigates, as they would no longer retain the power of protecting them.

The British Admiral was thoroughly aware of these motives, and laboured of course with all his might, to compel them to an engagement; wherein, if unsuccessful, they would be deprived of those advantages, of which they must unavoidably remain in possession, at any rate, till that could be brought about.

The position of the French fleet was, at this time, so critical, that no time was to be lost in forcing them to alter it. From the multitude of their frigates, they occupied an immense track of sea, and formed a chain that guarded, as it were, all the avenues to the coast of Britain.

In the mean time, the periodical return of two fleets from the West India islands, and of as many from the East Indies, was now looked for. The loss of these, or a part of them, would have proved a grievous blow from their immense value, and the number of seamen they had on board.

All these were powerful reasons to urge the British Admiral to the most unremitting pursuit of the French fleet. But being to windward, and cautiously maintaining the weather gage, the French still continued to defeat all his endeavours, and to keep at such a distance, as made it impracticable to pursue them to any effect, while the wind continued in the present quarter, and they remained as unwilling to be approached.

The chase lasted in this manner, till the twenty-seventh of July. Between ten and eleven in the morning, an alteration of wind and weather occasioned several motions in both fleets, that brought them, unintentionally on the part of the French, and chiefly through the dexterous management of the British Admiral, so near each other, that it was no longer in their power to decline an engagement.

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This was so repugnant to the intent of the French, that they neglected nothing to disappoint the hopes now entertained, of bringing them unavoidably to action. As they could not defeat this hope intirely, they resolved, however, to frustrate it in part, by engaging in such a manner, as should leave the contest undecided.

Both fleets were now on the same tack : had they so remained, the British fleet on coming up with the French, would have had an opportunity of a fair engagement, ship to ship ; which would hardly have failed of proving very decisive. But this was a manner of combating quite contrary to the wishes of the French Admiral. Instead of receiving the British fleet in this position, as soon as he found that an action must ensue, he directly put his ships on the contrary tack, that sailing in opposite directions, they might only fire at, as they passed by each other. By this means a close and side-long action would be effectually evaded.

Having taken this resolution, which it was utterly out of the British Admiral's power to defeat, as soon as the van of the British fleet, consisting of Sir Robert Harland's division, came up, they directed their fire upon it ; but at too great a distance to make any impression : the fire was not returned by the British ships, on the other hand, till they came close up to the enemy, and were sure of doing execution. In this manner they all passed close along-side of each other, in opposite directions, making a very heavy and destructive fire.

The center division of the British line, having passed the rearmost ships of the enemy, the first care of the Admiral was to effect a renewal of the engagement, as soon as the ships of the different fleets, yet in action, had got clear of each other respectively. Sir Robert Harland, with some of the ships of his division, had already tacked, and stood to-

wards the French ; but the remaining part of the fleet had not yet tacked, and some were dropped to leeward, and repairing the damages they had received in the action. His own ship, the *Victory*, had suffered too much to tack about instantly ; and had he done it, he would have thrown the ships astern of him into disorder.

As soon as it was practicable, however, the *Victory* wore, and steered again upon the enemy, before any other ship of the center division ; of which not above three or four were able to do the same. The other ships not having recovered their stations, near enough to support each other, on a renewal of action, in order to collect them more readily for that purpose, he made the signal for the line of battle a-head.

It was now three in the afternoon ; but the ships of the British fleet had not sufficiently regained their stations to engage. The *Victory* lay nearest the enemy, with the four ships above-mentioned, and seven more of Sir Robert Harland's division. These twelve were the only ships in any condition for immediate service ; of the others belonging to the center, and to Sir Robert Harland's division, three were a great way a-stern, and five at a considerable distance to leeward, much disabled in their rigging.

Sir Hugh Palliser, who commanded the rear division during the time of action, in which he behaved with signal bravery, came of course the last out of it ; and in consequence of the Admiral's signal for the line, was to have led the van on renewing the fight ; but his division was upon a contrary tack, and was entirely out of the line.

The French, on the other hand, expecting directly to be re-attacked, had closed together in tacking, and were now spreading themselves into a line of battle. On discovering the position of the British ships that were fallen to leeward, they immediately stood

stood towards them, in order to cut them off. This obliged the Admiral to wear and to steer athwart the enemy's foremost division, in order to secure them; directing, at the same time, Sir Robert Harland to form his division in a line a stern, in order to face the enemy, till Sir Hugh Palliser could come up, and enable him to act more effectually.

The Admiral, in moving to the protection of the leeward ships, was now drawing near the enemy. As Sir Hugh Palliser still continued to windward, he made a signal for all the ships in that position to come into his wake: Sir Hugh Palliser repeated this signal; but it was unluckily mistaken by the ships of his division, as an order to come into his own wake, which they did accordingly; but as he still remained in his position, they retained theirs of course.

This non-compliance with the Admiral's signals, was unfortunately occasioned by the disabled condition of some of the ships in Sir Hugh Palliser's division. His own ship, the *Formidable*, had suffered so severely in the engagement, as to be at the present time absolutely unfit for action, and almost unmanageable.

In the mean time, the Admiral having effectually secured the ships to leeward, and the French having formed their line, it was necessary that he should exert himself with all speed for the formation of his own. Sir Robert Harland was directed to take his station a-head, and the signal repeated for Sir Hugh Palliser's division to come into his wake; but this signal was not complied with, any more than a verbal message to that purpose, and other subsequent signals for that division's coming into its station in the line, before it was too late to re-commence any operations against the enemy.

The French continued drawn up in order of battle, but did not show any inclination to renew the attack themselves, meaning no more than to act upon

upon the defensive, though they had it in their power to engage whenever they thought proper during the whole course of the day. In the night, they took the determination to put it wholly out of the power of the British fleet to attack them a second time. To this purpose, three of their swiftest sailing vessels were fixed in the stations occupied during the day by the three Admiral ships of the respective divisions, with lights at the mast-heads, to deceive the British fleet into the belief that the French fleet kept its position, with an intent to fight it next morning. Protected by this stratagem, the remainder of the French fleet drew off unperceived and unsuspected during the night, and retired with all speed towards Brest: they continued this retreat the whole course of the following day, and entered that port in the evening.

The discovery of this departure was not made till break of day; but it was too late to pursue them, as they were only discernible from the mast-heads of the largest ships in the British fleet. The three ships that had remained with the lights, were pursued; but the vessels that chased them were so unable to overtake them, from the damages they had received in the preceding day's engagement, that they were quickly recalled from the pursuit.

In the mean time, the situation of the British fleet did not allow it to keep its present station, with any reasonable hope of making an impression on the enemy, whose ships, though considerably damaged in their hulls, had suffered much less in their sails and rigging, and consequently could move with much greater speed.

This consideration induced the Admiral to make the best of his way to Plymouth, as being the nearest port, in order to put his fleet into a proper condition to return in quest of the enemy.

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The killed and wounded on board the British fleet in this memorable action, amounted to somewhat more than five hundred: but the French, it has been asserted, on grounds of great credibility, lost near three thousand; this appears the less improbable, from the consideration that the French, in all their naval engagements, aim principally at the masts and rigging, and the English chiefly at the body of the ships.

Notwithstanding it was clear beyond a doubt, that the French retired from the field of battle in order to evade another engagement, yet the utmost pains were taken by the French ministry to persuade the people that they had obtained a victory; but the means they employed to palliate their flight into Brest, were too weak and futile to impose even upon their best wishers in Europe.

A circumstance in this action, which was not called in question, was, that the French officers and sailors displayed a degree of skill and seamanship in the management of their vessels, which the oldest persons in the British fleet declared they had never seen any example of before among the French.— Various were the causes to which these improvements in naval matters were attributed; but the most natural is, the uncommon attention and assiduity bestowed upon their marine by those who presided over it, from their foreseeing how necessary it would be in the prosecution of those designs which were become the principal objects of their politics.

Such was the issue of the fight between the British and the French fleet, on the twenty-seventh of July, seventy-eight. Admiral Keppel hoped to have made it “a proud day to England”; such were his own words: but from a variety of causes, equally needless and odious to mention, it proved the source of a most fatal contention, which filled

the nation with complaints and jealousies, and excited animosities that are not even extinct at this day.

The skill and valour displayed on the side of the British officers and seamen in this engagement, was remarkable. They fought the enemy, and attacked them under many disadvantages. The French fleet was close and compact, and drawn up in such a manner, as to enable every ship to be well supported; the British fleet, on the contrary, from the determination of the enemy not to engage without compulsion, was obliged to bear down upon them in detached and unconnected parts, exposed to a great superiority of fire. Under such circumstances, nothing but an uncommon degree of professional abilities, and extraordinary exertions of courage, could have overcome the difficulties under which they laboured, and obtained those advantages of which the French were but too conscious. Their seizing the very first opportunity that offered to make a retreat, together with the solicitude and speed with which they effected it, made it manifest how much they dreaded these advantages, would, on a second engagement, have been improved into a complete victory.

Admiral Keppel having taken the determination to return home, for the purpose of repairing the damages of his fleet, left a sufficient strength to guard the entrance of the Channel, and disperse the French frigates that had been cruising there previous to the action. Most of them left their stations in consequence of it, which was a further proof how little they considered it in the light of any success.

As soon as the British fleet was refitted, it put to sea with the same intent and endeavour as before, to seek and engage the enemy. To this purpose, it took its station off Brest, to give the French

an opportunity of making good their boast of having defeated the English in the preceding fight. But the French fleet kept the same distance as before, and as studiously shunned a meeting. Instead of cruising in the Channel, or on its own coast, it proceeded to the latitude of Cape Finisterre, where it plied to and fro during the remainder of the season, leaving the Bay of Biscay, and the track to the French ports, open to the depredations of the British cruizers and privateers.

The consequence of this management of its marine was, that France was subjected to such losses, as excited universal clamour and indignation throughout the kingdom. Its trade from every quarter of the world suffered in a degree unprecedented in any former war. The number of captures made upon the French was prodigious; and what was an additional aggravation, they chiefly consisted of the most rich and valuable part of their shipping.

The trade of England, on the other hand, was protected in so extensive and effectual a manner, that no loss of any consequence was sustained. The seas in the neighbourhood of Great Britain enjoyed a security much beyond the expectations that had been formed at the beginning of the campaign, and totally different from what the enemies of this country had promised themselves, on the opening of the hostilities between France and Great Britain.

C H A P. XLI.

Transactions in the East Indies.—Losses and Disappointments of the French.

1778.

THE notification given by the Court of France of its acknowledgment of American independence, was justly considered as a declaration of war. In consequence of a well grounded persuasion that a quarrel would now ensue between the two kingdoms, as extensive in its operations as their respective power could make it, it was determined in the councils of the English East India Company, as essentially concerned in such a dispute, to put its possessions into a state of security with all possible speed, and at the same time to attack those of France, without waiting for any further formalities.

A resolution was accordingly taken to act vigorously and decisively in India, and to pursue immediate measures for the reduction of the principal settlements of the French in that country, before they could receive notice in France of the designs that were adopted for that purpose in England.

The instructions dispatched to this intent, were conveyed to their destination with such rapidity, and at the same time with so much secrecy, that a competent force was prepared at Madras under General Monro, and took possession of a post within four miles of Pondicherry, towards the beginning of August, without the French East India Company having received the least intimation of this design, or their officers in the East Indies being apprized of it, before it was begun to be carried into execution.

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As soon as the reinforcements were arrived intended for the prosecution of the siege, the place was closely invested. On the twenty-first of August, the British troops advanced within cannon-shot of the town, and seized a thick planted hedge, that served as an outside fence to the fortifications, which it surrounded on every side: this confined the garrison to the town, and deprived it of all inland communication.

In the beginning of September, the besiegers received a complete supply of artillery, and of other stores. A resolution was then taken to attack the place both on the northern and southern side, and the trenches were opened on each accordingly.

Before the commencement of the siege of Pondicherry, a squadron had been sent from Madras to block it up by sea. It consisted of a ship of sixty guns, one of twenty-eight, and one of twenty, a sloop, and an armed East Indiaman: it was commanded by Sir Edward Vernon. On his arrival off that place, he fell in with a French squadron under Monsieur de Tronjolly. It was composed of a ship of sixty-four guns, one of thirty-six, one of thirty-two, and two armed East Indiamen. Both squadrons maintained a warm engagement during the space of two hours; but notwithstanding their superiority, the French withdrew; and made the best of their way into Pondicherry, in order to refit. This engagement took place on the tenth of August.

Contrary winds and currents obliged the British squadron to leave that station for some days. Upon recovering it on the twentieth, the French squadron was discovered standing out of Pondicherry, apparently with a design of engaging. Sir Edward Vernon prepared accordingly for action, not doubting but the preservation of such a place as Pondicherry, would induce the French commander to exert him-

self to the utmost in its defence. He approached as near as he could to Pondicherry, and came to an anchor in the road during the night, but in the morning the French squadron had disappeared.— The French commander had taken the opportunity of night to depart, and had accomplished his intent with such expedition, that he was at day-break totally out of sight.

This departure of the French squadron enabled Sir Edward Vernon to block up Pondicherry by sea, and to cut off all supplies of provisions, and succours of any kind from that quarter. The garrison, though left to themselves, resolved however to make as long and obstinate a defence as their circumstances would possibly enable them. They composed a body of three thousand men, of which a third consisted of Europeans. They were commanded by Monsieur de Bellecombe, an officer of great bravery.

On the twenty-eighth of September, the besiegers began to fire upon the town: their batteries were mounted with thirty pieces of heavy cannon, and twenty-seven mortars. They were no less vigorously answered by the fire of the besieged, who were possessed of a very numerous artillery, amounting to no less than three hundred pieces.

The approaches of the besiegers, and the works they were carrying on met with great obstruction from the heavy and frequent rains which fall at this season of the year in that climate. They proceeded, however, with so much industry and spirit, that about the middle of October, they began to prepare for an attack on the body of the place.— They conducted both their attacks on the north and the south-side of the town with such success, that they were meditating a general assault, to assist wherein, a large body of seamen and marines were sent on shore from the British squadron in the road.

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But they were prevented from carrying this design into execution by a violent fall of rain on the day before the intended attack: it filled the ditches, and greatly damaged the floats that had been constructed to pass them. These damages, however, were soon repaired, and every preparation renewed for a general storming of the town.

By this time the garrison was greatly reduced: the vigorous resistance they had made, had cost them near a third of their number, in killed and wounded; and the remainder did not appear, upon calculation, sufficiently numerous to withstand the assault of near ten thousand men, of which the army of the besiegers still consisted, after deducting what they had lost on their side since the commencement of the siege.

These considerations induced the French Governor, on the sixteenth of October, the eve of the projected assault, to offer to surrender the town on terms of capitulation. His proposal was readily complied with, and he obtained the most generous and favourable conditions that could be granted consistently with the interest and safety of the British settlements in the East Indies. It was agreed that the European troops should be sent home to France, and the seapoys, and other country troops disbanded: the honours of war were paid to the garrison, and as a testimony of esteem and respect for Monsieur de Bellecombe, the regiment of Pondicherry was permitted to retain its colours.

The public stores, and whatever belonged to the government, and the French East India Company, were delivered up, but every individual was allowed to keep his private property.

In this manner were the French dispossessed of their principal settlement in the East Indies. The loss of the besiegers did not amount to one thousand men.

When the intelligence of this, and various other losses in that part of the world, was brought to Europe, it created great dissatisfaction in France, and struck all its well-wishers with astonishment.— They saw her power totally annihilated in India, and all those vast projects which had been forming in respect to that country entirely frustrated.

Both the French and their abettors began now to abate of those sanguine expectations they had indulged a few months before. Instead of that high-hand with which France had promised itself to act in every quarter of the globe, it had been uniformly disappointed every where: instead of bringing ruin upon Great Britain, its own subjects were reduced to the utmost distress, by the daily and prodigious losses attending every branch of their commerce. The failures among the merchants were continual and alarming; the sea-ports and trading towns were full of complaints, and the people in general as heartily reprobated the measure of declaring in favour of America, as they had been eager before in espousing its cause.

The case of Great Britain was the very reverse. The immense treasures resulting from her commerce were safely deposited in her harbours; she had lost little of what the usual balance of her trade brought from the East Indies, and that which she carried on in the different parts of Europe, had met with but an inconsiderable check.

That of France, on the contrary, prospered no where; her West India islands had suffered heavily, from the deprivation of innumerable articles wanted for the prosecution of their most necessary business, and their very subsistence. The calculation of the losses she had sustained by the capture of her homeward-bound ships and fleets, amounted, according to her own confession, to between four and five millions sterling.

Such

Such were the first fruits of the alliance that France had formed with America. The very different ideas that filled the minds of men on its first formation, from those with which they were now occupied, served to embitter and aggravate every calamity that was felt by the people of France.— The very policy that had projected this union was called in question, and represented as erroneous. The Americans were no longer that favourite nation for the assistance and relief of which the public was once so ready to enter the lists against their oppressors; they were now considered as an artful and designing people, who had by their artifices and intrigues, found means to engage in their quarrel a generous and spirited nation, that had in this instance been blinded to their real interests, and overpersuaded that they could not consult them more effectually than by embracing the present opportunity, afforded by the contest between Great Britain and her Colonies, of ruining their ancient rival by espousing the cause of these latter.

But instead of accomplishing the ruin of this rival, with that facility and promptitude that were held out as infallible, they had met with misfortunes and disgraces almost every where. An island or two excepted, of small consideration, they had been either foiled or disappointed in every undertaking they had formed, either abroad or at home. D'Estaing, whose exploits had been anticipated in the imagination of every man in France, had abandoned the coast of North America, without being able to make the least impression upon the enemy. He had speeded still worse in the West Indies, where, notwithstanding the superiority of his naval and military force, he was defeated both by sea and land. On the coast of France, they had retreated before the British fleet, after pretending to have beaten it. But that now appeared, what it was
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in reality,—a meer pretence. Had the French fleet been victorious, it would not most certainly have fled before a vanquished enemy.

Such were the complaints with which the whole kingdom of France resounded, while all Europe stood astonished at the firmness and inflexibility with which the British government faced the innumerable difficulties that had threatened to overwhelm it, and at the courage and activity with which the nation prosecuted every measure that was undertaken.

The situation of Great Britain was indeed become an object of universal surprize and admiration. At the commencement of the year, she was apparently in a state of general depression. Her enemies were daily growing stronger in the new world, and a storm was gathering in the old, which it was not thought she would have been able to weather. The hopes of the few friends she had were hourly decreasing, and the hand of Fate seemed, as it were, to lie heavy upon her.

But at the expiration of the year, all was reversed. She had stood her ground every where with the utmost fortitude : she had triumphed in various parts of the globe, and had lost reputation in none. She had preserved the vast wealth produced by her immense trade, from the depredations of her enemies ; and had enriched herself with the spoils of her principal foe. Her credit remained as firm as ever. Her determination to keep the field against all her adversaries, was equally unshaken ; and her hopes of being able to do it, not less founded. Thus, instead of that ruin which her enemies had thought proper to prognosticate, she still abounded in resources, and her resolution was unappalled.

France, by the manner she engaged in this contest, shewed that her inclination to injure Great Britain, was much greater than her power to effect such a design.

design. Those who seemed best acquainted with her circumstances, did not think she was sufficiently recovered from the disasters she had undergone during the last war, to enter upon the business she had taken in hand, with the vigour necessary for so vast an undertaking.

In a project of this nature, a maritime force superiorly decisive, was an indispensable requisite. But notwithstanding her efforts and attention, and the great sums she had expended on her navy, its condition, at the demise of Lewis the Fifteenth, was so feeble, that it required a much longer time than that which had elapsed since that event, to place it on a footing of parity with that of Great Britain

The French ministry did not reflect, that the naval assistance of the Colonies would not, in the infancy of their independence, and the commencement of their formation into a state, be considerable enough to enable her to dispute the empire of the ocean, with a nation that had so long enjoyed it, and was in possession of a navy, amounting to one hundred and ten ships of the line, ready constructed, besides twenty on the stocks. The actual strength of France, consisted of between seventy and eighty in readiness, and eight others that were building. Her new allies were not masters of one single ship of the line: they had a great number of privateers; but not above ten or fifteen ships that could even be ranked with frigates.

But it was chiefly on the superiority of her seamen, that Britain placed her dependance. The valour and the dexterity of her sailors were unequalled, as well as the experience and ability of her officers and commanders. The French ships were crowded with larger multitudes; but the British had far the greater proportion of real seamen.

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It was not long before the French ministry was convinced that Great Britain would require more powerful efforts than France was able to make, in order to compass the ends proposed by uniting with America. Neither honour nor profit had accrued from the events of the first campaign; and the second promised still less, from the stronger state of preparation, and the prodigious exertions that were making throughout England, to ascertain her security at home, and to meet her enemies with all the naval strength that she could collect.

In this conviction, France began to turn her thoughts to that branch of her royal family that sat on the throne of Spain. The compact between the members of that potent family, was thought a sufficient motive to induce the Spanish ministry to cooperate with the French, in reducing the power of the common enemy of the House of Bourbon, and they applied to it accordingly.

Never, in the mean time, did the power and importance of Great Britain appear with greater splendour, than upon the close of this memorable period of the war. Though labouring under the most violent divisions at home, and without the intervention of a single friend from abroad, she still was able to carry on a vigorous and extensive war on the distant and vast continent of North America; and not only to bid defiance to the navies of France, but to ruin the principal branches of her trade in both extremities of the globe, and to seize the major part of her commercial fleets on her own coast.

The truth was, that before France had declared herself the protectress of America, the British nation hardly considered itself as being at war; and expressed no animation in the prosecution of those hostilities that had taken place in the Colonies. But the moment France intervened, the sight of its old and natural enemy roused it at once into action. The
people

people of this country, for the first time since the commencement of the dispute, felt themselves interested in it.

The French themselves, from the little disposition they beheld in the English to act with their usual fervour in the dispute with the Colonists, imagined that the same temper would continue to influence their conduct against those who should favour them : but they forgot that national antipathy, when all other motives fail, is strong enough, of itself, to restore energy to a people, and to call forth all their exertions.

The French experienced this in the fullest manner. Instead of the faint and languid opposition they expected, they saw this nation start at once from that state of indifference, in which it had so long, and possibly might have still longer remained, but for this insult and provocation from its ancient rival. The spirit of emulation seized it immediately ; and it is no untruth to say, that France, by becoming a party in the dispute against Britain, gave it an entire new turn ; and infused a degree of spirit and activity in all the measures of this country of which she was the first to feel the effects, and perhaps to repent the cause.

C H A P. XLII.

Proceedings in Parliament.—Trial of Admiral Keppel.

1778.

Nov. 20, 1778. **T**HE meeting of Parliament, at the close of the season of action, was attended with anxious expectation, in what manner it would proceed in the midst of the new scenes that had opened.

The substance of the speech from the Throne, was a representation of the injurious conduct of France, a reliance on the spirit and exertions of the nation in its own defence, the vigour and success with which the commerce of the enemy had been annoyed, and the safety and prosperity which had accompanied their own. The necessity of employing the most resolute efforts equally by land and sea.

Opposition still continued inimical to the ministry, and expressed the highest dissatisfaction at the prospect of its being entrusted with the conduct of so important a war as the present, after having managed the affairs of the nation with such ill success.

The business of the commission in America, was mentioned with great disapprobation. It was represented as disgraceful and useless: the proposals it carried out, had, as foretold, been refused by the Americans, as unsatisfactory; and had only shewn the impolicy of this country in the measures it had adopted on that continent.

There was one measure, however, in which opposition concurred with an unanimity peculiarly characteristic of the invariable disposition of Englishmen

men towards France. The most vigorous prosecution of hostilities was recommended against that power. Hatred to this country, and views of her own aggrandizement, were the sole motives that had induced France to attack Great Britain. It would therefore be the wisest policy to turn the full tide of war upon that irreconcilable enemy, and to employ the courage and strength of the British nation in taking the amplest revenge upon a people, who shewed themselves determined to let no opportunity pass of injuring this country, and of effecting its total ruin if it were to be accomplished.

By directing the operations of war against the possessions of France, she would be obliged to recall her attention home, and be less at liberty to support her new allies. Instead of an advantage, she would find her alliance with America a burden; which losses and distresses would probably induce her to shake off, or, at least, to lighten, by confining her defence chiefly to herself. Were Great Britain to exert the force she had, with judgment and spirit, the French would find her an overmatch in the present instance; as the war would be almost entirely a naval one, for which the resources of Great Britain were peculiarly calculated.

While opposition recommended the most active and spirited measures against France, it equally reprobated the continuance of hostilities against the Colonies: all endeavours to compel them to submission were additional motives for attaching themselves to France. They fought and resisted from the dread of falling under our domination: were that apprehension once removed, were they to be thoroughly convinced that we meant henceforth to treat them on the footing of friends, and of a people whom we were willing to consider as brethren, their animosity would cease; and notwithstanding the many causes we had given them for resentment, they

they would, on a return of kind treatment from this country, not be averse to a friendly accommodation. To this there was every reason to think they would be induced, from the power we should immediately acquire of cutting off their communication with France, provided we directly withdrew our forces from America, and applied them to the reduction of the French islands. This would oblige that power to sum up her whole exertions for their defence, and totally to relinquish the protection of her new allies. Were these to be so unwise as to refuse to treat seperately, our naval force would easily restrain them within their own limits, and prevent them from being of any assistance to France.

Such were the general allegations on the side of opposition; to which they added several strictures on the dilatoriness and impropriety of ministerial measures, on the rupture with France first taking place.

The ministry, after a general reply on the subject of American affairs, entered into a particular justification of their measures in the beginning of the campaign. The detention of the squadron under Admiral Byron was, they said, indispensible, until the destination of that under Count D'Estaing was ascertained. A junction of this latter with the Brest fleet, would have given France a fatal superiority in the Channel, which was happily obviated by waiting till the Toulon squadron had sailed.

The evacuation of Philadelphia was represented as absolutely necessary on the declaration of France for America. The large detachments that must be drawn from our army on that continent, for the purpose of attacking the French islands in the West Indies, would, by diminishing it, naturally contract its offensive operations. To render them efficacious, it was requisite to compress and unite its strength within less extensive bounds than before,
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when it was more numerous and able to annoy the enemy at once in various places. New York was a more central, and convenient situation than Philadelphia. It lay open to the reception of supplies and reinforcements; it was a station where fleets and armies could remain in security; and from whence expeditions could proceed with much greater dispatch than elsewhere, to any other part of the continent, or to the islands.

Among other discussions in the debates of this day, it was warmly asserted, that a continuation of coercive measures in America was highly expedient. Britain had still a number of friends in that large country. Many of those who from their situation ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the dispositions of the natives, did not scruple to affirm that two thirds of them were desirous of a reconciliation with great Britain, upon the terms held out by the commissioners. The reason why they did not express their sentiments openly, was the terror of those who had arms in their hands, and were determined at all events to support the system adopted by Congress. Independence on the parent state, was by no means the wish of the generality of the better sort. It was chiefly the plan of a particular class of men, influenced by republican principles, and the ambition of rising to power and consequence. Conscious they could not compass this by remaining in a state of peaceable subjection, as heretofore, they had resolved, sooner than miss their aim, to embroil their country in dissensions, to throw off its connection with Britain, and to call in the assistance of foreigners against all who should oppose their designs.

Such being the situation of the Colonies, it would be unworthy of that character of generosity and perseverance, which the British nation had always maintained, either to abandon the protection of those

who adhered to this country, or to give up the sovereignty over it, without having first exerted all its efforts to support the one, and to retain the other.

But the principal subject of debate was concerning an amendment to the address, requesting an inquiry into the causes of the present difficulties, and by what councils the kingdom had been brought into that perilous posture of affairs, from which it was become so arduous a task to extricate it.

Both parties on this occasion went over the long beaten ground of the innumerable arguments produced by the American contest; but the ministerial party proved the strongest, though not without a severe conflict, that lasted till near three in the morning, when the address was carried without the amendment, by a majority of two hundred and twenty-six, to one hundred and seven.

In the House of Lords the debates were incomparably more violent than in that of Commons. Opposition there assumed a method of proceeding entirely new, and that struck ministry with the most astonishment. In order to express the more forcibly their disapprobation of the totality of measures that were recommended by the royal speech, and approved of by the address, they refused their concurrence to the presenting of any.

The motives alledged for this extraordinary step, were the same that had already been so often repeated; the incapacity of the present ministers, the ill success with which all their measures had been constantly attended, the despair of the nation that any change of fortune would be brought about through their means, the necessity of placing such men at the head of affairs in this critical season, as the public could look up to with hope and confidence.

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They insisted upon a full and circumstantial inquiry into the origin of the multiplicity of evils and distresses that afflicted the whole empire. Dissatisfaction and suspicion filled all denominations of subjects: the naval and military classes, in particular, expressed a diffidence in those at the helm, and were involved in such dissensions as threatened the most fatal consequences. These were evils of such magnitude, as required immediate inspection: unless a speedy cure was applied, they would prove mortal to the state; and no cure could be expected without a radical extirpation of the cause. A complete and impartial inquiry, who were the real authors of all these calamities, ought therefore to be instituted, without any respect or exception of persons:

The ministry condemned, in terms of the greatest severity, this attempt to put a negative on the presentation of any address. They treated it as unprecedented and unauthorized by any just reasoning, and utterly subversive of the harmony that ought to subsist between the executive and the deliberative power of the state, in such perilous times.

Inquiries into the conduct of ministry might be instituted at any time; but ought never to prevent unanimity in supporting government, especially in cases of such exigency as the present.

The whole system of public affairs was now altered. The nature of the contest was entirely different from what it had been till the present crisis. The altercation between Great Britain and her Colonies, was now changed into a dispute between this kingdom and that of France. The question was, whether we should passively submit to the dictates of that imperious power, and suffer it, without resistance, to wrest our property out of our hands. It was not so much the loss of this property that should affect us, as the indignity of acquiescing tamely in the manner of its being lost. France had insidiously
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pretended to embrace a disinterested and neutral part in regard to this unhappy dispute; but after deceiving us with the warmest professions of peace and amity, it had, contrary to all maxims of candour and probity, broken through all those assurances, and violated her faith, in a manner wholly inconsistent with that rank and character she assumed, and totally derogatory to that high sense of honour on which she so much valued herself, and founded so superior a claim of respect.

Allowing that the usual practice of politicians countenanced these deviations from public integrity, still it was incumbent on the party aggrieved by them, to shew his resentment, and to seek reparation for the injury done him, by every means in his power. The perfidious policy of the times might, in some measure, excuse these reciprocal acts of treachery, too common among nations; but the very aggressors in these cases did not expect to escape without feeling the severest vengeance of those who were able to inflict it.

France and America having made one common cause, they could not be disjoined, and the prosecution of war with the one, necessarily included hostilities with the other. To act with remissness in America, from an idea of bringing it sooner to a reconciliation, would be weakness in the extreme: it would expose us to the contempt and derision equally of the French and the Americans.

Neither America nor France were such objects of terror as some people took a delight in representing them. The events of the last campaign had shewn, that Britain was in fact rather an object of terror to them. The Americans, it was well known, dreaded to meet us on equal ground; and the French had, with particular care and solicitude, studied to avoid our fleets, wherever they had not a decided and incomparable superiority.

The war with France being a matter of necessity, it was the duty of the House to stand by the Throne, with their warmest resolutions to support it against that antient and inveterate enemy. The nation at large expressed the most resolute determination to second the efforts of government. It would be shameful in its rulers to appear less firm and animated on so trying an occasion, and in so just a cause. The present war with France was defensive in every respect. Were the contest with the Colonies to be deserving of reprehension on the part of Britain, still the quarrel with France was of its own seeking; it behoved, therefore, every man who felt for the honour, as well as for the interest of his country, to espouse its cause unfeignedly and without hesitation. Those who refused to concur in such a requisite and laudable measure, would merit no other appellation than that of foes to Great Britain.

The issue of this debate was, that the address was carried, as proposed by ministry, by a majority, upon a division, of sixty-seven to thirty-five.

A few days after the meeting of Parliament, the proclamation of the third of October, issued by the Commissioners in America, was made a particular subject of investigation in both Houses.

In the House of Commons, the heaviest censures were passed on that part of the proclamation which threatened harsh treatment to the Colonists, in case of their continuing in their adherence to France.— It was condemned as inhuman and barbarous, and unbecoming a civilized and generous people.

It was moved, in consequence, that an address should be presented to the throne, expressing the abhorrence of Parliament for those passages in the proclamation, and requesting the King publicly to disavow them.

Ministry supported the propriety of those passages; asserting, that they imported no more, than that the Colonists, by withdrawing themselves from the obedience they owed to Britain, and throwing themselves into the arms of France, were of course become as much our enemies as that power itself, and could expect no more indulgence from this country in the course of its future hostilities with them than France itself.

A most virulent and acrimonious debate ensued upon this occasion, which was at the same time accompanied with much collateral matter arising from it, as well as with personal invective. But the address was rejected, upon a division, by two hundred and nine, against one hundred and twenty-two.

An address of the same nature was proposed by the opposition in the House of Lords, and supported by much the same arguments; but it was rejected by a majority of seventy-one, to thirty-seven.

In the mean time, the issue of the engagement between the British and French fleets, on the twenty-seventh of July, had become a subject of frequent and severe discussion among all ranks and classes. Great complaints were made throughout the fleet, that by the impropriety of conduct of the Blue division, the opportunity of obtaining a complete victory over the French fleet had been lost.

The discussions on this matter became gradually the principal subject of the public papers, and were carried on with a warmth and vehemence, that set the whole nation into a ferment of the most violent and outrageous nature. The friends of the Vice Admiral of the Blue were no less hot and positive in the defence of his conduct, than his opponents were in its condemnation. Incensed at the censorious manner with which it was treated, they laboured

boured to represent it as brave and judicious beyond reprehension, and even superiorly meritorious to that of the commander in chief.

This altercation in the daily prints became a source of the most injurious and unguarded provocations on both sides of the question. Those who espoused the cause of the Admiral, manifested no less determination in contradicting the repeated assertions of superior merit in his opponent, and accusing him in the most open and explicit manner of being the real cause of the escape of the French fleet, through his disobedience of the signals and orders of his commander, and by remaining at a distance with his division, instead of coming to the assistance of the rest of the fleet. These charges, which were made with unusual strength and confidence, excited a general desire of a further elucidation of this matter.

An accusation of so weighty a nature, was very grievous and alarming to Sir Hugh Palliser. He applied to Admiral Keppel for a justification of his conduct, and a clearance from those imputations which were so hurtful to his professional character. He required of him to sign and publish a paper, stating particulars relative to the engagement of the twenty-seventh of July; one of which was to specify as a fact, that he did not intend by his signals on the evening of that day, to renew the battle at that time, but to be in readiness for it the next morning.

On the rejection of this demand by Admiral Keppel, Sir Hugh Palliser published in one of the daily papers a variety of circumstances concerning that engagement, which were prefaced by a letter, to which he signed his name. This publication reflected severely on the conduct of the Admiral.

An attack so public, and so detrimental to his character, induced Admiral Keppel to declare to

the Admiralty, that unless Sir Hugh Palliser should explain this matter to his satisfaction, he could not, consistently with his reputation, ever act conjointly with him.

This altercation happening before the meeting of Parliament, was of course taken notice of when it met. In the House of Peers, the Earl of Bristol demanded of the first Lord of the Admiralty, an inquiry into the conduct of the commanders of the fleet on the twenty-seventh of July, assigning as a reason for this demand, the declaration of Admiral Keppel, that he would not resume the command, until such an inquiry had taken place.

The answer to this requisition was, that circumstances did not require it. The consequences of the engagement on the twenty-seventh of July, had answered every purpose that could have been expected. The French fleet, though neither taken nor destroyed, had been so effectually disabled and disheartened, that after flying away from the English fleet in the night, to avoid a pursuit, it had not dared to face it during the whole remainder of the campaign. All the benefits of the completest victory had thereby been produced; the trade of this country had received the most extensive protection, while that of France had been ruined.

The institution of an inquiry would be productive of the most fatal effects. It would breed dissensions, and occasion enmity and faction among the naval classes. This would lead to the most pernicious consequences, especially at a time when unanimity was so much needed. Such an inquiry would no less injure the service, by depriving it of a number of officers, whose attendance would be requisite on a trial of such importance, and who must be absent from their duty, while their presence was so much wanted in their different stations.—

Thus

Thus the success of the preceding year would in a great measure be defeated by such a measure.

This inquiry would no less wound the public peace of the kingdom: parties would be formed on each side, with all that heat and violence characteristic of this nation. Whichever way the matter was decided, they would still remain, and fill the public with suspicions and animosities, that would continue for a long time to disturb both public and private tranquillity.

In the House of Commons this subject was taken up in the same manner. It was urged, that as Admiral Keppel had expressed a public refusal to serve in conjunction with Sir Hugh Palliser, the cause of such a declaration ought to be made known, by a thorough investigation of the conduct that had occasioned it.

The nation had a right to be fully informed of the nature of the contest between two officers in such high trust. Whoever of the two was in fault, ought unquestionably to undergo condign punishment. If the dispute proceeded from slight causes, they ought to be removed with all speed, and no difference be suffered to subsist between the principal commanders in the navy, among whom unanimity was peculiarly necessary in the discharge of their respective duties.

Admiral Keppel, and Sir Hugh Palliser, who were both present in the House on this occasion, spoke severally to the point in question in support of their respective conduct. The issue of the contest between them was, that a motion was made for an address to the Crown to bring Sir Hugh Palliser to a trial, for his behaviour in the late engagement with the French fleet.

In answer to this motion, Sir Hugh Palliser replied in a speech of great warmth and vehemence, that he had already demanded and obtained a court-martial

martial to sit on Admiral Keppel, whom he charged with having through his misconduct caused the failure of success in that engagement.

This communication occasioned great astonishment in the House. It had been, and still continued to be the general desire of individuals of all parties, to heal this breach between these two officers, and to prevent it from going any further at a time when the services of both were so much needed. The feuds that would arise in the navy from such a litigation were fully foreseen, and the mischievous influence they would have upon the affairs of the nation. From these weighty motives, it was the cordial wish of the House to put an end to this altercation with all speed.

It was therefore with universal concern the House was informed of the determination that had been taken to bring Admiral Keppel to a trial; the fore-sight of what would be the result of such a step, struck them with the greatest anxiety.

Admiral Keppel conducted himself on this occasion with remarkable temper and coolness of expression. He acquiesced without reluctance in the orders that had been laid upon him to prepare for a trial of his conduct, which he hoped would not, upon inquiry, appear to have been dishonourable or injurious to his country, any more than disgraceful to himself.

Much discontent was created by the Board of Admiralty's admitting the charges against Admiral Keppel, and appointing a trial. It was condemned in the House in terms of the greatest severity. It was asserted to have been their duty to have laboured with the utmost earnestness, and exerted their whole official influence to stifle this unhappy disagreement between two brave and valuable men, the consequences of which they well knew, and ought to have obviated, by interposing as re-
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conciliators, instead of promoting the dispute, by consenting to bring it to a judicial and public hearing. Imputations of a heavier kind were made on this occasion, and expressed with great explicitness and freedom of sentiments and language.

The answer made by those who undertook to justify the conduct of the Lords of the Admiralty was, that they could not consistently with the impartiality which they owed to every officer of the navy, refuse to receive all matters of complaint relating to subjects of their department. They had no right to decide on the merits of any case laid before them; they were bound to refer it to a court composed of naval officers, who were the only proper and competent judges of each others conduct in professional matters.

Every man in that line was naturally desirous to be tried by his peers. Both military and naval cases were of so complex and difficult a texture, that none but persons belonging to the profession had any pretence to pass a judgment upon them. In conformity with these principles, which were founded upon the clearest equity, they left the decision of the present altercation to the gentlemen of the navy, whose honour and integrity in all instances of this kind had never been called in question, and by whose verdict alone it was but just and reasonable that every officer in that line of service should wish to stand or fall.

The arguments upon this subject were manifold, and urged with great heat and violence on both sides. They were productive of uncommon animosity and rancour, and opened a door to a spirit of contention that diffused itself through all classes of society.

People of moderation and candour lamented with unfeigned sorrow, the rage and fury by which both parties were governed on this unfortunate emergency.

cy. Such was the height of passion that prevailed every where, that the critical circumstances of the nation were wholly forgotten, and the attention of the public entirely absorbed in this fatal dispute. Individuals of all ranks, and all professions, engaged in it with as much zeal as if they had been personally concerned in the issue.

The dissatisfaction that was excited upon this occasion among the upper classes in the navy, appeared in a memorial that was presented to the King by twelve of the oldest and most distinguished Admirals, at the head of whom was the name of that great and illustrious commander Lord Hawke.

The conduct of Sir Hugh Palliser was therein condemned without reserve; that of the Admiralty itself was severely censured, as having established a precedent pregnant with the most ruinous consequences to the naval service of the kingdom. By the measure it had now adopted, that board had submitted to become the instrument of any individual who might be prompted by iniquitous motives to deprive the navy of its best and highest officers.

They represented it as a destructive violation of all order and discipline in the navy, to permit and countenance long concealed, and afterwards precipitately adopted charges, and recriminatory accusations of subordinate officers against their commanders in chief. They reprobated it as highly improper and scandalous, to suffer men at once in high civil office, and in subordinate command, previous to their making such accusations, to attempt to corrupt the judgment of the public, by publishing libels on their officers in a common newspaper, which tended at once to excite dissensions in the navy, and to prejudice the minds of those who were to try the merits of the accusation against the superior officer.

What

What added considerable weight to this memorial, was, that the majority of those who subscribed it, were not only officers of the first rank and importance in the navy, but unconnected with the opposition, and attached by various motives to the court and ministry. This evinced their conduct in the present instance, to have been uninfluenced by considerations of party.

The minds of men of all professions and degrees were so entirely engrossed by the trial of Admiral Keppel, that no business of any consequence was agitated in either of the Houses of Parliament while it continued. The most active members in both were now at Portsmouth, detained by the interest they took in the cause of the two contendants.

This famous trial begun upon the seventh of January, seventy-nine, and lasted more than a month, not ending till the eleventh day of February ensuing. After a long and accurate investigation of every species of evidence that could be produced, upon a business of such intricacy, as well as importance, the court-martial acquitted Admiral Keppel of all the charges that had been brought against him, in the completest and most honourable manner. He was declared in the clearest and most explicit terms, to have acted the part of a judicious, brave, and experienced officer; and the accusation was condemned in the severest language.

The satisfaction felt and expressed upon the acquittal of Admiral Keppel was conspicuous in the highest degree. Both Houses of Parliament voted him their thanks for the eminent services he had performed, and the whole nation resounded with his applause.

The City of London distinguished itself in the most striking manner, by the zeal with which it testified its participation in the general satisfaction of

of the public. It bestowed every honour and mark of respect in its power upon Admiral Keppel; who certainly had ample cause to congratulate himself, upon the many proofs of unfeigned esteem and attachment, which he experienced upon this memorable occasion.

The resentment against his accuser operated in no less striking and forcible a manner. The tide of popular rage was so strong, that it constrained him to retire wholly from public life, and to resign all his employments.

But notwithstanding the high degree of national favour and esteem, in which Admiral Keppel now stood, it was soon discovered that they would avail little in restoring him to authority and command; and he thought it prudent to withdraw from a situation wherein he found himself not acceptable.

The dissatisfaction occasioned by this treatment of Admiral Keppel, contributed powerfully to embitter the opposition against those who were considered as the authors of it. Those who presided at the Board of Admiralty underwent a severe examination of their conduct. It was represented as erroneous and faulty in the extreme; and no pains were omitted to lay it forth in such colours, as to make it appear deserving of the highest reprehension.

Its conduct for a series of years, was animadverted upon with the utmost censure and reprobation. A multitude of facts and particulars were cited, in proof of the assertions, and in support of the charges made against those who administered this department. Their conduct the last summer especially, was adverted to as greatly deficient in prudence, and as having exposed the kingdom to the most serious danger.

Administration made a long and circumstantial reply to these charges. The debates upon this occasion

caſion were unuſually animated; and repeatedly called forth the abilities of the the different ſpeakers on both ſides.

A reſolution had been moved on the part of oppoſition, in conſequence of theſe charges, tending to condemn the conduct of the Admiralty during the preceding year; but it was rejected by a majority of two hundred and four, to one hundred and ſeventy.

So inconfiderable a proportion in favour of miniſtry, emboldened oppoſition to reſume its attack upon the Board; but it was again defeated by much the ſame majority.

The intent of oppoſition in this latter attempt, was to ſhew that the ſtate of the navy was inadequate to the vaſt expences incurred for its ſupport and augmentation. The chief argument uſed in proof of this aſſertion, was the ſuperiority of the ſums granted for the navy of late years, to thoſe granted in former; from whence it was inferred, that the Navy ought to have been much more numerous.

The circumſtance chiefly alledged in exculpation of the Admiralty, was the larger ſize of the ſhips at preſent conſtructed, in compariſon of thoſe built in the time alluded to in the eſtimate adduced by oppoſition.

Theſe debates concerning the navy were marked by the declaration of Lord Howe and Admiral Keppel, the two principal officers at that time in the the ſea ſervice, that they were determined to withdraw themſelves from it, whlie it continued under the preſent direction.

This reſignation was ſhortly after followed by that of Sir Robert Harland, Sir John Lindſay, and ſeveral other officers of great reputation. So general were the diſcontents, that no leſs, it was ſaid, than twenty Captains of the firſt diſtinction in the navy, had purpoſed to throw up their commiſſions in a

body on the same day. Nothing but the sense of the very great need in which their country stood of their abilities, prevented them from executing their determination.

This readiness to relinquish the public service in so many of the ablest naval commanders, excited a general alarm throughout the nation, and occasioned a direct attack from opposition, against the principal Lord of the Admiralty. A motion was made that an address should be presented to the Crown, for the removing him from his station at that Board.

Besides the arguments already alledged, the spirit of discontent and defection now reigning in the navy, was chiefly insisted upon, and the danger of losing, at a time when most wanted, the courage and capacity of the best officers in the navy.

The reply to this charge was, that they had not been dismissed; their resignation was voluntary and unrequested. They acted out of character in assuming the freedom to require that ministers should be discharged from their respective departments. Should they continue to refuse their services to the state, others might be found to replace them.

After a violent altercation, that took up a great part of the night, the motion for the removal of Lord Sandwich from his office, was rejected by a majority of two hundred and twenty, to one hundred and eighteen.

This debate was followed, within a few days, by the appointment of a committee, to inquire into the conduct of the American war. It took place at the request of Lord and Sir William Howe, in order to clear themselves of any imputation of mismanagement.

An inquiry of this nature had long been earnestly desired by the the public. Multitudes had been impressed with an opinion, that the reduction of America by such a force as had been sent from this country

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try to that purpose, would have been completed with facility in one, or in two campaigns at most. They were impatient at the delay which attended this business, and were anxious to know what were the causes of it.

It was therefore become necessary to lay before the public, the real causes of the failure of this important object, and to inform them of those particulars, without the knowledge of which, they could not form an adequate idea of the subject in question.

To this intent Sir William Howe, in a speech which lasted near two hours, delivered with great precision and perspicuity, a narrative of his conduct during the time he commanded in America. His account was listened to with uncommon attention; and seemed to make a powerful impression upon the hearers.

The assertions he made, and the facts he advanced, were supported by the testimony of several witnesses, equally respectable from their rank and character. They were, Earl Cornwallis, Major General Grey, Sir Andrew Hammond, Major Montrefor, Chief Engineer, and Sir George Osborne, a member of the House of Commons.

From their concurrent allegations and remarks, they appeared to be clearly of opinion, that the forces sent to America were at no period of the war, sufficiently numerous to reduce it. That the real cause of this, was the inimical disposition of the Americans, who were almost unanimous in their determination to resist the efforts of Great Britain to subdue them. It also proceeded from the nature of the country, which was peculiarly unfavourable to military operations. From these two considerations, it was uncommonly difficult, and oftentimes impossible to reconnoitre the enemy, or to obtain any intelligence that could be relied on, touching

the roads, the situation of places, or of ground, or the means of procuring forage or provisions. For want of this latter article, especially, it was impracticable for the army to act at any distance from the fleet, or without having possession of both sides of some navigable river: and its motions were attended with much delay, and often with great danger, from being usually confined in its march to a single column.

It appeared at the same time from their testimony, that the encampment to which the Americans retreated after their defeat at Long Island, in August, seventy-six, was so strongly fortified, and the enemy within it in such force, that it would have been an act of the greatest temerity, to have attacked it without artillery and the other necessary preparations for such an attempt. This particular was stated in answer to those who had blamed Sir William Howe for not having made an immediate assault on that encampment.

A variety of other particulars were mentioned by them in answer to other charges against some parts of his conduct. They were unanimously of opinion, that his proceedings in the instances animadverted upon were the most eligible and judicious he could have chosen. The facts they established were such, in short, as proved him to have acted with a valour and prudence adequate to the importance of his command.

In order to invalidate the assertions made by Sir William Howe, together with the testimonies adduced in his favour, two counter-witnesses were called in by the adverse party. These were Major General Robertson, Deputy Governor of New York, and Mr. Joseph Galloway, an American gentleman.

The counter-evidence produced against Sir William Howe, chiefly tended to disprove or debilitate what had been deposed in his defence.—Its principal aim was to establish a great superiority in number of

of such as were inclined to the cause of Britain, among the natives of America, comparatively to those who opposed it : that had a proper use been made of this disposition, it might have been rendered highly serviceable, and would have essentially contributed to a successful termination of the war. That the British forces in America were fully adequate to the suppression of all resistance. That the country was not so full of obstructions and impediments in the way of armies, as had been represented. That its woods and forests were no obstacles to prevent armies from marching in as many columns as they judged proper. That the British troops excelled the Americans in their own methods of bush-fighting. That the American army had usually, if not at all times, been inferior in strength to what it had been represented.

Various charges of misconduct were also brought against both Lord and Sir William Howe ; but they were such as had been already contradicted in the most positive and direct manner by the previous depositions in their favour.

It was particularly noticed during this examination, that strong credit was due to the testimony brought for them. It rested upon persons of known integrity and judgment. Their knowledge was gathered from what they had personally seen and experienced. They had been ocular witnesses of the events they described ; and thoroughly acquainted with the measures upon which they had delivered their opinions : they were military men, and in that light were competent to decide on military transactions, especially such at which they were present.

The same advantages were not found in a proportionable degree, in those whose testimony was brought to combat theirs. One of them was not a military man ; and though the other was a gentleman

man of a very respectable character, as well as an officer of great merit, yet he had chiefly been in garrisons during the present war, and had not assisted at those operations which were now the object of inquiry. It was no less observed, that the evidence for Sir William Howe was affirmative and circumstantial; that against him, general and negative.

The inquiry into the conduct of Sir William Howe, encouraged General Burgoyne to solicit the House to afford him also an opportunity of clearing himself of the censures which he had so largely experienced.

His request appeared so reasonable, and he had been treated of late with so much severity, that all parties concurred in thinking, that he demanded no more than what he was justly entitled to expect from the equity of that House. He was accordingly permitted to produce the necessary authorities for his justification.

The witnesses that appeared on his behalf, were, Sir Guy Carleton, Governor of the Province of Quebec at the time of General Burgoyne's expedition; the Earl of Belcarras, Captain Money, Quarter Master General of his army; the Earl of Harrington, Major Forbes, Captain Bloomfield of the Artillery, and Lieutenant-Colonel Kingston, Adjutant-General.

The first of these officers excepted, whose duty retained him at Quebec upon that occasion, the others had attended General Burgoyne during the whole time of his expedition, and had of course been present at the transactions that were now to be submitted to a parliamentary examination.

The account they laid before the House, was remarkably accurate and perspicuous. As they had shared in all the hardships and perils of that memorable enterprize, they were fully qualified to describe

describe it in its proper colours. The testimony they gave, was such, as placed General Burgoyne's character in the most meritorious and conspicuous light.

It appeared, that throughout the whole of this expedition, the General had, as occasions required, acted equally the part of a commander and of a soldier. That amidst the disappointments and distresses they were continually struggling with, the attachment of all ranks in his army to his person, continued unshaken. That during the incessant toils, difficulties, and dangers of this unfortunate campaign, no murmur, nor discontent of any kind, was expressed among the numbers who composed it, against any part of his conduct or behaviour. That when it was found their patience and courage had been exerted in vain, and that all hopes of success were at an end, still they were ready to follow him to the field, and to die with their arms in their hands.

A variety of particulars relating to this expedition, were also cleared up, entirely to his honour, and the removing of several charges and insinuations to his disadvantage.

There was, at the same time, a circumstance mentioned, which the liberality of sentiments of the witnesses would not permit them to suppress. They made an explicit and candid acknowledgment of the courage and intrepid behaviour of the Americans; fully refuting those scandalous surmises of their deficiency of spirit, that had been too readily adopted by those who were unacquainted with their character, and that were no less shameful in those who propagated or admitted them, than injurious and unjust to those who suffered from so base and groundless an imputation.

It was remarked by numbers of the most judicious individuals in the nation, in consequence of these parliamentary disquisitions into the conduct of Sir

William Howe and General Burgoyne, that the spirit of defamation lately gone forth, and that seemed particularly levelled at the most exalted characters in the naval and military line, would, if not checked in due time, produce the most fatal consequences to the nation, by depriving it of its best officers, through the averfeness that would prevail among them, to undertake a service attended with so much discouragement, and that exposed every man whose good fortune did not come up to the full expectations that had been formed, to obloquy and slander without measure, and to be rendered by the basest arts, an object of universal odium.

While these transactions were occupying the attention of the House of Commons, that of the Lords was no less busily taken up with those inquiries and examinations into the state of the navy, which had, in the preceding session, occasioned so many debates among them.

What rendered the inquiry now carrying on in the House of Lords the more remarkable, was the person who exerted the most activity in bringing it forward. This was the Earl of Bristol, a nobleman whose life, through a complication of infirmities and diseases, was evidently drawing to a speedy end; but whose resolution and industry remained unbroken to the last.

He was chiefly assisted in this tedious and difficult business, by the Duke of Bolton, and the Duke of Richmond. This latter nobleman was obliged, in his absence, to supply his place in some of the most intricate parts.

The first step that was taken, was to demand the official papers and documents necessary for such an investigation. Here again a refusal was made, on the ground so often pleaded, of the danger that
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would arise from disclosing, in so public a manner, the actual state of the navy in such a critical time.

This refusal was resented with the utmost vehemence by the Earl of Bristol, in whose name the demand for papers had been made. As soon as he was able, he repaired to the House; and, notwithstanding he was so weak, as to be unable to stand without crutches, he spoke with a strength and animation that struck the whole House with amazement.

The speech he made was full of the most bitter invectives against the Earl of Sandwich, whose conduct, as First Lord of the Admiralty, he depicted in the most opprobrious colours. He explicitly gave notice, that his intent was to convict that nobleman of malversation, and to effect his removal from the department wherein he now presided.

Lord Sandwich, in a firm and spirited speech, combated very circumstantially the various attacks upon his administration, and declared that whatever errors he might have committed, he had it amply in his power to make it manifest to all the impartial and unprejudiced world, that he had acted in every branch of the department committed to his charge, with the strictest integrity, and the clearest endeavours to benefit the public.

In the course of the debates occasioned by this subject, a most violent discussion took place on the appointment of a commander in chief over the grand fleet, intended for the Channel and Home service.

The person appointed to this high and important station, was Sir Charles Hardy, a brave and experienced officer; but now advanced in years, and who had long retired from the active scenes of a naval life, with an intention never to return to them. He was at this time Governor of Greenwich Hospital.

It was asserted by opposition, that the consequences of the behaviour of those who presided at the Admiralty were alarming in the most serious degree. They had driven from the service of their country the most eminent officers in the navy. They were now reduced to the necessity of applying to an elderly gentleman, broken with age and infirmities, to accept of a command from which he would gladly have been excused.

But such, it was said, was the rancour with which men of real merit and elevated minds were persecuted, for not bowing with meanness and fervility to the caprice and presumption of people in power, that sooner than employ such men, however their abilities were wanted in these calamitous times, they would hazard the safety, and the very existence of the state, by committing its defence to persons much inferiorly qualified, and who were universally known to be past that time of life and strength which was requisite for the great functions to which they were so imprudently called.

The Earl of Bristol, according to the notice he had given, having collected the materials on which he intended to rest his charges against the Earl of Sandwich, laid them before the House on the day which had been appointed for that purpose. He accompanied them with a speech, wherein he took great pains to enforce the propriety of displacing that nobleman. Among other particulars he stated, that a sum of seven millions had been expended on the navy within the last seven years, above the proportion allotted in any like period before, and yet the navy was evidently on the decrease.

The Earl of Sandwich made a long and animated speech in justification of his conduct. He represented the state of the navy as vigorous and flourishing, from the number of large and capital ships it contained, much

much exceeding the dimensions of those constructed some years before. He positively denied the estimates and calculations made by the Earl of Bristol respecting the charges and expences of building and repairing the navy.

The debate upon this occasion was long, and accompanied with great warmth. The speakers exerted themselves on both sides in a more than ordinary manner. On putting the question, the motion for the removal of Lord Sandwich was rejected by a majority of seventy-eight, to thirty-nine.

This rejection produced a strong protest, signed by twenty-five Lords. The Earl of Bristol drew up a separate one in his own behalf, wherein he entered into a detail of the motives that had induced him to propose the motion which had been rejected. It was the last public transaction with which that celebrated nobleman closed an active and variegated life.

It was observed by the public, in regard to these repeated inquiries into the state of the navy, that whoever was in fault, one matter was clear, which was, that the truth, in all these disquisitions, was so difficult to come at, from the perplexed and endless mazes of accounts and examinations wherein it was involved, that true wisdom would consist in cordially forgetting and forgiving the various mistakes into which the most intelligent are apt to fall, while there was reason to believe they were unintentional, and proceeding only from the inherent incapableness of human nature to excel in every respect.

C H A P. XLIII.

Declaration of Spain in favour of America.

1779.

DURING these disputes and contentions in Great Britain, the French ministry was sedulously employed in procuring the accession of Spain to the cause it had espoused.

Experience had shown France, that notwithstanding the hopes she had conceived from her vast preparations, they were not adequate to the design she had formed, of compassing the submission of Great Britain to the terms she had planned in conjunction with the United States of America. She saw her commerce in evident danger of being totally ruined, and the resources of her marine, of course, effectually destroyed. The danger was imminent and immediate. In the space of one twelvemonth more, she had every reason to apprehend that the fleets and privateers of Britain, were they to proceed as they had begun, would reduce her to such distress, as to compel her to relinquish the object she had so long kept in view.

In this extremity. she reminded the Court of Spain of the obligations incumbent upon it, in virtue of the Family Compact. She represented the consequences of suffering Great Britain once more to give the law to France. Were the French branch of the line of Bourbon to be thus humbled, the Spanish branch could not fail to participate in its humiliation. Thus they would both be degraded a second time in the eyes of all Europe.

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At the time when the Convention at Saratoga took place, the French ministry, which had long been waiting for such an opportunity of coming to a rupture with Great Britain, immediately proposed to the Spanish Court an union of their mutual strength, in order to compel Great Britain to acknowledge the independence of America. The entire overthrow of the British power was laid before that Court as the infallible consequence of such a loss as that of the vast dominions possessed by Great Britain in America. This would reduce it so low, that henceforth the House of Bourbon might look upon itself as delivered from its capital enemy.

But the solicitations of the French ministry were not successful. Spain did not at that time think it in any wise her interest to co-operate in the dismemberment of the British empire. Several of her politicians were no less disposed to look forward to future contingencies, than to consult the seeming interest of the day. These were by no means inclined to precipitate matters in a business that appeared to them to require mature deliberation. France was unusually impatient to draw Spain into her measures upon this occasion. This they were not surprized at, when they considered that its American possessions were but of small importance comparatively to those of Spain, and that the nature of them differed essentially from that of the dominions of the Spanish Crown in that vast hemisphere.

The precedent of a successful rebellion, was looked upon at the Court of Spain as too dangerous to be forwarded and encouraged in the manner proposed by France. The possessions of Spain were in many respects similar to those of Great Britain in that part of the world. Should the present contest between them and that Crown terminate in its losing them, an event so remarkable, could not fail to make
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make an impression on the inhabitants of the Spanish settlements in America.

Notwithstanding the fidelity and submission professed by the Spanish Colonies in America, there was reason to apprehend that the defection of the British Colonists, would be attended with pernicious effects. It was well known that there were turbulent spirits in many of the provinces of Spanish America. These would not omit to avail themselves of so striking an instance of success, to excite discontents and commotions, and would hold up the example of British America, to those who were seditiously inclined, in order to animate them to tread in the same steps.

Were Spain to assist the British Colonies in their resistance to the parent state, and become instrumental in procuring their independence, it could not be doubted that Great Britain would lose no opportunity to effect a similar dismemberment of the Spanish empire. A retaliation of this nature would become an immediate object of her politics; and her strength was so great, that aided by the alliances she might form in Europe, and by the inclination of those multitudes whom views of personal interest might seduce from their allegiance in Spanish America, she would with the more likelihood accomplish a project of that nature, as she would not probably attempt it till she had taken the precaution to involve the House of Bourbon in such disputes on the continent of Europe, as would require the full employment of its whole strength by land, and preclude it from making any considerable exertions at sea.

But exclusive of these considerations, which were evidently well founded, Spain ought no less to carry its views further than the present time. True it was, that a family compact subsisted between the French and Spanish branches of the House of Bour-

bon; but it was not irrevocable. It was founded much more on personal regard, than upon national interest. France and Spain, antecedently to the date of their being ruled by princes united by consanguinity, had been as much noted for their reciprocal enmity, as any nations in Europe; the English themselves were not more hostile to the French, than the Spaniards had been.

This spirit of mutual opposition, though laid for the present, might revive, and become as powerful in its operations, as in any preceding aeras. There had already happened a breach between the two crowns: it had even taken place not long after the accession of the very first Prince of the House of Bourbon, that wore the Spanish crown. Circumstances might alter so much, as to produce events of the like nature, perhaps much sooner than expected. The temper and disposition of the French and Spanish nations were notoriously opposite; and were in that respect remarkably susceptible of dislike and aversion. This antipathy of character, it was well known, had oftentimes produced most deplorable effects among the military classes of each power. Though embodied in the common service of their respective sovereigns, neither officers nor soldiers could live together on terms of friendship: their swords were incessantly drawn against each other in private quarrels. Where individuals were so ready to differ, it could not be expected but soon or late the public, of which they composed a part, would partake at last in this inimical frame of mind.

Were Spain and France again to become rivals, the former would, in such case, have ample cause to repent its having co-operated in the diminution of the power of Great Britain, which was, from its interests and situation, much better calculated for an ally to Spain, than France; a connection with
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which was productive of much less profit either to individuals or to the public.

From these various motives it was represented as unadvisable to be aiding in the downfall of a power, whose friendship might be found highly valuable upon future occasions. In pressing Spain with so much eagerness to join in its destruction, who could tell whether France itself had not an eye to what was now furnished, and did not secretly wish, by the depression of Great Britain, to deprive Spain of the support it would receive from that quarter, in case of a breach of that union which now subsisted between the two crowns, much more than between the two nations?

Such were the reasonings and ideas that prevailed among several of the members of the Spanish ministry, on the first application of the Court of France for its interference in favour of America.

In consequence of the averseness which was testified on the part of Spain, at that time, to coincide with the measures of France, the negotiations with the commissioners of the United States were carried on without its participation; and the alliance with them was concluded, and notified to the Court of London, without any previous consultation with the Spanish ministry.

It was not till the greater part of the year seventy-eight was elapsed, that France resumed her solicitations at Madrid. From whatever cause it might proceed, they were more successful than before. The Spanish monarch was at last prevailed upon to make an offer of his mediation between France, North America, and Great Britain.

He acted upon this occasion with great foresight and circumspection. He waited till the military and naval forces that had been employed in the late quarrel between Spain and Portugal, were returned from Brazil, and till the rich fleets from Mexico
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and Peru were safely arrived in the harbours of Spain. As soon as those were secured, he assumed the character of mediator between the powers at war.

Great Britain was not averse to his attempting a pacification upon such terms as comported with her interest and dignity. A suspicion however, was not groundlessly entertained, that he would lean to the side of a prince of his family.

The terms proposed by the Spanish Monarch were, that both parties should immediately disarm, and agree to an universal cessation of hostilities in all parts of the world: That all parties should remain in possession of the places and territories they occupied at the time this suspension took place: That a meeting should be appointed, where the ministers of France and Great Britain should settle their respective differences: That France should not interfere in the settlement of the dispute between Great Britain and the States of America, which should be left entirely to the decision of Spain: That in the mean time, the American States should be treated with on a footing of independency; and that in case an accommodation were not effected, hostilities should not re-commence till a twelvemonth's notice had been given of such an intention.

These terms were by some politicians esteemed far from disadvantageous to Great Britain. That in particular which prescribed a cessation of hostilities, was considered as highly favourable to this country. It would give time for the resentment of the Americans to cool, and would afford opportunities to form such plans of reconciliation with them, as might prove acceptable. By leaving the British forces in possession of the places where they were stationed, beneficial concessions might be procured for the restoration of them. Were the negotiations to prove ineffectual, leisure would be afforded to

Great Britain to put herself in a stronger state of preparation for the renewal of hostilities; and not improbably to form a counter-alliance to that of France and America; which, by finding employment for the French armies, would necessarily weaken their naval force, to the great detriment of their American allies.

To these considerations was added, the probability that the Spanish monarch would not interest himself with so much warmth for the interests of the United States, as their French allies; and that possibly the conviction of the dangerous consequences which would result to Spain, from a termination of the dispute in favour of the British Colonies, would induce him to act rather with luke warmness in their concerns.

This motive in particular, it has been said, rendered France itself somewhat indifferent in regard to this mediation. She accepted it in full confidence that the spirited disposition of the British government would not comply with the proposals of the Court of Spain.

Herein she was not deceived. Notwithstanding the candour and impartiality at first professed by the Spanish ministry, the conditions it held out to Britain, in behalf of France, appeared so detrimental and injurious to this country, that they were, without hesitation, declared inadmissible.

On this declaration, Spain immediately determined to join the association of France and North America against Great Britain. This resolution was taken so abruptly, on receiving the denial of the British Court to coincide with the measures proposed, that it became evident the mediation that had been proffered was not founded on a sufficient basis of impartiality to render it safe and eligible. The intention of the Court of Spain, seemed rather to dictate than to mediate. The terms of peace were such

such as Great Britain could not listen to, without detracting from the determination she had taken to preserve her reputation unfullied, whatever losses she might incur through the events of war, and those casualties which neither human prudence can foresee, nor valour prevent.

The rejection of the plan of pacification framed at Madrid, was an object of the utmost astonishment to the political world. It was fully understood every where, that the alternative of refusing the mediation of Spain, would be an accession of that power to the confederacy against Great Britain; and it was therefore universally imagined, that sooner than expose herself to so manifest a risk, she would yield to necessity, and comply with the decisions of that Court, rather than provoke its enmity.

Such indeed was the conduct which good policy seemed to prescribe, in the opinion of the majority of people throughout Europe. To adopt any other was generally condemned as the effect of obstinacy and presumption.

But this opinion, though general, had many opponents. It was contended, that in public, as well as in private life, there were occurrences wherein states, no less than individuals, were bound by the rules of honour and magnanimity to venture their destruction sooner than forfeit the rank and reputation they had acquired. Illustrious precedents militated in favour of this idea, both in ancient and modern history. When the immense armies of Persia invaded Greece of old, that brave people resolved to perish sooner than submit; though certainly every apparent chance was against them: they were but a handful in comparison of their enemies; but they marched forth with a determination to die or to conquer. Armed with this resolution they fought the battles of Marathon and Salamis, and triumphed over the greatest power on earth.

The Romans had trod in their footsteps with equal success. When nearly overwhelmed by the victorious arms of Carthage, they did not despond: they disdained to offer any conditions of peace to their haughty enemy: they continued to face him with unabated courage; and through their invincible perseverance in the midst of losses and defeats, they at length overcame him.

In latter ages examples of the same kind were not wanting. Holland, in the last century, had withstood in its just defence, the combined attacks of the two greatest powers in Europe. In the century preceding, when the power of Spain was at its highest summit, and alone almost equal to that of all the rest of Europe, England did not hesitate to go forth and oppose the vast armament she had prepared for the conquest of this kingdom. Though incomparably inferior in strength, and number of shipping, and of men, and every requisite for so unequal and arduous a trial, she gave Spain a meeting on the ocean, and through her courage and conduct proved invincible.

Her situation at present, compared with her circumstances in those days, was far preferable, even proportionably to the combination of enemies she had now to encounter. The marine of Spain, it was computed, would make an actual addition of about sixty ships of the line to that of France, besides a few more that were constructing. This doubtless composed a formidable list; but though superior in number of vessels to that of Great Britain, it was not to be questioned this latter counted a much greater number of able seamen and experienced officers.

Thus, notwithstanding the determination adopted by Great Britain might seem to be dictated by temerity, yet when it was duly considered, it would be found not unworthy of a wise and valiant people,
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who had weighed, with coolness and circumspection, the respective situation of themselves and of their enemies; and who saw good reasons, upon mature deliberation, to hope they should be able to stem the current now running so forcibly against them. They clearly perceived its violence would not be lasting; and must, from a variety of causes, lose its strength in a short time; while their own, on the contrary, would increase by the discouragement their enemies would feel on finding themselves incapable of overcoming them, and the consequent disunion such a disappointment would produce.

Such were the ideas entertained by many of the soundest heads in Europe. This triple alliance of France, Spain, and America, did not, in their apprehensions, carry that intrinsic strength and firmness, which is requisite for the achieving of great designs. Its appearance was much more formidable than its reality; and it evidently harboured the seeds of a speedy dissolution, or of an ineffectual subsistence.

The contrariety of character, inherent by nature, and every cause that operates most forcibly on the passions of men, marked in a particular manner every branch of the confederacy. United from motives of necessity on the one side, and of ambition on the other; each party cherished its own separate views, and paid little, if any, attention to those of the other.

Independency and Freedom were the sole objects of America. Provided these were secured, the grandour of the House of Bourbon could not be supposed to dwell in the wishes of so sensible and judicious a people as the natives of the British Colonies. The liberal education and extensive knowledge of politics, and of the European world, possessed by the leading and genteel classes among them, left no room to doubt, that could matters be fet-

tled with Britain on the footing they proposed, and every suspicion of hostile intentions from that quarter thoroughly removed, an union with France and Spain against Britain, would be no desirable object to them, either in point of interest or inclination.

Brought up in habits of antipathy against both those nations, in the midst of the continual succours they were receiving, and expecting from them, they felt no cordiality for either. Nor could this be imputed to deficiency of proper sentiments. They viewed France and Spain in too just a light, to ascribe their protection to any other than the real motive, which was the desire of humbling Great Britain. Generosity and compassion for an oppressed and injured people, could not, in common reason, be supposed to influence such absolute and arbitrary Courts as those of Versailles or Madrid. It was their own interest, divested of all other considerations, that prompted them to espouse the cause of the British Colonies.

Nor were either France or Spain so ignorant as to imagine, that the British Colonies were not duly sensible, from what impulse they both acted in the present juncture. This reciprocal consciousness of the radical causes of the connection between them, prevented all mutual affection and cordiality; and weakened, in no small degree, the confidence that was indispensibly requisite in the co-operations of the different parties.

The very principle on which the British Colonists founded the right of their resistance, must indubitably have rendered them odious to their protectors. A right to oppose tyranny, and to cast off subjection to princes who were guilty of oppression, was a maxim which no man in France or Spain durst avow. Yet such was the foundation on which the Americans built their pretensions to shake off their obedience to the Crown of Great Britain, and to apply for assistance to these powers.

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The fact was, that both these Courts considered them as rebels, who were deserving of the severest chastisement; but who, at the same time, happened to prove such convenient instruments of their politics, that they were willing, in favour of that consideration, to set aside the unjustifiableness of their conduct, and afford them the amplest countenance.

Another potent motive to break the force of this alliance, besides the difference of government and political notions, was the immense disparity of habits, manners, ideas, and disposition; and especially of religion. These all contributed to alienate the minds of those new allies, and to render them unfriendly to each other, in proportion as they became more intimately acquainted. Thus the very progress of their connection was inimical to its duration, and the longer they remained united, the stronger of course became the incentives for a separation.

It was fully foreseen, that the pride and loftiness of a monarchical spirit, would not fail to be offensive to republicans when taken under its protection. Undervaluing such a government, it would be apt to treat its members with slight. These, on the other hand, impatient of the least want of attention, would retort this usage without hesitation. Hence dissatisfaction would arise, and concord would be loosened.

But were the Americans, from views of immediate interest, willing to connive at the superiority that might be assumed by the two monarchies that supported them, would these very monarchies themselves act altogether with that reciprocal coincidence in each others plans and measures, that would be necessary for the compassing of their common designs? Would no jealousies or complaints intervene? Would their commanders agree? Would

their officers, or their very people, combine in a reciprocation of service ?

It was well remembered by many, with what little unanimity they had acted upon former occasions against a common enemy. The campaigns in Italy, in favour of the pretensions of the very monarch now sitting on the Spanish Throne, ought to have convinced him how little reliance could be placed on the joint efforts of two nations, so discordant in every respect as the Spaniards and the French.

So strong and insuperable was the mutual aversion of these two people, that it was much to be questioned, whether the losses and defeats that might befall the one, in the course of this very war carried on by their joint auspices, would not prove an acceptable event to the other ; so little were the hearts or hands of the commonalty united, whatever conformity of sentiments existed in their respective sovereigns or ministers.

It were even much to be doubted, whether the Americans themselves, in case Great Britain should recognize their independence, and grant them a favourable accommodation, would not view the ill success of their French and Spanish allies with secret satisfaction ; so reverse and irresistible is the strength of native and habitual prepossessions, and so prone is human nature to recur to those habits, and return to that track of thinking and acting to which it has been used from its infancy.

Reflections of this kind prevented the conduct of the British ministry from being branded with temerity for resolving to face the potent confederacy that now threatened them ; and for not even deigning to hint the least desire of treating upon such terms as did not accord with the plan of conciliation they had offered to the Colonies, or indeed of entering into any treaty at all.

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Whatever errors the British ministry might have committed in its former conduct towards the Colonies, and whatever might be the dangers to which their present conduct exposed them, it was not without admiration that Europe beheld the invincible fortitude with which they met the dreadful storm now ready to burst upon them. Britain, it was now asserted, even among its enemies, had displayed a truly Roman spirit. Like that resolute and aspiring people, it preferred destruction to the loss of its grandeur, and thought it a less misfortune to surrender its existence than its glory.

Such were the sentiments attributed to this nation by some of the greatest politicians in Europe: nor were they ill founded. The greatness of the peril did not seem to make that impression upon the minds of the public, which the enemies of this country had expected. The means of facing them were much more the object of its contemplation, than the dangers and difficulties that would attend so daring a resolution.

Still, however, a man of superior genius, and above all personal views, seemed wanting to direct the spirit and manage efficaciously the resources of the British nation. But where to find him,—or, if found, how to bring forward a man of such a character, appeared an insurmountable task to those who considered the disunited, factious, and corrupted state of the people at large. If they resembled the Romans in their pride and loftiness of mind, they preserved an equal resemblance in those parts of their character that occasioned their ruin. The rage and animosity inspired by continual dissensions, were risen to so outrageous a height, that neither virtue nor abilities were accounted such in their possessors by those who were of a contrary party. The tide of reciprocal opposition was so strong, as to overwhelm all other con-

siderations. Good or bad qualities were indiscriminately overlooked in the general confusion of those distracted times, and hardly any other qualification was become valuable, or was mentioned as the rest of merit in any man, than that of adhering faithfully to the party he had chosen.

In the midst of these domestic storms, the far greater number of individuals who speculated throughout Europe on the affairs of Britain, made no doubt it would inevitably perish. The native intrepidity of its people, the courage and expertness of its military and naval classes, the abilities of its commanders, the greatness of its resources; all these might buoy it up a while, but its internal discords would sink it at last: They were a weight too heavy to be borne, when added to the many others under which it laboured, and would alone contribute more to crush it than all other causes collectively.

It was hardly possible, indeed, for those to think otherwise who were witnesses of the daily violence that shook, as it were, both Houses of Parliament. In former days, though warmth and impetuosity in maintaining their opposite opinions, had doubtless characterized the contending members; they still kept, however, within the bounds of decency; they did not disgrace their eloquence by employing it in the lowest invectives. But strength and dignity of expression were now converted into virulence and extremity of abuse. Personal defamation, and every circumstance that could affront and insult the character of individuals, and expose them to public contempt, were now accounted the most essential and forcible talents in a speaker.

The integrity and upright intentions of those who were at the helm of national affairs, had long been held in high repute by foreign nations; but this was now entirely destroyed by those unguarded reproaches and recriminations with which the Parliamentary debates were attended. When they be-
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held the gross and indecent manner with which the different parties treated each other, when they heard the detail of those accusations with which they alternately strove to render themselves odious, they lost the respect and veneration which they had once entertained for that assembly, and viewed it as a set of factious, turbulent individuals, actuated merely by personal motives, and regardless of that public for which they pretended so much concern.

The zeal that had been expressed against the measures of ministry, was looked upon as proceeding from discontent at not possessing their places, much more than from conviction of their impropriety.—Whatever determinations might have been adopted by men in power respecting America, opposition, it was said, would have condemned them, whether lenient or coercive. As the individuals of this party could not compass the discarding of their antagonists, they were determined to throw every impediment in their way, and to prevent any of their measures from prospering.

Such were the ideas entertained of the British Parliament by many of the most judicious foreigners. They accounted for their depravity by recurring to those causes that had in days of old been assigned as the fountain of Roman degeneracy;—excessive opulence, followed by its usual concomitant, boundless luxury. Enriched to a degree unknown in other countries, through the immense commerce established by the vast successes of the last war, Great Britain was now become the receptacle of all those arts and refinements that contribute to the delight and enjoyment of life. They were carried to the most costly and studious excess that wealth could procure. All classes and degrees pursued them with an avidity and fondness that knew no restraint.

This universal addiction to pleasure, had operated a striking change in the manners and character of
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the nation. Amusement and dissipation had taken place of that seriousness and solidity of disposition for which it had formerly been so remarkable. The English were in many respects become another people. They had cast off the plainness and simplicity of their ancient manner of living, and adopted the most expensive and luxurious that wealth and wantonness could jointly support and devise.

Plunged in the various excesses arising from the intemperance of their enjoyments, individuals were now so wedded to them, that they were deemed necessary concomitants of life, without which the possession of it would be tasteless and insipid, and with which therefore they would not part upon any account. Such a stile of living necessarily occasioned a multitude of expences unknown before.—Incomes were stretched to their utmost bearing to supply the demands it created. But as profusion is an evil that gathers vigour from its growth, and has a peculiar tendency to spread the most extensive infection, this expensiveness excited a fatal emulation, and arrived at length to such a pitch, as to over-top the means of the generality of those who conformed with so destructive a fashion.

But it was become so prevalent, that the pride of people was interested in adhering to it. As a renunciation would have betrayed a diminution of affluence, and as the times were such as rendered a suspicion of that sort ignominious, no man would submit to incur it. Hence flowed a prostitution of personal influence and abilities, in order to purchase the means of continuing in that career of profuseness.

In this manner venality, that had hitherto been restricted within limits, and attended with a degree of shame, was viewed no longer as a disgrace. It was reduced into a system, and openly practised with impunity, and without pains to conceal it.

Such were the descriptions drawn by numbers of foreigners, and not a few of our own people, of the state of this country at that period. They inferred from thence, that it was vain and groundless to indulge any expectation of its being able, in circumstances of so much profligacy, and want of both public and private virtue, to produce a sufficient stock of unanimity and concord in the executive, any more than in the deliberative power, to resist the weight of that ponderous impression which the multitude of so many enemies could not fail to make.

Those, on the other hand, who thought more favourably of the issue of this contest to Britain, founded their ideas on the precedents afforded in history. Rome, for instance, notwithstanding the feuds and commotions with which it was perpetually agitated, still continued to prosper, and to overcome all her enemies abroad.

Allowing that much of the ancient rigidity of public virtue was departed, much still remained, in spite of the continual clamours of the discontented and the dissatisfied part of the nation. True it was that interestedness prevailed, and that votes were often sold; but even this, though far from excusable, was no proof that those very individuals who acted in this shameful manner, were not in other respects warm friends to their country, and ready to venture their persons and all they possessed in its defence.

The motives that influenced the Parliamentary conduct of individuals, should not be scrutinized without great allowance for times and circumstances. Personal connections ought to preserve a due influence, even in the most public transactions. The character of men was a sufficient and warrantable inducement to approve of their measures, and to place an implicit confidence in their integrity, as well as in their abilities.

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Great Britain was the region of parties. No period could be cited wherein they did not exist with more or less of violence; yet experience had shown, that there were persons of the highest merit in all parties. Patriots had been found among the favourers, as well as among the opponents of people in power.

Notwithstanding the Parliamentary altercations were sometimes carried to an indecent length, it ought to be remembered, that objects of great magnitude tended naturally to inflame the passions of those who differed in opinion concerning them. Never had objects of greater importance been agitated within the walls of the British Parliament than at the present day. The loss or preservation of one moiety of the empire was now in question. Was it surprising that in discussions arising from so interesting a cause, wherein every man felt himself so deeply and immediately concerned, people should not retain the same calmness as in ordinary matters? This could not be expected in so free and high spirited a nation.

It could not be doubted, from the undauntedness that had already been displayed on the accession of France to the present contest, that the same firmness and determination to encounter all difficulties, would still subsist. Having deliberately resolved to meet them, the character of the British nation was too well known, to imagine that any exertions would be wanting on its part to render fortune propitious. It was called upon by every motive that could animate a brave and illustrious people. The remembrance of its late triumphs on land and sea in so many parts of the globe; the necessity of preserving the empire of the ocean, so long the scene of its power and glory; the protection of its immense commerce, which was the source of its wealth and grandeur, and the principal pillar of that rank and
reputation

reputation it had hitherto maintained with such unrivalled success and splendor.

Add to these considerations the keenness of the resentment the English must feel against the French, for having conspired with their revolted subjects in tearing from them the sovereignty of America. The manner in which France accomplished this design rendered it peculiarly offensive. Under cover of the most specious protestations of neutrality, it had carried on a series of intrigues founded on a duplicity unworthy of its character.

However sanguine the French might be in their expectations, they would find, that notwithstanding the co-operation of Spain and America, the chief of the contest would lie between them and their ancient rivals. On them the strength and efforts of these would be principally directed; and past experience had shown the activity and resources of these rivals to be uncommon and formidable in the highest degree.

America was at a vast distance, and incapable of any offensive operations of any consequence out of its own territories. Spain, in the late war, had proved an insufficient aid. Should Britain suspend its hostilities on the American continent, and direct its fleets and armies against the dominions of the House of Bourbon, in the West Indies, it would be no easy task to prevent them from falling into the hands of that resolute and enterprising enemy.

The French had not hitherto manifested an equal degree of diligence or skill, when compared with that which had been exerted by the English since the declaration of France in favour of America. Notwithstanding the advantages of coming fresh into the contest against an enemy already fatigued with three expensive and arduous campaigns, yet she found him prepared to meet her with an alacrity and vigour which she confidently hoped he had lost.

It was well known that this unexpected disappointment had not a little damped the spirit, and abated the confidence of the French. They were a people quick in their formation of the most flattering prospects, but apt to be cast down on the least failure; they were easily elated, but still more easily depressed; not from want of courage, but from want of patience to contend with obstacles that threatened difficulty and duration, and required great labour and perseverance to surmount.

The English were, on the contrary, of a quite opposite character: bold and daring, yet circumspectful; enterprising, yet not precipitate; cool and deliberate in framing their resolutions, but firm and determined in executing them; they met obstructions with temper, and submitted to hardships with fortitude: their intrepidity was accompanied with a calmness that fitted them peculiarly for seasons of danger. They bore disappointments undismayed; and from the experience of the present time, it was plain they could face the severest trials without despondency.

The formidable confederacy before which France had presumptuously thought that Great Britain must bend without any further hesitation, had only doubled her exertions, and exalted her courage: her firmness seemed to increase in proportion to her peril; and instead of humbling herself before so many enemies, she evidently set them all at defiance.

As no nation had ever exhibited greater proofs of magnanimity, none had at the same time taken bolder and more decisive measures against its numerous foes. It seemed determined, should Fate have decreed its fall, to perish nobly, and to leave a name un sullied and respectable to all future ages.

Such were the various sentiments and opinions of the many individuals in Europe, whose thoughts and lucubrations were taken up with the critical situation

tion of this country, at the time when Spain declared its accession to the alliance of France and of America against Britain.

This declaration was made to the British ministry by the Spanish Ambassador at the Court of London, upon the sixteenth day of June, seventy-nine.

Notwithstanding suspicions had long been entertained of the hostile intentions of the Court of Spain, yet the consideration how repugnant it was to the interest of that monarchy to act inimically to this country, kept people's minds in suspense how the joint solicitations of the French and American ministers at that Court would terminate.

The Rescript delivered to the British ministry by the Marquis of Almadovar, Ambassador from Spain, was a composition of a vague and desultory nature, wanting in clearness and precision, and attended with no accuracy or strength of reasoning: the facts stated carried no weight nor conviction, and did not appear to afford just causes for so serious and violent a measure as a rupture between the two nations.

It set forth, that the King of Spain had used his utmost endeavours to bring about a reconciliation between Great Britain and the powers with which she was at war, but that they had been rejected in a manner that manifested an hostile disposition in that Court.

It represented the conduct of the British ministry respecting the mediation it had accepted on the part of Spain, as disingenuous, and tending only to protract it by vain pretences and evasive answers.

It complained of insults offered to the Spanish flag, and violation of the territory of Spain in America; it stated that reparation had been demanded for these outrages, but that none had been received; and what was very remarkable, it specified that the

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various injuries done to Spain by Great Britain amounted to one hundred!

Such was the substance of the Spanish Rescript; which intimated at the same time, that the interests of Spain and France were so blended, as to require their being comprized in one settlement, in any future treaty with Great Britain.

The complaints contained in this Rescript were answered in a very forcible and circumstantial manner, in a paper that was transmitted to the Spanish Ambassâdor after his departure.

But whatever pretences were alledged by Spain for breaking the peace with England, it was very clearly understood that the real motive was to embrace the favourable opportunity of depressing Great Britain, now offered by the defection of its Colonies.

Very severe reflections were passed on this occasion upon the conduct of ministry by the members of opposition in Parliament. Now at length, it was said, that system was completed which had been so often predicted, but which ministers exploded as groundless and imaginary. The Family Compact between the French and Spanish branches of the House of Bourbon, was now fulfilled in all its parts; and Great Britain, the principal object of that family's dread and aversion, was to experience the first effects of that dangerous combination.

But however pointed and acrimonious the speeches of opposition were, all parties felt the necessity of union on this emergency. Both Houses concurred firmly and unanimously in the resolution to support with the utmost spirit and vigour the war denounced against this country by the House of Bourbon.

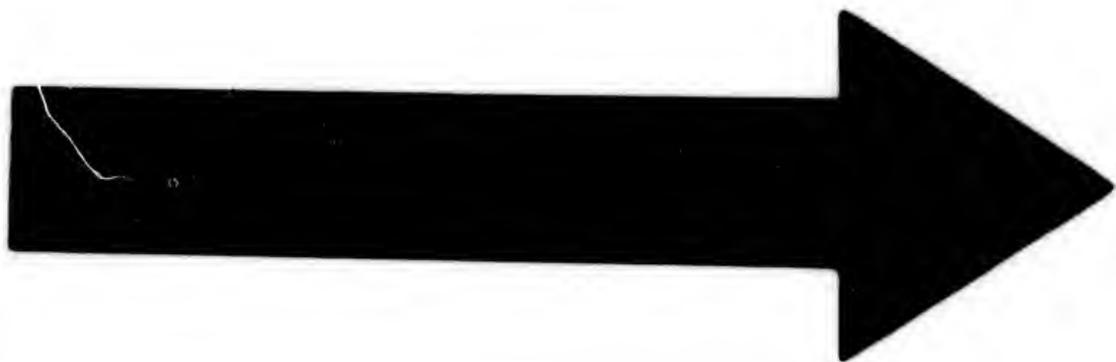
In consequence of the delivery of the Spanish rescript to the ministry, its contents were laid before both Houses in the King's name, with a solemn declaration

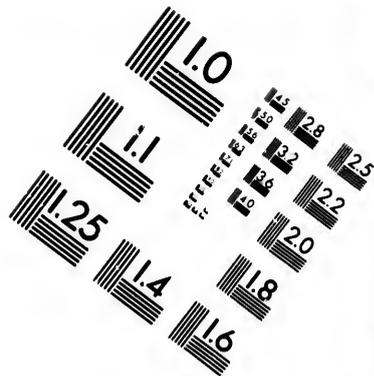
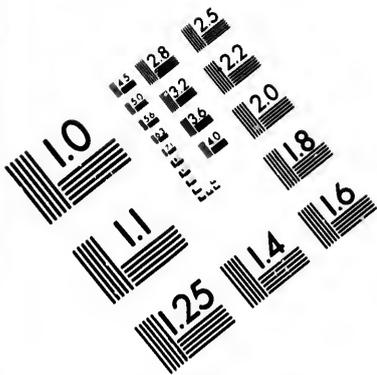
declaration on his part, of the real desire he had always entertained and expressed to cultivate peace and harmony with that crown, and how much he was surprized at the pretences on which the declaration was founded. Several of the grievances complained of had not been communicated by any channel previous to this rescript. Whenever applications had been made, they had been received with all due attention, and nothing had been omitted to procure all requisite satisfaction.

In answer to the royal message, which was worded with great temper and dignity, after presenting an address to the Throne, containing their determination to exert all the powers and resources of Britain against its enemies, it was moved in the House of Commons, that another address should be presented at the same time, requesting that the naval and military forces of the kingdom should be collected in such a manner, that its whole united strength might be exerted against the House of Bourbon.

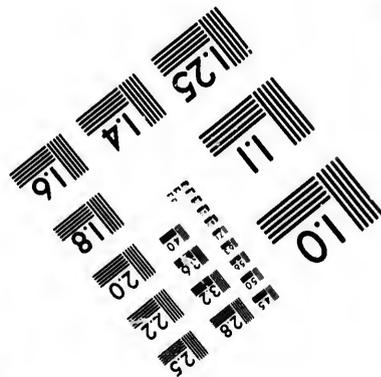
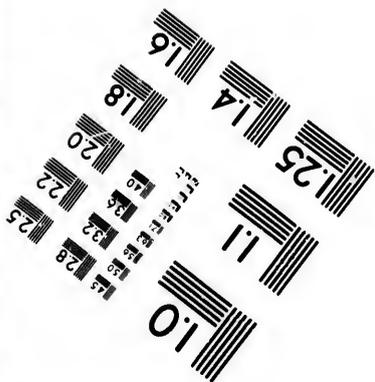
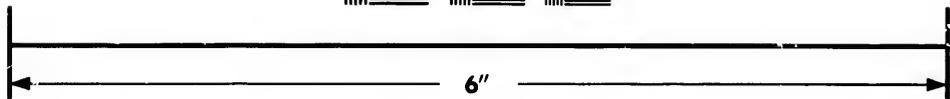
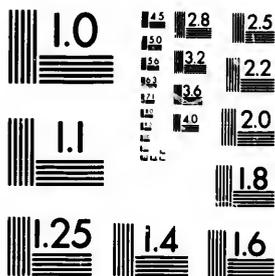
This motion was supported upon the great necessity of making the principal impression upon that quarter, and the improbability of doing it effectually while the force of this country remained scattered and divided at such an immense distance. To continue our efforts in America in the same manner as before, must weaken them in Europe, where it was evident they were much more wanted at present, that we had to contend with so powerful a combination of enemies, whose fleets and armies were now menacing our very coasts, and threatening an invasion of the kingdom itself.

Ministry opposed this motion on the ground of its interfering with the royal prerogative of directing exclusively all active measures. Were even such a measure proper to be adopted, an open compliance with the request now proposed, would involve a notification of it to the enemy, that might prove highly





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prejudicial. It was much more adviseable, on all accounts, to leave the executive power to act in such matters at full liberty: to assume the right of controuling its operations, would check and retard them in such a manner, as might frustrate the best concerted schemes.

The setting aside of this motion was very displeasing to numbers, who were firmly convinced that the stationing the fleets and armies of the realm so far afunder, would prevent them from being of that essential service they would prove, were they at hand to co-operate. America was now considered by many as an object no longer deserving of that sollicitude which it had so long occupied. The difficulty, or rather the impracticability of recovering it, was obvious, while the nation was engaged in a war with both France and Spain. A war with two such formidable powers, was of itself an object of sufficient magnitude to employ the whole attention and forces of Great Britain: to divide them would be to render them impotent and useles. The utmost that could be proposed, was to keep possession of what still remained in our hands on the American continent, but by no means to make it the scene of our principal operations.

In addition to this idea, the propriety of which was warmly maintained on this occasion, it was suggested that at so dangerous a crisis as the present, all personal animosities ought to give way to the service and safety of the state; that it behoved all parties to unite in so necessary a purpose. To this intent, it was incumbent on ministry to use their utmost endeavour to recall to their different stations in the army and navy, those individuals whose discontents had induced them to throw up their employments: no man of courage and abilities ought to be overlooked or slighted at this perilous season; such men especially as Lord Howe and Admiral Keppel

Keppel should not be suffered to remain unemployed; and no means should be left untried to prevail upon them to resume their functions.

In the House of Lords the same ideas were prevalent as in the House of Commons, among the members in opposition. The Duke of Richmond in particular spoke strenuously on this occasion, for a total alteration of the system that had hitherto been pursued in America. He represented that country as the fatal drain of the blood and treasures of Britain, and as the unhappy source of the dissensions that filled both parliament and nation: were the measures that had been carried on at so immense a cost in that country, to be suspended, and a vigorous exertion to ensue of the resources possessed by Great Britain, they were so manifold, that when thoroughly weighed and inspected, they would be found fully adequate not only to resist, but to overcome and defeat the whole naval strength of the House of Bourbon.

In consequence of this representation, he moved that an amendment should accompany the address to be presented to the Throne, expressing that in so awful a situation as that wherein this country stood at present, its strength ought no longer to be divided and wasted in a fruitless and ruinous civil war; the prosecution of which would expose it to the attempts of its numerous enemies, who would not fail to take advantage of the absence of so large a proportion of our fleets and armies in a distant part of the world, and invade us while enfeebled by so considerable a deprivation of our strength: the only means therefore of resisting so potent a confederacy, was to relinquish that system of hostilities in America which had been productive of so many calamities, and involved this country in such imminent and unprecedented danger.

The Duke of Richmond's motive for confining his motion to a change of system, without including a removal of ministers, was to obtain, by this proof of moderation and disinterestedness, their more ready concurrence in his proposals. A dismissal of the present ministry was, however, insisted upon with great warmth by several other Lords in the opposition.

The arguments alledged by ministry, for dissenting from the Duke of Richmond's proposal for a cessation of hostilities in America, were, that such a measure would appear as a renunciation to all hopes of recovering that country, the sovereignty of which was an object of too much consequence to abandon without the most violent and resolute struggle to retain it. Herein the honour of the nation was the more deeply concerned, as France and America had made it an essential article in their treaty of confederacy, that they should agree to no terms of pacification, till Great Britain had solemnly recognized the independency of the United States. Hence it was clear, that to withdraw our armies would not accelerate a reconciliation upon those terms we demanded: and as the dignity of the nation required that we should accede to no others, it was proper that we should retain the means of enforcing them by keeping our forces in America.

After a long and interesting debate, wherein much eloquence and acuteness of reasoning were displayed on both sides, and were attended with no little acrimony and personal invective the amendment to the address moved by the Duke of Richmond was negatived by a majority of fifty-seven to fifty-two.

The imminent peril to which the kingdom was now exposed, occasioned a variety of military projects to be laid before Parliament, for the purpose of its internal defence. The principal one that was adopted, was the raising of volunteer companies, which

which were to be added to the regiments of militia belonging to the counties where they were raised.

It had been proposed at first to double the number of the militia, which would at once produce such an augmentation of force, as would, in conjunction with the regular troops, constitute a most formidable army; but upon mature reflection, the standing establishment of regulars and militia appeared fully sufficient for the guard of the kingdom, especially when reinforced by the additional companies to be raised in every county.

A motive for not increasing the militia, was, that a merely defensive war did not seem the most eligible measure in the present circumstances. As it was determined to carry it on with the utmost activity and vigour, it would, in consequence of such a resolve, be necessary to send a number of troops out of the kingdom upon the various expeditions that would be undertaken: these must of course be composed of, and drafted from the regular forces, which would therefore demand continual recruiting to supply the place of those who were sent abroad. In order to raise these recruits with the more facility, it was judged more advisable to leave the militia on its actual footing, than to increase it, as the numbers wanted for that purpose would be more usefully employed in filling the vacancies in the regular regiments, and keeping them up to their full complement.

The spirit and magnanimity that were displayed at this perilous time, fully answered the prognostications of those politicians both at home and abroad, who had confidently predicted that the combination formed against Britian, would serve much less to intimidate it, than to shew its amazing resources; and would shortly make it evident, that the prospects in which its enemies had been so forward to indulge their imaginations, were founded on their

ignorance of the real situation of this country, and the disposition of its people ; of the greatness of its intrinsic wealth, and the readiness of individuals to employ it with the most boundless generosity for the common defence.

Animated with this laudable spirit, all parts of the kingdom exhibited a zeal and promptitude to concur in every measure necessary for the protection of the realm, that banished all despondency and fear. People of rank and affluence acted every where with a liberality which soon evinced that no funds would be wanting in this critical exigency. Companies were raised, and regiments were formed upon the plans that had been proposed, and every preparation made to meet the utmost efforts of the enemy.

C H A P. XLIV.

Military Operations in North America.

1779.

THE success of the British arms in reducing Georgia had revived the hopes of the Loyalists in the neighbouring provinces of Carolina. As a considerable part of them consisted of emigrants from Britain, notwithstanding they had, through compulsion, submitted to the adverse party, they were constantly watching an opportunity of casting off a yoke, to which their dispositions could not be reconciled, and of returning to the subjection of their native country.

On hearing of the reduction of Georgia, and the arrival of General Prevost, they determined to rise in a body. They assembled accordingly on the back frontiers of North Carolina, with an intent to maintain their ground in that province, till they could be joined by reinforcements from Georgia.

But the distance from thence to the place where they embodied was so great, that it was impracticable to answer their expectations with sufficient dispatch to support their undertaking. It was soon frustrated by the superior strength of the enemy in their neighbourhood: they were attacked and totally routed with the loss of about half their number.

The remainder, finding the strength of the enemy continually increasing, and expecting no further assistance from their own party in that quarter, resolved to make their way to Georgia. They effected this resolution with great courage and constancy

through a variety of difficulties, and had the good fortune to join the royal forces in that Province.

As the number of troops under General Prevost, was not sufficient to form any strong chain of communication with those districts that were remote from the capital, he was obliged to contract his posts in order to preserve his strength.

This was the more indispensibly necessary, as General Lincoln was arrived on the borders of Georgia with a considerable force, and encamped within twenty miles of Savannah town, the British head quarters.

Another strong body of Americans was posted at a further distance, on the river of that name, at a place called Briar's Creek; where it covered the upper part of Georgia, and prevented any associations being formed in favour of the British interest.

Colonel Prevost, a relation of the General of that name, was stationed at Hudson Ferry, on the Savannah river, twelve miles below Briar's Creek. The proximity of the American corps at this place, induced him to form a design of surprizing it. To this intent General Prevost made several motions in the neighborhood of Savannah town, in order to divert the attention of General Lincoln, and remove all suspicion of the project in agitation.

In the mean time, Colonel Prevost ordered a division of his forces to advance towards Briar's Creek, to the purpose of feigning an attack upon the American body posted there; with the other division he took a circuit of near fifty miles, to the enemy's right, with a view, after crossing Briar's Creek, where it was fordable, to come suddenly upon their rear.

The situation of the Americans at Briar's Creek was so advantageous, that they entertained no apprehensions of being forced: the Creek extended along their front, and was for some miles of too
great

great a depth to ford. The river Savannah, with a deep swamp on each side, covered their left; and they had a body of cavalry on their right, to keep a look out on the adjacent country.

It happened, unfortunately for them, that on the approach of Colonel Prevost with his division, this very body had been detached to a considerable distance on the opposite quarter. This favoured the

March 30, 1779. Colonel's design so completely, that he came upon them undiscovered, in the middle of day: they were attacked in their camp, and instantly put to the rout every where: a body from North Carolina rallied, and attempted to make a stand; but after a brave resistance, they were also defeated.

The victory was complete in every respect: the enemy lost their artillery and stores, their baggage, and almost all their arms; besides about four hundred killed and taken, among the latter of whom were many officers: numbers were drowned in the river Savannah, and perished in the swamps, in their endeavouring to escape.

By this success the province of Georgia was again freed from the enemy, and a communication thrown open with the well-effected in the back settlements of this and the neighbouring Colonies of Carolina. Several bodies of them joined General Prevost, and proved no small addition to his army: in consequence of which he stretched his posts further up the river Savannah, and secured the principal passes over it. By these means, the forces which had been collected by the enemy on the other side, were constrained to remain inactive, as the passage was too dangerous to be attempted in presence of the force that now guarded it.

General Prevost, in the mean while, was employed in observing their movements, intending, as soon as an opportunity offered, to make an attempt
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on the Province of Carolina. He was, after some expectation, favoured with one that opened a new and very unexpected scene.

A meeting of the Delegates of the Province of Georgia had been appointed to be held in the beginning of May. As the capital was now in the possession of the British troops, the meeting was transferred to Augusta, a town situated one hundred and thirty miles from that of Savannah. In order to be at hand to protect this assembly, General Lincoln marched his army to the neighbourhood of that town.

The situation he quitted lay between the lower parts of Georgia and Carolina, and effectually prevented any attempt from the British troops on that side. But by leaving it, the way was immediately opened for the design that General Prevost had in contemplation.

The face of the country was such, indeed, at this time of the year, as powerfully discouraged any military operations. The river Savannah, which is the boundary between those two Provinces, was so swelled and increased by the rains and freshes, that it seemed utterly impassable. On the Carolina side the country was either so flooded or swampy, that it appeared impossible for an army to march through it.

Besides these natural obstructions, General Lincoln had left a strong body of men under the command of General Moultrie, a very resolute officer, to guard the passes that led to Charlestown. All those were deemed sufficient impediments to prevent the British forces from forming any projects against Carolina during so unfavourable a season.

But General Prevost, on the departure of the American forces for Augusta, lost no time in carrying his intended scheme into execution. He was invited to the prosecution of it by various motives.

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The necessity of obliging General Lincoln to move from the upper country, where he intercepted the communication between the Royal army and the well affected in the back-settlements; the hope of obtaining supplies of provisions, of which he began to stand in great need, the expectation of encouraging the loyal party to act in his favour, and the propriety of employing vigorous measures, in order to keep up the reputation of the British arms.

The force he had with him at this time did not much exceed three thousand men; but they were tried soldiers. They set forward on this expedition at the end of April, and proceeded with a resolution that astonished the American troops posted at the different passages. These were soon dispersed, and obliged to fall back. As the country became more open, the British troops made their way with the greater rapidity; and at length disentangled themselves from the innumerable swamps and marshes through which they had marched, in spite of a continual opposition.

As the road to Charlestown was now cleared, and the Loyalists in General Prevost's army represented the taking of it as a matter of no difficulty, he resolved, in concurrence with his principal officers, to advance with all speed towards it; hoping from the feeble condition in which it was represented to be, that he might possibly render himself master of it before General Lincoln could come to its assistance.

This officer was persuaded that the obstructions to the movements of the British troops would have been insurmountable. In this conviction he remained with his whole force at Augusta. It was with the utmost surprize he was informed of the progress made by General Prevost. The danger Charlestown was in compelled him to hasten with diligence to its relief. To this purpose he mount-

ed a select body of infantry on horseback, and followed it himself at the head of all the troops he could collect.

The forces commanded by General Moultrie had occupied all the bridges and avenues on the road to Charlestown. He was now joined by Pulaski's legion, and some other troops, and seemed determined to make a resolute stand. But the vigour with which his people were continually attacked was such, that they retreated every where, and the British troops arrived at length within sight of Charlestown, and took post almost within cannon-shot of that city on the twelfth of May.

Most of that day was spent in skirmishing: on the next, General Prevost having drawn up his troops in such a manner as to make the most intimidating appearance, sent in a summons to surrender, with offers of a very advantageous capitulation. As the place was not completely fortified, and the regular strength to defend it was inconsiderable, the inhabitants would gladly have compounded with General Prevost on terms of neutrality for the city, and the whole province of Carolina, during the remainder of the war. But as these concessions did not include the surrender of Charlestown, the negotiation was dropped, and the town's-people prepared to make an obstinate defence.

But the circumstances of General Prevost's army did not allow of an assault: his artillery was not of a sufficient weight for such a purpose, and he had no shipping to support his attack by land. That of the besieged was numerous and in good condition, and were posted in such a manner as would have greatly annoyed him in case of an attack. Their fortifications were well provided with artillery, and the inhabitants appeared altogether determined and able to make a vigorous resistance.

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Besides these considerations, others equally cogent offered themselves to dissuade General Prevost from making any further attempt upon the town. General Lincoln was advancing with all speed, at the head of a force superior to his own; were he to fail in his attempt upon the place, he would find himself environed with difficulties that would probably prove insurmountable. The garrison on the one hand, and General Lincoln on the other, would place him between two fires, and his retreat would become impracticable, from the diminution of his army, that would necessarily ensue through the continual skirmishes wherein he would be engaged, and from the face of the country, intersected with such a multitude of creeks and morasses, the fords and passes through which would be strongly guarded every where.

He was induced by these various motives to withdraw his troops from the posts they occupied before Charlestown during the night. He crossed over to the islands of St. James and St. John, lying to the south of Charlestown. As they abounded in provisions, they proved the most convenient quarters that could have been chosen at this time; his determination being to act on the defensive, till the arrival of those supplies of military stores, and other necessaries, which he daily expected, and much wanted.

The British troops tarried in these islands till the arrival of two frigates, which put it in the power of General Prevost to resume the operations he had projected. The principal one was to possess himself of the island of Port Royal, which from its situation would afford many advantages. It had an excellent harbour, and commanded the coast between Charlestown and Savannah river, with the town of that name, from whence a communication to the island was open and secure: here he determined

mined to fix his quarters till he received the reinforcements requisite to re-enter Carolina.

General Lincoln, who perceived the design of the British commander, thought it necessary to make an attempt to dislodge him from the convenient post he had taken, preparatory to the execution of his design. To this purpose he advanced to Stony Ferry, situated between St. John island and the main-land. This being a pass of great importance, General Prevost had taken great precautions to secure it. A chosen body was posted here under the command of Colonel Maitland, a very gallant officer, and it was fortified with redoubts and artillery.

The Americans attacked it in great force, but after a long and severe dispute, were obliged to retire June 20, with considerable loss. An armed float, 1779. that had been stationed opposite to their right flank, galled them so effectually, that they were obliged to confine their attack chiefly to the right of the British lines, which was the strongest side, and where they met with a fire that did great execution.

After this disappointment, they desisted from any further attempts, and left General Prevost at liberty to continue his intended operations. In consequence of which, he pursued the plan he had formed, and moved his forces towards Port Royal island, of which he took possession without opposition.

During these operations in the Southern Colonies, Sir Henry Clinton was concerting at New York the means of distressing the enemy in the middle Provinces. An expedition was accordingly undertaken against Virginia, to be conducted by Sir George Collier with a naval, and General Matthews with a land force. Entering the Chesapeak, the larger ships anchored at the mouth of the river James, to block up its navigation, and Sir George Collier

Collier proceeded with the lighter vessels up Elizabeth river to Portsmouth. But the wind and tide not serving, General Mathews apprehending that the enemy, on receiving intelligence of the British troops approaching, might the better prepare themselves for defence, thought it advisable to land them immediately, and march with all speed to the place intended.

The town of Portsmouth was open and unfortified to the land side, but the passage up the river was guarded by a fort at half a mile distance below it; but the garrison being weak, and expecting no assistance, and the fort itself unable to stand a vigorous attack, it was abandoned without making any defence.

Upon intelligence of the approach of the fleet and army, the enemy set fire to several loaded merchantmen ready for their departure, among which were some very large, and of great value. The troops however arrived in time to save a considerable number.

The damage done to the enemy at Portsmouth and its neighbourhood was imminent. A prodigious quantity of provisions prepared for General Washington's army, was destroyed, together with a vast variety of naval and military stores, besides what was carried away. About one hundred and twenty vessels of different sizes were burned, and twenty brought off. No loss was sustained by the fleet and army, which after having fully executed the designs proposed by the expedition, by demolishing the fortifications, and setting fire to the magazines and store-houses within their reach, returned to New York in less than a month from their departure.

On the return of this detachment and squadron, Sir Henry Clinton resolved to execute a project he had sometime had in view. Two strong forts were
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constructing by the enemy on the North River, the one at Verplanks Neck on the east; the other at Stoney Point, on the western side. They were of the utmost importance to the Americans, as they commanded the principal pass between the Northern and the Southern Colonies, called King's Ferry, and lying midway between them. As they were nearly completed, though not sufficiently strong to make an effectual resistance, he determined to assail them before they were finished.

What further induced him to undertake this expedition, was the distance at which General Washington lay with his army at this time, and the impracticability of his arriving at the North River soon enough to throw any impediments in the way of this design.

On the thirtieth of May, the force destined for this expedition embarked under General Vaughan; Sir George Collier commanded the shipping. A division of the troops landed within eight miles of Verplanks, which the enemy abandoned, after setting fire to the barracks, a block house, and all that was combustible, and not in readiness to carry off.

Another division landed on the western side of the river, at three miles distance from Stoney Point, from which the enemy immediately withdrew on its appearance.

On the opposite shore, facing Stoney Point, stood a small but strong fortification; which had been constructed to secure the passage of the river on either side. It was called Fayette, in honour of the French nobleman of that name in the American service. Its situation was hardly accessible, for which reason it was determined to attack it from the other shore. To this intent some heavy pieces of artillery were dragged up to Stoney Point from the foot of the rocks where it was situated, and a battery of cannon
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and mortars erected on their summit, which overlooked and commanded fort Fayette.

While General Pattison, who commanded the division that had mastered Stoney Point, was employed in cannonading fort Fayette, General Vaughan proceeded from Verplanks through a range of hills, and surrounded the fort on the land side. Sir George Collier had also stationed his shipping in such a manner, as to cut off the garrison's retreat by water, and to subject it in the mean time to a very heavy fire.

Thus assailed on all sides, the garrison, after making a most resolute defence, was obliged to surrender without any other condition, than that of being promised civil usage, to which their gallant behaviour certainly intitled them.

The importance of both these acquisitions was such, that immediate diligence was used to put them into the completest state of defence. Stoney Point, as lying nearest the enemy, was principally attended to; no doubt being entertained that their efforts would quickly be directed to its recovery.

While the works were carrying on at these places, Sir Henry Clinton, in order to cover them, encamped at Philipsburg, about half way between them and New York island. Here he commanded the country adjacent to the North River on both shores, and was in readiness to seize any favourable opportunity of compelling General Washington to an engagement, in case he should leave his station in Jersey, and approach nearer to the British army.

The post occupied by Sir Henry Clinton, and the possession of Verplanks and Stoney Point, proved very incommoding to the Americans, by intercepting the direct communication between the northern and southern Colonies across the river Hudson, and obliging them to make a circuit of near one hundred miles, for the purposes of necessary correspondence

through one of the most mountainous and difficult countries in America.

The circumstances of the American army, were not such at this period as to enable General Washington to undertake any offensive operations. The late successful expeditions of the British forces into several parts of the continent, had considerably weakened it, by the detachments he had been forced to make in order to put those places in a posture of defence, which lay chiefly exposed to their incursions. The destruction of stores and provisions by these expeditions, had not a little disconcerted the measures projected by the Americans, and reduced them to the necessity of acting chiefly upon the defensive.

Another motive no less prevalent conduced in preventing the American General from encountering any unnecessary risk at the present. A powerful assistance of troops had been promised, and was now expected from France. In consequence of this expectation, Congress was not willing he should put it in the power of the British army to bring him to action, lest a defeat should ensue, which would diminish their importance and reputation, and deprive them of the ability of co-operating with, and rendering effectual the strength that might be sent for their support.

In the mean time they lost no opportunity of distressing the fleet and army, by cutting off the trade to New York, by means of the numerous privateers that swarmed along the coast, and infested especially the navigation of the Sound between Long Island and Connecticut.

In order to put a stop to these depredations, it was determined by the British commanders to make a vigorous effort on the coast of Connecticut, and to destroy those places that proved a receptacle to
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these predatory vessels, and from whence they were fitted out.

To this intent a select body of men was put under the command of Governor Tryon, and General Garth, an officer of known experience and activity. They embarked under the convoy of a good number of armed vessels, and proceeded to Newhaven, where they landed. On intelligence of their approach, the militia of the country assembled, and marched to the assistance of the inhabitants. But their opposition was ineffectual: the batteries that protected the harbour were demolished, together with the fort, and all the shipping and naval stores of every kind that were found. The town itself received no molestation: this was owing to the inhabitants having abstained from firing upon the troops out of the houses.

From Newhaven the armament sailed to Fairfield, which made a most resolute and desperate defence. Here the contest was so violent, that the town was unhappily set on fire, and totally consumed with all it contained.

The next town they attacked was Norwalk, where they met with no less determined an opposition, both from the town's people, and large bodies of militia that came to their assistance from all parts of the neighbourhood. This place shared the same fate as Fairfield, and was totally reduced to ashes, as was also Greenfield, a small sea port; by the burning of which this destructive expedition terminated.

Immense damage was done to the Americans upon this occasion. Exclusive of the destruction of their houses, they sustained a prodigious loss in shipping, merchandise, and effects of all denominations.

This military execution took place with a very inconsiderable detriment to the troops that effected it. Notwithstanding the various impediments they

had to overcome, and the perpetual encounters with men who opposed them with the utmost resolution, the number of killed was not more than twenty, and of wounded about one hundred and thirty.

General Washington, on the taking of Verplanks Neck, and Stoney Point, and the destructive incursions into Connecticut, removed from his encampment in Jersey, and advanced nearer to Sir Henry Clinton, in order to oblige him to call in his detachments, and contract his operations; but he took at the same time so strong a position in the mountainous country along the shores of Hudson's river, that the British General found it impracticable to bring him to an engagement.

One of the motives for General Washington's approach, was, a design he had formed to recover Stoney Point by surprize. It had been put into as complete a posture of defence, as the shortness of the time since it fell into the hands of Sir Henry Clinton, would permit: the garrison consisted of a select party under Colonel Johnson.

The American General chose for the execution of his design, one of the most resolute officers in his army. This was General Wayne, who, at the head of a strong detachment of picked men, proceeded through a road full of impediments, and arrived towards the close of the evening of the fifteenth of July, within sight of Stoney Point. Here they formed in two columns, and to prevent a discovery, waited till midnight.

The column on the right was commanded by General Wayne; his van-guard was composed of one hundred and fifty of his bravest soldiers, led on by Colonel Fleury, a French officer of noted bravery. The left column was under the command of Major Steward, a bold and active man, and had a van-guard of chosen troops like the right. The orders were to make use of the bayonet only; for which purpose no muskets were suffered to be loaded.

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The two columns marched to the attack from the opposite sides of the works. Another body made a feint on that side which lay between them. Never did the American troops behave with more intrepidity than upon this occasion. The works were surrounded with a morass and two rows of abatis, and well provided with artillery. They were opposed by a heavy fire of musketry and grape shot. They forced their way through these various obstacles, bayonet in hand, and both columns met in the center of the works, where the garrison was obliged to surrender prisoners of war.

The conduct and personal behaviour of General Wayne gained him great honour. He received a dangerous wound during the attack; but he still persisted in conducting it with great courage and presence of mind. His officers followed his example, and acquitted themselves in a manner that acquired great reputation to the American troops.

Their success in this enterprize was considered by Congress in a light of such importance, that it was thought necessary to perpetuate the memory of it in a particular manner, by conferring honorary rewards upon those who had most signalized themselves. General Wayne received a gold medal, emblematic of this action; two of silver were bestowed upon Colonel Fleury, who struck the British colours with his own hand, and Major Steward, who headed the left column with remarkable intrepidity and conduct. A proportionable recompence was given to all the officers and soldiers employed upon this occasion.

The loss of the British troops, notwithstanding a brave defence, was inconsiderable in number of slain; but that of prisoners amounted to five hundred.

As soon as the Americans were masters of Stoney Point, they turned the artillery which they found

on the fortifications, against the works at Verplanks Neck, which lay within gun shot on the other side of the river; a body of troops advanced at the same time on the land side, in order to cut off the retreat of the garrison.

On receiving intelligence of the surprize at Stoney Point, Sir Henry Clinton immediately moved his army forwards to retake it, and to compel the enemy to abandon the attack of Verplanks: Sir George Collier proceeded up the river with armed vessels and transports, with troops on board to the same intent.

The British General made several movements tending to draw General Washington to an engagement; but they were ineffectual: as he did not deem the preservation of Stoney Point of sufficient consequence to venture an attack, he cautiously avoided one, and contented himself with demolishing as much of the fortifications as time would permit, and with carrying off the artillery. The British troops retook possession of it three days after it was surprized.

The success of the Americans at Stoney Point, induced them to make another attempt of the same kind at Patius Hook, a fortified post on the Jersey side, opposite to the city of New York. They presented themselves at three o'clock in the morning, before the gate of the fortifications; and being mistaken by the guard for a party of British troops, returning from an excursion on which they had been detached on the preceding day, they entered without opposition, and made themselves masters of a block-house, and two redoubts; but the alarm being spread, Major Sutherland, the commandant, threw himself, with a body of Hessians, into another redoubt, by an incessant fire from which he forced the enemy to quit the posts they had seized. They withdrew with so much precipitation,

tation, that they had not time to set fire to the barracks, or to spike the guns.

During these transactions in the Province of New York, the people of Massachusetts had been at great pains and expence, in equipping an armament for an expedition against a British post and settlement began during the summer, and already in a state of forwardness, on the eastern limits of their territories.

This new post was on the river Penobscot, on the borders of Nova Scotia. A body of the British troops had lately taken possession of an advantageous situation on that river, and begun the construction of a fort, which, when finished, it was foreseen by the enemy, would prove a great annoyance to them in those parts, where the settlements they had formed of late years were but weak, and quite unable to defend themselves against an enemy in any considerable force.

It was determined, therefore, to lose no time in dislodging the British troops stationed there, before they could complete their intent. To this purpose a numerous armament, and a good body of troops were prepared at Boston, the command of which was given to Commodore Saltonstall, and General Lovel.

Colonel Maclane, who commanded the post at Penobscot, on being apprized of the preparations that were making at Boston, found it necessary to drop the prosecution of his first project, which was the erection of a regular fort, and to confine himself to the putting of the works already constructed in the best posture of defence, which the shortness of the notice given him would admit. His force did not reach to one thousand men, and there were only three armed vessels with him; but he made such good use of it, that in a few days the post he occupied was placed in a respectable state of defence.

On the twenty-fifth of July, the armament from Boston came in sight. It consisted of thirty-seven armed vessels and transports. It began by a heavy cannonade upon the British shipping; which they vigorously returned, aided by a battery of four twelve-pounders, situated on the banks of the river for their protection.

The fortifications which had been constructed with an intent to complete them into a fort, stood in the middle of a small peninsula; the western part of it which projected into the river, forming a bay, within which the vessels lay. On the narrowest part of the peninsula, between the fortifications and the land, an entrenchment had been thrown up, which perfectly secured the post from that quarter.

The enemy being repulsed in their first attack, withdrew to the western end of the peninsula; from whence they returned the next day, and made a second attack; but with no better success than their former; upon which they desisted from any more on that side.

Their next attempt was to land on the western point; but here too they were successively foiled; till having found means to bring the fire of their largest vessels to bear upon the shore, they effected a landing under their guns, after a long and resolute defence by the troops posted to oppose them.

After making good their landing, they erected two batteries; from which they kept up a strong and incessant fire upon the works. But this did not prevent the garrison from carrying them on with unremitting industry. The cannonade continued with equal spirit on both sides during a fortnight; at the expiration of which, it was resolved by the American commanders to make a general assault.

While they were employed in preparations for this purpose, and the garrison was making ready to receive them, an unexpected event put an end to their
their

their design. On the fourteenth of August, it was discovered early in the morning, that the besiegers had left their camp and re embarked their artillery during the preceding night. Nor were the garrison long in suspense to what cause they should attribute this sudden retreat. A British fleet was shortly descried coming up the river.

It was commanded by Sir George Collier, who had sailed from New York to the relief of the British forces stationed here, the moment intelligence had been received of their danger. It consisted of one man of war of the line, and five frigates. The Massachusetts fleet seemed at first to intend a stout resistance; and drew up across the river in the form of a crescent; but on the approach of the British ships, they withdrew with the utmost precipitation.

They were pursued with such eagerness, that not one single vessel of the whole fleet that had sailed from Boston could effect an escape. They were chiefly blown up and destroyed by the Americans themselves.

This was a heavy blow to the Province of Massachusetts. The fleet consisted of nineteen armed vessels, in excellent condition, one of which carried thirty-two guns, five others twenty-four, and the remainder from eighteen to fourteen. The transports amounted to four and twenty.

The soldiers and sailors who escaped on shore from this universal destruction of their naval force, were obliged to explore their way through woods and wildernesses, where they experienced great distress for want of provisions. To complete their calamity, a dreadful quarrel broke out between the troops and seamen, concerning the causes of their disaster at Penobscot. It was carried to such a length, that a violent fray ensued among them, wherein numbers were slain.

C H A P. XLV.

Military Transactions in the West Indies.

1779.

THE capture of the island of St. Lucia, and the defeat of the French by sea and land there, conferred great reputation on the British arms. Admiral Byron arriving shortly after with his squadron, gave them a superiority, which caused no little alarm among the French islands.

The junction of this officer with Admiral Barrington, enabled both to sail immediately to Martinico, in order to provoke Count D'Estaing to come forth and engage them. He had lately been reinforced, and was little, if at all inferior to them; but he expected further reinforcements; and had not forgotten his reception at St. Lucia from a much smaller force than his own.

The conquest of St. Lucia, however it was honourable, and in some respects useful, proved however a most destructive acquisition to the British troops. Accustomed to the more temperate climate of North America, they were not able to bear the relaxing unhealthy change of the West Indies. Sickness and mortality soon spread among them, and swept off multitudes. This was truly an irreparable loss, as it was impossible to supply the places of such troops as had been sent from America.

Reinforcements being arrived from France to the French fleet under Count De Grasse, it was now imagined that Count D'Estaing would have quitted Port Royal, and ventured a general engagement; but he continued immovably in that harbour. Admiral Rowley had joined the British fleet from Europe;

rope;

rope; but there was no sufficient disparity between it and the French fleet, to account for a man of Count D'Estaing's well known spirit, declining an engagement when so frequently offered him by the British Admirals.

His conduct, however, was influenced by very proper motives. He waited an opportunity which he knew must soon arrive, of attacking the British fleet at a disadvantage, by the diminution of its strength, through the convoys necessary for the homeward-bound trade from the British West India islands. It was now the middle of June, the usual season of its departure for Europe, and it was assembled at St. Christopher's in readiness to sail.

The situation of Admiral Byron, the commander in chief, was extremely difficult and critical. The immense value of the merchantmen now on their departure, rendered it absolutely indispensable to give them a powerful convoy. A small one would have subjected it, as well as them, to the utmost danger, by falling in with M. De la Motte Piquet, who was at this time, with a strong squadron, on his way from France to the French islands. But were it to escape from this peril, still it would run the greatest risk, on its return to join the remainder of the British fleet, to be intercepted by the whole French fleet under Count D'Estaing. He would not certainly omit so fair an opportunity of attacking one of the divided parts of the fleet; either that which had convoyed the trade, or that which remained at St. Lucia; and his superiority was so great at present, that to divide the British fleet, would be a measure which no reason could justify.

In consequence of these considerations, it was determined to convoy the homeward trade with the whole fleet, till it was out of danger of being followed by Count D'Estaing, or of falling in with M. De la Motte.

No

No sooner was this determination carried into execution, than Count D'Estaing, as it had been highly apprehended, resolved immediately to avail himself of it. He dispatched a body of troops to attack the island of St. Vincent. They were joined, on their landing, by a great multitude of the Caribbe Indians who were settled in the island, and who gladly embraced this opportunity of revenging themselves for the injuries they had received some years before, and the dispossession of their lands, that took place some time after the conclusion of the last war.

The combined strength of these foreign and domestic enemies, was too great to be withstood by an inconsiderable garrison, especially, as by means of the Caribbees, the enemy had been put in possession of the heights overlooking and commanding the town of Kingston, the principal place in the island, and a large body of regular troops was expected from Martinico.

June 18, 1779. These motives induced the Governor to capitulate. The conditions were very favourable. It was apparently the intention of the French, to diminish the inclination to make an obstinate resistance against them, by granting the most advantageous terms to those who surrendered.

In the mean time, Count D'Estaing was reinforced by the arrival of the Squadron commanded by Mons. De la Motte. His fleet now consisted of twenty-six ships of the line, and twelve frigates; and his land force of ten thousand men.

With this powerful armament, he set sail for the island of Grenada; the strength of which consisted of about one hundred and fifty regulars, and three or four hundred armed inhabitants. He arrived there on the second of July, and landed about three thousand men, chiefly Irish, being part of the Brigade composed of natives of Ireland in the service of France.

They

They were conducted by Count Dillon, who disposed his troops in such a manner, as to surround the hill that overlooks St. George's town, and commands it, together with the fort and harbour.

Lord Macartrey, the Governor, though he could not avoid foreseeing that all resistance would be vain against so formidable a force, resolved however to make an honourable and gallant defence. The preparations made, and the countenance shewn by the garrison upon this occasion, were such as induced Count D'Estaing to be personally present at the attack. He headed a column, and behaved with great bravery; but his troops were repulsed on the first attempt against the intrenchments on the hill: their second onset was more successful: it lasted near two hours. The garrison, after a most courageous opposition, were obliged to yield to the prodigious superiority of number that assailed them on every side. The loss of the French in this conflict, was no less than three hundred killed and wounded.

After making themselves masters of the intrenchments on the hill, they turned the artillery taken there, against the fort that lay under it. This obliged the Governor to demand a capitulation. Count D'Estaing acted upon this occasion in a very haughty and insulting manner. He rejected peremptorily all the articles laid before him, and sent back others, with which he insisted on their instant compliance.

But the conditions he offered were of so extraordinary and unprecedented a nature, that both the Governor and inhabitants agreed in rejecting them without hesitation. The French commander being determined to grant no other, it was judged advisable to surrender without making any conditions at all.

The conduct of Count D'Estaing, after his becoming master of this island, did no credit to his character. It was severe and oppressive, and quite repugnant

repugnant to that generosity which had been experienced by the other islands that had surrendered to the arms of France. The French soldiers were indulged, it has been said, in the most unwarrantable irregularities, and had they not been restrained by the Irish troops in the French service, would have proceeded to still greater.

Admiral Byron, after accompanying the homeward-bound West India fleet till out of danger, and appointing them a convoy to see them safe home, returned with the remainder of his squadron to St. Lucia. On being apprized of the reduction of St. Vincent by the French, he sailed immediately with a body of troops under General Grant for its recovery.

They had not proceeded far, when they were informed that Count D'Estaing had landed a large force at Grenada; but that Lord Macartney was making an obstinate defence, and would be able to maintain his ground till succours arrive. On this intelligence they directly steered for Grenada.

On the sixth of July, the British fleet came in sight of that of France, then lying at anchor off the harbour of St. George. The force under Admiral Byron consisted of twenty one ships of the line, and only one frigate; that under Count D'Estaing, of twenty-seven sail of the line, and seven frigates.

Upon sight of the British fleet, the French immediately got under way. It was the intention and endeavour of the British Admiral to come to close action, from a consciousness of the superiority of the English in that mode of fighting. The intent of the French Admiral, on the other hand, was to avoid an engagement of that decisive nature, and to confine himself to the preservation of his conquest.

In consequence of this plan, the French fleet, which, as more lately come out of port, was in

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better condition, and sailed the fastest, kept in so distant a position, that it was with difficulty it could be reached by any part of the British fleet, nor without exposing this part to the necessity of sustaining, unsupported, a combat against their whole force.

Admiral Byron, on perceiving the disposition, and conjecturing the design of the enemy, made the signal for chasing, and coming to a close engagement, notwithstanding their evident superiority. The engagement begun about eight in the morning; when Admiral Barrington with his own, and two other ships, commanded by Captains Sawyer and Gardner, fetched the van of the enemy, which they attacked with the greatest spirit; but the other ships of his division not being able for a long time to come up to his support, these three ships suffered considerably from the vast superiority with which they were necessitated to encounter, and the Admiral himself was wounded.

The British fleet endeavoured in vain to compel the enemy to come to a close fight; they avoided it with the utmost circumspection and dexterity. It was only by seizing the transient opportunities of the different movements occasioned by the wind and weather, that some of the British ships closed in with the enemy; but then it was upon such disadvantageous terms, as nothing but the extreme eagerness of the British commanders, would have induced them to submit to, as they were constantly engaged with a superiority out of all proportion.

The officers whose fortune it was to encounter the enemy in this unequal manner, were Captains Collingwood, Edwards, and Cornwallis:— They stood the fire of the whole French fleet during part of the engagement. Captain Fanshawe of the Monmouth, a sixty-four gun ship, singly threw himself in the way of the enemy's van, to stop them.



them. Admiral Rowley, and Captain Butchart, fought them at the same disadvantage, and every Captain in the fleet strove with no less spirit to have an equal share in the action.

The distance at which the French fleet continued, and the difficulty of nearing it sufficiently to bring it to close action, occasioned a general cessation of firing about noon. It recommenced about two in the afternoon, and lasted, with different interruptions, till the evening. But the British Admiral, notwithstanding his repeated efforts, could not accomplish the end he so ardently sought, of forcing the enemy to a close fight.

During the action, some of the ships of Admiral Byron's fleet had boldly made their way to the very mouth of St. George's harbour. Not knowing the island was in the possession of the French, their intent was to let the garrison see they were coming to their relief, and thereby to encourage them to hold out. But they were quickly undeceived, when they perceived the French colours flying ashore, and the guns of the forts and batteries firing at them.

This discovery put an end to the design that had brought on this engagement, which was to compel the French to abandon the attack of the island.—The inferiority of the British naval and military force, rendered the recovery of it no less impracticable; and it was now become highly necessary to consult the safety of the transports with the troops on board, which lay greatly exposed, from the number of large frigates, which it was apprehended the French would not fail to dispatch in pursuit of them.

Notwithstanding the damage several of the British ships had sustained in their sails and rigging, and their consequent inability of acting to advantage, the French did not think proper to renew the action. One ship, in particular, the *Lion* of sixty-

four guns, Captain Cornwallis, had suffered so considerably, that she was utterly incapable of rejoining the fleet, that was now plying to windward, and was obliged to bear away alone before the wind.— She arrived in a few days at Jamaica, without being followed by any of the enemy, notwithstanding her weak condition.

Two other ships lay far astern, much disabled; but the French did not attempt to cut them off, from the apprehension of bringing on a close and general action. The same motive prevented them from attempting to capture the transports. The whole of their conduct evinced they did not dare to risk any measure that would involve them in a decisive action.

Admiral Byron having directed the *Monmouth* to make the best of her way to St. Christopher, or Antigua, together with the transports, drew up his remaining ships in a line of battle, expecting, that being no more than three miles distant from the enemy, they would avail themselves of their great superiority, and not permit him to withdraw the transports without endeavouring to seize them; but after having waited in this position during the whole night, he was much surprized in the morning to find the whole French fleet had returned to its station at Grenada.

Never did the valour of the British naval officers display itself more conspicuously than upon this occasion. The most spirited efforts were visible throughout the whole fleet to second the intention of their commander. So resolute and eager, indeed, were they to encounter the enemy in any situation, however so disadvantageous and forlorn, that Captain Cornwallis, in the *Lion*, almost a wreck, falling in with the *Monmouth*, which he mistook for an enemy, he made ready to attack her with the utmost alacrity and resolution.

The consequences of the engagement between the British and French fleets off Grenada, were equally destructive to both of them, though in a different line. The British ships were greatly damaged, on the one hand, though their loss of men was inconsiderable for so long and obstinate an action, not amounting to above one hundred and eighty killed, and three hundred and fifty wounded. On the other hand, the French suffered much less in their shipping, but their list of slain and wounded amounted, according to impartial accounts, to more than three thousand.

But as the loss on the French side was merely of men, it was not so much felt, from the multitudes with which their ships are always crowded. The detriment incurred by the English was much more essential, from the time that would be consumed, and the difficulty in repairing their damages in that part of the world.

Admiral Byron found it necessary to repair to St. Christopher's, in order to refit his ships as well as that station would enable him. He was followed thither some time after by Count D'Estaing, who had now received fresh reinforcements, and whose superiority was so great and decisive, that it would have been the highest temerity to have attacked him in the disabled condition wherein the British fleet was at present.

It was much apprehended that Count D'Estaing would have seized this opportunity of Admiral Byron's inability to oppose him, to have attacked some of the British islands; but as they were in a much better state of defence than those that had fallen into the hands of the French, and as the British fleet would soon be able to resume its operations, he did not judge it advisable to make any further enterprizes, till some occasion should occur that might oblige it to move to a greater distance.

Another

Another motive prevented him from any such attempt at this time, which was the necessity of conveying the home-bound fleet of French merchantmen from their West India islands.

On his return from the performance of this duty, his orders from the Court of France were to leave the West Indies, and to proceed with all expedition to North America, where he was to co-operate with the whole strength of which he was possessed, in the execution of those designs which should be found requisite to carry into execution for the service of the Americans.

Hitherto, the alliance with France had been productive of much less utility to America than had been expected either by the Colonies or the French themselves. The great armament that had been sent with Count D'Estaing, had done nothing corresponding with the mighty hopes that had been formed from the daring spirit of its commander. His conduct in quitting the coast of America, at a time when his assistance was evidently wanted, or could at least have proved highly consequential, had greatly lessened the good opinion of him, and the confidence with which he had been so warmly received by the Colonists.

His departure had been the cause of much mischief to the American interest. Exclusive of other injuries of lesser note, the loss of Georgia had taken place, and Carolina was in imminent danger of sharing the like fate. The British shipping infested every part of the coast, and from its superiority, opened an easy entrance every where into the various provinces of the confederacy. Their maritime situation, and their perpetual interfection by large rivers, navigable for ships of force, exposed them to continual incursions and depredations, by which the country experienced the most heavy distresses, and which, if not effectually checked by a naval

force able to repel that of the enemy, would in process of time compass its total ruin.

Such were the complaints of the Americans on the sailing of Count D'Estaing's Squadron for the West Indies. The subsequent disasters that had befallen them, increased their discontents at being abandoned, as they rightly enough expressed it, by Count D'Estaing, at the very moment, they had enabled him to act with vigour for the cause of France and of America, where his operations would have been most decisive, and were indispensibly wanted.

These complaints soon reached the Court of France, and made the greater impression, as they were well founded. In order to obviate any further dissatisfaction in a people whom it was so highly the interest of France to treat with particular condescendence and attention, especially when their demands were reasonable, the French ministry sent instructions to Count D'Estaing, whereby he was enjoined to return with all speed to the assistance of the Colonies.

In pursuance of this injunction, he set sail for the Continent at the head of twenty-two ships of the line, and ten large frigates. His intentions and his hopes were, as before, directed to objects of the first magnitude. The first measure of the plan in contemplation was to expel the British forces out of Georgia, and to place that province, and the contiguous one of South Carolina, and, in short, all the Southern Colonies, on a footing of perfect security from any future invasions by the British troops.

After the accomplishment of this object, which he promised himself would be attended with no great difficulty, from the smallness of the force that was to oppose him, the next he proposed was no less than a total deliverance of America from the terror of the British arms. This was to be effected

affected by the destruction of the British fleet and army at New York.

This latter part of the plan he doubted not to accomplish through the co-operation of the American army under General Washington. The land force he had with him was considerable, and he looked upon his naval strength as irresistible, in the present weak condition of the British marine at New York.

His arrival on the coast of Georgia being wholly unexpected, some vessels on their way thither from that city with stores and provisions, fell into his hands. The *Experiment*, of fifty guns, commanded by Sir James Wallace, had also the misfortune of falling in with his fleet: though previously disabled by a violent storm, she defended herself with the utmost resolution, and was not taken without much difficulty.

As no intelligence had been received of the approach of Count D'Estaing, no preparations had been made for a suitable resistance. The British troops were still divided in separate cantonments. The head quarters were at Savannah town; but the force with General Prevost at that place was very inconsiderable, the major part being stationed on the island of Port Royal, with Colonel Maitland.

An express was immediately dispatched to the Colonel, on the arrival of the French fleet, with orders to join him with all speed, with the whole body under his command; but the express was intercepted by one of the many American parties that were on the look-out to prevent a communication between these two bodies of British troops. The consequence was, that for want of timely advice, the Colonel was not ready to set out till the French fleet had occupied the passage by sea, and the Americans had strongly secured most of the passes by land.

In this dangerous and difficult situation, Colonel Maitland displayed a spirit and activity that did him and his people the highest honour. The only means remaining to join the division at Savannah, was by the creeks and inlets scattered along the shore, and these were narrowly watched and guarded by the enemy. In the face of these numerous obstacles, he resolutely set forward with a determination to run all hazards sooner than not effect a junction, without which he knew all opposition would be vain against such a force as that which would be employed by the French and Americans upon this occasion.

In the mean time, Count D'Estaing was concerting with the governing powers in Carolina, the measures that were to be adopted in the present circumstances. It was intended to collect a large force to co-operate with him, which with that already under General Lincoln, would be fully adequate to the design of not only reducing Georgia, but of capturing at the same time all the British troops in that province.

After having made all the necessary arrangements, the whole French fleet came to an anchor Sept. 9. at the mouth of Savannah river. The frigates were stationed at the entrance of the various inlets and rivers, and the troops were landed as near as it was practicable to the town of Savannah.

As soon as Count D'Estaing had brought his troops ashore, he moved them up to the British lines, intending to harass the corps under General Prevost by continual skirmishes and alarms, and to depress it by incessant fatigue, before it could be reinforced with the detachment that was yet on its way from the island of Port Royal, and had many difficulties to struggle with before it could effect a junction with the forces at Savannah.

To

To this intent a select party of French were drawn out, and advanced to the British lines, assisted by a body of cavalry under the command of the Polish Count Polaski; but General Prevost was too prudent to venture his men out of their lines, and the French, after giving and receiving several volleys of small arms, withdrew to their encampment.

On the sixteenth of September, Count D'Estaing summoned General Prevost to surrender to the arms of France. The message was conceived in terms of the highest confidence and certainty of success. It boasted of the manner in which Grenada had been taken, and warned the British General to beware of making a fruitless resistance; which he intimated would probably be attended with the most fatal consequences to the besieged.

In consequence of a refusal to listen to a summons that offered no specific terms, Count D'Estaing granted a suspension of arms, for twenty-four hours deliberation. He doubted not, from the evident superiority of his force, and the little apparent probability of their being able to resist it, that the garrison would, upon mature deliberation, agree to a capitulation.

But their resolution was already taken, which was, to hold out to the last extremity. They availed themselves, in the mean while, of the suspension of arms, to make every preparation requisite for the obstinate defence they intended. Before the expiration of the time, their exertions were such, that a number of cannon were mounted in addition to those already on the works, and these were strengthened anew.

In the course of this day, the long expected and desired reinforcement arrived under Colonel Maitland, after having surmounted a variety of obstructions, and made his way through almost impassable swamps and morasses.

On the seventeenth, a final answer was returned to Count D'Estaing's summons, by which he was given to understand, that an unanimous determination was taken to defend the place to the last man. Count D'Estaing received it with equal displeasure and astonishment. Relying on a speedy surrender, it grieved him that the termination of this business was delayed in a manner he so little suspected, and which prevented him from entering upon the more important operations he had in view.

A junction being formed by the French and American forces, they amounted together to between nine and ten thousand men. Count D'Estaing had five thousand regulars, and near one thousand stout Mulattos and free-negroes, well armed. The body of Americans that joined him under the command of General Lincoln, consisted of about two thousand at first; but were soon augmented to twice that number.

To oppose this formidable strength, General Prevost had no more, altogether, than three thousand men: but they were such as continual experience had shewn he could place the firmest dependence on. Numbers of them were refugees, whom resentment for the usage they had received, exasperated to a degree that rendered them desperate.

The French and Americans encamped separately. Count D'Estaing thought it most prudent to keep them apart. His motives for this measure were well founded. He knew by experience, how apt they were to disagree; and he hoped that by acting asunder from each other, a reciprocal emulation would be excited.

It was agreed accordingly, that each of them should carry on their respective approaches without interference from either side. This method was particularly agreeable to the French; who looking upon themselves as incomparably superior to the Americans,

cans, did not chuse to divide any honour with these, to which they imagined that they alone were entitled.

From the very commencement of his operations against the British garrison, Count D'Estaing soon perceived he would have a different resistance to encounter with, than that he had met at Grenada; from which, however, he ought to have learned, considering the handful of undisciplined planters that opposed him with so much bravery, not to have so hastily presumed on the reduction of a place defended by British regulars.

Both the French and the Americans behaved with great spirit and activity, in their endeavours to interrupt the works that were continually carried on by the garrison. But they could not prevent them. Such was the unremitting perseverance of the British military and seamen, in spite of all obstructions, and such their indefatigable industry, that every day added to the strength of their fortifications and batteries: these in particular increased to such a degree, that before the conclusion of the siege near one hundred pieces of cannon were mounted on them.

From the twenty-fourth of September, to the fourth of October, a heavy fire was maintained on both sides; and some skirmishes took place, in which the garrison were constantly successful, and did considerable execution.

The enemy finding they could make no impression on the works of the besieged, resolved on a bombardment, accompanied with a stronger cannonade than ever. To this purpose they opened, on the fourth of October, three batteries; one of thirty-seven, and another of sixteen pieces of cannon, and a third of nine mortars. The firing from these batteries lasted, with little intermission, during five days; but the damage they did was chiefly confined
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to the town, where it destroyed some houses, and killed some women and children.

Hereupon General Prevost wrote a letter to Count D'Estaing, requesting that the women and children might be permitted to retire from the town to a place of safety; but this request was insultingly refused both by Count D'Estaing and General Lincoln.

The Americans, mean while, were much dissatisfied with the French commander; they blamed him for not having attacked the British troops immediately upon his landing, without giving them time to put themselves in such a state of defence as they had now attained.

He began himself to loose patience at the inutilty of his cannonade, and to think it more advisable to proceed at once to a general assault; hoping, from the number and goodness of his troops, to be more successful than by the slow and gradual methods of attack, which had hitherto been employed, and of which the efficacy daily appeared more doubtful.

To this purpose, on the ninth of October, before the break of day, the French and Americans jointly attacked the British works with great fury. Count D'Estaing, accompanied by the principal officers of both armies, conducted the attack. They advanced upon the right of the British lines; and, favoured by a hollow piece of ground which covered them from the fire of the British batteries, they approached in good order and great force, and assailed them with extraordinary fire and impetuosity. Two of the enemy's standards were actually planted upon the parapet of a redoubt, which was, during some time, assailed with the most obstinate violence. Captain Taws, who commanded in the redoubt, was slain, with his sword in the body of the third man he had killed with his own hand. But they

they met with so determined and firm a resistance from an incessant fire of musketry and cannon, levelled at them from almost every direction, that after making repeated efforts to force their way into the lines, they were thrown at length into disorder from the terrible execution done among them, and appeared unable to stand their ground any longer.

This critical moment was seized with great presence of mind. A body of grenadiers and marines sallied forthwith out of the lines, and charged the enemy with such fury, that the ditches of the redoubt, and a battery which they had seized, were cleared in an instant : they were broken and driven in the utmost confusion into a swamp, on the side of the hollow which had favoured their approach.

By the time the enemy had been repulsed, it was broad day ; but the weather was so foggy, and the smoke so thick, that it was not possible to discover the movements of the enemy. This, added to the consideration of their vast superiority in numbers, rendered General Prevost very circumspectful in venturing far from his lines ; and as much firing was heard from several quarters, it was judged safest to stand in readiness to carry assistance, were it to be wanted.

These precautions, though very proper, proved however unnecessary, the enemy having been repulsed every where with prodigious slaughter. Twelve hundred were killed and wounded ; among whom, the French themselves acknowledged forty-four of their own officers. The famous Count Polaski was mortally wounded in this engagement, and Count D'Estaing himself received two dangerous wounds.

To complete the success of the British arms on this occasion, a victory of so much importance, and which gained them so much reputation, was purchased at a very moderate price : the list of killed and wounded was no more than fifty-five ; and the
brave

brave Captain Tawes was the only officer that fell.

The courage and intrepidity displayed on this memorable day by the British officers and soldiers, was so great and striking, that as General Prevost expressed himself in his account of the action, "To particularize those who either did, or strove to signalize themselves beyond the rest, would be to mention the whole army." Not only the military, but the naval list distinguished itself in the most conspicuous manner: the ships companies, with their officers, were all stationed ashore, and equally partook of the dangers as well as of the honours that were gained.

One officer, however, was spoken of with such applause by his General, that it would be injustice to pass him unobserved. This was Captain Moncrief, who, in the capacity of Engineer, conducted the plan of defence with so much judgment and skill, that he was honoured with the warmest and most unanimous applause of the whole army, and recommended in a manner at their desire, as an officer deserving of the highest notice and rewards: the French themselves acknowledged their astonishment at the continual proofs of his abilities, of which they were witnesses to their own cost.

While the British troops were enjoying the satisfaction resulting from the success that was due to their conduct and valour, the enemy was in a condition of discontent and sullenness, which had like to have terminated fatally. The Americans could not conceal their disapprobation of the whole proceedings of Count D'Estaing; nor he the contemptuous light in which he held them. Reciprocal taunts and reproaches came to such a height between both the officers and soldiers of either party, that it was once thought they would have proceeded to actual violence.

A motive

A motive which strongly influenced the Americans upon this occasion, was the jealousy they had conceived against the French commander, on account of his having summoned General Prevost to surrender to the arms of France, without including those of the United States of America.

They inferred from thence, that either he considered them as unworthy of the honour of being mentioned conjointly with the King of France, or that he meant to retain the Province of Georgia for that Crown, in case of a reduction. Whichever of the two was the meaning of the French commander, it exposed him equally to the indignation of the Americans.

To this it may be added, that the inhuman refusal of the request of General Prevost, for a permission to the women and children to depart from the town of Savannah during the siege, was now by the French attributed to the Americans, whom they accused of brutality; and whose General, a French officer of rank, loaded with the coarsest and most injurious appellations, in common with his other countrymen.

This treatment of their commander, as it happened out of his hearing, the Americans represented as base and spiritless; and spoke of it in terms of the highest resentment. Thus, animosity and hatred were kindled between them to the highest pitch; and nothing but a consciousness of the necessity of keeping the peace between the two nations, would have prevented the French and the Americans from coming to the most desperate extremities.

To atone for past incivilities, an offer was now made by Count D'Estaing, to grant the request concerning the women and children; but it was spiritedly refused, as it now plainly appeared that there would be no occasion to accept it.

From

From the day of their repulse, both the French and the Americans abandoned all further prosecution of the siege; and were wholly employed in preparing to retreat. After moving off their artillery, and embarking their sick and wounded, of which they had a great number, the French broke up their camp in the night of the seventeenth, and retired with the utmost precipitation to their shipping. The Americans, on the other hand, crossed the Savannah river, and withdrew into Carolina.

In this manner was the Province of Georgia cleared a third time of the enemy; after the most sanguine expectations had been entertained by all America, that the reduction of this Province would have been but a preparatory step to the expulsion of the British fleets and armies from every part of the continent.

It was not therefore, without excessive concern, that Congress was informed of the disaster that had attended the united arms of the French and American confederacy. It proved a heavy blow to their interest, and greatly lowered the hopes they had formed from the potent succours the French Admiral had brought, and the designs he had laid before them.

Instead of having accomplished the smallest part of the scheme he had now projected, he met with the completest defeat on his very first attempt to carry the commencement of it into execution.

In lieu of that triumphant return to France, which the enemies to Great Britain had so often anticipated in their wishes and discourses, he was obliged to make the best of his way home, with a sickly and ill-conditioned fleet, part of which only he durst venture to send back to the West Indies.

C H A P. XLVI.

French Manifesto.—English Answer to it.—Proceedings of the Combined Fleets of France and Spain.

1779.

IN consequence of the hostile notification on the part of Spain, presented by the Ambassador of that Crown to the Court of London, its thoughts and attention were, of course, employed on the measures which that notification now rendered necessary. A proclamation was issued on the nineteenth of June, for the granting of letters of marque and reprisals against the subjects of Spain, and another to regulate the distribution of prizes that should be taken during the continuance of the war with that nation.

In the mean time, as the confederacy now formed by America, France, and Spain against Great Britain, had attracted the eyes of all Europe, on so vast and important an object, the French ministry thought it incumbent on them to publish to the world such arguments and motives for its conduct, as might afford a colourable pretext for the extraordinary measures they had adopted.

The performance that was composed in France to this intent, was remarkably specious and artful, and showed with what facility reasons may be assigned for the most unjustifiable actions.

It began by reproaching the Court of London with inequitable and unfriendly treatment of the subjects of France in every quarter of the globe, and having exercised its power with great tyranny ever since the conclusion of the last peace.

Imputing the pacific disposition of France to fear or feebleness, Great Britain had, according to her
customary

gined, no doubt, that she had but to employ her usual stile of haughtiness, to obtain of France an unbounded deference to her will : but to the most unreasonable propositions, and the most in-temperate measures, his Majesty opposed nothing but the calmness of justice, and the moderation of reason. He gave the King of England to understand, that he neither was, nor pretended to be a judge of the dispute with his Colonies ; much less would it become his Majesty to avenge his quarrel. That in consequence, he was under no obligation to treat the Americans as rebels, to exclude them from his ports, and to prohibit them from all commercial intercourse with his own subjects."

The Manifesto then proceeds to the injunctions of the Court of France, forbidding the exportation or sale of arms and military stores to America, and to the permission granted to England to prevent the French from carrying on such a traffic with the Americans.

It asserts that France was scrupulously exact in observing every commercial stipulation in the treaty of Utrecht, although it was, according to the Manifesto, daily violated by the Court of London, which, at this very time, had refused to ratify it. That the Americans were interdicted from arming, selling their prizes, or remaining any longer in the ports of France than was consistent with the terms of that treaty.

"These orders," says the manifesto, "produced the desired effect. But notwithstanding this condescension, and strict adherence to a treaty, which his Majesty, had he been so disposed, might have considered as non-existing, the Court of London was not satisfied. It affected to consider his Majesty as responsible for all transgressions, although the King of England, notwithstanding

Vol. III. No. 20. X "standing

“ standing a solemn act of Parliament, could not
 “ himself prevent his own merchants from furnish-
 “ ing the North American Colonies with mer-
 “ chandise, and even with military stores.

“ It is not difficult to conceive,” says the Mani-
 festo, “ how much the refusal of yielding to the
 “ assuming demands and arbitrary pretensions of
 “ England, would mortify the self-sufficiency of
 “ that power, and revive its ancient animosity to
 “ France. It was the more irritated, from having
 “ experienced some checks in America which prog-
 “ nosticated the irrevocable separation of its Colo-
 “ nics. It foresaw the inevitable losses and cala-
 “ mities following from such a separation. It be-
 “ held France profiting by that commerce which
 “ it had with an inconsiderate hand thrown away,
 “ and adopting every means to render her flag re-
 “ spectable.”

The Manifesto next complains that England had,
 under the most frivolous and unjust pretences, in-
 terrupted the trade, and insulted the flag of France
 in Europe as well as in America.

It adverted to the preparations that had been ma-
 king in the ports of England, and which could not,
 from the nature of their appearance, have America
 for their object.

“ His Majesty, therefore,” adds the Manifesto,
 “ found it indispensable to make such dispositions
 “ on his part, as might be sufficient to prevent the
 “ evil designs of his enemy, and prevent, at the
 “ same time, insults and depredations similar to
 “ those committed in the year one thousand seven
 “ hundred and fifty-five.

“ In this state of things,” continues the Mani-
 festo, “ his Majesty, who had hitherto rejected the
 “ overtures of the United States of North America,
 “ in contradiction to his most pressing interests,
 “ now

“ now perceived that he had not a moment to lose
“ in concluding a treaty with them.

The Manifesto proceeds to assert, “ That nothing could be more simple, or less offensive, than the rescript delivered by the French Ambassador to the British ministry;—that the King of England first broke the peace, by recalling his Ambassador from the Court of France, and by announcing to his Parliament the French notification as an act of hostility. That it was absurd to suppose that the recognition of American Independence on the part of France, could alone have irritated the King of England. The real cause of that animosity which he had manifested, and communicated to his Parliament, was the inability to regain America, and turn her arms against France.”

The King of France received the overtures of a mediation on the part of the King of Spain, with a sincere desire of rendering it effectual; but it was quickly discovered that the Court of London acted with dissimulation: it required the King of France to withdraw his rescript, as a preliminary step to treating. Such a demand was injurious to Spain as well as to France; it placed the hostile intentions of England in the clearest point of view, and struck both the French and Spanish Monarchs with equal amazement.

The sailing of the fleets under Admirals Byron and Keppel, disclosed the real designs of England. The attacking of the Belle Poule, and the capture of two frigates, rendered the operations of the fleet under Count D'Orvilliers absolutely necessary to frustrate the projects of the enemies to France, and to revenge the insults offered to its flag.

The Court of London continued hostilities without a declaration of war, from its consciousness of wanting reasons to justify its conduct. The Court of France, on the other hand, had hitherto delayed

notifying to the world the injuries it had received, from a fond hope that the English ministry would at last recollect itself; and that either justice, or the critical situation into which it had plunged England, would have wrought an alteration in its conduct.

In the mean time, the King of France listened with the utmost deference to the mediation and advice of the King of Spain; and communicated through his channel those very moderate conditions on which he would most gladly have laid down his arms. But the English, though constantly feigning a desire of peace, insulted the Court of Spain with a tender of propositions that were inadmissible, and foreign to the subject of dispute.

From this conduct, it was clear that England did not wish for peace; but negotiated for no other purpose than to gain time to make the necessary preparations for war. Still however, the King of Spain continued his mediation, and exerted himself for the restoration of tranquility.

The Manifesto then proceeds to state the suspension of arms, together with the other proposals made by Spain to the belligerent powers that have been mentioned.

In consequence of the refusal of Great Britain to accede to these proposals, it asserts the indispensable necessity of exercising hostilities against this country.

“There is not a doubt,” says the Manifesto, “but these proposals must appear to every well-judging person, such as would have been accepted. They were, however, formally rejected by the Court of London; nor has that Court shewn any disposition to peace, unless on the absurd condition, that his Majesty should entirely abandon the Americans.”

“After this afflicting declaration, the continuation of the war is become inevitable; and therefore his

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his Majesty has invited the Catholic King to join him in virtue of their reciprocal engagements, to avenge their respective injuries, and to put an end to that tyrannical empire, which England has usurped, and pretends to maintain upon the ocean."

Such was in substance, and in part, the exposition of the motives that induced France to engage in a war against Great Britain. By those partisans of that power, whom the jealousy produced by the grandeur and prosperity of Britain had rendered so numerous, this Manifesto was received with satisfaction, and duly countenanced; but by the disinterested and the intelligent part of society, it was considered in no other light than as a meer palliation of facts, that were unjustifiable in their very nature; and as one of those productions which custom has rendered a necessary concomitance of the enterprizes resulting from lawless ambition.

It was answered in a very able and masterly manner, by a memorial written in justification of the conduct observed on the part of England. Never were the designs of France, and the measures employed by her to carry them into execution, laid forth with more explicit evidence, and accuracy of representation: nor the many allegations and pretences on which she founded the rectitude of her conduct, exposed and refuted with more strength of reasoning.

The publication of this celebrated performance, though it did not silence those individuals either in France or in America, who were determined to defame the character of the British nation, yet conveyed ample conviction to the minds of the unprejudiced, how little the French were warranted to complain of the conduct of Britain respecting them; and that nothing but their irradicable disposition to domineer over their neighbours, had excited them to embrace what they imagined was a favourable op-

portunity of reducing the power of that people, who had always proved the most formidable obstructors of this inequitable design.

This composition entered into a minute review of the measures pursued by France, ever since the commencement of the dispute between Great Britain and her Colonies: it recapitulated, with great precision, the numerous instances wherein the Court of France had manifested a partiality to the Colonists, and a determination to support them effectually, by conniving at, or rather indeed encouraging its subjects, to afford them all the assistance and succours that were necessary to enable them to combat the efforts of Great Britain to reduce them to obedience.

It represented, with great force, the duplicity exercised by the Court of France in the correspondence relating to this unfriendly, or to speak with more propriety, this inimical behaviour to a power that had given it no provocation. It shewed, by a circumstantial enumeration of facts ascertained by clear and authentic documents, that the grievances complained of by the British ministry, were real and undeniable; but that the complaints of France were unfounded, and her assertions of ill usage on the part of England, vague and declamatory,

It shewed that the mediation of Spain was accompanied with an evident bias in favour of France, that the terms proposed by that Court could not therefore be accepted by that of Great Britain consistently with its dignity; and that the rejection of them was no sufficient provocation to justify the part taken by Spain against England,

A reply came out in France to this memorial, which denied some of the facts therein contained; but it was written with much more warmth than judgment; and was by no means calculated to remove the impression made by the powerful arguments

ments of the former. It was replete with invectives against the English nation; which its principal aim was to render odious, and to represent as deserving the enmity of all the world.

The Manifesto published at Paris in vindication of the conduct of France, was accompanied by another issued at Madrid, in defence of the accession of Spain to the alliance of France and America against Great Britain. It was conceived much in the same terms as the rescript delivered to the British ministry by Count Almadovar; and was altogether a heavy and nerveless composition; proving only that Spain was determined to find pretexts for joining the confederacy against this country.

Elate with the acquisition of so potent an ally, France began now to form the most extensive projects against the British nation. The French imagined that their present superiority was so decisive and irresistible, that Britain would inevitably be crushed by its weight. A conquest of this island was the common topic of discourse among them; and preparations for such an attempt were apparently making in all the provinces of that kingdom contiguous to the sea coast.

Upon receiving intelligence of them, a proclamation was issued to put the nation upon its guard. Orders were circulated for a strict watch to be kept in all the maritime counties, with injunctions for the immediate removal of cattle and provisions to a proper distance, upon the approach of an enemy.

The superiority which Britain had maintained at sea, during the preceding summer, and the prodigious successes of her cruizers and privateers on the French coast, had equally distressed and alarmed the Court of France. As soon as it thought itself secure of the coalition of Spain, it began to form

new arrangements in regard of its marine, and to turn its attention to foreign enterprizes.

It was the more intent upon projects of this nature, as it deemed them indispensibly necessary to efface the impressions which the late immense losses of the commercial property of the French had made on the minds of their neighbours, and to remove the persuasion that seemed to have taken place, that Britain would still prove an overmatch for the naval power of France.

Pursuant to this idea, a squadron was fitted out, of which the ultimate destination was to reinforce Count D'Estaing in the West Indies. It was commanded by the Marquis of Vadreuil; and the troops that accompanied it, which were very numerous, were under the Duke of Lausun.

Its first expedition was to the western coasts of Africa, where it attacked and took, without any difficulty, the British forts and settlements on the rivers of Senegal and Gambia; the garrisons of which were too feeble to make any resistance against so great a force. This happened in the month of February, seventy-nine.

They thought proper on this occasion to quit an island already their own. This was Goree; which had been taken from them during the last war, and restored at the peace. They removed the artillery and garrison to Senegal. But they soon had reason to repent their abandoning this island, the situation of which is far from disadvantageous or useless in the prosecution of trade. Shortly after their departure, Sir Edward Hughes, on his passage to the East Indies, being apprized of what happened, landed a body of troops on that island, of which the fortifications were immediately put in a proper state of defence.

These, however, being distant acquisitions of no great importance, it was thought requisite, after
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the vast expectations that had been raised among the people of France, to undertake something nearer home, and which might cherish those ideas of conquest with which they began to indulge their imaginations.

Out of the extensive dominions which in former ages belonged to the Kings of England on the continent, nothing but the empty title of King of France remains in their possession. This, with the isles of Jersey and Guernsey, is all they have retained abroad.

These two islands France now formed the project of seizing. Her vanity, no less than her interest was concerned in depriving Britain of those only remnants of her ancient power and greatness in France.

A force of five or six thousand men was collected for this purpose. It embarked in fifty flat-bottom boats, and attempted a landing in the bay of St. Ouen, in the isle of Jersey, on the first day of May; but though they were supported by five frigates, and other armed vessels, the militia of the island, with a body of regulars, made so resolute a defence, that they were compelled to retire, without one man having set his foot on shore.

But if the French miscarried in this enterprize, it was, though indirectly, productive of no little benefit to their American allies. A fleet of near four hundred merchantmen and transports, was on the point of sailing from England to New York, under the convoy of a squadron commanded by Admiral Arbuthnot. But this officer being informed of the French attack upon Jersey, thought it his duty to lead his squadron with all speed to the assistance of that island. On his return to Torbay, where the fleet was waiting for him, contrary winds, and unfavourable weather, detained him there a full month; and his passage to America was so tedious, that he
did

did not arrive at the place of his destination till near the expiration of August.

This was a heavy retardment to the operations of the forces at New York. The fleet was laden with warlike stores, camp equipages, provisions, and necessaries of all kinds, besides considerable reinforcements: but arriving so late in the year, Sir Henry Clinton, who, relying on these supplies, had formed several projects of importance, was totally disabled from carrying them into execution.

Much discontent and mutual recrimination among the French naval and military officers was occasioned by their failure at Jersey. The attempt was represented by many as ill concerted, and worse executed, and as deficient in point of every requisite to authorise any hope of success.

The French, however, were still determined to make another attempt. Both the troops and seamen that had been employed in the former, were equally desirous of retrieving their honour; but as the weather opposed them, they were obliged to defer it. Mean while, Sir James Wallace, with a small squadron, one of which was a ship of fifty guns, came in sight of that which was to cover the descent. It consisted of several large frigates, with other armed vessels. On his appearance, they made the best of their way to the coast of Normandy, where they ran ashore in a small bay, under the cover of a battery. He pursued them to the bottom of the bay, silenced the guns of the battery, forced the French to abandon their ships, captured a frigate of thirty-four guns, with two rich prizes, and burned two other large frigates, and a considerable number of other vessels.

This gallant action entirely discouraged the scheme of invasion intended against the island of Jersey. From this time it appears to have been totally laid aside; and though a show was kept up
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along the opposite coasts of France, yet from the vigilance of the British cruizers, it was rendered totally ineffectual.

In the mean time it was much to be apprehended that the designs of the House of Bourbon were to invade Great Britain itself. The vast naval superiority of which they would be possessed on the junction of the French and Spanish fleets, would give them such a command of the Channel, as would put it in their power to chuse both the time and place of descent.

But were the military preparations in England to deter them from attacking it, Ireland lay open to an attempt, from the inconsiderableness of the regular force remaining in that kingdom, owing to the large drafts which had been made from the regiments on that establishment to reinforce the armies and garrisons abroad.

It was chiefly this part of the British dominions for which most apprehensions were, entertained, Though the wishes of the French nation itself pointed to England as the principal object of their attention. So great was the desire and ardour of the generality of people throughout France for a direct invasion of this country, that the government whatever might be its real intent, thought fit to give it every kind of countenance and encouragement. The selectest troops in the French service were drawn out of their cantonments, and marched to the provinces bordering on the British Channel: transports were prepared in every convenient seaport, a great promotion was made of General officers, and those commanders were publicly appointed who were to have charge of this important expedition.

So warm and sanguine were the expectations of all classes, that the regiments destined for this business were crowded with volunteers and supernumeraries. The universal eagerness to have a share

in the conquest of England, roused the emulation of all the families of any distinction. The public schools and colleges, in many places, were emptied of all the youth that were thought fit to participate in so glorious an undertaking: and many elderly gentlemen, worn out in the fatigues of a military life, resolved on this occasion to summon the remains of their former strength and vigour, and to dedicate their last scenes to a transaction, from whence it was expected that France would derive so much grandeur and fame.

In the midst of these flattering projects, it was necessary to form a junction of the French and Spanish naval force, before any attempt could be made to realize them. The incapacity of France, till assisted by Spain, to accomplish the ends she had in view, became daily more evident. The fleet intended to act against England consisted of no more than twenty-eight ships of the line, and those not in a good condition: the British fleet, on the other hand, that was to oppose it, amounted to thirty-eight sail of the line.

As the design of invading this island was publicly avowed on the other side of the water, it was resolved, as the most ready means of defeating it, to prevent a junction of the allied fleets. To this purpose it was intended to block up that of France in the port of Brest: but the endeavours made with that view did not succeed. Wind, weather, and other causes occasioned unavoidable delays, and in the meantime Count D'Orvilliers left this harbour in the beginning of June, and sailed with all expedition to the coast of Spain, where he joined the Spanish fleet.

This junction gave the united fleets a most formidable appearance. They consisted of between sixty and seventy ships of the line, besides a very great proportion of large frigates, and a multitude of other armed vessels. This prodigious armament, like the famous

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famous Armada of Spain two centuries before, filled all Europe with anxiety and conjectures concerning the issue of its operations. The enemies of this country looked upon its downfall as being certainly at hand; while even its well-wishers could not forbear considering its situation as highly critical.

The first movement of the combined fleets was to steer conjointly towards the coast of England.— Sir Charles Hardy, with the British fleet, was at this time cruising in the entrance of the Channel. The enemy, however, passed him unobserved, and entered the narrow seas about the middle of August. They came in sight of Plymouth, where they captured the *Ardent* of sixty-four guns, on her way to the fleet, but made no attempt to land any where, or to attack any place.

The wind setting in strongly from the East, compelled them to quit the Channel: on its abating, they resumed their station in sight of the British coast, about the Land's End, and the chops of the Channel. On the last day of August Sir Charles Hardy made good his entrance into the Channel, in full view of the enemy, who either did not endeavour, or were not able to prevent him. His design was to entice them up to the narrowest part of the Channel, where, in case of his coming to action, the advantage of numbers would not be so decisive as in the open sea; and where, if they should be worsted, they would find themselves entangled in many difficulties; and would even, without such an event, be exposed to much danger, from the frequent variation of winds, and other local causes.

The combined fleets followed him as far as Plymouth, but did not think it advisable to proceed any farther. The reasons they assigned were a great sickness and mortality among their people, by which some of their ships were totally disabled; the bad condition of these, most of which required immediate

diate repair, and the proximity of the stormy winds of the equinox.

From these motives, they found themselves under the necessity of abandoning the English coast, and of repairing to Brest, in about three weeks from their first appearance in the Channel, without having intercepted any part of the East or West India trade, as they had proposed, and without having made the least impression on the naval strength of Great Britain, notwithstanding their immense superiority, and the contumelious boastings with which they had filled every Court in Europe.

This retreat of the combined navies of France and Spain, from the shores of Britain, without having effected any part of the plan they had universally given out with such unlimited confidence and pride, struck all Europe with astonishment, and covered the French themselves with confusion. It was in vain they pretended that causes against which no human efforts can prevail, had combated for the English: it was shrewdly suspected, the fact was, that superior as they were, they did not however dare to commit their fortune to a fair and decisive trial of skill and valour with so resolute and desperate a body of men, as the British seamen are justly reputed.

Though near double the number of the British fleet in shipping, and treble in that of men, their commanders well knew what opponents they would have to encounter. They were not ignorant of the surprising deeds of courage and dexterity performed by the naval classes of this nation in cases of extremity, and were from that motive extremely averse to compel them to their utmost exertions.

Such was the general opinion of Europe. It was further corroborated by the daringness with which the British fleet continued to keep the seas; after the combined fleets had retired into port, by the multiplicity

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tiplicity of captures that were daily made of French and Spanish vessels upon their own coasts, as well as in every part of the world, and by the uninterrupted arrival from all quarters of the British commercial fleets.

The invincible spirit with which Britain faced such numerous and formidable enemies, was the more worthy of admiration, as the kingdom was in the mean while torn with civil dissensions of the most alarming nature. Exclusive of those political altercations which had so long disturbed its internal peace, religious fury, the most dreadful of all human phrenzies, had lighted up a flame which begun to threaten a violent conflagration, and which excited the most grievous apprehensions in all thinking people.

The unfortunate differences of opinion concerning the American war, still continued to divide all denominations. The conviction of its inutility for the purposes that caused it, and the impatience of its long continuance, began to sower the minds even of those who had most approved of coercive measures. As these had proved completely ineffectual; or, indeed, to speak the truth, had produced the most calamitous effects, the far greater majority of people was heartily desirous they should be relinquished, and the strength of the nation no longer wasted in attempts, which experience had shewn to be impracticable and ruinous.

The great argument now pleaded, was the irresistible necessity of complying with the exigency of the times. The affairs of this country were involved in difficulties solely on account of its obstinate adherence to the system hitherto pursued in America. Were it to cast off that oppressive burden, it would then be able to put forth its strength to advantage; but while it moved under so heavy a load, its powers were necessarily cramped, and it
could

could not reasonably expect to act with a vigour adequate to the arduous trial imposed upon it by the imprudence of those who had so long and so unfortunately been trusted with the administration of its concerns.

These were the general sentiments of the nation at this period. Many of those who had been warm advocates of ministry, began now to desert it, and to call for a total change of its proceedings, with as much earnestness as they had formerly manifested in supporting them.

But whatever diversity of opinion they might hold upon other matters, the whole nation agreed to a man in one point, and that was the most spirited prosecution of the war against France and Spain. Here it was that Britain should exert the courage and abilities of the many gallant officers in her services: she had resources enough, by directing them properly, to make the House of Bourbon repent her combination against this country.

In the mean time, the zeal that had been roused for the defence of the nation, continued to operate with unabated fervour. Large sums were subscribed in the several counties, and employed in raising volunteers, and forming them into regiments and independent companies, as best suited the military circumstances of the counties to which they belonged. Associations were also framed in the towns; where the inhabitants armed themselves, and bestowed no little portion of their time and attention in acquiring a sufficiency of warlike knowledge and discipline, to enable them to be useful in case of any pressing emergency.

Among those public bodies of men who signalized their attachment to the public cause, the East India Company distinguished itself in a manner worthy of its opulence and grandeur. It presented government with a sum for the levying of six thousand
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seamen, and added at its own cost three seventy-four gun ships to the navy.

Other pecuniary donations were made by the corporate bodies of the kingdom, besides a multitude that came from the private purses of individuals. Through these abundant supplies, no encouragement was wanted for the purposes of manning the navy, or recruiting the army.

This dauntless behaviour, and these immense resources, placed this country in so respectable a light, that Europe now began to entertain quite other ideas of the issue of the contest between Great Britain and the House of Bourbon, than those which the first appearance of this grand confederacy had suggested.

Two important objects struck the discerning part of the world. The wretched condition of the navy of the combined powers, and the excessive œconomy brought into every department of the finances in France.

In the vast number of ships, of which the French and Spanish fleets were composed, there was hardly any that did not stand in need of great, and most did of thorough repair. When they put to sea at the commencement of the naval campaign, they were prodigiously deficient in a number of capital requisites; and notwithstanding the multitude of hands employed in both kingdoms, they sailed out of port in a very incomplete state of preparation. This deficiency betrayed a material want either of means, or of expertness in the use of them, or perhaps of both.

The rigid parsimony adopted by France, on the other hand, was singular and unprecedented in that monarchy. In the late reign, when reduced by Great Britain during the last war to the most mortifying difficulties, the Court of Versailles had not thought itself of such rigorous expedients as those

which had lately been practised. True it was, they bore the seemingness of patriotism in the government; but they were not the less oppressive and ruinous to numerous classes of individuals; they evidently shewed that the French ministry found itself in very unusual and alarming straits, and compelled to make use of all the ways and means that could be devised, however grievous they might prove to those who were affected by them, or whatever indications they might afford to the world of the exhausted condition of the kingdom.

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C H A P. XLVII.

Proceedings in Parliament.

1779.

THE session of Parliament was opened on the twenty-fifth of November, with a speech from the Throne, exhorting the nation to continue in those sentiments of unanimity in the defence of the kingdom, on which its safety depended. It congratulated the public on the firmness and courage universally displayed in this critical situation: it took notice that the menaces of the enemy, and the approach of danger, had no other effect on the minds of the people of this country, than to animate their courage, and to call forth that national spirit which had so often defeated the projects of their ambitious neighbours. It concluded with a resolute declaration to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour, and to make the strongest exertions, in order to compel the enemy to listen to equitable terms of accommodation.

The speech was received with due respect, and met with those assurances of attachment to the Crown, and determination to assist it with the full power of the nation, which were proper in its present circumstances; but to the address which conveyed these sentiments, an amendment was proposed by opposition in both Houses, importing the necessity of changing both measures and ministers in this season of unexampled danger.

It represented, in firm and explicit terms, the difference between the present and the past condition of the kingdom at the commencement of the pre-

sent reign. The vast extent of the British empire at that aera, its opulence, its prosperity, its grandeur, its glory, the respect and dread of foreign nations, the concord of all people at home, and the harmony that subsisted between this country and its immense dominions abroad.

It then adverted to the dreadful alteration that had taken place in every part of the representation. It stated that no other expedient could prevent the final ruin of the kingdom, but the removal of those persons, whose ill-advice had occasioned all these calamities, and an unfeigned adoption of measures entirely new and different from the past.

The members of opposition took on this occasion a wide range of retrospect into all the subjects of animadversion that had been so often debated in Parliament.

They ascribed the disasters that had befallen Great Britain, to a pernicious system of government, tending in its nature to eradicate every salutary maxim that binds society. The unhappy progress of this system had already impaired the character of the nation, and was levelled at the ruin of its constitution. However artfully covered by those who conducted it, the discerning public had long observed its rise and advance with the strongest detestation and concern.

This baneful system was founded on that iniquitous principle of all narrow minds, to set people at variance in order to rule them. This precept, it was said, had been so stedfastly observed, that the navy, the army, the parliament, the administration itself were full of discord and dissention. Suspicion and jealousy infected all classes, and animosities had been sown throughout all distinctions of subjects in the realm. Hence proceeded confusion in the various departments of government, and that

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ill understanding among the executive branches, which had been productive of so much mischief.

To the general disunion which had been generated by this system, was manifestly due the dismemberment of the British empire, and the terrible dangers to which the kingdom itself was now exposed. But notwithstanding the continual warnings arising from a constant series of unprosperous events, it was still pursued with unabated obstinacy, and threatened nothing less than absolute destruction to the ancient government of this country.

As the authors of this ruinous system remained concealed, it behoved the public to insist on the removal of its ostensible instruments. The powers that had been intrusted to them, they had exercised so much to the detriment of the state, that they were evidently unfit for the posts they had so long, and so unfortunately occupied.

They were the more unworthy of the confidence so undeservedly reposed in them, as they seemed to bear an inveterate malice to every man that rendered himself conspicuous by his extraordinary merit and services to the state. Whether in the civil, in the naval, or the military line, whoever stood high in the opinion of his country, was singled out as an object of their dislike, and compelled by ill usage to relinquish his station. In this manner, the army and the navy had lost some of their most eminent officers, at a time when they were most wanted and most called upon by their country.

The next objects adverted to by opposition, were the events of the preceding summer. It was reserved, said they, for the administration of the present day, to bring that mortification upon Great Britain which she had never experienced before. Her coasts had beheld the fleets of the House of Bourbon parading in those seas, of which the dominion was peculiarly her own, by the universal assent

of all nations. They had insulted our very shores in the sight of our fleets; through the inferiority of which the enemy had reigned unmolested master of the Channel."

These were facts that ought to cover ministry with shame, as they had justly exposed them to the indignation of all men who retained any feeling for the honour of their country. Notwithstanding the enemy had made no impression, it was a sufficient disgrace for Englishmen to have permitted him to retire unhurt from so daring an insult to this kingdom. The flags of France and Spain flying uninterrupted in view of the British shore, was an instance unprecedented in our annals; and those to whom such a reproach was owing, were amenable to the justice of their country.

The unguarded situation of Plymouth, and the junction of the French and Spanish fleets, were next animadverted upon. The first was attributed to neglect and inattention; the second to unnecessary delay, and want of due activity. Both were highly censurable, as they had laid the realm open to dangers that might, and ought therefore to have been avoided, and consequently admitted of no excuse or palliation.

The attack upon Jersey arose from the same causes. A very small proportion of frigates, properly stationed, would have obviated that attempt. The fleet and convoy, then on their departure for America, would not have been detained: they would have reached their destination in time, and enabled the army there to have made a vigorous campaign; whereas, for want of the necessary supplies of men and stores contained in that fleet, the season for action was elapsed, and all opportunities lost for the present year.

Through the neglect and incapacity of ministers, the prodigious power collected for the services of the

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the nation, lay in a great measure useless and unexercised. The regular troops and militia, now employed for the internal defence of the kingdom, exceeded one hundred thousand men. This was a force much greater than necessary for that sole purpose. Considerable parts of it ought to have been detached abroad, to annoy the enemy in those many places where we knew them to be vulnerable.

The imprudence of ministry was inexcusable in assigning so large a proportion of the national strength to the military establishment at home: nor was their want of ability less apparent, in the narrow and confined use they had made of the immense force of which the nation was at present in possession. The computation of the naval and military list belonging to this country, in Great Britain, Ireland, and other parts of the world, consisted of no less than three hundred thousand men: the navy consisted of more than three hundred sail, including frigates and armed vessels: twenty millions had been expended for the service of the present year; and yet, with this enormous mass of treasure and of power, the utmost boast of ministry was, that they had kept the enemy at bay, and frustrated the measures he had planned for an invasion of this island. But this was a very inadequate recompence for the prodigious efforts this nation had made, to enable its rulers to preserve its reputation and dignity un sullied, and to maintain it on that formidable footing, which had rendered it so long the terror of all its enemies, and in a great degree the arbiter of Europe.

From these heavy imputations, opposition proceeded to censure the arrangements that had taken place respecting the new raised forces. Veteran officers, of tried valour and experience, had been pass by to make room for younger men of far inferior merit. Thus equal injustice was done to the public, as well to individuals: commands were

given to such as were less deserving and able to fill them with honour to themselves and advantage to the state, than others, to whom they were unjustly preferred; and men who had spent their lives and fortunes in expectation of being promoted according to their rank, were now oppressively and tyrannically denied their clearest right, to the discouragement of all military worth, and to the great scandal of the nation.

Ireland was the next object of their reprehension. The dissatisfaction of the Irish ought to have been obviated by complying with their demands, which were just and reasonable, and such as ought long ago to have been granted without their asking.

The losses in the West Indies were dwelt upon with the utmost severity. Want of sufficient garrisons was the sole cause of the capture of those islands that had fallen into the hands of the enemy: this was a neglect of which ministry was undeniably guilty. There was plenty of troops for those purposes, and they could not have been employed in a more useful and necessary service, than in the protection of our West India islands; from which we derived such a considerable portion of our resources, and which lay so much exposed to the attacks of the enemy.

The conduct of ministry, it was said, had been so glaringly erroneous, that people of the plainest understandings were astonished at their imbecility. It was the universal cry of the nation, that they ought to be dismissed without hesitation. No further proofs could be desired of their incapacity. It had gone so far, and was so visible to all men, that it was become a matter of general surprize, how they durst presume to retain their places, in direct contradiction to the wishes of the nation at large, and notwithstanding their own consciousness of the terrible calamities they had occasioned.

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The ministerial answer to these various charges, was very circumstantial, and no less firm and spirited. It totally and peremptorily denied the existence of that odious system of government, which opposition had described in such opprobrious colours. It was a meer creature of imagination, founded upon the animosity of party, but wholly devoid of reality. True it was, that divisions had long subsisted both in the deliberative and executive branches of government; but they proved no more than that a violent attachment to their different opinions had carried individuals beyond the bounds of moderation. Precedents of this kind were numerous in this country; and yet it was not recorded that they had ever been attributed to the pursuit of any system similar to that which was now imputed to the present ministry. Assertions without proof were unworthy of notice or answer; and the charges advanced by opposition, were bold affirmations without any specification of facts, built upon rumours, propagated by such as had been disappointed in their unreasonableness views, and who were determined to embarrass the measures of their more successful competitors.

This alone was the foundation of that malicious obloquy which had of late years attended people in power in a degree seldom preceded. Were the members of opposition to become so powerful as to possess themselves of the reins of government, they would experience the same treatment; and ought not to imagine, from the multitude of objections and censures with which they assailed the present plans of administration, that their own would meet with a more favourable reception.

As to the violent and reiterated cry of new men and new measures, it was absurd and nugatory. It could not mean a relaxation of the national spirit and vigour. It could not intend any sort of concession

sion to the enemy, that would be attended with disgrace. If its purport was to encourage fortitude and perseverance against the efforts of our numerous foes, it did no more than what administration laboured with all its might to inculcate at this present time; and had always endeavoured to make the ruling principle of its measures.

Changes in the different provinces of administration, resignations in the civil or military departments of the state, were not such novelties as people should convert into objects of wonder or of dissatisfaction: they were the natural consequences of altercations; and these were unavoidable in a free government. No insulting dismissal had taken place; due consideration had been shewn to the pretensions of every man; no one had been silenced in his just defence: as to heats and animosities, they would always exist while the passions of men existed: and they were more difficult to prevent, or to repress, in this, than in any country upon earth, while it preserved that spirit of liberty which naturally prompted individuals to declare their sentiments without restraint, and to censure with unbounded freedom, those measures which they disapproved, together with their authors and abettors.

The strictures of opposition on the conduct of ministry, for permitting the fleets of France and Spain to appear unmolested in the Channel, were described as void of all candour. The naval strength of the House of Bourbon had been almost wholly collected upon this occasion, while that of Britain lay necessarily scattered in various parts of the world. The superiority of the enemy was so great, that it would have been the height of imprudence to have encountered them without the extremest necessity. But what had been the issue of this vast force, and of the vauntings it had occasioned? The French and Spaniards came into the Channel; but

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but they did not dare to remain there; they had a fair opportunity of engaging the British fleet, but they declined it; they had threatened an invasion, but they did not even make a shew of attempting it; they felt the superiority of skill of their opponents, and were averse to call it into action.

The truth was, that with forty sail of the line, the British Admiral had, by the prudence and judiciousness of his conduct, foiled the designs of an enemy who had sixty-six. In defiance of this tremendous superiority, our trade and shipping had been effectually protected, and no advantage gained by the enemy. The prodigious expence they were at in fitting out so formidable an armament, was totally sunk, and rendered of no efficacy; and they themselves damped in the most excessive degree, and entirely dispirited from renewing such an expedition against this country.

The junction of the two fleets was an event that happened against all reasonable expectation. That of France was in so inadequate a state of preparation for sailing, that nothing but the dread of being intercepted by that of Britain, in case of any longer stay at Brest, induced it to quit that port. Had it remained there till completely ready, it could not have avoided the British fleet.

The attack upon Jersey was represented as one of those occurrences in war, which no vigilance can prevent. It was sufficient in such cases that the enemy was repelled, and the national credit preserved. More could not be required from the most provident and bravest of men.

The danger threatened at Plymouth was much greater in appearance than in reality. The motions of the enemy did not indicate that any descent was intended in that quarter. Had it been their intention, it was far from being so ill provided to give them a proper reception, as had been furnished. There

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was a sufficiency of troops in its neighbourhood to repair to its assistance, before the enemy could have effected any material detriment.

The situation of Ireland was acknowledged to be alarming; but no complaints could be equitably formed against the present administration, which had done more to redress the grievances of that country, than any former one, and was unfeignedly determined to take away all causes of discontent, and to place the Irish nation on such a footing, as would put an end to all motives of dissatisfaction,

The chances of war had not proved favourable to Great Britain in the West Indies; but the loss it had sustained there had been in some measure counter-balanced by the capture of one of the French islands; and still more by the honour the British arms had acquired, in defeating by sea and land a force much superior to their own.

The domestic arrangements in the military, were inevitable consequences of the measures which government had been obliged to adopt in the present exigency of its affairs. The pretensions of individuals who contributed by their fortunes and their personal influence and exertions, to the strengthening of the army, could not, in justice or in policy, be overlooked; but even in these cases, merit was not forgotten; and every care had been taken to prevent any military trust from being placed in improper hands.

The charge of not employing the national force to advantage, was strongly denied. The principal object during the two last years, was to shew that the strength of this nation was such, when called forth, as would intimidate every enemy from projecting the invasion of this island. A conviction of this would depress the arrogance of the enemy, and by rendering him less confident of success, would induce him to be more willing to listen to honourable

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honourable terms of accommodation, and less disposed to persist in hostilities, from which no advantages could be obtained.

It was no longer to be doubted, that France and Spain were thoroughly persuaded that their designs against this island would be frustrated were they to attempt their execution. They were also convinced of another truth, equally operating against this design, which was, that to load their ships with crowds of men unused to the seas, and compelled, against their inclination, to a service for which they were totally unfit, was leading them to destruction. It was in vain to expect that such men could have either activity or good-will; they would soon be disabled by the fatigues and hardships of an element to which they were not bred; their minds would be dispirited, and their bodies enfeebled; illness would of course ensue, with all its inconveniencies and miseries, and force them at once to abandon their projects.

As to the requisition contained in the amendment to the address, that the King should dismiss the present ministry, and adopt new measures, it involved an accusation of ministers, to which, as they were not bound, neither were they willing to subscribe. They had for years undergone reproaches from the adverse party for not conforming to its opinions; but what proof had been adduced that they were more judicious than their own. The lenity so much recommended by opposition, when put to the test, by the repeal of the Stamp Act, had not been attended with any efficacy. The Americans had risen in their demands, ever since they found this country was disposed to make concessions. Had they not formally declared themselves independent, still they would have thrown off all restraints, had they continued united to this
country

country upon the footing they had proposed, and to which opposition would so readily have agreed.

But it was neither ministry nor opposition that had any right to decide who should be employed in the different departments of government: that right was vested exclusively in the Crown. Unless that branch of the legislature had the supreme direction in these matters, the affairs of the nation would be thrown into the utmost confusion, as every party would insist on a preference to its own members. If opposition still continued to reprobate the conduct of those at the helm, a Parliamentary inquiry lay open; there, if they were upon examination found to have acted a censurable part, they would be condemned in a constitutional manner; but endless imputations of misconduct, where from the nature of things, it was impossible to ensure success, was unjust and ungenerous, and argued much more of factiousness and personality, than of real concern for the public.

True it was, the events of war had not proved so decisive in North America as had been reasonably expected; but till experience had pronounced against the propriety of measures, no arguments founded on mere conjecture should prevent their trial, especially when approved by a great majority of suffrages. The voice of the nation, at the commencement of hostilities in America, seemed generally to speak for coercive measures, as the most likely to bring matters to a speedy conclusion: that voice had been listened to; resolute and spirited plans had been formed in consequence of it; the fate of war was now in suspense; and as a decision of the contest by the sword had been the choice of this country, and accepted by its Colonies, it would be unworthy of the character of this nation to be the first to shrink from an appeal made after

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so mature and solemn a deliberation, and hitherto persevered in with so much constancy and vigour.

After one of the longest and most violent debates that ever was known in either of the Houses, the amendment to the address was rejected in the House of Lords, by eighty-two votes to forty-one; and in that of Commons, by two hundred and fifty-three, to one hundred and thirty-four.

In the mean time, the affairs of Ireland began seriously to engage the public attention. The loyalty and attachment that country had shown to the cause of Great Britain, had procured it the universal concurrence of all classes, in the necessity of removing the grievances of which it complained.

Some opposition had at first arisen from those commercial towns, that apprehended their interest might suffer from a compliance with its requests; but their representations were drowned in the general cry of the nation, and it was determined to do the Irish that justice which they so amply deserved.

In consequence of this determination, several acts were repealed that had proved obnoxious to the trade of that kingdom, and several branches of commerce laid open to their participation in common with the people of Great Britain.

Another subject of public discussion at this time was the enormity of the expences incurred for the support and defence of the nation against its numerous enemies. It was observed, that never had this country been the object of so powerful a combination as that which was now exerting its whole strength to work its ruin; but that notwithstanding the consequent necessity of employing its resources with the utmost care and good management, there never had been so manifest and scandalous a profusion in every department of public expence.

What rendered people the more solicitous on this account, was the solitary situation of this country

in its present difficulties. It had not a single ally, and there was no likelihood of any power on the continent of Europe espousing its cause. The original quarrel with its Colonies seemed yet it in the ideas of the European states, to stand upon the same ground on which it had begun. They did not seem sufficiently aware that the accession of the House of Bourbon to that quarrel had entirely changed the very nature of it; or if they did perceive the consequences of suffering that family to prevail over Great Britain in the present contest, the loss of its Colonies, which would be the worst that could happen to this latter, would only deprive her of a proportion of strength which had excited their jealousy. She would, at all events, remain strong enough, in conjunction with their assistance, if necessary, to repress the ambition of the House of Bourbon.

Still, however, their jealousy preponderated against their prudence. It was so deeply rooted, as not to permit them to look on as meer spectators. Instead of that indifference and neutrality which they all professed, appearances in several of them were very unfavourable to this country, and occasioned well-grounded suspicions, that they were watching the opportunity to contribute still further to the depression of Great Britain, by declaring themselves in favour of the independency assumed by its Colonies.

In such a perilous situation, surrounded by open and concealed enemies, attacked by the whole strength of France and Spain, and menaced with the indirect enmity of most of the other European powers, it certainly was incumbent on those who presided over the affairs of this country, to husband its resources with the strictest œconomy, as no relief or friendship were expected from any other quarter.

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The fact was, that from the noble and successful stand that Britain still continued to make, and from the unprosperous condition of both the French and the Spanish marine, Europe began to entertain great doubt whether the House of Bourbon would be able to attain the point it had proposed. In this idea, as the general wish went to abridge, in some degree, the vast power and influence which had been exercised by Great Britain, clandestine measures were in agitation in almost all parts of Europe, for the purpose of co-operating with the designs of the House of Bourbon, till it had effected as much of the diminution of this country's greatness, as should reduce it to that level which was the object of European politics.

This inimical disposition of her neighbours, began to shew itself in a very alarming manner, and to awaken the solicitude of every man who was desirous that Great Britain should not be despoiled of its rank and consequence. The discerning, as well as the spirited part of the nation, deemed it unquestionably able to go successfully through the conflict wherein it was engaged, by a prudent and judicious employment of the force which it possessed.

Notwithstanding the losses that Great Britain had undergone, her power still remained so formidable, and her resources were confessedly so great, that she bid fair, in the opinion of all intelligent people, to come with honour out of the contest, provided her finances were administered with due œconomy.

In order to compass so desirable an end, various were the schemes in contemplation at this time, both among the members of the ministry, and those of the opposition. Among those who distinguished themselves upon this occasion, were the Duke of Richmond, and the Earl of Shelburne, in the House

of Lords; and Mr. Burke in the House of Commons.

On the seventh of December, a long and interesting speech was made by the Duke of Richmond on the necessity of practising the most rigid œconomy, as the only rational ground whereon to rest the hope of extricating this country from its many difficulties. What he principally insisted on, was, that the first lesson of this necessary virtue should be taught by the Crown itself. An example of such influence and potency, would not fail to have the most immediate and diffusive effect. It would excite a universal imitation. No men possessed of a patrimony adequate to their rank and pretensions, would hesitate, after such a precedent, to resign such a part of the salaries and incomes arising from their public employments, as bore a proportion with that bestowed out of the royal revenue for the exigencies of the state.

The intent of this proposal was not to lessen the lustre and magnificence of the Throne. The diminution of its income now proposed, would reach no further than that addition which had latterly been made. Such a reduction would place it on the same footing as in the most splendid and prosperous æras, and leave it in full possession of all that was requisite to make a figure equal to the rank and dignity of a British monarch.

An address conformable to the purpose of this speech, was moved accordingly, and enforced by a variety of additional arguments by the other Lords on the same side of the question. Much knowledge and eloquence were displayed in the discourses made in support of the motion; and a multitude of reasons assigned in its recommendation.

The motives alledged by ministry for opposing this motion, were, that the Civil List was a necessary appendage of the Crown, and could not suffer any
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diminution without impairing its lustre. That considering the value of money, it did not exceed the former revenue, which, though nominally smaller, was substantially as large. It would occasion an abridgment of stipends and salaries, that would reduce many individuals to great and mortifying straits: and finally, the sum produced to the public by this retrenchment, would not prove of sufficient consideration to raise it in so distressing and oppressive a manner; which would affect people partially, without contributing to any essential and general benefit.

There were a multiplicity of more advisable methods to encrease the national revenue, without detracting from that of the Crown, and of those whom it employed in the necessary departments of the state. Vigilance over those who were appointed to the different branches of the public expenditure, and a strict and rigorous inspection into their accounts, were the proper and obvious methods of preventing needless expences, and obviating the waste of money. After a long and well-supported debate, the motion was negatived by seventy-seven to thirty-six.

The encreasing enormity of the sums wanted for the extraordinaries of the army, was, at this time, no less an object of the most alarming nature. The most intelligent individuals were unable to account in what manner they could possibly be incurred; as particular provision was made for the various articles of stores and provisions, transports and ordnance; the sums expended in which, were accounted for in a clear and regular manner.

All parties agreed in the indispensable necessity of putting an immediate stop to this career of profusion. The Earl of Shelburne undertook, in the House of Lords, to lay before them a detail of the

immense expenditure that had lately taken place in in this department.

The discussion of this important subject, opened a wide field to his abilities, and afforded him a well-timed opportunity of comparing together the extraordinary of past and present times. He stated a variety of facts to shew the prodigious difference between the sums expended in this, and those that were found sufficient in former wars. He observed, that at the time of the Revolutoin, when a large army was maintained in Flanders, another in Ireland, and expeditions were carried on in the West Indies, the yearly extraordinaries for military services never amounted to more than one hundred thousand pounds. In that extensive and glorious war, which was waged at the opening of this century, on account of the succession to the Crown of Spain, notwithstanding the numerous armies that were employed in Germany, Flanders, and Spain, and the enterprizes that were carried on in the Mediterranean, the West Indies, and North America, the annual extraordinaries of the army required at no time more than two hundred thousand pounds.

In the war which commenced with Spain in the year thirty nine, and was carried on against that kingdom and France in many parts of the world, notwithstanding the multitude and importance of the various operations which took place at that period, wherein a dangerous rebellion broke out in the heart of the kingdom, the sum of four hundred thousand pounds was the highest demand in any year for extraordinaries.

In the last triumphant war, when every quarter of the globe became the scene of action, the highest expences for extraordinaries were incurred in the year sixty-two. Britain had then an army of eighty thousand men in Germany, another very numerous in North America, others in the West and East Indies,

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dies, in Portugal, and on the coasts of France. The extraordinaries of the whole were defrayed with two millions. But the extraordinaries of the present war, during the two last years, seventy-eight and seventy-nine, would be found, when added together, to amount to six millions.

The principal cause which he assigned for this amazing disproportion between the extraordinaries of former times, and those of the present, was,—That ministers employed fewer persons in this department, and allowed them less profits. During the last war one contractor only supplied all the forces in America; and his agreement was to furnish provisions on that very spot at sixpence a ration. But the present contract was divided between a dozen ministerial men, who, instead of transporting supplies to America at their own cost, as had been the practice, were only bound to deliver them at Cork, notwithstanding they received the same price. Thus the public was charged with all the expences attending the voyage, contrary to custom; in consequence of which every ration, in lieu of six-pence, cost the government two shillings.

He took severe notice, that one person only had, in the space of two years, enjoyed contracts to the amount of thirteen hundred thousand pounds.—Three millions seven hundred thousand pounds, in specie, had passed through the hands of another contractor, to be transmitted to America; but no voucher had appeared for this immense sum: its accounts were contained in thirty or forty lines; twenty thousand in one—thirty or forty thousand in another. Such was the method of authenticating this vast expenditure.

He observed, that the influence acquired by ministry through this arrangement, was enormous, and unconstitutional in the most alarming degree;

it afforded ministers the dangerous opportunity of laying out the national treasure at their own discretion, and without any check. Hence flowed the sums expended in venality and corruption. Want of account produced want of œconomy; and the public money was lavished for unwarrantable and disgraceful purposes.

In consequence of these various representations, he moved, That the expenditure of those vast sums, annually sunk in extraordinaries, should immediately be brought under controul; and that to extend the public expences beyond the sums granted by Parliament, was an invasion of its peculiar and exclusive rights.

The reply to these charges was, that no dishonourable imputations could be laid to the character of the Lord who presided over the Treasury. His disinterestedness was such, that were he to leave his office, it would be found that it had not enriched him. Every article of national expence was sufficiently subject to examination and controul at the Exchequer. Such an enquiry as that now proposed, was of a dangerous tendency, by bringing such matters to light, as ought, from their nature, to remain concealed. Without placing a great degree of confidence in those agents of government whose characters were reputable, many objects must be neglected that were not otherwise attainable. Commanders of armies, especially, ought to be largely trusted. So much depended on their management of opportunities that were and could be known only to themselves, that to stint their demands on such occasions, would limit their powers and abilities of acting in a degree that would necessarily prove highly injurious to the public service.

Upon these grounds, the motion made by the Earl of Shelburne was rejected by a majority of eighty-one votes, against forty-one.

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After being defeated in this first motion, he made a second; the purport of which was, to consider of the appointment of a committee to enquire into the different branches of expenditure, and to consider how far they might be reduced, and how much could annually be saved of the national income. He was more fortunate in this proposal, which was readily assented to.

The attention of the House of Commons was taken up at this time, by that plan of œconomy and reform which was proposed by Mr. Burke. He gave notice of his intention to bring it shortly before the House, as a business which it was become indispensable to take into the most serious consideration. He represented that a reformation of the numberless abuses of which people complained in in so loud and acrimonious a manner, was a duty they owed to their constituents; and which if they refused to perform, it was much to be apprehended the nation might, in the height of its dissatisfaction, take it out of their hands, and bring it to completion without waiting for their intervention.

The intention of Mr. Burke was warmly applauded and seconded by the members of opposition; but some of them did not scruple to declare their apprehensions that his plan would be rejected, and that there was not virtue enough in the representative body, to admit of any proposal tending to destroy that system of corrupt subserviency to ministerial views, which occasioned the present distresses of this country.

Mr. Fox supported the design of Mr. Burke with extraordinary force of thought and language. He represented, with peculiar energy, the universal expectation of all ranks and all parties, that some effectual means should be employed to put a stop to that prodigality which would, if not checked at this critical period, occasion the speedy downfall of the state.

But his opinion was, that so great was the averfeness of a parliamentary majority to the reformations intended, that nothing but inevitable neceffity would produce its confent. This neceffity, however, was daily becoming more preffing, and would compel what wifdom could not perfuade. It would infpire the public with a determination to infift upon a due correction of abufes; and were the public to be refolute in its demands, all oppofition to them would be vain.

He added a variety of other arguments to enforce the fcheme of reformation; and was ably affifted by other members of the fame opinion. But what was advanced upon this fubject, did not feem to make that impreffion upon the other fide which was aimed at.

When the annual eftimates were laid before the Houfe, they revived the debates about the propriety of a reform. Cenforious notice was taken that thofe relating to the Ordnance amounted to one million fifty thoufand pounds; exceeding thofe of the preceding year by one hundred and thirty thoufand. The unufual and unexpected increafe of expence in thefe and the other departments, excited ftrong animadverfions on the part of oppofition, and occafioned a multitude of fevere reflections on fome of the principal perfons in adminiftration.

Thefe warm difcuffions within doors, created numberlefs others without. The clamours for reformation became general; and were the more violent, as it was greatly fufpected that the majority in Parliament were averfe to it, and would oppofe it with all their might, whenever propofed. This perfuafion generated much difcontent throughout the realm, and expofed the miniftrial party to much flander and defamation among thofe who were fanguine for this meafure, and who conftituted the moft numerous part of the nation.

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C H A P. XLVIII.

Meetings and Associations in England.—Petitions to Parliament.—Proceedings and Debates in that Assembly.

1780.

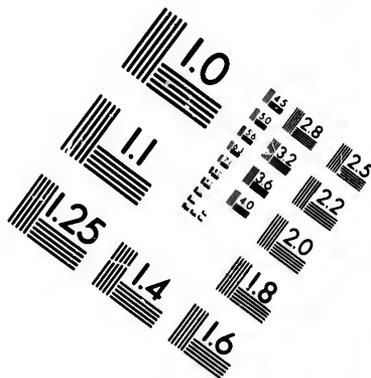
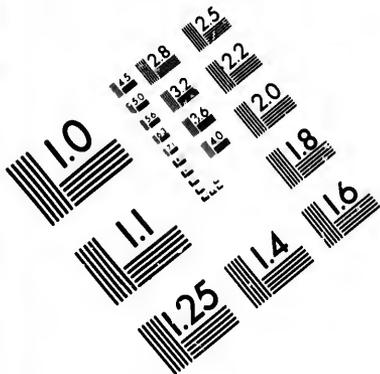
DURING the course of the preceding summer, the people of England began to look with great suspicion and jealousy on the conduct of most of their representatives: they complained, with great freedom and latitude of thought and expression, of the influence which was exerted by ministry in Parliament, and of the prodigious increase of that influence within a few years.

Sentiments of this kind were adopted by numbers of individuals possessing great weight and consequence, and soon spread with amazing rapidity over the nation. They became, as usual in such cases, the general topics of conversation; and were espoused with uncommon warmth by a large proportion of the people.

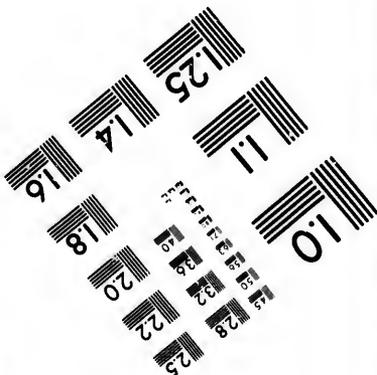
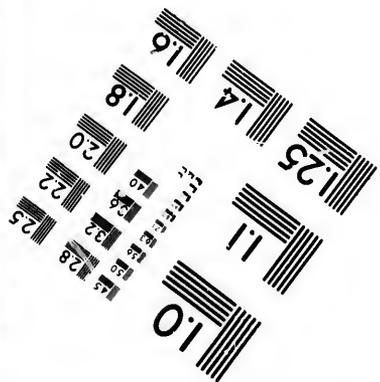
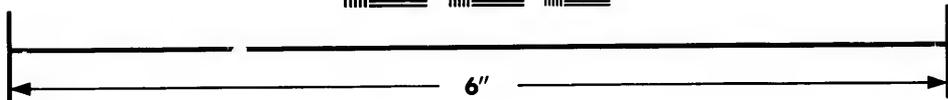
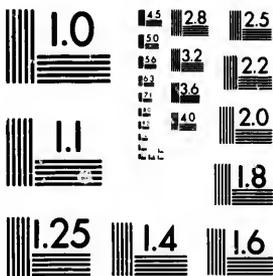
From the continual discussions to which they gave rise, bold and animated ideas were often vented on the causes to which this influence was attributed, and on the remedies that were necessary to stop its progress.

Many of those daring and resolute individuals with which this nation abounds, were openly of opinion that nothing would prevent it short of a change in the constitution of Parliament. In its present form it would always remain under the controul of ministry. Experience had shewn that all the barriers which had been set up to preserve its





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independence upon administration, had proved ineffectual.

The only method remaining to compass this end, seemed, in the apprehensions of the majority, to be an abridgment of the duration of Parliament, and a fair representation of the people. They could not, with any colour of truth, be said to possess that just and equal share in the choice of their representatives, to which they were entitled by the constitution; and without which it was absurd to affirm that they enjoyed the rights of freemen, the most essential of which consisted in electing those who were to govern and make laws for them.

Since the meeting of Parliament these principles and notions had acquired the more strength, as the backwardness of most of its members to concur in the general desire of the nation, appeared more confirmed and decisive. It was expected that the City of London, as the capital, and hitherto foremost in asserting the public cause, would have led the way upon this occasion. But the county of York first set the example to the rest of the kingdom.

A numerous meeting of the principal persons in Dec. 30, that rich and large county, was held at 1779. York, where a petition to Parliament was framed with the utmost unanimity, and a committee of sixty-one gentlemen chosen, to manage the correspondence that would be necessary for the carrying on the design in agitation, and to draw up a form of association in order to support and promote it.

The petition stated that the nation was involved in a dangerous and expensive war; in consequence of which, together with the defection of its Colonies, and their present confederacy with France, the national debt was greatly increased, taxes heavily augmented and the trade and manufactures of the kingdom much affected. It complained, that notwithstanding

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standing the frugality so peculiarly necessary in the present circumstances, the money of the nation was lavished with unbounded profusion, and that an influence had been thereby established, which, if not timely resisted, would destroy the constitution of this country. It requested Parliament, previous to the raising of any further taxes, to inquire into, and correct the abuses in the expenditure of public money; to reduce all exorbitant emoluments; to abolish all sinecure places and unmerited pensions, and to appropriate the produce to the exigencies of the state.

So earnest and diffused among all classes, was the spirit that produced this petition, that no less than fourteen clergymen were of the committee appointed to form a plan of association, and to carry on the correspondence for that purpose with the other counties.

The example of the county of York roused, in a manner, the whole kingdom. Middlesex framed a petition and association on the same model, and was shortly followed by twenty-seven of the principal counties, and most of the considerable towns in England.

In the several meetings held for this purpose, both Administration and Parliament were treated with unrestrained severity of censure and reprobation. No language was thought too opprobrious: they were described as an assemblage of individuals void of all principle, devoted to the most slavish influence, possessing no will of their own, and ready to sacrifice their conscience and reputation to the most ignominious dictates of people in power; lost, in short, to all generous sentiments and feelings, and bound by no ties but those of the meanest and most sordid interest.

Never, indeed, had Great Britain, since the civil wars in the last century, experienced so much animosity and division among its inhabitants. Confidence

dence in government, that central pillar of all public prosperity, was utterly vanished, and no respect or esteem for their representatives remained among the majority of the people. They considered them as men whose only aim was to enrich themselves at the public expence, and to whom the glory or the interest of the realm were matters of no consideration. The Court was viewed as the receptacle of all that harboured sinister designs against this country; and where no man stood any chance of advancing himself that durst avow any maxims but those of obsequiousness and servility.

What powerfully contributed to these unfavourable notions of the court and government, among the people of this country, was the base opinion entertained and propagated by the Americans and their adherents, of those who presided over the affairs of Britain. The public prints at Boston and Philadelphia, the latter place especially, were full of invectives against the court and ministry of this kingdom. Animated by the success with which the declaration of independence had been maintained, and emboldened by that republican spirit which is always the most ungovernable at its first outset, they knew no bounds to the reproaches and defamations with which they loaded the leading individuals of a state, by which they deemed themselves injuriously treated; and they represented them accordingly in the most opprobrious colours.

This vindictive spirit hurried them frequently into unjustifiable excesses. Scurrility and licentiousness of stile often disgraced their productions, and took away that sting and poignancy from them, which they were unadvisedly meant to enforce.

Such individuals in England as had espoused their cause, came gradually at last to adopt their notions. Hence those violent declamations against the ruling powers; and those descriptions of their

actions

actions and character, that were marked with so much rancour and outrageousness; and that involved in one common reprobation every man who approved of the measures of ministry, without reflecting that conviction of their rectitude might influence those who supported, no less than those who opposed them.

The multitudes that condemned, in this indiscriminate manner, the conduct of those at the helm, did not perceive the danger of carrying matters to those extremities which must ensue, were they to make good the determinations they seemed to have taken in order to force a compliance with their demands. They did not appear to be aware that this flame of discontent and dissention now raging throughout the kingdom, was in no little measure owing to the secret machinations of the foes to this country. These were fully persuaded, that should unanimity prevail, and confidence in government, Britain would rise superior to all their efforts. In this persuasion their numerous emissaries were employed in spreading animosity and discord, and incensing the nation at large against those who had the management of its affairs.

In this state of general confusion, the minds of men were too much agitated coolly to attend to the consequences, of those internal commotions, into which they were so ready to plunge themselves. They did not sufficiently consider that the violent spirit which was raised throughout the nation, was in part the work of its enemies; and that even allowing its object to be proper and lawful, it could not be compassed through the means that were by too many suggested, without throwing the realm into convulsions, and exposing it to the mercy of the formidable powers with which it was at war.

The generosity of disposition that characterises this nation, had inclined numbers not only to think favour-

favourably of the American cause, but to give their warmest wishes to those who supported it: there were many who did not scruple openly to express their most fervent hopes that the British arms would be foiled, and the Americans prove victorious.

While the contest lay solely between Great Britain and America, such ideas might perhaps have been excusable; though certainly not reconcilable to strict patriotism. But when the Colonies had cast off their connection with this country, and allied themselves with its most dangerous enemies, so manifest a declaration of enmity cancelled at once all the ties of friendship that had formerly subsisted. Whichever of the two was in fault, the parent state or its dependencies, they were now become two separate powers; good policy therefore required every British subject to view America in the light of an enemy, however he might have thought himself authorised to favour her pretensions, previously to the dissolution of that union which had rendered them both but one state.

In addition to this motive, there was another of equal, if not still greater weight; the affections of the Americans were totally estranged from this country and its inhabitants. Without enquiring whether the Americans were well-founded in adopting those rancorous sentiments wherein their publications abounded, it may be sufficient to observe, that their former attachment to the people of this country, was now converted into a most violent hatred. As much as before this unhappy contest, they were wont to delight in the praises of England and its inhabitants; they now manifested a readiness to find blemishes and reasons for censure in both. The manners and character of the English, their abilities and genius, were all studiously depreciated, and those of other nations represented as much preferable.

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Most of those illiberal aspersions were dealt out in periodical publications, in order to inflame the resentment of the commonalty, and excite their indignation against the superiority claimed by Britain over America. Far from regretting the separation of the two countries, their political writers exerted their utmost ingenuity in representing it as the most auspicious event that could have happened to the Colonies.

They asserted, that had the union subsisted between them, the consequences would have proved highly derimental to America, both in a moral and a political light. The force of ancient attachments and prejudices in favour of England, would gradually have occasioned a conformity with her in every respect. From the ascendancy which custom had so long secured to the parent state; the vices of the English nation, and the many flaws and defects of its various institutions would have been adopted. In short, a coalition would have been formed of English and American habits and ideas, extremely prejudicial to the latter.

For these reasons they were even of opinion, that the total rupture with Great Britain, and the alliance concluded with France, were much more advantageous to America, than a recognition of its independence, accompanied with an immediate reconciliation with the former.

Notwithstanding the acknowledgment of independence, the preponderance of old maxims would have continued to influence the people of America. The remembrance of their origin, and the kind treatment which policy would have dictated on the part of England, would soon have obliterated the memory of past feuds. By degrees an intimacy would have returned, and the English and Americans would again have become the same people in sentiments and affections, however their governments might differ.

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Were such a re-union ever to happen, the probable consequences would be, that the Americans would imperceptibly slide into an imitation of a people whom they could hardly avoid considering as their model. In process of time, they might be induced to slight and abandon the constitutions they had now formed, and establish others more conformable to that of England. Their morals would no less be tainted by this approximation.

Both of these were evils against which the Americans could not guard with too much circumspection. The government of Britain, however perfect in appearance and theory, was no desirable object to those who knew how corrupt it was in practice: and the manners and ways of living of its inhabitants could not be recommended, as worthy of being copied by such as were acquainted with the extravagance and excesses of individuals; the pride and luxury of the great, and the profusion and irregularity that reigned among all classes.

It was no longer, therefore, among the English, the Americans were to seek for patterns of either public or private virtue. The simplicity of a republic, ill accorded with the affected splendour of a monarchy; and American plainness would certainly suffer a contamination from the pretended refinements of the English in their various modes of enjoying life. From imitating them in points of smaller importance, they would at last follow their example in matters of moment, and habituate themselves to that laxity of domestic morals, and that system of corruption in affairs of state, which now infected all orders of men in England with so little exception. Such were the ideas of many persons in the Colonies.

These inconveniences would not, in their apprehensions, result from the alliance the Americans had formed with France. Born and educated in a country, of which the government, religion, laws,

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laws, maxims, and manners were diametrically opposite to those of the French, the antipathy and prejudice early imbibed against these, would effectually prevent them from ever obtaining any footing among the Americans. The only connection between them and the French, would be that of two nations united merely for their political support, and influenced by no other consideration but the necessity of reciprocal assistance, exclusive of all those motives arising from consanguinity and personal attachments.

These and many other arguments were adduced by the Americans in favour of an alliance with France, preferably to one with Great Britain. They seemed, in short, to have transferred all their future hopes and views to that country and nation; and to have bidden, as it were, an everlasting farewell to the land and people from whence they originated.

Such being the dispositions of the Americans towards Britain, and their opinion of its inhabitants, it no longer became these to harbour those friendly sentiments in their behalf, to which they were formerly entitled. The utmost they had a right to expect in the judgment of the impartial world, was to be placed on a footing of equality with other states, until they manifested a willingness to renew the ancient amity with their parent country.

In the mean time, the antipathy of the Americans to ministry and its adherents, had, by means of their publications and their partisans, gained extensive ground in England: its many secret foes were indefatigable in their endeavours to sow the seeds of dissention, and to increase the animosity of all parties:

It was therefore with the utmost keenness and activity, they seized this opportunity of the general discontent and alarm at the state and management of

the public finances, to inflame the minds of the people, already sufficiently exasperated at the enormity of the sums annually levied and expended by the present administration.

In this heat and violence of temper, the nation was summoned to those meetings that have been mentioned. Happily as those who conducted them were persons of rank and character, it was with great satisfaction perceived by people of moderation and discernment, that the machinations of the emissaries of France and America, would be frustrated, and that the utmost they would be able to effect, would terminate in clamours and invectives.

On the eighth day of February, Sir George Saviile, one of the Members for the county of York, presented to Parliament the petition of his constituents. Though in a weak state of health, he exerted himself upon this occasion with uncommon vigour; and was attended to with that respect and attention which were due to a man of his eminent worth and unsuspected patriotism.

The speech he made was remarkably pointed and animated. He observed, that the petition he laid before the House, was the unanimous result of a most respectable and numerous meeting: Those who composed it were men possessed of no less property than was contained in the House to whom their petition was now presented. This was a circumstance that merited serious consideration. Neither had the petitioners exceeded therein the bounds of the strictest decency: the petition was conceived in temperate language, and abstained from all personality. It went singly to the point universally complained of, the prodigious expenditure of the public money, and the abuses with which it was accompanied; and it requested the House to put a stop to them.

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A request of this nature was so reasonable and constitutional, that it could not in equity be refused. But should ministers reject it, he left it to them to conjecture the consequences. It came from the largest and most populous county in the kingdom, fully sensible of its propriety, and earnestly bent upon obtaining a remedy to the evils of which the pressure was felt so heavily.

He then addressed the minister with great firmness; pressing him to declare, whether he meant to be a friend or a foe to the petition. He concluded by telling him the petition was subscribed by more than eight thousand freeholders; and laying upon the table a list of the gentlemen's names, of whom the meeting consisted, assured him that in whatever manner the House might dispose of the petition, they who had framed it, were determined to abide by it; and had to that intent appointed a committee of correspondence with the committees of the other counties.

This petition was seconded by Mr. Fox in one of the most animated and eloquent discourses that ever had been pronounced in the House. The ministerial answer on the other side, was firm and resolute: it insisted on the necessity of proceeding, previously to all other business, to that of ways and means to raise the supplies that had been granted for the indispensable service of the kingdom in its present perilous circumstances.

The petition from the county of York was followed by those from other counties, and by another from the proprietors of estates in Jamaica, and the principal merchants concerned in that trade. This latter petition was drawn up in a bold and masterly stile. It conveyed remonstrances and complaints of the heaviest nature, and charged ministry with the most inexcusable neglect of the island of Jamaica; of which it represented the worth and importance

to this country in a clear and forcible manner. The purport of this petition was to shew the danger that island was in, and the likelihood of the enemy attacking and taking it, unless it were put in a better state of defence.

On the eleventh of February, Mr. Burke brought forward the plan he had formed to secure the Independence of Parliament, and to introduce œconomy into the various departments of government.

The speech he made on this occasion, was replete with the most extensive and accurate knowledge of the subjects of which it treated. He laid the proposals before the House with a perspicuity and an eloquence that commanded the attention, and even the applause of those whom his system would most affect. It was allowed by all parties, that he had acquitted himself in the arduous business he had undertaken, in the most masterly and complete manner.

The principle on which he founded his system, was to remove the causes of corrupt influence, by lessening the power of those from whom it proceeded. In order to accomplish this point, a number of lucrative, but unnecessary and useless employments and places in their gift, were to be abolished, and the unreasonable emoluments of others abridged. By these means, no less, upon a strict computation, than fifty votes in Parliament would become independent, through the abolition of those places which were held under ministry; and an addition of two hundred thousand pounds would accrue to the revenue.

The reformation he proposed was principally aimed at those offices that were liable to frequent changes of incumbents. Those of which the possession was of a permanent nature, and the possessors had no other means of subsistence, would be placed on such a footing, as to prevent individuals from

from receiving any personal injury. All official and useful employments were to retain their usual salaries and perquisites.

An ample fund was to remain to the Crown for the requisite support of its dignity and grandeur, and for the remuneration of those who deserved well of the state by their merit or services.

He observed that an exorbitant share of influence was highly pernicious to government. In proportion as that influence had risen of late, the authority of government, and the respect due to it were no less visibly diminished. The strength of government should go no further than the due performance of its functions: all that went beyond that line, tended indeed to render ministers powerful; but not to make them serviceable to the public.

The plan of this intended reformation was comprised in five separate bills. The first regulated the civil establishment of the Crown, limited the sum appropriated to pensions, suppressed needless offices, and applied the money produced by these savings to the use of the public. The second ordained the sale of the forests, the lands, and other possessions hitherto appertaining to the Crown. The third united the Principality of Wales, and the county of Chester, to the same kind of subjection to the Crown as the other parts of the kingdom, by abolishing the courts and offices peculiar to them, and placing them altogether on the same footing as the other counties. The fourth made the same provision for the Duchy of Lancaster, as the fifth did for the Duchy of Cornwall. The savings arising from these alterations were, as in the first instance, to be applied to the service of the public.

The offices to be abolished by this reformation, were the Treasurer, Comptroller, and Cofferer of the Household, the Treasurer of the Chamber, the

Master of the Household, the Board of Greencloth, and many places under the Steward of the Household; the great and removing Wardrobe, the Jewel Office, the Robes, the Board of Works, and the Civil branch of the Board of Ordnance. The offices of Treasurer of the Navy, and Paymaster of the Army, were no longer to remain on the footing of banks; the money formerly deposited with them, was henceforth to be lodged in the Bank of England, to which also the business of the Mint was to be transferred, the manufacturing part only excepted. The office of Paymaster of the Pensions was also to be suppressed, and they were hereafter to be paid at the Exchequer. A reduction was to be made of the great patent places in the Exchequer to fixed salaries, after the demise of their present possessors, and those who had reversions upon them. The other offices to be abolished, were the Board of Trade, that of Third Secretary of State, and those of Masters of the various sorts of hounds. The present list of pensioners to remain; but to determine with their lives; after which the sum for pensions was to be limited to sixty thousand pounds a year.

This plan was accompanied with several regulations for the due and orderly payment of all persons in office or employment, according to their respective necessities, and the importance of their employments. On the first list of payment were the Judges: on the second, Ministers to foreign Courts: on the third, the King's Tradesmen: on the fourth, his Domestic Servants, and all persons whose salaries did not exceed two hundred pounds a year: on the fifth, the yearly allowances to personages of the royal family, including the privy purse: on the sixth, individuals whose salaries exceeded two hundred pounds a year: on the seventh, the Pension List: on the eighth, the posts of Honour

nour about the King's person : on the ninth, the Lords of the Treasury.

The speech and propofals of Mr. Burke were received by the minifter with great candour and liberality of fentiment. He acknowledged the ingenuity and judiciousnefs of the plan, and the great propriety of introducing the propofed œconomy and reformation in the various departments of the ftate. The motion for bringing in the bills, paffed accordingly, without any oppofition.

Great were the expectations entertained by the public at large on the hearing of the favourable reception of the fcheme offered by Mr. Burke. The high opinion entertained by all parties of that gentleman's abilities, rendered them confident that were he permitted to bring his defign to full completion, an effectual chek would be given to that influence of which the magnitude appeared fo alarming to the generality of people.

The fum that might be produced for the public fervice by the reductions of exorbitant falaries, and the abolition of needlefs offices, was not the principal object that people had in view. However confiderable it was expected to prove, it bore no proportion of importance, in the minds of men, when compared with the fatisfaction that would be felt, on feeing the parliamentary power of minifters reduced, and the representative body of the nation placed in a ftate of real independence.

On the fame day that Mr. Burke brought his plan of reformation into the Houfe of Commons, another to the fame purport was introduced by the Earl of Shelburne into the Houfe of Lords. He moved, in addition, that a committee fhould be appointed, to confift of members felected out of both Houfes, none of whom fhould be poffeffed of places or penfions, in order to examine the public expences, and the

method of accounting for them, particularly the business of contracts.

He supported his motion with great powers of argument, and with an extensive display of knowledge and information. He complained that unconstitutional influence had usurped the place of constitutional power. This, he avowed in terms of great warmth, it was his aim to annihilate; but this would be impracticable, while twenty millions, the present amount of the annual expenditure, were left to the sole and uncontrouled disposal of a profuse ministry.

He went largely into the measures adopted of late years in proof of the baneful consequences of that influence. He ascribed to its overbearing weight, the whole series of difficulties into which the nation had been led. He entered into a deep and severe investigation of the manner in which the debts of the nation had increased to their present enormity.

He confirmed the propriety of the examination he proposed, by recurring to the precedents of that kind in the two reigns successive to the Revolution, which had been productive of much utility to the public, by detecting abuses, and punishing those who were guilty of corrupt practices.

The Earl of Shelburne's motion was vigorously seconded by other Lords. After adducing several facts in confirmation of what had been laid before the House, it was asserted as a conclusive argument in its favour, that a large majority of people of all parties demanded an immediate reformation of government, as the only means remaining to preserve this country from certain and approaching ruin.

The motives assigned by administration for opposing the motion, were, the inutility of coming to any resolution in that House which was to be binding on the other, and the constitutional incompetency of the House of Peers to interfere in any business relating to the grant or expenditure of money,

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ney, which belonged exclusively to the House of Commons. The examination of public accounts, in the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, was represented as a measure that had proved ineffectual, and for that reason had been discontinued on the accession of the present royal family. It was also insisted, that no additional laws were necessary to punish pecuniary transgressions, as those in being were, and had been, experimentally found fully adequate to that purpose.

That part of the motion which excluded placemen and pensioners from the committee of examination, was highly resented by the Lords on the side of administration. By some it was construed as a libel upon them, as it insinuated that such of them as were in office, could not be trusted for a conscientious delivery of their opinions on a subject of the highest importance to their country.

But that which seemed to give the highest displeasure and offence to the Lords in the interest of ministry, was the argument drawn from that spirit of dissatisfaction and complaint which had given rise to the meetings and associations in the counties, and to the petitions that had been presented to Parliament in terms of so much freedom.

These meetings, together with their proceedings, were condemned as the offspring of faction, and the forerunners of rebellion. They tended to throw the realm into confusion by calumniating government, and leading men to cast aside that respect and deference for their rulers which are the necessary bonds of society.

The motion now before them was represented as designed to co-operate with those proceedings. It originated from the same fund of factiousness, and was calculated to embarrass ministry, and to render it odious, by making such proposals, as being impracticable, and therefore inadmissible, would of course

course be rejected. These proposals corresponding with the petitions framed by these meetings, it was easy to perceive that the rejection of them would add fresh fuel to the flame that had been kindled, and enable their abettors to hold out those who had opposed them to popular malevolence, and to perplex by such means the measures of administration.

The objections to the motion on account of its inefficacy to bind the other House, was treated as destitute of weight. All such pretexts and cavils might be removed by omitting the mention of either of the two Houses; and the matter was of too serious a consequence to desist from it on account of meer forms.

The incompetency of the House of Lords to interfere in money matters, was an obstacle of no moment: a conference with the House of Commons would settle that point with facility. But without having recourse to this, there were precedents to shew that the House of Peers enjoyed, and had exercised the right of examination into the public expences.

The resentment so warmly expressed for the exclusion of placemen and pensioners, was answered by observing that this exclusion was perfectly conformable to the constitution and the laws of this country; which allowed no individuals to determine upon questions wherein they were supposed to be personally interested, or liable to be biased.

The reprobation of the county meetings was taken up with great warmth by the Lords in opposition. They denied, in the most explicit and contradictory terms, whatever had been thrown out to their disadvantage. The Marquis of Rockingham, in particular, spoke with much firmness and animation upon this subject. He asserted the meeting of York to have been the very reverse of factious. It consisted of persons of all parties, convinced of the im-

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mediate necessity of the reform for which they petitioned.

It was observed, at the same time, that the petitioners in the English counties had displayed no signs of that rebellious spirit which was imputed to them. They came to these meetings unarmed; they made no threats; they acted strictly according to the letter of the constitution: yet they were wantonly charged with insidious designs, and with unwarrantable practices. But those who indulged themselves in such indecent representations of the actions and intentions of men of rank, character, and property, ought to consider that by treating them so disrespectfully and so injuriously, they were labouring to provoke them to those excesses, of which they were determined on their first coming together, to remain clearly innocent; but which ill usage, and contumelious language had a natural tendency to extort even from the most moderate and forbearing.

But who were these men whom ministry took such pains to describe as malicious and contemptible? They were gentlemen of birth, education, and fortune; as much conversant in liberal knowledge, and as well acquainted with the world as those who aspersed them in this unjustifiable manner. Title and the privilege of sitting within those walls excepted, there was no disparity between the revilers and the reviled. Was it then consistent with equity or with common manners, to load persons of this description with such defamatory epithets, as were so promiscuously bestowed upon those who composed the meetings in the different counties?

Ministry ought to bear in mind, that it was precisely by such an opprobrious treatment of the character of the Colonists, that they drove them to that insurrection against this country, which had

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at last terminated in hostilities and independence. Did ministers imagine that Englishmen had less spirit than the Americans, and were not as capable, on provocation, to make those repent who durst offer them improper usage?

Some members of the opposition went so far as to tell administration, that they rejoiced to see so free and bold a spirit reviving in this country. It was that true English spirit which had, on so many occasions, defeated the designs of wicked ministers, and frustrated the attempts against its liberties. It was a noble spirit; and instead of being condemned and discouraged, it deserved to be cherished. None would wish it to subside, but such as had reason to apprehend its resentment for their guilt or misconduct. Every true Englishman would congratulate his countryman on its re-appearance among them; and would be heartily aggrieved should ministerial artifices effect its decline.

After a debate carried on with a violence and pointedness on each side, that knew very little bounds, and wherein much eloquence and argument were displayed by both parties, the Earl of Shelburne's motion was rejected upon a division, by a majority of one hundred and one, to fifty-five.

This was the strongest minority that had appeared in the House of Lords for many years. It proved very alarming to ministry; as it shewed that a spirit of defection had gone forth, which threatened, from its late increase, to rise in no long time to such a height, as would effectually put a stop to that influence of which the complaint was so general.

The rejection of Lord Shelburne's motion occasioned a remarkable protest. It was conceived in the most expressive and forcible language. Among other particulars, it firmly denied any intention to diminish the constitutional power of the Crown.—“This power,” the protestors said, “we are no
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“ less solicitous to preserve, than we are to annihilate
“ its unconstitutional influence. The prerogative
“ rightly understood, not touched or intended to
“ be touched by this motion, will support the
“ Crown in all the splendour which the King’s
“ personal dignity requires, and with all the autho-
“ rity and vigour necessary to give due effect to the
“ executive powers of government.”

C H A P. XLIX.

Parliamentary Proceedings.

1780:

THE motion made by the Earl of Shelburne, the plan proposed by Mr. Burke, and the county petitions, were looked upon as the most remarkable events produced in Parliament by the American war. Their tendency being of such a nature, that had they succeeded in the manner intended, they would have wrought an essential revolution in the modes of administering the affairs of government.

On the eighth of March, the House of Commons went into a committee on that bill in Mr. Burke's plan, which related to the civil establishment of the Crown. The first question agitated, was the propriety of abolishing the office of Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The objections to its abolition, were its real utility and efficiency: it was attended with no unreasonable salaries or profits, and produced little influence in Parliament. These assertions could not be invalidated by any proofs to the contrary; a meer denial of them carried no weight.

A third Secretary of State had been known in this kingdom in past ages, and was no novelty in the present, nor even so lately as during the last reign. It could not therefore be considered as a new office, but as an old one revived.

But exclusive of these two objections, another subsisted of much greater strength. The abolition of that office in the manner proposed, would be an
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usurpation of the executive power by the deliberative, which was evidently unconstitutional.

Opposition contended, on the other hand, that two Secretaries of State only, had proved fully sufficient in the most flourishing period of this country. That it was precisely from the date, when a third was appointed, that its prosperity began to decline: the former existence of a third could not therefore be alledged as any argument of his necessity. The charge of infringing the executive rights of the Crown, did not apply to the privilege long enjoyed, and exercised by Parliament, to inspect and regulate whatever appertained to the government of this country, whether in the framing of laws, or the correction of abuses in every department of the State without exception.

The debate on this question lasted till three o'clock in the morning. It was managed with great ability on both sides. Argumentation, knowledge, and eloquence, were displayed in a degree seldom known. Points of the most serious and constitutional nature were agitated with a fervour and vehemence equal to their importance. The limits of regal power, its duties, its pretensions, and its prerogatives; the rights of the people, the boundaries of their claims in matters of government; in short, the whole theory of the British constitution came into ample discussion on this occasion. The issue of the debate was, that the motion for abolishing the office of third Secretary of State, was rejected upon a division, by two hundred and eight, against a minority that was now increased to no less than two hundred and one.

It was remarked thereupon, by the friends of ministry, that this augmentation of their opponents was a conclusive proof that the influence so much complained of had no real existence, and was hardly

of sufficient weight to insure the carrying on the necessary business of government:

The reply made by opposition to this remark, was, that the universal sense of the people of England had been so loudly and so animatedly expressed, that their constituents were fully convinced of the necessity of complying with their demands.

The next object of discussion, was the Board of Trade. It was represented by opposition, as an office entirely useless in the present circumstances, and answering no other purpose than to secure eight votes in Parliament at the yearly charge of a thousand pounds a piece.

A gentleman who sat at that Board, maintained its importance and utility with much knowledge and information relating to it. He was answered by Mr. Burke with no less acuteness. The purport of his argument was to shew, that when under the direction of a committee of council without salaries, the affairs of the Plantations had been conducted with more ability and dispatch than since the appointment of that Board. In proof of this, he adduced a variety of facts and passages highly instructive and interesting.

The issue of this contest was more favourable to opposition than the former. The abolition of the Board of Trade was carried by two hundred and and seven votes against one hundred and ninety-nine.

This was a signal defeat to ministry. It manifested that the voice of the nation, when seriously and resolutely bent on any great point, was of too much preponderance to be resisted with facility, even in the very seat of ministerial power.

The third debate on Mr. Burke's Establishment Bill, was concerning the offices of Treasurer of the Chamber, Treasurer of the Household, Cofferer, and other places connected with these. Ministry
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contended that these employments were not of a public nature, and that it would be indecent to assume the management of the King's Household, in matters that did not relate to the government of the state, and wherein his own private convenience was solely concerned.

Opposition denied the Royal Household being the King's private concern. It had at all times been held by Parliament in quite another light, even in those ages when the power of the Crown was far superior to what it had been since. It was by means of these numerous offices about Court, that an undue influence had so long been supported. To prevent their suppression, was to abet the continuance of that influence.

The contest on these points was very warm, and brought out a multitude of arguments of the most serious tendency in their application to the subject in question. A variety of reflections were thrown out by opposition, highly disagreeing with the maxims advanced by those who argued in favour of the present establishment.

On putting the question whether the place of Treasurer of the Chamber should be abolished, it was negatived by two hundred and eleven votes, against fifty-eight. The abolition of the other concomitant offices was negatived in the same manner.

Mr. Burke was not more successful on bringing forwards, some days after, the question for suppressing the employment of the Great Wardrobe, and others depending on it. The motion was rejected by two hundred and ten votes, to one hundred and eighty-three. That concerning the Board of Works, was thrown out by two hundred and three, against one hundred and eighteen.

The discussion on both these subjects afforded Mr. Burke an opportunity of displaying the great variety

of his knowledge and abilities, and of exerting a power of reasoning, and a fertility of imagination, humour, and eloquence, that gained him the highest applause. But he was now convinced that his efforts for the establishment of his plan, would meet with insuperable difficulties, and that every obstacle would be thrown in their way on the part of administration, and by the numerous expectants of their favours.

Herein he was not deceived. A rejection was given some days after to the proposals for abolishing the offices of Masters of the various denominations of hounds, and of Paymaster of the Pensions, for suppressing the payment of Pensions during pleasure, for limiting the Secret Service Money, for regulating the order in which Payments were to be made to the Civil Officers of State, and to those of the King's Household, and for empowering certain of the great officers of State, to call before them those who kept the public accounts, and to examine them in a summary way.

The only clause which passed upon this occasion, was that which enacted that the offices of Lieutenant and Ensign, and others appertaining to the Yeomen of the Guards, and the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners, should, after their determination in the present possessors, no longer be sold; but be given to Officers of the Army and Navy upon half pay, and of fifteen years standing in their respective line of service.

The ill success of his attempt was the more mortifying to Mr. Burke, as he had expected, and now declared to the House, that had his plan been accepted in that latitude he proposed, more than a million would have annually been saved to the nation.

On the sixth of April the petitions from the English counties, now increased to the number of forty, were,

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were according to a previous appointment, taken into consideration by the House of Commons.

The late Lord Ashburton, then Mr. Dunning, opened this important business, in a speech full of accuracy and forcibleness of argument. He observed, that the general purport of these numerous petitions amounted to a strong and serious complaint of the unconstitutional influence of the Crown, and the necessity of setting bounds to the profuse expenditure of the public money.

He observed that several efforts had been made to second the intent of these petitions. Sir George Saville had moved for a disclosure of the private pensions payable at pleasure; Mr. Burke had produced his plan of reform; Colonel Barre had moved for a committee of Accounts; and Sir Philip Jennings Clerk had brought in a bill to exclude contractors from that House: but the first of these attempts was immediately defeated; the second frustrated by ministerial artifice, after having received a deceitful encouragement; the third was taken out of the framer's hands by a stratagem from the same quarter; and the fourth, though it had been carried through the House of Commons, was menaced with a certain overthrow in the House of Lords.

These attempts to procure satisfaction to the petitioners, having failed, it now remained for the House to determine, whether the petitions presented by the people of England, were to be complied with, or rejected. To bring this point to an issue, he would make two motions; the acceptance or refusal of which must necessarily decide it.

He then moved, "That the influence of the Crown had increased, was still increasing, and ought to be diminished." He contended that his assertion was of notorious truth and certainty. It was the full persuasion of the public, and was founded upon every indication which the nature of it ad-

mitted. This corrupt influence was arrived to such a height, that persons who supported the measures of ministry in Parliament, reprobated them without. He could name no less than fifty members of that House, who acted in this scandalous manner.

The objections of ministry were grounded on a defect of proper evidence in support of an assertion of so serious a nature: they knew of none; all appearances were against it: the unprosperous situation of public affairs afforded no visible means of this influence. The power of the Crown, such as it was, had subsisted before their time; and it would be highly unjust to charge the present administration with having procured it any augmentation. Government had for many years been carried on exactly on the same plan, and by the same means as now, without such imputations as ministers experienced at this day.

Great indignation was expressed at the mention of that infamous duplicity which induced men to act for ministry within doors, and against them without. The fact to some appeared problematic: they were loaded with execration, and even bid to depart from the ministerial side of the House.

The part which was taken on that day by Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, was strongly decisive against ministry. He supported the motion in the firmest and most pointed language, appealing to the conscience and feelings of every gentleman present, whether they could deny it. His opinion was, that the powers lodged in the hands of the Crown, were fully adequate to all the purposes of a good, and more than sufficient for the purposes of a bad government. He told the House, that the petitions before them ought to have been prevented, by removing the cause without waiting to be reminded of their duty. They sat there as the representatives of the people; and could not be ignorant that they

they were bound to consult the advantage of their constituents, whenever it was clearly pointed out, preferably and antecedently to all other considerations.

After one of the most memorable debates that had for many years been heard in the House of Commons, Mr. Dunning's motion was carried upon a division, by two hundred and thirty-three votes against two hundred and fifteen.

The second motion made by Mr. Dunning, was, that the House of Commons was as competent to examine into, and correct abuses in the expenditure of the revenue appropriated to the Civil List, as of every other branch of the public revenue, whenever it might seem expedient.

Another motion was added to it by Mr. Thomas Pitt, whose exertions on the side of opposition had been remarkable on this day. He moved that it was the duty of that House to provide an immediate and effectual redress of the abuses complained of in the petitions that had been presented to it from the different parts of the kingdom.

Notwithstanding the request and entreaty on the part of ministry, that no further proceedings should take place that night, both these motions were carried without a division: so resolute were those in opposition to make the most of an advantage which was seldom in their possession, and of which they seemed to doubt the permanency.

To complete the success of opposition, the resolutions that had passed were reported, read a first and second time, and agreed to without a division. Such an expeditious method of proceeding was strongly opposed by ministry; but its influence was at this moment entirely lost; and it was said at the time, that had it not been for the lateness of the hour, and the evident impropriety of pushing mat-

ters further at that instant, opposition might have carried whatever they thought proper.

Never had ministry been treated with so much severity of language as on this occasion. They were accused of having, through their servility and base submission to that secret influence by which they were overruled, sacrificed the glory of their country, and lessened its importance irrecoverably. Before they assumed the reins of administration, the name of an Englishman was respectable in the most flattering degree; but as if a conspiracy had been formed against it by those who dictated the measures of ministry, all had been done that could have possibly been imagined, to lower it in the estimation of the world.

No stronger proof, it was said, could be adduced of the alarming influence of the Crown, than the retention of their places and power by the present ministry, after the load of calamity and disgrace they had heaped upon this country, and in defiance of the repeated complaints of the public, and the general cry for their dismission.

The invectives against them out of doors were still more outrageous. The discontent of people at large was now risen to such a height, that they received the news of the ministerial defeat in the House, with as much exultation, as if a victory of the last importance had been obtained over an enemy.

It was observed by some shrewd foreigners at this time, that nothing could exhibit the superior pretensions of the English to liberty, in a more disparaging light, than the fixed and unaltered contradiction of their wishes for a change of ministry and measures which was experienced at this period; when, notwithstanding the representatives of the nation united with their constituents in the most unqualified

unqualified reprobation of the conduct of their rulers, these were still able to keep their places.

After many years of fruitless endeavours, opposition now saw itself master of the field. It resolved to lose no time in improving this success. On the next meeting it was moved by Mr. Dunning, that to ascertain the independence of Parliament, and remove all suspicions of its being under undue influence, there should every session, seven days after the meeting of Parliament, be laid before that House, an account of all sums issued out of the Civil List, or any other branch of the revenue, since the last recess, in favour of any of its members.

Little opposition was made to this proposal. As it was evidently founded on the necessity of establishing a substantial test of independence, no valid arguments could be produced against it, and it was carried with no difficulty.

Encouraged by this success, Mr. Dunning next moved, that the following officers should be excluded from a seat in the House:—The Treasurers of the Chamber and Household, the Cofferer, Comptroller, and Master of the Household, the Clerks of the Green Cloth, and their deputies.

This question was debated with much more warmth than the former. As it was in fact a place bill, it met with great obstruction from the ministerial quarter. Its whole strength was collected to defeat it. But after a well-disputed contest, it was carried, upon a division, by two hundred and fifteen, against two hundred and thirteen.

Such were the consequences immediately resulting from the fervour with which the petitions from the English counties had been enforced; but this triumph of opposition was of short duration. It was indeed a novelty of a striking nature. The whole kingdom stood astonished at the readiness

with which its representatives had passed so many resolutions militating against the influence of ministry; and people were at a loss to what causes they were to ascribe so wonderful a change in men who had hitherto seemed so resolutely devoted to the will of administration.

But this popular disposition did not last above a week. It expired on the motion of Mr. Crewe, for excluding Revenue Officers from voting at Parliamentary Elections. After a long debate, it was rejected by two hundred and twenty-four, against one hundred and ninety-five.

In the House of Lords, the Contractors Bill met with the overthrow with which it had been threatened. The principal arguments against it were, that it would indispose substantial people from engaging to furnish necessaries to the fleet and army, and would throw that business into the hands of necessitous persons, whose circumstances precluded them from aspiring to a seat in Parliament; and who therefore could not reasonably be supposed to possess the means of fulfilling their contracts.

It was urged with great vehemence, that the public was imposed upon by a factious cry of Independence of Parliament, and Economy, which had perverted the minds of the people, and seduced them into opinions subversive of government. It was time for the House of Peers, as the constitutional barrier between King and People, to set their faces against this spirit of innovation, which, under pretence of reforming abuses, aimed at the destruction of those established rules of government, which till now had been quietly submitted to; and without an acquiescence wherein, the state would be subject to endless turbulence and commotion.

These, and a variety of other allegations, tending much to the same purpose, were received by opposition with the strongest expressions of denial and

and disapprobation. It was asserted that the exclusion of contractors, was a measure founded on the same principle as that which excluded multitudes in England from voting in the election of their own representatives. Men of the highest capacity, and the purest principles, were, if not duly qualified in other respects, shut out from all pretensions to be elected. Persons in certain public offices were for that reason denied a seat in Parliament. The principle on which this regulation was founded, admitted of no controversy. It was the danger all men were in of submitting to that authority to which they owed their consequence. This submissiveness was a principle that pervaded all mankind: men of fordid dispositions were governed by no other; and men of the noblest inclinations found it difficult to resist. The generality, if not indeed all contractors without exception, were individuals bred up in mercantile affairs, which naturally habituated their minds to keenness in the pursuit of their pecuniary interests: such a frame of mind necessarily exposed them to be powerfully influenced by the prospect of lucre. Such men, therefore, ought not to be placed in the way of temptation, especially when their yielding to it might be prejudicial to the public in matters of the highest importance.

Nor would the public suffer any detriment from their exclusion; as ministry had thought proper to suppose might happen from the abilities some of them might possess. The abilities of such persons were seldom known to extend beyond the knowledge of enriching themselves at the public expence. Herein their abilities were undeniable; but in that knowledge which became a gentleman entrusted with political business, they could hardly fail being deficient, from the narrowness of their education; as it was notorious that most, if not all of them,

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were individuals merely conversant in trade; and confined to those walks of life, wherein very little improvement in any other branches is obtainable.

Allowing such persons to be possessed of the fairest character in their profession, were not the profits accruing from the contracts given to them, an ample reward for their diligence and fidelity in fulfilling them according to agreement? It was well known that these profits were often so great, as to exceed all the reasonable proportions of gain derivable from any other branch of business. Such uncommon encouragements from ministers were never bestowed without a certainty of their being fully balanced by the receivers.

Experience manifested how truly the ministry calculated in these matters. Contractors were as firm and staunch adherents to it, as any denomination of men. They had no opinions but what were strictly conformable to its directions; and were constant and implicit in their obedience.

It had been objected by ministry, that open and public contracts would prove the means of disclosing secrets of state which ought to remain concealed. Designs in contemplation against the enemy, could not be carried on with probability of success, were they once to be apprized of them; and private contracts only could effectually prevent the conveyance of information.

But this objection, it was alledged by opposition, was easily removed by adverting to the contracts made by the Victualling-Office. They were public in the extremest degree: every circumstance was made known that related to the shipping which were to be supplied; yet no inconvenience arose from this long established mode. The enemy had no other means of coming at the knowledge of intended expeditions, than the meer account of stores and provisions shipped on board a squadron: the utmost

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that could be discovered by such a circumstance, was the length or the shortness of the voyage; but the real object of its destination must be ascertained by other methods.

Some very severe insinuations of misconduct in ministry were thrown out upon this occasion. It was furnished that the charges of the contract for rum, which was paid for in currency, had been made out in sterling money; and that after a large premium had been allowed for supplying the forces in America with gold from Portugal, the remittances were all made in English guineas. To what was this to be attributed?—To inadvertance, neglect, or connivance?

The danger of discouraging men of great property from entering into contracts with government, and of throwing this business into the hands of improper people, was treated as groundless and chimerical. No man that had interest enough to obtain a contract, could ever want the amplest credit to enable him to perform it.

But that which gave the greatest offence to opposition, was the manner in which ministry had rebuked the violent spirit that had been roused throughout the nation for the independence of Parliament, and the reform of abuses. That spirit, it was replied, had too long lain dormant. It was the genuine spirit of the English constitution; and it was only by keeping it awake, that those reformations could be brought about, which the times demanded. The people had not been imposed upon by false pretences; they were witnesses of the most unprecedented profusion; and were warranted in requiring integrity and œconomy in the management of the national revenue: this was a constitutional request, and was not dictated by turbulence or the spirit of innovation, as had been suggested. A dutiful petition was the right of the subject; and

could not be construed into a disturbance of government.

A variety of other arguments were produced on each side, in the course of this debate, when the question being put, the Contractors Bill was rejected by sixty-one votes, to forty-one

In the House of Commons the decline of the popular interest became daily more apparent. In pursuance of the determination to comply with the wishes expressed by the people, Mr. Dunning moved, that an address should be presented to the Throne against a dissolution or prorogation of Parliament, until measures had been taken to prevent the improper influence, and to remedy the other grievances complained of in the petitions.

Opposition was not unaware of the defection intended by a number of their late auxiliaries. In order, if possible, to preserve their adherence, they expatiated with unusual force and vehemence on the propriety of carrying into execution the plan of reform that had been so happily commenced, and the dishonour of relinquishing it after so strong and solemn an avowal of its necessity. No man, it was said, that had voted for the resolutions that had passed on the sixth of April, could, consistently with his reputation, depart from them, without laying himself open to contempt, and incurring the imputation of acting from the basest motives.

The debates on the motion were long and animated. A repetition ensued of all that had been advanced on the subject of the petitions. The part now taken by those who had recently gone over to opposition, and who now returned to their former connection, was reprobated in the most unreserved terms that language could afford. But arguments and remonstrances were lavished to no purpose; they continued immovable in the resolution they had formed to resume the support of ministry; and when

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when the question was put, the motion was rejected by two hundred and fifty-four votes, against two hundred and three.

Such a desertion in the day of trial, roused the resentment of opposition to the highest pitch. The ministerial side of the House would gladly have availed itself of the lateness of the hour to break it up, as it was past midnight: but Mr. Fox rising, the Speaker insisted that the House should remain sitting.

The talents of Mr. Fox were displayed on this occasion with an energy that astonished even those against whom they were directed with the most unrelenting severity. He treated those members who had deserted opposition with the utmost disdain and contempt, and bestowed upon them the most unqualified reproaches that anger could suggest, and eloquence could express. He represented the vote which had just passed, as a shame and scandal to the House. Men who had solemnly bound themselves to stand by the cause of their constituents, had now basely and treacherously deceived them: they had, in defiance of disgrace and loss of character, gone over to their enemies; and assisted in reinstating them on that footing of power, from which they had promised in the most faithful manner to contribute in removing them. After betraying their friends so ignominiously, what epithets could they expect, but those of unprincipled and sordid slaves to the meanest of all human passions.

Mr. Dunning was no less pointed in his strictures on those who had forsaken the side of opposition. He charged them with the foulest breach of faith; of which persons in a public station could be guilty: they had deceived the people into erroneous measures; and by holding out false pretences of befriending them, had prevented them from adopt-

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ing those measures they had in contemplation to procure a redress of their grievances.

It was now the unanimous opinion of opposition, that the decision of this day had put an end to all reasonable hopes of compassing the intent of the petitions. The pains that had been taken to convene the people of the best repute and character throughout the nation, and to take their sense upon the present state of affairs, were now, they said, rendered useless by the treachery of their representatives.

The accusations levelled at ministry by this declaration, were too heavy to pass unanswered. It was therefore replied, that the petitions preferred by the people ought by no means to be considered as rejected: they stood on the same ground as before, and would employ the attention of Parliament in the same manner as if the motion made on this day had not met with a negative.

The next attempt in favour of the petitions, was a motion made on the side of opposition, that no further grants of money should take place until the grievances they complained of were redressed. But it was rejected by a majority of eighty-nine, to fifty-four; as was also another motion by Mr. Dunning, for taking them into consideration, by one hundred and seventy-seven, to one hundred and thirty-four.

The two last subjects of debate produced in the House of Commons in consequence of the spirit excited by the petitions, were the Commission of Accounts first proposed by Colonel Barre, and new modelled by ministry on its own plan; and the Extraordinaries of the Army.

Opposition objected that ministry had appointed commissioners who had no seat in the House; which was depriving it of its exclusive right of inspecting the management of the public money, as well as of granting it.

It was replied by ministry, that the immediate business of Parliament was so great and comprehensive, and required such perpetual attendance, that no members of that House could find leisure for so arduous a task as the examination of public accounts. It was also alledged, that were they to be employed in this business, it would occasion endless altercations, and subject the parties concerned to perpetual strictures, notwithstanding their caution and integrity.

The Extraordinaries of the Army were brought before the House with great clearness and accuracy by Colonel Barre. According to his statement it appeared, that the sum of three millions eight hundred thousand pounds had been applied to the service of the land forces in North America, during the years seventy-five, seventy-six, seventy-seven, and seventy-eight; and one million five hundred and eighty-eight thousand, in the year seventy-nine: of the first sum no satisfactory account had been given to the House; and of the second no account at all.

He moved the admission of this statement, and that to allow of such large sums to be expended in extraordinaries, without a regular account, and without the sanction of Parliament, was not authorised by precedent, invaded the right of the House of Commons, and was one of the abuses complained of in the petitions presented to that House; and that the appointment of new and expensive offices in the army, without necessity, was a waste of the public revenue, which tended to a dangerous increase of that corrupt influence which occasioned so much alarm, and was become so heavy a grievance.

The debates upon these motions were carried on with great spirit on both sides. Opposition pleaded on one hand, the impropriety of consenting to any expenditure without an explicit and circumstantial
account;

account; and ministry contended on the other, for the indispensable necessity of keeping secret a variety of occurrences in the pecuniary department, and of trusting implicitly to the honour and discretion, as well as to the abilities of persons in high command, or employed in difficult commissions.

Colonel Barre distinguished himself as much upon this occasion, by the variety of reasonings with which he seconded his motions, as by the perseverance and sagacity with which he had gone through so laborious an investigation. The contest lasted till near two o'clock in the morning, when the motion was rejected, upon a division, by one hundred and twenty-three votes, to fifty-seven.

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Insurrections in London.

1780.

THE unfavourable reception of the petitions presented to Parliament by the different counties, and of the plan of reform proposed by Mr. Burke, with the rejection of the several motions made by the popular party, occasioned great discontent, and confirmed the dissatisfaction and ill opinion which the people had conceived of the majority of their representatives.

It was in the height of that ill temper which the conduct of Parliament had created in the multitude, that those discontents broke out which had their foundation in religious phrenzy, and which were so near involving the kingdom in universal desolation.

The hardships under which individuals professing the Roman Catholic persuasion had laboured for many years in England, had lately awakened the consideration of the liberal minded. The utility and impropriety of persecuting people from whom no danger was apprehended, and who were not suspected of disaffection to the civil constitution of this country, induced several persons of rank and influence to undertake the procuring them relief.

A variety of motives militated in favour of such a measure:—A remarkable spirit of toleration had begun to diffuse itself through several parts of Europe, and that outrageous zeal for the propagation of particular tenets of religion, which had occasioned so many calamities, was daily subsiding,

even in some of those countries which had experienced them most.

It was time, in the opinion of men of understanding and moderation, to leave mankind in perfect freedom in all matters relating to their conscience. The liberty of thinking and speaking, so widely enjoyed in England, ill agreed with those oppressive regulations enacted against a persuasion, the adherents to which had long demeaned themselves with the utmost humility and patience, under the many discouragements to which they were subject by law.

Those regulations had been framed in boisterous and unsettled times, when the minds of men were influenced by an unfortunate mixture of political and religious notions, that rendered these improperly subservient to each other, and banished all candour and generosity from public transactions. In those tempestuous æras, an obstinate partiality to their own maxims in affairs of church and state, accompanied with an invincible abhorrence of all others, created in opposite parties an averfeness to sentiments of toleration; and the consciousness this reciprocal disposition, led them to refuse each other all indulgence and forbearance, to which they were not compelled by absolute necessity or mutual convenience.

But these unhappy times were no more. Society was become too enlightened to suffer mankind to be the victims of false notions in religion. As no country upon earth was blessed with a freer constitution than England, this freedom, it was asserted, ought to be extended to all subjects of investigation of which the human mind is capable, and no restraint should be laid on the profession of principles that were not immoral, or tending to disturb the peace of the community.

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Such being the ideas established among the judicious and reasonable, it was not surprising that they should seize the first opportunity of relieving a denomination of people who suffered unnecessary oppression.

The calamities of the times had afforded the English Roman Catholics a very proper occasion to manifest their attachment to government. They presented a most loyal and dutiful address to the King, which was drawn up with an elegance of expression, and a nobleness of sentiment that did them great honour.

It contained the strongest assurances of affection and fidelity to the King's person, and the civil government of this country, which, in the words of the address, having been propagated through all changes of religious opinions and establishments, had been at last perfected by that revolution which had placed the present royal family on the throne of these kingdoms, and inseparably united its title to the crown with the laws and liberties of the people.

“ Our exclusion,” said they, “ from many of the benefits of that constitution, has not diminished our reverence for it. We behold with satisfaction the felicity of our fellow-subjects; and we partake of the general prosperity which results from an institution so full of wisdom. We have patiently submitted to such restrictions and discouragements as the legislature thought expedient. We have thankfully received such relaxations of the rigour of the laws, as the mildness of an enlightened age, and the benignity of the British government have gradually produced; and we submissively wait, without presuming to suggest either time or measure, for such other indulgence as those happy causes cannot fail in their own season to effect.

“ We beg leave to assure your Majesty; that our
 “ dissent from the legal establishment in matters of
 “ religion, is purely conscientious; that we hold
 “ no opinions adverse to your Majesty’s government,
 “ or repugnant to the duties of good citizens; and
 “ we trust that this has been shown more decisively
 “ by our irreproachable conduct for many years
 “ past, under circumstances of public discounte-
 “ nance and displeasure, than it can be manifested
 “ by any declaration whatever.

“ In a time of public danger, when your Ma-
 “ jesty’s subjects can have but one interest, and
 “ ought to have but one wish, and one sentiment,
 “ we think it our duty to assure your Majesty of
 “ our unreserved affection to your government, of
 “ our unalterable attachment to the cause and wel-
 “ fare of this our common country, and our utter
 “ detestation of the designs and views of any fo-
 “ reign power against the dignity of your Crown,
 “ and the safety and tranquility of your subjects.

“ The delicacy of our situation is such, that we
 “ do not presume to point out the particular means
 “ by which we may be allowed to testify our zeal
 “ to your Majesty, and our wishes to serve our
 “ country; but we entreat leave faithfully to assure
 “ your Majesty, that we shall be perfectly ready,
 “ on every occasion, to give such proofs of our
 “ fidelity, and the purity of our intentions, as your
 “ Majesty’s wisdom, and the sense of the nation
 “ shall at any time deem expedient.”

This address was presented to the King on the first day of May, seventy-eight. It was signed by the Duke of Norfolk, the Earls of Surrey and Shrewsbury, the Lords Stourton, Petre, Arundel, Dorner, Teynham, Clifford, and Linton; and by one hundred and sixty-three Commoners of rank and fortune.

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The sensible part of the nation was highly satisfied with this demonstration of respect and attachment on the part of the Roman Catholics, and testified in return a willingness to consider and treat them as loyal subjects.

The only obstacle that stood in the way of their wishes, was the difficulty of overcoming the prejudices of the lower classes, the narrowness of whose education, and means of information, might lead them to disapprove and condemn the indulgence shown to the people of a persuasion which they had been taught to look upon with horror and detestation.

But notwithstanding the prepossessions of the vulgar, it was determined by several individuals of generous and liberal sentiments, to espouse their cause, as far as it could be done consistently with the principles of the constitution, and the general temper of the times, which though not averse to release them from those burthens which were evidently unreasonable, were still apprehensive that danger might ensue from granting them unqualified liberty. Among those who patronised them were some of the principal members of opposition. This was a circumstance that operated strikingly in their favour; it showed that those whom the public esteemed the most strenuous friends to the freedom and constitution of this country, did not imagine they would be endangered, by treating the Roman Catholics with more lenity than they had hitherto experienced.

About the middle of May, seventy-eight, Sir George Saville made a motion for the repeal of some penalties enacted against the people of that persuasion. He grounded his motion on the necessity of vindicating the honour, and asserting the true principles of the Protestant religion, of which the peculiar merit was to admit of no persecution. It

ill became the professors of such a religion, to be guilty of that intolerance with which they reproached others. The statutes he meant to repeal, were such as gave occasion to deeds that debased, and were a disgrace to human nature, by inciting relations to divest themselves of the feelings of humanity, and by encouraging the rapacity of informers.

Among a variety of motives for relieving the Roman Catholics from the terror of these severe statutes, he mentioned with great warmth of praise the above address. He represented it as a full proof of the loyal disposition of the Roman Catholics, and as an unfeigned testimony of the soundness of their political principles; which alone were to be considered in the government of human society.

While these were pure, and conducive to the good of the public, they ought not to be debarred from participating in the benefits of a government, to the support of which they contributed in common with the remainder of their fellow subjects. In order, however, to silence the objections of those who might suspect them of duplicity, and to remove, as far as human prudence could suggest, all apprehensions of that nature, a test should be framed of so binding and solemn a nature, that no man could be supposed so void of understanding, as to imagine that any authority could annul its efficacy.

The pains and penalties of the statutes to be repealed, were laid before the House with great accuracy and impartiality by Mr. Dunning. By these statutes it was made felony in a foreign clergyman of the Roman communion, and high treason in one that was a native of this kingdom, to teach the doctrines, or perform divine service, according to the rites of that church; the estates of persons educated abroad in that persuasion, were forfeited to the next Protestant heir; a son, or any other nearest relation, being a Protestant, was empowered to take possession

son of his own father's, or nearest of kin's estate; during their lives : a Roman Catholic was disabled from acquiring any legal property by purchase.

No man could deny that these restrictions were cruel and oppressive in the extreme, and reflected much disgrace on a people pretending to humanity and civilization. The least a British Parliament could do, was to repeal these monuments of a barbarous and unfeeling age, sowed by fanaticism into a forgetfulness of the rights of human nature. Even after these severe statutes were annulled, individuals professing the Roman Catholic religion, would remain under sufficient controul and discouragement from those that remained.

The mildness of the British government did not indeed countenance the practice of the severities enacted by these statutes ; but still they were instruments of tyranny in the hands of the vilest part of society ; informers, and individuals lost to all feelings. The prospect of lucre subjected every man of the Roman persuasion to the ill usage of people of this description ; as on their evidence, the magistrates were bound, however unwilling, to carry these cruel laws into execution.

In consequence of these representations, which were too strictly true, and were not in the least exaggerated, the motion made in favour of the Roman Catholics, was received without one dissentient voice. A bill in pursuance to its intent, was brought in, and passed both Houses with the utmost unanimity.

This deliverance from the principal oppressions under which they had so long suffered, was accepted by them with such marks and expressions of gratitude, as rendered them intirely worthy of the notice and relief they had obtained from the equitable disposition of the legislature.

The test or oath that accompanied the repeal of these obnoxious acts, was conceived in the strongest and most expressive terms. They were enjoined to swear allegiance to the King's person and family, and to abjure the pretensions to the Crown, of all others, that person especially who assumed the title of King of Great Britain, under the appellation of Charles the Third. They were to declare their disbelief and detestation of the following positions:—That it is lawful to put individuals to death on pretence of their being heretics—that no faith is to be kept with heretics—that Princes excommunicated by the Pope and Council, or by the See of Rome, or any other authority, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects or by any others—that the Pope of Rome, or any other foreign Prelate, or Sovereign, is intitled to any temporal or civil jurisdiction, or pre-eminence, either directly or indirectly in this kingdom. They were solemnly to profess, that they made the aforesaid declarations with the utmost sincerity, and in the strictest and plainest meaning of the words and language of the test, without harbouring any secret persuasion that any dispensation from Rome, or any other authority, could acquit or absolve them from the obligations contracted by this oath, or declare it null and void.

In consequence of the lenity shewn to the Roman Catholics, the Protestant Dissenters from the established church, applied to Parliament, in the ensuing year, for an extension of the laws already enacted in their favour. The motion made in their behalf met with due approbation; and was carried through both Houses to their intire satisfaction.

But this liberality of sentiments, though approved of in the case of the Protestant Dissenters, did not meet with the same approbation in other respects. The spirit of fanaticism, though vanished from

from the enlightened part of society, proved, upon this occasion, to be far from extinct in this island. The relief extended to the Roman Catholics, revived it in a manner that astonished all Europe; which had long considered the British nation, as totally delivered from religious prejudices.

The indulgence shewn to the Roman Catholics in England, encouraged those of the same persuasion in Scotland to hope for the same relief. Several Scotch gentlemen of great rank and character, and who were members of Parliament, expressed their warmest wishes, that it should be extended to their country; and declared their intention to bring in a bill for that purpose the following session.

The great progress of knowledge and polite learning among the genteel classes in Scotland, gave no room to imagine that any opposition to this measure would arise from that quarter. There were, on the contrary, good reasons to believe that it would be very favourably received. The general assembly of the church of Scotland openly approved of it, in rejecting, by a majority of no less than one hundred suffrages, a remonstrance that had been proposed against it. In consequence of these flattering appearances, a petition was prepared for presentation to Parliament on behalf of the Roman Catholics in Scotland.

But these agreeable expectations were soon damped through the bigotry of some individuals, who unappily found means to kindle a flame of opposition against the benevolence intended by Parliament, of which so enlightened and sensible a people as the Scotch were thought wholly unsusceptible.

A pamphlet was published against the doctrine and professors of the Roman religion, which represented them as the common foes to mankind, and

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the disturbers of all states. It was circulated among all classes, and raised a number of enemies to the intended petition.

As religious zeal always abounds most among the ignorant and the uninformed, it was principally among the lower classes the enmity to the proposed indulgence was found to predominate. It spread gradually through the people at large; and though generously disavowed by the intelligent and better sort, by the Synod of Lothian in particular, composed of persons highly eminent for their abilities and character, it gained ground every where, and threatened a total defeat to any scheme of that nature.

This opposition was at first chiefly conducted by a few obscure agents at Edinburgh, who were, it is said, so conscious of their own insignificance, that they concealed themselves with the utmost care from the knowledge of the public. They assumed, however, the title of Committee for the Protestant Interest; and under that denomination carried on a correspondence with all those who coincided with their opinions, and who now began to form a very large proportion of the common people in Scotland.

As the committee at Edinburgh, from its residence in the capital of the kingdom, was deemed to consist of persons of the first importance, it directed in a manner the motions of all the others. And its dictates were submitted to with an acquiescence truly surprising in so acute and discerning a nation.

This committee was, according to report, composed of thirteen members; the principal of which were, a merchant, a goldsmith, and a writing-master in an hospital. The others were tradesmen and clerks in public offices, or private counting houses; and their secretary was a young lad in his apprenticeship.

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It ought, however, to be noticed, that the persons who made up this committee, acted from no mean or mercenary views; their principles, though wrongly directed, were laudable, and aimed at the preservation of the Protestant religion, and the liberties of their country; both which they conceived were in danger, from the indulgence of government to individuals of the Roman Catholic persuasion.

Actuated by these ideas, they exerted themselves with so much activity, and excited such a spirit of outrageousness and intolerance against them, that convinced of the inutility of endeavouring to stem so dreadful a torrent, the principal gentlemen of that persuasion thought it requisite for their safety, to convey an intimation to the British ministry, that they were desirous to drop the application they had proposed to make, for an indulgence similar to that which had been granted to their fellow-subjects in England of the same communion.

They had also recourse to other precautions in order to mitigate the fury of the multitude, and to lessen that resentment against government for its favourable disposition towards the Roman Catholics, which they were conscious would be wreaked upon themselves. They published in the newspapers the representation they had made to ministry, signifying their desistance from any further solicitations for the repeal of the penal statutes; hoping thereby to convince the public, that they were sincerely desirous to remove any cause of dissatisfaction on their own account, and to submit to any inconveniency sooner than occasion any disturbance.

• But that inexorable spirit of mistaken zeal, which had been fostered with so much industry, was now kindled to such a height, that no considerations were able to quell it. The enraged populace incensed at their betters on account of their moderation, and

the liberality of their principles, accused them in the most insolent manner of having betrayed the cause of God and Religion.

As charges of this nature in the mouths of the vulgar, usually portend the perpetration of mischief, it became the duty of persons invested with due authority, to have an eye on their proceedings, in order to check any irregularities on their first appearance. But whether from inadvertance; or an idea that these popular discontents would subside the sooner for being left to themselves, no sort of notice was taken of this intemperate behaviour of the commonalty; and they seemed to have been abandoned to their own will and guidance.

In the mean time threats of the most vengeful nature were daily thrown out against the Roman Catholics; they were insulted in the open streets, and treated with all manner of indignity; but this was only a prelude to the designs in agitation against them.

On the second day of February, seventy-nine, the populace met according to appointment, in order to carry into execution the various projects they had in contemplation. They began by an attack upon a house inhabited by a Roman Catholic Bishop, with others of his persuasion, and which contained a place of worship. They committed it to the flames; and it was with difficulty the people who dwelt in it were able to make their escape. They destroyed in the same manner another house that had also a chapel; after which they proceeded to vent their resentment on several individuals of that persuasion by burning their effects.

The next objects of their vengeance were those who had patronized the Roman Catholics. They beset the houses of Dr. Robertson and Mr. Crosby, two gentlemen eminently noted for the liberality of their principles: the latter was a lawyer of the first distinction

distinction, but peculiarly obnoxious to the vulgar, for having acted as counsel to the Roman Catholics upon this occasion: the former, one of the most elegant historians this age or country has produced. But the character of these two gentlemen was too highly respected to suffer them to become the victims of a deluded mob. On hearing of the intentions of the rioters, the friends of both came to their assistance in such numbers, and so well prepared to repel the fury of the populace, that they did not dare to exercise the violence they had premeditated.

This disappointment, which was accompanied by further precautions against their malevolent designs, put an end to the attempts of the mob at Edinburgh. But the spirit of dissatisfaction at the indulgence intended to the Roman Catholics, still remained in full force. Ministry was held out as harbouring a secret determination to undermine the Protestant religion, and to introduce Popery; and loaded in consequence with the most outrageous invectives.

This ungovernable spirit was gradually communicated to the enthusiastic part of the English nation. Though inconsiderable in number and importance, they possessed that activity and industry which fanaticism never fails to inspire. They exerted themselves with such indefatigable zeal, that in a short time they attracted the notice of the public through the increase of their strength and vehemence; and began to excite the apprehensions of those who reflected what mischiefs had so often been perpetrated through the violence of religious animosities.

Notwithstanding the general inclination to mildness and generosity in religious matters, that justly characterises the people of England, it cannot, unhappily, be denied, that a strong propensity remains in numbers to undervalue and treat with harshness those

those who differ from them in opinions of that kind. Though such a disposition is seldom found but in persons of an illiberal education, yet as these are abundantly spread every where, the influence exerted by them is very extensive; and the dread of incurring the ill will of the vulgar, often induces men of enlightened understandings to give way to long standing prejudices, and to conceal a disapprobation of those proceedings which it is out of their power to prevent.

This proved unfortunately to be the case at the present period. The cry against Popery, of which there did not certainly exist the remotest danger, became daily more loud among the inferior classes; and that inveteracy which had subsided during so many years, began to revive in as powerful a degree, as if the nation were actually under the impending terrors of persecution.

To this fanatic delusion were added the secret fears of others, who, though far from being under such apprehensions, still imagined it was not inconsistent with good policy to discourage a religion, from the professors of which so much danger had accrued to the constitution of this country in former times. These, though averse to all acts of violence, thought it necessary to keep alive the antipathy to it, and by no means to shew the least willingness to grant any further indulgence than it had hitherto experienced.

From this motive they were of opinion, that a suspension of the laws enacted against it, though tacit and unauthorised, was however sufficient to remove all complaints of harshness and oppression on the part of the Roman Catholics. They relied upon the humanity of the public, and the lenity of government, for a prevention of any ill treatment of them. But they looked upon the penal statutes, nevertheless, as a requisite bar to contain them

within

within the bounds of submission, and fear of offending.

The unwillingness to disoblige people of this description, as well as the violent and zealous, compelled the more liberal-minded to act with the utmost guardedness and circumspection. They were fully convinced that the causes of the restrictions imposed upon individuals of the Roman persuasion, no longer operated; and that their circumstances disabled them from being of any detriment to the state, however inimical their dispositions might be. But no reason subsisted for suspecting these: they seemed universally ready to give every proof that could be required of their attachment to the government and cause of their country: hence it was evident their religious opinions did not militate against either.

These were sufficient inducements to men of candour to think them deserving of a more favourable treatment than hitherto had been their fate. As it was a standing maxim in politics, not to mingle these with religion, they held that no subjects should be persecuted for differing from the established church, unless their tenets taught them infidelity and disobedience to government.

Impressed with this conviction, they highly applauded the suppression of the various penalties to which the Roman Catholics had been liable by the statute now repealed. Some went even so far as to assert, that while they demeaned themselves with loyalty to the state, they were entitled to the enjoyment of every civil right, without exception, in common with their fellow-subjects.

But neither the parliamentary relaxation of the laws against them, nor the kind sentiments entertained in their behalf by the benevolent and judicious, were acceptable to the bigoted part of society. They still continued in their prejudices, and resolv-

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ed to counteract, as much as they were able, the liberal conduct of the British government.

Regardless of the honour it had acquired abroad by this measure, and of the disgrace which the nation would incur by opposing it, their minds were wholly taken up with the means of rendering the condition of the Roman Catholics worse than it was before the repeal of the penal acts, and of making both them and ministry repent the step that had been taken in their favour.

A society was formed in London, which took the title of the Protestant Association. In a few months it gathered great consequence from the numbers which profess their adherence to the cause it supported; and it was soon perceived that it would proceed with vigour and resolution in asserting it.

Lord George Gordon, who had rendered himself conspicuous in Scotland by his opposition to the repeal, was elected President of this Association: and it now prepared to act an explicit and decisive part against the resolutions of the legislature in that affair.

On the twenty-ninth of May, in the year eighty, the Associators held a meeting in order to settle in what manner they should present a petition to the House of Commons against that repeal. A long speech was made on this occasion by their President. He represented the Roman persuasion as gaining ground rapidly in this country; the only method of stopping its progress, was to go up with a spirited remonstrance to their representatives, and to tell them in plain and resolute terms that they were determined to preserve their religious freedom with their lives. He was ready to run all hazards with the people; but if they were too luke warm to run the same hazards with him, when their conscience and their country called them forth, and meant to
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spend their time in mock debate and idle opposition, they might chuse another leader.

His harangue was received with the loudest applause; upon which he moved, that the whole body of the Association should meet on the second day of June, in St. George's Fields, at ten in the morning, to accompany him to the House of Commons on the delivery of the petition. This being unanimously assented to, he informed them, that if he found himself attended with less than twenty thousand of them, he would not present the petition. He then directed they should form themselves into four divisions; the first, second, and third, to consist of those who belonged to the City, Westminster, and Southwark; the fourth of the Scotch resident in London. They were, by way of distinction, to wear blue cockades in their hats.

In this manner did Lord George Gordon bring to bear what he had often mentioned in Parliament. His speeches to that Assembly had frequently held out the most fiery denunciations of the power and influence he possessed in Scotland; where he told them he was at the head of one hundred and twenty thousand men, determined to do themselves justice if it should be refused them. He insisted, with the utmost vehemence, that ample security should be given to the people of Great Britain against the danger of Popery.

Three days previous to the presentation of the petition, he gave notice of it to the House, and acquainted it with the manner in which it was to be presented. From whatever motive it proceeded, this information did not seem to make any impression upon that assembly. It was received with as much indifference and unconcern as all his former intimations.

On the second day of June, according to appointment, about fifty or sixty thousand men assembled

in St. George's Fields. They drew up in four separate divisions, as had been agreed, and proceeded to the Parliament House, with Lord George Gordon at their head. An immense roll of parchment was carried before them, containing the names of those who had signed the petition.

It was two o'clock before the whole body could be collected before both Houses of Parliament. On this occasion they gave an universal and most tremendous shout, by way of signifying their arrival.

On their way to the House, they behaved with great peaceableness and decency. But as soon as they were arrived, they seemed to be conscious of the power and terror accruing from their numbers. They began by compelling all the members of both Houses they met with, to put blue cockades in their hats, and call out, "No Popery." They forced some to take an oath that they would vote for the repeal of the Popery act, as they stiled it. They treated others with great indignity. They posted themselves in all the avenues to both Houses; the doors of which they twice endeavoured to break open.

Their rage was chiefly directed against the members of the House of Lords; and among them to the personages of the highest distinction in the realm: several of them were used in the most brutal manner, and narrowly escaped with their lives.

During these outrageous proceedings, Lord George Gordon moved for leave to bring up the petition. This was readily granted; but when he proposed it should be taken into immediate consideration, it was strenuously opposed by almost the whole House.

Enraged at this opposition, Lord George Gordon came out several times to the people during the debates, acquainting them how averse the House appeared

peared to grant their petition. He particularised those who had spoken against it.

Several members of the House expostulated with him in the warmest terms on the unjustifiableness of his conduct. One of his relations, Colonel Gordon, threatened to run him through, the moment any of the rioters should force their entrance into the House.

It was several hours before the House could carry on its deliberations with any regularity. The mob was in possession of the Lobby and all other places in the vicinity of both Houses. It was late in the afternoon before the members were relieved from this confusion by the arrival of a party of the guards.

Order being restored, the business of the petition was resumed; when Lord George Gordon told them it had been signed by near one hundred and twenty thousand British Protestant subjects. He therefore peremptorily insisted that the petition should be considered without any delay.

But notwithstanding the dangers with which they were menaced, and the proof which the mover of the petition had given, that no means should be left unemployed to compel them to grant it, the Commons continued immovable in their determination to oppose the petition. Of two hundred members, then present in the House, six only voted for it. All the rest rejected it in defiance of all threats and intimidation.

In the mean time the mob, on the arrival of the guards, had dispersed itself into various parts of the metropolis. Among other outrages, they demolished two Romish chapels belonging to foreign ministers; and openly vented the most terrible menaces against all people of that persuasion.

On the fourth of June the mob assembled in numerous bodies in the eastern parts of London; and

attacked the chapels and houses of the Roman Catholics in that quarter: stripping them of their contents, which they threw into the street, and committed to the flames.

They renewed their outrages on the following day, destroying several Romish chapels, and ill using the people of that persuasion, and others who had befriended them. They demolished the house of Sir George Saville, in resentment of his having brought into Parliament the bill in favour of the Roman Catholics.

The dreadful menaces of the rioters against all persons who had favoured the Roman Catholics, and the particular denunciations of revenge levelled at several distinguished individuals in Parliament, did not prevent, next day, a great number of the members from attending the House of Commons; where they resolved that a committee should be appointed to enquire into the present insurrections, in order to discover and punish their authors and abettors.

The House of Lords met at the same time; but the confusions recommencing every where with aggravated fury, it was judged expedient by both Houses to postpone any further sittings till the riots were entirely subsided. To this intent they adjourned to the nineteenth.

During this day and the following, which were the sixth and seventh of June, the rioters were absolute masters of the metropolis and its environs. Their outrageousness knew no bounds; and they seemed in a manner determined to perpetrate all the mischief that could be suggested to them.

Some of those rioters who had been concerned in the demolition of the chapels belonging to foreign ministers, had been seized and sent to Newgate. The mob collected before that prison, and demanded their immediate release: on being refused, they proceeded

proceeded to throw firebrands and all manner of combustibles into the keeper's house; which unhappily communicated the fire to the whole building: the flames spread so rapidly, that this immense pile was soon in conflagration. In this scene of confusion, the prisoners were all released. They amounted to about three hundred; among whom several were under sentence of death.

They set fire, in the same manner, to the King's Bench and Fleet prisons, and to a number of houses belonging to Roman Catholics. The terror occasioned by these incendiaries was such, that most people hung out of their windows pieces of blue silk, which was the colour assumed by the rioters; and chaulked their doors and shutters with the words, "No Popery," by way of signifying they were friendly to their cause.

The night of the seventh of June concluded these horrors. No less than thirty-six different conflagrations were counted at the same time. The Bank had been threatened, and was twice assailed; but happily was too well guarded for their attempts.

Towards the close of the evening, large bodies of troops arrived from all parts, in consequence of the expresses that had been dispatched the two foregoing days. They came in time to put a stop to the progress of the rioters. They fell upon them every where, and multitudes were slain and wounded, besides the numbers that perished through intoxication: these were very considerable, as the liquor that ran from the distilleries of Mr. Langdale, whose house and property, being a Roman Catholic, they destroyed, was taken up in pailfuls by the mob.

It was not until the afternoon of the eighth, that people began to recover from their consternation: during great part of the day, the disorders of the

preceding night had created so terrible an alarm, that the shops were almost universally shut up over all London.

Six days had these horrible riots continued with little or no opposition of any effect. The reason was, that numbers apprehended they were the result of a premeditated design, and were conducted by men of resolution, who acted in concert; and who, though under concealment, directed all the motions of the populace. No few suspected that the emissaries of this country's enemies were not idle during these commotions, and would not fail to promote all the mischief of which they were capable.

Whatever foundations there might be for suspicions or surmises of this nature, certain it is, that a sort of panic terror seemed to have struck the inhabitants of the metropolis. The rioters were in all appearance composed of the lowest and most despicable dregs of the populace; yet they carried every thing before them without resistance. Houses were evacuated, and individuals fled before them, as from a victorious soldiery that had taken a town by storm.

On the subsiding of this violent and unexpected commotion, it was thought proper to secure Lord George Gordon. He was arrested, and committed close prisoner to the Tower, after having undergone a long examination before the principal lords of the council.

In this manner ended one of the most surprising, unprecedented, and dangerous riots that ever happened in this country. Had it lasted a day or two longer, such was the temper of the populace, and the backwardness to resist their fury, that it is not improbable most, if not every part of the metropolis would have been laid in ashes.

On the nineteenth of June, both Houses met again according to adjournment. A speech was made

made on this occasion from the Throne, acquainting them with the measures that had been taken in consequence of the disturbances, and assuring them of the utmost readiness to concur in whatever could contribute to the safety and maintenance of the laws and liberties of the people.

The speech was highly approved, as proper and constitutional in every respect; but the conduct of administration was severely censured, and charged with unpardonable neglect for not calling forth the civil power, and employing the military in due time to obviate the mischiefs that had been committed. Ministry excused itself, from the want of sufficient strength to answer all the demands of assistance that were made during the riots, and the absolute impossibility of suppressing them till the arrival of troops from the country.

The various petitions were now taken into consideration that had been presented for the repeal of the act which had occasioned the riots; but the House continued in the same mind. It did not chuse to compromise the honour of the nation for the sake of gratifying the weak and groundless request of an ignorant and deluded multitude, influenced by enthusiasm, and the absurd apprehension of dangers that were imaginary, and founded on misinformation.

Such was the general purport of the discourses made upon this occasion. The best speakers in the House were those who principally distinguished themselves on this critical emergency:— They avowed and supported the principles of religious freedom and toleration with the most striking energy, and instead of relaxing from their former sentiments on this subject, they confirmed and strengthened them by a number of additional arguments, which however they might prejudice them among the fanatic party, raised their character high
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with all persons of candid dispositions and liberal education.

To show, at the same time, that they were guided by no factious views, and were real friends to the Protestant religion, and the liberty of their country, they passed the following resolutions, which were allowed by all impartial people to have been judiciously timed, and sufficiently calculated to remove all causes of apprehension from the minds of the petitioners, and to convince them that the British Parliament was no less strenuous in the Protestant cause, and no less averse to the introduction of Popery than it had been at any preceding æra.

They first stated, that the intent of the act in favour of the Roman Catholics had been misrepresented and misunderstood, as it did not repeal or invalidate the several statutes made against that religion, but only mitigated the unnecessary severity of a particular statute. They asserted, at the same time, that no ecclesiastical or spiritual authority was given by that act to the Pope or See of Rome.

They then declared that the House of Commons was determined to watch over the interests of the Protestant religion with unremitting attention; and that all attempts to seduce the youth of this kingdom from the established church to Popery, were highly criminal according to the laws in force, and were a proper subject of further regulation.

But they also resolved, that all endeavours to disquiet the minds of the people, by representing the late act in behalf of the Roman Catholics, as repugnant to the safety or the principles of the Protestant religion, manifestly tended to disturb the public peace, to break the union necessary at this time, to disgrace the national character in the eyes of other nations, to discredit the Protestant religion, and to furnish occasion for the renewal of the persecution

cution of Protestants in countries where the Romish religion was established.

After making these declarations, they concluded by bringing in and passing a bill of the most effectual nature for securing the Protestant religion from the encroachments of Popery. Its purport was to restrain persons professing the Roman Catholic religion from teaching or being entrusted with the education or government of the children of Protestants.

But notwithstanding these condescensions, the spirit of fanaticism was not appeased: murmurs were still heard among the multitudes that abetted the petition. As ignorance and obstinacy are generally united, the vulgar and illiterate, of whom, excepting such as were led by enthusiasm, they entirely consisted, continued to complain of the facility with which Parliament yielded to motives, which they represented as dictated by meer worldly wisdom, and utterly inconsistent with the purity and strictness of true religion.

In the midst of these unhappy commotions, and throughout the whole transactions relating to the bill in favour of the Roman Catholics, and the petitions against it, the conduct of the principal clergymen both of the church of England, and among the dissenters, reflected much honour upon their character, from the principles of tolerance they openly asserted on this occasion. It opened a prospect to persons of sound understanding and benevolent temper, which in a great measure atoned for the evils produced by outrageousness of zeal, and deficiency of knowledge; it showed the fervour of controversy among divines to be greatly abated, and that the time would probably come, ere long, when not only religious disputes, but difference of opinion in such matters would be banished from illuminated and polite society.

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The melancholy effects of misguided zeal were not, however, confined solely to London. The outrageous disposition of the fanatic populace was preparing to act the like horrid scenes in other parts of England. The mob rose in Hull, Bristol, and Bath; but through the timely interposition of the magistracy, these places were saved from their fury.

As evil has been observed to be frequently productive of good, these dreadful riots gave occasion to many precautions against the repetition of such terrible disasters in future. In London, and other places, a spirit of watchfulness originated from them, which induced numbers of reputable individuals to form themselves into associations, for the preservation of the peace against domestic insurrections.

It was also attended with another consequence, no less important. It impressed the public with the firmest conviction that popular violence is the most dangerous method of proceeding in order to obtain the redress of grievances, as it takes the execution of even the most just and laudable designs out of the hands of those who are best qualified to conduct them, and delivers them over to such as cannot fail, unless they act under a wiser direction than their own, to become the instruments of confusion and ruin.

The eighth day of July closed this session, which was the most memorable and fertile in interesting events of any since the breaking out of the American dispute.

C H A P. LI.

Military Operations in America towards the close of the Year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine.

PREVIOUS to these transactions in Great-Britain, America had produced new scenes of military operations during the preceding summer and autumn. The rupture intended by the Court of Spain with England was no secret to the governors of the Spanish settlements. Prior to the notification delivered to the British ministry by Count Almadovar, they were making hostile preparations, and captured several English vessels before the notice of this event had been carried to that part of the world.

The government of Louisiana, which had been ceded by France to Spain, was in the hands of Don Bernardo Galvez, an officer of reputation, and much respected for his honour and humanity. He was perfectly apprized of the feeble condition of West Florida; and projected an invasion of that province before it could be put in a proper state of defence. General Campbell, who commanded the small number of British forces there, was wholly unacquainted with this design, or with any intention of hostilities by the Spaniards. They improved this circumstance to the utmost, by seizing an armed vessel, and several others laden with provisions and stores for the British troops.

Flushed with this success, the Spaniard advanced in great force in order to surprize the British troops. The total amount of these throughout the whole province, did not consist of more than five hundred men. They determined, however, upon the approach

proach of the enemy, to make a resolute defence. They threw up, with all expedition, an intrenchment, which they fortified with all the industry which the straitness of time would afford. Here they stood a siege of nine days, under the command of Colonel Dickson; and behaved with so much bravery and skill, that the enemy was unable to force them, till the arrival of a train of heavy artillery, when they surrendered upon honourable conditions, which were observed with inviolate fidelity by the Spanish commander, Don Bernardo De Galvez. This expedition took place about the end of September, seventy-nine.

While this enterprize was carried on, another project was formed by the Spaniards against the British logwood cutters, settled in the Bay of Honduras, and on the Musquito Shore. These being hard pressed, applied to the Governor of Jamaica, General Dalling, for assistance. A detachment was accordingly sent to their relief under Captain Dalrymple, with necessary supplies of arms, ammunition, and artillery.

Before the arrival of these succours, a body of Spaniards had taken possession of St. George's Key, the chief British settlement on the coast of Honduras. They plundered it, and made a number of prisoners; but those who escaped being joined by a body of their countrymen, retook it, and forced the enemy to retire.

In the mean time Captain Dalrymple, who had been informed of the loss of St. George's Key, was hastening to the relief of the dispersed inhabitants. He fortunately fell in with a squadron dispatched by Sir Peter Parker, Admiral on the Jamaica station, in quest of some register ships richly laden; but which retreating into the harbour of Omoa, were too strongly protected by the fort there, to be attacked by sea. As the Spaniards had been compelled

pelled to abandon St. George's Key, it was proposed to unite the forces that were now met, and to proceed directly against Omoa.

The land force under Captain Dalrymple being too inconsiderable of itself to attempt the fort of Omoa by land; the marines of the Squadron and a strong party of the settlers were added to it. But with this addition it did not out-number the garrison.

The force destined to act by land was set on shore at about nine miles distance from the fort, at the dusk of the evening. The intention being to march directly on, in order to surprize and escalade it in the night. But no roads were to be found: they were compelled to explore their way through narrow footpaths, morasses, and over mountains so beset with precipices, that they were obliged, in order to avoid them, to use lights made of cabbage trees.

These difficulties so much retarded their progress, that they were at day break at a great distance from the fort. They were discovered by the enemy, who attacked them; but they were quickly dispersed, and forced to withdraw into the town; from whence, as they continued to fire upon the British troops these found it necessary to set fire to it, much against their will.

While the town was in flames, the Squadron took that opportunity to come into the bay, and to draw near the fort with an intent to batter it. But notwithstanding a heavy cannonade, the garrison returned the fire with so much resolution, and were provided with so numerous an artillery, that no impression could be made by that of the Squadron, which could not, from want of wind, fetch near enough to do proper execution.

The troops being masters of the ground adjacent to the fort, erected several batteries on the most advantageous situations to annoy it; but though they

they carried on their operations with great vigour, it was soon perceived, that the strength of the place required pieces of weightier metal than those which the besiegers employed, as the walls were no less than eighteen feet in thickness.

This, with the consideration of the consequent impracticability of carrying on a regular siege, the smallness of their force, and that they were in an enemy's country, from whence assistance to the besieged might be daily expected, induced the British commanders to resolve to try the success of an escalade.

Early in the morning, on the twentieth of October, the necessary dispositions being made, the troops advanced to the attack with great order and intrepidity. They entered the ditch, which happened fortunately to be dry, and fixed their scaling ladders against the walls, which were near thirty feet in height. The first who mounted were two seamen, who with admirable courage and presence of mind, stood by the ladder by which they had got up, to guard it till others had ascended; boldly presenting their pieces against a large party drawn up to receive them; and retaining their fire, according to orders, till their comrades had joined them. The squadron, mean while, came in close with the fort, upon which it kept a heavy fire.

The excessive daringness and celerity with which this attack was conducted, struck the Spaniards with such consternation, that they remained as it were motionless, and unable to act, notwithstanding the exhortation and example of their officers. They never recovered from this panic. The seamen and soldiers continuing to scale the walls with the most amazing quickness, the enemy made no defence. About a hundred of them escaped over the walls on the opposite side of the fort. The remainder of the garrison laid down their arms and surrendered.

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In this manner the strong and important fortress of Omoa fell into the hands of the British troops. It was allowed by friends and foes, that no action during the whole war gained more reputation to the British arms. The courage and conduct displayed on this occasion, were equally conspicuous, and could not certainly have been exceeded.

An instance of heroism is reported to have happened on this occasion, to which history affords nothing superior in its kind, and which gave the Spaniards the highest idea of British valour. A common sailor who had scaled the walls, had armed himself with a cutlass in each hand. Meeting with a Spanish officer unarmed, and just roused from sleep, he scorned to take advantage of his condition; and generously presented him one of his cutlasses, saying, "You are now on a footing with me." The officer was struck with too much admiration at his magnanimity, to accept of his offer; and took just care to make the circumstance duly known. So brave a man's name should have been recorded.

The value of the booty taken from the Spaniards, was estimated at three millions of dollars. But the loss which they most felt and lamented, was that of two hundred and fifty quintals of quicksilver, a commodity of indispensable necessity in the working of the produce of their gold and silver mines. They offered accordingly to ransom it at any price; but the British commanders acted with a disinterestedness that did them great honour. Though the retention of this article was to them far beneath the profits it would have produced, they refused to part with it, on account of the advantages the enemy would have derived from its possession.

Actuated by the same motives, they would accept of no ransom for the fortress of Omoa; for which the governor offered to lay down three hundred thousand dollars.

Other

Other circumstances highly honourable to the British character, accompanied this event. The Spanish military and inhabitants were treated with the utmost humanity: their personal effects remained untouched; and they experienced a generosity at which they had reason to be the more astonished, as their behaviour to the British settlers in the Bay of Honduras, had been remarkably severe and merciless.

The church plate and ornaments were, with the same generosity, restored, on condition that the articles of the capitulation should be punctually complied with.

It was remarked with particular satisfaction, that both Captain Luttrell who commanded the squadron, and Captain Dalrymple, who was at the head of the land force, took the strictest care in their respective accounts to government to do justice to every individual acting under their orders, that deserved special notice.

Those officers whom they mentioned as claiming distinguished praise, were Captains Pakenham, Parker, and Nugent, and Lieutenant Trott of the navy; Captain Carden of the military, who acted as Engineer, Lieutenants Walker and Dundas, who commanded the seaman on shore, the second of whom was the fourth man who scaled the walls; Mr. Concanen, a midshipman, who was the third; and Lieutenant Wightman, of the marines, who acted as aid-de-camp.

Very peculiar attention was paid by both the British commanders, to the release from imprisonment, and the personal safety of the British subjects, who had been deprived of their liberty through the chances of war and other causes.

One of the most happy consequences of the behaviour of the English at Omoa, was, that it impressed the Spanish nation with the highest opinion of the people

people of Britain; and inclined them to harbour much more favourable sentiments in their behalf, and to adopt a much more friendly conduct towards them, than they had done before.

Having refused to ransom the fort, a garrison was left for its protection, on the departure of the British squadron; but as it was very inconsiderable from the small number of men that could be spared, on account of the various services for which they were wanted, the Spaniards in the neighbourhood resolved to make an attempt to retake it: They collected a body of two thousand men, with which they invested the fort on the twenty-fifth of November. The garrison defended it with the utmost bravery, keeping a constant fire upon the enemy; and obliging them to retire for shelter, and take up their quarters behind a hill. Here they made preparations for an assault, in which, from their numbers, they made no doubt of succeeding. They summoned the garrison to surrender, promising the honours of war, and a safe conveyance to Great Britain, with threats of severity in case of a refusal. These demands not being complied with, the enemy continued his operations, and made all ready for an escalade.

In the mean time the condition of the besieged afforded no hopes of making any effectual resistance. They were but eighty-five in number, most of whom were, from illness and excessive fatigue, become incapable of duty. They were now obliged to make one sentinel answer for five, by shifting his place, and challenging five different times. They had no surgeon to attend the sick and wounded; none but salt provisions, nor even any water, but what came from on board of a sloop of war stationed abreast of the fort.

In this extremity they resolved, notwithstanding the menaces of the Spanish commander, to render the place as unserviceable as they could make it. To

this purpose they spiked all the guns, and destroyed all the ammunition and military stores that could not be carried off. They even locked the gates of the fort, after which they embarked without the loss of a single man.

All this was performed in defiance of the large force that besieged them, and when duly considered, was not less a matter of astonishment, than the very extraordinary manner in which the fort had been taken. The officer who conducted this remarkable defence and evacuation, was Captain Hulke of the navy.

While the honour of the British arms was so effectually supported on the continent of Spanish America, it was no less vigorously maintained in the West Indies, by the bravery and vigilance of the naval commanders on that station. Admiral Hyde Parker, assisted by Admiral Rowley, kept the enemy in continual alarm, and intercepted the trade of the French islands in the most distressing manner. They took three large frigates dispatched by Count D'Estaing to the West Indies, after his failure in America. They seized or destroyed great part of a convoy, in sight of the squadron at Port Royal in Martinico, under Monsieur De la Motte Piquet, who narrowly escaped being taken. He had sailed out of that harbour, in order to favour the escape of that convoy, by engaging the British squadron. Having partly effected his purpose, he withdrew; but was pursued so closely that he was compelled to take shelter under the batteries ashore. It was in this pursuit, that Captain Griffith of the Conqueror, an officer of great merit, was unfortunately slain. These successes happened towards the close of seventy-nine, and the commencement of the ensuing year.

The tardy arrival of the convoy with the supplies of recruits and provisions, under Admiral Arbuthnot,

not, had occasioned a late opening of the campaign of seventy-nine, in the vicinity of New-York. Nor was it attended with any remarkable events. Each side seeming to be chiefly occupied in watching the motions of the other, and in making incursions and surprizing posts; a kind of warfare which, though it kept the troops in exercise, produced nothing decisive.

The Congress took this opportunity to carry into execution the design they had formed against the Indians who had been instrumental in the destruction and ravages committed in the back settlements of the Colonies. A considerable body of Continental regulars was selected for this purpose, and put under the command of General Sullivan.

The Indians forming the Confederacy of the Five Nations, were the enemy against whom this expedition was projected. They inhabited that immense tract of country lying between New England and the Middle Colonies, and the province of Canada. A conference had been held with them by the agents of Congress, at the commencement of the present hostilities, wherein they promised to observe a strict neutrality between Great Britain and the Colonists. It was even said that they offered to take up arms in favour of these; but were told, that no more was desired of them than to remain faithfully neuter.

They soon departed, however, from this line of conduct, overcome by the presents and promises of the British agents among them, and their own native appetite for depredation. They invaded the frontiers, carrying slaughter and devastation wherever they went, and perpetrating the most enormous barbarities.

They were accompanied in these incursions by those among the Colonists who had been expelled from the contiguous provinces for their attachment to the cause of Great Britain. These having taken

refuge among those Indians, in order to avoid the persecution and ill usage of their countrymen, and being kindly received, were in a manner incorporated with them.

Through this intermixture, the Indians became more expert in military matters, and of course more formidable: but unhappily for the character of the Refugees, many cruelties which they could not prevent, were committed by the Indians in those expeditions wherein they bore a part, and were often by their incensed countrymen attributed to their instigation, or laid directly to their charge.

The determination was now taken by Congress, totally to destroy this Indian nation. No other measure appeared sufficient to give security to the settlements on the frontiers; where the inhabitants had lived in constant alarm ever since the beginning of hostilities; and had lost all activity in the prosecution of their domestic improvements.

The intelligence of the preparations that were making against them, was received by the Indians with great courage and firmness. They resolved to act upon this occasion with the utmost boldness and spirit. They collected all their strength; and marched with all speed to those parts, where they expected the Americans would begin their operations, in order to anticipate them, and seize those passes of which the possession would enable them to act with advantage.

They took accordingly a strong position in the most woody and mountainous part of the country; which they fortified with great judgment. They raised a breast-work in their front, of large logs of wood, extending half a mile. Their right was covered by a river, and their left by a hill of difficult access. In this posture they waited the approach of the American army.

General

General Sullivan attacked them in this encampment on the twenty-ninth of August. They stood a hot cannonade for more than two hours : but the breast-work being almost destroyed, and the Americans having reached the top of the hill upon their left, they were apprehensive of being surrounded, and retreated immediately with the utmost speed.

The behaviour of the Indians on this day was very courageous : they returned the fire of the Americans with great spirit and regularity ; and would, it was thought, have maintained their ground, had not these been provided with a train of artillery ; to which the defeat of the Indians was principally owing ; and without which the post was so strongly fortified, that it could not have probably been forced, notwithstanding the valour and resolution with which it was attacked by the Americans.

What chiefly contributed to the stand made by the Indians, was the presence of two or three hundred American Refugees, who behaved with great bravery ; and by whose direction they were guided in the construction of their defences, and in the order and discipline they observed.

This engagement proved decisive. After their trenches were forced, they fled without making any endeavour to rally. They were pursued two or three miles ; but their flight was so swift, that they could not be overtaken. Their loss in slain and wounded was very considerable, though few prisoners were made.

The consternation occasioned among the Indians by this defeat, was such, that they lost all hope of retrieving their affairs, and dropped all ideas of further resistance. As the Americans advanced, they retreated before them with the utmost precipitation, and suffered them to proceed without any obstruction,

tion, in the destructive operations they were commissioned to perform.

In pursuance of the orders he had received, General Sullivan penetrated into the heart of the country inhabited by the Five Nations, spreading every where the most extensive desolation. His letter to the Congress, giving an account of the progress and proceedings of the army under his command, was as complete a journal of destruction as ever was penned. No less than forty towns and settlements were destroyed, besides detached habitations. All their fields of corn, and all their orchards and plantations; whatever, in short, was in a state of cultivation, underwent the same fate. The devastation was such, that on the American army's leaving that country, not a house was left standing to their knowledge, nor an Indian to be seen.

Such was the issue of this celebrated expedition, undertaken by way of retaliation for the outrages which the Indians had committed on the frontiers, and particularly in destroying the unfortunate settlement of Wioming, during the preceding summer.

What rendered this total ruin of the country possessed by the Five Nations, the more remarkable, was the degree of knowledge and expertness in agriculture, and in various domestic arts, to which it was now, for the first time, discovered that the Indians had attained. It appeared, by General Sullivan's account, that the lands about their towns were excellently cultivated, and their houses large and elegantly constructed. The extent of their industry may be conjectured by his asserting, that the quantity of corn destroyed could not, by a moderate computation, amount to less than one hundred and sixty thousand bushels; that their orchards were so well stocked, that no less than fifteen hundred fruit trees were cut down in one orchard only, numbers of which had evidently been planted many years,

years, and that their garden grounds contained immense quantities of vegetables of every kind.

So strong was the relentment of the Americans for the outrages committed by the Indians, and so powerful their determination to take the speediest, as well as the severest vengeance, that not to be obliged to postpone it, the soldiers and officers of their army cheerfully agreed to remain at short allowance, in order to make their provisions last till they had completed the destruction to the full extent it had been proposed.

It was executed accordingly in spite of the many difficulties attending a march through a country, where the roads and paths had been so contrived, as to be almost undiscoverable but to the inhabitants, where the enemy watched all their motions from positions where they lay concealed, ready to fall upon those who straggled from their main body, and to take every other advantage; and where the very labour of destruction was fatiguing to the highest degree.

Their perseverance in accomplishing the design they came upon, was a striking proof how strongly the passion of revenge is able to actuate human nature, especially when added to the motives of safety and interest. Both these, indeed, were no less consulted upon this occasion than the former. The countries from which these Indian nations were now expelled, were possessed of as fertile and inviting a soil as any in North America; and opened a well grounded prospect of proving as rich and useful settlements as any throughout the continent.

Notwithstanding the success with which the Colonies had maintained their independence, they laboured under many inconveniencies in the internal arrangement of their affairs. The prices of all kinds of merchandize, and even of many necessary articles in domestic life, had risen to a degree that proved

highly distressing to all classes. Many endeavours were used to obviate, or to remedy these evils; but they still continued to perplex the public, and were no small hindrance and discouragement in the prosecution of their various undertakings.

But of all the difficulties they had to contend with, none proved so arduous and trying as the depreciation of their paper money. The scarcity of gold and silver specie, had obliged Congress, at the commencement of the war, to emit immense sums in bills redeemable by the states. But the necessity of the times had obliged them to make several additions to the first emissions. Towards the close of the year seventy-nine, upwards of thirty millions sterling had been fabricated in this manner. But this currency was so depreciated, that it was fallen thirty times below par. Such a difference between its real and nominal value, naturally alarmed the public, and there were multitudes who began to apprehend that this incumbrance would prove an insuperable evil.

It was indispensibly necessary to remove the distrust entertained by the mass of the people in the ability of the United States to redeem their bills.— Unless this matter could be cleared up to their satisfaction, it was justly foreseen that the difficulty of raising money would encrease, and that the paper in circulation would continue to decrease in value, till it became almost of no significancy.

In order to dispel the apprehensions and despondency that were daily gaining ground upon this account, the Congress drew up a circular letter to their constituents, wherein they used a variety of arguments to convince them that their fears were ill-founded, and that they had every reason to be persuaded they would be able to surmount every difficulty.

The

The two principal arguments which they held out to their consideration, were the success of the present revolution, and the sufficiency of the natural wealth and resources of America to answer all the purposes proposed.

“The time has been,” said they, “when honest men might, without being chargeable with timidity, have doubted the success of the present revolution: but that period is past; the independence of America is now as fixed as fate, and the efforts of Britain against it are as vain and fruitless as the raging of the waves that beat against our shores.”

The letter then entered into a description of the British government and people, calculated to diminish all terrors on their account. It represented them in the most opprobrious colours that the extreme aversion and rancour could inspire.—

“Against the fury of these enemies,” said they, “you made a successful resistance, when single, alone, and friendless, in the days of weakness and infancy, before your hands had been taught to war, or your fingers to fight: and can there be any reason to apprehend that the supreme Disposer of human events, after having separated us from the house of bondage, and led us towards the land of liberty and promise, will leave the work of our political redemption unfinished?”

“In close alliance,” continued they, “with one of the most powerful nations in Europe, in amity with many others, and enjoying the goodwill of all, what danger have we to fear from Britain? Whoever considers that these States are daily increasing in power, that their armies are become veterans, that their governments, founded in freedom, are perfectly established, that in addition to France, Spain with fleets and armies ready for war, and a treasury overflowing with
“wealth,

“wealth, has entered the lists against Britain, that
“the other European nations, often insulted by
“her pride, and alarmed by the strides of her am-
“bition, have left her to her fate; whoever confi-
“ders these things, instead of doubting the issue
“of the war, will rejoice in the sure and certain
“prospect of success.”

After establishing this point, they then proceeded to prove, that the natural wealth and resources of America were fully adequate to the payment of the debt incurred in its defence.

They supposed that at the conclusion of the war, their debts would amount to three hundred millions of dollars. The payment of this sum, divided among three millions of individuals, which was the population they assigned to the United States, would take from each one hundred dollars; a small proportion, when the time was considered that would be allowed them to discharge it.

But by the expiration of that time, which would not be probably less than twenty years, the number of inhabitants in America would be much more than double their present amount. By natural population they were known to increase in that proportion every twenty years. But there were the highest reasons to believe that the emigrations from other countries to America would be henceforth much more considerable than ever. On the supposition that ten thousand families would arrive the first year after the war, and as many during every successive year, it was clear that from this perpetual augmentation of numbers, which doubled in every twenty years, great part of the debt would become payable not merely by the present number of inhabitants, but by that number increased through its own population, by the multitudes of emigrants from other countries, and their proportionate increase. In this manner
every

every person's share of the debt would be constantly diminishing by others coming in to pay a proportion of it.

“Hence,” added they, “we may form some idea of the future population of these States.— Extensive wildernesses, now hardly known or explored, remain to be cultivated; and vast lakes and rivers, whose waters have for ages rolled in silence and obscurity to the ocean, are yet to hear the din of industry, to become subservient to commerce, and to boast delightful villas and spacious cities rising on their banks.”

Having thus stated the probable numbers among whom the payment of the debt would be re-partitioned, they expatiated largely on their ability to accomplish that object.

“They who enquire,” said they, “how many millions of acres are contained only in the settled parts of North America, and how much each acre is worth, will acquire very enlarged, and yet very inadequate ideas of the value of this country. But those who will carry their inquiries further, and learn that we paid heretofore an annual tax to Britain of three millions sterling in the way of trade, and still grew rich; that our commerce was then confined to her; that we were obliged to carry our commodities to her market, and consequently to sell them at her price; that we were compelled to purchase foreign commodities at her stores, and on her terms, and were forbidden to establish any manufactories incompatible with her views of gain; that in future the whole world will be open to us, and that we shall be at liberty to purchase from those who will sell on the best terms, and to sell to those who will give the best prices; that as this country encreases in number of inhabitants,
“ and

“ and cultivation, the productions of the earth will
“ be proportionably encreased, and the riches of
“ the whole proportionably greater. Whoever ex-
“ amines the force of these, and similar observa-
“ tions, must smile at the ignorance of those who
“ doubt the ability of the United States to redeem
“ their bills.”

Such were the chief arguments and allegations with which the Congress combated the apprehensions of the many that were doubtful, whether it would ever be in the power of America to extinguish the immense debt it had contracted.

But Congress was not alone in these endeavours to keep up the spirit of the people. A number of publications came forth to the same intent; many of them written with great strength and energy of style and reasoning; but marked at the same time with an acrimony and illiberality of sentiment and language, that much diminished their merit.

It has been said in mitigation of the censure which they incurred upon that account, that the motive which actuated those who wrote in this manner, was the necessity of preserving in its fullest vigour, that force which arose from the resentment and indignation of the people at large, whose animosity required continual excitement in order to prevent it from stagnating.

Such an apology, if it may deserve the name, did not, however, satisfy persons of candour and judgment. Whoever was in fault, Great Britain or the Colonies, it became neither, in the vindication of their respective cause, to have recourse to abuse and defamation. It is a fortunate circumstance that people are not inclined to form their ideas of the English and the Americans from the writings that have appeared on both sides, during the unhappy contest that has at last separated them from each other. Such is the false and injurious light in
which

which these have reciprocally represented them, that they would suffer materially in their reputation, did not the world well know that they are, in many essential respects, but one and the same people; and that allowing for some blemishes, which the vicissitudes of time and human affairs are apt to introduce among nations, they still retain the virtues and great qualities that dignified the character of their illustrious and common ancestors.

END OF VOL. III.

