111 B745 J. G. Gibson 1908

HISTORY

OF THE

WAR

WITH

AMERICA, FRANCE, SPAIN,

AND

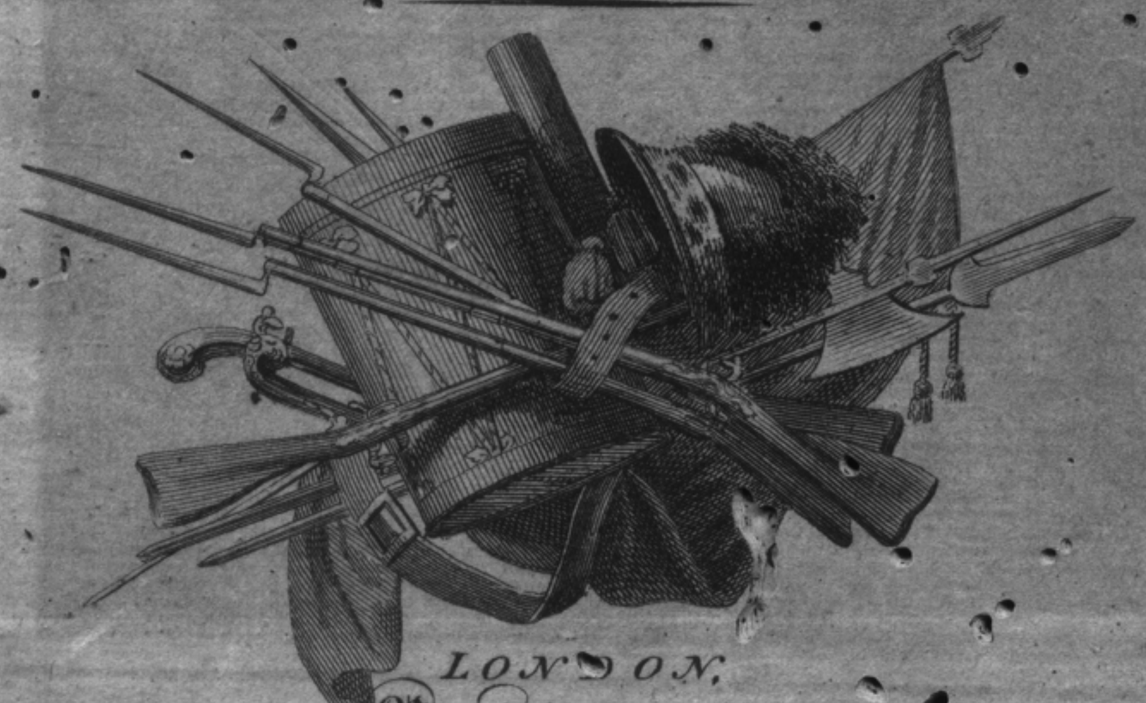
HOLLAND;

commencing in 1775 and ending in 1783.

By JOHN ANDREWS, L.L.D.

In Four Volumes with Portraits, Maps and Charts.

Vol. I.



LONDON,

Published by his Majesty's Royal Licence and Authority.

For JOHN FIELDING, Pater Noster Row, and JOHN JARVIS in the Strand.

MDCCLXXXV.



Reynolds del.

GEORGE the III.

Angus s

Published July 2,1785, by I.Fielding Pater noster Row.

111 B745 J. G. Gibson 1908

HISTORY

OF THE

WAR

WITH

AMERICA, FRANCE, SPAIN,

AND

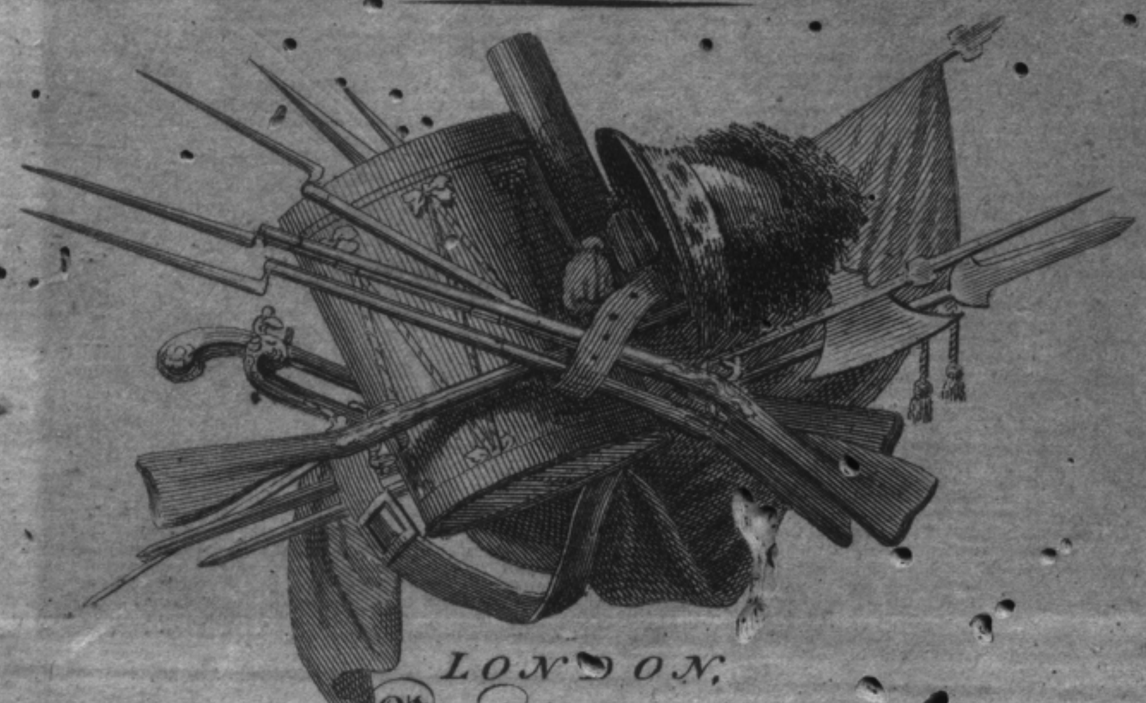
HOLLAND;

commencing in 1775 and ending in 1783.

By JOHN ANDREWS, L.L.D.

In Four Volumes with Portraits, Maps and Charts.

Vol. I.



LONDON,

Published by his Majesty's Royal Licence and Authority.

For JOHN FIELDING, Pater Noster Row, and JOHN JARVIS in the Strand.

MDCCLXXXV.

GEORGE R.

GEORGE the THIRD, by the Grace of GOD, KING of GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, and IRELAND, DEFENDER of the FAITH, &c. To all to whom these Presents shall come, greeting: Whereas JOHN FIELDING, of Paternoster-Row, in the City of London, Bookseller, and JOHN JARVIS, of the Strand, in the Liberty of Westminster, Printer, have by their Petition humbly represented unto Us, That the Petitioners have been at great Expence and Labour in preparing for the Press an HISTORICAL ACCOUNT of the WAR with AMERICA, FRANCE, SPAIN, and HOLLAND, commencing in the year 1775, and ending with the Definitive Treaty in the Year 1783; written by JOHN ANDREWS, Doctor of Laws: that the Operations of Our Fleets and Armies having been more extended than in any War carried on under the auspices of a British Monarch, and the Petitioners being unwilling to conceal any Fame justly acquired by Our Subjects, have sought for and obtained Information Military, Naval, and Political, from all the four Quarters of the Globe: That the Petitioners have also employed the first Artists of our Kingdom to Engrave the Copper-plates, (a part of the Work) from original Drawings, and from the best Charts; and the Petitioners are desirous of repeating the Fruits of their Expences and Labour, and of enjoying the full Profit and Benefit of Printing and Vending this Work, without any Person interfering in their just Property, and which the Petitioners cannot prevent without Our Royal Licence and Privilege; the Petitioners therefore most humbly pray, We will be pleased to grant unto them Our Royal Licence and Privilege, for the sole Printing, Publishing, and Vending the said Work, in as ample manner and form as has been done in cases of the like nature. We being willing to give all due Encouragement to this Undertaking, are graciously pleased to condescend to the Petioners Request; and We do therefore, by these Presents, as far as may be agreeable to the Statute in that case made and provided, grant unto them the said JOHN FIELDING and JOHN JARVIS, their Executors, Administrators, and Assigns, OUR ROYAL LICENCE AND AUTHORITY, for the sole Printing, Publishing, and Vending the said Work for the term of fourteen Years, to be computed from the Date hereof strictly forbidding all our Subjects within our Kingdoms or Dominions, to Reprint or Abuse the same, either in the like, or in any size or manner whatever; or to Import, Buy, Vend, Utter, or Distribute any Copies thereof, Reprinted beyond the Seas, during the said term of four-

teen Years, without the conſent or approbation of the ſaids JOHN FIELDING and JOHN JARVIS, their Executors, Adminiſtrators, and Aſſigns, under their Hands and Seals, firſt had and obtained, as they will anſwer the contrary at their peril. Whereof the Commiſſioners and other Officers of our Cuſtoms, the Maſter Wardens and Company of Stationers are to take notice, that due obedience be rendered to Our Pleaſure herein declared. Given at our Court at St. James's, the firſt Day of June, 1785, in the Twenty-fifth Year of Our Reign.

By His Majeſty's Command,

SYDNEY.

INTRODUCTION.

NO Nation ever terminated a war more to its advantage and glory, than that which Great-Britain carried on againſt the united powers of France and Spain, and concluded by the Treaty of Paris, in one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty-three.

The ſtrength of the Britiſh nation had been conducted by the moſt ſpirited and fortunate Miniſter that ever preſided over its councils, and had been exerted with a vigour and energy unexampled in any preceding æra: an uninterrupted ſeries of ſucceſſes attended it in every quarter of the globe, and victories followed each other by ſea and land, that aſtoniſhed all Europe, and thoroughly ſubdued the ſpirit and broke the ſtrength of the enemy.

The terms of the pacification that ended this memorable conteſt, though not ſo advantageous, in the opinion of ſome, as the ſtate of this country on the one ſide ſeemed to claim, and to expect, and the depreſt ſituation of its enemies might, on the other, have ſubmitted ſtill they were ſuch as exalted the Britiſh monarchy to a degree of ſplendour and power, that rendered it equally the envy, the admiration, and the terror of Europe.

By this treaty Great-Britain remained en-

tire miſtreſs of the immenſe continent of North America, from the banks of the Miſſiſippi, to the ſhores of Greenland. She acquired ſeveral valuable iſlands in the Weſt Indies, and eſtabliſhed her power in the Eaſtern parts of the world on ſuch extenſive foundations, as left her a decided ſuperiority over all the European nations that have any trade or ſettlements in thoſe diſtant countries.

But there were no few politicians both at home and abroad, who thought they perceived in this ſplendid concluſion of her diſpute with France and Spain, infallible, though perhaps latent cauſes of much future miſchief. The entire ceſſion of the French poſſeſſions in North America, an immenſe tract, opened a wide field of ſpeculation to people of a thinking diſpoſition.

While this prodigious extent of land remained in the hands of France, though it might ſeem a heavy curb to the induſtry and enterprizing temper of the Britiſh nation, it was, in fact, a boundary to the ambitious ſpirit of its Colonies. By reſtraining them within determinate limits, and keeping them in perpetual alarms, it obliged them to look continually for aid to the parent ſtate, and obviated all ideas of diſobliging a people, of whoſe friendſhip and protection they ſtood in perpetual need.

It has even been ſurmiſed, that France itſelf fully ſaw the conſequences of her ceſſion of Canada to England, and that ſome of the ſhrewdeſt of the French Miniſtry did not refrain

ſtain from dropping ſome hints to this purport. However that might be, it may with great truth be ſaid, that no profound penetration was neceſſary to diſcover, that the acquiſition of the French North American poſſeſſions, by delivering the Britiſh Colonies from all apprehenſions on that dangerous quarter, gave them immediately an eaſe and ſecurity in their domeſtic tranſactions, to which they muſt for ever have been ſtrangers; and, of courſe excited a train of ideas, which they would not, and could not otherwiſe have harboured.

While the dread of France was preſent to their minds, ages would probably have elapſed, before they would have thought of facing ſo great a power ſingly, and unſupported. The long habit of depending on the aſſiſtance of the parent ſtate, would have been retained; and as protection and obedience are reciprocal, the connection that had ſo long ſubſiſted between Great-Britain and her Colonies, would, in all likelihood, have remained the ſame as before, unimpaired, and unaltered, in every circumſtance attending it.

To theſe conſiderations, others might be added of equal weight:—The ſtate of the Britiſh Colonies at the æra of the general pacification, was ſuch as attracted the attention of all the politicians in Europe. Their flouriſhing condition at that period was remarkable and ſtriking; their trade had proſpered in the midſt of all the difficulties and diſtreſſes of a war, in which they were ſo nearly and ſo immediately concerned. Their population continued on the

increaſe, notwithſtanding the ravages and depredations that had been ſo fiercely carried on by the French, and the native Indians in their alliance. All this ſhewed the innate ſtrength and vigour of the conſtitution of the Britiſh Colonies.

The concluſion of the quarrel between Great-Britain and France, placed them immediately on ſuch a footing, as could not fail to double every advantage they already poſſeſt.—They abounded with ſpirited and active individuals of all denominations. They were flushed with the uncommon proſperity that had attended them in their commercial affairs, and military tranſactions. The natural conſequence of ſuch a diſpoſition was, that they were ready for all kind of undertakings, and ſaw no limits to their hopes and expectations.

As they entertained the higheſt opinion of their value and importance, and of the immenſe benefit that England derived from its connection with them, their notions were adequately high in their own favour. They deemed themſelves, not without reaſon, entitled to every kindneſs and indulgence which the mother-country could beſtow.

Though their pretenſions did not amount to a perfect equality of advantages and privileges in matters of commerce, yet in thoſe of government, they thought themſelves fully competent, to the taſk of conducting their domeſtic concerns, with little or no interference from abroad. Though willing to admit the ſupremacy of Great-Britain, they viewed it with a

ſuſpicious

ſuſpicious eye, and with a marked deſire and intent ſpeedily to give it limitations.

Their improvements in all the neceſſary and uſeful arts, did honour to their induſtry and ingenuity. Though they did not live in the luxury of Europe, they had all the ſolid and ſubſtantial enjoyments of life, and were not unacquainted with many of its elegancies and refinements.

A circumſtance that places them in a very meritorious point of view, is, that notwithſtanding their peculiar addiction to thoſe buſineſſes and occupations of which lucre is the ſole object, they were duly attentive to cultivate the field of learning. They have ever ſince their firſt foundation been particularly careful to provide for the education of the riſing progeny. This is ſtrikingly applicable to thoſe Colonies that are properly called New England, and among them to that of Maſſachuſet.

Their vaſt augmentation of internal trade, and external commerce, was not merely owing to their poſition, and facility of communication with other parts; it aroſe no leſs, if not more, perhaps, from their natural turn and temper, full of ſchemes and projects; ever aiming at new diſcoveries, and continually employed in the ſearch of means of proſpering and bettering their circumſtances.

This diſpoſition carried them into every quarter from whence profit could be derived. There was hardly any port of the American hemiſphere to which they had not extended their navigation; they were continually ex-

ploring new ſources of trade, and were found in every ſpot where buſineſs could be tranſacted.

To this extenſive and inceſſant application to commerce, they added an equal vigilance in the adminiſtration of their affairs at home.--- Whatever could conduce to the amelioration of the ſoil they poſſeſſed, to the progreſs of agriculture,---in ſhort, the improvement of their domeſtic circumſtances was attended to with ſo much labour and care, that it may be ſtrictly ſaid, that Nature had given them nothing of which they did not make the moſt.

In the midſt of this ſolicitude and toil in matters of buſineſs, the affairs of government were conducted with a ſteadineſs, prudence, and lenity, ſeldom experienced, and never exceeded in the beſt regulated countries of Europe.

When the Britiſh American Colonies are conſidered in theſe various points of view, it is not ſurpriſing, that feeling their own worth and conſequence, they ſhould cheriſh the moſt partial ſentiments in their own behalf, and look upon themſelves with that eſteem and reſpect, which conſciouſneſs of great worth naturally ingenders, and that they ſhould at the ſame time, betray impatience and diſcontent at whatever might ſeem to place them in an humble and inferior light.

All theſe were ſufficient motives to induce Great-Britain to treat them as ſtates whoſe friendſhip and good-will were highly to be prized, and which now were only to be retained by the wiſeſt and moſt temperate meaſures,

after

after their total emancipation from thoſe dangers to which they had ſo long been liable, from the proximity of a formidable and enterprizing enemy.

But independent of theſe divers conſiderations, a cauſe had long ſubſiſted, of which the effects had been foretold, whenever the obſtructions that ſtood in their way ſhould be removed. This was the republican ſpirit that carried the firſt emigrators to the ſhores of New England, in the laſt century. Perſecuted at home for opinions in religion, ill agreeing with the eſtabliſhed tenets in church and ſtate, their adherence to their own was ſo rooted and invincible, that ſooner than part with them, they choſe rather to abandon their native country, and fly to the remoteſt and moſt inhoſpitable regions, in order to enjoy the unreſtrained and public profeſſion of their own ſentiments.

Such a reſolution, though produced by enthuſiaſm, was nevertheleſs great and heroic: it ſupported them in difficulties of the moſt ſerious magnitude; it carried them through a world of obſtacles. To ſay that in leaving England, they had deprived themſelves of thoſe comforts that are moſt grateful to human nature, the pleaſures and delights of the home we are born and bred in, is not doing juſtice to the courage and magnanimity of the firſt ſettlers in New England. To ſpeak with truth, we ſhould acknowledge they had every hardſhip to encounter that can aſſail the heart, and ſtagger the fortitude of man. The climate

was

was againſt them in every ſhape; it was entirely new to their conſtitutions; the winter cold, and ſummer heat, equally inſupportable; the productions of the earth miſerable and ſcanty; the ſoil ſtubborn, and of little value: Sickneſs and death were the deſtiny of an alarming proportion of the firſt adventurers.

When through unconquerable perſeverance they had weathered the firſt ſtorms that await all great undertakings, they had ſtill a moſt arduous taſk to undergo in ſecuring themſelves from the malevolence and jealouſy of the ancient inhabitants of the land, whoſe native ferociouſneſs, inflamed with indignation at ſeeing a foreign people in poſſeſſion of a country of which they were once the ſole maſters and occupiers, impelled them to exert their whole rage and fury for the deſtruction of theſe newcomers.

Thus they had every obſtacle to ſurmount that could try their patience, and prove their firmneſs. The victories they obtained over theſe complicated obſtructions, raiſed their character to a level with that of the braveſt people recorded in hiſtory, in the eſtimation of the few who can conſider facts diveſted of that ſplendour which time, place, and circumſtances, are apt to beſtow upon them, and from which they derive their luſtre with the generality.

The remembrance of the cauſes of the emigration of their forefathers is ſtrong throughout the provinces of New England, and was always a favourite ſubject of diſcourſe. The princi-

ples.

ples that animated them, have been carefully tranſmitted from generation to generation, and are faithfully and zealouſly maintained to this day. The religious part of their enthuſiaſm has been dropped, but the political part ſubſiſts unimpaired, and in its fulleſt vigour; and no people are more warmly attached to the preſervation of their rights and liberties.

To this it is owing, that no branch of knowledge is cultivated with more aſſiduity than that of the law; the addiction to this particular ſtudy is general, one may almoſt ſay univerſal, every New England-man being more or leſs of a lawyer.

Hence it is, that perſons of genteel education among them are remarkably more converſant in the laws and conſtitution of their country, than their equals in any other parts. This enables them to render their attainments in learning and literature, which are very conſiderable, highly ſubſervient to the ſervice and benefit of the public.

The four New England governments being thus originally founded and peopled by the Puritanic party in England, during the laſt century, we are not to wonder at the veneration entertained for their character by their deſcendants, nor at the warm adherence profeſt by theſe for their political and religious tenets.

The partiality to republican principles, that ſo diſtinguiſhingly characterizes the people of New England, flows from this ſource. It ſtrongly marks and influences all their meaſures, and is hardly leſs viſible in their private life,

life, than in their public tranſactions. This might be exemplified by a variety of inſtances. They cheriſh the memory of the great champions of the republican cauſe, in the days of Charles the Firſt, to ſuch a degree, that even before the Revolution that has deprived Great-Britain of America, it was common to ſee their pictures and prints placed in the ſame room, in a line with thoſe of the Britiſh Monarchs.

When all theſe conſiderations are duly weighed they form an irreſiſtable proof that a deſire of independence of any authority inimical to Republican tenets, muſt always have exiſted in the minds of men who had been traditionally, as it were, under their powerfulleſt influence.

Their invariable conduct upon all ſuch occaſions as favoured theſe principles, proves how deeply they were rooted in their hearts. It is well known with what exultation they partook of the triumphs of the Republican party in England; and with what unfeigned ſorrow they received the news of the reſtoration of monarchy, in the perſon of Charles the Second.

That ſo high-ſpirited and reſolute a people would certainly embrace the firſt opportunity of aſſerting a cauſe that had been ſo dear to their anceſtors, was obvious to all who had ſtudied their character, and were acquainted with their ſtory. From a variety of paſſages, it affords the higheſt probability that they would not have waited for the preſent day, to diſmember themſelves from the empire of Britain, if circumſtances had invited them. Notwithſtanding,

ing the impracticability of bringing about such an event, it had its partizans and abettors almoſt in the infancy of their colonization. Ideas of this tendency prevailed among them ſo long ago as the reign of the aforementioned Monarch.

If the people of New England are unfriendly to monarchy, they ſtill bear a greater averſion to the Church of England. The ſevere treatment of their anceſtors by Archbiſhop Laud, dwells ineffacably in their memory; and the mildneſs of the preſent Eccleſiaſtical government in England, has not been able to atone for the errors and tranſgreſſions of ſome of its former rulers. They ſeem to look upon the Hierarchy as a body of men calculated for the ſupport of arbitrary power; and often cite the ſervile attachment of ſeveral Engliſh Prelates to the abſurd maxims of paſſive obedience to the will of the Sovereign.

As reſiſtance to a tyrannical government is the foundation-ſtone of their political ſyſtem, they view with equal contempt and abhorrence all men who profeſs unlimited ſubmiſſion to their Princes; and as they inſiſt upon a perfect equality among all their religious teachers, they no leſs diſclaim all ranks and degrees that confer Spiritual authority among the clergy.

Thus their inclinations and maxims are equally unfavourable to thoſe on which the government of Church and State is founded in England. Notwithſtanding the good ſenſe and moderation prevailing among them, prevents their breaking out in harſh language, yet

their

their invectives, though polite, are not the leſs pointed, and manifeſt an irreconcileable enmity to the religious and political conſtitution of the mother-country.

This frame of mind is univerſally diffuſed over the four provinces of Maſſachuſet, Connecticut, New Hampſhire, and Rhode Iſland. The inhabitants, with few exceptions, are of that religious perſuaſion known by the denomination of Congregationaliſts, or Independents.

The leaders and ruling men among them are all rigid diſſenters from the church of England. None but ſuch have any chance of becoming popular. The ſmall numbers who profeſs the religion of the parent ſtate, are beheld with an invidious eye, and as ſecret foes to the country they live in.

There was a time, indeed, when they were held in ſuch deteſtation, that they were not even tolerated by the adverſe party. Strange as it may ſeem, this outrageous behaviour was predominant at the very æra of their emigration, when their debility was ſuch, that a royal mandate from England would have ſufficed to cruſh them. One knows not on this occaſion at which to teſtify the moſt ſurprize, the audaciouſneſs of their conduct, or the paſſive forbearance of the Engliſh miniſtry.

The truth was, that religious zeal only promoted the colonization of New England. The firſt ſettlers, who fled to a wilderneſs for the ſake of maintaining their opinions againſt all oppoſers, were determined to ſuffer no contra-

fered from them, and seemed resolved to retaliate, as it were, for the persecution they had so long endured. As policy, and worldly considerations, had little or no share in their actions, they were totally regardless of the danger they incurred by the violence with which their conduct was attended; and they continued many years to act in the same manner, to the great scandal of the moderate and judicious part of society, and the high disgrace of their own character.

Such was the situation of the British Colonies in general, throughout North America, and of the New England provinces in particular, when the pacification above-mentioned opened one of the most remarkable scenes that ever commanded the attention of the world.

The French, who have for many ages been the professt and natural enemies of England, had long viewed, with equal envy and apprehension, the flourishing state of those Colonies she had founded in North America. In order not to remain behind-hand with a rival, whose growing greatness they were always studious to oppose, they also made settlements in that wide-extended continent, and endeavoured to make up by policy, or by force, the deficiencies of soil and situation, in the countries that had fallen to their lot.

As the nature of their government is more favourable to military than to commercial exertions, they accordingly formed unnumbered projects of that kind for the aggrandizement of their colonies. They erected a multitude of forts

forts and fortifications, thrown like a chain over every part of the continent, where they could frame any pretence of ſettling, and calculated to connect eſtabliſhments and territories at an immenſe diſtance from each other.

But as ambition and prudence are often apt to be at variance, they forgot that without wealth and population, no territory can be worth defending. Thus amidſt the immenſe tracts throughout which their ſoldiery was ſtationed, nothing was ſeen but the apparatus of war; military piles of building, and magazines of warlike ſtores, riſing in the midſt of deſarts. The country round was a ſolitude, planted with foreſts, and only viſited occaſionally by ſavages, in their hunting ſeaſons.

Far other was the policy of their Engliſh neighbours:—Inſtead of conſuming themſelves in unprofitable attempts at a needleſs extenſion of territory, they confined themſelves to a careful cultivation of what they poſſeſſed, and never thought of augmenting it, but in proportion to the demands of an increaſing population.—Thus their advances were gradual; they never came forward till the ground they left behind them was well filled and occupied.

Such a difference in the ſyſtem of coloniza-tion, could not fail of producing the moſt oppoſite conſequences. At the expiration of a century after their reſpective foundations, the poſſeſſions of France were comparatively poor, barren, and thinly inhabited; while thoſe of England were rich, fertile, and full of an induſtrious and thriving people.

Long

Long before the breaking out of the war between Great-Britain and France, in one thouſand ſeven hundred and fifty-five, the French had at various times entertained ideas of effecting a ſeparation between the Engliſh and their American Colonies. Convinced it was not in their power to ſubdue them by force of arms, ſtill however they perſiſted in their deſign, in hope of finding ſome means of wreſting them out of the hands of England.

In the mean time, their natural impatience and impetuoſity unable to bear with much delay, was continually prompting them to haſten an event, from which they promiſed themſelves ſo much ſatisfaction.

They again betook themſelves to their former ſchemes and contrivances: claiming territories that were in poſſeſſion of the Engliſh, and incroaching upon thoſe ſettlements that lay neareſt to them, and appeared the moſt open and defenceleſs.

When the ſpirit of the Britiſh nation, provoked at thoſe inſults, was ſufficiently rouſed, they then perceived how feeble and unavailing their plans muſt prove, and how little they could depend upon the exertions that France could make in that part of the world.

But it was now too late to recede:—As they had called forth their enemy to an open conteſt, they were obliged to ſtand the chances of war, and to collect their whole ſtrength and vigour for a trial that threatened evidently to prove the laſt that would ever be made by one

of the contending parties in the plains of North America.

After the events of war had decided in favour of Great-Britain, it now remained for France to bring about through her policy and intrigues, what ſhe had not been able to compaſs by her valour and military ſkill.

The circumſtances of the times were highly favourable to her wiſhes. The European powers did not ſee without ſecret diſſatisfaction, the amazing increaſe of the power of Great-Britain, through ſo many lands and ſeas. They began immediately on the concluſion of hoſtilities, to view this iſland in the ſame light they did France during the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth; as a ſtate whoſe power was too diſproportionate for the peace and ſecurity of Europe; and upon which therefore it behoved them to keep a watchful eye, that no opportunity might be loſt of reducing it within narrower bounds.

As its ſtrength aroſe in a great meaſure from its American dependencies, it was chiefly theſe that European politics immediately had in contemplation to ſever from their original founder.

By breaking the connection between them and Great-Britain, a multiplicity of advantages offered themſelves to their expectations. The view of profiting by the immenſe trade they promiſed themſelves, in a free intercourſe with thoſe flouriſhing colonies, was alone a ſufficient motive to engage them to labour earneſtly for their emancipation from the ſovereignty

of

of Great-Britain; but the principal object of their attention was to ſtop the growth of the ſtrength and influence of England, which had been widely felt before and during the late war, and were now become ſo formidable, as to occaſion univerſal alarm and terror.

Through her colonies in the Weſtern hemiſphere on the one hand, and her poſſeſſions in the Eaſt Indies on the other, ſhe ſeemed to graſp, as it were, both extremities of the globe, and threaten to monopolize the abſolute dominion of the ocean.

The maritime powers of Europe, in particular, ſaw this exaltation of Great-Britain with the extremeſt jealouſy. Holland had felt its weight during the late war, in the interruption of that trade which the Dutch had exerted themſelves to carry on clandeſtinely for the French. The northern kingdoms had alſo experienced its ſuperiority in the ſame line; and they all were eagerly waiting for an opportunity to ſet limits to her power.

But it was chiefly from France the principal danger aroſe. Her reſentment was inceſſantly brooding over the mortifications ſhe had received in her laſt quarrel with England. She ſaw her ancient rival glorying in her ſpoils, and deriving new ſtrength and vigour from her loſſes. She ſaw her recovering faſt from the diſtreſſes inſeparable from war, and in the faireſt way of arriving in the courſe of a few years, to a ſtate of ſtrength and opulence that would ſet her above the reach of any hoſtile

ſtile deſigns from abroad, and fix her in a condition to give laws to all her neighbours.

Full of this conviction, which was in truth well founded, the French miniſtry were ſoon convinced, that the only method left them to deſtroy that edifice of Britiſh grandeur, which gave them ſo much umbrage, was to undermine it.

It was a reflection highly offenſive to the pride of a monarchy, long accuſtomed openly to domineer over all her neighbours, that ſhe muſt now place her principal dependence on under-hand intrigues, and dark contrivances, and truſt to them alone for the accompliſhment of her deſigns.

No doubt at preſent ſubſiſts, that ſhe began immediately after the Peace of Paris, to carry into execution the ſcheme ſhe had formed for the ſeparation of the Britiſh Colonies from the mother-country.

Conſcious that whilſt a good intelligence laſted between them, the ſuperiority muſt henceforth remain for ever on the ſide of Britain, it was only by their diſunion ſhe could hope to regain the ſtation and conſequence ſhe had formerly poſſeſſed in Europe.

The firſt ſteps ſhe took were to employ her ſecret emiſſaries in ſpreading diſſatisfaction among the Britiſh Coloniſts. Their importance was deſcribed in the moſt flattering colours, and their ſtrength repreſented as an object of greater magnitude than the poſſeſſors ſeemed aware of. The partiality of Great-Britain to her own intereſts, in the various regulations

lations of their commerce abroad, and administration at-home, was depicted in the ſtrongeſt light. No inſinuations, in ſhort, were wanting, to excite a ſpirit of diſcontent throughout the Colonies, and to infuſe a notion, that it would be highly for their intereſt to caſt off all dependence, and to ſtand intirely upon their own ground, free from all the ſhackles and reſtraints with which they were at preſent loaded.

Theſe ſentiments were far from unacceptable to a people already prepoſſeſſed in favour of that liberty which was ſo temptingly held out to their perceptions, and no leſs prejudiced againſt the prerogatives exerciſed over them in ſuch a variety of ſhapes. They were in the ſituation of an individual bordering on manhood, and who beginning to feel his vigour, is no longer willing to ſubmit to much controul.

The effects produced by the machinations of the French, were preciſely ſuch as they had intended and expected. The diſpoſition of the inhabitants of North America began gradually to alter from that warmth of attachment to the mother-country, which had ſo peculiarly characterized them. They began to view her rather in the light of a ſovereign, than of a parent, and to examine, with a ſcrupulous nicety, the nature of thoſe ties that rendered them parts of her empire.

HISTORY OF THE WAR.

CHAPTER *the* FIRST.

The Stamp Act and its Conſequences.

SUCH was the ſituation of the North American Colonies, when thoſe meaſures took place in England, that were productive of the greateſt events that have happened within many ages.

The long and bloody war that Great Britain had waged againſt the united ſtrength of the Houſe of Bourbon, though highly ſucceſsful, had been equally expenſive. The triumphs of our fleets and armies in ſo many parts of the world, had been purchaſed at an enormous price; and both the blood and treaſure of the nation had been profuſed to obtain them.

The debts contracted by the nation in the ſupport of the laſt and former wars, amounted to the amazing ſum of one hundred and forty eight millions; for which an intereſt of near five millions

was annually paid. Theſe immenſe charges were born with a patience and equanimity not inferior to the ſpirit and reſolution with which they had been incurred; but they were a load under which the nation began to ſtagger.

Taxes of every denomination were levied upon the public. Every branch of buſineſs was examined; and every channel of trade explored, in order to aſſeſs them with their proportion of contributions.

After ſtraining, apparently to their utmoſt bearing, the reſources left at home, the idea was ſuggeſted of calling in the aſſiſtance of the Colonies, in a more direct and explicit manner than had hitherto been done.

As the late quarrel had been occaſioned chiefly on their account; and as they derived the great and principal benefits of the peace, it was thought equitable they ſhould make ſome more than common returns for thoſe advantages.

Their ability to contribute largely to the common exigencies, was deemed indubitable; but their willingneſs was no leſs called in queſtion; and it was repreſented as an attempt full of danger, to make uſe of compulſion in caſe they ſhould refuſe.

Whatever might be the neceſſities of the mother country, the Colonies were fully perſuaded that the ſole and excluſive enjoyment of their whole trade, was a tax in itſelf more than proportionably adequate to all thoſe that were levied upon the people of Great Britain.

This plea had undoubtedly its weight in the apprehenſion of all moderate and impartial people; but while they allowed the Coloniſts to alledge it as a reaſon for treating them with great lenity in the point of taxation, they did not, at the ſame time, imagine that it was a concluſive argument for their declining

declining to afford any other kind of relief to the parent ſtate.

England in ſecuring to itſelf the excluſive trade of her Colonies, acted upon a principle adopted by all modern nations. She did no more than follow the example ſet before her by the Spaniards and Portugueſe; but ſhe followed it with a lenity to which the government in thoſe nations is an utter ſtranger.

In planting theſe diſtant Colonies, ſhe endowed them with every right and privilege enjoyed by her ſubjects at home: She left them at full liberty to govern themſelves, and of framing ſuch laws and regulations, as the wiſdom of their own legiſlatures ſhould point out as neceſſary for the good of the community over which they preſided. In ſhort, ſhe gave them the ampleſt powers to provide for, and purſue their reſpective intereſts, in the manner they ſaw fit; reſerving only the benefit of their trade, and of a political connection under the ſame ſovereign.

The Colonies founded by France and Holland, and before them by Portugal and Spain, did not experience the ſame indulgence. The two latter not only claimed the monopoly of their commerce, but governed them in many reſpects with a rod of iron: burthening them with an endleſs chain of vexatious regulations; cramping every exertion that ſeemed foreign to the views of the rulers at home, giving no encouragement but to what tended directly and immediately to their own intereſt, and puniſhing ſevcrely whatever had a contrary tendency.

Though France and Holland did not adopt ſuch oppreſſive maxims, yet they were, in fact, not much leſs ſtrict and coercive. They ſold, as it were, the proprjety of their Colonies to mercantile aſſociations, which, in order to make the moſt of their bargain, loaded them with every incumbrance that

a mono-

a monopolising spirit can suggest: selling to them the commodities of Europe at an enormous advance; taking the produce of their lands at the lowest prices they could compel them to receive; and discouraging the growth and cultivation of any more than they could dispose of at an unreasonable profit at home.

Such was, for a length of time, the unjust policy observed by France, in particular, towards her Colonies: the consequences perfectly corresponded with so absurd and barbarous a system. Her transmarine possessions long remained without any settled form or consistency; and never emerged to any prosperity; till taught by dear-bought experience, administration saw the necessity of taking them out of the hands of their monopolisers, and placing her Colonists on the footing of other subjects.

England never treated its Colonies in this ungracious, illiberal manner. Content with the general profits resulting from their trade, she left it open to every individual in her dominions. She did not confine it to particular ports, as in Portugal and Spain; nor give it up to the extortion of a company of merchants, as in Holland and France.

Thus her Colonists, notwithstanding some restrictions, possessed an immense stock in trade on their own account. Independently of the direct remittance of what grew on their lands, to the shipping that sailed from England to receive it, they carried on a large exportation of their domestic commodities, which, through the indulgence of the metropolis, was not confined to her sole harbours, but extended by judicious and well-timed regulations, to various parts of both hemispheres.

Hence the unreasonable gains so common in the sale of European merchandize, in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, were unknown to those belonging to Great Britain; where many articles were

as

as cheap, and ſome even cheaper than in England itſelf, through the expertneſs of men converſant with buſineſs, in the advantageous management of their ſtock.

No ſuch thing is ſeen in the Spaniſh and Portugueſe ſettlements; and but little of it in the French. Few are the trading veſſels belonging to the former, and thoſe of an inconſiderable and diminutive ſize. The capital ſhips that viſit their harbours, arrive from thoſe of Portugal and Spain. Such is the narrow monopolizing diſpoſition of both theſe countries, that they ſail in fleets, under the command of officers commiſſioned by government, as if it dreaded to truſt them to any other management. It is but lately the Court of Spain has altered ſome of her regulations in this particular.

There was a generoſity even in the reſtrictions of Great Britain, on the trade of her colonies, that ſhewed they were not impoſed in the wantonneſs of power; but evidently with a deſign to repartition, as it were, the exerciſe and profits of commerce among the various inhabitants of her wide-extended dominions.

While her ſubjects at home were free to trade to all parts of the world, the ſame permiſſion in a numerous variety of articles, was granted to her coloniſts; the northern climes of Europe, and the Eaſt Indies only, were excepted. In Portugal, Spain, Italy, throughout the Mediterranean Sea, on the coaſts of Africa, in all the American hemiſphere, the veſſels of the North American colonies enjoyed the moſt unbounded and lucrative commerce.

The encouragement given to this commerce was equally wiſe and beneficent. It tended in the directeſt manner to the improvement of their country, by increaſing its commodities through an abundant exportation, and enabling them to clear and

cultivate

cultivate the ſoil, through the ſure and conſtant ſale of the vaſt quantity of timber for all kinds of uſes, that accrued from the cutting down of their immenſe foreſts.

Beſide theſe two advantages, both of a capital and eſſential nature, they poſſeſſed others hardly leſs beneficial. They carried rum and ſugar, together with the produce of their fiſheries, to every market within the above ſpecified limits. Theſe branches employed ſuch a multitude of ſhipping, that the ports of thoſe countries where they traded were continually viſited, and often crouded with them.

True it is, that a number of articles were alſo appropriated to an importation into Great Britain excluſively; but when we duly conſider this matter, it will be found that the very nature of the countries poſſeſſed by the Coloniſts, gave them ſufficient occupation at home, without rendering it any ways neceſſary for their proſperity, that they ſhould employ themſelves ſo much abroad, as the inhabitants of a ſoil occupied by a numerous people, and whoſe tillage had laſted for ages.

It was reaſonable, therefore, to allot them principally the taſk of clearing and cultivating the immenſe tracts they inhabit; this would always prove a profitable buſineſs, and enable them to procure themſelves, on their own bottom, a never-failing fund, from whence to ſupply all their wants, and to furniſh, beſides, a plentiful ſupply for the purpoſes of trade.

The proof of this is, that thoſe places which are in the higheſt cultivation, abound moſt in riches and people. The population of Pennſylvania, which was founded fifty years after ſome of the other colonies, bids fair, in time, to exceed them all.

In the mean time, the trade in thoſe articles of which Great Britan reſerved the benefit to her-

ſelf, did not interfere with the main purſuit of the Coloniſts. This being chiefly the purchaſe of the conveniencies of life, there was certainly no country where the Coloniſts could find them generally in greater, if ſo great perfection; and, conſidering their intrinſic value, where they could find them cheaper.

Another conſideration occurs, and that of the moſt material nature. The ſituation of the Colonies is ſuch, that it often happens in their dealings abroad, that a long courſe of credit is neceſſary for them. This they can find no where but in England. The opulence of our merchants is ſo ſuperior to that of thoſe in any other country upon earth, that it enables them to wait for the returns of their trade, much beyond the time that any others can afford.

Neither ſhould it be forgotten, that the ampleſt liberty of trading in all their reciprocal commodities, ſubſiſted between North America and the Engliſh Weſt Indies. This was a fund from whence they derived immenſe reſources; as it opened a channel through which they carried out a world of articles of their own produce, and received ſupplies not only for their own conſumption, but for the demands of that extenſive commerce which they carried on in ſo many parts of the globe.

Thus it appears, that notwithſtanding the ſeveral reſtraints that took place on the American trade, enough was left to render them a rich and flouriſhing people. That they were ſuch in reality, is well known to all who have the leaſt acquaintance with that country. Its happineſs was viſible to all who viſited it. If ever any country might have been ſtiled the ſeat of human felicity, Britiſh North America moſt unqueſtionably deſerved the appellation.

To ſay that no partialities exiſted in favour of Great Britain, would certainly be a violation of truth;

truth; but let an unprejudiced man weigh in the ſcale of Juſtice, the conduct obſerved by Great Britain towards her Colonies, and that which foreign ſtates have purſued in reſpect to theirs, and then let him decide, which is the moſt conſiſtent with humanity, juſtice, and policy.

The great complaint of America, was the diſcouragement of manufactures, by confining every province to the uſe of its own, and preventing the reciprocal importation of their reſpective fabrications. This, it cannot be denied, was a ſevere regulation; but when we reflect, on the other hand, that moſt, if not all of the articles thus prohibited, could be purchaſed at a cheaper rate from England, the idea of ſeverity naturally annexed to ſuch a prohibition, is much diminiſhed; and it almoſt vaniſhes away on the additional conſideration, that the hands thus employed would have been much more beneficially taken up, both in a public and in a private light, in the great and important buſineſs of agriculture, or of navigation.

It ought, nevertheleſs, to be allowed, that to curb the diſpoſition of a whole people towards any branch of induſtry or ingenuity, is a meaſure to which it cannot be expected that human nature will tamely ſubmit. It is viewed as a ſpecies of affront to the underſtanding. The detriment that may poſſibly ariſe from the prohibition, is not ſo much reſented as the prohibition itſelf.

As mankind, therefore, will generally bear oppreſſion much more eaſily than inſult, it is probable that the rigorous injunctions precluding the ſale of any manufacture of their own make, beyond their provincial boundaries, appeared to the Americans as calculated to cruſh their native talents in the very infancy of their exertion, and to cut off the very hope of ever arriving at thoſe advantages to which they were of right intitled.

Preventions of this nature are always the more odious, as they ſeem levelled at the abilities of a people, and deſigned as it were to keep them in a ſtate of natural inferiority. For this reaſon, undoubtedly, they were eſteemed a heavy grievance throughout the American colonies; and every individual conſpired, as it were, as much as in him lay, to elude them.

It was probably owing to the diſcontent ariſing from regulations of this ſort, that the liberality with which Great Britain acted in other inſtances, was overlooked. She not only abſtained from the laying of duties on her own manufactures, but took off thoſe on foreign articles when exported to America. Herein her conduct was very different from that of the other European ſtates with regard to their Coloniſts, whom they force to receive ſuch goods, loaded with all the duties they are charged with in their own ports.

While this indulgence laſted, goods of foreign fabrication were often conſiderably lower in price, in ſome of the colonies, than in ſome parts of Europe itſelf.

It was not, therefore, without great murmurs and complaints in the Colonies, that a ceſſation of this indulgence took place immediately after the war. They looked upon this meaſure as a
others ſtill more diſagreeable; and began to
that Great Britain meant to try how far ſhe might render them ſubſervient to her convenience, and to what extent ſhe might do it without endangering her own intereſts.

They were full of theſe ideas, when the Britiſh Miniſtry, alarmed at the amazing increaſe of ſmuggling, and the prodigious loſſes it occaſioned to the revenue, took the reſolution to uſe every poſſible effort in order to prevent it. To this intent, which in itſelf was perfectly juſt and reaſonable, a ſcheme

was

was propoſed and embraced, which proved highly pernicious in its conſequences, and rendered the remedy much worſe than the diſeaſe.

A number of armed cutters were ſtationed around the coaſts of Great Britain, to the commanders of which the ſtricteſt orders were iſſued to act in the capacity of revenue officers. They were enjoined to take the uſual Cuſtom-houſe oaths, and to obſerve the regulations preſcribed by them.

Never was a more ignominious duty impoſed upon men of gallantry and ſpirit. It ſunk the brave and enterprizing ſeaman into a meer tide-waiter. That eagerneſs and zeal which had been employed in the ſearch and attack of an enemy, was now exerciſed in the diſcovery and ſeizure of prohibited goods; and the courage which they had diſplayed in the ſervice of their country, was now directed againſt their fellow ſubjects.

Had theſe unwiſe meaſures, however, been confined at home, the evils they produced would have been ſo much circumſcribed, that on due experience of them, they might in time have been obviated; but as one wrong ſtep is generally productive of others, the ſame unfortunate ſpirit that planned them for the coaſt of Britain, extended them to the ſhores of America.

The outcry was great againſt them in England; but in America it was outrageous. As it could not be ſuppoſed that gentlemen bred in the naval ſervice were converſant in the laws and uſages of the Cuſtom-houſe, they were often guilty of infringing them. Remedies were at hand in England; but in America it was difficult, and in ſome caſes almoſt impracticable to obtain redreſs, from the tediouſneſs of forms, and the diſtance of places.

To this grievance, which weighed heavy throughout a country where much liberty of trade had been

ſuffered

ſuffered and connived at, another quickly ſucceeded, no leſs, if not more obnoxious to the trading part of the community.

A lucrative branch of commerce had, for more than a century, been carried on between the Britiſh iſlands in the Weſt Indies, and the Spaniſh ſettlements on the vaſt continent of South America: it had for many years been largely participated by the North American colonies. It was a commerce of the cleareſt gain and benefit to the Britiſh trader; it conſiſted in a prodigious exchange of all kinds of Britiſh commodities for the precious metals.

Senſible that the advantages lay entirely on the ſide of Great Britain, and was ruinous to the intereſts of Spain, that monarchy had always oppoſed this commerce with all its might. Guarda-coſtas were commiſſioned to ſcour the wide-extended coaſts of her American dominions, and to ſeize every veſſel that approached too near them, a taſk which they executed with ſuch indiſcriminate licenſe, that it provoked the war which broke out between Great Britain and Spain, in one thouſand ſeven hundred and thirty-nine

But though this commerce was in direct oppoſition to the orders of Spain, and could not therefore be conſidered as ſtrictly legal, it certainly was not the buſineſs of Great-Britain to prevent it. The new ſyſtem however adopted by the Britiſh miniſtry, was purſued as if a convention had been made with the Spaniſh Court for that very purpoſe. The Britiſh cruizers acted as if they had received their commiſſions from Spain, and were to be rewarded by her for deſtroying this commerce. They did it effectually; and in a ſhort ſpace of time it was almoſt wholly annihilated.

This to the Northern Colonies was a deprivation of the moſt ſerious nature. This traffic had long proved the mine from whence they drew thoſe ſup-

plies of gold and ſilver, that enabled them to make copious remittances to England, and to provide a ſufficiency of current ſpecie at home. It gave life to buſineſs of every denomination, by the facility with which payments were made. A proportionable increaſe of trade kept pace with this readineſs of caſh, and a reciprocal circulation of money and merchandiſe was eſtabliſhed, to the benefit of all parties concerned.

A ſudden ſtop being thus put to this proſperous career, all America felt it to its vitals, and broke out in the loudeſt complaints againſt the ſervile complaiſance of Britain to Spain; and the ill policy of diſobliging its own ſubjects to humour foreigners.

Their complaints were juſtly founded; but the evil ſtar of Britain began to predominate: the Miniſtry continued in the reſolutions they had taken; and, as if theſe had not done ſufficient miſchief, they followed them, with others no leſs offenſive to the Americans.

In the Seſſion of Parliament of March, one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty-four, a Bill was framed, laying heavy duties on the articles imported into the Colonies from the French and other iſlands in the Weſt Indies, and ordering theſe duties to be paid in ſpecie into the Exchequer of Great Britain.

The injuſtice and abſurdity of this new law, both of which were equally glaring, excited, afreſh, the murmurs of the Coloniſts. They repreſented, in the ſtrongeſt terms, how inconvenient it was, after depriving them of the means of obtaining ſpecie, to inſiſt upon their paying thoſe duties into the Britiſh Treaſury in ſpecie alone.

But that which perplexed and incenſed them more than all the reſt, was the Bill paſſed in the ſame Seſſion,

Seſſion, to reſtrain the currency of paper money in the Colonies.

All theſe new regulations treading ſo cloſe, as it were, upon each other, were objects of equal ſurprize and diſpleaſure to the people of North America. It was a ſcheme to them, in ſome reſpect, entirely new; as notwithſtanding various laws had, from time to time, been enacted regarding their commercial intercourſe, they had uſually been made at conſiderable intervals, and did not wear that appearance of reſtraint and coercion, not weigh upon them in the manner of the preſent.

Warm and ſpirited remonſtrances were ſent home from America, pleading their cauſe in the language of men who think themſelves ill uſed, and are determined to obtain redreſs. They laid every argument before the Miniſtry, that ingenuity, prompted by intereſt, could furniſh them with: they reaſoned, they expoſtulated; in ſhort, they uſed every method that could be employed, to prevail upon the ruling powers to recall what they had done.

Among other allegations, they explicitly mentioned that ſuch reſtraints upon their trade were inadmiſſible in America, as they directly tended to put an end to the clearing of their lands, and the proſecution of their fiſheries. Unleſs thoſe foreign ports where they depoſited the ſurplus of their corn, and of the proviſions of all kinds abounding in their country, were freely opened to them, whither muſt they carry them? The Britiſh iſlands in the Weſt Indies could not alone conſume them. Britain did not want them. Diſpoſe of them ſomewhere they muſt; and where could that be, unleſs in places where they would fetch a reaſonable price?

It were the height of partiality to deny the validity of theſe reaſonings: it was obvious to all diſcerning and judicious people; their caſe was not

therefore, left to them alone to maintain; it gained a multitude of partiſans in the mother country, and was openly and warmly eſpouſed by ſome of the moſt reſpectable characters in the land.

But in America they did not ſtop at bare complaints. When they found that their remonſtrances were ineffectual, they bethought themſelves of uſing ſome more efficacious means to convince the Britiſh Miniſtry of the error they had committed, in running counter to the opinions and deſigns of a numerous people, ſituated at ſuch a diſtance, and able, in a variety of ways, to elude their intentions.

They now, for the firſt time, united in a general oppoſition to the views of the Britiſh Miniſtry. Meetings were held, and reſolutions were taken to make no further importations from Great Britain of what was not of abſolute neceſſity; and to encourage, to the utmoſt of their power, every ſpecies of manufacture that was practicable among them.

In this reſolution multitudes immediately concurred, to the great detriment of the manufacturers in England, who were not ſparing of their diſapprobation of the miniſterial meaſures, and expreſſed it in the moſt violent and reſentful terms.

But the Miniſtry was proof againſt all kind of oppoſition. It proceeded, ſtep by ſtep, in the execution of its projects; as if nothing was wanting to complete them, but a firm reſolution to do it.

In order, however, to mix lenity with firmneſs, they paſſed ſeveral Acts favourable to the commerce of the Colonies, hoping thereby to ſooth them into a ſubmiſſion to thoſe that had given them ſo much diſguſt.

But the Coloniſts were now become ſo full of ſuſpicions, and placed ſo little reliance on the good will of the Miniſtry, that their whole attention was taken up in deviſing means to thwart their meaſures. They paid little regard to theſe conceſſions, which they

they now looked upon as meer artifice, uſed only to decoy them into ſecurity and inattention to their own intereſts.

They were further confirmed in this belief, by the advice they received ſhortly after, that the Miniſtry had it in contemplation to eſtabliſh ſtamp duties in America ſimilar to thoſe already ſettled in Great Britain.

The pretence upon which the Miniſtry founded this meaſure, gave as much offence as the meaſure itſelf. It was voted by the Houſe of Commons as juſt and requiſite towards defraying the expences neceſſary for the protection of the Colonies.

The receipt of this advice rouſed the fury of the Americans to the higheſt pitch. The protection that was alledged, they deemed not only unneceſſary, but an abſolute puſance. They wanted, they ſaid, no protectors but themſelves; and were more than adequate to ſuch a taſk againſt any enemy they had to apprehend.

The military forces that were ſtationed over ſeveral parts of the Continent, they repreſented as equally dangerous and expenſive. They were, from the nature of their profeſſion, a conſtant check upon the liberty of the ſubject; and were at the ſame time a heavy charge on the public.

It was in vain pleaded by the mother country, that a regular body of well-diſciplined men was an indiſpenſible requiſite in all ſtates. This might be admitted in England, and other countries in Europe; but was evidently otherwiſe in America, where the Indians alone remained, whom it was no very difficult matter to keep in awe.

The truth was, that Great Britain, under the pretext of providing for the ſafety and defence of its colonies, meant only to ſecure their obedience, and to terrify them into an implicit acquieſcence in all its dictates.

Such were the ſentiments that pervaded all America, when firſt they were apprized that taxes were to be laid upon them, for the ſupport of the troops on that eſtabliſhment.

The previous notice of a Bill of this kind being in agitation, has, by ſome politicians, been condemned as a ſtep that betrayed wavering and heſitation in the Councils of the mother country, and that betrayed too much of fear and want of reſolution, for the Coloniſts not to perceive it. Had the Miniſtry proceeded at once to carry its reſolves into immediate execution, they would have met with much leſs reſiſtance, than by making them known in this manner, a full twelvemonth before they ventured to give them the force of law. This was, in fact, puting the queſtion to the people of America, whether they would conſent to them or not.

The interval between this notice and the approaching ſeſſion, that was to determine their fate, was marked in America by the moſt violent fermentation. The minds of the inhabitants ſeemed to be undergoing a total transformation from their preceding ſtate. Inſtead of their late peaceable and ſteady attachment to the Britiſh nation, and its intereſts, they were daily loſing their reſpect, and falling off from that complying diſpoſition which had ſo long characterized them.

It was not only among detached individuals that ſuch a diſpoſition prevailed: it was no leſs viſible among their public and corporate bodies; and affected even the members of their government and legiſlatures. The General Aſſemblies of Maſſachuſet and New York, expreſſed their diſſatisfaction and alarm, in terms that fully ſhewed how ſtrongly they were determined to reject any meaſures that might be framed in conformity with

They did not ſtop here.—They came to ſome reſolutions, in conſequence of thoſe that had been taken in the Britiſh Houſe of Commons, which amply manifeſted how inflexibly they were averſe to them. They accompanied their reſolutions with petitions to the Houſe of Commons, intreating them to give no countenance to the propoſals of the miniſtry.

During the ſpring ſeſſion of one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty-five, adminiſtration informed the agents of the ſeveral colonies, reſident in London, that if their conſtituents would propoſe any other mode of raiſing the ſum intended to be levied by ſtamp-duties, their propoſal would be accepted, and the ſtamp-duty laid aſide. The agents replied, that they were not authoriſed to give any anſwer; but were inſtructed to oppoſe the bill, when it ſhould brought into the Houſe of Commons, by petitions, queſtioning the right claimed by Parliament of taxing the Colonies.

Full time had been given them to canvaſs this dangerous queſtion in the ampleſt manner. They had prepared a diverſity of arguments in oppoſition to the Parliamentary pretenſions. They objected, that the powers intended to be given to the Vice-admiralty courts in America, by the act for laying ſtamp-duties, would prove a ſource of intolerable grievance, by their diſtance from each other; and ſtill more, by their deciding without the intervention of a jury.

They alledged, at the ſame time, that the payments required by the act being in ſpecie, would infallibly drain them of the little coin remaining for neceſſary circulation, and prove an inſurmountable impediment in the way of trade.

But that which they urged as the moſt cogent, and moſt forcible of all arguments, was,—that not being repreſented in the Britiſh Parliament, it could have no right to tax them. This they affirm-

ed in the moſt open and explicit terms; aſſerting, at the ſame time, that they alone were competent to judge what taxes they were able to bear. They claimed, therefore, the right of exerciſing this judgment excluſively, and of impoſing taxes upon themſelves, without the interference of any others.

This was a language which Great-Britain had never before heard from her Colonies. The ruling powers liſtened to it with anger and indignation.—But it was not the Colonies alone that ſpoke in this ſtile:—It was taken up with no leſs warmth and reſolution even in the Parliament itſelf, and was now ſpread over the nation at large. The principles adopted by the Americans, were maintained by numbers, with as much vehemence as if the cauſe of the Americans was their own.

The miniſtry were equally chagrined and aſtoniſhed at the violence with which ſo great a proportion of the nation eſpouſed the pretenſions of the Colonies. As the ſyſtem of taxing them had been previouſly determined upon, they knew not how to recede from a meaſure that was to be the firſt eſſay in that important trial. They were loath to abandon at once an attempt, from which they had promiſed themſelves ſo much utility, in caſe of ſucceſs. They were as eager to go forward in the proſecution of their ſcheme, as their adverſaries were that they ſhould deſiſt, notwithſtanding they clearly ſaw the perils that muſt attend it.

But the time was now come, that Britain was to be involved in the moſt tremenduous and deſtructive quarrel that had befallen her for the courſe of many ages.

Impelled by that prepoſſeſſion in favour of a long cheriſhed idea, which the beſt and wiſeſt men are ſo often not able to reſiſt, and hurried by that impetuoſity which the heat of party naturally inſpires, the miniſtry bore down all oppoſition. The ſtamp-

act

act was paſſed by a Parliamentary majority, in ſpite of the arguments within doors, the clamours without, and the ſpirited and repeated remonſtrances of the Colonies.

This famous act has juſtly been conſidered as the prelude and occaſion of all the ſubſequent ſtorms, that raged not only in North America, but extended their horrors to almoſt every other quarter of both hemiſpheres.

Its arrival in America threw immediately the whole continent into flames. Boſton, the capital of New England, where the news firſt arrived, expreſſed its reſentment in a manner perfectly ſuitable to the violent ſpirit with which its inhabitants have always oppoſed whatever they have deemed injuſtice and oppreſſion. The colours of the ſhipping of the harbour were hoiſted half-maſt, the bells of the churches were muffled, and tolled a funeral peal; the act was printed with a death's-head affixed to it, in lieu of the king-arms:—It was cryed about the ſtreets, and ſtiled "The Folly of England, and the Ruin of America."

Theſe firſt effuſions of reſentment and rage, were followed by numberleſs attacks from the public papers. They arraigned both the juſtice and policy of the tax; and repreſented it as repugnant to the dignity and wiſdom of the Britiſh nation, and as pregnant with every evil that could cauſe a long and deep repentance.

Emblems of the moſt hoſtile ſignification were at the ſame time adopted by ſundry news-papers:—One of them, in particular, exhibited the figure of of a ſnake, cut in ſeveral pieces, each one inſcribed with the name of ſome Colony: the motto above them was "JOIN, or DIE!"

The act itſelf was treated with the moſt ignominious contempt. It was publicly committed to the flames in ſeveral places by the inraged populace, together

together with the effigies of ſuch as were imagined to have been its framers and promoters. Ships that arrived with ſtamped papers on board, were obliged to deliver them up into the cuſtody of perſons appointed to preveut their being uſed; or to enter into an engagement that they would not land them. The only places where they could be effectually protected from the fury and inſolence of the multitude, were men of war, and garriſons.

The perſons who were commiſſioned to diſtribute theſe papers, were all, without exception, compelled to reſign their office, and ſolemnly promiſe never to reſume it.

But their chief reſentment was directed againſt ſuch of their own countrymen as ſided with Government, and were active in aſſerting its authority.—They plundered their houſes, deſtroyed their property, and uſed their perſons with the utmoſt indignity.

While theſe outrages were perpetrated by the lower claſſes, the better ſort did not interfere in the leaſt to prevent them. They ſaw, with ſecret pleaſure, how well they would be ſupported in the determination they had formed to reſiſt the deſigns of Great-Britain. Some of them did not ſcruple to ſignify in a public manner, that they would pay no taxes, but ſuch as were laid upon them by the legiſlature of their reſpective province.

The Aſſemblies themſelves connived, in fact, at theſe tumultuous proceedings, by declining to aſſiſt their Governors, and other officers inveſted with lawful authority, either with their advice or countenance. They left them to act ſingly, as they might think proper, without giving themſelves any concern about the riots, thoſe who excited them, or ſuch as were the ſufferers.

They ſoon proceeded farther; and from ſilent ſpectators, became the principal actors, in the more

intereſting

intereſting and important ſcenes that ſucceeded to theſe popular commotions.

Emboldened by what they ſaw, and what they daily heard from all parts of the continent, they now ſtepped forth, and reſolutely avowed their ſentiments in the face of the world. They openly declared, that the authority aſſumed over North America was illegal; and that Great-Britain had no right to impoſe taxes upon them, without their own free conſent.

In theſe reſolves, the concurrence of the various Colonies was univerſal. Never had ſuch unanimity appeared among them upon any antecedent occaſion. Though differing in a number of eſſential points, both civil and religious, there was no diſſenting voice among them in their oppoſition to the deſigns of the Britiſh miniſtry.

The Colony of Virginia was the firſt to begin the work of open and formal denial to the requiſitions of the mother country. It declared fully and explicitly, that the General Aſſembly of the Province, together with the King of Great-Britain, or his ſubſtitute, had, in their repreſentative capacity, the ſole and excluſive right and power to lay taxes and impoſitions upon the inhabitants; and that every attempt to veſt ſuch a power in any other perſons but thoſe conſtituting the general aſſembly, was illegal, unconſtitutional, and unjuſt; and had a manifeſt tendency to deſtroy Britiſh, no leſs than American freedom.

The reſolves of the other Provinces ran much in the ſame ſtrain, and bore evident marks of the moſt rooted and inflexible determination to abide by them, at all events, and to ſtop at no meaſures that might become neceſſary to ſupport and enforce them.

In the mean time, to give efficacy to theſe reſolutions, and to make the people in England feel more readily the conſequences of their diſſatisfaction,

tion, the merchants and traders entered publicly into reciprocal agreements to order no more goods from Great-Britain, nor even to permit the ſale of ſuch as might be conſigned to them, after the expiration of the preſent year.

In order to ſupply the deficiency of Britiſh goods, they now betook themſelves to a regular encouragement of all ſorts of domeſtic manufactures. An aſſociation was formed for this purpoſe at New York, and through the premiums it offered, quickly excited the induſtry of the numerous emigrants that had in the courſe of the preceding years reſorted to America from all parts of Europe. Fabrications were ſet on foot of ſuch commodities as could not be diſpenſed with; and, in a little time, quantities of the coarſeſt and commoneſt ſorts were brought to market, and chearfully preferred to the Engliſh, though dearer, and of an inferior quality.

Such was, at the ſame time, their zeal and care to provide abundantly for the execution of this ſcheme, that a reſolution was taken to abſtain from the eating of lamb, that no wool might be wanting for the uſe of thoſe manufactures of which it was the chief material.

Thoſe elegancies which were of Britiſh make and importation, were now univerſally laid aſide: the women did not yield to the men in theſe inſtances of ſelf-denial; and were as exemplary in refuſing every article of decoration for their perſons, and of luxury for their tables.

Such a remarkable revolution in the diſpoſition and behaviour of its colonies, ſtruck the Britiſh government with the deepeſt alarm. They beheld multitudes of artificers, of all denominations, on the point of being reduced to the moſt deplorable diſtreſs. They ſaw the manufactories, flouriſhing in ſo many parts of the kingdom, in danger of immediate deſtruction. The Colonies were computed

to

to take off annually, full three millions worth of their produce. The loſs of ſo conſiderable a branch of trade, was an idea not to be born with patience; and yet to perſiſt in the ſyſtem of colony taxation, muſt inevitably occaſion it, with, perhaps, more fatal conſequences.

It does not, however, appear that theſe conſiderations made much impreſſion upon the Miniſtry that had planned and executed the meaſures which now threatened ſo much miſchief. It is probable they imagined that after the firſt fermentation was over, the minds of people would cool, and return of themſelves to their former ſtate of acquieſcence and conformity to the will and deſire of the parent ſtate, rather than involve themſelves in an altercation, that would certainly bring with it a variety of diſtreſſes, and muſt neceſſarily intangle them in difficulties from which they would not poſſibly extricate themſelves according to their expectations.

Thoſe, indeed, were not only the ſentiments of the miniſtry;—they were adopted by numbers at that time; and continue ſtill to be the perſuaſion of many to this day.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Repeal of the Stamp Act.

WHILE Great Britain and America were ſuſpended in anxious expectation in what manner theſe differences between both would terminate, the miniſtry ſo obnoxious to the latter was diſmiſſed, and another ſubſtituted in its room, whoſe inclinations and politics were looked upon as more favourable to their wiſhes.

In the mean time, diſagreeable tidings were daily arriving from the American continent. After ſeverally reprobating, in their provincial aſſemblies, the regulations contained in the Stamp Act, theſe bodies, in order to confer more weight on their determinations, reſolved to hold a general congreſs of all the colonies, wherein they might form ſuch an union as might render them more reſpectable, and add more ſtrength and weight to the opinions they ſhould adopt among themſelves, and to the repreſentations they intended to tranſmit to the Britiſh Parliament.

This reſolution was taken in Auguſt, one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty-five, and was carried into execution in the beginning of October following, at New York; in which city was held the firſt Congreſs of the American continent.

The proceedings of this general meeting of the Colonies, were conformable to thoſe of their reſpective aſſemblies. They agreed exactly in the ſame reſolves, and ſeconded them with petitions to the King and to both Houſes of Parliament; wherein they ſet forth with great reſpect, but with equal firmneſs, the impropriety of laying taxes upon them

without

without their conſent, and earneſtly ſupplicated for a redreſs of the grievances that muſt inſue from the continuation of the Stamp Act.

Theſe petitions, the Americans flattered themſelves, would meet with more attention from the preſent, than from the late miniſtry; and herein they were not deceived.

When the Parliament met in January, ſixty-ſix, the tranſactions upon the American continent during the preeeding year, became the ſubject of the moſt ſerious conſideration, and occaſioned a multiplicity of debates and arguments.

Nor were the diſcuſſions without doors leſs earneſt and animated. If the Americans had their oppoſers, it is no leſs true that they had their partiſans; and which were the warmeſt and moſt violent of the two, is hard to decide.

The propriety and neceſſity of repealing the Stamp Act, was ſtrongly inſiſted upon by one party. Its inequitableneſs, impracticability, and, above all, its impolicy, were aſſerted with an infinite variety of reaſonings.

The unanimity with which it had been reſiſted was repreſented in the ſtrongeſt colours. Traders of the loweſt degree, ſhopkeepers, and the commoneſt retailers, had agreed to drop all buſineſs ſooner than tranſact it with the uſe of ſtamps.

Profeſſions, the very exiſtence of which depended on the continual uſe of them, had thrown up their means of ſubſiſtence, ſooner than employ them. This was remarkably applicable to the gentlemen of the law, who had, upon this critical occaſion, exhibited a rare example of diſintereſtedneſs.

So little was the ſtamp act regarded by the Americans, that they had univerſally agreed to carry on their uſual buſineſs without it; and ſo dreaded was their reſentment againſt all who ſhould give it the leaſt countenance, that on the day appointed for the

the act to take place, not a ſheet of ſtamped paper was to be had throughout the colonies.

The governors of the Colonies themſelves, convinced of the unſurmountable difficulties in the execution of it, had wiſely given the matter up, and granted certificates to thoſe who applied for them, of the impoſſibility of procuring ſtamped papers.

To theſe arguments others were added of ſtill more cogency, in the opinion of thoſe who adduced them.

It was urged that in ſome of the moſt conſiderable places in America, the inhabitants had reſolved that no remittances ſhould be made to England, nor any ſuit for debt on the part of a reſident in England be admitted in any court, until the abrogation of this act.

A reſolution was alſo threatened of ſtopping the exportation of tobacco to Great Britain, from Virginia and the contiguous provinces; a meaſure which, if carried into execution, muſt cut off the immenſe ſums accruing to her revenue from this article, and the vaſt benefits ariſing from its re-exportation to other parts of Europe.

Beſide theſe, other reaſons were alledged for acting with a gentle hand towards the Americans. Coolneſs and prudence pointed out lenient methods as far more deſerving of notice than ſuch as inculcated force and compulſion.

Taxation and repreſentation, it was affirmed, went hand in hand in all equitable governments. They were inſeparable from the principles of the Britiſh government. Theſe principles accompanied, in their fulleſt extent, the ſubjects of Great Britain, in whatever part of the world they choſe to ſettle under the protection of the mother-country; which, it could not be ſuppoſed, would act with ſuch cruelty as to deprive her children of their birthright, for living in another climate. They

were

were therefore entitled to the ſame privileges in the land in which they dwelt, as the Engliſh themſelves in that which they inhabit.

The dutiful behaviour of the Coloniſts on many emergencies, was no leſs carefully ſpecified. The readineſs they ſhewed in the laſt war was mentioned in the higheſt terms of applauſe. The zeal with which they had at all times eſpouſed the cauſe of Great Britain, was exemplary, as well as the willingneſs they had manifeſted in the contribution of ſupplies, whenever called upon to do it in a fair and legal manner.

Their commerce alone, in the manner it was regulated by Great Britain, was, agreeably to their own aſſertion, repreſented as equivalent to the greateſt and moſt productive taxes. The inceſſant increaſe of that alone was an inexhauſtible treaſure, which would not fail, in time, to eaſe the parent ſtate of many, if not moſt of thoſe heavy burdens under which it now laboured.

Such was the general ſtile and nature of the arguments with which the friends of the Coloniſts defended their cauſe, both by ſpeeches in Parliament, and by publications diſperſed and read with avidity throughout the public.

The advocates for the ſtamp act were no leſs ſtrenuous in its ſupport, and in their endeavours to refute the arguments and maxims eſtabliſhed by their antagoniſts.

They loudly reprobated that ſpeculative ſtrain of reaſoning which carries men out of the ſafe and clear road of practice, into the intricacies of meer theory. To theſe they imputed the unhappy altercation concerning the right of impoſing taxes upon the Colonies, and the notions daily propogated of the injuſtice of levying money from the ſubject without his direct and formal conſent.

The various nations that have planted colonies

were, ſaid they, utterly unacquainted with ſuch pretenſions in their coloniſts, as were aſſumed by thoſe belonging to Great Britain. They not only expected them to conform to the ancient laws of the mother country, but even to accept implicitly of thoſe which ſhe might judge proper to enact for them in particular.

But allowing the Britiſh colonies to be fully entitled to the rights of Britiſh ſubjects, it could only be in thoſe caſes where individuals are concerned in their private capacity, or the local buſineſs of the province is agitated. Where the intereſts of the whole empire come under diſcuſſion, the metropolis, as being the ſupreme head, muſt be allowed to decide; otherwiſe there is an end of that unity which conſtitutes, and is neceſſary for the exiſtence of a ſtate. As the Colonies could not, and did not claim a ſhare in that deciſion, it appertained, of courſe, to Great Britain; and the only queſtion was, whether, in thus deciding on the general concerns of that immenſe community of which ſhe was indiſputably the head, ſhe had acted with wiſdom and propriety.

In order to ſhew that Great Britain had not deviated from her uſual juſtice and moderation, it was obſerved, that the condition of the Colonies was proſperous in the higheſt degree: eaſe and plenty might be accounted the peculiar attributes of the country they inhabited. All hands were continually employed, and were abundantly paid for the work they did: that the public expences they were at for the ſupport of their government were moderate in a degree hardly conceivable, when their vaſt extent is taken into conſideration. From the northern-moſt limits of New Hampſhire, to the ſouthern confines of Georgia, a ſpace of near fifteen hundred miles, the ſum expended for the maintenance of all the different civil eſta-

eſtabliſhments in that immenſe tract, did not amount to fourſcore thouſand pounds a year.

Their church government might be deemed no ſort of expence, when compared with that of England. Tithes and ſinecures were unknown; and that heavy burden, the poor's rate, never was felt among them.

Protection, the great tie between government and its ſubjects, they had always experienced in the moſt ample degree. They never had recourſe to Great Britain in the day of need, without obtaining the readieſt and moſt effectual aſſiſtance.—Whether it was needed for their defence againſt an enemy, or to forward their domeſtic improvements, it was always granted with a liberal hand.

It was noticed at the ſame time, that a particular ſpecies of protection was afforded them; ſuch as the colonies of no other nation can be ſaid to enjoy. This was the conſtant courſe of credit given them by Great Britain, without which they never could have riſen to that pitch of internal opulence which ſo juſtly excited the admiration of all who had ſeen it. When this was duly conſidered, the tax impoſed on the Colonies could hardly be viewed in any other light than of a moderate intereſt for the prodigious ſums they were indebted to Great Britain, amounting, at the loweſt computation, to four millions ſterling.

As to the plea of their deficiency in gold and ſilver, it was alledged to be partly, if not altogether voluntary. The precious metals may be conſidered as an inſtrument, or as an object of trade: As the firſt, wherever they can be diſpenſed with, they will certainly not be employed, and will be reſerved for thoſe occaſions that abſolutely require them. As the ſecond, they will always give way to objects of greater neceſſity. The Coloniſts, who are inceſſantly embarking in extenſive ſchemes of

trade, will always part with them whenever the advantages they procure are much greater than thoſe ariſing from their retenſion, for the meer purpoſes of circulation. As they are only the ſigns of riches, wherever a ſubſtitute can be found to anſwer that end, it then becomes prudence to uſe then immediately as objects of trade, and to convert them into ſuch materials as will of themſelves be of actual ſervice and utility; the precious metals being ſeldom any more than a bare medium to theſe ends.

The conſequence, therefore, of exacting remittances from them in ſpecie, would probably be no more than inducing them to take ſome part of the balance in their favour, originating from their extenſive trade, in current ſpecie, as many nations are glad to do. This, when the ſmallneſs of the ſum to be levied upon them was conſidered, would prove but a very ſlight check upon their commercial ſchemes.

It was ſtrongly affirmed, the hardſhip they ſo bitterly complained of, that of being taxed without their conſent, for purpoſes about which they were not conſulted, was groundleſs and nugatory. The money demanded of them, was for their immediate ſervice; no intention ever was furniſed, to appropriate it to any other purpoſe: it was required of them merely as their contingent for the general exigencies of the empire; of which the ſureſt knowledge, and conſequently the moſt ſkilful repartition muſt always reſt with Great Britain, as the ſupreme ſeat of political direction, and the main ſpring of every motion where the univerſal intereſt of the whole was concerned.

The various emigrations from the Britiſh iſlands were not, it was ſuggeſted, made with a view in the emigrators, to ſever themſelves from the ſovereignty of Britain: they went forth merely to bet-

it were, of the mother-country: they had conſtantly an eye to her protective care: they relied upon it; and it was under the imperial banner of Great Britain, one may truly ſay, that they made themſelves reſpected, and became ſtrong and flouriſhing.

Long uſage, it was alledged, militated for the prerogative claimed by the Britiſh government. The Coloniſts, ever ſince their firſt foundation, had peaceably ſubmitted to the juriſdiction of the ruling powers at home, throughout all the various changes and revolutions that had ſucceſſively taken place in Britain, during the laſt and preſent century. In all caſesof intricacy, where they could not obtain a permanent deciſion among themſelves, and ſuch as parties would ſufficiently reſpect to admit as final, they conſtantly had recourſe to the Privy Council in England, and abided by its determination without any further diſpute; notwithſtanding it acted on theſe occaſions entirely according to the ſpirit or letter of the Engliſh laws, as appeared moſt equitable; and by no means in conformity to thoſe that prevailed in the colonies.

This right of acting as umpire, was an inconteſtible proof that the Colonies had always conſidered this country as intrinſically poſſeſſed of an authority paramount, and ſuperior to their own; which was ſtill more ſtrongly exemplified by their punctually recurring to it in the frequent diſputes about their reſpective boundaries, and in the many other differences that had, from time to time, ariſen between the provinces from various cauſes, all which had been invariable ſubmitted to the judgment of the parent ſtate.

It was further argued that this practice of conſtantly appealing to the powers at home, conſtituted in itſelf an indiſputable evidence both of the juſtice and propriety of acknowledging the ſupre-

macy of Great Britain over the Colonies. It ſhewed that it never had been queſtioned, and what merited no leſs the attention of the Colonies, that it was abſolutely requiſite, for the preſervation of tranquility and good order throughout the American ſettlements, where endleſs jars and confuſions would neceſſarily enſue, without the interpoſition of a ſoverign controul or to prevent to pacify them.

There was ſtill another conſideration, ſaid they, of which the inhabitants in the colonies did not ſeem aware. The government over them was delegated; and the conduct of their governors and ruling men ſubject to reviſal and cenſure at home. This rendered the condition of individuals much more eaſy, from the conſciouſneſs of obtaining redreſs in caſe of ill uſage, than if thoſe who ruled over them were accountable to no ſuperior tribunal. The weight of government was hereby diminiſhed, in proportion as they who exerciſed it, were amenable to a ſtill higher court.

Would the Americans, it was aſked, relinquiſh the ſolid advantages they now enjoyed, for a meer appellation? the price of this would be much greater than they apprehended. Were they to diſclaim the authority of the parent-ſtate, and take, upon them the riſk of ſtanding on their own ground, at a diſtance from the ſhelter and aſſiſtance of Great Britain, they would ſoon experience an oppreſſive alteration at home, and a mortifying difference abroad.

Inſtead of that quiet and undiſturbed enjoyment of the gains of their induſtry, which was now their peculiar lot, they would then be loaded with thoſe manifold burthens which all ſtates muſt ſubmit to, that aſpire at making a figure of importance and reſpectability. Impoſitions of every kind would follow ſuch a meaſure. In lieu of that moderate

government of which the demands were but ſmall, they would then have a rank and title to ſupport, a national dignity to maintain, and a complication of intereſts to defend. All this would require large revenues, and would ſoon teach them the diſparity between trade carried on without domeſtic incumbrances, and guarded in all parts of the world by a powerful protector, and a commerce liable to perpetual exactions on a variety of accounts, and whoſe profits muſt neceſſarily undergo immenſe ſubtractions for the current and indiſpenſible ſervice of the ſtate. While their internal proſperity met with theſe unavoidable obſtructions, they muſt not imagine that their affairs would flow in the ſame eaſy channel abroad as heretofore. They well knew that nations are, like individuals, treated with complaiſance or with roughneſs, according to the means they poſſeſs of returning benefits, or of reſenting injuries. The reſpect they now met with throughout the various quarters of the world where they carried on their trade, was in conſequence of the reſpect which the power and influence of Great Britain commanded all over the globe. When once the nations are apprized of a ſeparation between them, and that Great Britain no longer intereſts herſelf in their behalf, they will inquire into the nature of their eſtabliſhment, and ſcrupulouſly meaſure the extent of their power, before they decide among themſelves upon what footing to conſider them.

Nor ought the Americans to flatter themſelves, that this examination of their ſtrength and condition would be ſlight and ſuperficial: they, to whom ſuch a taſk would be committed, muſt be careful for their own ſakes to acquit themſelves with diligence and exactneſs; and they would be furniſhed with ſufficient means. The world is no longer in thoſe unenlightened times, when from the general diffuſion of ignorance and barbarity, knowledge was difficult to

obtain. The ſpeedy communication ſubſiſting between all cultivated nations, ſoon renders them thoroughly known to each other, whenever it becomes requiſite to make ſuch inveſtigations. Whatever lifts the Americans may hold out for the inſpection of foreigners, theſe will not be long in diſcovering, that with all their exaggerations, and notwithſtanding the pains taken to repreſent them as a numerous people, in the immenſe tracts they occupy along a coaſt extending fifteen degrees of latitude from the north eaſt to the ſouth weſt, there does not exiſt above one million ſeven hundred thouſand white inhabitants, even according to their own account, which is well known to be calculated to impreſs the world with a much greater opinion of their ſtrength, than is juſtly founded.

According to the proportions eſtabliſhed by political writers, three parts in four of this number conſiſt of women and children; and of the remaining fourth, one half may reaſonably be reputed, through age, infirmity, and the various accidents concomitant on nature, incapable of taking an active part in the defence of their country. Thus the men able to bear arms will amount to little more than two hundred and fourteen thouſand.

To proceed with all imaginable impartiality, were it to be allowed that this number will ſuffice to guard their coaſts, repel invaſions, and ſupply the many other calls of civilized ſociety, it is granting as much as can be expected; many will probably think more than ought to be done, conſidering the prodigious extent of that coaſt, the perpetual interſection of mighty rivers running, at ſhort intervals from each other, and dividing the provinces in ſuch a manner, as to render it eaſy for an enemy to cut off their mutual communication. Add to this the boundleſs regions lying behind them, and inhabited by a fierce and yet unſubdued foe; between whom

and

and them an everlafting enmity muſt ſubſiſt, whoſe inveteracy is animated by every motive that can actuate the heart of man, and fill it with irreconcilable, and at the ſame time with well-grounded hatred.

But ſuppoſing them well provided for home defence, in what manner will they, with ſo ſlender a population, be adequate to any conſiderable exertions abroad? Veſſels may be eaſily equipped for the purpoſes of trade; but the manning of a fleet is a taſk of ſerious magnitude: none but opulent ſtates, well ſtocked with riches and inhabitants, are equal to ſuch an undertaking. Whatever the future deſtiny of the Colonies may be, their condition at preſent does not permit them to cheriſh any reaſonable expectations of becoming, before a length of time, formidable at any diſtance from their own country.

The conſequence will be, that the ſtates of Europe ſtanding in little awe of their diſpleaſure, will not treat them with that complaiſance, nor ſhew them that favour they will poſſibly require at their hands. They will ſeize thoſe pretences to make them pay largely for commercial advantages, which are ſo readily found when eaſy to enforce; nor will they, at the ſame time, expreſs much readineſs in procuring them compenſation for the injuries they may juſtly complain of.

The remoteneſs of their ſituation from this hemiſphere, will always prevent that ſpeedy communication with thoſe powers in confederacy with them, which is ſo requiſite, and often ſo critical in a political correſpondence. Tranſactions may happen of which the quickeſt intelligence is abſolutely neceſſary for the accompliſhment of the ends propoſed by a connection with them. Hence it will not ariſe from policy, ſo much as good fortune,

tune, that alliances with them may prove beneficial.

The truth is, that European politics are too far off for Americans to mix in them with any regularity of co-operation. Nature interpoſes with an immenſe ocean, and bids them, as it were, to reſt contented with a commercial communication, without becoming parties in feuds, by which they have nothing to gain, and much to loſe.

Is it not wiſer, therefore, for the Colonies to remain in a gentle ſubjection to Great Britain, which, for its own ſake, will never lay a heavy hand upon them, than to truſt to the precarious friendſhip of other nations? Theſe, without the ſame motives of condeſcendance to their diſpoſition, will involve them in difficulties, in which they will leave them, on any proſpect of conveniency to themſelves, to combat and ſurmount without affording them any aſſiſtance; however abſolutely requiſite, or ſolemnly ſtipulated. Self-intereſt on thoſe occaſions will ſtifle all other conſiderations; and thoſe ties of conſanguinity and reciprocal affection that unite Great Britain to her colonies, not ſubſiſting between theſe and their new allies, connections will be formed and diſſolved betwixt people ſituated at ſuch a diſtance, with equal inconſiderateneſs and facility.

The ill policy of caſting off the connection with the parent ſtate, appearing in ſo evident a light, it was to be hoped, for the happineſs of the Colonies, that they would open their eyes to the dangers they would run by embracing ſo fatal a meaſure, which would certainly tend to throw them ſucceſſively into the hands of powers not more inimical to Great Britain, than eager to make them ſubſervient to their own ſelfiſh ends, and ready to ſacrifice them the moment theſe were attained.

If it behoved the Colonies to attach themſelves cordially to Great Britain, it was no leſs incumbent

on

on them to place that confidence in her wiſdom which men ſhould in prudence do in thoſe they have choſen for their chiefs. Great Britain is, by her poſition, placed, as it were, on an eminence from whence ſhe ſurveys every part of the Britiſh empire. She perceives objects at an immenſe diſtance, which the inferior ſtation of her dependencies cannot diſcover: they muſt neceſſarily depend upon her vigilance for information; and muſt, of courſe, be guided by her direction.

The fact is, that while the provincial aſſemblies acknowledge themſelves ſubordinate to the Britiſh government, they muſt, in reaſon, truſt to her management in all the great affairs of ſtate. Unacquainted with the intrigues that agitate the Courts of Europe, and ignorant of the ſecret deſigns that are lurking in the cabinets of miniſters, they are not competent to the buſineſs of obviating difficulties, and warding off dangers. This is the duty of ſovereigns and their miniſters: they alone have the means of penetrating into the receſſes of politics, and of unravelling that clue of dark meaſures wherein the intentions of ſtateſmen are hidden: ſagacity alone is not ſufficient to effect this; other methods muſt be employed, ſuch as apply to the paſſions of men, and ſuch as princes and their delegates are moſt expert in uſing.

The proportional ſtrength of every member of an empire, is only known to its head. Beyond the limits of its own juriſdiction, no colony was able to pronounce, with any certainty, on the real ſituation of any province in the empire. Every one referved the documents that lead to this knowledgle for the inſpection of the miniſtry at home: this alone knew, excluſively, their reſpective circumſtances, and could form a proper idea of the meaſures to be adopted for the relative benefit of them all.

This duty had hitherto been performed by Great

Britain.

Britain with the univerſal approbation of the Colonies, and to the admiration of all Europe. Her judicioufneſs and foreſight in the treatment of them were unexampled, and had raiſed them to a ſummit of felicity which no other colonies had ever attained.

Why, therefore, ſhould the ſtep ſhe had recently taken, be reprobated with ſo much violence, before a fair trial had been given it? The wiſdom of it might, upon experience, be found equal to any preceding regulations.

Until this unhappy day, the injunctions of Great Britain, though reaching to a multitude of caſes, and comprehending every branch of commerce and adminiſtration, had been received with all deference and reſpect: no cavils nor queſtions had ariſen concerning her right and authority to frame them. As emanating from the ſupreme ſeat of legiſlative power, they were duly ſubmitted to; and no ſuſpicions were harboured of their being fraught with an oppreſſive tendency.

Reſtrictions and confinements in every branch of trade, were neceſſary for the benefit of all traders in general: they were a partial evil, to which they all ſubmitted for the univerſal good. In England, various limits are aſſigned to ſeveral branches: the conviction of their utility ſilences all complaint? and they are admitted by all parties, however they may appear repugnant to their immediate intereſt.

Conformably to this idea, which is founded on the ſtricteſt equity, the limitations that accompanied the American trade, by circumſcribing it within certain bounds, gave it a body and ſtrength which it would probably loſe, were it ſuffered to range at large without any controul: ſuch an indiſcriminate licenſe, inſtead of aſſiſting the progreſs of trade, might create ſuch a competition between the mother-country and its dependencies, as would

in

in time end, if not in the deſtruction, at leaſt in the infeebling of the trade of both.

The proverb which teaches, that by graſping at too much, a man may loſe what he already poſſeſſes was peculiarly applicable to the Americans. They enjoyed under the preſent ſyſtem a multitude of advantages, which were daily encreaſing. They had no reaſon to repine at the ſuperiority of Great Britain; they had hitherto received no injury from it; they had, on the contrary, found it a neceſſary friend on very trying occaſions. A ſtriking proof that it was not a ſuperiority of real and internal happineſs, appeared in the comparative condition of the inhabitants of the mother country, and thoſe of its colonies. Here no wretchedneſs was known; every man, in the emphatic phraſe of ſcripture, lived under his figtree and his vine: hunger and nakedneſs kept at a diſtance, and no mendicants were ſeen throughout the land. But was it ſo in Britain? How happy, could the anſwer be made in the affirmative.

The ſuperiority, therefore, ſo much boaſted of in the parent ſtate, was a ſuperiority of ſtrength and efforts to guard and defend all its dependencies. Great Britain had ſo thoroughly exerted itſelf in the diſcharge of this important duty, that ſhe had thereby brought herſelf almoſt to the brink of ruin. True it was, that in the proſecution of it, ſhe had raiſed herſelf to the higheſt pitch of glory; but in that all her colonies had a ſhare: the luſtre ſhe had obtained, was powerfully reflected upon them; and they experienced both the honours and the benefits of being members of the Britiſh empire, while ſhe alone paid the immenſe price of all this glory.

Such was the general tenor and purport of the numberleſs ſpeeches and arguments uſed on this memorable occaſion. Never was more eloquence diſplayed than by the ſpeakers on each ſide of this important

tant

tant queſtion. It was conſidered reſpectively as the cauſe of America on the one hand, and of Great Britain on the other; and was accordingly pleaded by both parties with a warmth and ability worthy of ſo great a ſubject.

The debates on this act laſted two months, when it was repealed, to the univerſal joy of the people of England.

But that party which had framed it in the preceding, and ſupported it in the preſent ſeſſion, condemned this repeal as an inſtance of weakneſs in the miniſtry, and as a heartleſs ſubmiſſion to the pleaſure of the colonies, whoſe pretenſions would now increaſe, when they ſaw that a dread of their power, and a fear of diſobliging them, began to operate in England.

The idea of their inability to pay the tax required, they repreſented as totally falſe and groundleſs. As a proof of the flouriſhingneſs of their circumſtances, it was ſpecified, that of the debt they had contracted during the late war, near eighteen hundred thouſand pounds had been diſcharged in the courſe of only three years; and that they had provided funds for the diſcharge of their remaining incumbrances of this nature, amounting to between ſeven and eight hundred thouſand pounds, in the ſpace of two years more.

This plainly ſhewed they were fully able to levy the ſum exacted by the ſtamp act, which was, in truth, a very moderate impoſition, and was not expected to exceed the ſum of one hundred thouſand pounds annually.

To theſe allegations it was replied, that notwithſtanding theſe appearances, the Americans were already loaded as much as they could bear; that the very diſcharging of the ſums above mentioned, was a very heavy weight upon them, and ſhould be

at the preſent: that in the mean time the regulations made by the late miniſtry, were greatly felt, and operated in the nature of a large tax, though not formally laid upon them as ſuch.

It was further aſſerted, that the repreſentations brought up from all parts of the kingdom, were undeniable proofs of the detriment that had been already cauſed, and would continue to its manufactories, if that act remained in force. That it was more conſiſtent, therefore, with policy and with humanity to repeal it, than to involve Great Britain in a quarrel for ſo inſignificant a conſideration as the eventual produce of a ſtamp act, and to ſuffer ſo many thouſands of induſtrious and ingenious individuals to want ſubſiſtence.

In addition to theſe reaſons, it was ſurmiſed that other ſubſtantial cauſes might be aſſigned for the readineſs ſhewn to comply with the requeſt of the Colonies. The Houſe of Bourbon, though ſilent, was not inactive in ſtrengthening the bonds of its reciprocal compact. The diſgraces and humiliations that had been heaped upon her in the late war, could never be obliterated from her remembrance. There was no doubt that ſhe would ſeize the firſt opportunity that offered, to take the moſt ſignal vengeance on the Britiſh nation; and who could tell whether ſhe was not only watching how ſhe might improve, but whether ſhe had not ſecretly excited the preſent diſturbances between Great Britain and her colonies.

To confirm theſe inſinuations, the ſuſpicious behaviour of the French was adduced, in withholding the payment of the Canada bills ſo faithfully promiſed at the concluſion of the peace, together with the affected delays of the Spaniſh Court in putting off the ſettlement of the Manilla ranſom. Both theſe were objects wherein the national honour was eſſentially concerned: the conduct of thoſe powers

was inexcuſable; and it was not probable they would venture to act in ſo ſlighting a manner, were they not convinced that difficulties would ſhortly ariſe, to prevent Great Britain from inſiſting upon their doing her complete juſtice.

As to the weakneſs and ſubmiſſion of the miniſtry to the Colonies, it was anſwered that a diſcovery of error ſhould be followed by an immediate receding from it, without conſulting the prejudices of falſe honour. Every ſtep had been taken in order to arrive at the reality of the ſituation of America, and every man had been conſulted whoſe knowledge and experience of that country intitled him to credit. After examinations and conſultations upon the minuteſt circumſtances relating to every Britiſh colony in America, the reſult had been, that the laying on the ſtamp act was a meaſure equally ill timed and ill adviſed. There were not at this preſent day ſufficient means for the people there to comply with the terms ſpecified by the act. Wealth they undoubtedly had; but it did not conſiſt of gold and ſilver in the ſame proportion as they are found in other countries: to levy the payment of this tax in the manner propoſed, would occaſion more diſtreſs among them than was conceivable in England, where the plenty of the precious metals enabled every body to have ſome ſhare of them.

There were alſo other material objections againſt the carrrying of this act into execution. The people in the colonies thought themſelves treated with great and unuſual ſeverity by the various ordinances relative to their trade, that had taken place previous to the ſtamp act. As they had been rigorouſly enforced, and were at the ſame time deemed highly injudicious and oppreſſive by the people of England as well as of America, theſe were the more deeply exaſperated at them; and were not therefore

in

in a diſpoſition to receive freſh burdens with the ſame willingneſs they had formerly teſtified. To have recourſe to compulſion would prove bad policy: it would indiſpoſe them ſtill further, and be the means of ſtill greater oppreſſion than the former, without anſwering perhaps the intended end; as in ſo extenſive a country, where towns and habitations are often at a great diſtance, and the inhabitants thinly ſcattered, they would by various ways be able to elude the payment of the tax.

An impoſition, therefore, that came accompanied with ſo many difficulties in the execution, and produced ſo much ill blood, did not deſerve ſupport. The ſooner it was repealed, the ſooner the miſchiefs it had already produced, would be repaired and forgotten. It were imprudent in the extremeſt degree, to covet on the one hand a trifling revenue that muſt be extorted through violent methods, and to incur the riſk on the other of loſing an immenſe balance of profit, flowing with eaſe and regularity through long accuſtomed channels of trade, and which by the benefits accruing to the parties concerned, bound them to each other by the ſtrong ties of intereſt, and cemented that natural friendſhip and mutual benevolence between the people of Great-Britain and America, which no motives whatever ſhould, in ſound policy, be permitted to interrupt.

The Americans had been accuſed of intemperate proceedings; of having acted with an unbecoming degree of warmth, and treated with indecency the lawful commands and authority of the mother-country. This was a harſh accuſation to be levelled indiſcriminately upon a whole people collectively. True it was, that among the lower ſort inſtances of heat and violence had happened, which could not be excuſed; but they were not approved by the better. A mob is no where to be contained

within bounds. What tumults had lately been frequent in England, even in the metropolis, at the very doors of Parliament, in the preſence of Majeſty itſelf? Were the military to be let looſe on this account; and was an undiſtinguiſhed puniſhment to be inflicted on the innocent as well as the guilty? Such meaſures might be conſiſtent with the principles of ſome of the deſpotic courts on the European continent, but were by no means admiſſible in a country of freedom, ſuch as England; where; it was juſtly preſumed, the majority of the natives felt for the Americans almoſt as much as for themſelves, and would not ſee them delivered up to the diſcretion of the military, without eſpouſing their cauſe, even if it were leſs-defenſible than it appeared at preſent.

On a cool review of what the Americans had done, it was no more than what the people of Great-Britain had ſet them frequent precedents of, on ſimilar occaſions. It proved, in fact, that they were endowed with the ſame diſpoſition, and poſſeſſed of the ſame ſpirit. This certainly was in itſelf no misfortune nor blemiſh; it was a character the natives of this iſland gloried in; it was, in truth, the foundation of their liberty. To the effects ariſing from this cauſe, they were indebted for the excellent government of which they ſo juſtly boaſted; to be deſirous of repreſſing ſuch a temper in their American brethren, was equally abſurd and unjuſt. The Americans ſprung from the ſame ſtock, and inherited all the qualities of their forefathers: it was no wonder, therefore, they ſhould imitate them, and copy cloſely after their example; it ran, as it were, in their blood; and if it was a fault, it was common both to the European and American Engliſh. But it was no fault; or, at worſt, a happy and glorious one; ſuch as they might juſtly pride them-

the Colonies for the conſequences reſulting from principles which were cheriſhed and honoured in the mother country, was unworthy of the ſentiments and feelings of men who adopted thoſe principles in their fulleſt latitude, and among whom the conſequences they naturally gave birth to, had made their appearance upon almoſt every occaſion that had the leaſt tendency to provoke them.

In private altercations, the party that manifeſted the greateſt coolneſs, was, in the nature of things, always the ſureſt of coming off with the the greateſt advantage. In purſuance of this maxim, it behoved Great Britain, for her own ſake, to avoid all precipitation in regard to her Colonies. Notwithſtanding the ill-humour they had ſhown, Great Britain was, in fact, the aggreſſor, and had occaſioned it by exerciſing her authority with too high a hand. The true method of keeping ſubjects in a diſpoſition always to obey, was by relaxing the reins of government, whenever, through inadvertence, or any other cauſe, they had been drawn too tight. The chief fault of the rulers of nations, was their propenſity to exert their power upon too many occaſions. The art of governing happily; was not to govern too much; and to leave mankind as much to their own liberty of conduct, as might be compatible with the general intereſt of the community. This rule had not been obſerved in reſpect of the Americans: too cloſe and narrow an inſpection had lately prevailed in all their concerns. It was this conduct that exaſperated them; it was this conduct, therefore, that required alteration on our part. As England had begun the difference, it became her to put an end to it, by a ceſſation of thoſe demands upon America, which were ſo grievous and intolerable to her:—though ſhe might be able to comply with them, yet as her compliance muſt either proceed from coercion, or, at beſt, be attended with univerſal mur-

mur and diſcontent, it equally became the natural generoſity of the Britiſh nation, as well as the conſtitutional lenity of its government, to give way to the deſires of the Americans, were even policy and intereſt not to dictate ſuch a condeſcenſion.

But waving theſe motives, was it equitable to pretend to a more thorough knowledge of the condition America was in at preſent, than that of the wiſeſt heads among them? From the examination of one of the moſt judicious men, and able politicians that, or any other country ever produced, it had appeared, that the tax in agitation was utterly impracticable; and if inſiſted upon, would prove the moſt ruinous meaſure ever purſued by England, with reſpect to her Colonies. The very attempt to eſtabliſh it, had conſiderably alienated the reſpect and the attachment they had always profeſſed for England, and all that belonged to it. Before that fatal meaſure had been adopted, the temper of America was ſo favourable to England, that the ſtrongeſt predilection and partiality was entertained for whatever bore the name of Engliſh. Our manufactures, our faſhions, our taſte, were every where predominant; our ideas, cuſtoms, and manners, were adopted with a filial and implicit reverence; a native of Britain was treated with peculiar kindneſs, and even allowed a tacit preference to themſelves, while his behaviour correſponded with his character in life.

But ſince the framing of that odious meaſure, this affection had been much impaired: the Americans began to conſider the Engliſh in the light of a people, whom they had a right to ſuſpect of arbitrary deſigns upon them; and could not therefore behave with the ſame cordiality to the individuals of that country as heretofore.

They had formerly conſidered the Engliſh Par-

ty, and always ſpoke of that body with the profoundeſt veneration: they looked upon it as a ſhield of defence againſt the oppreſſion of wicked miniſters, and confidently relied on its aſſiſtance in the redreſs of any grievance they might complain of.

But this confidence and reſpect was much diminiſhed by the different treatment they had lately experienced. Inſtead of the mildneſs and complaiſance that aſſembly was wont to expreſs towards America, the affairs of that country were now, it ſeems, no longer a favourable object; and its proſperity was viewed rather with an unfriendly and jealous eye.

They once were free to lay their repreſentations before Parliament, with a full ſecurity they would be duly attended to; but times were now ſo unhappily changed, that when they applied, with all reverence and humility for its interpoſition in their behalf, Parliament refuſed even to receive their petitions.

In conſequence of this ſeverity of conduct, the reſentment of the Americans was ſuch, that it was vain to expect a return of good will, or of commercial intercourſe, without a repeal of the act in queſtion. This was the purport of the petitions addreſſed to Parliament; and unleſs they met with acceptance and ſucceſs, that reſentment would never ſubſide, and its effects would continue in ſpite of all endeavours to prevent them.

Whatever might be the opinion of the abettors of the late miniſterial meaſures, America ſtood in no abſolute need of Britiſh manufactures. Thoſe that are the moſt uſeful and neceſſary, ſuch as cloths and woollens, iron and ſteel ware, and other articles of equal utility and importance, they had already begun to manufacture with ſucceſs, and would, in a ſhort time, arrive at no ſmall degree of perfection in thoſe branches of workmanſhip.

In thoſe arts that contribute to conveniency or elegance, they had not made ſo much progreſs; but the people of America were very far from deficient either in point of induſtry or ingenuity; and had already produced ſuch ſpecimens of both, as rendered it evident, that with encouragement, they would ſpeedily attain to a conſiderable degree of expertneſs,

But however inelegant and coarſe the productions of the American artiſts might be, the people of England would, as actual experience had already taught them, find that no allurements of ſuperior finery, or even of cheapneſs, would carry off their manufactures in the American markets, or even ſuffer them to be admitted there.

The merchants in America, though a numerous body of men, were comparatively a handful to the vaſt aggregate of the various other parts of the community. Theſe were chiefly compoſed of farmers and cultivators of land: men wholly taken up in rural occupations; in clearing the ground, and improving the ſoil, or in rearing flocks and cattle. Theſe were a race of men little acquainted with any wants which they were not able to ſupply of themſelves. They lived in primitive ſimplicity: what they wore was chiefly wrought within their own doors: they ſtood in no need of ſhops or warehouſes for the purpoſes of luxury. Theſe were not a people whom the deprivation of Britiſh goods could affect.

If, through a continuation of the ſyſtem taken up in England, the Americans ſhould on their ſide perſiſt in a refuſal of Engliſh importations, they were not in the leaſt apprehenſive of diſtreſs for their huſbandmen and planters. Inſtead of felling timber and ſowing of grain for exportation, they would, on the failing of theſe reſources, betake

leave their fields and foreſts; and, inſtead of ploughmen, would become artificers.

Nor let the enemies to America imagine that materials would be deficient. The wool of their flocks could, in the ſpace of two or three years, with proper management, furniſh a ſufficient quantity for the demands of all America. The quality, though ſomewhat inferior to that of England, was of remarkable fineneſs. Flax they abounded in: immenſe quantities of flax-ſeed were annually exported to Ireland from Philadelphia and New York.

Iron they were provided with in equal plenty; and had among them numbers of workmen perfectly converſant in the manner of working it to the beſt advantage. Thus they were prepared to face every difficulty that might ariſe from the interruption of commercial ſupplies from Great Britain. If this interruption ſhould continue any time, they might become ſuch proficients in trades and handicrafts of all kinds, as not only to raiſe a ſufficiency of neceſſaries for their conſumption at home, but even to produce a ſtock adequate to the demands of the French and Engliſh Weſt Indies, and of Spaniſh America; with whom their nearer proximity would enable them to carry on ſuch a trade, on much more advantageous terms to both parties, than the diſtance of Britain could afford.

All theſe were matters of ſerious conſideration to the people of England, and ſhould induce them to put a ſtop to the pernicious ſchemes that were going forwards, before their evil conſequences aroſe to a degree beyond remedy.

There was another ground of complaint among the Americans. They were miſrepreſented in a manner equally injurious and indecent. They were deſcribed as void of loyalty and gratitude; as earneſtly ſolicitous to profit all they could by the

generosity of the mother country, and yet unwilling to bestow their due share of co-operation. But did facts in any wise countenance so grievous an accusation? Did not America, in the course of the preceding war, raise an army of twenty-five thousand men, and maintain them at its own expence? The troops sent from Great-Britain did not amount to a larger number. In the war antecedent to that, they supplied the British expeditions against Spanish America with several thousands of their best men, and exerted themselves with equal bravery and success against the French in North America. The recapitulation of such facts was not made by way of reproach, but proceeded from the necessity of rendering the English duly sensible of their mistake, in taxing America with a defect of good-will.

The last war, it was said, was undertaken purely on account of America. But how distant from truth was this assertion! It arose from a contest about the limits of Canada and Nova Scotia. This contest was heightened by the incroachments of the French upon the right of the English to trade in the country on the Ohio. This trade was carried on with British manufactures, by factors, whose correspondents resided in England. Thus it was undertaken for the defence of the British mercantile interest, in the inland parts of America, where the commercial intercourse with the native Indians depends chiefly on the goods remitted from England.

It was not hereby intended to insinuate, that America did not look upon herself as bound to espouse the quarrels of Britain; on the contrary, she was proud of being considered as a faithful partner of Britain, in all her enterprizes; as a partaker of her dangers, as well as of her successes; and was no


BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.
Goldar sculp.
Published Sept.r 2.d 1785. by J. Fielding, Pater Noster Row.

leſs intereſted in all that befel her, than ſhe could poſſibly be herſelf.

Were a war to break out in Europe from cauſes wherein America had no particular concern, ſtill the Colonies would zealouſly take up arms, and furniſh their pecuniary contingent, on a requiſition from Great-Britain. This was no more than they had always done. They were ready to do it again, and to manifeſt the ſincereſt attachment, by every kind of pooof that lay in their power, while the parent ſtate called upon them for that purpoſe in a conſtitutional manner, as had always been practiſed heretofore.

Such was the purport of the ſentiments and opinions of the celebrated Doctor Franklin, upon his examination before the Houſe of Commons.—They contained altogether, a body of information worthy of that aſſembly's notice, and were productive of a friendly diſpoſition towards America, that contributed not a little to the repeal of the act ſo obnoxious to that people.

But the two chief ſupporters of their cauſe were Lord Camden in the Houſe of Peers, and Lord Chatham (then Mr. Pitt) in the Houſe of Commons. The firſt had been lately raiſed to the Peerage with the univerſal applauſe of the nation, of which he had acquired the higheſt eſteem and reſpect, by his conduct while at the head of one of the moſt important departments of the law. His arguments were deciſively in favour of the Americans, and carried with them a weight and reſpectability that rendered them effectually ſerviceable in their cauſe.

The Houſe of Commons had long been witneſs of the talents for oratory poſſeſſed by Mr. Pitt; but he diſplayed them on this occaſion in a manner that will never be forgotten by thoſe who were witneſſes of his exertions on that memorable day. He ſpoke

with

with that boldneſs of thought, that originality of expreſſion, and that impetuoſity of eloquence, which characteriſed him in ſo ſingular a manner, and which ſo few were able, or dared to encounter.—Such was the impreſſion he made upon his auditors, and the public at large, that the repeal of the ſtamp-act was determined, and a majority of the nation concurred in approving this determination.

This famous bill was ſtrongly oppoſed, however, in the Upper Houſe; and on its paſſing, no leſs than thirty-three Lords entered a proteſt againſt it, couched in ſtrong terms, and ſupported by forcible arguments.

Here the diſpute between Great Britain and its Colonies ſeemed to promiſe an entire ceſſation. Their deſires had been complied with in the moſt ample manner; and nothing had been omitted to teſtify the ſincerity with which the parent ſtate wiſhed to live on the moſt friendly terms with its American dependencies.

But the judgment of thoſe who had predicted that the conceſſions of Great Britain to America, inſtead of laying that turbulent ſpirit which had lately broke out among them, would, on the contrary, increaſe it, began to be verified in many inſtances.

Thoſe who, during the late troubles, had ſhown themſelves friends to the Britiſh government, were become objects of general diſlike. While in England the heats occaſioned by the difference of opinion concerning the ſtamp act, were gradually ſubſiding, in America they ſeemed to have laid the foundation of an irreconcilable hatred to ſuch as had not ſided with the popular party. A faction now evidently appeared to be formed, reſolutely bent to ſeize every occaſion of diminiſhing the power and influence of the mother country. It was the more

danger-

dangerous, as it acted with apparent respect and attachment to Great-Britain, though it consisted at the same time of her well-known enemies; men, unhappily for her, whose abilities went hand in hand with their enmity.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Continuance of the Diſſentions in America.

THE inhabitants of the immenſe dominions poſſeſſed by Great-Britain in America, though the ſubjects of one power, and generally originating from the Britiſh iſlands, were, notwithſtanding, very different from each other in their character, diſpoſition, ideas, cuſtoms, manners, religious, and political notions.

The people dwelling in the four provinces of the country called New England, are the deſcendants of thoſe determined republicans, who, as already obſerved, fled from England, in order to enjoy their own notions of government and religion, unmoleſted by the hand of power.—They retained the hatred of their forefathers to kingly authority, and were always eager and violent in their oppoſition to it, on the leaſt ſuſpicion of its harbouring deſigns to exceed its limits.

One may, without offering violence to truth, conſider them as the life and ſoul of that oppoſition to Great-Britain, which has terminated in its loſs of the extenſive empire of North America.

The Colony of New York, together with that of Jerſey, is chiefly inhabited by the poſterity of the firſt founders of that ſettlement, who were Dutch, and who have left the general outlines of their character to the people of that province, induſtry, frugality, and an aſſiduous perſeverance in the means of thriving.

Pennſylvania contains a ſtill greater mixture than the two former. Two-thirds of the inhabitants conſiſt of Germans, Dutch, and other foreigners, of ſeveral denominations; a hardy and laborious race, who

who driven partly by poverty, and partly by perſecution, to this friendly retreat from both, have by patience and toil, rendered that large country one of the moſt fertile and plentiful in the new world.

A numerous proportion of that peaceable and inoffenſive ſect, the Quakers, poſſeſſes a conſiderable ſhare of Pennſylvania; of which the illuſtrious Penn was the original founder and proprietor.

In both Carolinas, multitudes are of foreign extraction, and retain the reſpective temper and diſpoſition of their progenitors.

In Virginia and Maryland, the primitive adventurers were perſons, in general, of a reſpectable character; poſſeſſed of property, and irreproachable in their morals, of a loyal turn, and firmly attached to the mother country.

But in proceſs of time, this happy frame of mind has undergone a great change, owing to cauſes eaſily traced by reflecting men. For many years theſe two provinces have been, as it were, the ſink, wherein England has poured all the vice and iniquity of which the laws could rid this iſland. Felons of all denominations, convicts exempted from the ſeverity of juſtice, individuals of infamous character, profligates in ſhort of both ſexes, and of every complexion, have been ſent in ſhoals to people theſe two Colonies.

The conſequences have proved, as it was foreſeen, by all perſons of diſcernment, highly injurious to the reputation of both theſe provinces. They abound in men of a licentious ſpirit, averſe to legal controul, and of an audacioufneſs that is not to be flattered by the deference and awe that are due to civil authority.

It was firſt in Virginia the ſtandard of defiance to Great Britain was hoiſted, as it were, in due form by the taking of thoſe reſolutions in the general aſſembly, that have already been mentioned. This

was

was a deciſive meaſure, and emboldened all the Colonies to come into public reſolves of the like nature.

Such being the temper and diſpoſition of the Coloniſts in general, it was not ſurprizing that they ſhould be keen and eager in the diſcovery and purſuit of whatever appeared to be their immediate intereſt, and jealous of what might thwart it. To this it was owing, that notwithſtanding the repeal of the the ſtamp act, as the other regulations previous to it had not alſo been repealed, they continued in a diſcontented mood; which, though repreſt for a while from a ſenſe of the condeſcenſion ſhewn them in that particular inſtance, ſoon broke out in a manner that convinced thinking people it would finally be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences.

When the ſtamp act was repealed, the miniſtry who took that ſtep, conſcious that they were, in fact, ſtooping to the Americans, thought themſelves obliged, at the ſame time, to paſs a bill declaratory of the ſupreme ſovereignty of Great Britain over all her Colonies, and of her competency and right to make laws and ſtatutes to bind them in all caſes whatever.

By the ſame declaration they annulled all the reſolves and proceedings of the Provincial Aſſemblies that tended to claim any authority in their reſpective diſtricts independent of that of Great Britain, eſpecially the ſole and excluſive privilege of impoſing taxes and levying money.

This declaratory act, though conſidered at home as neceſſary to maintain the dignity of the Britiſh government in the midſt of ſo much conceſſion, was beheld by the Americans in quite another light. It was deemed a reſervation of claims and pretences, to be brought forth and enforced whenever a favourable ſeaſon occurred. This greatly di-

plaiſance of England. She appeared rather to temporiſe, than to yield, with a good grace, to the deſires they had ſo earneſtly expreſſed.

The little impreſſion made in America by the lenity of Great Britain, was manifeſted on the very firſt occaſion that preſented itſelf; an act had been paſſed by the adminiſtration, to which they were ſo much obliged, providing the troops cantoned throughout the Colonies, with ſuch neceſſaries in their quarters, as were indiſpenſible for their comfortable ſubſiſtence. In direct violation of this act, the aſſembly of New York paſſed another act, whereby the mode of executing the former was altered, and one of their own framing ſubſtituted in its room.

When the news of this refractorineſs and diſreſpect, was brought to England, it exited no leſs indignation than ſurpriſe, it was evidently calculated to ſhow that Great Britain had no condeſcendence to expect on the part of its colonies, either in matters of greater or leſſer conſequence, the preſent object was of the latter kind; yet ſuch was the ill humour prevalent among them, as to cavil about a compliance founded upon the moſt obvious neceſſity.

In the heat of reſentment for ſuch undutiful behaviour, ſevere meaſures were at firſt propoſed in Parliament, but upon weighing the matter deliberately, the moderation that characteriſes the Engliſh Government, dictated more conciliatory methods of proceeding. In order to ſupport the dignity and ſupremacy of the Britiſh legiſlature, without proceeding to extremities, and yet to make the Colonies ſenſible of its determination, not to recede from its juſt rights, a bill was brought in, by which it was enacted, that the legiſlative power of the general aſſembly of New York, ſhould be totally ſuſpended, until it fully complied with all the

At Boſton the ſame refractory diſpoſition equally prevailed. Notwithſtanding the equitableneſs of granting due compenſations to ſuch as had ſufferred from the licentiouſneſs of the mob, during the riots on account of the ſtamp act, it was not without difficulty the general aſſembly was induced to acquit themſelves of their duty.

All theſe proofs of an unruly diſobedient temper, rouſed at laſt the ſpirit of the people in power at home; they began to think it was neceſſary by ſome vigorous aſſertions of the rights of Great Britain, to convince the Colonies that it had by no means given up thoſe claims of paramount authority, which it had exerciſed without oppoſition during ſuch a number of years.

In purſuance of this idea, the Parliament paſſed an act, impoſing duties on tea, paper, painters, colours, and glaſs, imported into the Britiſh plantations in America.

This act was received in the Colonies with no leſs, if not more diſapprobation than that which impoſed the ſtamps. The populace renewed its abuſive behaviour, and the better ſort immediately agreed to give it the moſt open and determined oppoſition.

To this purpoſe, meetings were held in all the principal towns; wherein it was reſolved, to beſtow excluſive encouragements on the manufactures carried on in America, and to leſſen the importation and uſe of foreign commodities, a particular enumeration of theſe was made, which was chiefly levelled at the articles that came from England.

In the mean time, a circular letter was ſent to every Colony by the Aſſembly of Maſſachuſet, which openly took the lead in this recommencement of a regular oppoſition to Great Britain, inviting them to join in a communication and harmony of ſentiments, expreſſing their diſſatisfaction at

the

the conduct of the Britiſh miniſtry, and aſſerting in the ſtrongeſt terms the injuſtice and impropriety of its preſent treatment of the Colonies.

During the coruſe of theſe unhappy altercations between Great Britain and America in 1768, one of the moſt unfortunate circumſtances attending it, was the enmity ſubſiſting between the provincial Aſſembly of Maſſachuſet and its Governor. He was unqueſtionably a man of abilities; but was conſidered as a ſecret foe to the cauſe of America, and as a ſworn champion of the royal prerogative. In this light he met with a conſtant ſeries of obſtructions in whatever he undertook. Bickerings and diſputes followed each other uninterruptedly, and he had all the violence of a party to contend with, that was animated with as much inveteracy againſt his perſon, as with hatred to the meaſures he ſupported.

The conteſt was of courſe carried on with an eye to both theſe objects: perſonal rancour was evidently at the bottom of many, if not moſt, of thoſe perpetual repreſentations and remonſtrances with which they never loſt the opportunity of aſſailing him. Neither can it be denied that feeling the ſtings of their animoſity, he often retorted it, and treated them with an aſperity correſponding to their own.

The conſequences of this diſſention were fatal to the parties chiefly intereſted in the great queſtions then in agitation. Great Britain and America owed many of the alterations that aroſe, and much of the antipathy ſubſiſting between them, to the mutual ill-will of the Governor and the Houſe of Repreſentatives.

The new acts of the Britiſh legiſlature renewed and afforded freſh materials for the iſl-humour of both. All bounds of moderation were now forgot-

him. As the obſtinacy of the Colonies had highly exaſperated the Britiſh adminiſtration, the Governor was ordered to act with vigour and reſolution, and by no means to ſhow any diſpoſition to yield to them as formerly.

As the circular letter from the Aſſembly of Maſſachuſet had given particular offence, and was viewed as an intention to raiſe an univerſal conſpiracy throughout the Colonies againſt Great Britain, he was inſtructed to require, in the moſt poſitive and peremptory terms, that they ſhould reſcind the reſolution which had produced that letter, and declare their diſapprobation of that ſtep as proceeding from temerity and precipitation.

Previous to this requiſition, he had communicated to the Aſſembly, a letter written to him from Lord Shelburne, then Secretary of State, and which contained ſeveral expreſſions that ſhowed how diſagreeable and offenſive their conduct appeared to the Britiſh miniſtry.

The Aſſembly was highly exaſperated at the contents of this letter; and accuſed him of having miſrepreſented them at home in his official diſpatches, copies of which they inſiſted he ſhould produce, if he meant to clear himſelf of the imputation they charged him with; otherwiſe they ſhould conſider him in the odious light of a ſecret calumniator.

On his refuſal of theſe copies, they wrote letters to the miniſters in England, wherein they exculpated themſelves from the charges of the Governor, and repreſented him as guilty of miſrepreſentation and partiality. They accompanied theſe complaints with warm remonſtrances againſt the late acts of Parliament, as unconſtitutional, and ſubverſive of the rights of Britiſh ſubjects.

Deſpairing of being able to pacify men whoſe

of management, he thought it prudent to adjourn the Aſſembly, that they might have leiſure to cool and ponder with ſome degree of temper on the ſteps they intended to take in the buſineſs that was ſhortly to become the ſubject of their deliberations.

In the ſpeech accompanying this prorogation, he gave a full vent to his diſpleaſure at the behaviour of the leading members of the Aſſembly, whoſe ambitious and popular views he reprobated with great freedom, and whom he deſcribed as much more actuated by faction, than by any real concern for the public.

In the mean time, to counterbalance the circular letter addreſſed by the province of Maſſachuſet to the other Colonies, another circular letter was written to every Provincial Governor in America, by Lord Hillſborough, lately preferred to the new appointment of Secretary of State for the American department.

This letter was intended as a refutation of the other, which it repreſented as calculated to miſlead the public, and fill it with groundleſs jealouſies and ſuſpicions of the deſigns of Great Britain, as tending to inflame the minds of men with unjuſt reſentments, and to excite them to unite in oppoſition to the lawful authority of the parent ſtate.

Such was the ſituation of affairs, when Governor Bernard made the requiſition above mentioned.

Some people are of opinion, that had there remained the leaſt inclination to meet the wiſhes of the miniſtry ſo as to put an end to the altercation between Britain and her Colonies, a medium on this occaſion might have been found by the Aſſembly of Maſſachuſet, to reconcile their own rights and importance with the ſupremacy and dignity of the Britiſh Parliament. Conceſſions might have been made, which would have ſaved the honour of

Britain, without derogating from the freedom of the Coloniſts.

But this opportunity of reconciliation was rejected with more unanimity than was expected. When the queſtion to reſcind the reſolutions of the former houſe was put, it paſſed in the negative by a diviſion of ninety two to ſeventeen.

It has been ſurmiſed, that this refuſal was in a great meaſure occaſioned by their being made acquainted with the conſequences that muſt follow it. They were told that in caſe they did not comply, they were immediately to be diſſolved. Upon this information, after conſulting together the ſpace of a week, they deſired a receſs might be granted them, in order to adviſe with their conſtituents. The denial of this exaſperated them, and they forthwith came to the above determination.

They concluded by writing a letter to Lord Hilſborough, to juſtify their proceedings, and by ſending to the Governor a meſſage of the ſame tendency. They delivered themſelves in both with the utmoſt freedom of thought and expreſſion. They inſiſted upon the propriety of the circular letter; that they had a right to communicate their ſentiments to their fellow ſubjects upon matters in which they were all jointly concerned; that it was the undoubted privilege of the Colonies to unite in a petition to the throne for the redreſs of their grievances. They reprobated, with great warmth, the requiſition to reſcind the reſolutions of the former houſe; calling it unconſtitutional and unprecedented: they complained of the epithets beſtowed on their conduct through the ſuggeſtions of their ſecret enemies; and that while they were doing nothing but what was perfectly juſtifiable, they ſhould be accuſed of harbouring ſeditious deſigns. They did not fail, at the ſame time, to remonſtrate againſt

the

the late acts, as ſubverſive of the principles of liberty, and as highly oppreſſive to America.

But they did not ſtop here. Inflamed with reſentment againſt the Governor, whom they conſidered as their capital enemy, and the prime cauſe of the diſpleaſure expreſſed againſt them, they drew up a liſt of charges of which they repreſented him guilty with much heat and acrimony, declaring him unfit to continue in the ſtation he was inveſted with, and petitioning for his immediate removal.

The behaviour of the Aſſembly of Maſſachuſet was like a ſignal and example to the other Aſſemblies of the American continent. They treated the circular letters, written to each of them by the Secretary in the American department, preciſely in the ſame manner. They unanimouſly voted addreſſes to that Aſſembly, expreſſive of their approbation and concurrence in all its meaſures. They wrote to the American Secretary in the ſame ſtile; approving and juſtifying, in the moſt forcible terms, the conduct of the Aſſembly at Boſton, and condemning the purport of his own letter with the moſt explicit freedom.

To ſhow, at the ſame time, that they did not mean their diſſatisfaction ſhould evaporate in meer complaints, they renewed their former combinations againſt the uſe and importation of Engliſh goods, and agreed to vend or purchaſe none that ſhould arrive, after ſuch as had been ordered previouſly to the expiration of the preſent year. From this agreement articles only of indiſpenſible neceſſity were excepted; and it was to hold good till the late acts were entirely repealed.

The diſſolution of the Aſſembly of Maſſachuſet had been preceded, a few days before, by a great tumult at Boſton. A veſſel belonging to one of the principal merchants there, was ſeized by order of the Board of Cuſtoms, in conſequence of having

neglected to comply with the regulations in force. She was conveyed, for ſecurity, under the protection of a man of war, then lying in the harbour. Hereupon the populace aſſembled, and treated the Commiſſioners of the Cuſtoms very outrageouſly, breaking the windows of their houſes, and burning the Collectors boats.

Dreading further ill uſage, the officers of the Cuſtoms judged it neceſſary to take ſhelter in caſtle William, ſituated at the entrance of the harbour, where they reſumed the functions of their office.

In the mean time, the people of Boſton held frequent meetings, the iſſue of which was a remonſtrance to the Governor, aſſerting, as uſual, rights and pretenſions contradictory to the authority of the Britiſh legiſlature. Among other requeſts, they made one of a very ſingular and unprecedented nature, which was, that he would take upon him to order the King's ſhips out of the harbour.

The licentiouſneſs of the people became daily more outrageous and ungovernable. It reſembled, in many inſtances, the ſpirit of violence exerted by the republican party, during the tumultuous æra of the civil wars in England in the laſt century.

Inflamed by the machinations of thoſe among them who had ſecret ends to accompliſh, the commonalty began to throw off all decency and reſerve, both in their words and actions. They ſpoke with the higheſt irreverence of the greateſt perſonages in Britain, and their publications teemed with paſſages deſtructive of all ſubordination to its ſovereignty over them. They ſeemed, in ſhort, to have thrown aſide all reſpect for their mother country, and to have transferred their regard and obedience to their own aſſemblies excluſively. Theſe they dignified, occaſionally, with the title of Parliament; and conſidered them as lawfully inveſted with ſufficient rights and powers to govern

their

them independently of any other interference whatsoever.

In the midſt of theſe diſorders, news arrived from England, that the ſolemn petition they had tranſmitted thither, to be laid before the King, had not been preſented to him. The Colony Agent had not been ſuffered to deliver it; objections being made that he was not duly authoriſed for that purpoſe, having been only appointed by the Aſſembly, without the Governor's concurrence.—This report contributed not a little to excite univerſal murmurs, and to add to the ill-blood and ſeditious diſpoſition already prevailing among all claſſes.

Government bethought itſelf, at length, of making the Colonies ſenſible, that it would not ſubmit any longer to be braved and inſulted in the execution of its authority. To this intent troops were ordered to repair to Boſton, in ſufficient numbers to intimidate the refractory, and to ſupport the well-affected.

On receiving this intelligence, the town of Boſton expreſſed the utmoſt ſurprize and alarm. Now it was, ſaid they, that the real deſigns of Britain began to manifeſt themſelves. Their liberties were now to be trampled upon by an unmerciful and barbarous ſoldiery; and themſelves devoted to deſtruction, in caſe of reſiſtance.

They aſſembled in the town-hall; and drew up a petition to the Governor, intreating him to call a General Aſſembly, that the province might inſtantly reſolve what meaſures were proper to be adopted in ſuch critical circumſtances, for the peace and ſafety of the country, and to prevent thoſe heart-burnings and inſurrections, that might probably be occaſioned by the rumours of a military force approaching to overawe the inhabitants, and

compel their obedience to laws to which they were averſe.

But they were diſappointed in their demands: the Governor gave them to underſtand, that it was no longer in his power to convene a Provincial Aſſembly, until he had received the King's conſent; the purport of his laſt inſtructions being, that he ſhould wait for orders from England, where the matter was then under conſideration.

Upon this refuſal of the Governor, they determined to call an Aſſembly themſelves, under the name of a Convention. Preparatory to this purpoſe, a committee was appointed by the town-meeting, to take into ſpecial conſideration the preſent ſtate of the province. This committee began by a long enumeration of their rights, and of their various infractions. They reſolved, that the introduction of an armed force among them, in oppoſition to their conſent, was contrary to law. This reſolution, they aſſerted, was ſtrictly conformable to the ſpirit of the Engliſh conſtitution, which forbids the keeping up of an army, without the conſent of Parliament. They appealed to the ſame ſpirit for the propriety of holding frequent Parliaments; and, in conſequence, reſolved that a Convention ſhould be ſummoned, in the ſame manner as the General Aſſembly.

But the moſt remarkable meaſure adopted by this meeting, was a requiſition to the inhabitants to put themſelves in a poſture of defence againſt any ſudden attack of an enemy. This requiſition they founded on a late apprehenſion, as they ſtated it, prevailing among many, of an approaching rupture with France.

This was certainly the boldeſt ſtep that had ever yet been taken in the Colonies. The intention of it was obvious to the world, as well as to themſelves; and it was eaſy to perceive what were the final aims of

thoſe who had given birth to, and fomented with ſo much pains, the diſtractions and diſturbances throughout the Colonies.

The ſelect-men of the town of Boſton were directed to write circular letters to all the other towns in the Colony, acquainting them with the reſolutions that had been taken, and exhorting them with the utmoſt earneſtneſs to concur with firmneſs and ſpeed in the deciſions made by the meeting.

Such was the unanimity of oppoſition to Great Britain throughout this populous province, that out of ninety-ſeven towns, of which it conſiſted, one only refuſed its concurrence. This was the town of Hatfield; the inhabitants of which had the courage to diſſent from the ſentiments of their countrymen, and openly to ſignify their diſapprobation of their proceedings.

Their anſwer to the circular letter inviting them to unite with the reſt, was conceived in terms, which for the judiciouſneſs and ſpirit of the arguments they conveyed, were juſtly eſteemed at the time, a compoſition highly honourable to thoſe who framed it. It fully juſtified the moderation it recommended, and repreſented in their trueſt colours, the ſeditiouſneſs and infatuation of thus bidding open defiance to Great Britain, and of flying to arms without neceſſity; which could only tend to accelerate miſchiefs and miſeries, which coolneſs and temperance of behaviour would be moſt efficacious to prevent.

The conduct of the inhabitants of Hatfield made no other impreſſion on their countrymen than to excite their contempt of it, and their ſuſpicion that it was influenced by motives of puſillanimity, or intereſtedneſs; an accuſation which they were always ready to fix on all who deviated from thoſe violent methods of acting which they had ſo long adopted,

and

and looked upon as the only means that were proper to be employed in the present exigencies.

As soon as the Convention was met, it sent a deputation to the Governor, to assure him that their intentions were intirely pacific; that they did not consider themselves as any ways invested with powers of government; that their sole aim was to deliberate together, in a friendly manner, what measures would prove most conducive to preserve public tranquility, in the present critical situation of their affairs.

They did not forget, however, to complain of grievances, and of the imputation of disloyalty under which they unjustly laboured in England; earnestly desiring that he would consent to the meeting of a General Assembly, as the surest and most constitutional remedy they could have recourse to, in their present distress.

But the Governor remained inflexible in his denial of their request; advising them seriously to reflect on the dangers they were exposing themselves to, by continuing assembled in defiance of law.—He exhorted them to desist from so unwarrantable a conduct, and quietly to separate, before he found himself obliged, as the Representative of the Crown, to assert its prerogatives in a more decisive manner. He told them they might rest assured, that Great Britain was determined to maintain her sovereignty unimpaired, and would find means to insure obedience.

In answer to the Governor's admonitions, they replied, that the Convention could only be viewed as a private assembly of persons, met to confer amicably on their concerns. In that light, which was the only one they claimed, no criminality or refractoriness could be imputed to them.

To this second message the Governor would give

hearing, would be admitting them to be legally aſſembled, and might tend to confer a weight and importance on them, which he wholly diſavowed.

The Governor's firmneſs diſconcerted them :— They contented themſelves with drawing up a report of their proceedings; which, contrary to the ſtile they had uſed hitherto, was conceived in terms of remarkable moderation. After mentioning the motives of their meeting, and diſclaiming all public authority, they recommended intire deference and ſubmiſſion to government, and a reſpectful dependence on the wiſdom and equity of the king and his miniſters, for a juſt and timely redreſs of their grievances.

They added ſtrong proteſtations of their readineſs to aſſiſt in their ſeveral capacities, in the maintainance of good order, and to co-operate with the civil government in the ſuppreſſion of all irregularities.

They concluded by a circumſtantial repreſentation of their own conduct on the preſent occaſion, and of every tranſaction which related to it. This was done by way of apology, and to obviate or diminiſh the ſiniſter impreſſions which the violence of their late proceedings might have occaſioned. It was tranſmitted to their agent in London, who was carefully inſtructed to make the beſt uſe of it for that purpoſe.

The day whereon the Convention broke up, was marked by the arrival of ſeveral tranſports with troops, under the convoy of ſome ſhips of war. There were difficulties at firſt about quartering them. As caſtle William was ſufficiently roomy to accommodate them, objections were ſtarted to their admiſſion into the town, where no barracks had been prepared for their reception. But this difficulty was luckily removed by fitting up ſome houſes that were to

admitted on that footing, in order to obviate any precedent of their being quartered in private houſes. On theſe conditions they came on ſhore, and were allowed the proviſions uſual to be furniſhed by the Colony in ſuch places.

This arrival of a military force ſeemed to have thrown a damp on the ſpirit of turbulence that had reigned ſo long uncontrouled. As it was now imagined, that having once begun, Great Britain would continue to act with vigour, thoſe who before had been the open promoters of oppoſition, began to think it neceſſary to proceed with caution, and to aſſume an appearance of moderation.

But the tranquility effected by this meaſure was unhappily of no long duration. A concatenation of untoward cauſes, produced a ſeries of incidents that ſoon put an end to the expectations that had been formed of ſeeing a ceſſation of this unhappy conteſt.

The late conduct of the Province of Maſſachuſet had given great offence in England. It was repreſented in Parliament, as an atrocious violation of the dignity of the Britiſh legiſlature, and as an explicit denial of its authority. The public was anxious, in the mean time, to ſee a period of theſe diſputes, convinced that they would, if not ſoon terminated, occaſion miſchiefs of a very ſerious nature.

The two parties that divided the Britiſh nation on this ſubject, ſubſiſted ſtill in their full force.—Thoſe who had at the commencement of the diſpute recommended coercive meaſures, adhered to their former opinion with unabated warmth; and ſuch as preferred lenity and condeſcendence, were no leſs ſtrenuous in maintaining the juſtneſs of their ſentiments.

In this perpetual conflict of ideas, the people at

Thus the altercation continued in Britain, as well as in America, with as little ſigns of coming ſpeedily to any concluſion. It was this circumſtance, principally, that kept up the ſpirit of diſſention in America. Had the Britiſh nation been firſt and laſt of one mind on this matter, Lord Chatham's aſſertion in the Houſe of Commons would have been verified, and the reſiſtance of America would only have provoked her deſtruction. But the claſhing of private intereſts in Britain, gave a ſtrength to the pretenſions, and an importance to the tranſactions in the Colonies, that perplexed the councils of the nation, and rendered them fluctuating and indeciſive.

As the oppoſition in America was attended, on the contrary, with unanimity, and conducted by perſons of great abilities, it was not ſurpriſing that they ſhould make the moſt of the diviſions prevailing among the ruling people in Britain, and take all thoſe advantages that neceſſarily accrue to an enemy from the diſunion of his antagoniſts.

Such has conſtantly been the perſuaſion of the judicious and diſcerning, ever ſince the commencement of this conteſt.

Thus, notwithſtanding the reſolutions taken from time to time by the Britiſh miniſtry, to force the Americans to obedience, as the Colonies were well acquainted with the inſtability of people in power, they cheriſhed no groundleſs hope, that in the frequent changes of the miniſtry, one might at laſt ariſe favourable to their pretenſions, and inclined, for the ſake of tranquility, to make the conceſſions they demanded.

In this expectation, it was not ſurpriſing they ſhould continue to harraſs every adminiſtration that proved hoſtile to their demands. They had done it hitherto with ſucceſs, and doubted not, through perſeverance, to gain the point they propoſed.

Such was the reſpective ſituation of Great Britain and America, at the opening of the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty-nine; when a new ſyſtem appeared to have been formed in regard to America, and a determination taken to change the lenity and forbearance hitherto exerciſed, into ſeverity and compulſion.

In purſuance of this determination, an addreſs was preſented to the King by both Houſes, wherein they paſſed the ſevereſt cenſures on the behaviour of the Aſſembly of Maſſachuſet; the various reſolutions it had paſſed derogatory to the claims of the Britiſh legiſlature were declared to be null and void. The circular letter it had written to the other Colonies, inviting them to join in a common petition againſt thoſe claims, was condemned as illegal, unconſtitutional, and unwarrantable in a people who acknowledged themſelves ſubject to the Crown of Great Britain. It was no leſs reprobated as injurious to the Britiſh nation, and evidently calculated to ſpread diſcontent and create factions inimical to the parent ſtate, and directly ſubverſive of its ſovereignty over the Colonies.

The town of Boſton in particular, by this addreſs, was repreſented as the ſeat of inceſſant confuſion. Riots and diſturbances daily ſucceeded to each other; and the inhabitants were become ſo unruly and tumultuous, that no reſpect was paid to civil government. The officers appointed by the Crown in the various departments of public ſervice, did not any longer dare to attempt the execution of their duty. The magiſtrates, inſtead of exerting themſelves for the reſtoration of good order, remained paſſive ſpectators of theſe tumultuous proceedings." It was time, therefore, for the executive power to interpoſe, in order to effect that by force, which could not be compaſſed by lenity.

It was declared in this addreſs, that the proceedings of the people in their town meetings were unlawful and ſeditious; that their appointment of a Provincial Convention, and their letters to the ſeveral towns, requeſting them to elect deputies to that intent, were deſtructive of all government, and tended to eſtabliſh an authority independent of the Crown. The meeting of the Convention itſelf, was a daring uſurpation of power, and a manifeſt defiance of the Britiſh legiſlature.

This addreſs expreſſed, at the ſame time, a full concurrence in the meaſures that had been taken to reduce that town and province to the obdience due to Great Britain. It promiſed a firm ſupport of all the meaſures neceſſary for that end; and concluded by adviſing that an exemplary puniſhment ſhould be inflicted on the authors of the late diſorders. In order to do this the more ſpeedily and effectually, it was propoſed that Governor Bernard might be inſtructed to tranſmit the fulleſt information he could procure, of all treaſonable acts committed in the Colony of Maſſachuſet within the foregoing year, ſpecifying the perſons moſt active in their perpetration, that a commiſſion might iſſue from the Crown, to inquire into, and determine upon the guilt of the reſpective offenders, within the limits of this realm, in conformity to a ſtatute made in the reign of Henry the Eighth, ſhould ſufficient ground appear to warrant ſuch a method of proceeding.

Notwithſtanding this addreſs was voted by a great majority, yet it was ſtrongly oppoſed; and a multitude of arguments were adduced, to ſhow the danger, as well as the impropriety of uſing coercive methods in America. It was alledged that Great Britain having, by the repeal of the ſtamp act, renounced all ideas of compulſion, it ought, conſiſtently with its honour and juſtice, to have

The Coloniſts had been taught to believe, that the policy of Great Britain would henceforward induce her to ſecure the loyalty of the Colonies through acts of beneficene, and carefully to abſtain from laying ſuch impoſitions upon them as did not accord with the ſyſtem they had formed upon the ſubject of taxation. It was not ſurprizing, therefore, that finding themſelves deceived, they ſhould feel and expreſs a reſentment which had certainly ſome foundation.

Incouraged by the irreſolution of our politics, and the inconſiſtency of our councils, they had been guilty of irregularities which were not to be excuſed. But they who accuſed them of rebellion, ſhould conſider, that when people are led into errors and miſbehaviour through the fault of others, theſe are principally anſwerable for the miſchiefs that are committed.

The temper of the Americans had been tried:—Experience had ſhown, that in ſome caſes they were obſtinately determined to adhere to their own opinions. It would have been wiſer, therefore, to have made no ſecond trial after failing in the firſt.

There were a variety of objects in America to which the views of the miniſtry might be profitably directed, without ſelecting thoſe preciſely from which no emolument could accrue, and the proſecution of which was avowedly attended with danger. the great object in view was the right of taxation: but were it not more prudent for Great Britain to lay that ſpeculative point intirely aſide, and confine herſelf to what long experience had proved was practicable, and void of all perplexity?

There were inſtances without number, wherein the acquieſcence of the Colonies might be depended on:—Why ſhould one wander from them in ſearch of thoſe where it was clear they would remain inflexible?

Popular prejudices ſhould not be combated, when the victory over them would coſt more than it was worth. Thus, allowing the Americans to act upon a wrong principle, ſtill as it was deeply fixed, to employ violent methods in the cure of it, would be like tearing up a tree by the roots, in endeavouring to clear it of ſome noxious branches.

But whether the Americans were right or wrong, was no longer a queſtion. An idea was now taken up, that the dignity of the ſtate muſt, at all hazards, be ſupported. This was indeed an argument of ſome weight; and was in itſelf an object deſerving of attention. But was it not equally proper to conſider well the occaſion upon which a nation's honour is to be aſſerted? Was the nation's dignity, any more than her intereſt, concerned in the enforcing of a tax univerſally odious to them upon whom it was impoſed, and the produce of which did not deſerve the pains and expence that would be required to raiſe it?

The Americans were a keen and intelligent people. They clearly ſaw that the principal intent of the duties laid upon them, was to raiſe a fund for the gratification and recompenſe of thoſe among them who were willing to co-operate in miniſterial meaſures. They could not therefore be expected to ſubmit, unleſs they were compelled by a force ſuperior to that which they would be able, and probably would not fail to exert, in oppoſition to any ſuch attempt.

But of all ſeverities, none could ſurpaſs that of bringing delinquents in America to be tried in Britain. This was evidently repugnant to the ſpirit of the conſtitution. It was renewing thoſe unhappy times, when tyranny and cruelty were ſeated upon the throne, and ſported with the liberty and life of the ſubject. Of all obſolete ſtatutes, thoſe made

in the bloody reign of Henry the Eighth, ſhould laſt of all be recurred to at the preſent day.

What juſtice, what humanity could warrant the tearing a man away three thouſand miles acroſs the ſeas, to be tried for an offence of which at laſt he may be found innocent; but for which, by this mode of trial, he is previouſly made to ſuffer? Remote from his natural friends and connections, deſtitute of ſupport and advice, he is delivered into the hands of power, and tried by a jury of ſtrangers, perhaps under its influence, and who cannot be ſuppoſed to feel the ſame intereſt for him as they would for one of themſelves."

In anſwer to theſe objections, the adherents to adminiſtration ſtill contended for the neceſſity of a direct and explicit acknowledgment of the ſovereignty of Great-Britain on the part of America.—Nothing elſe was required: The tax lately impoſed could not be conſidered as any emolument to the revenue; it was meant merely as an homage to the ſupreme power of the parent ſtate; and though it might be a mortification to the pride of the Coloniſts, it certainly was no incumbrance on their property.

It was high time to repreſs the republican diſpoſition of the people of Maſſachuſet, whoſe licentiouſneſs and inſolence were the more daring, as they perceived a backwardneſs to check it. In the former reigns ſuch proceedings as had happened in the preſent, would have met with immediate chaſtiſement. Nothing, therefore, but ſpirited reſolves, ſupported by vigorous meaſures, would remedy the evils complained of, and reſtore that ſubordination in the Colonies, which was abſolutely requiſite for the general intereſt of the Britiſh empire.

Such were the reaſonings and opinions of the party that recommended coercive meaſures. Thoſe of lenity had proved ſo fruitleſs that they imagined

it was impolitic and abſurd to truſt to them any longer.

In the mean while, the arrival of the Britiſh troops at Boſton, had been productive of very alarming events. During ſome time, an appearance of harmony had ſubſiſted between them and the inhabitants; but the intent of their coming rendered their preſence obnoxious. They did not evidently come as friends: they were, on the contrary, the moſt dangerous foes; as under pretence of maintaining tranquility, they came with an intent to ſubvert public freedom, and eſtabliſh a deſpotic authority. Such were the ideas prevailing throughout the American continent.

While the forces that had arrived continued the ſame in number, they were too formidable to be inſulted with impunity. But the departure of a large detachment having greatly diminiſhed them, the people of Maſſachuſet came, it ſeems, to the reſolution to expel this ſmall remainder, which they looked upon with equal averſion and contempt. So little were they either regarded or dreaded, that one of the town magiſtrates took occaſion publicly to repreſent them as a meer handful. The deſigns forming againſt them, were not, however, ſo ſecretly managed, as to be entirely concealed. An intimation of this kind put an end to what little cordiality might have ſubſiſted between them and the inhabitants. Mutual inſults and provocations quickly followed; and purſuant to the intent propoſed, the people in the country took up arms, and prepared to join thoſe of Boſton. But before matters were duly ſettled for the execution of this plot, an accident happened, which prevented it from taking place in the manner deſigned.

In the evening of the fifth of March, 1770, ſome ſoldiers were aſſaulted and beaten by a party of the town's-people.—A tumult en-

fued;—the inhabitants collected from all parts of the town, threatening deſtruction to the military, whom they attacked with clubs and bludgeons.—Provoked at this uſage, ſome of the ſoldiers fired upon the populace, ſeveral of whom were killed and wounded.

The conſequence of this unhappy fray was, that in order to prevent further bloodſhed, it was judged neceſſary to remove the troops to Caſtle William. Had they not retired in this manner, it is propable they would have been cut to pieces. The whole Province of Maſſachuſet was up in arms, and would eaſily have overpowered the ſmall number to which they were then reduced.

The ſtationing of theſe troops at Boſton, had not produced thoſe ends for which they had been ſent. The Colonies ſtill continued in their former reſolution to oppoſe Britiſh importations. Aſſociations were publicly formed for this purpoſe; they met regularly, as if duly authorifed by law; and appointed committees to inſpect the cargoes of all veſſels arriving from Britain. Severe cenſures were paſſed upon all who refuſed to concur in thoſe aſſociations; and their names were publiſhed in the newſpapers, as enemies to their country. The reſolves and decrees of theſe meetings met with a compliance and reſpect which was utterly denied to the authority of government.

In ſome caſes, goods imported from Great Britain were immediately ſeized as ſoon as landed, and ſecured in warchouſes to prevent their ſale: in other caſes they reſhipped them to Great-Brita

Upon receiving intelligence of theſe proceedings, the Parliament was highly incenſed, and a determination was conſequently taken not to relax from vigorous meaſures, which, in the opinion of the majority, was become more neceſſary than ever.

In

In order, at the ſame time, to make it evident, that they were no leſs obſervant of moderation than actuated by zeal for the dignity of the Britiſh Legiſlature, they repealed all the late duties, excepting that upon tea, which was reſerved merely to ſave the national honour in the midſt of ſo much condeſcenſion; and as an object which nothing but a ſettled reſolution to quarrel with Great Britain; could render deſerving of any animadverſion on the part of the Americans.

Many weighty arguments, however, were adduced againſt the continuation even of this duty. It amounted, in truth, to no more than ſixteen thouſand pounds; but would be conſidered in America as an inlet to other taxes on the ſame plan, whenever time and opportunity were more favourable than the preſent, for the Britiſh miniſtry to make ſuch an attempt.

Experience ſhowed this reaſoning to have been well founded. The continuance of the duty upon tea, trifling as it was, excited the murmurs of the Colonies in a violent degree. They objected to it preciſely on the ſame ground the oppoſition in Parliament had done, as an impoſition, which, if they conſented to it, would be made a precedent, upon which others of the ſame nature might in future be demanded.

What, in all probability, much contributed to the inflexibility of the Colonies, was the critical ſituation of affairs in Europe at this ſeaſon †. To ſay nothing of the diſcontents prevailing from various cauſes at home, a rupture was apprehended with the Houſe of Bourbon. They who patroniſed the Colonies, did not fail to urge theſe as weighty motives to avoid any altercation with them; and to ſacrifice the little intereſts in agitation between them and the mother country, to the greater ob-

† 1771.

jects that might ſhortly employ the whole attention and power of Great Britain.

This inflexible ſpirit, inſtead of being in the leaſt allayed, ſeemed in fact to increaſe of late, in proportion to the conceſſions made by Parliament to the Colonies. Theſe conceſſions they looked upon as extorted by their own firmneſs; and as owing, by no means, to the benignity of the Britiſh government.

Conformably to this diſpoſition, they continued to encourage their own manufactures, and to diſcourage thoſe of Great Britain, as far as it was practicable in a country that could not well thrive and flouriſh without importing a conſiderable number of the moſt eſſential articles requiſite for the proſecution of the moſt neceſſary branches of buſineſs, and could not, at the ſame time, procure many of them any where upon ſuch advantageous terms as from Great Britain.

Thus, notwithſtanding the agreements of non-importation, in which they were at firſt ſo ſanguine and zealous, they relaxed by degrees, prompted by convenience and intereſt; and the general intercourſe in commercial matters was carried on as uſual, without any material interruption.

But the political intercourſe was attended every where with perpetual diſputes. Governors were embroiled in daily conteſts with their Provincial Aſſemblies. Prorogations and diſſolutions followed each other of courſe, accompanied by cenſures on the one ſide, and remonſtrances on the other.

Theſe inceſſant altercations could not fail further to debilitate the powers of government, already weakened through preceding cauſes. The reverence due to lawful authority ſeemed in a manner to be obliterated in the minds of the generality, and they ſeemed to conſider themſelves as at liberty to

act in all matters of trade and buſineſs without any ſort of reſtraint.

This unruſineſs was prevalent every where. At Boſton the reſiſtance to the Cuſtom-houſe officers continued to manifeſt itſelf upon every occaſion; and was ſometimes accompanied with great inſtances of inhumanity. Among others, a tideſman, who had ſeized a veſſel for breach of the acts of trade, was ſeized by the populace, ſtripped, and carted about the town, beſmeared with tar, and ſtuck with feathers.

At the town of Providence, in Rhode Iſland, a place long notorious for ſmuggling, the people boarded a King's veſſel ſtationed there to prevent it; treated the commander with great indignity; ſtruck and wounded him; and after forcing him and the ſhip's company to go on ſhore, ſet her on fire.

Theſe daring inſults were fully countenanced by their ruling men. The General Aſſembly of Maſſachuſet did not heſitate openly to notify to the Governor, that they acknowledged no ſuch officers in the Colony as the Commiſſioners of the King's Cuſtoms, nor knew of any revenue that he had any right to eſtabliſh there.

Upon receiving the news that ſalaries had been ſettled upon the juſtices of the Superior Court at Boſton, the moſt inflammatory language was held throughout the Province. An addreſs was preſented to the Governor, wherein that meaſure was cenſured in terms of the greateſt aſperity; and a committee was appointed to take it into conſideration, ſelected as uſual out of the different diſtricts of the colony.

This Aſſembly explicitly diſavowed the ſupremacy of the Britiſh legiſlature over them. They aſſerted that all men had a clear right to remain in a ſtate of nature ſo long as they thought proper; and in purſuance of this principle, they accuſed the

Britiſh Parliament of having violated their natural rights in a variety of caſes; but eſpecially by aſſuming the powers of legiſlation over them, in virtue of its own will, and contrary to their own conſent.

Copies of the tranſactions of this committee were induſtriouſly circulated in every town of Maſſachuſet. They were accompanied by letters, warmly exhorting the inhabitants to rouze themſelves, and to remain no longer indolent and ſupine, while the iron hand of oppreſſion was daily tearing the choiceſt fruits from the fair tree of liberty. Such were their expreſſions.

In the midſt of theſe diſturbances an accident happened, which contributed remarkably to increaſe the ill-humour and diſcontents of the Province. A number of letters written confidentially to perſons in place and power in England, by the preſent Governor and Deputy Governor, were accidentally diſcovered, and communicated to the public. They contained unfavourable repreſentations of the diſpoſitions of the people in general, and of the ſecret views of their leaders; their intent was to ſhow the neceſſity of coercive meaſures, and of altering the form of government in order to ſecure the people's future obedience.

The wrath and indignation excited on this occaſion produced the moſt violent reſolutions in the Aſſembly. The original letters had fallen into the poſſeſſion of their agent at London, who tranſmitted them immediately to his conſtituents. They were carried up to the council by deputations, who were ſtrictly enjoined not to truſt them an inſtant out of their hands. In this mortifying manner they were preſented for inſpection to the Governor, who could not deny his own ſignature.

In conſequence of this diſcovery, a petition was ſent over to England, earneſtly entreating the King

contrary to this requeſt, they not only were continued, but the petition was declared groundleſs and ſcandalous. This anſwer added freſh rancour to the animoſity and reſentment of the people of Maſſachuſet.

But another tranſaction was now preparing, the conſequences of which were far more fatal.

Notwithſtanding the reſolutions adopted in the Colonies againſt the importation of tea from Great Britain, means had been found to import it, though in ſmaller quantities than heretofore, owing partly to the lower price of that brought from other countries. This diminution was very prejudicial to the Eaſt India Company; and the more felt at this time, as they had lately experienced ſome mortifications from government. In order to make them ſome compenſation, the Parliament empowered them to export their tea free of any duty payable by the Company †.

In virtue of this permiſſion, the Company freighted ſeveral ſhips with tea for North America, and appointed agents to diſpoſe of it in the ſeveral colonies.

This open and avowed manner of bringing a commodity among them, in direct defiance to their conſent and oppoſition, was, in their opinion, an inſult not to be ſuffered. Private intereſt, as well as public averſion to this meaſure, contributed to render it odious. The dealers in tea foreſaw that the profits of this branch of buſineſs, which were very conſiderable, would henceforward center excluſively amongſt the Company's factors.

Unfortunately for the meaſure, theſe factors were the profeſſed adherents and ſupporters of the Britiſh adminiſtration: this, of courſe, rendered them extremely unpopular; and was alone a ſufficient motive to defeat the buſineſs committed to their management.

† 1773.

Thoſe

Thoſe perſons to whom the tea deſtined for Boſton was conſigned, were unhappily of the family, and neareſt connections of thoſe who had written the letters that had given ſuch general offence.

From theſe cauſes, together with the long ſubſiſting determination to counteract the deſigns of the Britiſh miniſtry, a ſettled reſolution was taken throughout the Colonies to oppoſe the landing of the tea.

They communicated their ſentiments to each other, and were unanimous in the perſuaſion, that if the tea was ſuffered to be brought aſhore, it would become impracticable to prevent the ſale of it.—thus the tax would take place, in ſpite of all their endeavours to the contrary.

In the mean time the people aſſembled every where in large bodies; and to make their reſolves the more ſpeedily effectual, they compelled the conſignees to reſign their appointments, and ſolemnly engage never to reſume them. Committees were choſen, who took upon them to act with great authority. They examined the accounts of merchants, framed public teſts, and declared ſuch as refuſed them enemies to their country. They were inveſted, in ſhort, with all thoſe powers, which a diſcontented people are ſo ready to truſt their leaders with.

Under the guidance and ſanction of theſe rulers, every ſort of licentiouſneſs was tolerated. The public prints, from one end of the continent to the other, were continually filled with invectives againſt the councils and policy of Great Britain. They ſummoned the people to reſiſtance from all quarters, and repreſented them as devoted to deſpotiſm, unleſs they univerſally roſe to face thoſe internal, as well as external enemies, who were leagued in a conſpiracy to oppreſs them.

Such was the purport of the language they uſed both in their ſpeeches and writings. Theſe ſentiments were not only thoſe of the commonalty; they were now adopted by all claſſes indiſcriminately, and were the avowed principles of the community.

While America was thus deliberately preparing to encounter the deſigns of Britain, three ſhips, freighted with tea, entered the harbour of Boſton. The danger, or rather the impracticability of landing it, was ſo manifeſt, that the captains would willingly have carried it back to England, could they have obtained a formal permiſſion from thoſe who were officially authoriſed to grant one. In this ſtate of ſuſpenſe, the inhabitants, who ſaw that if they were ſuffered to remain in the harbour, the tea would infallibly be landed, notwithſtanding all precautions againſt it, reſolved to put an end to the difficulty at once, by a blow that ſhould ſtrike radically at all attempts of this kind.

After giving notice to the conſignees, the owners, and the captains, that they would not permit them to bring their teas aſhore, and inſiſting on their departure from Boſton with their cargoes, upon finding that the Governor and Cuſtom-houſe refuſed their conſent, without which the ſhips could not leave the harbour, a number of men, diſguiſed like Indians, boarded them, and threw the whole cargoes into the ſea.

The ſame treatment was experienced by the veſſels laden with tea in other parts of America. At Philadelphia, the pilots were forbidden to conduct them up the river Delaware; and at New York, though ſome cheſts of tea were landed under the protection of a man of war, the Governor was conſtrained to deliver them into cuſtody, to preſerve the public peace.

But had the maſters of thoſe veſſels been ſuffered to bring the tea on ſhore, they would probably have found no perſons daring enough to take charge of them; ſo great was the dread of the aſſociations that had declared againſt its importation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Boſton Port Bill.

THE news of theſe proceedings in America arriving while Parliament was ſitting, was immediately communicated to both Houſes by a formal meſſage from the Throne.

This meſſage intimated in the ſtrongeſt terms, the neceſſity of taking the moſt ſpirited and ſpeedy meaſures, to put a ſtop to them; and of framing ſuch regulations as might efficaciouſly prevent their repetition, and ſecure an undiſputed dependence of the Colonies on the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain.

To prove the propriety of this meſſage, a large number of papers were laid before the Houſes relating to the late tranſactions in Maſſachuſet, and in other parts of America. They contained the votes and reſolutions of the Colonies previous to the arrival of the ſhips with the tea; the conduct of the people when they arrived; the menacing ſpeeches in their meetings; and the daringneſs and licentious language univerſally current in their publications.

The behaviour of the inhabitants of Boſton was particularized on this occaſion as highly deſerving of reprobation and puniſhment. Every endeavour had been uſed to engage their aſſiſtance for the preſervation of tranquility; but they had treated theſe endeavours with ſullenneſs and contempt: they had even, in their corporate capacity, publicly inſulted the ſheriff in one of their town meetings, upon his officially warning them to break up that aſſembly as illegal.

Thus they had bidden open defiance to all civil authority, and taken the reins of government out

of the lawful hands; transferring it to themſelves, and exerciſing actually all its powers according to their own judgment and determination.

The concluſion was, that it being evident from all the documents ſubjected to the inſpection of government, that the re-eſtabliſhment of peace and order in that Colony could not be effected without a direct and vigorous interpoſition of Parliament, its powers ought now to be called into action, and could not be too ſoon exerted.

It was urged that ſuch as were intimately converſant in the affairs of the Colonies, unanimouſly agreed, that in their preſent circumſtances nothing but ſuch a meaſure would bring them to reaſon, and induce them to recognize the lawful ſovereignty of Great Britain without further chicanery and diſpute.

The indignation without doors was equally rouſed againſt the Americans, as well as that expreſſed by Parliament. As it appeared that they might eaſily have defeated the tea ſcheme without proceeding to ſuch violent extremities, the warmth with which their cauſe had been eſpouſed was now much abated; they began to be viewed in the light of a raſh, unruly people, ready to plunge into a ſerious quarrel for ſlight cauſes, and forgetful of the amicable intercourſe that had ſo long ſubſiſted between them and the parent ſtate, and of the affectionate manner with which they had been ſupported even in the preſent conteſt, by the good wiſhes and countenance of a conſiderable part of the Britiſh nation.

Swayed in no ſmall degree by this conſideration, as well as by the preceding arguments, the Parliament preſented an addreſs to the Throne, promiſing their firmeſt concurrence in the meaſures it had recommended for the ſubduing of the refractory diſpoſition of the Colonies.

This addreſs, however, was not unanimous: there were many who thought that previous to the adoption of ſo weighty a meaſure, as that of abſolute coercion, the motives on which it was founded ſhould be examined and diſcuſſed with the utmoſt freedom and latitude. That is was a ſtep which, when once taken, could not with facility be recalled, and would in the mean time involve Great Britain in ſueh difficulties and dangers as were fitter to be left to the imagination of thoſe to whom they were thus hinted, than to be now made a ſubject of explicit deſcription.

America, it was argued, was univerſally ripe for the moſt obſtinate reſiſtance, in caſe force ſhould be uſed in the buſineſs of taxation. Parliament might inſiſt upon the lawfulneſs of taxing the Colonies; but the Colonies themſelves would decide whether they would ſubmit or refuſe to be taxed. Paſt experience had ſhown that they were determined to oppoſe this meaſure:—Why ſhould the miniſtry, therefore, preſume to act upon ſo dangerous a ground as that of coercion, with ſo many warnings of its impropriety? The only proſpect of ſucceſs was founded upon a force ſuperior to that of America: but were Great Britain to put forth her ſtrength upon this occaſion, would not the expences prove immenſe? And were ſhe to ſucceed, would not the ill temper and reſentment of the Americans remain unconquered, and become a ſource of conſtant ſuſpicions on our ſide, and of malevolence on theirs, which would break out on the leaſt opportunity of exerciſing it to our detriment?

In the preſent diſpute, two national bodies differed on a point of ſpeculation; and one of the two was to be materially affected by the iſſue of the diſpute. It became them both, therefore, to proceed with the utmoſt caution, and to afford no cauſes of

of the moſt delicate nature, involved in doubts and perplexities, and would not, unfortunately, admit of a deciſion that would ſatisfy either of the contending parties. Great Britain claimed a right to tax America; America denied that right.—The former had cut ſhort the matter, by deciding in its own favour; but the latter refuſed to acknowledge the juſtice of that deciſion; and pleaded the inequitableneſs of condemning one of the parties concerned, in ſo ſummary a manner: this was aſſuming an authority which was founded upon meer preſumption.

America, it was true, derived its political exiſtence from Britain, but was now become a conſiderable nation, and ought therefore to be treated with reſpect. Due attention ſhould be paid to the ideas prevailing in ſuch a nation; and care ſhould be taken not to give offence to ſo large a body, by inſiſting upon their relinquiſhing perſuaſions and principles which they hold as fundamental in their conſtitution. That in this litigation, the contending parties ſtood on very different ground. Great Britain would loſe nothing by making conceſſions, and waving the rights ſhe had claimed; but America had much to loſe by yielding to the demands made upon her.—They were of a nature that affected her in the tendereſt part; they deprived her of the conſequence to which ſhe thought herſelf juſtly entitled, and degraded her in her own ideas. This was too much for a numerous and reſpectable people to bear.—They could not comply without rendering themſelves unhappy in their own apprehenſions; ſuch a conceſſion ought not, therefore, to be required by a nation that called itſelf friendly and generous.

On theſe conſiderations, Great Britain would act a part conſiſtent with its magnanimity, and no ways repugnant to its intereſt, if duly reflecting on the equity of relinquiſhing a queſtion which ſhe could not decide in her own favour, without occa-

ſioning much calamity, ſhe would nobly and wiſely abandon all pretenſions, that were not manifeſtly her due, and clearly aſſented to by the other party.

A condeſcendence of this kind would deliver Great Britain at once from all difficulties: it would preclude all occaſions of diſpute, by leaving the Colonies in the quiet poſſeſſion of thoſe notions that were ſo dear to them, and would ſecure their adherence by the deareſt of all ties, that of their intereſt, which they were too intelligent not to know conſiſted in a cloſe attachment to Great Britain.—A diſſolution of this connection muſt undoubtedly be attended with many inconveniencies to them: but though they were conſcious of this, yet they were not the leſs reſolved to abide by them all, rather than conſent to thoſe requiſitions on the part of Great Britain which were the ſubject of the preſent altercation. Such had been their reſolve from its commencement; and in matters of this kind, experience daily ſhowed, that the further men advanced, the leſs they were willing to recede.

By theſe, and the like arguments, did the oppoſers of the miniſterial meaſures endeavour to prevent their taking effect. But the prepoſſeſſion againſt America was ſo ſtrong, that no reaſonings could withſtand it. Such as contended for the neceſſity of aſſerting the ſupremacy of Great Britain, at all events, were ſuch a majority, that all hopes were loſt of rendering their determinations ineffectual.

It may be added, that facts were on their ſide.—The oppoſition of the Americans had broken out into acts of great violence. They had treated individuals outrageouſly, and ſome with unwarrantable barbarity. In the reſentment which ſuch behaviour excited, the provocation to it was forgotten, and chaſtiſement was looked upon as no more than a juſt

and neceſſary aſſertion of the honour and dignity of the nation.

When the opponents of miniſtry warned them to look back before they proceeded further on this principle, and to examine impartially their own conduct in America, thir anſwer was,—that however that might have been diſagreeable to the Americans, it was juſtifiable on the general ground of ſupreme ſovereignty, ſo repeatedly aſſerted by the Britiſh legiſlature. Great Britain was now called upon to maintain her deciſion. The queſtion therefore was not whether ſhe ſhould relinquiſh her claims, but how to ſupport them moſt effectually.

It was now moved, that a forcible and vigorous plan of acting ſhould be adopted, and carried into immediate execution. That in this determination to reſtore peace and good order throughout the Colonies, that one which had invariably led the way to diſobedience and confuſion, ſhould be firſt animadverted to, and ſingled out as an object of Parliamentary reſentment. This Colony the Parliament and the whole nation knew to be Maſſachuſet. Here it was that reſiſtance had conſtantly originated; and here it was incumbent on them, for that reaſon, to begin the work of puniſhment for paſt, and of prevention againſt future offences.

The late outrageous proceedings at Boſton were of ſuch a nature, that were Great Britain to paſs them over without the ſeverity they deſerved, it would degrade her in the opinion of all the powers of Europe, whoſe attention was univerſally fixed on her preſent conduct, and would ſubject her to indignities without end from the Colonies. Had the proudeſt power in any quarter of the globe inſulted her in the manner the town of Boſton had done, ſhe muſt, and would undoubtedly have inſiſted on the ampleſt ſatisfaction: much more was ſhe entitled to it

from a place ſubject to her dominion, and which ſhe herſelf had founded.

It was therefore propoſed, that the town of Boſton ſhould pay for the tea that had been deſtroyed in its harbour. The diſguiſe aſſumed by the deſtroyers, was no mitigation of the offence imputed to the town in its corporate capacity. The temper of the inhabitants, the reſolves of the town-meetings, the neglect of their magiſtrates, in making no inquiry after offenders, the paſſiveneſs of all perſons poſſeſſed of influence during theſe proceedings, and their evident connivance at all irregularities,—theſe and other inſtances, needleſs to alledge, were convincing proofs that the commiſſion of that offence was, though indirectly, yet indiſputably countenanced by the inhabitants of Boſton. They ought therefore to make compenſation to the ſufferers; to which purpoſe it was proper to lay a public fine on the town, adequate to the loſs ſuſtained.

But beſide this indemnification for the injury done to private individuals, a public reparation was equally due to the honour of the Britiſh nation, no leſs hurt by ſo daring an inſult. To this intent it was moved, that the port of Boſton ſhould be ſhut up, and precluded from all commercial buſineſs, until the fine impoſed for the payment of the tea was diſcharged, and ſolemn aſſurances given that in future the inhabitants would ſubmit to the laws of trade and revenue enacted by the Britiſh Parliament. After making ſuch atonement, the king might, as ſoon as he thought proper, revoke the prohibition againſt the uſe of their harbour, and reſtore them to all their privileges.

This act, though ſevere in appearance, was not ſo, it was ſaid, in reality. The duration of the puniſhment inflicted upon the people of Boſton, lay entirely at their own option. An acquieſcence in

the requiſitions made by Parliament, would remove it inſtantly. But if they ſhould continue obſtinate in their denial of obedience, they alone would become anſwerable for the conſequences; and it were unworthy of the ſpirit and character of the Britiſh nation, to ſuſpend the puniſhment they had ſo juſtly incurred, till full ſatisfaction had been obtained.

The buſineſs propoſed might, it was added, be effected by a few frigates, without calling in the aid of the military. This would prevent diſturbances and bloodſhed, and compel them to ſubmit quietly, when they ſaw their whole trade at a ſtand. It would alſo intimidate the refractory in the other Colonies, by ſhowing them with how much facility Great Britain could enforce obedience whenever ſhe choſe it.

This famous bill did not remain long in agitation: the temper of both Houſes was ſo warm upon this occaſion, as well as that of the nation at large, that it paſſed with a great majority, and was received with general ſatisfaction.

Petitions were however preſented againſt it by the Agent for the Province of Maſſachuſet, and by ſeveral natives of North America. They repreſented that it was repugnant to ſtrict equity, to condemn a whole people unheard, and at ſuch a diſtance; that on a proſecution of the offenders, if they could be diſcovered, Parliament might reſt aſſured, that a due execution of the law would take place: that in public commotions it was difficult to come at the guilty; but that to puniſh indiſcriminately the whole community for the offences of a few, was an unwarrantable and dangerous precedent: that the interpoſition of Parliament in ſuch matters, was unneceſſary and illegal, as other tribunals were erected for thoſe purpoſes. Theſe alone had a right to take cognizance of ſuch caſes; as they were

amenable only before the judicial courts. The act tended therefore to alienate the Colonies, whose affections to Great Britain were founded on her benevolence and juſtice to them, but would be radically deſtroyed by this arbitrary exertion of authority.

Theſe petitions were zealouſly ſeconded by the oppoſition. It contended againſt the delivery of the town of Boſton into the power of the Crown, as a meaſure wholly indefenſible, and which might, upon future occaſions, become an inſtrument of the moſt fatal nature to the liberty of the ſubject. No trial had preceded this delivery; it was concluded upon merely in conſequence of an accuſation; which, though poſſibly well-founded, had not been proved. This was inverting the due order of proceeding, and opening a door to diſcretionary power. Such a power was incompatible with the freedom of the Britiſh conſtitution, which enjoins, that no man, much leſs a whole community, ſhould be adjudged guilty, but upon fair and open trial. A ſentence of puniſhment previous to this eſſential formality, could not therefore be conſidered in any other light than as an act of tyranny.

Allowing the demand of indemnification for the loſs of the tea to be juſt, was it equitable to ſuſpend at the ſame time the whole trade and buſineſs of a populous city, which had no other means of ſubſiſting? This was wantonly adding the ... of vindictiveneſs to the neceſſity of pur... a ſuppoſition that there had been a ju... flicting it.

Miniſtry ought not to ima... would think Boſton alone w... blow: it was aimed ſo viſibl... that they would reſent it as r... had felt it. The cauſe of ... cauſe of all. The reject...

of all America; and if it was a criminal act, they all partook of the guilt, and muſt be ſenſible that Britain meant at a convenient ſeaſon to extend the puniſhment equally to all.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Acts for new-modelling the Governments of Maſſachuſet and Quebec.

AFTER paſſing the act againſt the town and harbour of Boſton §, it was propoſed, that in order to temper juſtice with mercy, and to let the Americans ſee that conciliation, and not revenge, was predominant in Britain, the tax upon tea, that had given birth to the late diſturbances in that place, ſhould be entirely repealed. This would evince the ſincerity of the mother country, in its endeavours to bring about a reconciliation with the Colonies, and prove that pecuniary emoluments were not ſo much her aim, as the deſire of ſecuring herſelf from the diſgrace of not daring to reſent affronts and ill uſage.

But the miniſterial party would not hearken to ſuch a meaſure; which, in their opinion, ſavoured of weakneſs and imbecility, as if Britain repented of the ſtep ſhe had juſt taken, and in order to deprecate the forgiveneſs of America, was willing to atone for it by an equivalent condeſcenſion another way. It would convince them that Britain was conſcious of wanting juſtice in her claims, or power to make them good. This perſuaſion would induce them to put no ſtop to their pretenſions; or, what was worſe, to bid open defiance to thoſe of Britain, and throw off all remainder of dependence. It would therefore be acting both a more prudent, as well as manly part, to perſiſt in the work begun, and to wait with an inflexible firmneſs, the iſſue of the meaſures which the wiſdom of ſo large a majority had adopted.

§ 1774.

It was even alledged, that the preceding act, however ſpirited, would not ſuffice to lay that rebellious diſpoſition which ſeemed woven into the very frame of the preſent ſyſtem of government in the Province of Maſſachuſet. It was the production of the republican genius that animated the firſt ſettlers in that country, and carried with it all the marks of an inveterate hatred to royalty. While it remained in its priſtine form, no laſting peace would ſubſiſt in the Province of Maſſachuſet, as no permanent ſubmiſſion to the authority of Great Britain could be depended on. It was therefore become indiſpenſibly requiſite to mould it into another ſhape, and render it more conſiſtent with the ſpirit of monarchical government.

A motion was made in conſequence, for the better regulation of government in that Colony.—The purport of it was to alter ſome parts of its charter; to deprive the Houſe of Repreſentatives of the privilege of electing the Members of the Council; and to empower the Crown to appoint theſe, together with the judges, ſheriffs, and magiſtrates of all denominations, and to remove them at its pleaſure.

In doing this, no more, it was ſaid, was attempted than to place that Province on the ſame footing as ſeveral others. The motive for this alteration was, that Government in that Province did not poſſeſs a ſufficient ſhare of power: too much was lodged in the hands of the people. It ought therefore to be taken from them, to prevent a repetition of thoſe riots, that proceeded from a defect of authority to enforce the laws, in thoſe to whom the execution of them was entruſted. Their dependence on the people rendered them averſe to curb the licentiouſneſs of the vulgar, by diſobliging whom they might loſe much intereſt and ſupport. While ſuch a ſyſtem was ſuffered to continue, no obedi-

ence could be expected, as no magiſtrate would dare to execute his duty in the ſuppreſſion of diſturbances.

This bill was vigorouſly combated by the opponents of miniſtry. It was repreſented as a ſtretch of power unconſtitutional in the extreameſt degree; and ſufficient of itſelf to rouſe all America into oppoſition, had no other cauſe or pretence ever been afforded: the Colonies would immediately ſuſpect that Britain was intending to lay the axe to the root of all their franchiſes and liberties; in a word to deſtroy at once all their charters. If Britain could treat one Colony in this manner, it would not heſitate to treat them all in the ſame; it would new model their conſtitution, and bring them to ſuch a ſtate of dependence on her will, as to leave them not even the ſhadow of freedom.

Charters were dangerous things to meddle with in a free country. It was by attacking the charters of the great corporations in England, the Princes of the Stuart line had rendered themſelves odious, and kindled a ſpirit of diſcontent among their ſubjects, that paved a way to the revolution. Great Britain had always expreſſed a peculiar abhorence of ſuch proceedings; why ſhould ſhe hold them leſs diſagreeable to the Colonies? If chaters were ſacred in England, they were equally ſo in America: they were the foundation ſtone of their various governments: they were the original contract between the parent ſtate and its foreign ſettlements: to annul them was to diſſolve the ties by which they were bound to Great Britain.

But to what purpoſe were theſe charters to be broken or altered in any particular Colony? They were all equally hoſtile to the pretenſions of Britain. Did the other Colonies expreſs leſs repugnance than that of Maſſachuſet to comply with the ordinances of the Britiſh legiſlature? Were they, not from one

end of the continent to the other as zealous in oppoſing them? To attempt an infringement of that Colony's charter, would only open a new ſcene of contention more dangerous than any of thoſe that had preceded. Former attempts aimed only at parts of their immunities; but this was levelled at the whole. Every Colony would view it in this light; and it could not be doubted that the moment the intelligence of this tranſaction reached the ſhores of America, the Colonies would make it a common cauſe.

As to the plea ſo ſtrongly inſiſted upon by the miniſtry, of bringing, by this regulation, the government to a nearer conformity with that of Great Britain, though it might be true in ſome reſpects, it was unfounded in the two moſt eſſential points; the nomination of the judges, and of the members of the council: theſe, who are ſuppoſed to be in America, what the Houſe of Peers is in England, are by this bill removeable at the King's pleaſure, as well as the judges; whereas in England both Peers and Judges enjoy their ſeats independently of the Crown.

Petitions were preſented againſt this bill by the agent for the Colony of Maſſachuſet, and by the Americans in England, as they had done againſt the former, and with the like ſucceſs.

The ſtile of theſe petitions was extremely pathetic, and foreboded in the minds of thoſe who were acquainted with the character of the Americans, what would indubitably come to paſs when they were apprized of what the Britiſh Parliament had decreed concerning them.

Theſe petitions pointed out, with a kind of prophetic freedom, the conſequences that would infallably attend the paſſing of this bill. They implored the Houſe to conſider well the ſeverity with which the Americans were treated; and whether it were poſſible for men of ſenſe and ſpirit to endure it

with any degree of patience: they entreated them to ponder on the warmth of attachment ſo long and ſo ſincerely felt by the Americans for the Britiſh nation: they beſought them to remember they were Engliſhmen in their education and principles; as paſſionately fond of liberty, and as reſolutely determined never to loſe it but with their lives: that while Britain behaved to them like a parent, their affection would always prompt them to ſtand by her as faithful children; but that if forgetting the mutual obligations that bind them to each other, ſhe ſhould unadviſedly endeavour to reduce them to the condition of ſlaves, ſhe could not reaſonably expect them to ſubmit.

But theſe remonſtrances were overborn by the torrent of reſentment that prevailed againſt America. The abſolute need of putting a final period to the long ſeries of confuſions that had diſtracted that country, was an argument that ſilenced all others. The preſent ſtate of that country, it was ſaid, offered nothing but irregularity and lawleſsneſs: in deſperate caſes, deſperate remedies were neceſſary; the caſe of America was ſuch in every reſpect: Great Britain was now compelled to make an option between the total relinquiſhment of America, or the reduction of it to terms of obedience: upon mature conſideration ſhe choſe the latter. Having made this choice, it was vain and unworthy of her to cavil and debate any longer about ſuch points as ſhe had reſolved never to give up: ſhe was at the ſame time convinced that her reſolution was founded on the moſt ſubſtantial and valid reaſons; they had been fully and freely canvaſſed; and their weight was allowed by a great majority of ſuffrages, the only method of deciding queſtions of ſuch importance.

The concurrence expreſſed in the paſſing two acts of ſuch conſequence, induced the miniſtry to come

forward with a third; which was to complete the former, and render them effectual. It was intended for the impartial adminiſtration of juſtice in the caſe of ſuch perſons as might be employed in the execution of laws, and the ſuppreſſion of riots, and tumults in the Province of Maſſachuſet; and it provided, that if perſons acting in that capacity ſhould be indicted for murder, and a fair trial could not be had in the province, the Governor ſhould be authoriſed to ſend the perſon accuſed to be tried in ſome other colony, or to England, if neceſſary.

Such was the tenor of this act. It was ſupported in the debates it occaſioned, by arguments drawn from the neceſſity of encouraging people to act with courage and confidence, againſt the irregularities that would probably enſue on the carrying the reſolves of Parliament into execution at Boſton. It was fully expected the people of Maſſachuſet would exerciſe that reſiſtance againſt them, which they had ſo often furniſed in their remonſtrances. As it was determined on the other hand to enforce them at all events, blood would probably be ſhed: but if the military thus employed in the ſervice of their country, were to be ſubjected to a court of judicature, compoſed of individuals belonging to that Colony, partiality and revenge would naturally prompt theſe to treat them with all poſſible ſeverity.

It was replied in oppoſition to theſe aſſertions, that ſuch an act would not produce that impartiality which was its ſuppoſed intent: the ſame ſpirit of faction which would condemn the accuſed before an American tribunal, would abſolve them before an Engliſh one. But it was unjuſt to caſt ſuch ſuſpicions on the Americans. The caſe of Captain Preſton, tried and acquitted by them, proved that they would do juſtice even to thoſe whom they conſidered as their enemies. He had headed a party of ſoldiers who had killed ſeveral of the inhabitants of

Boſton; yet in the midſt of the reſentments this action had cauſed, he met with all the lenity that could be expected.

It was further inſiſted, that the real deſign of ſuch an act was to erect a military government, by rendering the ſoldiery reſponſible to thoſe only whoſe cauſe they ſupported. This would encourage them in the perpetration of all kind of violence, and occaſion much more miſchief than could poſſibly ariſe from leaving them to the ordinary courſe of juſtice in the country where they might be ſtationed.

This bill meeting with the ſame ſucceſs as the two preceding, emboldened miniſtry to bring a fourth into Parliament; which was repreſented as no leſs proper at the preſent ſeaſon than the others. It was to form a permanent eſtabliſhment in the Province of Quebec, of which it was alledged the government had not hitherto been carried on upon any ſettled plan.

By this bill the limits of that Province were extended much further than they ſtood at the time of the laſt general peace. The affairs of the Province were put under the direction of a council, in which the King's Roman Catholic ſubjects in Canada were to be admitted. The members of this council were to be appointed by the Crown, and removable at its option. It was to be inveſted with the powers of legiſlation, and to exerciſe all the functions annexed to ſuch powers, excepting that of impoſing taxes: the French laws were eſtabliſhed in civil caſes without a jury; and the Engliſh laws with a trial by jury only in criminal matters. The Roman Catholic ſecular clergy, were ſecured in their poſſeſſions, and in the receipt of their uſual tythes from perſons of their own communion.

The arguments upon which this act was grounded, were, that the inhabitants of Canada having been uſed to a French government and laws, did not wiſh

to thoſe of England, and dreading the conſequences of thoſe popular ſyſtems of governing of which they ſaw the effects in the continual diſturbances throughout the Engliſh Colonies. That as to religion, nothing had been done but conformably to the promiſes made at the time of the capitulation; and that as to the extenſion of the boundaries, it took in chiefly ſuch French people as had ſettled in places beyond their former limits.

But theſe arguments were far from ſatisfactory to the oppoſition. They objected that an arbitrary government could not legally be ſet up within the Britiſh dominions; and that for Parliament to become inſtrumental in eſtabliſhing it, was an object of aſtoniſhment. There was no kind of neceſſity for ſuch a meaſure: an aſſembly might have been formed like thoſe in the Engliſh Colonies, wherein the Roman Catholics of that Province might have been admitted, as they were in ſome of the French ceded iſlands. As to the attachment of the Canadians to abſolute power, it was a bare ſurmiſe: no people in their ſenſes that had taſted of a free government, would give the other the preference.—The trial by jury was univerſally allowed to be one of the wiſeſt inſtitutions ever deviſed for the benefit of the community: it was not only eligible in criminal, but equally in civil caſes: it prevented moſt effectually the invaſion of property, and the violation of perſonal freedom.

The affair of religion was debated with more warmth than any other. By the capitulation, no more, it was ſaid, than the free exerciſe of the Roman Catholic religion was to take place; but the preſent act went to a full and circumſtantial eſtabliſhment of it, on a footing ſuperior to that of the Proteſtant religion, which, by the preſent meaſure, could not be deemed to enjoy any more than a ſim-

racter of the Britiſh nation, hitherto eſteemed the bulwark of the Proteſtant cauſe? Was it found policy to encourage a perſuaſion, from which ſo much miſchief was uſed to be apprehended, and of which the maxims inſtilled in their earlieſt education had taught them principally to beware?

The extenſion of the boundaries of that Province was reprobated with great aſperity: it was juſtifying, in a manner, thoſe claims of France that had occaſioned the laſt war: it was appropriating territories to a government that was intended to be the ſeat of arbitrary power; and taking them from thoſe who had aſſiſted in the conqueſt of them, in the juſt and well-founded hope of annexing them to their own poſſeſſions. This was a flagrant act of injuſtice, and would unqueſtionably be conſidered as ſuch by all the Britiſh Colonies.

If the oppoſition it met with in Parliament was warm and ſpirited, the diſcontent it excited without was much greater. As its appearance was inimical to liberty and Proteſtantiſm, the nation at large received it with unuſual marks of diſapprobation. The former acts were eſteemed proper in the preſent exigencies to curb the violence of the Americans; but this was looked upon as an attempt to invade the liberty and the religion eſtabliſhed by the laws of the land: though an indirect, it ſeemed no leſs a real attack upon both, and produced much ill will and ſuſpicion among the generality of people. It had alſo another effect, of which the miniſtry was not perhaps aware, when it firſt ventured to bring it forth. It diminiſhed the popularity of the meaſures that had been formed againſt the Americans: it reſtored them a number of thoſe friends to their cauſe, whom their late outragious proceedings had diſguſted; and even cooled the fervour with which many had concurred in the views of the miniſtry.

But the zeal and numbers with which their conduct had been ſupported in Parliament, gave theſe a full confidence of ſucceſs. As they imagined the Colonies depended chiefly upon the countenance of their well-wiſhers at home, they doubted not that upon receiving intelligence, how weak the party was become to which they looked up for aſſiſtance, they would loſe courage, and acquieſce in the will of Great Britain; eſpecially on beholding full proofs that ſhe was earneſt in her determination to bring them into her own meaſures, at all hazads; and would certainly exert her whole ſtrength, if neceſſary, to compaſs an end, in which her intereſt and dignity were equally and eſſentially concerned.

The truth was, that the fame and grandeur of the Britiſh nation were ſuch at this period, that it was never imagined the Colonies would ſeriouſly dare to contend with ſo formidable a people. As the late triumphs of Great Britain in ſo many parts of the world, ſtill continued to make an impreſſion upon the minds of its rulers, they flattered themſelves that they would ſtill operate in the remembrance of others. In this expectation they judged that when the Americans ſaw the ancient ſpirit of the Britiſh adminiſtration revive, they would not riſk a trial of proweſs with thoſe fleets and armies, which the combined ſtrength of the two greateſt nations in Europe had not been able to reſiſt.

CHAP. VI.

Conſequences of the foregoing Acts.

SUCH were the ideas and the hopes of the miniſtry, and of a great part of the Britiſh nation. They were as juſtly founded as the general experience of mankind could render them; but as the proſperity and adverſity of ſtates, as well as individuals, depend upon events and caſualties which it is not in the power of political wiſdom always to foreſee, theſe flattering expectations, however they might ſeem reaſonable, only ſerved to increaſe the numberleſs proofs, how often the wiſdom of the compleateſt ſtateſmen is deceived in the calculation of thoſe contingencies that decide the fate of nations.

Various were the expectations entertained from the meaſures now carrying into execution. It was hoped that by depriving Boſton of the uſe of its harbour, the great trade it had hitherto engroſſed to itſelf, would be divided among the other ſea ports in the Province of Maſſachuſet: it was imagined that of courſe they would exert their beſt endeavours to retain it, and would not therefore expreſs or feel much concern for the treatment of that town. It was no leſs believed that the ſeverity exerciſed upon the Colony of Maſſachuſet, would ſtrike terror into the others, and might poſſibly, from the commercial jealouſies and competitions that had ſubſiſted between the northern and ſouthern Colonies, be viewed with ſome ſecret ſatisfaction, and hope of deriving ſome advantage from its depreſſion. Hence it was inferred, that each of them would remain quiet on their own ground; and that inſtead of in-

count, the unanimity which had linked them in ſo many effuſions of diſcontent, would gradually evaporate, and leave them in a more tractable ſituation.

But theſe expectations proved groundleſs in every reſpect. Inſtead of ſhowing the leaſt inclination to profit through their misfortune, every proof of attachment and friendſhip was given to the people of Boſton; and they had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing themſelves applauded and aſſiſted by the whole American continent.

The ſpirit of oppoſition had been gathering more ſtrength and determination, than was thought of in Britain, an unfortunate ignorance of the native character of the Americans, was the cauſe of unſpeakable detriment throughout the whole of this conteſt. The generality of people, many of the firſt rank not excepted, were fully perſuaded that they would never proceed beyond thoſe expreſſions of diſcontent, with which they firſt began. When it was ſeen, by the meaſures they adopted upon the rejection of their petitions, that they would not ſtop at bare complaints, ſtill it was firmly aſſerted, and unhappily believed, that riots and diſturbances would be the utmoſt of their reſentment and reſiſtance. The idea of a ſteady, regular oppoſition of force to force, did not enter into the minds of many. It was fondly hoped, that on the ſight of the military ſtrength that was now preparing againſt them, they would decline all further conteſt, and peaceably ſubmit to the injunctions of Great Britain.

But far different in reality from theſe notions, was the diſpoſition and temper of the Americans: paſſiveneſs and humility were no part of their character: they were bred from their infancy in the higheſt ſentiments of independency; and were

croachment upon their property, or perſonal privileges. They were educated in habits of hardineſs and activity, that fitted them betimes for thoſe labours and exertions that accompany a military life. They were uncommonly expert in the uſe of fire arms; and their native courage and intrepidity had been proved upon a variety of occaſions, and were never called in queſtion by thoſe who knew them.

The late war had trained numbers of them to the regular uſe of arms; and they were not deficient in individuals, who had greatly ſignalized themſelves at that time both by ſea and land.

Such were the people whom prejudice repreſented as equally unable and unwilling to face the power and valour of Great Britain in the field; and whom the very terror of her arms would alone be able to conquer.

It was not ſurprizing, therefore, that animated by that ſpirit of liberty which, in a nation aſpiring at independence, is ever ſtrongeſt, they ſhould unanimouſly conſpire to ſupport each other in every dificulty they expected to encounter.

This diſpoſition, though common to them, all was conſpicuouſly evident in the Provinces of New-England: the inhabitants of this part of America gloried particularly in their being the genuine deſcendants of Britiſh anceſtors, unmixed with foreign blood, and inheriting the qualities upon which the natives of Britain value themſelves.

When they were duly apprized of the ſtorm that was gathering againſt them, they coolly and deliberately prepared to meet it. Every meaſure was concerted for that purpoſe which their circumſtances enabled them to employ; and they ſeemed univerſally reſolved to perſiſt, at all perils, in the reſiſtance they had begun.

They now were thoroughly convinced that Great Britain was inflexibly bent on reducing them to a ſtate of unlimited obedience, and intended to govern them henceforward entirely upon ſuch plans as ſhe might think proper to form without their concurrence: they doubted not that in thoſe plans her intereſts would be wholly conſulted, and little notice taken of thoſe of the Colonies: theſe would unqueſtionably be rendered entirely ſubſervient to her conveniency; and every advantage would be taken that force could give, or policy might ſuggeſt.

In the full conviction that ſuch would be their treatment, and that of all America, in caſe Great Britain was ſuffered to execute her preſent deſigns, it was deemed highly proper to combat them by every means in their power. Should they fail in their endeavours, and be overcome by the ſuperior might of their enemy, ſtill their condition would not be worſe than if they yielded without reſiſtance; but if, on the contrary, they proved ſucceſsful, their future proſperity would make ample amends for the difficulties and diſtreſſes they muſt go through to arrive at the ſituation they propoſed.

Such were the general reaſonings of the people in America upon the preparations and menaces of Britain to compel them to ſubmiſſion. Inſtead of intimidating or diſuniting them, the active meaſures reſolved upon by the miniſtry, had, on the contrary, bound them more firmly to each other than ever. As they now ſaw they muſt ſtand or fall together, all diſtinctions of intereſt or perſuaſion were immediately loſt in the great conſideration of ſelf-defence and exiſtence: theſe became the principal objects of their thoughts; and Great Britain in taking up arms, rather in hope of

of coming to hoſtilities, found them united in a common reſolution, to periſh ſooner than obey.

The high and determined ſpirit that had ſhowed itſelf ſo early in the Province of Maſſachuſet, ſtill continued. In purſuance of a vote againſt their acceptance of ſalaries from the Crown, the Chief Juſtice and the other Judges of the Superior Court at Boſton, were required by the Houſe of Repreſentatives to declare, whether they would receive them as uſual from the General Aſſembly: four of them anſwered in the affirmative; but the Chief Juſtice, Peter Oliver, had the reſolution to give them a denial. This produced a petition to the Governor for his removal, which not being complied with, they proceeded to impeach him for having betrayed his truſt, and violated the Provincial charter in accepting a ſalary from the Crown inſtead of the cuſtomary grant from the Aſſembly. In this bold and deciſive meaſure, eight only declined a concurrence out of one hundred members preſent on this important occaſion.

The Governor refuſed to receive the accuſation exhibited by the Aſſembly, and declined all interference in the matter. They had required him to act in the capacity of judge on the trial; but he pleaded incompetency to ſuch an office. They did not recede, on the other hand, and inſiſted that the law ſhould be executed againſt the Chief Juſtice, as an example to deter all men from proſtituting their abilities in the diſſervice of their country, eſpecially in ſo ſacred a place as a Court of Judicature. As it was evident that no obſtructions would be found ſufficient to prevent them from carrying the point they had propoſed, and bringing on a proſecution, which would be attended with great inconveniency and danger, the Governor thought it prudent, in order to ſuſpend all further animoſities,

to put an end to the diſpute at preſent, by diſſolving the Aſſembly.

In this ſituation were the affairs of that Province when intelligence arrived of the Boſton Port Bill. Such a meaſure being totally unexpected, occaſioned equal aſtoniſhment and alarm. A town meeting was immediately ſummoned, at which the reſolution was taken to put a ſtop to all trade with Britain and her dependencies, and to procure a like ceſſation throughout the Colonies, as the only method remaining to induce the Britiſh miniſtry to repeal ſo ſevere an act; for the extreme impolicy and injuſtice of which they appealed to the judgment and feeling of all the impartial world.

Numerous copies of the act were printed and diſperſed over all the American continent. They kindled a flame that proved inextinguiſhable. In order to ſtrike the eyes of the multitude, theſe copies were on paper edged with black, as uſual in mourning, to denote the mortal blow given to the liberty of America. The act was cried about by the vulgar, as a barbarous and cruel murder; and in ſome places was committed to the flames with great ſolemnity in the preſence of crouds ſummoned together for that purpoſe.

In the midſt of theſe diſorders General Gage arrived at Boſton in quality of Governor. He had been ſelected by the miniſtry for this poſt, as an officer of reputation, and as a gentleman in favour and eſteem with the Americans; among whom he had reſided many years, and with whoſe character and diſpoſition he was thoroughly acquainted.

The firſt official act of his government, was to inform the Aſſembly of their intended removal to the town of Salem, ſeventeen miles diſtant from Boſton, in conformity with the late act for depriving this place of the uſe of its port.

To impreſs the people at large with a deep ſenſe of the diſtreſſed ſituation they were in, the Aſſembly requeſted the Governor to appoint a day of public devotion throughout the Colony, to deprecate the evils impending on it; but the purpoſes propoſed by it were too obvious not to meet with a negative.

Provincial meetings were held in the mean time in every Colony. They all condemned, in the ſtrongeſt terms of diſapprobation, the act that had been paſſed againſt Boſton: they unanimouſly proteſted againſt the principles on which it was framed, and ſolemnly agreed to reſiſt it to the laſt, and to unite in the moſt vigorous aſſiſtance of their perſecuted fellow countrymen.

Virginia, as on a former occaſion, took the lead in a public avowal of its ſentiments. The firſt day of June had been appointed for the Boſton Port Act to take place: on that very day the General Aſſembly of that Province enjoined a public ſupplication to heaven in behalf of America. The ſtile of this injunction was remarkable: the people were directed to beſeech the Deity to give them one heart and one mind, firmly to oppoſe every invaſion of the American rights.

The example of Virginia was followed every where; and the firſt of June obſerved as a day of univerſal prayer and ſerioufneſs throughout the continent of America.

But independent of theſe acts of devotion, the members of the Aſſembly of Virginia entered into an aſſociation, in which they declared, that to endeavour by force of arms to compel any Colony to the payment of arbitrary taxes, was, in reality, an attack upon all the Colonies, and would prove their certain ruin, unleſs prevented by their uniting in a common reſiſtance. They recommended for this purpoſe a General Congreſs of the Colonies, to deli-

berate on the conduct requiſite to be adopted in their preſent critical circumſtances.

Though Pennſylvania and New York concurred in the general ideas of the Virginians, they ſtill retained that degree of moderation which a due ſenſe of their condition, as a commercial people, could not fail to ſuggeſt. A total ſtoppage of trade with Great Britain was a meaſure of too ſerious an importance, in their opinion, to be adopted before all others had been tried, and found ineffectual. The indemnification required for the Eaſt India Company, they acknowledged to be juſt; but they could not admit of a tax which deprived them of the excluſive right to grant their own money. In this matter they continued inflexibly reſolved to adhere to their long-taken determinations, and would ſupport the people of Maſſachuſet to the utmoſt of their power, againſt the oppreſſion and ill-uſage they might experience on that account.

Such alſo was the general temper and determination of the Colonies on this ſubject; invariably fixed in their reſolution to abide by their refuſal of obedience to Britain in the affair of taxes: but ſtill deſirous to abſtain from extremities, till every other remedy had failed.

In the mean time, General Gage had a very difficult part to act in his new government. Though much reſpect was ſhown to his perſonal character, yet the taſk he was commiſſioned to perform was highly offenſive to the people he was ſent to govern.

When the Aſſembly of Maſſachuſet met at Salem, they did not forget to paſs a reſolution, declaring the propriety and neceſſity of a general meeting of all the Colonies in Congreſs, in order to confer together upon the ſituation of American affairs. Five gentlemen were named to repreſent their Province, well known for their ſtrenuous oppoſition to Britiſh

measures; and a competent sum was voted for their expences.

All this they knew must be highly disagreeable to the Governor; but as they were sensible that his instructions were by no means favourable to them, they thought themselves entitled, on the other hand, to take what steps they might esteem necessary to counteract them.

Convinced, at the same time, that the moment their intentions were perceived, an end would be put to the session, they used all expedition in drawing up a declaration of their sentiments, to be communicated to the public, as a rule for the conduct of the people of Massachuset, whose implicit confidence in them would give the force of a law to whatever they should lay before them by way of recommendation and advice.

This declaration contained a repetition of grievances; the necessity they were now under of struggling against lawless power; the disregard of their petitions, though founded on the clearest and most equitable reasons; the evident intention of Great Britain to destroy the constitution transmitted to them from their ancestors, and to erect upon its ruins a system of absolute sway, incompatible with their disposition, and subversive of the rights they had uninterruptedly enjoyed during the space of more than a century and a half. Impelled by these motives, they thought it their duty to advise the inhabitants of Massachuset to throw every obstruction in their power in the way of such evil designs, and recommended, as one of the most effectual, a total disuse of all importations from Great Britain, until an entire redress had been obtained of every grievance.

Notwithstanding the secrecy with which this business was carried on, the Governor was apprized of it and on the very day it was agreed

the report of it made to the Houſe, he diſſolved the Aſſembly; which was the laſt that was held in that Colony, agreeably to the tenour of its charter.

The diſſolution of the General Aſſembly was followed by an expoſtulatory addreſs from the inhabitants of Salem; wherein, after deploring the calamities of the times, and their grief for the ſufferings of the people of Boſton; they entreated the Governor to act towards them with all the lenity that remained in his power; and concluded with theſe remarkable words:—"By ſhutting up the port of "Boſton, ſome imagine that the courſe of trade "might be turned hither, and to our benefit; but "Nature in the formation of our harbour, forbids "our becoming rivals in commerce with that con-"venient mart; and, were it otherwiſe, we muſt "be dead to every idea of juſtice, loſt to all feel-"ings of humanity, could we indulge one thought "to ſeize on wealth, and raiſe our fortunes on the "ruin of our ſuffering neighbours."

Sentiments of this kind were the more generous and noble, as previous to the altercation between Great Britain and her Colonies, warm competitions in trade had been uſual among the towns ſituated in the neighbourhood of Boſton, of whoſe proſperity ſome of them were not a little jealous.

As Salem was now become the capital of the Province, and reaping the fruits of that trade which had been taken from Boſton, it was imagined that intereſt would have gained over to the cauſe of Britain thoſe who were benefited by her meaſures: but they who reaſoned upon this principle, forgot that the paſſions of men are always ſtronger than their intereſt; and that the conſideration of this never preponderates but in minds that are cool, and diveſted of their influence. The Americans, at this criſis, were under the ſtrongeſt influence of a paſ-

ſion for liberty, and were ready to ſacrifice to it all that was deareſt to them.

Depending however upon this principle, the friends of the Britiſh government had conceived the moſt ſanguine hopes, that removing the ſcene of buſineſs to Salem, would have ſo much diſtreſſed the mercantile claſſes, that they would gladly have come into the meaſures required of them; but they remained firm in their engagements, and preferred the inconveniencies and detriment reſulting from their perſeverance, to the loſs of character they muſt have ſuffered, had they forſaken the cauſe of their countrymen.

To this it may be added, that from the fluctuating and precarious ſituation of public affairs, they foreſaw that little emolument could, at preſent, be expected from their compliance; they wiſely choſe therefore to wait for a ſeaſon of more ſtability.

During theſe agitations, intelligence arrived at Boſton of the two remaining bills that had been framed; the one for the new-modelling of the government of Maſſachuſet, and the annulling of its charter; the other for the adminiſtration of juſtice, upon a new plan.

This intelligence was circulated through the Colonies with the utmoſt diligence, and completed that meaſure of reſentment which ſeemed neceſſary to precipitate them into the moſt violent meaſures. Such as before appeared to heſitate, became fixed in their determinations. A ceſſation of all commercial intercourſe was again propoſed, and a renewal of all thoſe agreements that tended to the ſole uſe of their own manufactures.

Contributions were now raiſed in all quarters for the relief of the inhabitants of Boſton. Letters and addreſſes came to them from corporate bodies, and provincial aſſemblies, praiſing them in the higheſt

to preſent hardſhips for the good and honour of their country, and exhorting them to perſevere in the ſtedfaſt adherence to a cauſe which could not fail, through ſuch ſupporters, to become triumphant at laſt.

But notwithſtanding the ſpirit of violence and hoſtility to Great Britain, that ſeemed now to predominate, there ſtill was a large number, who reflecting on the terrible conſequences of ruſhing immediately to arms, laboured carefully to inſtil their ſentiments into others. To theſe it was owing that the rage and indignation of the majority were kept in any bounds, and that the final deciſion of the conduct America ſhould purſue, was referred to a general Congreſs.

But though they ſucceeded ſo far as to prevent an immediate commencement of hoſtilities, they could not put a ſtop to thoſe proceedings that prepared and fitted the minds of men for any that might happen.

Of all the committees in America, that managed the correſpondence on public affairs throughout their own Province, and with the other Colonies, that ſettled at Boſton was compoſed of ſome of the moſt noted perſons in America for their abilities, and their antipathy to Britain. Through their efforts and activity, the complaints and diſcontents at her meaſures were kept up and propagated; and their zeal was indefatigable in the encouragement of that ſpirit of reſiſtance, on which they founded the execution of the deſigns they were meditating.

The arrival of the two laſt acts of the Britiſh Parliament, having raiſed the fermentation throughout the Province to its higheſt pitch, this was the time to begin the unfolding of that plan, for which they ſaw the diſpoſitions of men were daily ripening, and the faireſt opportunity given.

They prepared an agreement accordingly;—which, in imitation of that which the enemies to monarchy framed during the civil wars in England, in the laſt century, was entitled a ſolemn League and Covenant. Herein the ſubſcribers ſolemnly bound themſelves, in the moſt religious manner, to break off all commercial intercourſe with Great Britain after the expiration of the enſuing month of Auguſt, until the late obnoxious acts were repealed, and the Colony re-poſſeſſed of its charter. They obliged themſelves neither to purchaſe or to uſe any goods imported after that term, and to break off all trade and dealings with any who did, as well as with the importers. They renounced all connection with thoſe who ſhould refuſe to bind themſelves in a ſimilar manner, either by this, or a like agreement; and concluded by threatening to make public the names of all who declined to enter into ſuch engagements.

The committee exerted itſelf with its uſual diligence in the promoting this Covenant, which was attended with a circular letter, exhorting all men to ſet their names to it, as a teſt of their fidelity to the cauſe of their country. All New England adopted it with the utmoſt zeal.

It was not however at Boſton only, and the Provinces of New England, that this ſpirit of oppoſition prevailed; the ſame agreements were as readily entered into elſewhere, and few parts of the American continent were without them.

Aſtoniſhed and incenſed at this extraordinary proceeding, the Governor of Maſſachuſet iſſued a proclamation againſt it, wherein it was ſtiled an illegal and traiterous combination, contrary to the allegiance due to the King, ſubverſive of the authority of Parliament, and deſtructive to peace and good order. People were forbidden to give it any coun-

ces; and the magiſtrates were admoniſhed to apprehend all perſons who ſhould publiſh, ſubſcribe, or abet any ſuch engagement.

But this proclamation was diſregarded; and only ſerved to ſhow what little authority remained to Great Britain in this Colony. Inſtead of paying it any deference, it was publicly attacked in print, and cenſured as illegal: the law, it was aſſerted, did not prohibit ſubjects from aſſembling to conſider of grievances, and form aſſociations for their relief in caſes of oppreſſion.

In the mean time preparations were making for the holding of the intended Congreſs. Philadelphia, from its ſituation between the North and South Colonies, was judged the moſt convenient place for that purpoſe, and the beginning of September the proper time for meeting. The Deputies who were to compoſe it were choſen by the Repreſentatives of each Province, out of their reſpective bodies: two were the leaſt, and ſeven the largeſt number ſent by any Province; but no Colony had more than a ſingle vote.

The Provincial Aſſemblies that were held previous to the meeting of the Congreſs, foreboded the tranſactions of that meeting. They were, as uſual, full of reſolutions, cenſuring in the ſtrongeſt terms, the conduct of the Britiſh legiſlature, and threatening to break off all commercial correſpondence with Great Britain, unleſs ſhe complied with their requeſts.

The people in Britain had now a full proſpect of what they were to expect from the meaſures in which they had been ſo ſanguine. They ſaw an union effected between all their Colonies, founded on the broad bottom of what they eſteemed their common intereſt. It was not the intrigues of a party they had to defeat, but the combined power

together by common reſentments. Experience had proved it impracticable to ſow diſſentions among them: they were therefore to be combated on their own ground, where unanimity in their cauſe would produce univerſal reſiſtance, and whence it were in vain to look for any ſupport.

A ſufficient earneſt was given of the firmneſs and conſtancy that would be met with, in the behaviour of the inhabitants of Boſton. Neither fear nor intereſt had worked the leaſt change in their determination. They continued to bear with a paſſive, but inflexible fortitude, the inconveniencies and hardſhips to which they were reduced by the deprivation of their port. Theſe were daily increaſing, and began to be an object of alarm to all claſſes. The aſſiſtance they had received from a variety of quarters was very conſiderable, but was not, however, adequate to the exigencies of a large commercial city, chiefly peopled with individuals employed in the numberleſs occupations created by an extenſive and flouriſhing trade. Before the preſent calamity had befallen them, it might with great truth be ſaid, that no place upon earth could exceed, and few rival the happineſs of its inhabitants. Boſton was, in fact, the ſeat of commerce and plenty. The immenſe buſineſs it carried on, afforded not only a ſufficient, but a comfortable ſubſiſtence to individuals of all branches and denominations. Not only the neceſſary and uſeful, but the elegant, and even ſome of the luxurious arts were cultivated amongſt them. They were become a polite, a gay, and, what was more to their honour, a friendly and hoſpitable people; and conducted their enjoyments in a manner that rendered them worthy of their proſperity.

In this happy ſtate of their circumſtances, they were ſentenced at once to a total deprivation of all

it reached every perſon ſettled there. Labourers, artificers, tradeſmen, merchants; every one without exception participated in the general calamity. They bore this ſudden reverſe with a patience and determination to perſiſt in the ſame line of acting, that had brought it upon them, which afforded no ſmall matter of ſurprize to their enemies, and of exultation to their friends.

Among theſe latter none ſignalized themſelves with more zeal and alacrity than the people of Marble-head, their near neighbours, and who by this proximity, were the moſt likely to reap the greateſt profit by their diſtreſs; but inſtead of endeavouring to turn it to any account, they generouſly offered to the merchants of Boſton the uſe of their harbour, wharfs, and warehouſes, free of all expence.

In the mean time troops were arriving at Boſton from all quarters. This increaſe of a military force occaſioned great jealouſy throughout the Province. It was looked upon as a denunciation of what they were ſhortly to expect, in caſe they continued in their preſent diſpoſition.

But inſtead of betraying any ſigns of change, it gathered ſtrength daily. Proofs were continually given that the people in the neighbourhood of Boſton kept a watchful eye on the proceedings of the Britiſh troops there; and would, on the leaſt notice of any harſh meaſures againſt the inhabitants, fly inſtantly to their relief.

A report was ſpread that a body of the military was poſted on the iſthmus, that joins the peninſula upon which Boſton ſtands, to the main-land, in order to cut off its communication with the country, and compel it by famine to ſubmit to any terms that might be impoſed. Hereupon the country aſſembled in large numbers, and diſpatched meſſengers to Boſton to inquire into the truth of

this report, and to assure them they might depend upon the speediest assistance, in case of necessity.

They brought with them, at the same time, an errand of far greater importance, as it showed in its fullest light, the reality of their determinations to keep their word with Britain, in resisting her to the last.

This errand was to inform the people of Boston, that were they to lose courage so far as to surrender their liberties, the Province should not look upon itself as bound by such submission: Britain, by breaking their charter, had annulled the original contract subsisting between them; and they were now left to themselves, and at liberty to act for their common preservation, as they thought most advisable.

About the beginning of August, a formal notification of the two last acts relating to the government was received, together with a list of the new council, consisting of thirty-six members. But twelve of the number declined their commissions; and most of those who accepted, were speedily obliged to resign them, in order to save their property and persons from the fury of the multitude.

The judges newly appointed experienced much the same treatment. All the inferior officers of the courts of judicature, the clerks, the juries, and all others concerned, explicitly refused to act under the new laws. In some places the populace shut up the avenues to the court-houses; and upon being required to make way for the judges, and officers of the court, they declared that they knew of no court nor establishment in the Province, contrary to the ancient usages and forms, and would recognize none.

The former constitution being thus destroyed by the British legislature, and the people refusing to aknowledge that which was substituted in its room,

a diſſolution of all government neceſſarily enſued. If the adherents to the Britiſh meaſures promiſed themſelves any advantages from this apparent ſtate of anarchy, they were greatly deceived. The reſolution to oppoſe the deſigns of Great Britain, produced occaſionally ſome commotions; but no other conſequences followed this defect of government; peace and good order remained every where throughout the Province, and the people demeaned themſelves with as much regularity, as if the laws ſtill continued in their full and formal vigour.

The truth was, that the people, as well as their rulers, looked upon their character and reputation to be deeply concerned on this occaſion. They were convinced it behoved them to give the world indiſputable proof that their diſpoſition was by no means unruly; and that far from being inclined to riot and licentiouſneſs, they could preſerve the public peace, and retain their uſual ſobriety and decency of behaviour, without any other reſtraint than that of their own habits and inclinations.

In this ſeeming ceſſation of rule and government, they diſplayed, in fact, the moſt implicit readineſs to comply with every injunction of their leaders. Conformably to their views, whilſt they carefully abſtained from ruſhing openly to extremities, they were indefatigably taken up with every preparation for war: arms were provided, and ammunition procured by all individuals who could uſe them, and heavy denunciations of revenge made againſt thoſe who ſhould oppoſe their intentions.

Upon receiving information of theſe preparations, General Gage thought it neceſſary to fortify the neck of land already mentioned, in order to guard the town from any ſudden ſurprize. This excited freſh diſcontents, and afforded ample cauſe of complaint: It was repreſented as a commencement of hoſtilities, and as an undeniable evidence of the deſign ſo long

ſuſpected, to render the military abſolute maſters wherever they ſhould be ſtationed.

Their complaints were ſo loud on this occaſion, that fearing they might proceed farther, the General, by way of precaution againſt all accidents of this kind, took the reſolution of ſeizing the powder, and other military ſtores, lodged in the Provincial magazines at Cambridge and Charleſtown. This ſtep appeared the more prudent, as the time was now approaching for the annual muſter of the militia, when it was apprehended, that if any hoſtile deſigns were in agitation, this would certainly be the ſeaſon for executing them.

It is not improbable that ſuch was the intention of the people of Maſſachuſet. The reſentment and indignation univerſally expreſſed at his conduct, and the violent meaſures immediately propoſed, ſeemed to be dictated by diſappointment, and manifeſted a concerted readineſs to proceed to extremities on the firſt opportunity. With difficulty were they prevented by ſuch as had the moſt influence over them, from marching to Boſton, and threatening to attack the troops, unleſs the ſtores that had been ſeized were immediately returned.

But though retarded for the preſent, their revenge was fully determined upon. Not only Maſſachuſet, but all New England, concurred in this determination. To impreſs the military at Boſton with a due perſuaſion that no exceſſes on their part would be attended with impunity, an alarm was ſpread that they were engaged in actual fight with the towns-people; this report brought inſtantly thouſands together, who proceeded towards Boſton with the utmoſt ſpeed, and made no halt till they had full certainty that the report was premature.

In Boſton itſelf, where the military were abſolute, open defiance was bid to the Governor himſelf. The company of cadets, that uſed to at-

Provincial Governors on ceremonial occaſions, diſbanded themſelves, and returned him the ſtandard he had, as uſual, preſented them with on his acceſſion to the government. This ſlight was the more felt and mortifying, as this body conſiſted wholly of young gentlemen of fortune and faſhion, and of families hitherto reputed to be attached to the Britiſh intereſt.

This public renunciation of all further connection with the Governor, by ſo reſpectable a corps, was by diſcerning people conſidered as an evil preſage. It had been chiefly occaſioned by his depriving their Colonel of his commiſſion.—This was the celebrated Mr. Hancock, a gentleman whoſe intereſt and influence were very extenſive, and whoſe character was extremely popular. By diſobliging him in this manner, he raiſed himſelf an enemy, whoſe popularity did not fail to create him a multitude of others.

Another inſtance of the like nature happened at the ſame time. A colonel in the Provincial militia having accepted a ſeat in the new council, twenty-four officers of his regiment reſigned their commiſſions in one day.

From theſe ſpecimens of the temper of the Americans, it was eaſy to prognoſticate what conſequences would infallibly reſult from their inveteracy.

During theſe proceedings, the towns in the neighbourhood of Boſton appointed a meeting of their principal inhabitants, wherein they agreed to refuſe all obedience to the late acts of the Britiſh Parliament, and engaged to indemnify all perſons who ſhould be proſecuted for diſobedience to the courts, and the other powers eſtabliſhed by them: they declared all members of the new council violators of the duty they owed to their country, and

warned them to reſign their poſts, under the penalty of being treated as public enemies.

They exhorted the people, at the ſame time, to perfect themſelves in military diſcipline, and to aſſemble once a week for that purpoſe. They adviſed them to be perpetually on their guard againſt the deſigns of their enemies; who, it was ſaid, had determined to ſeize upon thoſe among them who had moſt ſignalized themſelves by their oppoſition to the tyrannical meaſures of the Britiſh miniſtry. Should ſuch an attempt be made, they were directed to reſiſt it; and if it ſhould ſucceed, to ſeize, in their turn, every officer they could find, and detain them till their own friends were reſtored to liberty.

They recommended to the receivers of the public revenue, not to deliver it to the treaſurer, but to retain it in their own hands, till the conſtitution of the Province was reſtored, or a Provincial Congreſs ſhould otherwiſe diſpoſe of it.

After theſe, and ſeveral other admonitions, they concluded by entreating the people to continue in ſuch a firm, unanimous oppoſition to their enemies, as might convince them that all their endeavours to oppreſs America would be vain; and that in ſo juſt and noble a cauſe, "the conduct of the Americans would be ſuch as to merit the approbation of the wiſe, and the admiration of the brave and free of every age, and of every country."—Thoſe were their words.

A remonſtrance was next preſented to the Governor againſt the fortifications carrying on at Boſton. They herein informed him, that they intended by no means to commence hoſtilities with the Britiſh troops: but were at the ſame time equally reſolved, through the Divine aſſiſtance, never to ſubmit to the late oppreſſive acts. They complained of in-

larly of the ſeizure of their military ſtores. They imputed to theſe cauſes the ferment now raging throughout the Provinces, and which nothing could lay but a total ſtop to ſuch proceedings.

In order, if poſſible, to reſtore things to ſome degree of tranquility, the Council adviſed the Governor to call a General Aſſembly. The writs were iſſued accordingly; but the heats and animoſities ſo widely prevailing, and the deficiency of a council through the reſignation of ſo many of its members, induced him to countermand the writs by proclamation. But this latter meaſure was held illegal, and the Province elected its Deputies, who met at Salem; where, after waiting a day for the Governor, on his not appearing, they voted themſelves into a Provincial Congreſs, and choſe Mr. Hancock preſident.

A committee was immediately appointed to wait upon the Governor, and repreſent to him the neceſſity of taking the ſenſe of the Colony upon the preſent critical ſituation of its affairs. They enumerated the grievances already ſpecified, and requeſted him in the moſt ſolemn manner, to diſcontinue the works upon Boſton neck.

The Governor's anſwer was, that no inimical intentions were meant by the proceedings of the Britiſh troops; ſelf-defence only was propoſed. He reminded the committee how ill it became them to complain of breach of charters, while in defiance of government, they continued to hold Aſſemblies not warranted by law.

But theſe expoſtulations and recriminations ſerved only to increaſe ſuſpicion and reſentment on each ſide. As mutual good-will and confidence was entirely loſt, whatever was done was conſidered in a ſiniſter view; and imputations of the blackeſt nature were affixed to every meaſure reciprocally adopted.

So dangerous was the ſituation of all adherents to the Britiſh cauſe become, that they no longer dared to truſt themſelves out of Boſton. This was the only place where they could remain in ſafety. The Commiſſioners of the Cuſtoms, and all their attendants, had removed thither from Salem. Thus government, adminiſtration of juſtice, and commerce were all equally at a ſtand.

Winter was now approaching. In order to prevent the altercations that might ariſe from the troops being quartered upon the inhabitants, the intention of the Governor was to erect barracks for the accommodation of the former. But this intention was fruſtrated by the ſelect-men of Boſton, who compelled the workmen to deſiſt. Application was made to New York for a ſupply of carpenters to as little purpoſe; and it was with the extremeſt difficulty the troops were provided with winter lodgments.

He had no better ſucceſs in his endeavours to procure winter covering for the ſoldiery. The merchants of New York, on being applied to, anſwered to a man, "That they would never ſupply any article for the benefit of men who were ſent as enemies to their country."

This treatment of the military, tended not a little to increaſe their diſlike of the inhabitants of Boſton. Theſe, on the other hand, conſcious of this reſentment, looked upon them as men who would give a looſe to it on the firſt occaſion that offered.—Thus hatred and miſtruſt increaſed reciprocally; and became the more violent and intenſe, from the neceſſity of ſtifling their appearance, and covering them with mutual proteſtations of good-will.

While both parties were thus keeping a watchful eye upon each other in Boſton, the Province at large was making ready for thoſe events which every one foreſaw would take place the enſuing

ſpring. Magazines of military ſtores were formed; people were trained to arms, and money was provided. All this was effected with the greater facility and willingneſs, as they under whoſe direction it was done, diſclaimed all ſtile of authority, and addreſſed themſelves to the people as their friends and adviſers.

It was in vain for the Governor to iſſue a proclamation, warning individuals to pay no regard to the injunctions of men who acted in contravention to all law, by aſſuming ſuch a degree of authority. The more he reprobated the illegality of ſuch proceedings, the more they were convinced of their propriety, in the preſent circumſtances of their affairs, and the leſs they were inclined to deviate from them.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Congreſs at Philadelphia.

1774.

IN the beginning of Septemper the General Congreſs of all the Colonies met at Philadelphia according to appointment. It conſiſted of fifty-one delegates. An Aſſembly of this kind was an entire novelty in this hemiſphere. Throughout the vaſt dominions poſſeſſed by Spain, no inſurrections had happened worthy of being recorded: in thoſe belonging to Portugal ſubmiſſion had always prevailed; and France had never found it a difficult taſk to govern her American poſſeſſions. It was reſerved for Britain to afford the extraordinary ſpectacle of Colonies ſevering themſelves from the parent ſtate, and uniting againſt her in a regular and orderly reſiſtance.

The peaceable obedience to the commands of their reſpective ſovereigns in the Spaniſh, Portugueſe, and French Colonies, is deducible from the nature of their domeſtic government. Accuſtomed in their own country to an implicit acquieſcence in the dictates of the court, individuals who ſettled in foreign parts, carried with them thoſe habits of compliance, which, like all others implanted by education, are always retained.

But the vaſt diſparity of character formed by contrary habits, could not fail to produce very different effects in the Colonies founded by England. In temper, inclination, and purſuits, the Engliſh Coloniſts are the reverſe of thoſe ſubject to the foregoing nations.

This

This wide difference is accounted for by recurring to the diſpoſition of the Engliſh themſelves. Bred in the higheſt ſentiments of freedom, they preſerve and propagate them wherever they go. Hence in the numerous emigrations from England to America, that have taken place in the laſt and the preſent century, the ſpirit that was prevalent at the time they happened, always accompanied the emigrators. This accounts in particular for the paſſionate attachment to republican principles, that marks the character of the people in New England, whoſe forefathers were the moſt zealous adherents to that party which oppoſed monarchy with ſo much outragiouſneſs and violence in the laſt century.

Fraught with the high ſpirited notions that characteriſe the Britiſh nation, it is not ſurprizing that the inhabitants of Britiſh America ſhould feel the ſame repugnance to make any conceſſion unfavourable to liberty, that is profeſſed by the natives of this iſland; in which theſe glory, and which they conſider not only as the moſt ſhining part of their character, but as the ſource of all thoſe advantages they poſſeſs in a ſuperior degree to other nations.

Another material cauſe may be aſſigned for the forwardneſs expreſſed by the people of New-England, in aſſerting every privilege to which they thought themſelves entitled. This part of Britiſh America is chiefly peopled with white men; the proportion of blacks being no more than a twentieth. The lands are divided into ſmall lots, each of them freeholds: this produces a numerous commonalty, who live in plenty, though not in luxury. An equality of circumſtances places them on a footing of friendlineſs and mutual intercourſe, that renders it dangerous to aim at innovations, or at too much authority over them.

A people

A people thus conſtituted, enjoy a weight and conſequence unknown in countries where great quantities of land are in the poſſeſſion of a few. Here the number to be bought or influenced being ſmall, that buſineſs is much more eaſily accompliſhed, than where multitudes are to be conſulted whoſe circumſtances ſet them above neceſſity, and whoſe education renders them obſtinately attached to the conſtitution of their country.

Long ago it was foreſeen, that a time would come when the people of New-England would lay claim not only to freedom in its utmoſt extent, but to political independency. The principles they were brought up in, taught them juſtly to conſider the firſt as their due; and the jealouſy of incroachments upon it, would lead them to bear impatiently the dependence upon any power diſtinct from their own. Experience ſhowed, that while unable to caſt off ſuch a yoke, they bore it even then with reluctance. It was no matter of aſtoniſhment, that thinking themſelves able to reſiſt it, they ſhould refuſe to bear it any longer.

That ſpirit of reſiſtance of which Great Britain now ſo bitterly complained, was therefore the neceſſary and native growth of thoſe Colonies which ſhe had founded, foſtered, and reared, with ſo much attention and care, to their preſent ſtate of maturity. They felt the ſtrength and importance to which they had attained, and were deſirous to exerciſe it according to their own ideas.

They were now met altogether for the firſt time, in the perſons of their delegates. After having for many years dwelt, as it were, ſeparate from each other, and often differed about their various intereſts, they now laid aſide all prepoſſeſſions and antipathies, and cordially agreed to unite their reſpective abilities of every kind, in oppoſition to the power and demands of Great Britain.

This was a ſcene that called up the attention of all Europe; but eſpecially of thoſe ſtates that had large poſſeſſions in America. They ſaw the beginning of a conteſt, the final iſſue of which might affect them in the moſt ſerious manner. Were the Britiſh Colonies to ſucceed in their attempt, ſo far as to place themſelves on a footing of total independence upon Great Britain, this might prove a precedent of the moſt fatal tendency to their intereſt. It might induce their own Colonies to imitate thoſe of England, in hopes of meeting with the like ſucceſs.

Thoſe powers, on the other hand, who had no Colonies, viewed with a ſecret ſatisfaction the embarraſſments of a ſtate whoſe might they dreaded and wiſhed to ſee diminiſhed.

The delegates were enjoined by the inſtructions they had received from their conſtituents, ſolemnly to acknowledge the ſovereignty of Great Britain over them, and their willingneſs to pay her the fulleſt obedience, as far as the conſtitution authoriſed her to demand it: they were to diſclaim all notions of ſeperating from her; and to declare it was with the deepeſt regret, they beheld a ſuſpenſion of that confidence and affection which had ſo long, and ſo happily for both, ſubſiſted between Great Britain and her Colonies.

But they were no leſs carefully directed, at the ſame time, to aſſert the rights tranſmitted to them by their anceſtors. Theſe rights they would never ſurrender, and would maintain them at all perils. They were entitled to all the privileges of Britiſh ſubjects, and would not yield to the unjuſt pretenſions of Parliament, which, in the preſent treatment of the Colonies, had violated the principles of the conſtitution, and given them juſt occaſion to be diſſatisfied, and to riſe in oppoſition. Parliament might demand this oppoſition would never ceaſe

until thoſe acts were wholly repealed that had been the radical cauſe of the preſent diſturbances.

They were particularly inſtructed to preſerve the utmoſt harmony in all their conſultations, and to debate nothing with acrimony: whatever ſhould be decided by a majority, the remainder ſhould acquieſce in chearfully. This majority was to be formed, not by numbering the delegates, but by allowing one vote to each Colony.

The temper and ſecrecy with which they conducted their proceedings, was the firſt object that ſtruck diſcerning obſervers: it contributed powerfully to gain them the reverence and favour of the public, and to convince their conſtituents that they had intruſted their affairs to able hands.

Their firſt public act was a declaration approving and applauding the conduct of the people of Maſſachuſet, and encouraging them to proceed with the ſame ſpirit they had begun: they lamented the diſtreſſes of the people at Boſton, and the oppreſſion they ſuffered through the illegal and tyrannical acts of the Britiſh Parliament: they coincided with all the meaſures and reſolutions taken and propoſed by that Province, and recommended a generous contribution of ſupplies from all the Colonies, to enable their countrymen at Boſton nobly to perſevere in the ſtruggle they were now making for the common cauſe.

They further declared, that if any attempt ſhould be made to carry theſe acts into execution by force, all America ſhould join to oppoſe it; and that if, in the courſe of hoſtilities, the preſervation of the inhabitants of Boſton made their removal up the country neceſſary, all America ſhould unite to indemnify them for the loſſes and detriment they might incur on that account.

They next wrote a letter to General Gage, in

of by the people of Maſſachuſet, much in their own terms, they informed him of the unanimous reſolution taken by the Americans to oppoſe, with their united endeavours, the acts lately paſſed by the Britiſh Parliament; and that to this intent the Colonies had appointed them the guardians of their liberties. They entreated him, in the ſame manner the people of his government had done, to deſiſt from any military operations, as tending to breed ill blood, and occaſion, at laſt, hoſtilities, which might fruſtrate the pacific diſpoſition of the Congreſs, and render a reconciliation with the parent ſtate a work of great difficulty.

This letter was followed by a public declaration of the rights belonging to the Britiſh Colonies. Herein they again aſſerted their title to every privilege enjoyed by Engliſhmen. They particularly ſtated, that as the diſtance of the Colonies from Britain made a repreſentation of them in the Britiſh Parliament inconvenient and impracticable, their Provincial Aſſemblies ought excluſively to poſſeſs the powers of legiſlation, as the only legal repreſentatives of the people, by whom they are choſen. Theſe, conjointly with the Governor appointed by the King, being conſtitutionally the only lawful rulers in each Province.

In order, however, to preſerve the connection between Great Britain and her Colonies unimpaired, they conſented to pay due ſubmiſſion to ſuch acts of the Britiſh Parliament as are avowedly and evidently calculated for the meer regulation of commerce, and to ſecure the benefits of the American trade to the parent ſtate; but without empowering her to impoſe any tax whatſoever for the purpoſe of raiſing a revenue in America without their conſent.

They reprobated the idea of being tried for offences any where but at home, by juries of

among their neighbours. They claimed all the immunities granted to them at any time by royal charters, or ſecured to them by law: they declared the keeping of an armed force in any Colony during peace, againſt its conſent, illegal; and that a council inveſted with legiſlative powers, and appointed by the Crown during pleaſure, was contrary to the ſpirit of the conſtitution, and ſubverſive of freedom.

They inſiſted on theſe rights as inalienable, and in the lawful power of none to deprive them of. They were founded on the cleareſt natural juſtice, and could not reaſonably be called in queſtion.

They enumerated thoſe acts of Parliament by which they thought themſelves illegally aggrieved, and of which they declared the repeal indiſpenſibly neceſſary for the reſtoration of harmony between Great Britain and America. Among theſe was that relating to Quebec, which they explicitly termed "An Act for eſtabliſhing the Roman Catholic religion in Canada; aboliſhing the equitable ſyſtem of Engliſh laws, and erecting a tyranny there." This act, they ſaid, was peculiarly hoſtile to the Colonies, from the diſſimilitude between the religion, laws, and government, eſtabliſhed among the Canadians, and thoſe of the Coloniſts. The French in that Province had not forgotten the enmity formerly ſubſiſting between them and the Engliſh Colonies, and that it was by the aſſiſtance of theſe, they had been torn from the dominion of France.

They then declared, that to obviate in the moſt effectual manner the evils impending upon them, through the unjuſtifiable meaſures of the Britiſh miniſtry, it would be proper to frame a body of regulations againſt the importation and conſumption of Engliſh goods, until thoſe acts were repealed

and molaſſes imported into America, together with the Boſton port act, thoſe for altering the charter of Maſſachuſet, and the adminiſtration of juſtice in that Colony, and that relating to Quebec.

The regulations againſt importing or uſing any articles coming from Britain, were much the ſame that had been adopted on former occaſions, and have been already ſpecified: the principal difference was, that they were now enacted in a more formal manner, and recommended with more earneſtneſs and ſolemnity.

They did not forget to return the warm thanks of America to thoſe members of Parliament who had ſo zealouſly, though ineffectually, eſpouſed its cauſe; as well as to thoſe numerous individuals in England, that had ſtood up in its defence in their ſpeeches or writings.

Their next buſineſs was to draw up a petition to the King, an addreſs to the Britiſh nation, another to the Colonies, and a third to the Freneh inhabitants of Canada.

In their petition to the King, they complained in particular of a military commander in chief being appointed Governor of a Colony during peace; an armed force employed to compel the payment of taxes; new offices created and attended with much expence and oppreſſion; ſalaries and fees in the Courts of Admiralty payable out of the effects condemned; Cuſtom-houſe officers authoriſed to force entrance into houſes without permiſſion from the civil magiſtrate; heavy forfeitures for light offences; falſe informers exempted from indemnifying the parties accuſed; unreaſonable ſecurity demanded for theſe when defending their right.

After dwelling upon theſe, and the various inſtances repeatedly mentioned as objects of complaint amongſt the Americans, they declared their attach-

and affection to the King's perſon and family, with a more remarkable warmth and energy of expreſſion than had hitherto been uſed on ſuch occaſions. They entreated him, for the ſake of his people and himſelf, to adhere to thoſe principles that ſeated his royal anceſtors on the Britiſh Throne; and that as the common ſovereign of all his ſubjects, he would impartially conſider them as "connected by "the ſame bonds of law, loyalty, faith, and blood, "though dwelling in various countries; and not "ſuffer the relation formed by theſe ties, to be fur-"ther violated, in uncertain expectation of effects, "which, if attained, never can compenſate for the "calamities through which they muſt be gained."

They imputed the diſcontents, ill blood, and diſturbances in America, to the ill-adviſed ſyſtem of government that had of late years prevailed amongſt them. to this alone they aſcribed all the misfortunes that had happened. Before the proſecution of this plan, univerſal tranquility and ſatisfaction reigned throughout the Colonies. They did not petition, ſaid they, for new grants or favours; they aſked only for peace and freedom.

As this petition was looked upon as a ſolemn act of homage to the Crown of Great Britain, and ſpecified in a manner the terms and conditions of their allegiance, it was worded with great care and circumſpection, and was ſubſcribed by every member of the Congreſs.

Their addreſs to the Britiſh nation contained the higheſt encomiums on the common anceſtors of the people of Britain and of America. It aſſerted all the rights of freemen as common to both, and declared their irrevocable reſolution to ſurrender them upon no conſideration.

After enumerating the grievances already expreſſed, they deſcribed the felicity of former times, when, united in friendſhip as well as intereſt, Great

Britain and America combated ſide by ſide for their mutual proſperity and grandeur. They recalled the zeal ſhown in their Aſſemblies to ſecond the efforts of Britain, during the laſt ſucceſsful war, and how materially they had contributed to the victories obtained by the Britiſh arms. What motives, ſaid they, could influence Britain, after ſuch proofs of fidelity and attachment, to change her conduct towards the Colonies in ſo injurious a manner, and to load them with exactions unprecedented and unconſtitutional, tending only to augment miniſterial power, and to diminiſh that of Parliament?

They ſtated thoſe acts of Parliament which they had ſo often complained of as inimical to American liberty, and pointed out the reſult of that implicit ſubjection, of which they were intended to be the means. They repreſented the neceſſary conſequences to England of perſiſting in the meaſures adopted to ſubdue America; the enormous expences ſhe muſt incur, depreſſed as ſhe is already by the immenſe weight of her debts and taxes; the infallible loſs of the vaſt trade to her Colonies, while engaged in hoſtilities againſt them, and the prodigious diminution thereby of her reſources to accompliſh that fatal ſcheme.

But were Britain, ſaid they, to be victorious in the conteſt, what would be her emoluments? Soon would ſhe perceive that ſhe had not conquered for herſelf, and would ſpeedily have cauſe to lament her triumphs, when ſhe found upon whoſe brows the laurels were to be worn. In a word, ſaid they, to ſubdue the Colonies, would be to deſtroy the freedom of Britain in the plains of America.

Fluſhed with the power and influence accruing from the ſucceſs of ſuch an attempt, the ſtrength of miniſtry would then become irreſiſtible; and, aided by the weight of America, would bear down all oppoſition. Soon would ſome bold and enterpriz-

ing ſtateſman ariſe to put an end to the boaſted liberties of England. Should the Engliſh prove as refractory on ſuch an occaſion as the Colonies are at preſent; ſhould they deny him men and money for ſuch a purpoſe, American arms and treaſures would ſupply the deficiency. Nor ſhould the Engliſh wonder, that after making ſlaves of the Coloniſts, they ſhould co-operate in making ſlaves of them.

They ought not, therefore, ſaid they, to be accuſed of ſedition, impatience of rule, and aiming at independency. All that could be charged to them, was an inflexible determination to preſerve their freedom, and to reſiſt oppreſſion at all riſks. In the defence of their juſt rights they would go all lengths; and if in defiance of the laws and conſtitution of England, and the dictates of humanity, the Britiſh miniſtry ſhould draw the ſword in ſo iniquitous a cauſe, it will find the Americans fully reſolved "never to ſubmit to be hewers of wood, or "drawers of water for any miniſtry or nation in "the world."

It was with great ſorrow they aſſerted, that the criticalneſs of their ſituation compelled them to embrace any meaſure that might affect the immediate intereſt of individuals in Britain. This alone induced them to ſuſpend the commercial intercourſe between the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, and thoſe of the Colonies. In this, however, they were warranted by the great law of ſelf-defence; and no leſs, to their grief, by the indolence with which the Britiſh nation ſuffered the miniſterial ſchemes to take their courſe in reſpect of America; but particularly by the treatment now experienced by the town of Boſton.

As the deſtruction of the commerce of that city might be a prelude to the future deſtruction of that of all the Colonies, "we will endeavour therefore, "added they, to live with

" for ſubſiſtence, to the fertility and bounty of our " native ſoil, which will afford us all the neceſſa- " ries, and ſome of the conveniencies of life."

They concluded by a general appeal to the equity and generoſity of the Britiſh nation, and by expreſſing their hope that a Parliament would ariſe, whoſe honeſty, wiſdom, and reſolution, would reſtore the good underſtanding between Great Britain and America, and lay a permanent foundation for ſubſequent harmony between them, upon fair and conſtitutional principles.

It may not be amiſs to remark, that in this celebrated addreſs, a propoſal was made of a conciliatory nature; and which, the opponents to miniſtry complained, had not met with the notice it deſerved. " Place us, ſaid they, in the ſame ſituation " that we were at the cloſe of the laſt war, and our " former harmony will be reſtored."

Their next addreſs was to the Colonies. They informed them, that after having weighed, with the utmoſt impartiality and attention, the conduct reciprocally obſerved towards each other by Great Britain and America, ſince the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty-four, when the preſent unhappy quarrels had their firſt commencement, truth obliged them to declare, that " it is clear, beyond " a doubt, that a reſolution is formed, and now " carrying into execution, to extinguiſh the free- " dom of the Colonies, by ſubjecting them to a " deſpotic government."

They repreſented the hoſtile treatment of the town of Boſton, and the Province of Maſſachuſet, as part of the ſyſtem concerted againſt the Colonies: theſe were not leſs guilty of oppoſition to Britain than Maſſachuſet; but Britiſh policy aimed at diſuniting them. It had to that intent ſelected, for the firſt trial, the moſt powerful, and the moſt likely, for that reaſon, to break out into ſome act

of violence that might not meet with the concurrence of the other Colonies: this would afford a pretence for correcting that Province with a heavy hand, without the interference of the others, who might not, till it was too late, discover the impropriety, as well as the ingratitude of suffering it to be crushed in the very bud, as it were, of its exertions for the common cause.

Notwithstanding, they said, the behaviour of Britain, and the present circumstances of the Colonies, would justify more active measures than those they should recommend, yet in order to preserve consistency of character, and to make it evident to the world that nothing but extreme necessity should alter the passive disposition they had hitherto professed for the parent state, they judged it advisable still to continue that moderation and forbearance. Influenced by such motives, they had once more presented a loyal and affectionate address to the Throne, in hopes of obtaining its protection and assistance for the redress of their grievances. They had, with the same view, appealed to the British nation, and endeavoured, by awakening them to a sense of their own interests, to engage their interference and mediation in the behalf of their persecuted fellow subjects on this side of the Atlantic; warning them, at the same time, to beware of consequences, should matters be brought to extremities; for in that case they would find the Colonists prepared to meet them and to show themselves worthy of that liberty for which they were contending. This trial, however, they hoped would never take place: nothing should be wanting on their part to induce a sincere reconciliation: the reciprocation of benefits and services so long subsisting between them and the parent state; the ties of consanguinity; the remembrance of their common origin; all these, they flattered themselves would

England as well as in America; and it was their ardent wiſh, never to ſee the day, when, forgetful of all theſe motives to conſider the Americans as their brethren, the Engliſh, by aſſuming the character of tyrants, ſhould cut aſunder the bonds that had ſo long, and ſo happily held them together.

It was to ſtave off that fatal day, they had reſolved to abſtain from all harſh meaſures; but to mix firmneſs with lenity, they had, much againſt their inclination, come to the neceſſary determination of ſuſpending all further commerce with Great Britain. This, though detrimental to its immediate intereſt, was not to be conſidered as an act of intentional unkindneſs: it rather ſhowed them unwilling to do any thing that might be conſtrued as an act of hoſtility, and heartily deſirous of being thoroughly recconciled.

They concluded by reminding the Colonies, that they had not long to wait for the final option of the Britiſh nation, between friendſhip or enmity with America. They declare, however, "that in the piety, generoſity, and "good ſenſe of the Engliſh, they repoſe high con-"fidence; and cannot, upon a review of paſt events, "be perſuaded that they, the defenders of true re-"ligion, and the aſſertors of the rights of man-"kind, will take part againſt their affectionate Pro-"teſtant brethren in the Colonies, in favour of "the open enemies to theſe, and their own ſecret "foes, whoſe intrigues, for ſeveral years paſt, have "been wholly exerciſed in ſapping the foundations "of all civil and religious liberty."

Their laſt addreſs was directed to the French inhabitants of Canada. To theſe they ſtated the right they had acquired, upon becoming ſubjects to Great Britain, to enjoy all the advantages of the Britiſh conſtitution. The royal proclamation at the concluding of the laſt peace, had ſolemnly promiſed

had been withheld from them by miniſterial artifice, in contempt of public faith and expreſs ſtipulations; and as the Canadians from their education, and long acquieſcence in a very different form of government, were total ſtrangers to the ſuperior excellence of that to which they were now entitled, the Congreſs thought it juſt they ſhould at preſent be made acquainted with it.

To ſhow that this ſuperiority did not exiſt merely in their own aſſertions, a variety of thoſe benefits were cited in confirmation of it, that ſo conſpicuouſly diſtinguiſh the government of Great Britain from that of all other countries. It was under the protection and influence of the Engliſh conſtitution, the Colonies had proſpered ſo conſpicuouſly, and were now become ſo populous and powerful.

They then adverted to the Quebec act, which they repreſented as calculated to eſtabliſh the moſt rigorous deſpotiſm. It took away all ſhadow of power from the people and lodged it entirely in the hands of men who were wholly at the diſpoſal of the Crown. What name could be given to ſuch a government, but that of abſolute and arbitrary in the extremeſt degree? It was inſinuated upon this occaſion, that whatever tyranny they might formerly have experienced while under the dominion of France, they had certainly made a much worſe exchange by becoming ſubject to England. The French were their countrymen, and would, from that motive, be prompted to treat them with ſome degree of lenity; but no reaſon of that kind ſubſiſted at preſent, to ſhield them from the ill treatment of miniſters who were aliens to them, and of a nation at all times the profeſſed enemy of their own. Theſe would continually ſuſpect them of harbouring deſigns unfavourable to their intereſt, and of perpetually watching for an opportunity of

returning to their old maſters. Though this inſinuation was not contained in the addreſs, it was carefully conveyed to them, at the time, in a manner no leſs effectual.

Upon ſo critical an emergency, they invited them, in the warmeſt terms, to join with the Engliſh Colonies, as the ſureſt means to ſecure themſelves from ill uſage and oppreſſion. In order to work the greater impreſſion upon their minds, they referred them, on this occaſion, to the wiſdom and authority of their own countryman, the great Monteſquieu, a name venerated by all Europe.

What advice, to uſe their own words, would that truly illuſtrious man, that advocate of freedom and humanity, give you, was he now living, and knew that we, your numerous and powerful neighbours, animated by a juſt love of our invaded rights, and united by the indiſſoluble bonds of affection and intereſt, called upon you, by every obligation of regard for yourſelves and your children, as we now do, to join us in our righteous conteſt, to make a common cauſe with us therein, and take a noble chance for emerging from a humiliating ſubjection under governors, intendants, and military tyrants, into the firm rank and condition of Engliſh freemen, whoſe cuſtom it is, derived from their anceſtors, to make thoſe tremble who dare to think of making them ſlaves?

" Would not this be the purport of his addreſs?
" Seize the opportunity preſented to you by Pro-
" vidence itſelf. You have been conquered into
" liberty, if you act as you ought. This work is
" not of man. You are a ſmall people compared
" to thoſe who, with open arms, invite you into a
" fellowſhip. A moment's reflection ſhould con-
" vince you, which will be moſt for your intereſt
" and happineſs; to have all the reſt of America
" your unalterable friends, or your inveterate ene-

" mies. From Nova Scotia to Georgia, every Co-
" lony is now aſſociated: Your Province is the
" only link wanting to complete the bright and ſtrong
" chain of union. Nature has joined your country
" to theirs; do you join your political intereſt.—
" For their own ſakes, they never will deſert or
" betray you. Be aſſured that the happineſs of a
" people inevitably depends upon their liberty, and
" their ſpirit to aſſert it. The value and extent of
" the advantages tendered to you are immenſe.—
" Heaven grant you may not diſcover them to be
" bleſſings after they have bid you an eternal
" adieu!"

They next proceed to the article of religion; and from the liberality of ſentiments on this ſubject, that now characterizes the French nation, they declare themſelves entirely confident, that no obſtructions will ariſe to prevent a ſincere amity.—They appeal to the concord ſubſiſting between the Proteſtants and Roman Catholics in Switzerland, as an illuſtrious proof of the benefits produced by ſuch an union.

They continue by exhorting them to beware of thoſe ſecret abettors of arbitrary meaſures among themſelves, who from private views of avarice or ambition, may oppoſe the real intereſt of the Canadians, and diſſuade them from accepting the advantageous offers now laid before them. They inform them, that Congreſs has unanimouſly voted, that it will conſider the violation of their rights in the ſame light as if it were levelled at thoſe of the Engliſh Colonies. They adviſe them to call a Provincial Meeting, for the election of Delegates to repreſent them in the next continental Congreſs; and conclude by theſe ſolemn and remarkable words:—" It is our fervent prayer, that God may
" incline your minds to approve our equitable and
" neceſſary meaſures; to add yourſelves to us; to

"put your fate, whenever you ſuffer injuries which "you are determined to oppoſe, not on the ſtrength "alone of your ſingle Province, but on the con- "ſolidated powers of North America."

Such were, in part, the very words, and in general the ſenſe and purport of the various addreſſes framed by the Congreſs in this critical juncture of affairs in America. The conduct and meaſures which they adopted and propoſed, met with the univerſal concurrence and applauſe of their conſtituents. In no age or country was ever a greater confidence teſtified in its rulers, than the members of the American Congreſs experienced from their countrymen. This indeed was the natural conſequence of the diſpoſition the people were in from one end of the continent to the other. No parties or diviſions prevailed among them: their unanimous accord againſt Great Britain, had ſilenced and put an end to all thoſe leſſer cauſes of contention that are common in all countries. The ſame ſpirit animated their leaders; there was but one voice among them,—that of oppoſition to Britain.

The meeting of this Aſſembly, and its proceedings, were now become an object of equal curioſity and importance in Europe. The political part of ſociety was buſied every where in forming opinions and paſſing judgments upon them; and individuals were ſolicitous in framing conjectures upon their iſſue, according to their reſpective wiſhes or fears.

But however they might differ in their ſentiments concerning the juſtice of their cauſe, they all agreed that their meaſures were conducted with a wiſdom and ſagacity worthy of the moſt conſummate politicians.

Nothing contributed more powerfully to impreſs people with a favourable opinion of their abilities than thoſe public documents and addreſſes of which

language, energy of thought, and powers of argument they diſplayed, convinced even thoſe who were averſe to their pretenſions, that they were ſupported by men of ſpirit and capacity.

But beſide theſe compoſitions, a variety of other publications were now daily arriving from America, which did the natives great honour. They manifeſted a vigour and comprehenſiveneſs of mind, unfettered by modern effeminacy of thinking. They breathed thoſe maxims of liberty, which in ancient times filled the Grecian republics with ſtateſmen, patriots, and heroes.

The truth was, that the reſiſtance of America was an object that ſtruck the monarchical ſtates of Europe with admiration and aſtoniſhment. Accuſtomed to obey with implicit veneration the royal mandates of their reſpective ſovereigns, it could hardly enter into their conceptions, that any ſubjects of ſo great and potent a Prince as the King of Great Britain, would dare to diſobey commands, emanating jointly from his authority, and that of the Britiſh Parliament: their concurrence ſeemed to conſtitute a weight able to cruſh at once all oppoſition.

This opinion aroſe from the limited ſphere of ideas, wherein the principles of education prevalent in European monarchies, have circumſcribed the thoughts of mankind. It may even be ſaid, that no nations in Europe, the Britiſh excepted, dare carry reflection much beyond what they are taught by their rulers.

Hence proceeds a diſpoſition eaſy to manage; and which, when occaſionally provoked to break out into murmurs and diſcontent, is ſoon apt to return to ſubmiſſion, on the appearance of coercive meaſures to reduce them to obedience. While threats only are employed for this purpoſe, they may keep aloof, and threaten reſiſtance; but when

they ſee the arm of power lifted againſt them, their ſpirits fail, and they tremble to face the coming ſtorm.

They who wondered at the daringneſs of the Americans, did not reflect, that their poſition was preciſely ſuch as will always induce men to act in the ſame manner. They were the deſcendants of the freeſt people upon earth, whoſe notions they had imbibed, and whoſe privileges they claimed in their fulleſt extent, as their undoubted inheritance. Remote from the ſeat of power and corruption, they were not over-awed by the one, nor debilitated by the other.

Their immenſe diſtance from the metropolis, had hitherto preſerved them from the contagion of miniſterial influence: few were the means of detaching individuals from the intereſt of the public. The principal poſts and offices in the gift of government, were chiefly beſtowed on the natives of Britain; and the inferior employments were neither numerous nor lucrative enough to purchaſe many adherents. Thoſe honorary diſtinctions which birth and titles create, were hardly known among them: every man occupied the rank which his own induſtry, or that of his fathers had procured him. This afforded every individual the proſpect of riſing to importance through the exertion of his talents, and encouraged him, of courſe, to make a proper uſe of them. Hopes of this nature excited univerſal emulation, and produced a laborious and diligent race of men, full of projects for the making of their fortunes, and not eaſily diſheartened by difficulties.

They were wealthy, but it was in the riches of nature. The voluptuous opulence of Europe had not yet reached them. Society might be ſaid to have juſt attained the ſtate of manhood among them. Their enjoyments were neither far ſought, nor dearly purchaſed; and left their

unimpaired, and fit for the profecutions of an active life.

The fimiliarity of purfuits and occupations among them, created a levelling fpirit, which in the prefent poſture of their affairs was of admirable ſervice. It united them thoroughly in a cauſe, which was the more a common one, as they were all equally to partake of the benefit or detriment accruing from its ſucceſs or failure.

They were at the ſame time remarkably fond of the ways and habits of life by long cuſtom eſtabliſhed among them. They did not wiſh for an introduction of thoſe political ſyſtems, which by conferring imaginary excellence on particular claſſes, contribute only to eſtrange them in affection and intereſt from the reſt of the community. Nothing ſets this in a clearer light, than the readineſs with which all America concurred at the very outſet of its confederation, to provide againſt the future eſtabliſhment of hereditary honours.

No few politicians both in Britain, and other countries in Europe, have taxed the Britiſh government with overſight, in not having long ago introduced ſuch diſtinctions among the Americans. Titles of nobility create a natural attachment to the power that confers them: by drawing individuals nearer to the throne, and making them in ſome meaſure participate in its ſplendour, they procure it ſupporters in the day of of need.

But whether ſuch a meaſure would have much availed Great Britain in the preſent caſe, is a matter of doubt. No people are more attached to their country, nor to the life they lead in it, than the inhabitants of the Engliſh Colonies in North America. Like the native Indians diſperſed throughout the immenſe tracts of that vaſt continent, they delight in perſonal independence, and ſeem to look

them, as retreats from oppreſſion, ſhould the iron hand of tyranny compel them to abandon their preſent manſions.

Inured from early years to the occupations and toils of a country life, they dwelt in the midſt of rural plenty, and were totally unacquainted with ideal wants. Such being the condition of an infinite majority of the inhabitants, and the manners and inclinations of many of the moſt opulent, correſponding with theirs in a very conſiderable degree, they formed, altogether, a body of men too well affected towards each other, through that ſympathy which ariſes from ſimilitude of diſpoſition, to have been eaſily diſunited.

Experience has invariably ſhown, that no ſituation contributes more effectually to invigorate the human faculties, than that which is equally removed from the preſſures of want, and the exceſs of affluence. Either of thoſe extremities is fatal, by creating diſcouragement or indolence. Thus we ſee, that in countries where wealth is diſtributed in very unequal proportions, exceſſive wretchedneſs engenders ſloth and indolence on the one hand, and that too much opulence produces diſſipation and careleſſneſs on the other.

This happy medium between poverty and riches, was the moſt deſirable circumſtance that could attend the Americans at this period. It approximated and cemented the great body of the people; it made them duly ſenſible of the ſtrength and importance reſulting from an equal diffuſion of property, and inſpired them with a reſolution to maintain themſelves in ſuch a ſtate.

The Americans, throughout the whole of this conteſt, entertained a very clear idea of their own ſituation, and of that of Great Britain. They ſtood prepared on their own ground, where plenty of reſources were at hand; ſhould not theſe prove ſuf-

ficient to withſtand the power of Britain, they well knew where others might be found. The jealouſy of all Europe, of thoſe ſtates in particular whoſe enmity to Britain was natural and hereditary, was a fund from whence to derive ſupplies, which political inveteracy would render inexhauſtible while the quarrel laſted.

The condition of Great Britain was the reverſe in every reſpect. She was torn with diviſions at home, that rendered one half of the nation an enemy to the other. The very ſubject of the diſpute with America was the cauſe of endleſs conteſt. She had an immenſe ocean to croſs before ſhe arrived at the ſcene of action. The preparation and expence for ſo vaſt an enterprize, were neceſſarily prodigious. Add to this the avowed unwillingneſs in multitudes of thoſe who were to draw the ſword in this quarrel, and the divided opinions of the wiſeſt men in the nation what plan of acting was the moſt eligible.

But independent of theſe difficulties, which were ſufficient to alarm the moſt forward and confident, there was another of ſuch magnitude, as ſeemed of itſelf to render the attempt impracticable. This was the critical ſituation of the public funds.—Great Britain was now at the eve of a war, that threatened to prove the moſt perilous and expenſive of any ſhe had waged for ages. Her reſources, though great, were in evident danger of ſoon diminiſhing through its operations. The ſtanding revenue was inadequate to the demands of the ſtate on this occaſion; and the fears of thoſe who could alone advance the neceſſary ſupplies, were to be overcome by views of intereſt.

But even this powerful lure was conſiderably weakened by the reflection on the precarious ſtate of the Britiſh finances. All Europe was aſtoniſhed at the boldneſs of Britain in commencing a war ſo

terrible in its appearances, when loaded with ſuch enormous debts. It ſeemed utterly impoſſible for the nation to bear any additional weight; and political calculators were eager in predicting a national bankruptcy, in caſe Britain ſhould perſiſt in the hoſtile meaſures it had reſolved.

The general opinion of Europe was deciſively againſt theſe meaſures. They deemed it the height of impolicy in the Engliſh, to attack their Colonies; and carry their arms ſo far abroad, while their own affairs were in ſuch diſorder at home.

The Americans were loudly of this opinion. The reſiſtance they threatened was greatly founded on the preſumption that Britain was too much entangled with domeſtic difficulties to turn her attention to ſo great a diſtance.

Their arguments againſt the probability of ſuch a conduct in the Britiſh miniſtry, were enforced with that warmth and impetuoſity which characterized all their proceedings.

Is this a time, ſaid they, for Britain to ruſh to war with her Colonies, whoſe wealth and ſtrength conſtitute ſo great a part of her own, when ſurrounded by enemies wiſhing for her deſtruction, and that will undoubtedly contribute to accelerate it? To attack America, is in fact to attack herſelf: Such an enterprize, to ſay nothing of its injuſtice, is founded on folly, and muſt end in ruin: in loſing America, Britain will loſe a third of her dominions, her commerce, and her power. Neither will her loſſes terminate here. To ſpill the blood of the Americans, the beſt of her own muſt be ſhed. Her braveſt ſoldiers and ſailors muſt be ſacrificed in this fatal quarrel. Her treaſures will no leſs be profuſed; and all her reſources ſtrained to their utmoſt bearing. If ſhe perſiſt in this unrighteous quarrel, the day will certainly come, when her ſtrength will be exhauſted, her trade and manufac-

tufes ruined, and her population diminiſhed, when her revenues muſt unavoidably fail, her credit vaniſh, and her debts overwhelm her beyond any poſſibility of prevention.

Such was the general ſtile of the Americans when engaged on this ſubject. Fully perſuaded of the rectitude of their notions, as well as the juſtice of their cauſe, they flattered themſelves that the ſame ideas would be adopted in Britain, and preponderate at laſt over all motives of reſentment.

In the mean time, they were zealouſly occupied in maintaining by dint of reaſoning, the propriety of their conduct, and in impreſſing people with a conviction, that they acted upon the cleareſt and moſt unqueſtionable principle of natural equity.

Many were the apologies that appeared in their behalf at this time, not only in America and Britain, but in various other parts of Europe. They were circulated every where with great induſtry, and read with equal attention. They were conſidered as the plea of America before the bar of European wiſdom; the light in which the Americans wiſhed them to be viewed.

We are accuſed, ſaid they, of diſobedience to the Britiſh legiſlature, of ingratitude to our mother country, and of harbouring a long premeditated deſign of caſting off all further acknowledgment of her ſovereignty, and becoming our own maſters. To this we anſwer, that we obſerve the Britiſh laws with the greateſt fidelity; but that it is not conformable to the ſpirit and meaning of theſe laws, that any man ſhould be ſubject to the government of thoſe whom he has not, in ſome meaſure, conſented to obey. In Britain, all people, if they have not a direct vote in the election of a Parliament, poſſeſs however many indirect means of oppoſing or favouring candidates. They reſide on the ſpot, and whatever laws are enacted within the doors of Par-

liament, affect the members themſelves, no leſs than the people at large.

This cannot be alledged in the caſe of the Americans. They live in a country three thouſand miles diſtant from Britain. Acts of Parliament are therefore made by perſons with whom they are totally unconnected, and over whom, of courſe, they can have no influence; whereas in England this influence is ſuch, as often to conſtrain the Parliament to repeal acts that are unpopular. So different indeed is the ſituation of the Americans in this reſpect, that the more they are oppreſſed by the Britiſh legiſlature, the more it may become popular on this very account, from transferring to America burdens thought too oppreſſive in Britain.

Thus, continued they, our intereſts are brought into diſcuſſion by ſuch as have no concern in ſupporting them. What other conſequence can we expect, than that they will ſacrifice them, without remorſe or dread, to the conveniency of that community to which they belong?—It may happen, indeed, that a few generous and feeling individuals may befriend us, or that the oppoſers of miniſtry may from factious principles eſpouſe our cauſe; but the voice of true patriots, we know from long experience, is ſoon drowned in a miniſterial majority, whenever it proves diſpleaſing; and we know as well, that the aſſiſtance of faction is not to be relied upon.

Is it reaſonable then to blame us for taking our deareſt intereſts into our own hands, eſpecially as we do not by this forſwear our allegiance to Britain? We leave her in poſſeſſion of an immenſe proportion of authority over us. We make no laws without her conſent, even in our domeſtic concerns. She appoints our Governors, and every officer of any conſequence. She regulates our trade in every quarter of the globe. She declares war, and makes

peace, without conſulting us; and we are willing to fight her battles, and ſhare in her good or evil fortune, without repining at the inferiority of our condition. Is not all this a ſufficient acknowledgment of her ſovereignty? and can ſhe in honour or humanity claim any more?

The accuſation of ingratitude is equally groundleſs. We have omitted no opportunity of teſtifying our attachment to Great Britain. In the occurrences of private life, we have always been forward to ſhow how ſincerely we cheriſhed her remembrance. Of this let thoſe natives of Britain bear witneſs, who viſited or ſettled in America before the late diſturbances: the civility, or, to ſpeak with more propriety, the cordiality and affection they were treated with, amply proved our regard for the country from which they came; and we never could mention that country without emotion and rapture.

In public tranſactions our behaviour was the ſame. When did Britain engage in any conteſt, and find us backward to join her? Did we ever refuſe her our treaſures or our blood? Did we not rejoice at her ſucceſſes, or mourn over her diſaſters, as much as if they were our own?

True it is our anceſtors came from Britain; and ſhe has cheriſhed and protected America for a long courſe of years. But if cool unprejudiced reflection may be permitted, was it for us alone her cares were exerted? Did not the relation we bore demand her immediate ſupport of America, for the preſervation of herſelf? In the many wars wherein Great Britain has been engaged ſince the foundation of her Colonies, not one can be laid to their ſole account: They were the joint concern of both.

In the mean time this protection has been amply repaid. The excluſive enjoyment of the whole

American trade, is a price which all the world will allow to be more than adequate for the benefits we have derived from Britain. But ſuppoſing it to be no more than what ſhe has a right to expect, have we not, by paying it faithfully, acquitted ourſelves of our debt, and acquired therefore the right, on our part, of calling ourſelves an honeſt and punctual people.

The title of mother country is often pleaded in behalf of Britain. We admit the title;—we even glory in it; but we have not diſgraced it: We have acted in ſuch a manner as to convince the world, that we are worthy of being called her ſons. We have obeyed her juſt and lawful commands; we have exerted ourſelves to the utmoſt of our abilities for her intereſt and honour; we have ſubmitted to heavy burdens to eaſe her; we have even patiently acquieſced in her will and pleaſure, when we might juſtly have complained of her ſeverity, but our affections got the better of our reſentments, and we could not diveſt ourſelves of the feelings of dutiful children, and loyal ſubjects.

But there is a term at which obedience ceaſes to be a duty or a virtue, and becomes ſervility and baſeneſs: this term was haſtened by the imperiouſneſs of thoſe who adminiſtered the affairs of Britain. Proud of her ſucceſſes in a war in which ſhe had triumphed over the two moſt potent monarchies in Europe, ſhe confidently preſumed that the dread of her power would obviate all ideas of diſputing her commands, and that whatever ſhe thought proper to enjoin would implicitly be complied with.

In this fatal preſumption, ſhe ventured to try the condeſcendence of America; forgetting that ſhe had ſtretched it to its utmoſt bearing, and could not require more without aſſuming the character of a tyrant. But in an evil hour for Britain, her haughtineſs overcame her prudence, and ſhe over-leapt thoſe bounds of authority which ought to have been

held as ſacred as thoſe limits that fix the territorial rights of nations.

Such were the reaſonings and arguments of the Americans in defence of their proceedings. The jealouſy prevailing againſt Great Baitain, gained them a favourable reception every where. They were read, approved, and admired with a kind of enthuſiaſm. One would have thought Europe was in alliance with that part of the world; and that Great Britain was an ambitious aggreſſor, whoſe iniquitous attempts ought to be reſiſted, and againſt whom it behoved all nations to unite.

Theſe notions ſpread every where with aſtoniſhing rapidity. What contributed moſt powerfully to render them acceptable, was that ſeveral individuals of great eminence in political knowledge took up the pen in their recommendation. Britain was repreſented in the moſt injurious light: ſhe was accuſed of deſigning not only a monopoly of trade, but an excluſive enjoyment of liberty, and as ſecretly determined to overturn all the obſtructions formed by laws and equity, in the proſecution of that tyrannical ſcheme.

Among the various nations that eſpouſed the cauſe of the Americans, none ſignalized themſelves more than the French. They did it with the more warmth and vehemence, as the Engliſh nation was the principal object at which theſe were levelled.—They found or invented ſufficient cauſes to irritate the Colonies; they ſet their imaginations on the rack to furniſh them with pretexts for renouncing all further adherence to the parent ſtate, by which they repreſented them to have been treated in a manner unworthy of the attachment they had ſo long, and ſo invariably teſtified for her; and that entirely abſolved them of all obligation to remain any longer in her ſubjection.

It is no leſs remarkable than true, that the people of France, though paſſive under a form of government which is extremely oppreſſive, preſerve a high ſenſe of the value of political liberty, and expreſs great reſpect for thoſe nations that have been brave or wiſe enough to ſave themſelves from that contagion of ſlavery, which has over-run almoſt all the continent of Europe.

So ſtrong is their partiality to the cauſe of freedom, that when the French miniſtry, under the late King, undertook the conqueſt of Corſica, in virtue of the ceſſion which the Republic of Genoa made of that iſland to France, the Corſicans had numerous partizans and well-wiſhers among the French, who ſcrupled not openly to extol the reſolution of thoſe iſlanders, and to ſpeak of them as men who deſerved a better fate than to be ſubdued by France, or ſubmit to Genoa.

This ſpirit aroſe with double vigour on the commencement of the quarrel between Great Britain and America. The conſciouſneſs of the good-wiſhes of the Court to this latter, gave life to the national partiality in its favour, and emboldened people to ſpeak and write their ſentiments without reſtraint.

They did both with ſo much boldneſs and latitude of thought on the ſubject, that perſons unacquainted with the ſituation of France, would have imagined from the various tracts they publiſhed on this occaſion, that France was a country of perfect freedom, and the French a nation of republicans.

The truth is, that liberty is ſo truly the clear and inconteſtible right of mankind, that even they who have never poſſeſſed, nor expect ever to poſſeſs it, cannot help feeling its value, and the propriety of aſſerting it in all who have it in their power.

There is ſomething ſo intereſting in the idea of public freedom, that whenever a people take up

of meeting with the open countenance of all who dare beſtow it, and with the ſecret good-wiſhes of all who fear to expreſs them.

Men who are combating for freedom, are in ſome meaſure the champions of mankind: they fight, as it were, for the univerſal cauſe of ſociety. This naturally engages the predilection of all who behold the ſtrife. Tyrants, and their abettors, are neceſſary objects of hatred; we rejoice to ſee them overthrown; and though we ſhould derive no immediate benefit from their fall, we yet partake of that which reſults to others, by the ſatisfaction we cannot help feeling at the defeat of injuſtice and oppreſſion.

In the very countries that groan under the ſevereſt deſpotiſm, the public cannot be prevented from teſtifying its approbation of theſe ſucceſsful efforts in vindication of the common rights of men. A ſympathetic pleaſure ariſes from them, which is communicated throughout all ranks and degrees.—It is a kind of revenge indirectly levelled at thoſe who oppreſs them, and in which they indulge themſelves the more readily, as they have no other way of expreſſing their reſentment.

Another motive may be aſſigned for the contentment accruing from events of this nature. They hold up ſerious admonitions to arbitrary princes, and warn them to be moderate in the exerciſe of their power, leſt they ſhould, in their turn experience the wrath and indignation of an injured people. Conſcious of this effect upon the minds of their rulers, nations view ſuch events as the beſt of leſſons to thoſe who hold them in ſubjection.

To theſe cauſes may be aſcribed the eagerneſs with which men have always ſided with the oppreſſed. The Americans were reputed ill-uſed; this excited compaſſion: they were deſcribed at the ſame time as a reſolute and brave people, determined to

reſiſt oppreſſion; this procured them eſteem and reſpect, and raiſed them a multitude of adherents in all parts of Europe.

Before this period, the vaſt continent of North America was hardly known to moſt Europeans, but by its geographical poſition on the maps of the globe. They were totally ignorant that nations were ſilently rearing in that part of the world, which would one day diſpute its poſſeſſion with one of the greateſt powers in Europe. The ſudden diſcloſure of ſo vaſt a ſcene, ſtruck all people with aſtoniſhment. It ſuſpended their attention to all other objects: theſe became comparatively ſmall, when ſet againſt thoſe events which were now the ſubject of univerſal expectation.

The French, in particular, were longing to ſee the ſword drawn by both parties. Both miniſtry and people concurred in this wiſh; the firſt in full hope of diſmembering an empire of which they began to ſtand in the greateſt dread; the ſecond from popular anipathy, no leſs than natural impulſe in favour of men who were repreſented as ſtruggling againſt their oppreſſors.

From theſe cauſes France was more intent on the tranſactions now taking place in America, than any other power. She beheld with pleaſure the probability of a moſt ſanguinary conteſt between her ancient rival, and the Colonies which ſhe had taken ſo much time to found and bring to maturity, and had protected at ſo vaſt an expence. She rejoiced to ſee the fruits of ſo much ſagacity and care, the produce of near two centuries, on the point of being torn for ever from the hands that planted them. Her only apprehenſion was, that a ſenſe of their mutual intereſts might reconcile the jarring parties, and prevent them from coming to thoſe extremities into which her clandeſtine endeavours were now ſedulouſly exerted to precipitate both.

The meeting of the American Congreſs opened the faireſt proſpect of realizing the ſanguine expectations ſhe had entertained, that America, confiding in her ſtrength, would refuſe to make the conceſſions demanded by Britain; and that neither of the contendants being in any diſpoſition to yield, diſputes would ariſe to ſuch a height, as to render an appeal to force unavoidable.

Elated with theſe ideas, the French miniſtry viewed this meeting of the Congreſs as the firſt ſtep to the great revolution they were looking for. The altercation, from being a difference of opinion begun and maintained by individuals, was gradually become a national quarrel of the moſt ſerious nature. It had already produced an effect of the laſt importance; it had united all America under one government: Britain had no longer a ſingle Colony to contend with; ſhe had them all to face under one denomination.

The difference between the language they held when a ſunder, and the ſtile they now aſſumed, was manifeſt to every obſerving man. They did not, indeed, caſt off at once all reſpect and ſubmiſſion; but their conceptions were bold beyond any former precedent, and their expreſſions were animated to a degree that bordered on defiance.

The deliberations of Congreſs, indeed, were attended with ſecrecy, and the daringneſs of their ſpeeches was known only to thoſe who were preſent: but the reſult of theſe deliberations proved in what a tone they had been conducted, and with what kind of ſpirit the members were actuated.

The unuſual boldneſs and animation that accompanied all diſcourſes and writings of private individuals, correſponded with the ſpiritedneſs of their leaders: it went even further. As they were not bound by formalities, they kept no meaſures in their invectives againſt the politics of Britain: they

ſpoke like men who well foreſaw the iſſue of the conteſt; and were not therefore apprehenſive of the conſequences of what they might ſpeak or write.

The time is come, ſaid they, to fix ourſelves upon a ſtable ground. Let us at once know our deſtiny: freedom or ſlavery is now the queſtion: ſhall we, a great, a numerous people, humbly ſubmit to be ruled by another nation that has not conquered us, and that dwells in a different hemiſphere? Let our courage firſt be tried, and victory decide between us. It were a ſhame for men to yield before ſuch a deciſion.

What are the foundations upon which they erect a right of ſovereignty over us? Is it on their ſuperior virtue, or brighter capacity? The firſt they have candour enough not to preſume upon: they frankly acknowledge themſelves, and if they did not, we know them to be a corrupt and venal people in every thing relating to politics and government. With what a face can ſuch a people claim the prerogative of governing a diſtant nation, not worſe, if not better than themſelves? What renders ſuch a claim the more unreaſonable, is the impoſſibility of their being acquainted with our condition ſo well as ourſelves. A ſmall number of thoſe who compoſe their Parliament, are men of knowledge and experience; but the major part is made up of perſons whoſe wealth only could have ſeated them there; and ſome of whom lie under the imputation of a bad character. Shall ſuch an Aſſembly, choſen by a diminutive proportion of the people, whoſe votes are almoſt all purchaſed, and who themſelves will ſell their own to the higheſt bidder; ſhall ſuch an Aſſembly arrogate the right of making laws for us, who are as knowing as themſelvs in general matters, and much more competent to the taſk of providing for our own welfare, without going three thouſand miles to aſk for advice?

Their capacity we reſpect, indeed, much more than their virtue; but while it is continually proſtituted, it is much more dangerous than mediocrity of talents accompanied by good intentions: theſe will go much farther in promoting the good of the community, than brightneſs of genius attended by a dubious character. But allowing their abilities to be ever ſo ſplendid, and even ſuperior to our own, ſtill we have capacity enough to manage our own concerns; and experience has ſhown it to a proverb, that every one is beſt converſant in his own affairs.

But why ſhould we diſſemble our ſentiments on their conduct and intentions reſpecting America? They planted Colonies with no other view than to make them ſubſervient to their own conveniency. While unable to exerciſe a will of our own, we yielded paſſively to their ſuperior power; and they made the moſt of us accordingly. But we are no longer in that infant ſtate of Coloniſation, which obliged us to pay implicit obedience to their commands. While their behaviour to us is dictated by humanity, we ſhall gladly remember that we both originate from the ſame anceſtors; but if they conſider their poſſeſſion of the land occupied by theſe in former ages, as a title to lord it over us, we are not ſo deſtitute of ſenſe or ſpirit, as to admit of ſo unjuſt and groundleſs a claim. We are now arrived at a period of ſtrength and maturity that forbids us to bend beneath a foreign yoke: it were a ſhame, if convinced of our own power and importance, we ſhould tamely give ourſelves up to the controul of another people.

Let not Britain, therefore, attribute it to petulance or diſaffection, that we think ourſelves authoriſed to aſſume the direction of our own affairs. We are willing, we are deſirous to remain her everlaſting friends, and fellow ſubjects to the monarch that

wears her crown; but let her not deceive herſelf with a vain hope that we ſhall deſcend any lower.

But what hopes have we, on the other hand, that Britain will accept of theſe offers? Fleets and armies are the means by which ſhe evidently propoſes to retain us in her bonds. Behold what is now tranſacting at Boſton: this is a true earneſt of the conduct ſhe intends to hold with America.

What remains to be done in our ſituation, but manfully to face the dangers that threaten us? When attacked with fire and ſword, have we not a right to repel the aſſailants with the like weapons of deſtruction?

The eyes of Engliſhmen are now upon us; and numbers, perhaps the majority, do not wiſh to ſee us proſtrate ourſelves before the iron rod that is lifted over our heads. They would deſpiſe us for ſuch cowardice, and deem us unworthy of the forefathers of whom we make ſuch a boaſt.

Let us then rouze ourſelves. Let us go forth and give our invaders the meeting. Let our tongues and our pens be ſilent, until our deeds have proved that we have ſpoken and written no more than what we dare to perform. Until this is done, Britain will not think that we deſerve to be treated like Engliſhmen.

Such was the ſtile and manner of the numberleſs publications that appeared in America at this time.

What added, doubtleſs, conſiderably to the zeal thus manifeſted in the common cauſe, was the ſpirit exerted upon this occaſion by the independent clergy. They faithfully adhered to the people; and by their conduct and diſcourſes, ſhowed that they conſidered themſelves as equally intereſted with the reſt of the community, in maintaining its various claims.

There is probably no country upon earth where the inhabitants are more under the influence of their preachers than New-England. To ſpeak with impartiality, they are uſually men of irreproachable character, ſincere and laborious in their vocation, and exemplary in their lives and manners.

Men of this deſcription, many of whom were eminent for their learning and eloquence, were powerful aſſiſtants in ſpiriting up the people to cooperate with their leaders in reſiſting the deſigns of Britain, which were painted to them in all the colours of injuſtice and tyranny.

The diſcourſes addreſſed to the people from the pulpits in New-England, made the greater impreſſion, as they were unbought and flowed from principle. The cauſe of the public, from this method of ſupporting it, became more ſacred and reſpectable. It created a kind of religious attachment, and inſpired men with an enthuſiaſtic courage to defend it.

The conſequence was, that the inhabitants of New-England took up arms with the moſt conſcientious perſuaſion of the juſtice and rectitude of doing it. They went to the field of battle, convinced that if they fell, it was in a cauſe that Heaven approved. Sentiments of this kind could not fail to prodce intrepidity.

The Congreſs beheld with much ſatisfaction this univerſal diſpoſition to coincide with the meaſures, which, it perceived, muſt ſoon be taken in the preſent circumſtances. From the irreſiſtible power of the Britiſh miniſtry, it clearly foreſaw that the utmoſt efforts would be made to reduce America by force of arms. The reſolutions adopted in the laſt ſeſſion of Parliament, left no hopes of reconciliation otherwiſe than by complying with the acts it had lately paſſed, and which were the chief cauſe

That Aſſembly was duly aware of the dangers they muſt encounter in ſo arduous an undertaking as that of meeting regular troops in fight, fluſhed with former victories, and commanded by officers of tried valour and experience. But it relied, at the ſame time, on the nature of the country wherein the war would be waged; full of paſſes and defiles, interſected with numberleſs rivers and ſtreams, and covered in ſo large a proportion with woods and hills. All theſe were powerful impediments to the motions of armies; and would render the ſuperior diſcipline of the Britiſh forces much leſs formidable than it might at firſt appear.

In order not to be wanting to themſelves in ſo critical an exigency, liſts were carefully procured of the number of fenſible men in every Colony, and of thoſe eſpecially who had ſerved during the laſt war. As no more than twelve years had intervened ſince that period, near two thirds of thoſe who had borne arms at that time, were ſtill alive, if one may rely on the computation which allows two men out of three to be ſurviving at the expiration of ten years.

This examination of their reſources for the military liſt, was far from unſatisfactory. During the progreſs of the preceding war, more than forty thouſand Americans had taken the field in their ſucceſſive turns: their ſtanding complement was twenty-five thouſand. Allowing for the various accidents concomitant on life, a fund ſtill remained conſiſting of about twelve thouſand men, who had ſeen actual ſervice, and were well acquainted with the uſe of arms and military diſcipline.

CHAP. VIII.

Tranſactions in Great Britain relating to the Colonies.

AFTER laying the foundation of the republican ſyſtem, ſo long propoſed by the leading men in America, and providing for an effectual reſiſtance to the efforts of Great Britain, the Congreſs ſeparated, after a ſeſſion of near two months.

Intelligence of the meeting and tranſactions of this Aſſembly, ſpeedily reached England; but notwithſtanding their importance, they did not ſeem to occaſion much alarm to the generality of people. That party which adhered to the views and reſolutions of the miniſtry, placed ſo much confidence in their abilities, and in the meaſures which they had lately taken to bring the Americans to obedience, that they felt no apprehenſion on account of the bold proceedings of the Congreſs. They looked upon them as little more than the idle clamours of an unruly multitude, which the exertion of a proper ſpirit would quickly ſilence.

The other party, indeed, viewed theſe proceedings in a very different light. As they had from the commencement of the diſpute taken upon them to predict an univerſal confederacy of America, and an obſtinate reſiſtance to the deſigns of Great Britain, they did not fail to point out to the world, how true and well-founded their prognoſtications had proved; and to warn people not to advance any further in a track that evidently was dangerous in the higheſt degree.

But the public had loſt all patience on this ſubject. So much had been aſſerted and contradicted on both ſides of the queſtion, it was involved in ſo many doubts and uncertainties, that the bulk of the na-

tion began to drop its attention to American topics. One would have thought by the indifference with which they were treated, by far the greateſt number, that they had reſolved, as it were, to give themſelves no further concern about them, until ſome event ſhould happen of ſo ſerious a nature as to render them unqueſtionably of the utmoſt importance.

Such was the temper of the nation at large,
30th Nov. when a new Parliament met, which ſoon
1774. appeared to be no leſs diſpoſed than the former, to adopt and purſue with vigour the ideas and views of the miniſtry reſpecting America.

The Royal ſpeech informed them of the diſobedient ſpirit ſtill prevailing in Maſſachuſet; that it was abetted by the other Colonies; that due meaſures had been taken to enforce the acts paſſed by the late Parliament; that an inviolable reſolution had been embraced to maintain the ſupremacy of the Britiſh legiſlature in every part of the empire; and that in the ſupport of ſo juſt a determination, no doubt was entertained of their warmeſt concurrence.

An addreſs in conformity to the ſentiments expreſſed in this ſpeech, was voted by a prodigious majority. But they who were of a different opinion, exerted themſelves on this occaſion with uncommon vigour; and though born down by the weight of numbers, did not ſeem inclined to give up any part of the conteſt upon that account.

The refuſal of their concurrence was founded on the neceſſity of a ſtrict examination of what the preceding Parliament had done, before they ventured to give it their approbation. The reſtoration of tranquility in America, had been held out as a motive to gain approvers of the meaſures adopted in the concluding ſeſſion of the laſt; it became, there-

preſent, to examine how far the ſucceſs of thoſe meaſures correſponded with the motives from which they had been approved. But how different was the proſpect from that which had been promiſed! Inſtead of that peaceable picture which miniſtry had drawn in ſuch flattering colours, they beheld all America in flames; and it would require the ſkill of the ableſt ſtateſman to extinguiſh it.

To require them to give their ſanction to the plans in agitation among miniſters, was an attempt to impoſe upon their common ſenſe and experience. It was inviting them to add fuel to a fire that was conſuming one of the nobleſt monuments of Britiſh genius and induſtry.

America was now, it clearly appeared, to be devoted to miniſterial vengeance, for having fully proved the incompetency of the ſchemes that were now in proſecution. With what preſumption had its immediate fall been foretold, beneath the terrors awaiting the armaments that had been ſent forth? But had any ſupplicating voice been heard among the Americans? Were they not, on the contrary, ſtanding in a firm and compact array, prepared to meet our utmoſt wrath, and full of confidence in the juſtice of their cauſe.

It were imprudence in the extreme, with ſuch a ſight before them, to go forward without inquiring how far they were warranted in taking ſo ſerious a ſtep. Speed was only adviſable in the execution of deſigns maturely weighed; but no deliberation had preceded thoſe of which miniſtry demanded their approbation.

Thoſe deſigns had hitherto been attended with a kind of fatality. Whatever had been done in conſequence of them, had invariably been productive of miſchief. Was it conſiſtent with prudence to perſiſt in a ſyſtem not one part of which had anſwered expectation?

The anſwer to theſe objections was, that the behaviour of America was ſo diſreſpectful, and even ſo threatening, that it would argue a total want of ſpirit to let it paſs without notice. It was nugatory to ſay that the Americans were perſuaded of the equity of their cauſe. This was an argument that might as juſtly be pleaded in juſtification of Great Britain. But who was, in ſuch a conteſt, to decide of its rectitude or impropriety? If Britain ought not, had America a better title? The conteſt was now chiefly from that quarter. It began about the right of Great Britain to impoſe taxes upon America. In compliance with the wiſhes of America, Great Britain virtually relinquiſhed this right, by repealing every money act ſaving one. That one was the leaſt material of any; its produce was a meer trifle: it was excepted for no other reaſon than to preſerve the honour of the nation: the Americans knew it; but nothing would ſatisfy the Americans; their pride and obſtinacy diſdained to feel for the honour of Britain: an unlimited ſubmiſſion to their demands, was the ſole condition upon which they declared themſelves willing to be reconciled.

In private quarrels, individuals that meant reconciliation, met each other half way: the party that refuſed was always conſidered as the moſt blameable. Now Britain had gone more than half this way.; ſhe had gone almoſt the whole; but America had not moved a ſingle ſtep from the ground upon which ſhe ſtood at firſt: ſhe ſeemed imperiouſly to wait for a total unreſerved acquieſcence in her deſires on the part of Britain.

This was a faithful portraiture of the reſpective poſition of the two contendants. Would any man that wiſhed well to the reputation of Britain, require that ſhe ſhould humbly ſubmit to the dictates of America? All had been done that could be ex-

erified, the honour of Britain excepted: Heaven forbid that alſo ſhould be given up to the haughtineſs of the Americans. They alone had protracted the conteſt, by refuſing all condeſcendance, while Britain made ſo many conceſſions. Such a diſſimilitude of behaviour made it neceſſary for Britain to alter both her ſtile and conduct. She no longer exacted taxes from America; ſhe demanded homage and reſpect; ſhe felt herſelf inſulted, and expected a reparation of her honour: ſhe was not only the parent, but the protecting ſtate; this gave her a ſuperiority which inconteſtably empowered her to look for deference and condeſcenſion in her dependants.

The very nature of the diſpute was totally changed. America having refuſed the moſt ſlender acknowledgment of the ſovereignty of Britain, that could in the preſent circumſtances have been required, was guilty of a wilful and daring affront, which merited a conſpicuous chaſtiſement. Were Britain to refrain from inflicting it, her ſpirit and her power would equally be queſtioned; and if ſhe delayed it, the evil would accumulate by an increaſe of inſolence on the part of the Colonies, and of contempt on that of the European nations, which had already teſtified their ſurpriſe at the patience and inaction of the Britiſh miniſters, under ſuch repeated provocations.

Such was the ſtile of the debates upon this addreſs: they were equally ſpirited in both Houſes; but it was carried in the Houſe of Commons by two hundred and ſixty-four, againſt ſeventy-three; and in the Houſe of Lords by ſixty-three to thirteen.

Such majorities decided at once the fate of all oppoſition to miniſtry; and the Americans had now full intimation given them, that they would meet with no more favour from the preſent Parliament than from the laſt.

But the firmneſs and perſeverance of this oppoſition was not in the leaſt diminiſhed by the proſpect of the numbers it would have to encounter. Small as it was in the Upper Houſe, it produced a proteſt which concluded with theſe remarkable words: —"Whatever may the miſchievous deſigns, or the "inconſiderate temerity which leads others to this "deſperate courſe, we wiſh to be known as perſons "who have ever diſapproved of meaſures ſo pernicious in their paſt effects, and their future tendency; and who are not in haſte, without inquiry or information, to commit ourſelves in declarations which may precipitate our country into all the calamities of a civil war."

The oppoſition in Parliament was in the mean time ſtrongly ſeconded by the merchants of London and Briſtol trading to America. As they were fully appriſed of the conſequences that muſt neceſſarily inſue from a perſeverance in the hoſtile meaſures reſolved upon with North America, and deeply intereſted in ſuch an event, they exerted their whole influence to avert it. They prepared a repreſentation of the diſtreſſes they would unavoidably ſuffer from ſuch meaſures, and pointed out circumſtantially the various detriments that would ariſe from them to the public, and how dearly the proſecution of them muſt be paid for.

This oppoſition was attended with another of no leſs weight and conſequence. Mr. Pitt, now Lord Chatham, had for ſeveral years lived a retired life, remote from the buſy ſcenes in which he had long acted ſo conſpicuous a part. But his apprehenſions of the danger impending on the ſtate, now brought him again from his retreat. Though from ſeveral cauſes his popularity was diminiſhed, and his power much leſſened, yet the native dignity of his ſuperior genius, and the remembrance of the illuſtrious part he had acted in the ſaving of his country, would

not fail to procure him attention and influence to which ever ſide he might ſeem to incline.

He appeared in the Houſe of Lords on the firſt
20th Jan. day of their meeting after the Chriſt-
1775. mas receſs. He began his ſpeech by a total diſſent from the plan purſued in America by the miniſtry, and moved for an addreſs to the King, immediately to recall the troops from Boſton, as a neceſſary ſtep to all reconciliation. "An hour now loſt," ſaid he, "in allaying the ferment in America, might produce years of calamity, as the ſituation of the troops rendered them and the Americans continually liable to events which would cut off the poſſibility of a reconciliation. By withdrawing them, a proof of confidence and good will would be given on our ſide, that would remove jealouſy and ſuſpicion on the other. This was a preliminary ſtep of an indiſpenſible nature, and which muſt be taken previous to all others. It would be the ſetting of our foot on the threſhold of peace."

He animadverted in the ſevereſt terms upon the conduct of miniſtry. He accuſed them of having deceived the nation, by miſrepreſenting the ſituation of the Colonies, and by impreſſing people with an idea, that the diſputes and diſturbances among them were the affair of Boſton only, in which the reſt were unconcerned, and which a ſingle regiment would ſuffice to quell. He pointedly reprobated the whole ſyſtem of acts and regulations lately paſſed reſpecting them. He contended not, he ſaid, for indulgence, but juſtice to America. If we conſulted our intereſt or our dignity, the firſt advances to peace and concord ſhould come from us; as conceſſion always comes with a better grace, and more ſalutary effects, from a ſuperior. He warned them to retract in time, leſt unfortunate accidents ſhould compel them to ſubmit to the diſgraceful neceſſi-

of yielding through force, what they might have had the credit of granting through kindneſs.

He concluded a long and animated ſpeech upon this important occaſion, in the following bold and ſtriking manner:—"If the miniſters," ſaid he, "thus perſevere in miſadviſing and miſleading the King, I will not ſay that they can alienate the affections of his ſubjects from his crown; but I will affirm they will make the crown not worth his wearing:—I will not ſay that the King is betrayed, but I will pronounce that the kingdom is undone."

But the efforts of Lord Chatham in favour of the Americans, availed them nothing. Coercion was now deciſively reſolved upon by the majority, and no other plan was allowed to be admiſſible. They renewed all the arguments tending to criminate America, and to juſtify the conduct of miniſtry. The time was now arrived, ſaid they, for a final reſolution not only to be taken, but enforced. Parliament is determined to be obeyed; America refuſes obedience; what then but force can decide? To poſtpone coercion after ſo many threats, would be derogating from the national dignity. Delays in ſo urgent a buſineſs would defeat it without remedy, as the Americans were daily increaſing their preparations and ſtrength to encounter it. Years had elapſed ſince it had been the duty of Great Britain to employ her ſuperiority of means in cruſhing this rebellious ſpirit; ſhe had ſuffered it already to go too far. But if relying on the groundleſs hope that America might be reclaimed by other meaſures, ſhe neglected thoſe of compulſion, ſhe would only render it a taſk of more difficulty to employ them ſucceſsfully in future, as ſhe would certainly find to her coſt, that ſhe muſt employ them at laſt, however unwilling, if ſhe meant to retain any power over the Colonies.

After a violent conteſt, ſupported chiefly by a repetition of what had ſo frequently been urged, the motion was rejected by a majority of ſixty-eight to eighteen.

In the mean time, the merchants and manufacturers throughout the kingdom, in imitation of thoſe of London and Briſtol, laid a variety of petitions before Parliament againſt the hoſtile projects of the miniſtry reſpecting America.

The treatment of theſe petitions was remarkable: they were highly diſpleaſing to the people in power, as tending directly to defeat all the purpoſes they had ſo much at heart; but as they could not be rejected with a high hand, without adding conſiderably to the multitude who oppoſed the miniſtry, a committee was appointed to take them into conſideration, which was not to take place till after a previous committee on the affairs of America.

The reaſon aſſigned for ſeparating theſe two objects, was, that the conſideration of commercial, ought not to interfere with political matters; each of theſe being ſufficiently perplexing, without other embarraſſment. While the attention of the Houſe was taken up with the one, it ought not therefore to be diſtracted by the other: both together would puzzle and perplex; but aſunder, would be diſcuſſed with much more eaſe and perſpicuity.

But oppoſition would not admit of ſuch a reaſoning. To diſunite politics from commerce, in treating of the buſineſs of America, were dividing, in a manner, the body from the ſoul. To what purpoſe ſhould we concern ourſelves about America, unleſs it were for the ſake of commerce? But were it otherwiſe, there was no claſs of men whoſe correſpondence aſſiſted more in the illuſtration of political knowledge than that of merchants: they cor-

information; among theſe the political occurrences of the times conſtituted a principal part; as according to theſe, they regulated their mercantile proceedings. To exclude the intelligence that muſt ariſe from blending commerce with politics, would therefore be extremely unwiſe, eſpecially in a caſe where they were ſo intimately linked as in all that related to the Britiſh Colonies.

To defer the hearing of theſe petitions till the other committee had ſat, was in effect to reject them. They were intended as reaſons to influence that very committee againſt the propoſals of miniſtry. The truth was, they were dreaded as the moſt formidable objections to theſe propoſals, and were not, for that reaſon, to be permitted to enter the liſts, till the enemy they were to combat, had moved off the field triumphantly, under pretence that no antagoniſt appeared to oppoſe them.

But the Houſe of Commons was equally deciſive for miniſterial meaſures with the Houſe of Lords. The queſtion was carried in their favour by one hundred and ninety-ſeven, againſt eighty-one.

In conſequence of this deciſion, the petitions that had been preſented from London, Briſtol, Liverpool, Mancheſter, Norwich, Birmingham, Glaſgow, and other commercial towns, were ſucceſſively conſigned to what was then humouroufly entitled the Committee of Oblivion.

But the merchants of London were determined not to give up a conteſt of ſo weighty a kind, without teſtifying to the world how much they thought the proceedings of adminiſtration were contrary to ſound policy. They drew up a kind of proteſt, in which they aſſerted, that the connection between Great Britain and America was principally of a commercial nature, as the benefits derived from it to each were chiefly ſuch. During a century, and

ally employed in encreasing and encouraging the trade carried on between them, as an object of the last importance. That the manifold regulations adopted for the mutual prosperity of the Colonies and the mother country, formed the great political chain that united them to each other. Questions of commerce and policy, wherein both are concerned, ought therefore never to be divided, but examined jointly, as composing a whole, of which the parts can never be well perceived, unless they are placed in one point of view.

This remonstrance was presented on the day appointed for the previous committee to take place.—It was warmly seconded by the opposition, who insisted on the indignity offered to so respectable a body as the merchants of London, in referring the petition to a mock examination. A direct refusal would have been less mortifying.

As to the pretence so strongly urged, that a discussion of commercial matters would create a delay in the prosecution of measures of more consequence, it was unjust and groundless. No measures could equitably be formed without such a discussion; and the time required for it would not be of sufficient length to invalidate any measures that might follow in consequence of so proper and necessary a discussion.

Such a proceeding, it was further alledged, was unparliamentary: it pre-supposed a knowledge and conviction in ministers that the question would be carried according to their wishes; this indeed was not surprizing: but what was truly intolerable, it took away the very forms that should be observed in transactions of this kind, and prevented those who had a clear right to it, from stating their objections to the measures that passed against their suffrages.

But the fact was, the ultimate decision of mini-

ſo many ſpeeches, of which they knew beforehand the inefficacy. War was now the word; and notwithſtanding no weightier reaſon could be given for not attending to what the merchants had to ſay than this very determination, yet that was the very motive that impelled miniſters to refuſe them a hearing, leſt theſe ſhould make it appear how unwiſe it was to precipitate the nation into ſuch a meaſure.

And yet in caſe of a war, whom were they bound to conſult with more attention and deference than the mercantile claſſes, upon whom principally depends the arrangement of finances, and thoſe pecuniary reſources without which war cannot be waged. In whatever light therefore the point in queſtion was conſidered, every motive concurred to induce the miniſtry to pay the moſt ſerious regard to the repreſentations laid before them by ſo great a number of merchants from all parts of the kingdom.

In anſwer to the oppoſition, it was alledged, that faction had the principal hand in framing of the petitions ſo much recommended. The merchants had hitherto teſtified the fulleſt reliance on the diſcretion of Parliament; why ſhould they ſeize an occaſion of this kind to expreſs their doubts of its willingneſs to conſult their intereſts, and its ability to do it effectually?

The trade of Great Britain to America was in truth highly beneficial; but this was owing to the dependent ſituation of our Colonies: were they permitted to encroach on the ſuperiority of Britain, and to break through the regulations that had been framed with ſo much care and ſagacity to ſecure it, the advantages reſulting from their commerce, would gradually diminiſh, and become undeſerving of the ſolicitude with which England had ſo invariably attended to the protection and welfare of her American dependencies.

Diſtant poſſeſſions required an equal mixture of

them. America, it could not be denied, had experienced hitherto, much more of the firſt than of the laſt. Preſuming on its flouriſhing condition, and glorying in its ſtrength, it now aimed at an abatement of that ſuperiority on the ſide of Britain, which had been exerciſed ever ſince the foundation of her Colonies, without the leaſt complaint or appearance of diſſatisfaction. But ſhould Britain relax of thoſe rights ſhe had ſo long maintained, and enjoyed without diſpute, the merchants themſelves would be the firſt to feel the conſequences, and to arraign the imprudent indulgence of thoſe miniſters who ſhould, from ill-founded motives of policy, comply with the unreaſonable requeſts of the Coloniſts.

True it was, that war, and its concomitances, were a terrible object to behold; but they were ſometimes neceſſary, to prevent greater evils.—What evil could befal a trading nation ſo much to be dreaded, as the loſs of its commerce?—Was America to proceed in the courſe it had begun, a few years would ſuffice to ſet her free from all thoſe reſtraints that render the poſſeſſion of her valuable to Great Britain.

The chief of theſe reſtraints was the navigation act. But though the ſtrict obſervance of this, and the ſeveral injunctions laid upon them, might wear the appearance of ſeverity, yet they contributed to the reciprocal advantage of both parties, by encouraging the native produce of the Colonies, and enabling Britain not only to defend them with her arms, but to grant them immenſe ſums of money in annual bounties upon every article of trade which they could either diſcover or improve.

It had been repeatedly demonſtrated by fact, no leſs than by argument, that the intereſt of both Great Britain and America conſiſted in the prefer-

vation of the commercial ſyſtem ſo long eſtabliſhed between them. By adhering to it, they had both proſpered in a wondeful degree; and it might with great truth be added, that the proportion of that proſperity was evidently greater in every eſſential reſpect on the ſide of America, than on that of Great Britain. In proof of this, without entering into any further detail, let the reſpective condition of the commonalty be viewed in both counries, and and let an impartial obſerver decide which is the moſt enviable of the two.

The demands of the Americans were conſequently ungenerous and ill-timed. They were fully conſcious of the greater eaſe of circumſtances attending the generality of individuals among them, and of the oppreſſive burdens with which they were loaded in Britain. They knew the exigencies of the parent ſtate, and with what difficulty ſhe bore up againſt the embarraſſments that ſurrounded her. Was this therefore a ſeaſon to cavil about requeſts not attended, perhaps, with all the formality which their pride exacted, but certainly founded upon the ſtricteſt neceſſity, and of which nothing could warrant the refuſal.

Were that perpetual plea of the Americans ſincere, —apprehenſion for their juſt rights and immunities, they would ere now have deviſed ſome expedient to aſſiſt Great Britain in ſuch a method as might prove equally uſeful to her, and agreeable to their own ideas. But during a conteſt that had laſted now ten years, they had not made a ſingle propoſal.—This ſhowed, beyond the power of contradiction, that it was not the manner of aſking their aſſiſtance which diſpleaſed them, ſo much as the very matter itſelf. They were ſecretly determined to give none; and their whole ſtudy was to hide this determination, under the pretence of an illegality in the mode of

Were conceſſions to be made until the Americans were entirely ſatisfied, would their warmeſt advocate ſtand up and name the laſt of their demands? They were indefinite; and, in truth, aimed at a total repeal of whatever might ſeem obnoxious to their immediate intereſt. But that and their real intereſt differed greatly. A deprivation of the commercial and political ſupport they derived from Great Britain, would be the greateſt unhappineſs that could befal them. But this they muſt ſubmit to, if they ſhould ever ſucceed in the purſuit of that deluſive phantom of independence of all controul from Britain, which was ſo erroneouſly repreſented as the happieſt ſituation they could attain.

Conceſſions, in ſhort, were not the true method of reclaiming the Americans. They might appear ſuch to the mercantile claſſes, from the facility of making them, and the ſpeed with which tranquility would be reſtored. But how long would this tranquility remain unſhaken? NO longer than till the merchants of Great Britain had found how much their intereſt would ſuffer from the conſequences of thoſe conceſſions. This would quickly be diſcovered, when, unfettered by regulations, the Colonies received the produce of other countries, and carried their own wherever they thought proper. This was the point they inconteſtably aimed at, however they might pretend to the contrary. Notwithſtanding their boaſt of the vaſt buſineſs tranſacted with Great Britain, it was well known to ariſe from the prodigious credit they were indulged with here, and could not expect elſewhere.

True it was, that ſome years might elapſe before theſe evils would be diſcovered; but they would infallibly arrive, and their progreſs, though ſilent and unnoticed at firſt, would nevertheleſs be

ful as not to be remedied. Now therefore was the ſeaſon to obviate them, before they had taken too deep a root, and while the ſtrength of Britain was adequate to their eradication.

Conſiderations of leſs importance had often put arms into the hands of Britain: why ſhould ſhe heſitate in a caſe like the preſent, where honour and intereſt unitedly call upon her for the moſt ſpeedy and vigorous exertions? The merchants were wont heretofore to ſecond the wiſhes of the miniſtry, inſtead of oppoſing them: if they were alarmed at the ſuſpenſion of thoſe profits accruing from commerce, it was an inconvenience to which they had frequently ſubmitted: their enemies would experience as many, if not more; and it were unworthy of the character they had ſo long ſuſtained, to yield to indignities for the ſake of profit.

But the loſſes in preſent contemplation were nothing in compariſon to thoſe that would follow in future, ſhould Britain, from a ſpiritleſs fondneſs for temporary quiet, give up tamely thoſe advantages that would inſue from a reſolute maintenance of her juſt rights. This was a policy hitherto unknown in this country, where, inſtead of heſitation and backwardneſs, her councils had always been noted for the ardour and celerity with which they were inſpired, whenever the cauſe of the public was in agitation.

Theſe were the ſcope and purport of the numberleſs arguments that filled both the Parliament and the nation. But ſuch was the heat and violence of parties at this juncture, that arguments alone did not ſuffice to exhale it. All bounds of decency were overleaped in this unfortunate contention. Scurrility and invective were ſubſtituted in lieu of of reaſoning; and animoſity ſuperceded all the rules of civility and decorum.

Never did miniſtry and oppoſition engage with ſo

who felt how light they were in the ſcale of power, exerted all their eloquence and abilities in order to render their antagoniſts odious. They repreſented them as incapable, neglectful, and inconſiſtent; and the acts framed under their auſpices, as the offſpring of falſe information and ignorance. They were threatened with a ſevere vengeance, when the day ſhould come, as it muſt at laſt, that the nation would open its eyes to the iniquity of their adminiſtration.

The laſt Parliament was deſcribed as deeply participating of their guilt; and no language was ſpared in drawing it in the moſt defamatory colours. Among a variety of charges, one in particular ſpecified, that it began its political life with a violation of the ſacred right of election in the caſe of Middleſex, that it died in the act of Popery, by eſtabliſhing the Romiſh religion in Canada, and had left a rebellion in America, as a legacy to the nation.

The final concluſion of this ſcene of altercation and inveteracy was, that the motion in favour of the merchants petition was rejected by a diviſion of two hundred and fifty to eighty-nine.

But oppoſition was not alone in this day of trial. America ſeconded them ſtrenuouſly in the perſons of her agents, one of whom, on this memorable occaſion, was Doctor Franklin, whoſe genius and abilities had, at the time of the ſtamp act, been ſo ſucceſsfully exerted in the ſervice of his country.

Theſe gentlemen preſented a petition, originally addreſſed by the American Congreſs to the King, who had referred it to Parliament.

Hereupon a violent debate immediately aroſe. No petition, it was argued, could be received from the continental Congreſs. It was no legal body; and to admit of any hearing on their behalf, would be a ſort of recognition of their legality. The general

neral Assemblies, and their agents, were the only lawful representatives of the Colonies: none else would be admitted.

The reply was, that no government subsisted in the Colonies. Popular commotions, acts of Parliament, and dissolutions, had severally put an end to it. It was now incumbent on Parliament to cooperate in restoring it. The Congress consisted of persons of great influence in America, who were highly desirous to prevent the continuation of the disorders: they deserved, therefore, to be heard, if not as a public body, at least as individuals of character. Petitions were the acknowledged right of subjects of all denominations; and it would ill become the British Parliament to reject one that came recommended by so many motives to give it at least, a civil, if not a favourable reception.

It behoved Parliament in so dangerous a crisis as the present, to beware of treating petitions or petitioners with superciliousness: they ought, on the contrary, to be encouraged, as possibly the readiest, and, indeed, now the only means of preventing infinite mischiefs. These mischiefs were evidently impending, and would fall heavily and speedily on Britain and America, if not prevented with the utmost diligence.

Parliament ought to rejoice at the humility adopted by Congress, and receive its addresses with the more readiness, as a refusal would cut off all means of communication with so respectable a body; which, though not assembled according to the legal forms, was in fact the most powerful and important assembly at present in North America.

It ought to be duly remembered, that it was chiefly by rejecting petitions, America had been brought to its present condition of turbulence and confusion. This pointed out the necessity of act-

ing otherwiſe, unleſs it was reſolved to accelelate rebellion. This would infallibly be produced by a refuſal to attend to the preſent petition. It was the duty of Parliament to receive it, as the very intent of their ſitting was to hear and redreſs the grievances of the ſubject.

After an ineffectual ſtruggle, the American agents had the mortification of ſeeing the petition rejected by a majority of two hundred and eighteen to ſixty-eight.

In the mean time a conciliatory plan was preparing by the Earl of Chatham. Preſerving the undauntedneſs and perſeverance of his character, he reſolutely determined to exert his whole abilities in oppoſition to the hoſtile ſchemes propoſed by miniſtry.

To this effect, he laid before the Houſe of
1ſt. Feb. Lords a bill, the intent of which was
1775. to ſettle the troubles in America, and to aſſert, at the ſame time, the ſupreme legiſlative authority and ſuperintending power of Great Britain over the Colonies.

He requeſted the Houſe, in the moſt earneſt and pathetic terms, ſincerely to aſſiſt in ſo ſalutary a work; to lay aſide the prejudices of party, and to conſider well the importance of the ſubject before them.

The contents of this famous bill were, a ſpecific acknowledgment of the ſupremacy of the legiſlature, and the ſuperintending power of the Britiſh Parliament. It declared that no taxes or charges ſhould be levied in America but with the free conſent of their Aſſemblies. It aſſerted a right in the Crown to keep and ſtation a military force eſtabliſhed by law, in any part of its dominions; but declared, that it could not be lawfully employed to enforce implicit and illegal ſubmiſſion. It authoriſed the holding of

a Congreſs in order to recognize the ſupreme ſovereignty of Great Britain over the Colonies, and to ſettle, at the ſame time, an annual revenue upon the Crown, diſpoſable by Parliament, and applicable to the exigencies of the nation. On complying with theſe conditions, the acts complained of by Congreſs were to be ſuſpended, with every other meaſure pointed out as a grievance; and the conſtitution of their governments to remain as ſettled by their charters.

But this bill, of which the illuſtrious framer had conceived ſo much hopes, met with the fate of every propoſal that had been made in favour of America. It was oppoſed with univerſal violence, condemned without reſerve, and pronounced at once totally inadmiſſible.

The reaſons alledged for this immediate and entire condemnation, was its evident partiality to America, by the various conceſſions it enacted, and in particular by empowering the Colonies to aſſemble in Congreſs; a meaſure which, of all others, was the moſt offenſive to the dignity of Great Britain, and moſt injurious to its intereſts.

The ſuſpenſion of the acts to which they objected, was, in fact, a repeal. Were, for inſtance, the Admiralty Courts to be abrogated, what would become of the navigation act? The rebellious ſchemes of America were no ſecret: they pretended grievances; but meant, in reality, to put an end to all authority of Great Britain among them. It were the height of infatuation to think of conceſſions, with ſo many proofs of their antipathy to Britain. It was the buſineſs of every friend to his country, to combat their hoſtile diſpoſition with undaunted firmneſs, and by no means to appear pliant and yielding while they aſſumed, in all their behaviour ſuch an air of enmity and defiance.

Theſe

These assertions, it was urged, were not meer words called up for the purpose of a debate. They were prompted by matters of fact, and were unhappily but too well founded. While they were deliberating within these walls, the inhabitants of America had actually taken the field. They had attacked one of the King's garrisons, mastered it, and seized all the stores and ammunition for their own use, to be employed against Britain. Who could, after this, open his mouth in their defence or favour? They were no longer entitled to either.—They had now thrown off the mask, and shown themselves, what they were,—inveterate enemies to Britain.

From these causes it was moved, that the bill introduced as conciliatory, should be thrown out, in the very first instance. In this motion the ministerial party concurred without the least hesitation.—The circumstance above-mentioned of seizing a King's fort, contributed not a little to the warmth and hastiness with which the bill was rejected. Such conduct in the Americans was not unjustly looked upon as a commencement of hostilities.

But the spirit of Lord Chatham did not yield to the majority by which his plan was so completely defeated. He supported their attacks with all the fire of his former years, and defended it by a variety of reasonings.

While ministers, said he, represented America as in a state of rebellion, it behoved every man present to exercise his capacity for the quelling of it. No plan had hitherto appeared in that House for so necessary a purpose. To what could this be imputed, but to a negligence absolutely criminal in so arduous a situation of public affairs? When every exertion should be made to prevent the calamities that were so fast approaching; and that could not be ob-

vinced by any other method ſo effectually, as by a plan of reconciliation. It was to invite miniſters to embrace friendly meaſures, that he had employed himſelf in framing propoſals of that tendency, which he adduced a multitude of reaſons to prove, were the only effectual means to ſettle the peace of America upon a ſtable and permanent baſis.

His opinion was ſupported by the concurrence of other Lords in the oppoſition. They contended that it was highly unreaſonable to reject with ſo little diſcuſſion, a bill that tended to bring about a pacification ſo much wanted on both ſides of the Atlantic. What would the Americans think, when they heard with what impetuoſity all propoſitions of peace and amity with them were attacked by ſo reſpectable a body as the Peerage of Great Britain? Would they not inſtantly, and juſtly conclude, that all hopes of reconciliation were at an end, and that it only remained for them to prepare for war?

Allowing that the conduct of the Americans was highly blameable, and merited even chaſtiſement, ſtill if it were poſſible to avoid ſo harſh an extremity, without degrading the nation, would any prudent man declare himſelf an enemy to any meaſure by which ſo ſalutary an end could be accompliſhed? War could only be juſtified when the object propoſed was not otherwiſe attainable.—If the Coloniſts could be induced to comply with ſuch terms, as were reconcilable with the dignity of the parent ſtate, as well as with their own views and wiſhes, would not this prove a moſt deſirable event? Was it not therefore juſt and laudable to ſtrive with all poſſible zeal to compaſs it, in preference to thoſe projects that were founded upon coercion? Theſe were a diſgrace to humanity, and a reſource which no good politician ever admitted

into his thoughts, while the ſmalleſt hope remained of compromiſing differences upon any other footing.

It was further aſſerted, that miniſtry ought ſeriouſly to conſider, whether America was the ſole enemy that Great Britain would have to encounter, in caſe of her having recourſe to arms for the deciſion of this unhappy quarrel. Though America was unequal to a trial of ſtrength with Great Britain, were no other enemies to be apprehended? Would our ancient rivals ſtand ſtill, when ſo fair an opportunity was offered them of returning the heavy blows we had given them ſo lately? It was vain to flatter ourſelves the Americans would have no aſſociates; the envy which the greatneſs and proſperity of this country had univerſally created, would operate on this occaſion every where: they would find well-wiſhers and abettors at our very doors, and would ſoon meet with their open countenance or ſecret aſſiſtance. No man that profeſſed himſelf the leaſt converſant in hiſtorical knowledge, could deny the validity of theſe ſurmiſes. With ſuch a proſpect of ſure and certain danger, was it eligible to proceed in the track that led directly to it? Did the ſituation of Great Britain warrant ſuch a ſtep?—Was ſhe united in her ſentiments concerning the juſtice and propriety of venturing upon a war?—Though a Parliamentary majority might approve it, would the nation at large join heart and hand in ſuch a meaſure? The miniſtry ought to know that America had a number of partizans in Britain, who not only condemned the proceedings of the people in power, but even reprobated the principles upon which they were founded, and juſtified the reſiſtance of the Colonies. People of this mind would always find means of obſtructing, more or leſs, the deſigns carrying on againſt America; and might,

though indirectly, prove more effectual ſupporters of its cauſe than miniſters ſeemed aware. To dwell more particularly on this circumſtance might not be adviſable; but it ſhould not be forgotten, that where a nation is ſo conſiderably divided in opinion, people ſhould not be ſanguine in their deciſions, and ought, in common modeſty, to allow the poſſibility of their being in error.

The miniſterial party was not ſilenced by theſe objections. They were repreſented as far-fetched, and founded chiefly upon fears and apprehenſions. Were men to hearken to theſe, no active meaſures could ever be taken. Danger and uncertainty was the lot of all human enterprizes; but were theſe a ſufficient motive to refrain from acting, when called upon by juſt and valid reaſons? Did it become Britain to be paſſive under affronts at this, more than any other time? Was it eſpecially from her own ſubjects ſhe ought to receive them without reſentment? This was not a maxim ever inculcated in the ſchool of ſound policy: we are taught there, that without a proper ſpirit no ſtate can flouriſh and command reſpect. But without adverting to general notions, why ſhould we behave with more timidity towards our Colonies, than any other ſtate that treated us with indignity? We had faced the greateſt powers on earth fearleſsly and ſucceſsfully, and at a time when it was thought as much as now, that they would prove an over-match; but the courage and reſources of Britain conquered all difficulties, and would conquer them again, if exerted with ſpirit, prudence, and fidelity: while we can depend upon theſe, we may ſafely bid defiance to all our enemies.

Much had been inſiſted upon the diſunion prevailing at home; but was there no diſunion in the Colonies? Were they to a man unanimous againſt

Britain? The contrary was well known. With cautiouſneſs and management, a large proportion would remain faithful and active in our favour; and it would be our own fault if more did not ſide with us than with our adverſaries. The means were ſtill in our power;—firmneſs in our meaſures, and warmth in the cauſe of our friends and adherents.

The proferring of terms to America was vain and diſgraceful. They had repeatedly declared againſt all others but thoſe which they had dictated from the commencement of the diſpute, and ſtill inſiſted upon at this day. With a people ſo obſtinate, and ſo wedded to their own ideas, no treaty could be had: we muſt either comply with their terms implicitly, or force them to accept our own. Of the two alternatives, which became it Britain to adopt, conſiſtently with its honour? But after all the diſcuſſions and inveſtigations that had perplexed Parliament in the courſe of this conteſt, was it not plain that America was weary of obedience to Great Britain? Was the queſtion therefore any other, than whether Britain ſhall maintain her ſovereignty, or relinquiſh it? No man, it was preſumed, would riſe up in that Houſe, and move for a renunciation, on the part of Great Britain, of the dominion over America. If therefore it is to be retained, the ſooner we convince the Americans of our ability to do it, the more ſpirit and conſiſtency will appear in our councils, and the leſs we ſhall be ſuſpected of being defective either in means to accompliſh ſuch a deſign, or in fortitude to undertake it.

The iſſue of this long debate reſembled that of the preceding. It concluded in the entire overthrow of the motion made by the Earl of Chatham: the votes were ſixty-one to thirty-two. So reſolute was the majority in giving it an entire re-

jection, that it was not even permitted to remain upon the table: a ſevere mortification to a man who had made ſo ſplendid a figure, whoſe abilities had raiſed the nation to ſuch a pitch of grandeur, and whoſe opinion and judgment had once been conſidered as the oracle of this country!

The determination to oppoſe all conciliatory meaſures was equally remarkable in the Houſe of Commons. A petition was preſented to it by the proprietors of eſtates in the Weſt India iſlands, repreſenting their alarm at the aſſociation of the American Colonies, and at their intended ſtoppage of all trade with the Engliſh iſlands. Should this be carried into execution, which it certainly would, if Parliament did not repeal the acts they complained of, the ſituation of the iſlands would become very calamitous.

The property of Britain in the Weſt India iſlands amounted to more than thirty millions. A fund of ſeveral other millions was employed in this trade: it was of the moſt extenſive nature; all quarters of the globe were concerned in it; the returns centered in Britain, and were an immenſe addition to its intrinſic opulence. The ſhipping was an object of ſtill greater conſideration, by the vaſt number of ſeamen which it conſtantly maintained.

But the Weſt Indies, however wealthy, did not produce the neceſſaries of life in ſufficient abundance for their inhabitants. Large importations were continually wanted, which North America was the only place to ſupply: were they to be cut off from a communication with that continent, they would ſhortly be reduced to the utmoſt diſtreſs.

This petition, however, did not alter the diſpoſition of thoſe who ſupported the miniſtry. They ſeemed reſolved to treat all petitions as the contrivance of faction. The general ideas of thoſe who

approved of coercive measures, was that however inconvenient, they ought not to be retarded by such a consideration. Hostilities were necessarily attended with a variety of disagreeable circumstances; but these ought nevertheless to be submitted to, sooner than put up with humiliations and disgraces; which, in the end, often detrimented a nation more than war itself.

In the mean time, it was become necessary to let the nation be fully apprized of the ultimate resolves of ministry respecting America. This was done in the House of Commons, by a long speech, wherein the present circumstances of affairs in America were detailed with great accuracy. The behaviour of the different Colonies was pointed out, and the conduct necessary to be observed with each. The universal fermentation prevailing among them, was asserted to proceed from unwarrantable arts and practices to dispose them against the ruling powers in Britain. It was asserted too, that notwithstanding all their complaints, the public charges borne by individuals in America, were, on the strictest computation, not more than one to fifty, when compared with what was paid by individuals in England.

So immense a disparity, removed at once all reasons for complaining. Nothing but a settled determination to quarrel with the parent state, could induce the Americans to persist in their disobedience to the lawful injunctions laid upon them, which were neither injudicious nor oppressive; but on the contrary, framed with all possible lenity, and counter-balanced by advantages which were not possessed by the inhabitants of Great Britain.

It was therefore a spirit of resistance that animated America, and not a discontent at oppressions, which it was plain did not exist. Upon this

ground the quarrel now ſtood; and every meaſure now adopted ſhould be founded upon that idea. This, in the miniſters own words, "was the great barrier which diſunited both countries; and on this ground alone of reſiſtance and denial, he would raiſe every argument leading to the motion he intended to make for an addreſs to the King, and for a conference with the Lords, that it might be the joint addreſs of both Houſes."

The meaſures now propoſed to the Houſe, were to ſend a greater force to America, and to paſs a temporary act, ſuſpending all the foreign trade of the different Colonies of New England, and particularly the Newfoundland fiſhery, until they conſented to acknowledge the ſupreme authority of the Britiſh legiſlature, pay obedience to the laws of this realm, and make a due ſubmiſſion to the King; upon doing of which, theſe reſtrictions ſhould be taken off, and their real grievances, upon making proper application, ſhould be redreſſed.

The expreſſions of miniſtry were very clear and explicit upon this occaſion, New England, they ſaid, as moſt culpable, was juſtly ſingled out as an object of puniſhment. The other Colonies, as leſs faulty, would, it was hoped, be brought back with leſs compulſion. But "the queſtion now lay within a very narrow compaſs: it was ſimply, whether we would abandon all claims on the Colonies, and give up, at once, all the advantages ariſing from our ſovereignty, and the commerce dependant on it; or whether we ſhould reſort to the meaſures indiſpenſably neceſſary to enſure both?"

The addreſs voted in conſequence of the miniſterial motion, fully coincided with all his views. It repreſented the Colony of Maſſachuſet to be in actual rebellion, and encouraged by the other Colonies. It declared the reſolution of Parliament to

maintain

maintain the ſupreme authority of the Britiſh legiſlature in every part of the King's dominions. It beſought him to enforce this authority by the power conſtitutionally lodged in his hands; and aſſured him of their concurrence, at all hazards, to ſupport him in the proſecution of ſuch meaſures.

An addreſs of this kind was in effect a declaration of war againſt America. It was conſidered as ſuch by the oppoſition, and the conſequences which it would have, were pointed out with the utmoſt freedom. Some, indeed, contended that the accuſation of rebellion fixed upon the Province of Maſſachuſet, was falſe: the people there had done no more than what the conſtitution allowed: they had reſiſted arbitrary meaſures, after the examples that had ſo frequently been ſet them at home.

But whether they deſerved to be ſtigmatized as rebels or not, ſuch an appellation was dangerous, and might better be ſpared. It would only ſerve to aggravate, and render ſuch as might think it levelled at them, deſperate, and to inſpire them with a determination to reſiſt the efforts of Britain to the laſt drop of their blood, from the apprehenſion that their properties and lives were become forfeited.

The fingling out of Maſſachuſet as moſt deſerving of chaſtiſement, would avail nothing. The other Colonies knew themſelves as deep in the conſpiracy, and expected, in their turn, no better treatment. To chaſtiſe one, was to chaſtiſe all. If Britain meant to aſſert her authority with a high hand, her preparations muſt take in all who were concerned againſt her; and not imagine that the reduction of one Colony would ſuffice. They were all formed into one body; and to defeat a part, would now put the reſt more upon their guard. It was idle to aim at diſuniting them; they knew their

ſituation

ſituation too well to betray each other: it was equally nugatory to expreſs more anger at one than another: opprobrious epithets, or inſidious blandiſhments, were loſt upon them. Their conduct and language were equally open and unequivocal, and amounted to a clear determination to remain united in defence of their liberties, until ſuch conceſſions were made on our part, as would fully quiet the apprehenſions they entertained for their ſafety. Britain, therefore, muſt now conſider, which of the two was the moſt adviſable, peace or war; not with one, but with all her Colonies.

It was replied by the miniſterial party, that rebellious deeds conſtituted rebellion. The conduct of the people in Maſſachuſet could be viewed in no other light. They had, by open force, reſiſted the execution of the laws; which in England being reputed rebellion, cannot in America be called by another name. It was not intended to exerciſe any more ſeverity than might be abſolutely requiſite. Mercy would be ſhown, and extended with the utmoſt liberality to all who ſubmitted; but it was highly neceſſary to make a ſtrong diſcrimination between the deluded and the deluders. Policy and juſtice demanded theſe as victims for the good of the community; on theſe alone the vengeance of Britain would fall.

High ſtreſs was laid upon the union of the Colonies; but a little time would ſhow with how much impropriety. When once they beheld the ſpirit of Britain thoroughly rouſed, they would ſoon retreat from the field of action, and humble themſelves before her. They were aſſociated upon principles that would not ſupport them: the ſelf-denying regulations upon which their confederacy was founded, were too hoſtile to the intereſt and feelings of individuals, to bind them long together.

Impatience at ſuch unnatural reſtraints, and private ſelfiſhneſs would break through them, and ſhow how little they were acquainted with human nature who could rely upon ſo weak a foundation.

But there were alſo other motives to view with unconcern, and even with contempt this parade of union among the Colonies. The natives of America, it was ſaid, had nothing of the ſoldier in them; they were averſe to diſcipline, and incapable of military ſubordination: they were even of a fearful and ſpiritleſs diſpoſition; ſloathful, uncleanly, and of a conſtitution eaſily ſubdued by ſickneſs and fatigue. Theſe were not a people to face a Britiſh army. Small would be the force neceſſary to reduce them to obedience, and to put an end to all their projects of independence.

After a long and violent altercation, the queſtion was carried for the addreſs by a diviſion of two hundred and ninety-ſix, to one hundred and ſix.

But the importance of the ſubject that had been debated was ſuch, that the miñority made a motion ſhortly after, to re-commit the addreſs. It was argued that the conſequences that would probably reſult from the proſecution of the meaſures it recommended, impelled them to ſolicit the Houſe for a re-conſideration of it: they appeared of ſuch magnitude, that no time or attention could be miſemployed in a freſh inveſtigation.

A recapitulation followed of the dangers that would inevitably attend a war with America. The likelihood of other powers interfering, and the immenſe riſks we ſhould incur for the ſake of an object far beneath ſuch a terrible contention. Should Great Britain triumph over all oppoſition, what would prove her gains? No more than what ſhe was ſubſtantially poſſeſſed of at that very hour; the emo-

luments accruing from the commerce of America. But ſhould fortune prove unpropitious, what would then be her ſituation? An anſwer to this queſtion could not be made, without conveying a ſenſation of horror to every man that felt for his country. A motion, therefore, to re-commit an addreſs of ſo ſerious a tendency, wherein, perhaps, the very exiſtence of the Britiſh empire was involved, ought certainly to be received without heſitation by every man who profeſſed impartiality and candour.

A long debate followed this motion, and was ſupported throughout with all the abilities and eloquence of the two contending parties. The truth was, they both felt the magnitude and importance of the queſtion before them: ſo great a one had not been agitated in Parliament during the preſent century.

All that maſs of argumentation was re-produced on this occaſion, which had compoſed the ſnaterials of the numberleſs debates that had filled both Houſes of Parliament during the laſt ten years, and had been repeated all over the nation to no other purpoſe than to breed ill blood among the diſputants.

The ſum of this famous debate was, that miniſtry contended in the ſame manner it had done before, for the neceſſity of drawing the ſword, and manfully aſſerting the rights and the dignities of the parent ſtate. Lenity was now become a ſubject of deriſion in the Colonies; and was imputed to imbecility and fears. The Americans, through long forbearance, were become incorrigible by any other than harſh means. They thought themſelves in a condition to aboliſh the ſovereignty of Britain in America, and were now reſolved to do it. It was incumbent on every native of Britain, in ſuch a caſe, to ſtand forth, and to vindicate the intereſt

and glory of his country: it was the duty of Parliament and miniſtry to ſummon every particle of ſpirit that was left in the nation, to a conteſt wherein all that was dear to them, as individuals as well as a people, was ſo deeply involved.

The Americans had forgotten the hand that had planted and reared them: they were become unmindful of that protection and thoſe bounties they were perpetually receiving from the generoſity of Britain. It behoved us, if we valued our own character, to make them ſenſible that we were ſtill the great and potent people they acknowledged us, while we were ſhowering favours upon them. It was to theſe favours they owed the grandeur and opulence at which they were now arrived. We had but lately ſaved them from conqueſt and ſlavery; and they now repaid us with an accuſation of tyrannny: this was ingratitude in the extreme, as our requiſitions from them were ſmall, even in the avowal of their warmeſt friends, and their power to grant them no leſs undeniable; but their inclinations were to deny every requeſt we ſhould make.

To temporize in the midſt of ſo much provocation, would be to encourage further inſults and outrages. Britain had nothing elſe, indeed, to expect, until ſhe had put an effectual ſtop to the power of committing them. The whole conduct of the Americans breathed hatred and defiance. The Congreſs, with an appearance of moderation, was taking every poſſible meaſure to deſtroy the authority of Britain throughout the Colonies, and to devolve it upon themſeves. All the acts and proceedings of that Aſſembly amply juſtified ſuch an aſſertion: they tended uniformly to inflame the people againſt Great Britain, by repreſenting all her meaſures as framed with an intent to introduce a deſpotic government into the Colonies.

As to the ſuggeſtions of danger from foreign powers, they from whom it was hinted this danger would chiefly ariſe, had colonies to manage as well as Great Britain. It was hardly to be apprehended that they would be guilty of ſo much impolicy as to encourage rebellions in other colonies, which might, on the firſt occaſion, become precedents for imitation in their own.

A proper reinforcement in America would encourage thoſe to declare themſelves, who, from the uncertainty of our meaſures, though they remained ſtill our ſecret friends, dared not ſtep forth and avow their ſentiments: theſe, if duly ſupported, would prove no inconſiderable number; and, added to the forces that would be ſtationed among them, would counterbalance the power of the malcontents.

In anſwer to theſe aſſertions it was argued by the oppoſition, that the addreſs was in itſelf a meaſure replete with barbarity, no leſs than with imprudence: it tended to put arms into the hands of every man throughout the continent who ſuſpected the deſigns of the Britiſh adminiſtration, and to expoſe to ill uſage and ruin, every perſon who was known or imagined to be a friend to Britain.

The rigour of the law ſhould never be carried into politics. Were the Americans ever ſo culpable, miniſtry ought not to have perceived their guilt, unleſs it had, at the ſame time, diſcovered a ſure and ready method of bringing them to puniſhment without endangering the ſafety of the ſtate.

The idea of becoming independent was imputed to the Americans; but what were the proofs of this imputation? They repeatedly denied it in words; and their actions, until the preſent unfortunate difference, had always been full of loyalty and attachment.

If any thing could bring about independency, it would be the conduct of miniſtry, who, by driving them to deſpondency, would compel them to adopt meaſures, to which they were not otherwiſe inclined. The moſt loyal and obedient ſubjects will not have patience for ever, in caſes of tyrannical treatment. They will riſe at laſt, and aſſert their rights; and they who ſtile them rebels on that account, ſhould remember that oppreſſion not only generates, but juſtifies reſiſtance.

There were in all nations opinions generally received, which good policy would reſpect, while they produced no bad conſequences. The perſuaſion prevailing in America, that internal taxation belonged to their own Aſſemblies excluſively, had always been eſtabliſhed among them without contradiction from this ſide of the water. It ought not to have been attacked at ſo improper a ſeaſon as the preſent, after having been virtually recognized by the repeal of ſeveral acts made in contradiction of it, and after it had been explicitly approved by ſome of the moſt learned and intelligent men in this kingdom.

The opinions of which the Americans are ſo tenacious, ought therefore to be treated with the leſs diſreſpect, as they are not only their own, but thoſe of numbers of people in this country. Authorized and countenanced in this manner, was it ſurpriſing they ſhould continue inflexible in their reſolutions to adhere to them? eſpecially as they were founded upon a preſcription that had laſted from their firſt ſettlement in that part of the world, a ſpace of time conſiſting now of more than one hundred and fifty years, during which they had remained in the uninterrupted poſſeſſion of the priviledges of which we now ſought to deprive them.

It was the greateſt of misfortunes to a ſtate, when thoſe who ruled it, endeavoured, without appa-

rent neceſſity, to alter the ſyſtem and maxims of governing long adopted, and the utility of which had been confirmed by experience. Such was, however, the caſe of Britain: that mildneſs and benignity which was wont to direct the meaſures of former miniſters, was now laid aſide as obſolete: ſeverity and imperiouſneſs had taken their place: implicit obedience was now impoſed upon the Colonies, as the only condition upon which Great Britain would relax of her diſpleaſure, and ſuſpend the hoſtile operations deſigned againſt them.

But was war and conqueſt the medium of rendering their poſſeſſion uſeful to this country? Would the conflict prove of no duration? Were the ſcandalous falſhoods of cowardice and imbecility, ſo wantonly charged upon the Americans, to be ever ſo well grounded, ſtill the very nature of their country would fight for them: that alone would impede, conſiderably, our military enterprizes, and greatly retard the ſubjugation of ſo immenſe a continent; mean while the ſinews of war would quickly be relaxed. The ſuſpenſion of ſo conſiderable a commerce as that of our Colonies, would caſt a damp on all our operations.

Allowing, however, that Britiſh valour would triumph as heretofore in the plains of America, what muſt inevitably be the conſequences of ſuch a conqueſt? The Colonies, inſtead of peaceable and affectionate fellow ſubjects, deſcended from common parents, and united by every endearing tie to the people of Great Britain, would henceforward conſider themſelves as a conquered nation, bound to us by no other motives than thoſe of fear. Such a ſituation would neceſſarily call for armies to enforce ſubjection: the ſums wanted to maintain them, would exhauſt the profits derived from the country they overawed, and render it hardly worth the keeping.

Were theſe the ends for which Great Britain was ſo eagerly to contend? Did miniſters imagine the inhabitants of this country would paſſively conſent to ſee their purſes drained, and their ſtrength waſted in purſuit of ſchemes ſo evidently marked with infatuation, and which, at beſt, would only leave us where they found us? What more would they produce than the retention of America? But was not that our own already, without putting it to ſtake by a war of which the iſſue was ſo precarious?

The principles that actuated miniſters were totally repugnant to the ſpirit of the conſtitution. There was a time when loftineſs and pride were only thought proper to be aſſumed with the avowed enemies of this nation; and when condeſcenſion and lenity were viewed as the duty of miniſters towards the ſubject; but an odious change had happened: ſubmiſſion and deference was ſhown to foreigners, while our own people were treated with haughtineſs. This was reverſing the long eſtabliſhed rule of Engliſh politics. But let not thoſe who had introduced this inſulting innovation, promiſe themſelves impunity: arbitrary conduct was ſo intolerable to the people of this land, that they would not ſuffer it either when levelled at themſelves, or at their fellow ſubjects in any other part of the Britiſh dominions.

Miniſters might, for a while, carry on their meaſures elatedly, and look upon oppoſition with contempt; but a day would come, when the good ſenſe of the nation would deprive them of thoſe majorities of which they now made ſuch a boaſt. When the iniquity and folly of their meaſures had been fully proved by events, then the public would riſe upon them as one man, and call them to account for the miſchief they had brought upon it.

This, they might depend, would be their fate. The only chance they had to eſcape from the juſtice

of their country, was the progreſs of that corruption and venality through which they were now enabled to contrive its ruin; but even that would have its bounds: public calamities, when riſen to their higheſt pitch, demanded for victims thoſe who had cauſed them; and ſuperceded all other feelings but thoſe of indignation and revenge: the annals of all nations were confirmations of this truth.

In order to obviate theſe calamities, and to do juſtice to themſelves as well as to the Americans, the people of England ought ſeriouſly to ponder, whether they had a right to paſs condemnation over a numerous diviſion of Britiſh ſubjects, who not only claimed, but were unqueſtionably entitled to every right enjoyed by Engliſhmen. In this caſe, the firſt poſition they ſhould lay down, was, that anceſtry and locality gave no right of dominion to one nation over another: were ſuch a maxim once to be admitted, the world would be thrown into endleſs confuſion, and no prince or ſtate would be ſafe from foreign pretenſions.

The only juſt and righteous principle on which to conduct ſo important an examination, was to conſider the reſpective powers and faculties of each party, and how far they were obliged to contribute to the common exigencies of the empire. If, upon a due eſtimation of theſe, it appeared that a reaſonable proportion of ſupplies was denied, the party that was aggrieved by this denial, would clearly be intitled to tax the other with injuſtice, and to compel him to an equitable reparation.

But was this the principle that guided adminiſtration? Did they not, on the contrary, revive by their conduct the long-exploded doctrine of hereditary right? Which, though juſt and neceſſary when applied to property, was not admiſſible in England in matters of government; and was not,

therefore, applicable to the queſtion depending between Great Britain and America.

In contradiction to this fundamental principle of the Britiſh conſtitution, miniſtry inſiſted upon a paſſive obedience in the Colonies: they were required to ſubmit to the dictates of Great Britain, for no other reaſon than that ſhe was the parent ſtate. Was there no better motive to influence their obedience, no body could blame them for refuſing it. But the ties between Britain and her Colonies are of a far nobler, as well as much more binding nature: origin and conſanguinity, though highly to be prized, were not the moſt valuable: it was the conſtitution tranſmitted to them from Britain, and the brotherly aſſiſtance they had hitherto experienced from Engliſhmen, that ought to render the name ſacred to them. While thoſe ties remained unviolated, we had no room to complain of their behaviour; but abſolute lords and maſters were titles they would not recognize in Engliſhmen, any more than theſe would recognize them in any others.

When miniſters acted on ſuch unwarrantable grounds, the queſtion was no longer, whether the meaſures they propoſed ſhould be taken into conſideration, but whether they themſelves ought not inſtantly to be deprived of the power which they uſed ſo unconſtitutionally. The diſpute, therefore, was now, not between Great Britain and America, but between the miniſtry and the conſtitution; and the queſtion was, "Whether we ſhould loſe our Co-" lonies, or give up our miniſters.

Charges of ſo heavy a nature were of courſe retorted by the miniſterial party, with equal aſperity. All the reſiſtance and diſturbances in America, were imputed to the oppoſition in plainer and more explicit terms than ever. A factious republican ſpirit was gone forth, that actuated every writer and ſpeaker

in the American cauſe: it filled the nation with diſloyalty, and the Houſe with incendiaries. America, it was ſaid, would never have hoiſted the ſtandard of rebellion, if the trumpet of ſedition had not been heard in Britain.

This violent debate laſted till three o'clock in the morning, when the motion for re-committing the addreſs, was rejected by two hundred and eighty-eight, againſt one hundred and five.

In this manner was terminated the moſt important buſineſs that had, in the memory of man, engaged the attention of the Britiſh Parliament. Not only the natives of this country, but all Europe was impatient to learn the deciſion of this great queſtion. While it was impending, the foreign miniſters in London were continually employed in watching the motions of adminiſtration, and the debates of Parliament: they juſtly conſidered it as pregnant with conſequences that might eventually give a new turn to the face of all Europe.

On the very next day a conference was held be-
Feb. 7th, tween the two Houſes, wherein they
1775. both agreed to unite in the addreſs.

In the mean time petitions had been preparing by the London merchants trading to America, and from thoſe concerned in the Weſt India trade, to be laid before the Houſe of Lords. The Marquis of Rockingham, as the principal Peer in the oppoſition, was applied to on this occaſion to preſent them, but he was prevented by a previous motion in favour of the addreſs.

This however did not hinder a long debate concerning the propriety and neceſſity of receiving them. It was carried on with no leſs heat and animoſity of expreſſion than that which had taken place the day before in the Houſe of Commons.

The papers, on the veracity of which the addreſs had been framed, were repreſented by the oppoſi-

tion as partial and mutilated, and unfit for proper documents in ſo weighty a matter. It was for this reaſon the duty of the Houſe to attend with the more readineſs to the repreſentation of the merchants; whoſe teſtimony, as perſons deeply and eſſentially intereſted in bringing truth to light in this important juncture, might be depended on with much greater ſafety.

It was their particular deſire to be heard, before the Houſe took any determination relating to America. To refuſe this, it was urged, would be to tell the world, that right or wrong, its determination would be againſt the ſenſe of their petition. Was this a warrantable treatment of reſpectable and loyal ſubjects, who were endeavouring to ſerve the ſtate, by affording to government all the information they were maſters of. Good policy required the Houſe to hearken to them, as well as equity and good manners.

It was anſwered by the miniſterial party, that no diſreſpect was intended to perſons of ſo much conſequence in this commercial nation, as the merchants whoſe petition was now in the Houſe: that it was with great grief adminiſtration was obliged to declare, it could not be received conſiſtently with the general intereſts of the kingdom. They were deſired ſeriouſly to conſider, how neceſſary it was become to prevent the evils threatened to this country by the proceedings in America; that were they permitted to continue, the commercial grandeur of this nation would ſuffer a fatal dimunition, if not a total overthrow, in which no individuals would be greater ſufferers than themſelves. It became them, from ſo juſt a motive, to confide in the wiſdom of Parliament, as it was not doubted that events would hereafter convince them, that by aſſerting the ſupremacy of the Britiſh legiſlature, in the manner

propoſed, all thoſe advantages would be ſecured, about which they were ſo juſtly ſolicitous. They were exhorted to ſubmit to the temporary inconveniencies which might reſult from the reſolutions that muſt be adopted in the preſent circumſtances of public affairs. They would not probably be of long duration, and would be followed by a ſtate of proſperity, which would be the more permanent, from the removal of the obſtacles which they were now about to encounter.

The debate relating to the addreſs, carried the ſpeakers on both ſides into a wide field of diſcuſſion. The two greateſt Law Lords in the kingdom, entered into a conteſt, wherein their learning and eloquence was reciprocally diſplayed with the greateſt conſpicuity. The point in contention was to aſcertain whether the Americans were in actual rebellion. The different opinions they held on this weighty ſubject, and the variety of arguments with which they combated each other, afforded a melancholy proof of the uncertainty of the law, in a caſe where it ought particularly to be perſpicuous, and void of all manner of intricacy.

A repetition took place, on this occaſion, of all thoſe arguments againſt the Americans that have already been mentioned. It was repreſented, that upon emergencies of this nature, a ſtate that is bent upon aſſerting its authority or its dignity, muſt not expect to go through ſuch an arduous undertaking without many difficulties. All orders and denominations would ſeverally be aggrieved by the hardſhips concomitant on hoſtilities. But they were no more than what befel the community at large in every nation that waged war. The ſituation of Britain would not be worſe than that of her enemies. But whatever deſtiny might await us, whether victory or defeat, whether we ſhould preſerve or loſe

America,

America, ſtill the trial muſt be made. It would be puſillanimity to give it up without diſputing its poſſeſſion to the utmoſt of our power: Engliſhmen were not wont tamely to relinquiſh advantages;—wherever the ſtandard of Britain is planted, it ought to be vigorouſly defended, and every loſs patiently borne, except that of national honour.

The arguments uſed in the reply made to this reaſoning by the minority, were much the ſame as had been employed in the Houſe of Commons againſt the addreſs. Their general intent was to prove the imprudence of precipitating the kingdom into a war, which if unſucceſsful, would reduce it to the brink of ruin, and to which there appeared no ſufficient reaſon to hope for ſucceſs, when we took into conſideration the probability of that univerſal confederacy which would be formed againſt Britain by her numerous enemies on the European, as well as on the American continent.

It was particularly noticed, that a ſubject involving ſo many conſequences of the laſt importance, had been driven, as it were, through both Houſes with a hurry equally unworthy of its magnitude and their own dignity. So much haſte was, according to the proverb, never attended with good ſpeed. It evinced the apprehenſions of miniſtry, that were due time given thoroughly to inveſtigate their meaſures, their injudiciouſneſs would not fail to be diſcovered. Why ſhould they otherwiſe be ſo eager to bring them to a concluſion? A length of time would elapſe before it would be poſſible to commence their execution; had that interval been dedicated to a mature diſcuſſion of the various matter deſerving Parliamentary notice, elucidations would have followed, which might have thrown new light upon objects, which could not be too thoroughly attended to.

The whole night was conſumed in this debate; it concluded with the total defeat of the Marquis of Rockingham's motion: the numbers for him were only twenty-nine, thoſe againſt him one hundred and four.

This defeat produced a remarkable proteſt, drawn up with uncommon energy, and which ſtrongly characterized the temper of the oppoſition at that period. It concluded in the following words, which may be conſidered as a ſummary of the ſentiments entertained by the opponents to miniſtry, both in Parliament, and throughout the nation.

" The means of enforcing the authority of the
" Britiſh legiſlature is conſided to perſons who have
" hitherto uſed no effectual means of conciliating,
" or of reducing thoſe who oppoſe that authority:
" This appears in the conſtant failure of all their
" projects, the inſufficiency of all their informa-
" tion, and the diſappointment of all the hopes
" which they have for ſeveral years held out to the
" public. Parliament has never refuſed any of
" their propoſals, and yet our affairs have pro-
" ceeded from bad to worſe, until we have been
" brought ſtep by ſtep, to that ſtate of confuſion
" and violence, which was the natural reſult of
" deſperate meaſures.

" We therefore proteſt againſt an addreſs found-
" ed on no proper Parliamentary information,
" which was introduced by refuſing to ſuffer the
" preſentation of petitions againſt it, (although it
" be the undoubted right of the ſubject to preſent
" the ſame) which followed the rejection of every
" mode of conciliation; which holds out no ſub-
" ſtantial offer of redreſs of grievances, and
" which promiſes ſupport to thoſe miniſters who
" have inflamed America, and groſsly miſconduct-
" ed the affairs of Great Britain."

The addreſs thus jointly voted by both Houſes, was carried to the throne, and anſwered with an aſſurance of taking due meaſures to enforce its contents, and a meſſage exhorting Parliament to make ſpeedy proviſion for the effectually carrying into execution the meaſures they recommended.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Tranſactions in Great Britain relating to America.

1775.

AFTER providing a military force to be ſtationed at Boſton, it was perceived that farther meaſures would be neceſſary to execute the plan propoſed. Soldiers might quell inſurrections and inſults, but could not enforce the obſervance of laws and regulations, without the intervention of the magiſtracy; and it was evident that no aſſiſtance of this kind was to be expected from the people of Maſſachuſet.

They beheld with ſilent abhorrence the coercive ſcheme that had been formed to compel their obedience to the injunctions of the Britiſh legiſlature. Though they abſtained from active reſiſtance, they were determined to throw every impediment in the way of compulſion, and if they could not face it openly, to fatigue it by indirect and ſecret oppoſition.

The difficulty lay in procuring aſſiſtance from the inferior body of magiſtrates; as few of them were well-wiſhers to the meaſures in agitation, it was found impracticable to employ them in their execution; yet it was only through ſuch means the commonalty was to be brought to a ſtate of regular and peaceable obedience.

As the indiſſoluble adherence to each other among all orders and claſſes in Maſſachuſet, rendered it impoſſible to ſeek for co-operators among them, and as the miniſtry was fully determined to proceed on the plan of coercion, the only method remaining to make it effectual, was to extend it in ſuch a

manner, as to affect indiſcriminately all the inhabitants of the Province without exception. By including them in one general puniſhment, it would become the intereſt of all to conform unanimouſly to the laws enacted for them, in order the more ſpeedily to procure its removal.

To this intent a bill was brought into Parliament, the purport of which was, to reſtrain the commerce of the four Provinces of New England to Great Britain, Ireland, and the Engliſh iſlands in the Weſt Indies, and to prohibit them from carrying on the fiſhery at Newfoundland.

The reaſons alledged in ſupport of this propoſal were, that as the Colonies had entered into agreements not to trade with Britain, we were entitled to prevent them from trading with any other country. Their charter reſtricted them to the act of navigation; the relaxations from it were favours, to which by their diſobedience they had no further pretence. The Newfoundland fiſheries were the ancient property of Great Britain, and diſpoſable therefore at her will and diſcretion: it was no more than juſt to deprive rebels of the uſe of them.

Though the other Provinces of New England did not ſeem directly concerned in the rebellion, yet the Britiſh government was ſo little reſpected there, that they deſerved little more indulgence than that of Maſſachuſet. In New Hampſhire, the populace had ſeized upon a powder magazine, in one of the King's forts; and from the neighbourhood of that Province, and the temper of its inhabitants, the act would be eluded, unleſs they were included in it.

Connecticut manifeſted the ſame diſpoſition.—Upon the report of a fray between the ſoldiery and the people of Boſton, that Province roſe in great numbers, and marched directly to their aſſiſtance.

nuce. This ſhowed at once what we had to expect from that quarter.

As an alleviation to the ſeverity of this act, it was propoſed, that all perſons ſhould be excepted from it whoſe good behaviour the Governor of the Province would certificate, or who ſhould ſubſcribe a teſt acknowledging the rights of Parliament.

This bill was received by the oppoſition with every expreſſion of diſapprobation. It was particularly reprobated for involving ſuch a multitude of innocent people in its operation. Half a million of people were condemned to famine for the delinquency of a few, on a ſuppoſition they were guilty. This was a precedent unknown in countries governed by juſt and equitable laws, and could only be found in the tranſactions of tyrants.

But were Maſſachuſet guilty, why muſt the infliction of ſo ſevere a chaſtiſement extend to its neigbours? This was an exceſs of reſentment which nothing could juſtify: it belied the mildneſs of character which had hitherto done ſo much honour to the Britiſh legiſlature; and was beſide an act of impolicy that would raiſe up foes to Britain where it had none before. When people found that we made no diſcrimination between our friends and enemies, they would join with the latter to reſcue themſelves from univerſal oppreſſion.

Britain, in the preſent inſtance, treated her own ſubjects much worſe than ſhe had ever done her avowed and moſt inveterate enemies. During the many wars between England and France, hoſtilities had been reſtrained to the nation, and never exerciſed upon individuals. Our fleets and armed veſſels had always ſpared the fiſhing craft of the enemy: this was a rule from which they never deviated, even in the moſt bloody contentions. It was beneath the character of a civilized and generous people

people to moleſt poor fiſhermen, and to deprive the wretched inhabitants of a ſea-coaſt of their food.

New England, they all knew, ſubſiſted upon its fiſheries; the produce of theſe were bartered for abſolute neceſſaries. It was alſo the medium that enabled them to ſettle accounts with Britain, for the prodigious demands they were perpetually making upon her merchants. Thus to cut them off from that reſource, would be to ſtop their payments to Britain: this, in fact, would be throwing upon ourſelves the puniſhment intended for them.

Should this bill operate to the extent propoſed, the effects produced by it would reach farther than it was ever deſigned. In caſe of a future reconciliation with the Colonies, the laborious and indigent claſſes employed in the fiſhery, would by that time neceſſarily have betaken themſelves to other occupations for their ſubſiſtence, and it would be a difficult matter to recal them to their former buſineſs. In the interval, this profitable trade might fall into the hands of other nations, who would, of courſe, uſe all their endeavours to retain it. Britain was too far diſtant to engroſs it wholly to herſelf, and would have too many objects to diſtract her attention in conſequence of this quarrel, to take any more than ordinary care of this branch of her trade.

Another evil would ariſe from this bill, which miniſtry did not appear to foreſee. By declaring war again the Colonies, and depriving them of their fiſheries, the fiſhermen were driven into the immediate ſervice of rebellion; they would man privateers, and accelerate the levies of troops they were making; and being robuſt and hardy men, would prove the beſt recruits that could be found. Thus it was clear that this bill, in whatever light it was viewed, was highly diſreputable and pernicious.

The further allegations, on the other hand, in favour of the bill were, that Britain herein acted only by way of retaliation and self-defence againſt the Colonies. The precedent was their own; they had combined, as far as in them lay, to deſtroy our commerce and manufactures, and to reduce our iſlands to the utmoſt diſtreſs. Had any European power acted in the manner they did, we ſhould have done the ſame, and probably more.

The accuſation of barbarity was equally groundleſs. No more was evidently meant than to compel the Colonies to pay juſt obedience to the parent ſtate. The inconveniencies reſulting from this bill they had brought upon themſelves, and might put an end to whenever they pleaſed. The meaſure was vigorous, but not precipitate: it left them leiſure to reflect on their ſituation, and to regain the good-will of Great Britain, by embracing the proffered means of reconciliation, which were a peaceable ſubmiſſion to the laws it had enacted.

In other countries a revolt met with a far heavier chaſtiſement: forfeitures, corporal puniſhments, and death, were the uſual methods employed upon ſuch occaſions, to bring rebellious ſubjects to reaſon.

It was with the ſincereſt grief that the friends of Britain were made partakers of the inconveniencies ariſing from this bill; but this was an inevitable conſequence of theſe unhappy feuds. They would, from this conſideration, be the firſt to excuſe us: they knew that in war, friends and foes were often intermixed, and liable to ſuffer the ſame calamities.

Britain had long waited before ſhe adopted this meaſure. It was now ten years ſince America not only threatened, but actually put it in execution. Thrice had the Colonies thrown our merchants and manufacturers into the utmoſt conſternation;—It

was now our turn to try whether we could not intimidate them by the ſame means.

It behoved the people of Britain, if they had any ſpirit left, to cruſh at once this inſulting diſpoſition, which kept them in continual alarms, and rendered the poſſeſſion of America a matter of more anxiety than advantage. It were even better to part with it at once, than to live in ſuch a ſtate of uncertainty and apprehenſion on its account.

The period was now arrived long wiſhed for by America:—She now thought herſelf in a capacity to throw off all dependence upon Great Britain, and was determined to riſk the attempt. It became Great Britain not to ſhrink from the conteſt: if ſhe was not able to face the Americans, ſhe was not worthy of ruling them.

The connection between Great Britain and her Colonies, were matters to remain on the preſent footing, was no longer definable: they acknowledged ſubjection, and yet would pay no obedience. Now was the time to aſcertain it for a perpetuity.—If we were to remain maſters of them, we ſhould then know what ſettlement to make; and if we were to loſe them, we ſhould even, in that caſe, rid ourſelves of infinite perplexity.

It was replied by the minority, that the ſpirit ſo repeatedly required by the miniſtry, however laudable in reſpect to foreign nations, could only be productive of evil in domeſtic conteſts. Thoſe who acted in differences of this kind with moſt lenity and forbearance, were poſſeſſed of the ſpirit moſt to be deſired on ſuch occaſions. That heat and impetuoſity of conduct were the bane of all proceedings at home, was a truth acknowledged by all men; and it was upon this ſolid and unqueſtionable principle the miniſtry would be condemned by the unbiaſſed and impartial world.

Experience militated invincibly againſt the miniſtry. What were the effects produced by the ſpirit that dictated the laſt acts againſt Maſſachuſet? Had they humbled that Colony? Had they terrified the Americans? Had they not, on the contrary, ſpirited up the whole American continent to an open and confirmed reſiſtance? Why ſhould other effects be expected from the further exertions of ſuch a ſpirit?

The iſſue of this debate was, that the bill was carried for miniſtry, by two hundred and ſixty-one votes, againſt eighty-five.

A petition againſt it was, however, preſented by the London merchants concerned in the American trade: It was principally founded on the danger that would accrue to the fiſheries of Great Britain from ſuch a prohibition.

From the evidence which was brought in ſupport of this petition, it appeared that the American fiſheries were in ſo flouriſhing a condition ten years before the preſent period, that the four provinces of New England employed in that branch of trade alone, near forty-ſix thouſand tons of ſhipping, and ſix thouſand ſeamen; that the produce of their fiſheries in the foreign markets, amounted in the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty-four, to upwards of three hundred and twenty thouſand pounds.

Since that time, the fiſheries, together with their profits, had greatly increaſed. What rendered them particularly valuable, was, that all the materials uſed in them, (the ſalt for curing the fiſh, and the timber for building the veſſels excepted) were purchaſed in Britain; and that the net proceeds of the trade were all remitted hither.

It alſo appeared, that it would not be practicable to transfer theſe fiſheries to Halifax or Quebec, were ever ſuch aſſiſtance or encouragement given to either

either of thefe places. They had neither veſſels nor people to man them, and would never be able to procure ſupplies of ſeamen from New England: ſuch was the averſion the government of thoſe two ſettlements was held in by the natives of that Province.

A circumſtance came out at the ſame time, in the courſe of this evidence, that was ſtrongly inſiſted on as a juſt motive to recall this bill. The commercial concerns of the city of London, only, were ſo great and extenſive in New England, that this latter ſtood indebted to it near a million ſterling.

This was urged as a powerful argument againſt an act which would totally deprive the Britiſh merchants of all hopes of being paid ſo conſiderable a ſum; as it could only ariſe out of the balance produced by the gains upon the fiſheries.

It was ſhown at the ſame time, that the effects of this bill would be felt with great ſeverity by ſome people, who were entirely innocent of the charges laid to the generality of the Americans: theſe were the inhabitants of the iſland of Nantucket, lying off the coaſt of New England. This barren ſpot, about fifteen miles long, and three broad, contained about ſix thouſand ſouls, almoſt all Quakers: its products could not maintain twenty families; but the induſtry of the inhabitants was ſuch, that they kept one hundred and thirty veſſels conſtantly employed in the whale fiſhery, which they carried on in the North Seas, on the coaſts of Africa and Brazil, and even ſo far as the Falkland iſlands, and the ſouthern extremities of the Magellanic ſhores.

Were it only from the applauſe and encouragement due to ſo much induſtry and reſolution, ſo remarkable a people ought to have been exempted from the general calamity; and it behoved the generoſity of the Britiſh nation, to compaſſionate the caſe of this handful of brave and laborious men.

This particular caſe was, indeed, ſo remarkable and ſtriking, that a motion was accordingly made on the ſide of adminiſtration, to procure them juſt and proper relief.

But in order, at the ſame time, to counteract the general intent of the petition againſt the bill, a ſecond petition was preſented by the merchants and principal inhabitants of the town of Poole, in direct oppoſition to that from London.

It repreſented that the reſtrictions intended by the bill againſt the New England fiſhery, would not prove any ways detrimental to the trade of England, which was fully able, with proper exertions, to ſupply the demands of foreign markets. The produce of this fiſhery already exceeded half a million, the whole of which centered in Britain; whereas much of the profits of the fiſheries carried on by the Colonies, remained abroad.

What materially rendered the Britiſh Newfoundland fiſhery more beneficial to this country than that of New England, was that it bred a great number of hardy ſeamen, peculiarly fit for the ſervice of the navy; whereas the New England ſeamen are, by act of Parliament, exempted from being preſſed.

It appeared in the examination of thoſe witneſſes who ſupported this petition, that the fiſhery from Britain to Newfoundland, employed about four hundred ſhips, amounting to three hundred and ſixty thouſand tons, and two thouſand ſhallops of twenty thouſand, navigated by twenty thouſand ſeamen. Six hundred thouſand quintals of fiſh were taken every ſeaſon; the returns of which were annually worth, on a moderate computation, five hundred thouſand pounds.

But this repreſentation did not prevent oppoſition from reprobating the bill, as tending, like the other acts lately paſſed, to exaſperate the Colonies to a degree that would preclude all ideas of recon-

ciliation. They would now look on Parliament as an avowed and declared enemy, taken up only with the ſearch of means to diſtreſs them.

The miniſtry was accuſed of acting not only with barbarity, but abſurdity. If their wiſhes and intentions went to the preſervation of the Britiſh dominion over America, to what purpoſe did they ſtrive to ruin that country? The moſt deſpotic princes, in their puniſhment of inſurrections againſt their authority, carried it no further than againſt the principal delinquents: the bulk of the community, however guilty, was ſpared; and the general intereſt of the country ſtill was conſulted. But the reſentment of our rulers knew no bounds; they involved in one common deſtruction the property and inhabitants of America, as if they had determined to render the poſſeſſion of it of no value; and, indeed, as if they foreſaw, that from their inability and imprudence, it would be loſt for ever to the Crown of Great Britain.

They who ſpoke on the other ſide, were no leſs pointed and ſevere in their condemnation of the Americans, and of the conſtant ſullenneſs and perverſity with which they treated the condeſcending diſpoſition of the parent ſtate. They contended, at the ſame time, that this very bill againſt their fiſhery, however reſtrictive it might appear, would not produce thoſe diſtreſſes that had been painted in ſuch frightful colours. The idea of reducing them to real famine was ridiculous: the country abounded with proviſions; they were, in ſome meaſure, the ſtaple commodities of the land; and if ſome parts were deficient, others were plentiful. But were it true that they would be expoſed to all manner of wretchedneſs, ſtill it would be their own ſeeking; as ſubmiſſion to Britain would at once put an end to their miſery.

Still, however, it was contended by oppoſition, that an act of ſuch a nature would diſgrace us in the eyes of Europe, and juſtify thoſe malicious imputations of a cruel diſpoſition, in which ſo many foreigners delighted. They would now have ſome ground for their reproaches: a bill brought into an aſſembly compoſed of the principal perſonages in the nation, with an avowed intent to deſtroy, by hunger, ſome hundred thouſands of our fellow ſubjects whoſe guilt was diſputable, would aſtoniſh all mankind, and excite the anger and indignation of all who profeſſed the leaſt humanity. The bill was abſolutely atrocious; and thoſe who could approve it, were men of no feeling.

A deed of this kind was not juſtifiable according to the moſt rigorous ideas of war: in the perpetration of the moſt violent hoſtilities, the extremeſt hatred and inveteracy would preſerve a remnant of compaſſion for age, infancy, and ſex; but the Britiſh Parliament was now to be ſteeled againſt all theſe conſiderations, and taught to ſacrifice whole nations at once to the wrath and reſentment of miniſters.

What would be the fate of our countrymen at Boſton in the midſt of this univerſal calamity? Hunger, it was well known, would give courage to the fearful, and ſtrength to the weak. The Britiſh military ſtationed in Maſſachuſet were but a handful; and it could not be expected they would be able to make an effectual ſtand againſt the deſperate and enraged multitudes that would aſſail them night and day, in revenge for the barbarities exerciſed upon their country. They muſt neceſſarily ſink under the weight of numbers, and add to the liſt of thoſe victims doomed by miniſterial haughtineſs to deſtruction.

It was replied by the other party, that whatever deſcriptions the opponents to the bill might think

proper to make, of the deplorable condition to which it would bring the people of New England, ſtill they proved no more, than that unleſs the inhabitants of that Colony returned to their duty and allegiance to Great Britain, they would experience a very ſevere puniſhment. This was not denied: it was even the object in view; and was certainly preferable to a denunciation of war, which would neceſſarily be followed with conſequences far more terrible and deſtructive.

By this bill coercion undoubtedly was meant; but it was of an orderly and peaceable kind: the ability of Britain to cruſh all oppoſition in the Colonies, was now to be manifeſted; and what method more efficacious, and at the ſame time leſs hoſtile, could have been propoſed than the preſent? Not a ſword was to be drawn, nor muſket fired; no blood, in ſhort, was to be ſhed by this meaſure. It held the rod over the heads of the guilty; but it invited them to repentance: it threatened, but ſmote only thoſe whoſe obſtinacy extorted the blow. In a word, it affected none but ſuch as were determined to ſuffer. It was therefore the height of malevolence and miſrepreſentation, to deſcribe, as barbarous and inhuman, a mode of conduct which, when impartially and circumſtantially examined, was evidently much leſs calculated to hurt than to terrify.

Nothing was more probable than that when the Colony of Maſſachuſet became thoroughly ſenſible how entirely their fate reſted in the hands of Britain, the moſt refractory and averſe to obedience would ſee the futility of all their efforts againſt the ſuperior might of this country. All claſſes would then unite in the ceſſation of a reſiſtance, from which nothing but miſery could be expected: they would even congratulate themſelves on the temper and coolneſs with which the parent ſtate had acted in

bringing them to a juſt perception of their inferiority, and their impotency to reſiſt its will, whenever it was earneſtly determined to enforce it. Thus a great and important end would be accompliſhed without employing ſanguinary means; and Britain would have the ſatisfaction of quelling a rebellion without coming to hoſtilities.

In the Houſe of Peers, the debates on this bill were carried on much in the ſame ſtrain. Miniſtry brought witneſſes to prove, from their own perſonal knowledge and experience, how greatly the Britiſh fiſhery might be increaſed in Newfoundland; and adduced a variety of arguments to ſhow, that were America to be totally excluded from that fiſhery, the conſequences would be highly beneficial to Great Britain; the number of our ſeamen would be augmented in proportion to the decreaſe of theirs, and our profits increaſed in the ſame degree.

The oppoſition on the other ſide, exerted itſelf to prove the general utility of the American trade, and the conſtant ſettled benefits reſulting from it to this country, which were now riſing daily to an importance truly aſtoniſhing. The progreſs of the trade to New England, was minutely traced from the commencement of this preſent century, when it amounted only to ſeventy thouſand pounds, to the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and fifty-four, when it had ariſen to one hundred and eighty thouſand; but in the ten following years, notwithſtanding a furious and extenſive war, it increaſed to four hundred thouſand pounds; and from the laſt peace to the preſent period, had gradually advanced to double that immenſe ſum.

A country of which a ſingle province took off ſuch a quantity of merchandize from Great Britain, was not to be ſtudiouſly depreciated by partial repreſentations. It little mattered whether the pro-

ſufficient if they were real. Though New England carried on a vaſt trade with other parts of the world, the demands from Britain in conſequence of that trade, were prodigious, and anſwered our purpoſe as effectually as if we carried on that trade ourſelves.

There was no occaſion, therefore, to deprive any part of America of any particular branch of commerce, on a ſuppoſition that we ſhould engroſs it to ourſelves. This, if ſo practicable as repreſented, would require much time and attention: But was it prudent to run ſuch a riſk? Did we not receive already the ſame profits we propoſed to derive from this alteration? The path was now ſmooth and eaſy; why ſhould we be at the trouble of ſeeking out another, which, at beſt, would not be preferable to the preſent?

A variety of additional arguments were uſed to invalidate the propriety of the bill. The mutilation of the papers on which that information was founded, which was held forth to both Houſes as authentic, was complained of in the bittereſt terms: it was carrying on a ſyſtem of deception unworthy of men of rank, who were intruſted with the public affairs: ſuch a management of them, would lay them open to the ſevereſt reſentment and proſecution, and leave them without any excuſe for their juſtification. Parliament depended upon them for true and fair accounts of thoſe tranſactions, by which its ſuffrages were to be guided: if falſe or defective the fault was ſolely their own, and they muſt anſwer for it to the juſtice of their country.

But the efforts of oppoſition were as unavailing in this, as in the other Houſe. The abſolute and indiſpenſible neceſſity of coming to a final concluſion of the American buſineſs, overcame all other ideas: total ſovereignty, or total loſs, were judged the happieſt alternative for Great Britain: its councils had

been

been diſtracted for more than ten years by inceſſant altercations on this ſubject; it was become odious and diſguſting, as it filled the whole nation, from the very higheſt to the very loweſt claſſes, with reciprocal inveteracy. The method propoſed would bring matters to a ſpeedy deciſion; which, whatever it might be, was preferable to a conſtant ſcene of domeſtic confuſion.

In virtue of theſe arguments, the majority of the Houſe loudly declared for the bill. It was paſſed by one hundred and four to twenty-nine.

So reſolutely was the Houſe of Peers bent upon acting with the utmoſt rigour and ſeverity, as the moſt eligible means of bringing America to reaſon, that it propoſed to include in the reſtrictions enacted by this bill, the Provinces of New Jerſey, Pennſylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina; in this, however; they did not meet with the concurrence of the Houſe of Commons; and the bill was paſſed without this addition.

It produced a remarkable proteſt. The Lords who framed it, ſpoke with uncommon ſeverity of the ſyſtem on which the bill was founded. "That "government, ſaid they, which attempts to pre- "ſerve its authority by deſtroying the trade of its "ſubjects, and by involving the innocent and "guilty in a common ruin, if it acts from a choice "of ſuch means, confeſſes itſelf unworthy; if "from inability to find any other, admits itſelf "wholly incompetent to the end of its inſtitution."

They accuſed the miniſtry of endeavouring to purchaſe the nation's conſent to this act, by promiſing them the ſpoils of the New England fiſhery. This, they ſaid, was "a ſcheme full of weakneſs and in- "decency; of indecency, becauſe it may be ſuſ- "pected that the deſire of the confiſcation has cre- "ated the guilt; and of weakneſs, becauſe it ſup- "poſes

" poſes that whatever is taken from the Colonies,
" is of courſe to be transferred to ourſelves."

This proteſt took ſevere notice of an opinion, which ſome perſons laboured induſtriouſly to circulate throughout the nation; and which had been maintained in both Houſes of Parliament. This was the aſſertion of which notice has already been taken, that the Americans wanted ſpirit to go through what they had undertaken; and that Britain would find them an eaſy conqueſt.

An opininion of this kind was repreſented by the friends of America, as highly unbecoming ſuch an aſſembly as that wherein it had been delivered. It was not ſupported by truth, and could only be viewed as the effuſion of party reſentment; it was thrown out in the heat of debate, as an inducement to coincide with the meaſures in agitation, and to remove all apprehenſion of the dangers which might ariſe from their proſecution.

But it was further aſſerted, that a charge of this kind was the more imprudent and unadviſed, as excluſive of its containing a falſe and injurious accuſation, it tended in caſe of coercive meaſures, to ſlacken the care and ſolicitude with which they ought to be purſued; and to occaſion remiſſneſs in thoſe to whom they might be intruſted, from a perſuaſion that the enemy to be encountered was not deſerving of much fear, and required but little pains to be overcome.

CHAP. X.

Military and Naval preparations againſt America.—Lord North's Conciliatory Motion.—Petition from Jamaica in favour of the Colonies.—Act for reſtraining the Commerce of the Southern Colonies.—Mr. Burke's Conciliatory Plan.—Mr. Hartley's Motion to the ſame intent.

FEW acts of Parliament were ever received with more approbation from one party, and more diſapprobation from the other, than this bill for reſtraining the commerce of New England, and depriving it of its fiſheries. While it was applauded by the one as a judicious and neceſſary meaſure, it was reprobated by the other with the utmoſt vehemence and indignation, and repreſented as the genuine offspring of that tyrannical ſpirit which had by its opponents ſo ſong been imputed to adminiſtration.

Numbers of thoſe who favoured the cauſe of the Americans, were ſtudiouſly outrageous in their complaints againſt this bill: they loaded it with every opprobrious epithet they could deviſe; and, among other injurious names, they called it the act of ſtarvation.

In the mean time, as Great Britain had now taken her final reſolution, miniſtry was employed in making thoſe preparations that were judged requiſite to carry it into execution.

The number of troops intended for New England, amounted to ten thouſand men. This, according to the opinion of thoſe military men who were conſulted upon this occaſion, appeared a force fully ſufficient to execute the meaſures of government.

But

But this opinion was ſtrenuouſly oppoſed. Such a force was repreſented as totally inadequate to the end propoſed, and as only productive of much expence to little purpoſe.

Miniſtry was charged with equal imprudence for engaging the nation in hoſtilities, and for its manner of conducting them. Since America is to be ſubdued, ſaid oppoſition, let it be done effectually; let a fleet and army be ſent forth, in the ſtrength of which the publie may juſtly confide; ſuch as may, by its very appearance, intimidate. The firſt impreſſion ought, if poſſible to be deciſive, and every effort ſhould be made to render it ſuch.

In this idea of the minority, not only their own adherents, but many of their antagoniſts as readily concurred. The only reaſon alledged for acting otherwiſe, was that an expectation had been formed, that the Americans, upon a mature conſideration of the matter, would think it more conſiſtent with their intereſt to deſiſt from, than to continue an oppoſition that would certainly involve them in bloodſhed and deſolation; and which, were it to ſucceed, would entail ſuch expences, loſſes, and miſchiefs upon their country, as would require many years to repair.

Before the ſcene of action was entered upon, the miniſtry reſolved once more to attempt a reconciliation with America. A motion was accordingly made in the Houſe of Commons, importing, that when the Governor, Council, and Aſſembly of any of the Colonies, ſhall propoſe to make proviſion, according to their reſpective circumſtances, for the common defence, ſuch proportion to be raiſed under the authority of the Colony, and diſpoſable by Parliament; and ſhall engage to provide for the ſupport of the civil government, and the adminiſtration of juſtice, it will then be proper, if ſuch propoſal ſhould be approved of by the King in Parliament, to forbear levying

or

or impoſing any taxes on that Colony; thoſe duties excepted, that may be expedient to impoſe for the regulation of commerce, the net produce of which ſhall be carried to the account of the Colony where it is raiſed.

This motion was grounded on the ſincere deſire of giving America full proof how far it was from the intentions of Britain to adopt harſh meaſures, if they could poſſibly be avoided. Parliament, in its late addreſs to the Throne reſpecting the Colonies, not only meant to ſhow its final determination to ſupport the claims of Great Britain, at all hazards, but alſo its willingneſs, upon proper conceſſions, to reſtore America to her favour. That notwithſtanding the Britiſh legiſlature could not give up the right of taxation, yet if the Americans would propoſe ſuch a mode of contribution, as might at once be agreeable to themſelves, and anſwer the end, Parliament would conſent to ſuſpend the exerciſe of that right, and yield to America the authority of raiſing in their own manner, their ſhare of the contribution.

A reſolution adopted on the ground of this motion would, it was ſaid, be "an infallible touch-"ſtone to try the ſincerity of the Americans. If "their profeſſions were real, and their oppoſition "founded only upon the principles which they pre-"tended, they muſt, conſiſtently with thoſe prin-"ciples, agree with this propoſition. But if they "were actuated by ſiniſter motives, and had dan-"gerous deſigns in contemplation, their refuſal of "theſe terms would expoſe them to the world.— "We ſhould then be prepared, and know how to "act. After having ſhown our wiſdom, our juſ-"tice, and our humanity, by giving them an op-"portunity of redeeming their paſt faults, and "holding out to them fitting terms of accommo-"dation; if they ſhould reject them, we ſhould

" be juſtified in taking the moſt coercive mea-
" ſures."

The oppoſition received this propoſal with the utmoſt diſapprobation. It was, they ſaid, in no wiſe conciliatory: it was replete with infidiouſneſs, and would appear ſuch in the eyes of the Americans. The motives held out to the nation for uniting with miniſtry againſt America, were now, it was ſaid, entirely changed. The honour and dignity of Great Britain were lately the ſole principle on which they exhorted men to act; obedience to the commercial regulations enacted by Parliament, and allegiance to the ſupreme ſovereignty of this country, was their conſtant language: but they now abandoned that argument; the conteſt was now to be for a prize of another nature, the acquiſition of a revenue. This probably they deemed an object more intereſting to the generality in a commercial nation, and for the obtaining of which people would be found more willing to exert themſelves, than for a mere acknowledgment of ſuperior dignity, by which neither the power of the ſtate would receive any augmentation, nor the condition of individuals any relief.

In the mode of taxation propoſed for America, there was no eſſential difference from that which had been adopted before, and inſiſted upon as legal. The Colonies were as completely taxed without their conſent by requiring them to pay a ſtated ſum, levied in their own manner, as by laying a number of duties on them to the ſame amount.

Another objection occurred, equally militating againſt the acceptance of this propoſal by the Americans. No ſum was ſpecified; they were left totally ignorant what the demands of Britain might be: this was an unpardonable defect in propoſals of which they ought to have the cleareſt elucidation laid before them, in order to judge whether it was

in their power, allowing it to be in their inclination, to accede to them.

After a long diſpute the queſtion was carried for the miniſtry, by two hundred and ſeventy-four votes, to eighty-eight.

In the mean time, the ſituation of the Colonies of North America, had excited, in a particular manner, the attention of the Britiſh iſlands in the Weſt Indies. Incapable, from their ſituation, of reſiſting the authority of Great Britain in the ſame manner, they beheld ſilently the progreſs of a diſpute which threatened to terminate in ſuch terrible conſequences. One of them, however, ventured to eſpouſe their cauſe in a petition to the throne: this was the iſland of Jamaica, the moſt flouriſhing and powerful of any.

This petition, like the many others that had been repeatedly preſented in favour of America, availed it nothing. Miniſtry ſeemed, on the contrary, daily to become further perſuaded that more reſtrictions were neceſſary.

Another bill, as recommended by the Lords, was brought accordingly into the Houſe, to reſtrain the commerce of New Jerſey, Pennſylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, in the ſame manner as that of New England. The motives alledged were the acceſſion of thoſe Colonies to the reſolutions adopted by New England, reſpecting the Britiſh trade and manufactures. This bill was readily agreed to.

But though petitions were rejected, the petitioners were not the leſs ſolicitous in ſupporting them, and in authenticating the facts on which they were founded. The Weſt-India merchants and planters, in particular, ſeconded the petition they had lately preſented, with a detail of circumſtances relating to the Britiſh iſlands in that part of the world, that was equally copious and important. This buſineſs

was

was conducted in their behalf with great ability, by Mr. Glover, author of the poem Leonidas, a gentleman equally celebrated for his literary talents, and his commercial knowledge.

He ſtated with great energy and exactneſs, the prodigious value of the Weſt India iſlands to Great Britain. It appeared, from his inquiries and reſearches, that excluſive of the intrinſic worth of the iſlands, their ſtock-in-trade, and other property, amounting to no leſs than ſixty millions, the exportation to Britain, of late years, amounted annually to near two hundred thouſand hogſheads and puncheons of ſugar and rum, the weight of which was ninety-five thouſand tons, and the value four millions. The direct revenue ariſing from this immenſe trade, conſiſted of above ſeven hundred thouſand pounds, beſide that which accrued from the collateral branches depending upon it.

The danger in which a war with America would place this advantageous commerce, was enlarged upon with much accuracy, and the neceſſity of a continual correſpondence in trade between the iſlands and that continent, was pointed out in a variety of inſtances.

But among the Parliamentary tranſactions at that time, none was more remarkable than the conciliaMarch 22, tory propoſitions reſpecting the Colonies,
1775. made by Mr. Burke, a gentleman whoſe abilities and eloquence had for ſeveral years been much admired in Parliament. He introduced theſe propoſitions in a ſpeech that has been deſervedly celebrated for its various excellencies.

"The queſtions," he obſerved, "on which they were to decide that day, were whether they ought to concede, and what that conceſſion ought to be. To enable them to determine on theſe great queſtions with a firm and preciſe judgment, it was neceſſary to conſider diſtinctly the true nature, and

the peculiar circumſtances of the object before them; as after all their ſtruggles, whether they would, or would not, they muſt govern America according to that nature, and thoſe circumſtances, and not according to their own imaginations, or abſtract ideas of right, nor by any means according to meer general theories of government."

He then entered into an accurate inveſtigation of the preſent ſtate and circumſtances of the Colonies: he minutely examined their ſituation, extent, wealth, population, agriculture, and commerce, with their power and weight in the ſcale of empire. He then adverted to that invincible ſpirit of freedom which diſtinguiſhes them in ſo peculiar a manner from all other people. He accounted for it from their origin, education, and way of life, their political and religious principles, and their diſtance from the ſeat of government.

The conduct of Great Britain towards America, ought, he obſerved, to be regulated according to theſe various conſiderations. He then introduced a number of intereſting facts and obſervations relating to that country, in order to ſhow the neceſſity of governing it conformably to the ideas and habits long eſtabliſhed among the inhabitants, and that all other plans would prove weak and inſufficient.

He then deſcribed with great force and animation, the aſtoniſhing progreſs of population and commerce in that country, and how much they had contributed to the opulence and graudeur of Britain. From his review of the increaſe of our trade, at different ſtages, it appeared that in the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and four, the exports from England to North America, the Weſt Indies, and Africa, amounted only to about five hundred and ſeventy thouſand pounds; but that in one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſeventy-two, they exceeded ſix millions. It alſo appeared, that at the foregoing

period, the whole export trade of England, including that to the Colonies, amounted to little more than fix millions and a half. Thus the trade to America was now become not half a million leſs than the whole of that which England carried on with all the world, at the firſt of the above periods. Valuing therefore the exportations from Great Britain at ſixteen millions, America employed more than a third of our foreign trade.

He took notice of the ſeveral plans propoſed for the government of America, and animadverted particularly to that of force; a method, which as it appeared ſimple and eaſy to comprehend, men were apt to have recourſe to in all difficult caſes. This idea he reprobated with great ſtrength of argument. It depended upon times and circumſtances, which were always changing and uncertain; it deſtroyed the very objects of preſervation; it was a mode of governing hitherto unknown in the Colonies, and therefore dangerous to make trial of. Their flouriſhing condition, and the benefits we derived from them, were owing to quite other cauſes.

Without inquiring, therefore, whether it were a matter of right, or of favour, the only ſafe rule by which to govern the Colonies with advantage, was by giving them "an intereſt in our conſtitution," and by pledging the Parliamentary faith of the nation in the moſt binding manner, never to depart from the ſyſtem by which Gteat Britain is ſolemnly to declare that ſhe means to govern them.

All diſcuſſions of right ſhould be diſclaimed in ſuch a ſubject: policy alone was to be conſidered. He was not inquiring whether they had a right to make that people miſerable, but whether it was not their intereſt to render them happy? They were not to conſult lawyers on what they might do, but to be guided by equity and ſound policy in what they ought to do.

He declared pointedly againſt new projects. His theory with regard to repreſentation was founded on the ancient conſtitutional policy of the realm, as contained in acts of Parliament; and the practice he would recommend, was conformable to plain facts, recorded in the journals of the Houſe.

Experience had marked the road to be taken on this occaſion; it had been followed with advantage and ſafety, until the preſent differences with America. In conſtitutional diſcuſſions practice was always a wiſer counſellor than ſpeculation: their anceſtors, who had founded both the conſtitution and the Colonies, were the beſt guides they could follow for their preſervation.

He gave an hiſtorical deduction of the manner of incorporating Wales, Cheſter, and Durham, with the reſt of England, and of the good conſequences this meaſure produced, in the readineſs of their ſubſequent acquieſcence in the laws enacted by the authority of Parliament.

Though Ireland had not been included in this incorporation, yet the Engliſh conſtitution had been fully communicated to that kingdom. The Colonies had received it as effectually as their ſituation would reſpectively permit. While the genuine ſpirit of this conſtitution remained unimpaired, peace and proſperity attended them; the moment an alteration was attempted, diſorder enſued.

'To return to our old policy, was therefore to tread on the ſureſt ground. Our future ſyſtem in America ought to be ſettled on a Parliamentary foundation, and aſcertained in the cleareſt and moſt perſpicuous terms, in order to guard againſt all poſſible innovations. Taxation was by this ſyſtem to be eſtabliſhed in the Colonies not by impoſition from us, but by grants from them: their Aſſemblies were to be acknowledged competent to provide for the ſupport of their government in peace,

and to furniſh public aids in war: the courts of judicature were to be abſolutely independent; thoſe of admiralty new regulated; and the acts of Parliament ſo much complained of, to be totally repealed.

Theſe propoſals were grounded on the non-repreſentation of the Colonies in the Britiſh Parliament, the inconveniencies of their being repreſented at ſuch a diſtance, the readineſs with which they had always complied with requiſitions lawfully made, to raiſe money for public ſervices, and the ſuperior utility of their granting ſubſidies, to the laying of taxes upon them by the authority of Parliament.

The debate on theſe propoſitions was long and ſpirited. The objections againſt them were, that they gave up the object in contention, as notwithſtanding the right of taxing was not formally, yet it was virtually renounced. Should theſe propoſals be adopted, there was no certainty that the Americans would anſwer them with any returns of duty and compliance.

As to their former proviſions of money, during the late war, they proceeded evidently from the ſenſe of the danger they were in. But if required to do it upon any occaſion leſs preſſing, and leſs connected with their immediate intereſt, it was much to be doubted whether they would have been ſo complying.

But excluſive of theſe conſiderations, it was the ſole right and prerogative of Parliament to grant money to the Crown: no other body of men in the Britiſh dominions could participate in this right.—Such was the expreſs declaration of the Bill of Rights.

This right of taxation was the ground-work of the dignity and power of Parliament. It could not therefore be given up conſiſtently with any pro-

priety. Its very eſſence and exiſtence depended upon this prerogative. A miniſter would deſerve impeachment who ſhould procure a pecuniary grant from the Colonies. Was ſuch a practice to be tolerated, it would lead to much more danger than ſeemed to be apprehended; eſpecially in caſe the Colonies ſhould ever have the privilege of granting money at their own option.

In war, ſuch a manner of levying ſubſidies might be permitted, as reſulting from neceſſity; but without ſuch an urgent cauſe, the conſtitution would evidently be expoſed to danger, were the Crown empowered to receive ſupplies through any other channel than that of Parliament.

The exerciſing of this high prerogative of taxing the ſubject, was lodged in the diſcretion of that body. In this matter it was ſupreme, and queſtionable by no other power in the ſtate. All other bodies and aſſemblies throughout the Britiſh dominions, whatever immunities they enjoyed in other reſpects, and however independent of Parliamentary authority, ſtill were bound to implicit obedience in this.

It was replied, on the other hand, that the ſole intent of the declaration contained in the Bill of Rights, was to prevent the Crown from levying taxes in the kingdom without the conſent of Parliament; but did not mean to forbid the raiſing of them by lawful aſſemblies, in other parts of the King's dominions, for the public ſervice.

By thankfully acknowledging the promptitude and willingneſs with which the American aſſemblies had paſſed conſiderable grants, Parliament had acknowledged their right of giving money to the Crown.

The meaning of the Bill of Rights, was to confine the power of the Crown, but not the liberality of the ſubject; the firſt was debarred from exacting

money

money at pleaſure, but the ſecond was not forbidden to preſent it with what ſums might be judged proper, either as ſupplies for public meaſures, or as an aid or income to defray the charges neceſſary to ſupport the dignity and ſplendour of the throne; or even by way of gratitude and affection to the ſovereign, for the benefits derived from his exertions for the happineſs of his people.

The ſubſidies raiſed in this manner by the Colonies, having been equally abundant and productive of good conſequences, having never been refuſed, when demanded in the uſual way, and the Colonies teſtifying ſo much unwillingneſs to grant them in any other, it would be prudent to accept of them upon their own terms, rather than riſk the loſing them for ever, by putting at ſtake the poſſeſſion of the Colonies themſelves.

This danger, it could not be denied, the Parliament had brought upon the kingdom, by inſiſting obſtinately, and needleſsly, on a mode of raiſing money in the Colonies, which would not certainly produce more than that to which they had been ſo long habituated, and were equally reſolute in adhering to, notwithſtanding all the declarations and menaces of Parliament.

It was therefore high time to put an end to this abſurd and pernicious controverſy. Nothing could betray more abſurdity than to quarrel about the ſhadow, when we were poſſeſſed of the ſubſtance. The ideas of ſupreme ſovereignty, and national unity, were not combated by the Americans, provided an interpretation was made that did not intrench upon ſuch of their privileges, as, in their notions, were inſeparable from a ſtate of freedom. Theſe privileges, it had been proved, were not injurious to this country, and the exerciſe of them had often proved ſerviceable to it. But if by ſupreme ſovereignty we meant abſolute power, and by

national unity, an obligation in them to conform implicitly to our will, why ſhould we expect their admiſſion of tenets manifeſtly repugnant to our conſtitution, and of which we had never bethought ourſelves before this preſent occaſion.

They acknowledged themſelves united with Britain, and ſubject to its ſovereign: they were willing to go proportionably as far as ourſelves in their contributions for the common defence. Was not this ſubjection and unity, in the ſtricteſt acceptation of the terms? Was it not the real ſubſtance of ſovereignty and union? All requiſitions from them, on our part, beyond theſe eſſential and voluntary acknowledgments of our ſupremacy, were founded on ſpeculative and imaginary rights, and tended, as experience had proved, to deprive us of ſolid benefits. We were throwing the moſt valuable advantages away, in the purſuit of empty and unavailing titles.

After a debate ſupported with great vigour and ingenuity of argumentation on both ſides, Mr. Burke's propoſitions were negatived, by two hundred and ſeventy votes, againſt ſeventy-eight.

This rejection did not however diſcourage oppoſition from another attempt. A few days after the
March 27, failure of that made by Mr. Burke, ano-
1775. ther gentleman of great knowledge and abilities, followed his example. This was Mr. Hartley; who propoſed that a letter of requiſition ſhould be ſent to the Colonies by a ſecretary of ſtate, on a motion from that Houſe, for contribution to the expences of the whole empire.

This plan, it was repreſented, met thoſe ideas of taxation that had ſo often been approved by the Colonies, and conformably to which former levies of money had been made upon them, to their entire ſatisfaction. It left them in the poſſeſſion of determining

mining exclusively the propriety of the demand, and of limiting the sum, and directing its application.

The Parliamentary declaration against the raising of subsidies without its consent, was, by this plan, fully obviated, as the requisition would be their own act and deed. Thus the sentiments of both the contending parties would be reconciled: the Americans would be taxed, but in the manner most acceptable to their own feelings; yet as effectually as if Parliament had raised and assessed the supplies by its sole authority; and Parliament would have no reason to complain, when it saw that a simple motion in the House, operated as powerfully as if it passed an act to that purpose.

As this motion seemed to coincide with the opinion established in America, as well as with the interest of Great Britain, it was expected by many of its friends, that a favourable reception would have been given it, and that it might have proved a basis upon which to erect the superstructure of a treaty; but these expectations were totally frustrated, and the motion was rejected without a division.

The rejection of this, and the anteceding proposals, occasioned, mean while, much discontent throughout a great part of the nation. The character and abilities of the gentlemen who had framed them, were highly respected; and many people began to wish, with impatience, for the peaceable settlement of a dispute, from the continuation of which no good could possibly be expected; and which they were desirous should be terminated upon any terms.

But the partiality expressed for America by such numbers of people at home, did them much disservice on this as well as on some other occasions. Those who were of contrary sentiments, began to dread the consequences of favouring the republican opinions that had gradually become so current in the Colonies

and thought that it ill became the inhabitants of a country that had ſuffered ſo much from ſuch principles, to give them any countenance by eſpouſing the cauſe of thoſe who profeſſedly adhered to them. They looked upon this partiality as criminal, and were convinced, at the ſame time, that it was owing to the machinations of a party, which ſooner than miſs of a revenge for being diſcarded, would wreek it on their own country. The ſupporters of this party, were looked upon by many as the propagators of thoſe ſeditious maxims that had filled England with diſcontent, and had kindled a rebellion in America.

Experience, in ſome meaſure, authoriſed this opinion. So outrageous for many years had unhappily been the temper of all factions in this country, that they kept no meaſures in the proſecution of the objects they had in view, and employed, indiſcriminately, all means whatſoever to attain them. Oppoſition was, in conſequence of the perſuaſion that they were actuated by the ſame principles, accuſed of harbouring the moſt unjuſtifiable deſigns. As they were not permitted to rule the ſtate, they were, it was ſaid, determined to embroil it, and to render the power lodged in the hands of others, a ſource of continual vexation to them.

Influenced by ſuch notions, many were thoſe who entertained unſurmountable ſuſpicions of whatever was propoſed that bore the face of benevolence to America. They thought the Colonies had rendered themſelves by their behaviour, and the maxims of which they had occaſioned the inculcation in this country, unworthy of all condeſcenſion; and that it would not be for the intereſt of Britain to enter into any treaty with them, till their republican ſpirit had been humbled. As this could not be effected any otherwiſe than by the ſuperiority of the Britiſh arms, they heartily wiſhed to ſee them employed

for

for this end; and they condemned all pacific and conciliating meaſures, as inefficient and dangerous before it was accompliſhed. They would not radically remove the evil; it would only be palliated; by not being cruſhed in proper time, it would gather additional ſtrength, and break out on a future occaſion with double violence.

Sentiments of this kind prevailed no leſs in Parliament: to theſe may principally be attributed the hoſtile ſpirit that influenced the concurrence of the majority in the meaſures propoſed by miniſtry for the reduction of America.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Further reſtrictions on the American Trade.—Petitions to Parliament for and againſt America.—Petition from the Britiſh Inhabitants of Canada.—Petition from the Quakers.—Remonſtrance from the City of London.—Remonſtrance from New York.

1775.

THE reſentment of Parliament againſt America ſeemed to gain ground daily. In addition to the bill of reſtrictions upon its trade, already mentioned, a clauſe was brought in, including the Colonies ſituated on the river Delaware.

The ground of this additional prohibition, was, that they were as refractory and culpable as the other Colonies, and that ſufficient proofs of this had been brought before the Houſe to juſtify this proceeding.

In the mean time, a variety of petitions appeared on both ſides of the queſtion from ſeveral manufacturing towns in Great Britain and Ireland; ſome contending for the neceſſity of coerſive meaſures againſt the Colonies, others complaining of the bad conſequences they had occaſioned, and would ſtill induce. The facts maintained by the reſpective petitions, created infinite controverſy: they were aſſerted and denied with equal vehemence.

The oppoſition contended, that the petitions militating for miniſterial meaſures, were promoted by perſons who had no concern, or but a very diſtant one in the commerce with America. They were, it was ſaid, of a party which had been long proſcribed in this country; but which, unhappily for it, poſſeſſed a fund of obſtinacy which neither time nor diſappointments could overcome; they had ſeized

this

this opportunity to revive the odious and exploded principles of abſolute uncontroulable ſovereignty, which had formerly done ſo much miſchief: in a word, they were the Tories. From the intrigues of people of this deſcription, proceeded thoſe repreſentations in favour of the violent reſolves againſt America, which were now brought forth in order to counter-balance the weight of thoſe addreſſes for peace and reconciliation which came from thoſe who really traded with America, who had already felt, and experimentally knew how ſeverely they ſhould feel the loſs or ſuſpenſion of that neceſſary trade.

Among other petitions, one was preſented to the Throne from the Britiſh inhabitants of Canada againſt the Quebec bill. It repreſented the trouble and expence they had undergone in ſettling themſelves in that Province; that through their endeavours and induſtry, the value of that Colony was more than doubled ſince its acquiſition; but that by the late act of Parliament they were, without having deſerved ſuch treatment, deprived of all the priviledges of Britiſh ſubjects, and placed under an arbitrary government, contrary to the expectations and ſolemn promiſes which had induced them to ſettle in that country.

A like petition from them to the Houſe of Lords was preſented, and vigorouſly ſupported by Lord Camden, upon the principles of the Engliſh conſtitution, and the neceſſity of protecting the Proteſtant religion, at which a ſevere blow was aimed by the act in queſtion: he called upon both the temporal and ſpiritual Lords to unite upon this occaſion, in their reſpective characters of guardians of the laws and religion of the land.

Adminiſtration oppoſed him with no leſs warmth. The French inhabitants in Canada, were declared to be perfectly ſatisfied with that act: by which they

conſidered themſelves as entirely reſtored to the ſame condition they were in when under the crown of France. They had expreſſed their ſatisfaction upon that account to General Carlton on his arrival in that Province in quality of Governor. They had tranſmitted an addreſs of the ſame tendency to the King, acknowledging, in terms of the higheſt gratitude, their thankfulneſs for reſtoring them to their ancient rights and priviledges. Theſe were unequivocal proofs of the general contentment effected by that meaſure; and how impolitic it would be to repeal it in favour of about three thouſand individuals, to the mortification of more than one hundred thouſand.

After a long and animated altercation, the motion to reject Lord Camden's propoſal was carried by eighty-eight votes againſt twenty-eight.

Another petition from the Engliſh in Canada, of the ſame tenor as the foregoing, was preſented by Sir George Saville to the Houſe of Commons. It ſtated, among other particulars, that the petition to the King, in the name of all the French inhabitants in Canada, in virtue of which the Quebec act had paſſed, was not obtained in a fair and open manner. So far from being countenanced by the generality of people, it had not even been communicated to them. It was handed about in a private manner, and ſigned by a few of the nobleſſe and lawyers, with others in their confidence, through the inſtigations of the Romiſh clergy. The community at large, it was notorious, did not approve it.

But the advocates for miniſtry contended no leſs ſtrenuouſly for the propriety of attending to the addreſſes of large and avowed bodies, in preference to the uncertain and unauthoriſed ſurmiſes of private individuals. The Canadians were a numerous and warlike people, whoſe attachment it was prudent to ſecure amidſt the univerſal defection of our

own Colonies. By indulging them with a reſtoration of their own laws and uſages, we made them our faſt friends. This was certainly a juſt meaſure; as we might probably ſtand ere long in need of their friendſhip and aſſiſtance, in purſuance of the plan propoſed for the reduction of our rebellious Colonies.

It was however intimated, that notwithſtanding the unfavourable appearance of affairs in America, there were good reaſons for hoping that tranquility would ſoon be re-eſtabliſhed upon durable foundations, without appealing to the ſword. When our refractory ſubjects beheld themſelves ſurrounded on all ſides, when they ſaw our armies encamped on their ſhores, our fleets ſtationed along their coaſts, their communication with other nations cut off, and their back-ſettlements threatened by thoſe allies who were ſecured to Britain by the very act in queſtion, and whoſe enmity they ſo much dreaded, and had ſo often experienced in former wars: in ſuch a ſituation, they would hardly think of facing ſo many difficulties, and would probably be glad to accept of thoſe offers that were ſtill held out to them.

The iſſue of this debate was, that Sir George Saville was not more ſucceſsful in the Houſe of Commons, than Lord Camden had been in the Houſe of Lords. His motion for repealing this act was rejected by a vaſt majority, one hundred and ſeventy-four, to eighty-ſix.

Notwithſtanding the ill ſucceſs of ſo many petitions, an humble, but firm one, was preſented by the body of the Quakers. It ſpoke the language of peace and friendſhip peculiar to their perſuaſion, and recommended lenient meaſures accordingly:— But it declared, at the ſame time, their intimate perſuaſion, that in real attachment to the ſovereign and royal family, to the conſtitution and people of his country, the Americans were exceeded by no ſubjects in the Britiſh dominions.

While petitions came from ſo many quarters, the city of London determined to give them that countenance which would ariſe from its weight and im-
April 10, portance. It preſented a remonſtrance to
1775. the throne, in which the meaſures of the miniſtry were condemned in the moſt explicit and forcible language. It recapitulated all the articles of American grievances, and all the fatal conſequences of them, that had been ſo frequently predicted. They looked with horror, ſaid they, at the meaſures in agitation. Not deceived by the ſpecious artifice of calling deſpotiſm dignity, they plainly perceived that the real purpoſe was to eſtabliſh arbitrary power over all America. They juſtified the reſiſtance of the Americans upon the principles of the Engliſh conſtitution. Animated by thoſe principles, our forefathers brought about the Revolution; they wreſted the ſceptre out of the hands of the Stuarts, and placed the Houſe of Brunſwick upon the throne of Great Britain.

"Your petitioners," continued they, "are per-
"ſuaded, that the meaſures now purſuing, ori-
"ginated in the ſecret advice of men, who are
"enemies equally to your Majeſty's titles, and to
"the liberties of your people; and that your Ma-
"jeſty's miniſters carry them into execution by the
"ſame fatal corruption which has enabled them to
"wound the peace, and violate the conſtitution of
"this country. Thus they poiſon the fountain of
"public ſecurity, and render that body which
"ſhould be the guardian of liberty, a formidable
"inſtrument of arbitrary power. Your petitioners
"do therefore moſt earneſtly beſeech your Majeſty,
"to diſmiſs immediately, and for ever, from your
"councils thoſe miniſters and adviſers, as a firſt
"ſtep towards a redreſs of thoſe grievances which
"alarm and afflict your whole people."

This

This petition produced the following anſwer.

" It is with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment that I find " any of my ſubjects capable of encouraging the " rebellious diſpoſition which unhappily exiſts in " ſome of my Colonies in North America. Hav- " ing entire confidence in the wiſdom of my Par- " liament, the great council of the nation. I will " ſteadily purſue thoſe meaſures which they have " recommended for the ſupport of the conſtitutional " rights of Great Britain. and the protection of the " commercial intereſts of my kingdoms."

Such, to the great concern of all reflecting men, was now become the ſtile of intercourſe between the Crown and the people.

In the mean time, another remonſtrance was pre- May 15, ſented to the Houſe of Commons from the 1775. Aſſembly of New York. It was introduced by Mr. Burke, to whom it had been tranſmitted for that purpoſe. He repreſented in a ſtrong and urgent manner, how greatly that province had ſignalized its attachment and fidelity to Britain in the midſt of the preſent diſturbances, and how much it had incurred the diſpleaſure of the other Colonies upon that account. He aſſured the Houſe that the remonſtrance he wiſhed to lay before it, was conceived in terms of the higheſt decency and reſpect.—Though it complained of ſome acts of Parliament, which in that Colony were deemed grievances, yet he was of opinion, the remonſtrance ought to be received, that if any matter contained in it ſhould appear to the Houſe to need redreſs, it might be granted accordingly.

This application he conſidered as a circumſtance improveable to the higheſt advantage in the preſent poſture of affairs. It afforded an opportunity of coming to terms of reconciliation with America.—A direct channel was now opened to communicate through the medium of New York, with the other

Colonies. The utmoſt care ſhould be taken not to ſhut it, leſt no other avenue ſhould be found.

The miniſterial objections were, that it was incompatible with the dignity of the Houſe to ſuffer any paper to be preſented that queſtioned its ſupreme authority. Condeſcenſion enough had been ſhown in a variety of inſtances; but nothing was admiſſible that tended to Invalidate the right of taxation.

Particular notice was taken at the ſame time, that the title of petition did not accompany this paper: it was called a Repreſentation and Remonſtrance, which was not the uſual, nor the proper manner of application to Parliament. This ſingularity alone was ſufficient to put a negative on its preſentation.

To this it was replied, that the times were ſo dangerous and critical, that words and forms were no longer deſerving of attention. The queſtion was, whether they thought the Colony of New York was worthy of a hearing? No Colony had behaved with ſo much temperateneſs and diſcretion. Notwithſtanding the tempeſtuouſneſs of the times, and the general wreck of the Britiſh authority, it had yet preſerved a ſteady obedience to government.—While every other Colony was bidding defiance to Britain, this alone ſubmiſſively applied to her for redreſs of grievances.

Was it conſiſtent with policy, after loſing the good-will of all the other Colonies, to drive this, through a needleſs and punctilious ſeverity, into their confederacy againſt this country? could we expect, after ſuch a treatment, that this Colony could withſtand the arguments that would be drawn from our ſuperciliouſneſs, to induce it to relinquiſh a conduct which was ſo ill requited.

This was not a ſeaſon for ſtatelineſs and diſregard with reſpect to thoſe who profeſſed themſelves our adherents. Were even the refractory to make an

application, it ought to be received with benignity. What countenance would the people of New York assume, when they were reproached for having put their confidence in this country? What excuse would the Assembly be able to make to its constituents, when accused of having deceived them with promises of favour from Britain, when it was seen that Parliament refused even to hear their humble and dutiful representations?

This refusal, it was predicted, would give the finishing blow to the British interest in America.—New York might from this day be counted among the hostile Colonies. What other line of conduct could that Province embrace, with any prospect of safety? Spurned by Britain, it would instantly forsake her, and wipe off the stain of having forsaken them, by the zeal it would henceforward exert in the common cause.

But the ministerial arguments against the acceptance of whatever derogated from the legislative power of Parliament, preponderated with the majority against all other considerations. The rejection was carried by one hundred and eighty-six, against sixty-seven.

After having been foiled in the House of Commons, it now remained to be decided whether that Colony's representations would meet with a more gracious reception in the House of Lords.

But here the difficulty was still greater than in the other House. The dignity of the Peerage was said to be insulted by the appellation under which it had been presumed to usher those representations into that Assembly. They were stiled a Memorial; such a title was only allowable in transactions between princes and states independent of each other, but was unsufferable on the part of subjects.

The answer was, that the lowest officer in the service had a right to present a memorial, even to

his Majeſty himſelf, ſhould he think himſelf aggrieved: with much more reaſon might a reſpectable body preſent one to the Houſe of Lords. But excluſive of the general reaſon that entitled ſo important a Colony to lay ſuch a paper before them, the particular reaſon of its fidelity, in ſpite of ſo many examples of defection, was alone a motive that ought to ſuperſede all forms, and engage their moſt ſerious attention to what it had to propoſe.

After ſundry arguments of the ſame nature, the queſtion was determined againſt the hearing of the memorial, by forty-five Peers, to twenty-five.

Such was the iſſue of the efforts made by oppoſition in favour of the applications from New York. Numbers of people conſidered them as a ground, upon which to form a reaſonable expectation of coming to ſome deciſive agreement with this Colony; which might probably lead to a general treaty with all the Colonies. By ſuch means only it ſeemed likely at preſent to bring about a reconciliation.

When the rejection of theſe applications in both Houſes was announced to the public, a great part of the nation expreſſed the higheſt diſcontent. They now looked forward with dejection and ſorrow at the proſpect of mutual deſtruction that lay before them, and utterly gave up all other expectations.

CHAP. XII.

Tranſactions in America.—Preparations for war.—Differences between the Congreſs and the Province of New York.—Proceedings in Maſſachuſet.—Affair at Lexington.—Boſton blockaded.

1775.

WHILE Great Britain was preparing to enforce her decrees by force of arms, America was making ready to reſiſt them in the ſame manner. The unanimity of Congreſs, and the reſolution with which that body ſeemed animated, communicated itſelf to the whole continent.

The temper of the Americans on this occaſion, was an object of univerſal aſtoniſhment. Their town meetings and provincial aſſemblies, ſpoke unanimouſly the language of men who were determined to do, and to ſuffer every thing ſooner that yield to the authority that was claimed over them.

In this determination all ranks and denominations equally concurred. Poor and rich vied with each other who ſhould encounter hardſhips and mortifications with moſt conſtancy. The rich gave up the luxurious and eaſy life they had hitherto led; and the poor willingly ſubmitted to a retrenchment of thoſe comforts which their induſtry and labour uſed to procure them.

This ſeaſon of univerſal diſtreſs, exhibited a ſtrong proof of what human nature is able to compaſs, when taken up with the purſuit of what has ſtrongly excited its paſſions. Content and chearfulneſs appeared in the face of all people, however diſagreeable their condition appeared when contraſted with what it had lately been. The idea of having laid the foundation of that government of

which the principles were ſo dear to them, inſpired the leading men with ſatisfaction at their paſt proceedings; and the confidence with which the inferior claſſes relied upon the abilities of their rulers to overcome all obſtructions, induced them to bear with patience the preſent evils, in hope of being amply recompenſed in due time, by the enjoyment of eaſe and tranquility upon their own terms.

A great and powerful diffuſion of public ſpirit was created by the difficulties in which America was now involved; and without adverting to the juſtice or badneſs of their cauſe, a noble ſtrain of generoſity and mutual ſupport was univerſally exerted throughout the whole continent.

The people in the mean time had conceived ſanguine expectations, that the petitions tranſmitted from Congreſs to the King would be attended with happy effects. They looked upon the addreſs to the Britiſh nation as conceived in ſuch terms, as would influence it in their favour. It was affectionate, yet firm and manly: it ſhowed a diſpoſition to friendſhip and reconciliation, and yet diſplayed a ſpirit utterly averſe to ſervility; and though it expreſſed an abhorrence of paſſive ſubmiſſion, it no leſs declared a willingneſs to pay a reaſonable and legal obedience.

Such was the opinion entertained by the Americans of the memorial penned by Congreſs to the people of Great Britain.

Whatever might be the ſecret views of ſome of the principal actors in theſe commotions, an infinite majority of the Americans aſpired at no more than what their public declarations contained. This they conſidered as their juſt and lawful rights, of which they would not ſuffer a denial, and which they thought themſelves authorized to aſſert and to

But that which they all eſteemed the principal means of inducing Great Britain to comply with their wiſhes, was the firm and determined union of America, the ſpirit with which the Congreſs had acted, and the vigorous proceedings that were taking place in every colony.

It was chiefly from theſe hopes, which appeared to them well founded, that they did not think it adviſable to proceed to any more active meaſures at the preſent. The diſtance from Britain; the time and difficulties that would intervene in the raiſing and tranſporting from thence a body of troops ſufficient for ſo great an attempt as the ſubjugation of America, quieted their apprehenſions for the general ſafety. Were any meaſures pregnant with much danger to be in agitation, they relied upon timely intelligence, and could, in that caſe, readily put themſelves in a poſture of defence.

Such were the ideas of the generality; but the more intelligent were of another opinion. The firmneſs with which miniſtry had rejected, and ſtill continued to reject all overtures on the ſide of oppoſition, that did not coincide with their plan, ſeemed a convincing proof, that nothing ſhort of ſubmiſſion to the acts of Parliament which were the ſubject in contention, would ſatisfy the ruling powers in Britain. A determination to be obeyed was now the final reſolve of the Britiſh Parliament; no leſs than a reſolution to refuſe obedience was that of Congreſs.

In that perſuaſion, thoſe who were at the head of American affairs, judged it indiſpenſibly requiſite ſeriouſly to prepare for the worſt; without tranſgreſſing, however, thoſe bounds of moderation which they had adopted in their public declarations, and within which they thought it proper to keep, until they were compelled by events to act otherwiſe.

Purſuant to this intent, the militia was trained every where with great aſſiduity; and all thoſe parts of exerciſe were peculiarly taught them, which, by the beſt judges in thoſe matters, were eſteemed the moſt eſſential.

Theſe ideas and reſolutions were confirmed, upon receiving information that arms and warlike ſtores were forbidden, by proclamation, to be exported from England to America. This left them no longer in doubt concerning the real intentions of the Britiſh miniſtry, and they immediately uſed every exertion to ſupply all deficiencies of that kind. To this purpoſe gun powder mills and manufactories for arms were erected in Pennſylvania and Virginia; and every encouragement was given them that could be afforded in their preſent circumſtances.

The ſpirit of reſiſtance continued in the mean while to actuate the people of Maſſachuſet as powerfully as ever. General Gage had iſſued a proclamation againſt the authority aſſumed by the Provincial Congreſs of that Colony; but it was totally diſregarded. The people conſidered themſelves as abſolved from all further obedience to Britiſh government, and were entirely guided by the reſolves of that Aſſembly.

A regular form of correſpondence was now ſettled between Congreſs and the Provincial Meetings, by means of which the meaſures and motions of all the Colonies were univerſally directed.

The ſituation of Boſton was daily becoming more critical. Expreſſes were continually arriving from that place, which repreſented it to be in the greateſt ſtreights and difficulties, from the ſuperiority of the enemy that was in poſſeſſion of it, and the little likelihood of being able to expel him. From the natural ſtrength of its ſituation, and the additional works which were now compleated, it was be-

come too ſtrong to be forced by any ſudden attack, and would require a regular ſiege to be taken. The harbour and bay were occupied by a ſtrong ſquadron of men of war, which left no expectation of relief on that ſide. The town was abſolutely at the diſcretion of the garriſon; and the inhabitants might be conſidered as impriſoned, and liable to be made anſwerable for the behaviour of the Province at large.

Various expedients were ſuggeſted on this occaſion, in order to extricate the people of Boſton from their difficulties, and thereby prevent ſo large a number of individuals from remaining in the hands of the enemy. It was firſt propoſed to remove the inhabitants; but this was impracticable without the conſent of the Governor, who would ſoon perceive the drift of ſuch a meaſure, and act the more carefully for their detention. The next propoſal was, to put a valuation upon the houſes and effects of the inhabitants, ſet fire to the town, and indemnify the proprietors. But this, upon examination, proved no leſs difficult to accompliſh than the former. It was therefore deemed moſt prudent to truſt to time and opportunities, and to watch for both with the utmoſt vigilance: actual force appeared yet premature, and might produce much miſchief without anſwering the end in view.

Numbers of the principal inhabitants had, by this time, quitted the place; ſome from motives of diſguſt, at their confinement; others from apprehenſions of hoſtilities; and no few from fear of being called to account for their activity during the late diſturbances.

The garriſon, though not unprovided with abſolute neceſſaries, could not expect to be ſupplied with any refreſhments or conveniencies from a people to whom their preſence was ſo odious, and who

viewed

viewed them as the inſtruments of tyranny, and the immediate cauſe of the miſeries they were enduring.

After the diſſolution of the Provincial Congreſs of Maſſachuſet, the friends of the Britiſh government met in ſeveral places, at the inſtigation of the Governor, in order to try what intereſt remained to Britain in that Colony; but the trial was very unſatisfactory: few were thoſe who gave them any countenance. After ſome ineffectual aſſociations and reſolves, in oppoſition to the Provincial meeting, they found themſelves unable to reſiſt the ſuperior influence of the contrary party: numbers overpowered them every where; and they were obliged to give up all hopes of counteracting them.

In the mean time, the proclamation forbidding the exportation of military ſtores to America, had begun to operate throughout the Colonies in the moſt deciſive manner. They not only betook themſelves to the fabrication of arms, and the manufacturing of powder, but in ſome of them they proceeded ſo far, as to ſeize on the artillery and ſtores belonging to government.

Newport, the capital of Rhode Iſland, was the place where theſe proceedings firſt commenced.—Forty pieces of cannon, mounted on the batteries that protected the harbour, were carried off by the inhabitants. The captain of a man of war, having waited upon the Governor, who in that Province is choſen by the Aſſembly, to inquire into the cauſe of ſuch a proceeding, was explicitly told, that the people had ſeized them, that they might not be uſed againſt themſelves by the Britiſh forces; and that they intended to employ them in their own defence, againſt any one that ſhould attack them.

After taking this meaſure, the Aſſembly met, and agreed that arms and warlike ſtores ſhould be purchaſed with the public money. Reſolutions were paſſed for training the inhabitants, and every man

was exhorted to prepare himſelf for a vigorous defence of the rights and liberties of his country.

The Colony of New Hampſhire had hitherto acted with great moderation during theſe diſturbances: but on receiving intelligence of the proclamation above-mentioned, and of the proceedings in conſequence of it at Rhode Iſland, they reſolved to imitate them. A large body aſſembled accordingly, and ſeized on a ſmall fort, containing ſome artillery and powder. This happened in the month of December, ſeventy-four.

On the arrival of the King's ſpeech, upon the opening of the new Parliament, and the addreſſes to the throne voted by ſuch prodigious majorities, the ſpirit of reſiſtance grew ſtronger than ever.—They had indulged themſelves with an expectation, that reflecting on the calamities and dangers that muſt neceſſarily accompany coercive meaſures, the people of Britain would in their election of the new members, have inſiſted upon peace and reconciliation with America. But when they ſaw how deciſively ſuperior that party was which had reſolved upon thoſe meaſures, all their hopes of accommodation entirely vaniſhed, and their whole attention was turned to the means of oppoſing force with force.

But notwithſtanding theſe hoſtile appearances, there was ſtill a large number of individuals who earneſtly deſired a pacific ſettlement of theſe unhappy differences. A convention was held in Pennſylvania, which declared it to be their fervent wiſh to avert impending calamities, by a reſtoration of harmony between Great Britain and her Colonies; and that they were ready to uſe their warmeſt endeavours to that intent. But this diſpoſition, however ſincere, was accompanied with an avowal of their reſolution to take up arms in defence of what they demanded as their juſt rights, in caſe the Britiſh

adminiſtration ſhould proceed to acts of violence, in order to enforce ſubmiſſion to the acts againſt which they had remonſtrated.

Conformably to this declaration, an unremitting aſſiduity was recommended in the proſecution of thoſe manufactures neceſſary for their internal ſubſiſtence, as well as their defence: among which ſalt, gun-powder, ſteel, and ſalt-petre, were particularly mentioned. Similar meaſures were adopted in the other Colonies.

There was however one exception to this general aſſociation againſt Great Btitain. The Colony of New York, in the Aſſembly held previous to the 10th Jan. rejection of its remonſtrance, refuſed its 1775. concurrence with the reſolutions of the Continental Congreſs, and determined for an application to the King and Parliament, in the manner that has been related. In this, it has been ſaid, they were inſtigated by private inſinuations from the friends to miniſtry at home; who flattered themſelves, that the example of ſo conſiderable a Colony, would influence the remainder to an adoption of the ſame conduct. To this intent ſtrong aſſurances were given that countenance would be ſhown to their addreſſes; in which caſe they would have the honour of being the firſt mediators of peace and reconciliation between the parent ſtate and her Colonies. If there was any truth in this report, the event ſhowed they were greatly deceived.

In the beginning of February, ſeventy-five, the Provincial Congreſs of Maſſachuſet met at Cambridge, according to appointment. The Deputies who compoſed it, were men profeſſedly known to be determined to carry the oppoſition againſt the Britiſh miniſtry to every length. None but ſuch would have met with electors in the Province at this time; ſo ſtrong was the inveteracy to the ſchemes purſued in

England reſpecting the Colonies, and the hatred entertained for thoſe who abetted them!

The firſt public act of this Aſſembly was to inform the people, that the temper of miniſtry and Parliament accorded in every meaſure that was planning for the deſtruction of liberty in America; and that there was every reaſon to fear that all petitions and addreſſes to the ruling men in England would be received with diſdain. A powerful reinforcement of troops and ſhips of war was daily expected, of which the deſtination was againſt this Province in particular, whoſe warmth and activity in the common cauſe, had it ſeems, marked it out as the firſt object of Britiſh reſentment.

They now therefore called upon the people to make good their determinations to adhere manfully to each other in the defence of their common freedom, and to behave in a manner that ſhould teach their enemies they had not degenerated from thoſe brave anceſtors who had ſet them the example of laying down their lives for the liberty of their country. They reminded them in the moſt preſſing terms, of the neceſſity of applying diligently to the perfecting themſelves in the uſe of arms, and military diſcipline.

Among other military inſtitutions adopted at this time in New England, there was one which deſerves particular notice:—A number of the moſt active and expert among the militia were choſen out, whoſe buſineſs it was to hold themſelves in perpetual readineſs to be forth-coming at the firſt ſummons of their officers: hence they were called Minute-men: to do them juſtice, their ſubſequent conduct fully juſtified the appellation.

The ſeaſon was now approaching for the Colonies to meet in Congreſs. Notwithſtanding the evident loſs of all its authority in America, the Britiſh government ventured to iſſue a circular letter throughout

out the Colonies, prohibiting under the uſual penalties, the people from aſſembling together for the election of deputies to that meeting. But this ſhort of adminiſtration was uſeleſs; the elections were carried on every where with the utmoſt ſpirit and alacrity.

During the winter of ſeventy-four, there was a tolerable ſtate of tranquility in the Colonies; but it was rather a ſuſpenſion of the deſigns in agitation, than any real quiet. The knowledge of what was tranſacting in England had too much forwarned the Americans of what was to follow, to leave their minds at reſt. Publications were daily appearing, wherein the conduct of Great Britain was deſcribed as tyrannical and impolitic in the extremeſt degree; and what was more opprobrious, has enſlaved herſelf by the venality and baſeneſs of a proſtituted majority in Parliament, to the views of an ambitious miniſtry, deluded by falſe information into erroneous meaſures, and intending to erect an arbitrary ſyſtem of government at home upon the ruins of liberty in America.

In conſequence of ſo atrocious a deſign, the Britiſh nation was ſummoned to riſe in its own defence, as well as in that of America; and not weakly to ſhut its eyes to a danger, that could not threaten the one without threatening the other. If the blow now aimed at America ſhould bring her to the ground,—beware, ſaid they;—let Britain look to herſelf;—the next blow is deſtined for her!—Inſtead of wiſhing for ſucceſs to the arms of her miniſtry, ſhe ought, on the contrary, earneſtly to ſupplicate for defeat and deſtruction to them.

Such was the ſtile aſſumed in pamphlets, newſpapers, and common diſcourſe among the generality of people throughout the Colonies: they conſidered themſelves as about to contend not for America alone, but the whole Britiſh nation; accu-

fing it, at the ſame time, of not deſerving any protectors of a conſtitution, the defence of which they abandoned in ſo puſillanimous a manner.

All things were now haſtily tending to that criſis which was daily expected. The queſtion now ſeemed only in what manner hoſtilities ſhould begin.—The troops in Boſton were tired of being cooped up within a town, while their commiſſion was to bring a whole country to obedience. They held the natives in contempt, and looked upon their military meetings with ſcorn and deriſion.

The people of Maſſachuſet, on the other hand, were fired with indignation at the ideas entertained of them by the Britiſh military, and loudly proteſted, that whenever they both met face to face, it then would be ſeen whether the Americans wanted courage, and whether their antagoniſts had any other ſuperiority over them than that of meer practice and diſcipline.

Theſe reciprocal taunts added freſh fuel to the animoſity that actuated each party; and it was eaſily foreſeen that hoſtilities were at no great diſtance, and that when they broke out, they would be attended with much inveteracy and deſtruction.

Towards the cloſe of February, General Gage
Feb. 26, received information that a number of field-
1775. pieces had been brought to Salem. Judging from the proximity of that place, that ſome hoſtile deſigns were in agitation, in order to prevent them in time, he diſpatched a body of men to ſeize the cannon at Salem. On their march they were obſtructed by a river, over which there was a drawbridge, which the people on the oppoſite ſide had drawn up, to hinder their paſſing, and refuſed to let down, notwithſtanding the commands and threats of the officer at the head of the detachment. Upon this refuſal, a boat was ſeized by the military to ferry them over; but the country people perceiving their intention, jumped into the boat, and cut

open her bottom with axes: this occaſioned a fray between both parties, which would probably have ended fatally, had not a clergyman interpoſed. He repreſented, on the one hand, to the commanding officer, the inevitable conſequence of uſing force, and adviſed the people, on the other, that as it was late in the day, and impoſſible from that reaſon for the military to execute the orders they were ſent upon, to let the detachment paſs over the bridge without further oppoſition. His advice was complied with accordingly; and the military, after remaining ſome time in poſſeſſion of it, withdrew, without being able to execute their orders.

This tranſaction, though of no conſequence in itſelf, diſcovered the temper of the people; and ſhowed at the ſame time how little they were to be intimidated. It ſhowed, too, how diſpoſed they were to ruſh to extremities, and how readily they would do it on the firſt provocation.

The time came at laſt that was to change theſe preludes to hoſtilities into more ſerious ſcenes, and to realize thoſe apprehenſions that had ſo long hung over the minds of all thinking men throughout the Britiſh empire.

It was now far advanced in April, and it was not doubted that the people of Maſſachuſet had formed a plan for action. A large quantity of military ſtores was collected at Concord, a town not more than twenty miles diſtant from Boſton, and where the Provincial Congreſs was held. On receiving this intelligence, a detachment was ſent from Boſton in order to deſtroy theſe ſtores, and at the ſame time, as it was ſaid, to ſeize on Mr. Hancock and Mr. Adams, the principal directors of that Aſſembly.

This detachment, under the command of Colonel Smith, and Major Pitcairn, ſet out from Boſton



HUGH, *EARL* PERCY.

Published, Sep.r 30.th 1785, by John Fielding, Pater Noster Row.

on the 19th of April, before break of day, and proceeded with all expedition towards Concord, hoping to reach it before the country was alarmed. But notwithſtanding the ſilence in which they marched, and the precaution of ſecuring every one they met on the way, they found, by the continual firing of guns, and the ringing of bells in all the neighbouring villages, that they were diſcovered, and that people of courſe were aſſembling from all ſides.

They arrived at Lexington about five in the morning, a place fifteen miles diſtant from Boſton. The militia belonging to this town was exerciſing on a green adjacent to the road: an officer called out to them to throw down their arms and diſperſe; at the ſame inſtant ſome ſhots, it is ſaid, were fired from a houſe. This occaſioned a diſcharge from our people, by which ſeveral of the militia were killed and wounded.

The detachment then proceeded to Concord, where they deſtroyed the ſtores according to their orders. Here a ſkirmiſh enſued, when ſeverel were killed on both ſides.

The country now roſe upon them from all parts. During the courſe of a long and very hot day, they were expoſed to a continual, though irregular fire, ſupported with great vigour and reſolution. In the retreat from Concord to Lexington, a ſpace of ſix miles, they were purſued with the utmoſt fury by a large body of the Provincials, and fired at in the mean time from the houſes, walls, and other coverts.

By the time the detachment had reached Lexington, its ammunition was wholly expended. Here they had the good fortune to be joined by a conſiderable reinforcement under Lord Percy, ſent to their relief by General Gage, from an apprehenſion of the danger they were in.

Boſton lay, however, no leſs than fifteen miles off. Harraſſed already with the duty and fatigue of the day, the troops had yet this laborious march to perform, ſurrounded by enemies whoſe numbers increaſed every moment; who had the advantage of the ground, and could advance or retire at will. With all theſe diſadvantages, the Britiſh troops made good their retreat, and arrived at Boſton about ſun ſet. The ground they had meaſured that day was above forty miles.

Thus ended the memorable affair of Lexington, famous for being the firſt engagement wherein the blood of Britiſh ſubjects was mutually ſhed by each others hands in America.

Notwithſtanding it laſted a whole day, the number of ſlain and wounded on the Britiſh ſide was no more than two hundred and fifty, and of priſoners about thirty; a ſmall loſs when the prodigious ſuperiority of the enemy is conſidered. The ſecret of the expedition had got vent: the whole country was in arms for forty miles round; and all the beſt markſmen in the Province were preſent in the engagement. The loſs of the Americans, in killed and wounded, was about ſixty.

The Britiſh detachment did not exceed two thouſand men. They were excellent troops; but they were confined in a narrow road, flanked on each ſide, a great part of the way, with ſtone walls, low enough to fire over, and high enough to cover the aſſailants from the fire of men, who were marching with all ſpeed, and had not leiſure to ſtoop behind for any ſhelter, after giving their fire. Had it not been for two field pieces, brought with Lord Percy's detachment, the ſlaughter muſt have been much greater. As they were managed with great ſkill and activity, they repreſſed not a little the impetuoſity of the Americans.

To

To do theſe juſtice, it muſt be acknowledged that in this firſt trial of their courage and military proweſs, they behaved with great ſpirit, and fully refuted the charge of timidity, ſo unjuſtly caſt upon them.

Imputations of inhumanity were reciprocally made upon this occaſion. But charges of this kind are uſual in civil war, where hatred and rancour are always more inveterate than between ſtrangers; but if there was any truth in them, it is probable there was far more exaggeration. Whatever might have happened in the heat of battle, after the action was over, due ſentiments of humanity took place; and the priſoners and wounded were treated with civility and care.

The news of this engagement raiſed the whole Province: crouds flocked from every diſtrict, and Boſton was immediately ſurrounded on every ſide. So eager were the Provincials in their offers of ſervice, that it was eaſy for their chiefs to collect numerous bodies of choſen men. They formed altogether an army above twenty thouſand ſtrong. Their line of encampment extended from Roxbury to Myſtic, a ſpace of about thirty miles, and was tolerably provided with cannon. Their commanding officers were Colonels Ward, Pribble, Heath, Preſcot, and Thomas, who, though they might not perhaps have figured at the head of an European army, were men of undoubted bravery and reſolution, and not unadequate to the charge they undertook.

They were joined ſoon after by a large body of troops ſent from Connecticut, under the command of Colonel Putnam, an old American officer of noted intrepidity, and great experience. He had ſerved in the two laſt wars, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf by ſeveral actions, which required capacity as well as valour. He placed himſelf in ſuch a poſition, as to

be able to afford timely ſuccour to any part of the troops before the town that might want it.

The Provincial Congreſs was now removed to Watertown, about ten miles from Boſton. Here they framed an addreſs to the people of Great Britain, in which they entered into a minute detail of every circumſtance relating to the affair at Lexington, and endeavoured to prove that the Britiſh troops were the aggreſſors both at Lexington and Concord, and had been guilty of many irregularities at both places. They relied on the good ſenſe and generoſity of the Britiſh nation, for a ſpeedy termination of evils, which muſt in the conſequence affect equally Great Britain and her Colonies. They expreſſed unſhaken loyalty; but ſtill perſiſted in declaring the moſt inflexible reſolution never to ſubmit to any ſpecies of tyranny. They ſolemnly appealed to Heaven for the juſtice of their cauſe, for which they now had, and would ſtill continue to lay down their lives.

They next voted for the array and ſupport of the army, regulated the pay of officers and ſoldiers, and enacted rules for its good government. In order to provide a fund for military expences, they voted a conſiderable ſum to be iſſued in paper currency, receivable as money, the payment of which was ſecured on the public faith of the Province.

Among a variety of other reſolutions, they paſſed one, by which they declared that General Gage was, by the late and preceding tranſactions, diſqualified from acting in the ſtation of Governor; that no farther obedience was due to him; and that he ſhould henceforth be conſidered and treated as a public enemy.

As ſoon as the affair at Lexington was known, it kindled wrath and fury throughout all the Colonies. Notwithſtanding they had been long prepared for ſuch an event, yet it was received with as much apparent

parent aſtoniſhment and indignation, as if it had been wholly unexpected. It furniſhed them with an additional reaſon to quicken their warlike preparations, and to make ready for events of a ſimilar nature.

But what was of more conſequence, it enabled them to repreſent themſelves as more formidable than had been ſuggeſted by their enemies. The courage manifeſted in that engagement by the Provincials, was now become the ſubject of univerſal converſation: it excited a prodigious ſpirit of emulation, and infuſed a degree of confidence to which they had not hitherto been uſed.

Thoſe who had fallen in this action, were extolled as the firſt martyrs of public liberty: their names and families became objects of reſpect and veneration; and they were pointed out as examples of neceſſary imitation in the arduous conflict wherein America was now engaged.

In the midſt of this univerſal fermentation, plans of revenge againſt Britain were framing every where. The heads and hearts of all people in the Colonies were equally warm upon this occaſion; and they ſeemed, as it were, to vie with each other who ſhould exhibit the moſt violent proofs of reſentment.

CHAP. XIII.

Tranſactions at Boſton.—Meeting of the Continental Congreſs at Philadelphia.—Its proceedings.—Crown Point and Ticonderoga ſurprized by the Americans.—Arrival of reinforcements at Boſton.—Action at Bunker's Hill.—Conſequences of the Quebec Act.—Further proceedings of the Congreſs.—Acceſſion of Georgia to the American Confederacy.—General Waſhington appointed to the Chief Command of the American Forces.

1775.

THE firſt mark of the public reſentment of America, was a total ſtop to the exportation of all proviſions from their ports. This they knew muſt bring infinite diſtreſs on the Britiſh iſlands in the Weſt Indies, whoſe only dependence for their neceſſary ſubſiſtence, was on the importations of that nature from North America.

While they were thus univerſally intent on the means of proſecuting their revenge, the conciliatory propoſitions, moved by Lord North in Parliament, were brought to America. But this was no ſeaſon for their reception: the people now entertained a rooted ſuſpicion of every offer of that kind which came from England.

The firſt public body before which they were laid, was the Aſſembly of Pennſylvania. But here they met with a total rejection: they were repreſented as dangerous and unadequate to the wiſhes of America. The ſame opinion was adopted by the neighbouring Colony of Jerſey; and, after the example of theſe, they were entirely rejected every where.

In

In the mean while, the Britiſh troops at Boſton were cloſely blocked up. They were cut off from all ſupplies of vegetables and freſh proviſions, and reduced to ſubſiſt wholly on ſalt meat. The inhabitants were in the ſame condition. The Provincials were the more ſtrict in the prevention of all ſupplies, as they intended thereby to compel the Governor to permit the departure of the town's people, whoſe number was too great to be maintained out of the ſtores appropriated to the garriſon; or to ſuffer, at leaſt, the women and children to depart, according to repeated ſolicitations to that purpoſe.

After much entreaty from the inhabitants, an agreement was at length concluded, by which they were to be at liberty to quit the place, and carry off their effects, on delivering up their arms. They chearfully acquieſced in this propoſal; but after making this ſurrender, numbers were, to their great diſappointment, ſtill detained; and thoſe who had permiſſion to depart, were obliged to leave all their effects. This reduced many genteel families to great indigence. The poor and the helpleſs, indeed, were all diſmiſſed.

During theſe proceedings, the Continental Con-
10th May, greſs met at Philadelphia. They be-
1775. gan their ſeſſion with reſolutions to raiſe an army, and to eſtabliſh a large paper currency to defray the public charges, the Colonies in their united capacity becoming ſecurity for the payment of it in due time, in real money.

They next adverted to the means of diſtreſſing Britain moſt effectually in her American concerns. To this intent they ſtrictly prohibited the ſupplying of the Britiſh fiſhery upon the Banks of Newfoundland, with any proviſions whatſoever. Fully to effect this meaſure, all exportation was forbidden

to thoſe Colonies in America that ſtill remained in her ſubjection.

This was a proceeding wholly unexpected in England. It was ſeverely felt among the Britiſh ſettlements, and ſhipping, at Newfoundland. In order to prevent a real famine, many veſſels were neceſſitated to return home with all ſpeed, to fetch cargoes of proviſions for the ſubſiſtence of the people there.

While Congreſs was occupied in this manner, it received the agreeable news, that the people of New York had determined to join with the other Colonies, and to adopt the reſolutions they had taken, and the meaſures they had concerted againſt Britain.

This Colony had long continued on a plan of moderation, in hopes of being able to bring about a reconciliation; but the affair at Lexington had now put an end to all ſuch expectations. —Upon receiving the news of that engagement, numerous aſſociations of the party inimical to Britain, was immediately formed, by which the Provincial Congreſs was elected.

As the ſituation of the city of New York lays it open to the ſea, it was judged impracticable to defend it againſt a naval attack. For this reaſon it was thought moſt adviſable, before the approach of a Britiſh ſquadron, which was daily expected, to ſecure the military ſtores, and to remove the women and children out of all danger. After this departure of ſo many individuals, whoſe preſence would have incumbered them, the inhabitants provided for all other contingencies. In caſe they found themſelves unable to prevent the enemy from taking poſſeſſion of the city, their final determination was then to commit it to the flames.

While the Provinces on the ſea coaſt were preparing for their defence, the people in the inland

ettlements of the Northern Colonies were not leſs occupied. Some active and reſolute individuals, without waiting for orders, or communicating their deſigns to their ruling powers, concerted together a plan, which denoted the enterpriſing ſpirit that animated the Americans at that time: it was to ſurprize Crown Point, Ticonderoga, and the other forts that command the Lakes, which form the line of communication between the Colonies and Canada. Several perſons, it is ſaid, formed the ſame project unknown to each other, and fell in together on their way to execute it.

The principal conductors of this expedition, were, Colonels Eaſton and Allen: the body under their command conſiſted of two hundred and fifty men. At the head of theſe they ſet forward with great ſecrecy and expedition, and had the good luck to ſurprize both the garriſons of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, which fell into their hands without the loſs of a man on either ſide.

The ſeizure they made on this occaſion was very conſiderable: they found two hundred pieces of cannon, beſide mortars, and a large quantity of military ſtores. They took two veſſels completely equipped, and materials in readineſs for the conſtruction of others.

This ſucceſsful expedition gave to the Americans entire command of thoſe important paſſes for the poſſeſſion of which ſo much Britiſh and French blood had been ſhed during the laſt war. It was in its immediate conſequences, a heavy blow to the intereſt of Great Britain; as, Boſton excepted, ſhe had not now a ſingle hold left her in the revolted Colonies.

Towards the cloſe of May, the long expected reinforcements arrived at Boſton, together with the Generals Howe, Burgoyne, and Clinton, all officers

cers of approved merit, and whoſe behaviour in the laſt war had juſtly gained them much reputation.

By theſe arrivals, the troops now formed a large and reſpectable body: both the officers and ſoldiers were, without exaggeration, equal to any in Europe for diſcipline and valour. From the character of thoſe who now commanded them, it was expected they would not long remain inactive, and that their operations would not be confined to ſo narrow a ſcene as Boſton.

It was become in ſome meaſure neceſſary to extend the quarters of the army, for ſuch at preſent the forces in that place might be reputed. The Provincials boaſted that they were beſieging thoſe who had been ſent to ſubdue them; and as there was ſome truth in this vaunt, it was incumbent on our people to remove it.

Since the blockade began, ſome ſkirmiſhes had happened in the iſlands that lie in Boſton Bay. They were occaſioned by the endeavours of both parties to carry of the ſtock upon them: the Provincials had the advantage: they burned in the laſt, an armed ſchooner, left aground by the tide, and which the crew, after ſtanding a heavy fire of muſketry and cannon, were obliged to abandon.

It had been propoſed immediately after the fight at Lexington, to lead the Provincials on to Boſton, while their ſpirits were animated with the buſineſs of that day; but this propoſal was overruled by the conſideration, that the ſtorming of ſuch a place would neceſſarily involve in one common ſlaughter, both the military and the inhabitants.

Other motives had probably their ſhare in this prevention. The number of ſhips of war and armed veſſels of all denominations that ſurrounded and guarded the town on every ſide, would have rendered ſuch an attempt next to impracticable. The troops were numerous enough for a defence; and

from their ſkill and courage, added to the expectation of no quarter from an enraged enemy, would have made a moſt deſperate reſiſtance; they were well provided with artillery and ammunition, and knew perfectly how to uſe them.

Thoſe, on the other hand, who commanded the Provincials, did not care to expoſe them to a repulſe, which would probably have been attended with a dreadful ſlaughter. They had been witneſs to the cauſes that militated for them at Lexington, and were ſenſible of the difference between an engagement in cloſe paſſes, and narrow lanes, where the enemy they attacked was avowedly retreating, and the facing of him on a ground he had choſen, and where he ſtood prepared to fight: were the Provincials in ſuch a conflict to be defeated, it would throw a damp on their ardour that would be followed by worſe conſequences than the mere loſs of men they would ſuffer on ſuch an occaſion: this might be repaired; but the diminution of ſpirit and alacrity, they were conſcious, was the greateſt of all loſſes in war, eſpecially to men juſt entered into that arduous career, whom little ſucceſſes would animate, but whom ſuch an overthrow would entirely diſcourage.

While both parties at Boſton were ſtanding, as it were at bay, and watching each others motions, the Continental Congreſs was taking the moſt vigorous meaſures, and acting with a ſpirit that aſtoniſhed all men who reflected that they were but in the infancy of their exertions.

They boldly paſſed a reſolution ſimilar to that upon which the Britiſh nation, a century ago, founded the Revolution. They declared that the obligation of obedience to the Crown of Great Britain from the Colony of Maſſachuſet, being diſſolved by the violation of its charter,

the

the people were legally at liberty to proceed to the choice of a Houſe of Repreſentatives, and a Council, in conformity to the ſpirit and ſubſtance of the charter thus violated.

They paſſed another reſolution, by which they forbid the acceptance or negociation of any bill of exchange, note, or order of any Britiſh officer or agent, or the ſupplying them with money; and prohibited the furniſhing the Britiſh army or navy with proviſions, or demands of any kind.

In order to evince how ſecurely their protection and gratitude might be depended on by their friends and adherents, and at the ſame time to ſhew how much they diſregarded the frowns and diſpleaſure of the Britiſh Court, they re-appointed Doctor Franklin Poſtmaſter-General in America, an office from which he had been removed in England, on account of his adherence to the cauſe of the Colonies.

On the twelfth of June, a proclamation was iſſued by the Britiſh government at Boſton, offering a pardon, in the King's name, to all who laid down their arms, and returned to their homes and occupations. Two perſons only were excepted, Mr. Samuel Adams, and Mr. John Hancock, whoſe guilt was repreſented as too great and notorious to eſcape puniſhment. All who did not accept of this offer, or who aſſiſted, abetted, or correſponded with them, were to be deemed guilty of treaſon and rebellion, and treated accordingly. By this proclamation it was declared, that as the courts of judicature were ſhut, martial law ſhould take place, till a due courſe of juſtice could be re-eſtabliſhed.

But this act of government was as little regarded as the preceding. To convince the world how firmly they were determined to perſevere in their meaſures, and how ſmall an impreſſion was made by the menaces of Britain, Mr. Hancock immediately

ately after his proſcription was choſen Preſident of the Congreſs.

The proclamation had no other effect than to prepare people's minds for the worſt that might follow. The appellation of traitors and rebels, was now the moſt honourable and ſafe in America: ſuch as were ſuſpected of fidelity and attachment to Great Britain, were in fact the moſt expoſed to deteſtation and danger; and obliged, for the ſake of perſonal ſecurity, to diſſemble their real ſentiments.

The reinforcements arrived from Britain, the eagerneſs of the Britiſh military to avail themſelves of their preſent ſtrength, and the poſition of the Provincials, concurred to make both parties diligent in their preparations for action. It was equally the deſire of both: the firſt were earneſt to exhibit an unqueſtionable teſtimony of their ſuperiority, and to terminate the quarrel by one deciſive blow; the others were no leſs willing to come to a ſecond engagement, from a confidence they would be able to convince their enemies that they would find the ſubjugation of America a much more difficult taſk than they had promiſed themſelves.

Oppoſite to the northern ſhore of the peninſula upon which Boſton ſtands, lies Charleſtown, divided from it by a river about the breadth of the Thames at London bridge. Neither the Britiſh, nor Provincial troops, had hitherto bethought themſelves of ſecuring this place. In its neighbourhood, a little to the eaſt, is a high ground called Bunker's-Hill, which overlooks and commands the whole town of Boſton.

In the night of the ſixteenth of June, a party of the Provincials took poſſeſſion of this hill, and worked with ſo much induſtry and diligence, that by break of day they had almoſt completed a redoubt, together with a ſtrong intrenchment, reaching half a mile as far as the river Myſtic to the eaſt.

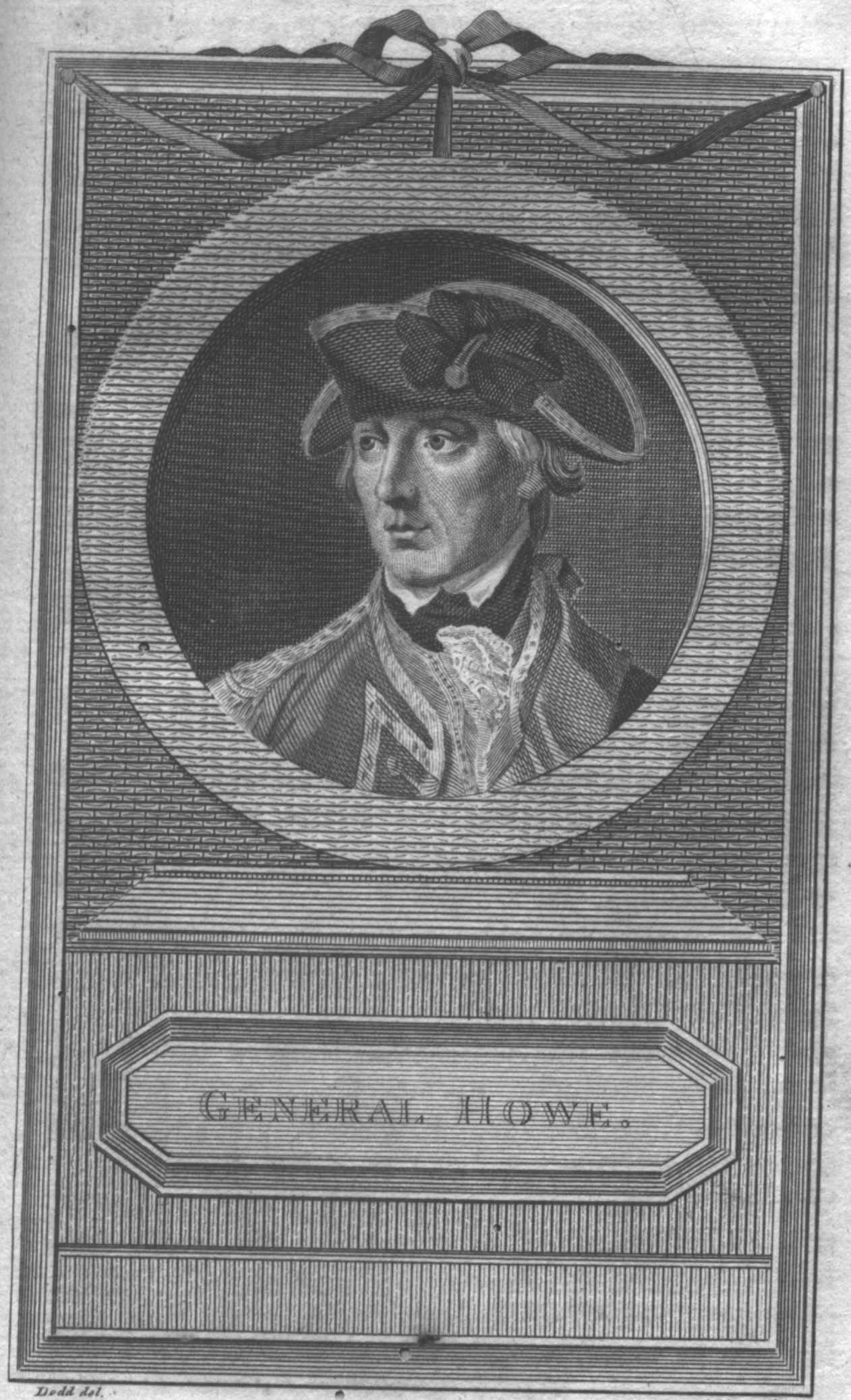
caſt. As ſoon as diſcovered, they were plied with a heavy and inceſſant fire from the ſhips and floating batteries that ſurrounded the neck on which Charlestown is ſituated, and from the cannon planted on the neareſt eminences on the Boſton ſide.

This did not however prevent them from continuing their work, which they had entirely finiſhed by mid-day, when it was found neceſſary to take more effectual methods to diſlodge them.

To this purpoſe a conſiderable body was landed at the foot of Bunker's-Hill, under the command of General Howe, and General Pigot. The firſt was to attack the Provincial lines, the ſecond the redoubt. The Britiſh troops advanced with great intrepidity; but on their approach, were received with a fire from behind the intrenchments, that continued pouring during a full half hour upon them like a ſtream. The execution it did was terrible: ſome of the braveſt and oldeſt officers declared, that for the time it laſted, it was the hotteſt ſervice they had ever ſeen. General Howe ſtood for ſome moments almoſt alone; the officers and ſoldiers about him being nearly all ſlain or diſabled: his intrepidity and preſence of mind were remarkable on this trying occaſion.

General Pigot on the left, was in the mean time engaged with the Provincials who had thrown themſelves into Charleſtown, as well as with the redoubt, and met with the ſame reception as the right. Though he conducted his attack with great ſkill and courage, the inceſſant deſtruction made among the troops, threw them at firſt into ſome diſorder, but General Clinton coming up with a reinforcement, they quickly rallied, and attacked the works with ſuch fury, that the Provincials were not able to reſiſt them, and retreated beyond the neck of land that leads into Charleſtown.

This



GENERAL HOWE.

Dodd del. *Goldar sculp.*

Published May. 13. 1786. by J. Fielding Pater Nester Row.

This was the bloodieſt engagement during the whole war. The loſs of the Britiſh troops amounted in killed and wounded to upwards of a thouſand. Among the firſt were nineteen, and among the laſt ſeventy officers. Colonel Abercromby, Major Pitcairn of the marines, and Majors Williams and Spenlowe, men of diſtinguiſhed bravery, fell in this action; which, though it terminated to the advantage of the King's forces, coſt altogether a dreadful price.

The loſs on the Provincial ſide, according to their account, did not exceed five hundred. This might be true, as they fought behind intrenchments, part of which were cannon proof, and where it was not poſſible for the muſketry to annoy them: this accounts no leſs for the numbers they deſtroyed, to which the expertneſs of their markſmen chiefly contributed. To render the dexterity of theſe completely effectual, muſkets ready loaded were handed to them, as faſt as they could be diſcharged, that they might loſe no time in re-loading them, and they took aim chiefly at the officers.

During the whole time of action, the Provincials were ſupported by continual reinforcements; theſe were clearly perceived by the numerous ſpectators of this engagement, on the tops of houſes, and every riſing ground in Boſton. Thus when fatigued, they were relieved by others, who took their places, and renewed the fight with freſh vigour. In this manner it was computed, that firſt and laſt, upwards of five thouſand Provincials were employed in the ſervice of this day.

The great ſlaughter occaſioned on the left of the Britiſh troops from the houſes in Charleſtown, obliged them to ſet fire to that place. The Provincials defended it ſome time with much obſtinacy, but it was quickly reduced to aſhes; and when deprived of that cover, they were immediately compelled to retire.

The

The valour diſplayed by the Britiſh troops in encountering and overcoming ſo many obſtructions, did them the higheſt honour in the opinion of all impartial men. The intrenchments caſt up by the Provincials, though the work of a few hours, were contrived with great ſtrength and judiciouſneſs; and to do them juſtice, they did not forſake them till after a very gallant reſiſtance.

The man whoſe fall was moſt lamented among the Americans, was Doctor Warren, a phyſician, he was a gentleman in high reputation for his eloquence, and various abilities; he was one of the principal and moſt active members of the Continental Congreſs in the preceding year, and was at this time Preſident of the Provincial Congreſs of Maſſachuſet: he commanded the lines of Bunker's-Hill as a Major-general on that memorable day, and took his ſtation in the redoubt facing General Pigot's attack. He fell bravely at the head of his men, juſt as he was pointing to, and reminding thoſe about him, it is ſaid, of the mottos inſcribed on the American colours planted on their intrenchments; on one ſide of which were theſe words:—"*An Appeal to Heaven:*" and on the other the following—"*Qui tranſtulit, ſuſtinet:*" Meaning, that the ſame Providence which brought their anceſtors to America, would now ſupport their deſcendants.

But notwithſtanding the honour of the day remained to the Britiſh troops, the Americans boaſted that the real advantages were on their ſide. They had, ſaid they, ſo much weakened their enemies in this engagement, as to put an entire ſtop to their operations. Inſtead of coming forth, and improving their pretended victory, they did not dare to venture out of the trenches and fortifications they had conſtructed round Boſton.

The only apparent benefit gained by the troops, was that they kept poſſeſſion of the ground whereon

Charleſtown

Charleſtown had ſtood; they fortified it on every ſide, in order to ſecure themſelves from the ſudden attacks that were daily threatened from ſo numerous a force as that which now inveſted Boſton.

But this enlargement of their quarters, though it contributed to render their confinement leſs irkſome, added not a little to the military duty they were obliged to go through, and in fact doubled their fatigues at a ſeaſon, when the heat rendered them more painful than at any other. Theſe, together with the want of freſh proviſions, occaſioned much illneſs among the ſoldiery.

The Provincials, on the other hand, to convince the troops how little their ſucceſs had availed them, raiſed intrenchments on a height oppoſite Charlestown, intimating to them that they were ready for another Bunker's-Hill buſineſs, whenever they thought proper, and were no leſs willing than they to make another trial of ſkill.

In expectation of another attempt of the like nature, they covered the weakeſt parts of their encampment with ſtrong redoubts, and extended their works cloſe to thoſe that had been erected by the garriſon on Boſton Neck, where they attacked and burnt a guard-houſe.

Their boldneſs increaſed to a degree that aſtoniſhed the Britiſh officers, who had unhappily been taught to believe them a contemptible enemy, averſe to the dangers of war, and incapable of the regular operations of an army. The ſkirmiſhes were now renewed in Boſton bay. The neceſſities of the garriſon occaſioned ſeveral attempts to carry off the remaining ſtock of cattle, and other articles of proviſion they might contain. But the Provincials, who were better acquainted with the navigation of the bay, landed on theſe iſlands, in ſpite of the precautions of the numerous ſhipping, and deſtroyed or carried off whatever could be of any uſe: they even

ventured ſo far as to burn the light-houſe ſituated at the entrance of the harbour, aud afterwards made priſoners a number of workmen that had been ſent to repair it, together with a party of marines that guarded them.

Mean while, in order to remedy the diſtreſſes under which the garriſon and ſhipping began jointly to labour, armed veſſels were ſent out, that made prizes indiſcriminately of all the coaſting craft laden with proviſions that came in their way. The crews ſometimes landed in queſt of neceſſaries, but they met with great oppoſition, and were ſometimes driven back by the country people. Theſe proceedings occaſioned much animoſity on both ſides.

Another cauſe of diſcontent, was the ſeizure of ſhips for breach of the regulations lately made, the owners making all poſſible reſiſtance on the one hand, and the ſevereſt compulſion being uſed on the other. Theſe unceaſing conteſts produced many ſcenes of miſchief, and the refuſal of compliance with the eſtabliſhed injunctions, brought heavy puniſhments upon ſome of the places on the coaſt.

While theſe tranſactions were taking place in the Britiſh Colonies, the Province of Quebec began alſo to participate in the public diſcontents: the act which had been framed for the regulation of that Province, produced effects far different from thoſe that had been expected from it. The majority of the Canadians received it with the moſt evident marks of diſapprobation, and cordially united with the Britiſh ſettlers in that government, in reprobating it as tyrannical and oppreſſive.

It had been confidently expected, that the goodwill and intereſt of the French Canadians would have been entirely ſecured, by thus replacing their government on its former footing. Adminiſtration had flattered itſelf that General Carlton, the new

numerous body of troops in that Province, with which to co-operate with General Gage. So ſanguine was that expectation, that twenty thouſand ſtand of arms, and a great quantity of military ſtores, had been ſhipped to Quebec for that purpoſe.

But inſtead of expreſſing the leaſt ſatisfaction at the frame of government tranſmitted to them from Great Britain, or any willingneſs to ſecond the deſigns of miniſtry, they ſeemed decidedly averſe to both.

They were now, ſaid they, under the government of Britain, and would demean themſelves peaceably and loyally; but were total ſtrangers to the nature of the diſputes between that government and its American dependencies, and it would not become them to make themſelves parties in ſuch diſputes. Were the Governor to raiſe the militia of the Province, they would obey him ſo far as to defend it if attacked; but would not march beyond its precincts, nor attack their neighbours.

In this difficulty, application was made to the Biſhop to influence the people, through the reſpect and deference they owed to his function and dignity, to a chearful acquieſcence in the views of the Britiſh government. He was urged to iſſue an epiſcopal admonition to that end, to be read in churches by the prieſts to their pariſhioners: but he declined all compliance with ſuch a meaſure, as contrary to the rules of the Roman clergy.

Some eccleſiaſtics however were found, who exerted themſelves in the ſervice of government, but with very little effect.

The principal efforts were made on this occaſion by the Nobleſſe. As they reaped the chief benefit of the act, they thought themſelves bound in gratitude to manifeſt their zeal and attachment to thoſe who framed it: they accordingly were ſtrenuous in maintaining the neceſſity, as well

as the duty, of not only paying a faithful and entire obedience to the laws enacted for the government of the Colony, but alſo of complying readily with the deſires expreſſed by their ſuperiors.

But the community at large ſtood immoveable in their determination to remain in a ſtate of perfect neutrality between Great Britain and her Colonies. The truth was, that they had ſufficiently experienced the ſuperior advantages of a Britiſh government, to be deſirous not to relinquiſh them. It was now almoſt fifteen years ſince the reduction of that Province: they had during that ſpace, been treated with ſo much lenity, and had been ſo much benefitted by the increaſe of trade and buſineſs of all kinds, that they were fully convinced it was their intereſt to preſerve their preſent, and to oppoſe whatever had a tendency to bring them back to their former ſituation.

In this perſuaſion, notwithſtanding they paſſively ſubmitted to the form of government impoſed upon them by the Britiſh miniſtry, they refuſed to take an active part in forcing their neighbours to a ſubmiſſion, which they apprehended might terminate to their own detriment.

Neither is it improbable, that the more ſhrewd and thinking people among them might view the diſturbances in the Britiſh Colonies, as a motive to induce the Britiſh miniſtry to treat them the more favourably, in order to retain their allegiance, and to prevent them from accepting thoſe offers of coalition which were held out to them by the Colonies.

For this reaſon it might chiefly be, that though they acquieſced in the arrangements made for their internal government, they did not incline to proceed any further, and thought that by doing this, they had ſufficiently teſtified their fidelity, and ought not to be required to do any more.

Poſſibly

Poſſibly too, the arguments that had been laid before them in the addreſs tranſmitted to them by the Colonies, might have produced ſome effect, and gained over to theſe a number of partizans and well-wiſhers among a people, who were now acquainted with, and began to reliſh the Engliſh maxims of government.

In default of the Canadians, hopes were entertained of engaging the various tribes of Indians that lie on the back-ſettlements of the Colonies, to take up arms in the cauſe of Great Britain. Secret agents were employed for that purpoſe, and large preſents were made to their chiefs and leading men, with a view to win their concurrence.

A ſtrong and vigorous attack had been propoſed on thoſe parts that lay moſt expoſed, as the moſt ſeaſonable diverſion that could be made in the preſent circumſtances of the Colonies: it would have alarmed and thrown into confuſion a conſiderable proportion of the Coloniſts, and would have much weakened thoſe efforts they were obliged to make for their defence on the ſea-coaſts, where they were liable to be continually and cloſely preſſed in many quarters.

But the endeavours of ſuch as were employed on this occaſion were not ſucceſsful. The Indians were not by any means diſpoſed to hearken to any ſolicitations tending to hoſtilities. They did not, ſaid they, underſtand the nature of the quarrel; they were ſurprized that Engliſhmen ſhould apply to them for aſſiſtance againſt each other; they reſpected them all, and could not diſtinguiſh who was in fault, whether thoſe who dwelt in America, or thoſe who lived on the other ſide of the ocean; they adviſed them to be reconciled, and not to ſhed the blood of brethren; it gave them ſerious grief and concern to behold ſuch enmity among them; but

as they knew not whoſe cauſe was juſt, they would eſpouſe the ſide of neither.

Theſe ſecret negotiations were very alarming to the Congreſs: they knew the dangers that would ariſe from a war with the native Americans, aſſiſted by the power of Britain: they had lately experienced how much miſchief they could do alone. The importance of a good underſtanding with them in ſo perilous a ſituation as that of the Colonies awakened all their attention to prevent a rupture. In order, if poſſible, to obtain their good-will, they repreſented to them, that the Engliſh on the other ſide of the water, had formed the wicked deſign to enſlave them; and that they had only taken up arms to defend their freedom: they hoped therefore, that as the original natives of America were the freeſt people upon earth, they would not aſſiſt in taking away that liberty from others, of which they were ſo juſtly fond themſelves. Were the Engliſh againſt whom they were now fighting, to overcome their brethren in America, they would ſoon make ſlaves of all the other people in that country, as they were become ſo proud and haughty, that they would not ſuffer their commands to be diſobeyed, however unreaſonable and unjuſt.

With reaſonings of this kind the emiſſaries of Congreſs found means to prepoſſeſs in their favour the minds of many of the principal Indians; they ſucceeded even ſo far, as to render it neceſſary for thoſe who were employed on the part of the Engliſh, to conſult their perſonal ſafety by withdrawing themſelves.

Having thus provided for the ſafety of the weakeſt parts of the Confederacy, they were now at leiſure to look forward with leſs anxiety, and to proſecute the reſidue of thoſe meaſures, which would have ſuffered ſo materiaſ an interruption, had

the

the endeavours of Britain ſucceeded in bringing the Indians upon them at this time.

Articles of confederation and perpetual union were ſolemnly agreed upon by the delegates of the various Colonies, aſſembled at Philadelphia. They were framed, with great unanimity, on that republican plan which flowed from the fundamental principles of the American confederacy.

They bound themſelves and their poſterity, for their common defence againſt their enemies, for the ſecurity of their liberties and properties, their perſonal ſafety, and their general welfare.

Each Colony was to retain a complete juriſdiction within its own limits; to enact laws and forms of adminiſtration, and enjoy independent ſovereignty in all domeſtic matters.

For the more convenient management of general intereſts, delegates were to be elected annually in each Colony, to meet in Congreſs at ſuch time and place as ſhould have been agreed upon in the preceding Congreſs.

Where particular circumſtances did not make a deviation neceſſary, it was to be underſtood as a rule, that each ſucceeding Congreſs ſhould be held in a different Colony, till the whole number had been gone through, and ſo in perpetual rotation.

The power of Congreſs was to extend to the determining upon war and peace; the entering into alliances; the ſettling diſputes between the reſpective Colonies, and the planting new Colonies where proper.

The Congreſs was to make ſuch general ordinances as appeared neceſſary for the common welfare of the Colonies, and to which their particular aſſemblies could not properly be competent; ſuch as the regulation of the common forces, and matters of general commerce or currency.

It was alſo to have the appointment of all officers, civil and military, appertaining to the general confederacy; ſuch as Generals, Admirals, Ambaſſadors, and others in like ſtations.

The charges of war, and all other expences incurred for the public ſervice of the union, were to be defrayed out of the common treaſury, which was to be ſupplied by each Colony in proportion to its number of male polls, between ſixteen and ſixty years of age: the taxes for paying that proportion to be laid and levied by the laws of each Colony.

The number of delegates from each Colony was to be regulated by the number of ſuch polls returned; one delegate to be allowed for every five thouſand polls.

At every meeting of the Congreſs, one half of the members, excluſive of proxies, ſhould be neceſſary to make a quorum. If any delegate was abſent, from neceſſity, he ſhould be empowered to appoint any other delegate, from the ſame Colony, to vote for him by proxy.

An executive council was to be appointed by Congreſs out of their own body, to conſiſt of twelve perſons; four of whom were annually to be replaced by four others.

This council, of whom eight were to be a quorum, was, in the receſs of Congreſs, to be entruſted with the execution of all the meaſures it had reſolved upon; to have the management all of the Continental buſineſs at home and intereſts abroad; to receive application from foreign countries; to prepare matters for the conſideration of Congreſs; to fill up, in the abſence of that body, all public offices that fall vacant; and to draw upon the treaſury for neceſſary ſervices.

No Colony was to engage in offenſive war with an Indian nation, without conſent of Congreſs.

The

The boundaries and lands of all the Indian nations were to be afcertained, and fecured to them. No purchafes of land to be made by private individuals, nor even by any particular Colony hereafter, without permiffion obtained from Congrefs.

Agents were to be appointed by Congrefs to refide amongft the Indians in proper diftricts, whofe duty it was to be, to prevent frauds and injuftice in the trade with them; and who were, at the public expence, to relieve their perfonal wants and diftreffes.

This confederation was to laft until the terms of reconciliation propofed in the petition of the laft Congrefs to the King, were agreed to, and the acts reftraining the commerce of America repealed, till reparation was made for fhutting up the port of Boftton, the burning of Charleftown, and the expences incurred by the war, and till the Britifh troops were entirely withdrawn from the Colonies.

When thofe events took place, the Colonies were to return to their former connections and friendfhip with Great Britain; but on failure thereof, the confederation was to be perpetual.

Such was the tenor of the fœderal union entered into with fo much warmth and readinefs by the Colonies. It was plain by the ftile and manner they adopted in the wording of it, that they looked upon a reconciliation with Great Britain as a very doubtful event.

The action at Bunker's Hill had filled the Americans with much higher notions of their ability to refift the efforts of Great Britain than they had ever entertained. Notwithftanding the noted bravery of the Britifh troops, they had found means to face them in a manner, which, though it did not place them upon a full equality of valour and difcipline, yet fhowed that they were a formidable enemy; and that they knew how to make the moft of every advantage.

This

This perſuaſion, which was certainly well founded, animated them to a ſurpriſing degree, and was a circumſtance which operated with great force in all their deliberations: thoſe of Congreſs, itſelf, took a bolder turn from this period. They had from the beginning been reſolute and firm; but they now aſſumed an ardour and deciſiveneſs, which indicated that they felt their ſtrength, and were entirely confident, that by exerting it vigorouſly, they ſhould be able to ſurmount all difficulties, and would not fail, with perſeverance, to obtain the end propoſed.

In this temper of mind they began to weigh the progreſs and actual circumſtances of the cauſe for which they were contending, and came to a determination, that after what had paſſed, an explicit and formal avowal, and juſtification of what they had done, and intended to do, was proper and neceſſary.

To this intent they publiſhed a declaration, ſetting forth the cauſes and neceſſity of their taking up arms, and reſiſting, by open force, the authority and the government of Great Britain. This declaration was conceived in terms remarkably pointed and ſtrong.

"Were it poſſible," ſaid they, "for men who exerciſe their reaſon, to believe that the Divine Author of our exiſtence, intended a part of the human race to hold an abſolute property in, and unbounded power over others, marked out by his infinite goodneſs and wiſdom as the objects of a legal domination, never rightfully reſiſtable, however ſevere and oppreſſive, the inhabitants of theſe colonies might, at leaſt, require from the Parliament of Great Britain ſome evidence that this dreadful authority over them has been granted to that body. But a reverence for our great Creator, principles of humanity, and the dictates of common ſenſe, muſt con-

vince

vince all thoſe who reflect upon the ſubject, that government was inſtituted to promote the welfare of mankind, and ought to be adminiſtered for the attainment of that end.

" The legiſlature of Great Britain, however, ſtimulated by an inordinate paſſion for power, not only unjuſtifiable, but which they know to be peculiarly reprobated by the very conſtitution of that kingdom, and deſpairing of ſucceſs in any mode of conteſt where regard ſhould be had to truth, law, or right, have at length deſerting thoſe, attempted to effect their cruel and impolitic purpoſe, of enſlaving theſe Colonies, by violence, and have thereby rendered it neceſſary for us to cloſe with their laſt appeal from reaſon to arms. Yet however blinded that Aſſembly may be by their intemperate rage for unlimited domination, ſo to ſlight juſtice and the opinion of mankind, we eſteem ourſelves bound by obligations of reſpect to the reſt of the world, to make known the juſtice of our cauſe.

" Our forefathers, inhabitants of the iſland of Great Britain, left their native land to ſeek, on theſe ſhores, a reſidence for civil and religious freedom. At the expence of their blood, at the hazard of their fortunes, without the leaſt charge to the country from which they removed, by unceaſing labour and an unconquerable ſpirit, they effected ſettlements in the diſtant and inhoſpitable wilds of America, then filled with numerous and warlike nations of barbarians. Societies or governments, veſted with perfect legiſlatures, were formed under charters from the crown, and an harmonious intercourſe was eſtabliſhed between the Colonies and the kingdom, from which they derived their origin. The mutual benefits of this union became in a ſhort time ſo extraordinary, as to excite aſtoniſhment. It is univerſally confeſſed, that the amazing increaſe of the wealth,

this ſource; and the miniſter who ſo wiſely and ſucceſsfully directed the meaſures of Great Britain in the late war, publicly declared that thoſe Colonies enabled her to triumph over her enemies.

"Towards the concluſion of that war, it pleaſed our ſovereign to make a change in his councils. From that fatal moment, the affairs of the Britiſh empire began to fall into confuſion; and gradually ſliding from the ſummit of glorious proſperity, to which they had been advanced by the virtues and abilities of one man, are at length diſtracted by the convulſions that now ſhake it to its deepeſt foundations. The new miniſtry finding the brave foes of Britain, though frequently defeated, yet ſtill contending, took up the unfortunate idea of granting them a haſty peace, and of then ſubduing her faithful friends.

"Theſe devoted Colonies were judged to be in ſuch a ſtate, as to preſent victories without bloodſhed, and all the eaſy emoluments of ſtatutable plunder. The uninterrupted tenor of their peaceable and reſpectful behaviour from the beginning of their coloniſation; their dutiful, zealous, and uſeful ſervices during the war, though ſo recently and amply acknowledged in the moſt honourable manner by his Majeſty, by the late King, and by Parliament, could not ſave them from the meditated innovations. Parliament was influenced to adopt the pernicious project; and aſſuming a new power over them, has, in the courſe of eleven years, given ſuch deciſive ſpecimens of the ſpirit and conſequences attending this power, as to leave no doubt concerning the effects of acquieſcence under it."

"They have undertaken to give and grant our money without our conſent, though we have ever exerciſed an excluſive right to diſpoſe of our own property. Statutes have been paſſed for extending the juriſdiction of courts of Admiralty and Vice

Admiralty beyond their ancient limits; for depriving us of the accuſtomed and ineſtimable privilege of trial by jury, in caſes affecting both life and property; for ſuſpending the legiſlature of one of the Colonies; for interdicting all commerce to the capital of another, and for altering, fundamentally, the form of government eſtabliſhed by charter, and ſecured by acts of its own legiſlature, ſolemnly confirmed by the Crown; for exempting the murderers of Coloniſts from legal trial, and, in effect, from puniſhment; for erecting, in a neighbouring Province acquired by the joint arms of Great Britain and America, a deſpotiſm dangerous to our very exiſtence; and for quartering ſoldiers upon the Coloniſts in time of profound peace. It has alſo been reſolved in Parliament, that Coloniſts charged with committing certain offences, ſhall be tranſported to England to be tried.

"But why ſhould we enumerate our injuries in detail? By one ſtatute it is declared that Parliament can of right make laws to bind us in all caſes whatſoever: What is to defend us againſt ſo enormous—ſo unlimited a power? Not a ſingle man of thoſe who aſſume it, is choſen by us, or is ſubject to our controul or influence; but on the contrary, they are all of them exempt from the operation of ſuch laws; and an American revenue, if not diverted from the oſtenſible purpoſes for which it is raiſed, would actually lighten their own burdens in proportion as it increaſes ours.

"We ſaw the miſery to which ſuch deſpotiſm would reduce us. We, for ten years, inceſſantly and ineffectually beſieged the Throne as ſupplicants; we reaſoned, we remonſtrated with Parliament in the moſt mild and decent language; but adminiſtration, ſenſible that we ſhould regard theſe oppreſſive meaſures as freemen ought to do, ſent over fleets and armies to enforce them.

" The indignation of the Americans was roufed, it is true; but it was the indignation of a virtuous, loyal, and affectionate people. A Congrefs of delegates from the united Colonies, was aſſembled at Philadelphia on the fifth day of laſt September. We reſolved again to offer an humble and dutiful petition to the King; and alſo addreſſed our fellow ſubjects of Great Britain: we have purſued every temperate, every reſpectful meaſure; we have even proceeded to break off all commercial intercourſe with our fellow ſubjects, as the laſt peaceable admonition, that our attachment to no nation upon earth would ſupplant our attachment to liberty: this, we flattered ourſelves, was the ultimate ſtep of the controverſy; but ſubſequent events have ſhown how vain was this hope of finding moderation in our enemies.

" Several threatening expreſſions againſt the Colonies, were inſerted in his Majeſty's ſpeech. Our petition, though we were told it was a decent one, that his Majeſty had been pleaſed to receive it graciouſly, and to promiſe laying it before his Parliament, was huddled into both Houſes amongſt a bundle of American papers, and there neglected.

" The Lords and Commons in their addreſs in the month of February, ſaid that a rebellion at that time actually exiſted within the Province of Maſſachuſets Bay; and that thoſe concerned in it, had been countenanced and encouraged by unlawful combinations and engagements entered into by his Majeſty's ſubjects in ſeveral of the Colonies; and therefore they beſought his Majeſty, that he would take the moſt effectual meaſures to enforce due obedience to the laws and authority of the ſupreme legiſlature. Soon after, the commercial intercourſe of whole Colonies with foreign countries, was cut off by an act of Parliament; by another, ſeveral of

them

them were entirely prohibited from the fiſheries in the ſeas near their coaſts, on which they always depended for their ſuſtenance; and large reinforcements of ſhips and troops were immediately ſent over to General Gage.

" Fruitleſs were all the entreaties, arguments, and eloquence of an illuſtrious band of the moſt diſtinguiſhed Peers and Commoners, who nobly and ſtrenuouſly aſſerted the juſtice of our cauſe, to ſtay, or even to mitigate the heedleſs fury with which theſe accumulated outrages were hurried on. Equally fruitleſs was the interference of the City of London, of Briſtol, and many other reſpectable towns in our favour.

Parliament is next repreſented by them, as intent upon the proſecution of meaſures, calculated to ſow diviſions between the Colonies, in order to extort their money from them, with more facility, " at the point of the bayonet," to uſe their own expreſſion. The only indulgence left them, being that of raiſing, in their own mode, the preſcribed tribute. " What terms," add they, " more rigid, and humiliating, could have been dictated by remorſeleſs victors to conquered enemies? In our circumſtances to accept them, would be to deſerve them."

The declaration then proceeds to accuſe General Gage of having begun hoſtilities, and to tax him with breach of faith in not fulfilling the conditions he had entered into with the inhabitants of Boſton. They charged the military, at the ſame time, with the burning of Charles Town, and committing other outrages without neceſſity, and contrary to the laws of war.

They reproach the Britiſh government for endeavouring to inſtigate the French inhabitants of Canada, and the Indians, to fall upon them; and for

exerting

exerting its utmoſt efforts to ſpread among them the complicated calamities of ſword, fire, and famine.

"We are reduced," continued they, "to the alternative of chuſing an unconditional ſubmiſſion to tyranny, or reſiſtance by force. The latter is our choice. We have counted the coſt of this conteſt, and find nothing ſo dreadful as voluntary ſlavery. Honour, juſtice, and humanity, forbid us tamely to ſurrender that freedom which we received from our gallant anceſtors, and which our innocent poſterity have a right to receive from us. We cannot endure the infamy and guilt of reſigning ſucceeding generations to that wretchedneſs which inevitably awaits them, if we baſely intail hereditary bondage upon them.

"Our cauſe is juſt,—our union is perfect: our internal reſources are great; and, if neceſſary, foreign aſſiſtance is undoubtedly attainable.

"We gratefully acknowledge, as ſignal inſtances of the Divine favour towards us, that his Providence would not permit us to be called into this ſevere controverſy, until we were grown up to our preſent ſtrength, had been previouſly exerciſed in warlike operations, and poſſeſſed of the means of defending ourſelves.

"With hearts fortified with theſe animating reflections, we moſt ſolemnly, before God and the world, declare, that exerting the utmoſt energy of thoſe powers which our beneficent Creator has graciouſly beſtowed upon us, the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to aſſume, we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabated firmneſs and perſeverance employ for the preſervation of our liberties, being with one mind reſolved to die freemen, rather than live ſlaves."

They next declare, that they mean not to diſſolve the union ſo long ſubſiſting between Great Britain and the Colonies; and that they have not raiſed

armies with the ambitious design of eſtabliſhing independent ſtates.

"We fight not," proceed they, "for glory, or for conqueſt: we exhibit to mankind the remarkable ſpectacle of a people attacked by unprovoked enemies. They boaſt of their privileges and civilization, and yet proffer no milder conditions than ſervitude or death.

"In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birth-right, for the protection of our property, acquired by the honeſt induſtry of our forefathers, and our own, againſt violence actually offered, we have taken up arms: we ſhall lay them down when hoſtilities ſhall ceaſe on the part of the aggreſſors, and all danger of their being renewed ſhall be removed,—and not before."

They concluded by imploring Heaven to proſper them, and to diſpoſe their enemies to reaſonable terms of reconciliation.

Such was the celebrated Declaration of Congreſs, on their formally taking up arms againſt Great Britain. It was dated at Philadelphia, the ſixth of July, 1775, and ſubſcribed by John Hancock, as Preſident of that aſſembly, and Charles Thompſon, as Secretary; the firſt, a man who had eminently ſignalized himſelf in the American cauſe, having expended a large proportion of an ample fortune in its ſupport; the ſecond, a perſon of great knowledge and experience, and whom his abilities alone had raiſed to the employment he now occupied, and filled, during the whole courſe of this conteſt, with univerſal ſatisfaction.

This Declaration was carefully diſperſed throughout the whole continent, and read in all public meetings with the utmoſt ſolemnity.

It was received by the Provincial troops encamped before Boſton with extraordinary applauſe. The publication of it was attended with great military

pomp. It was read at Cambridge by the Preſident of the College, in preſence of all the principal perſons of the Province of Maſſachuſet, and at the lines, by the principal clergyman in the army, who accompanied it with an animated addreſs to the ſoldiers and officers, and a ſolemn prayer for the ſucceſs of the American arms.

Nothing was more remarkable throughout the whole of this unfortunate war, than the religious manner with which the people of the Northern Colonies eſpecially, encouraged each other to do their duty in the field. It reminded one of the ſimilar methods ſo much recommended and practiſed among the opponents to the Royal cauſe, during the civil wars in this country, in the reign of Charles the Firſt.

It was not only in the New England Provinces this religious fervour prevailed; it was ſtrikingly conſpicuous in both the Colonies of New York and Pennſylvania. The ſynod of Philadelphia and the City of New York held a formal meeting, wherein they framed a paſtoral letter, which was publicly read in the churches, and contributed not a little to confirm the people in their adherence to the cauſe they had eſpouſed.

It was drawn up with great circumſpectfulneſs and decency, and breathed altogether ſentiments of humanity and moderation, that did much honour to the compoſers.

After ſome general admonitions, and taking notice that the whole continent, with hardly any exception, ſeemed determined to defend their rights by force of arms. "It is well known," ſaid they, "otherwiſe it would be imprudent thus publicly to profeſs, that we have not been inſtrumental in inflaming the minds of the people, or urging them to acts of violence and diſorder. Perhaps no inſtance can be given, on ſo intereſting a ſubject, in which

political ſentiments have been ſo long, and ſo fully kept from the pulpit; and even malice itſelf has not charged us with labouring from the preſs. But things are now come to ſuch a height, that we do not wiſh to conceal our opinions as men."

After proper exhortations to thoſe who went forth as champions in their country's cauſe, they proceeded, by earneſtly requeſting them to take every opportunity to expreſs their attachment to the King, and to the Revolution principles, that ſeated his family on the Britiſh throne. They ſtrongly recommended eſteem and reverence for his perſon, as a Prince who had merited well of his ſubjects on many accounts, and had probably been miſled into the late and preſent meaſures by thoſe about him.—"Neither," added they, "have we any doubt but they themſelves have been in a great degree deceived by falſe information, from intereſted perſons reſiding in America."

They next reminded them that the Continental Congreſs conſiſted of Delegates choſen in the moſt free and unbiaſſed manner by the body of the people; that they ought, for that reaſon, to be treated with all reſpect, and their reſolutions adhered to with fidelity and firmneſs, in order to enable them to bring out the whole ſtrength of the vaſt country that had put itſelf under their direction.

They particularly recommended a ſpirit of humanity and mercy, in the midſt of that warmth and impetuoſity ſo unhappily attendant on a civil war; they entreated all men, when called to action, to ſhed no blood but through abſolute neceſſity; and to ceaſe fighting, as ſoon as the neceſſity was over.

The declarations of Congreſs, and the exhortations of the clergy, produced wonderful effects in the minds of the public. Convinced that they were fighting in a righteous cauſe, people took up arms every where with the utmoſt

haved in a manner that fully verified the maxim, that a perſuaſion of acting juſtly, will always inſpire a man with courage, and ſupply the defects of knowledge and diſcipline.

After juſtifying its conduct to the world at large, the Congreſs determined to make a ſecond appeal to the people of Great Britain. It was written in a very ſerious, ſolemn, and forcible ſtile. They ſeemed as if they conſidered it as a valedictory addreſs to their fellow-ſubjects in Europe, and as if they entertained but faint hopes of ever forming again one people, under the ſame ſovereign, united in one mind, government, and name, as before, and bound by one common intereſt.

"Friends, countrymen, and brethren," ſaid they, "by theſe, and every other appellation that may deſignate the ties which bind us to each other, we entreat your ſerious attention to this our ſecond attempt to prevent their diſſolution. Remembrance of former friendſhips, pride in the glorious atchievements of our common anceſtors, and affection for the heirs of their virtues, have hitherto preſerved our mutual connection. But when that friendſhip is violated by the groſſeſt injuries, when the pride of anceſtry becomes our reproach, and we are no otherwiſe allied than as tyrants and ſlaves; when reduced to the melancholy alternative of renouncing your favour, or our freedom, can we heſitate about the choice?—Let the ſpirit of Britons determine."

After referring to their former addreſs, the ſtatement it contained of the injuries they had received, and their hope that they would have been redreſſed, they complained that their expectations had been grievouſly fruſtrated. 'That after being deprived by Parliament of many of their moſt valuable rights, of thoſe ſalutary laws which were tranſmitted to them by their anceſtors, of thoſe charters which inſpirited

ſpirited theſe to ſettle in the land now inhabited by their deſcendants, after ſeeing whole Colonies condemned without form of trial, their trade deſtroyed, their inhabitants impoveriſhed, ſoldiers encouraged to imbrue their hands in the blood of Americans by offers of impunity;—after thoſe, and the other inſtances of oppreſſion they had experienced, they did not imagine that any more would have been added to them; but to their grief they are now convinced, from the late meaſures of the Britiſh miniſtry, that its object is the reduction of the Colonies to ſlavery.

They appeal for proofs of this to the cruelty of reſtraining the people on the north rn coaſt of America from their uſual occupation of fiſhing, which to ſo many thouſands was the only means of procuring a livelihood.

They appeal in the ſame manner to the prohibition of their trade with all other nations:—"But this," add they, "we conſider rather as injurious to your opulence, than to our intereſt. All our commerce terminates with you; the wealth we procure from other nations is ſoon exchanged for your ſuperfluities; our remittances muſt then ceaſe with our trade, and our refinements with our affluence. We truſt, however, that laws which deprive us of every bleſſing, but a ſoil which teems with the neceſſaries of life, and that liberty which renders the enjoyment of them ſecure, will not relax our vigour in their defence."

After adverting to the diſtreſſes of the people at Boſton, the burning of Charleſtown, the ſeverities exerciſed by the Britiſh ſhipping on the ſeacoaſt of New England, the other calamities they were ſuffering, and the general harſhneſs of the treatment they had experienced,—"To what are we," ſaid they, "to attribute this treatment? If to any ſecret principle of the conſtitution, let it be

mentioned: let us learn that the government we have long revered is not without its defects; and that while it gives freedom to a part, it neceſſarily enſlaves the remainder of the empire. If ſuch a principle exiſts, why for ages has it ceaſed to operate? Why at this time is it called into action? Can no reaſon be aſſigned for this conduct, or muſt it be reſolved into wanton exerciſe of arbitrary power? And ſhall the deſcendants of Britain tamely ſubmit to this?—No, Sirs! we never will.—While we revere the memory of our gallant, virtuous anceſtors, we never can ſurrender thoſe glorious privileges for which they fought, bled, and conquered. Admit that your fleets could deſtroy our towns, and ravage our ſea-coaſts, theſe are inconſiderable objects,—things of no moment to men whoſe boſoms glow with the ardour of liberty. We can retire beyond the reach of your navy, and without any ſenſible diminution of the neceſſaries of life, enjoy the luxury of being free.

"We know the force of your arms;—and was it called forth in the cauſe of juſtice and your country, we might dread the exertion. But will Britons fight under the banner of tyranny? Will they counteract the labours, and diſgrace the victories of their anceſtors? Will they forge chains for their poſterity?—If they deſcend to this unworthy taſk, will their ſwords retain their edge,—their arms their accuſtomed vigour? Britons can never become the inſtruments of oppreſſion till they loſe the ſpirit of freedom, by which alone they are invincible.

"Our enemies charge us with ſedition:—In what does it conſiſt? In our refuſal to ſubmit to unwarrantable acts of injuſtice and cruelty? If ſo, ſhow us a period of your hiſtory in which you have not been equally ſeditious,"

After denying the charge of aiming at independence, and mentioning their frequent complaints and ſolicitations for redreſs, "What has been," added

added they, " the ſucceſs of our endeavours? Our petitions are treated with indignity, our prayers anſwered by inſults; our application remains unnoticed; and leaves us the melancholy apprehenſion of your wanting either the will or the power to aſſiſt us.

" Even under theſe circumſtances, what meaſures have we taken that betray a deſire of independence? Have we called in the aid of thoſe foreign powers who are the rivals of your grandeur? When your troops were few and defenceleſs, did we take advantage of their diſtreſs, and expel them our towns?

" Let not your enemies and ours perſuade you, that in this we are influenced by fear, or any other unworthy motive. The lives of Britons are ſtill dear to us; they are the children of our parents. When hoſtilities were commenced, when on a late occaſion we repelled their aſſaults, and returned their blows, yet we lamented the wounds they obliged us to give; nor have we yet learned to rejoice at a victory over Engliſhmen."

After juſtifying their defenſive proceedings, they declare that they have not loſt ſight of a reconciliation upon conſtitutional principles. They repreſent the benefits of their excluſive trade, and their willingneſs to ſubmit to the reſtrictions on it that ſubſiſted at the concluſion of the laſt war.

In anſwer to the allegation that they contributed nothing to the common defence, they aſſerted, that the advantages derived to Britain from the monopoly of their trade, far exceeded their proportion; but that if theſe advantages were, upon a fair computation, found inadequate, they were willing, provided the above reſtrictions were taken off, to contribute that full proportion, when conſtitutionally required.

They contended for the propriety of their refuſing the plan of accommodation propoſed by miniſtry in Parliament, as not leaving to them the diſpoſal of their property, but only the collection of

the taxes impoſed upon them in their own manner. —In order, however, to remove every imputation of obſtinacy on their part, "we have," ſaid they, "again preſented an humble petition to the King, requeſting him to direct ſome mode, by which the united applications of the Coloniſts may be improved into a permanent reconciliation.

"Yet," added they, "conclude not from this, that we propoſe to ſurrender our property into the hands of your miniſtry, or veſt your Parliament with a power which may terminate in our deſtruction.

"The great bulwarks of our conſtitution we have endeavoured to maintain by every temperate, by every peaceable means; but your miniſters, equal foes to Britiſh and American freedom, have added to their former oppreſſions an attempt to reduce us by the ſword to a baſe and abject ſubmiſſion.

"On the ſword, therefore, we are compelled to rely for protection. Should victory declare in your favour, yet men trained up to arms from their infancy, and animated by the love of liberty, will afford neither a cheap, nor an eaſy conqueſt.

"Let us now aſk what advantages are to attend our reduction? The trade of a ruined and deſolate country is always inconſiderable, its revenue trifling; the expence of ſubjecting, and retaining it in ſubjection, certain and inevitable. What then remains, but the gratification of an ill-judged pride, or the hope of rendering us ſubſervient to deſigns upon your liberty?

"Soldiers who have ſheathed their ſwords in the bowels of their American brethren, will not draw them with more reluctance againſt you. When too late, you may lament the loſs of that freedom, which we exhort you, while ſtill in your power, to preſerve.

"On the other hand, ſhould you prove unſucceſsful, ſhould that connection which we moſt ardently wiſh to maintain, be diſſolved, ſhould your miniſters

miniſters exhauſt your treaſures, waſte the blood of your countrymen in vain attempts on our liberty, do they not deliver you weakened and defenceleſs to your natural enemies?

"Since then your liberty muſt be the price of your victories, your ruin of your defeat, what blind fatality can urge you to a purſuit deſtructive of all that Britons hold moſt dear?

If you have no regard to the connection that has ſo long ſubſiſted between us; if you have forgotten the wounds we received fighting by your ſide for the extenſion of the Britiſh empire; if our commerce is an object below your conſideration; if juſtice and humanity have loſt their influence on your hearts, ſtill motives are not wanting to excite your indignation at the meaſures now purſued: your wealth, your honour, your liberty are at ſtake.

"Notwithſtanding the diſtreſs to which we are reduced, we ſometimes forget our own afflictions to anticipate and ſympathiſe in yours: we grieve that raſh and inconſiderate counſels ſhould precipitate the deſtruction of ſo noble an empire, and call God to witneſs, that we would part with our property, endanger our lives, and ſacrifice every thing, but liberty, to redeem you from ruin.

"A cloud hangs over your heads and ours;—ere this reaches you, it may probably have burſt upon us. Let us, then, before the remembrance of former kindneſs is obliterated, once more repeat thoſe appellations which are ever grateful in our ears; let us entreat Heaven to avert our ruin, and the deſtruction that threatens our friends, brethren, and countrymen on the other ſide of the Atlantic."

Such was the laſt addreſs of Congreſs to the Britiſh nation. It was drawn up rather as a vindication of what they had done, and intended to do, than with any real expectation of producing the effect which was its oſtenſible intent. Thoſe who fram-

ed it, knew too well the temper and diſpoſition of thoſe who influenced the councils of Great Britain at that time, to form any expectations of compliance on their part, with the requeſts it contained.

The petition to the King, mentioned in the foregoing addreſs, was conceived in terms correſponding with the principles upon which this was founded.

It began by obſerving that the union between Great Britain and its Colonies, and the energy of a mild and juſt government, produced benefits ſo remarkably important, and afforded ſuch an aſſurance of their permanency and increaſe, that the wonder and envy of other nations were excited, while they beheld Great Britain riſing to a power the moſt extraordinary the world had ever known.

Her rivals apprehending the future effects of this union, if left any longer undiſturbed, reſolved to prevent her receiving ſuch continual and formidable acceſſions of wealth and ſtrength, by checking the growth of thoſe ſettlements from which they were to be derived.

By their total defeat in the proſecution of this attempt, an additional force aroſe to Great Britain, through the vaſt enlargement of her American dominions, which placed her in a higher ſummit of elevation than ever.

At the concluſion of the laſt glorious war, the Coloniſts having, by their ſtrenuous exertions, contributed remarkably to its ſucceſs, and received repeated acknowledgments of their ſpirit and fidelity from both Crown and Parliament, doubted not they ſhould, in common with all their fellow ſubjects, participate in the emoluments of thoſe victories and conqueſts, in which they had bore ſo diſtinguiſhed a ſhare.

But while theſe honourable teſtimonials were ſtill recent, they were alarmed by a new ſyſtem of ſta-

tutes and regulations, adopted for the adminiſtration of the Colonies, that filled their minds with the moſt painful fears and jealouſies; to their inexpreſſible aſtoniſhment, the danger of a foreign quarrel was now ſucceeded by domeſtic danger of a more dreadful kind.

This dangerous ſyſtem was pregnant with conſequences, which, though not immediately felt, tended, however, ultimately to affect the proſperity of Great Britain.

"We decline," ſay they, "the ungrateful taſk of deſcribing the variety of artifices practiſed againſt the Colonies, the deluſive pretences, fruitleſs terrors, and unavailing ſeverities, that have from time to time been employed in attempting to execute this impolitic plan. It were irkſome to trace, through a ſeries of years paſt, the progreſs of thoſe unhappy differences that have flowed from this fatal ſource."

But the King's miniſters perſevering in theſe meaſures, and proceeding to enforce them by open hoſtilities, had at laſt compelled the Americans to arm in their defence, though with the higheſt reluctance, when they reflected whom they muſt oppoſe in this conteſt, and what might be the conſequences of its continuance.

Knowing with what reſentments and animoſities civil diſcords are apt to inflame the contending parties, they thought themſelves bound by every obligation, to uſe all the means in their power to ſtop the further effuſion of blood, and to avert the calamities impending upon the Britiſh empire.

Profeſſing, therefore, the moſt devoted attachment to the King's perſon, family, and government, connected with Great Britain by the ſtrongeſt ties that can unite ſocieties, and deploring every event that may tend to weaken them, they ſolemnly declare themſelves ardently deſirous, that harmony may be reſtored and eſtabliſhed upon ſo firm a baſis,

as may perpetuate its bleſſings, uninterrupted by any diſſentions, to ſucceeding generations, and tranſmit the King's royal name to poſterity, "adorned," to uſe their very words, "with that ſignal and laſting glory that has attended the memory of thoſe illuſtrious perſonages, whoſe virtues and abilities have extricated ſtates from dangerous convulſions, and, by ſecuring happineſs to others, have erected the moſt noble and durable monuments to their own fame."

They aſſure the King, that notwithſtanding their ſufferings, they retain too high a regard for the kingdom from which they derive their origin, to requeſt ſuch a reconciliation as might in any manner be inconſiſtent with its dignity or welfare. "Theſe," ſaid they, "related as we are to her; honour and duty, as well as inclination, induce us to ſupport and advance."

They beſought him, therefore, to interpoſe his royal authority and influence, to relieve them from their preſent ſituation; ſubmitting to his conſideration the expediency of directing ſome method, by which the united applications of the Colonies to the Throne might be improved into a thorough reconciliation; and requeſting, in the mean time, that hoſtilities ſhould ceaſe, and ſuch acts be repealed as are more immediately diſtreſſing to the Colonies.

By forming proper arrangements for collecting the united ſenſe of America, the King would receive ſuch ſatisfactory proofs of the good diſpoſition of the Colonies, as would ſoon induce him to reſtore them to his favour; and by that means enable them to evince the ſincerity of their profeſſions by every teſtimony of devotion to their ſovereign, and of affection for their parent ſtate.

After paying theſe farewell addreſſes, as they were not injudiciouſly called, to the King and people of Great Britain, the Congreſs thought it in-

cumbent upon them, not to pafs by without a fimilar proof of attention and refpect, fo conſiderable a member of the Britiſh empire, as the kingdom of Ireland: a country that had, at all times, furniſhed America with numbers of uſeful inhabitants, and at this time, eſpecially, with ſome of the braveſt men in her ſervice.

The addreſs to the Iriſh nation, was written in the ſame forcible and pathetic ſtile, as all compoſitions of that kind which flowed from the pens of Congreſs at this period.

After mentioning the importance and intereſtingneſs to all Europe of the conteſt in which the Britiſh Colonies were engaged, they expreſs, the earneſt deſire of the Americans, to poſſeſs the good opinion of the virtuous and humane part of ſociety, and ſtate the motives and objects by which they are actuated.

They lament that, "however incredible it may appear at this enlighted period, the rulers of a nation which in every age has ſacrificed hecatombs of her braveſt patriots on the altar of liberty, ſhould preſume gravely to aſſert, and by force of arms attempt to eſtabliſh an arbitrary ſway over the property, liberties, and lives of their fellow ſubjects in America."

This attempt they accuſe the miniſtry in Britain of having, by fraud and violence, purſued for the laſt ten years.—"At the concluſion of the laſt war," ſaid they, "the genius of England, and the ſpirit of wiſdom, as if offended at the ungrateful treatment of her ſons, withdrew from the Britiſh councils, and left that nation a prey to a race of miniſters, with whom ancient Engliſh honeſty and benevolence diſdained to dwell. From that period jealouſy, diſcontent, oppreſſion, and diſcord, have raged among all the King's ſubjects, and filled every part of his dominions with diſtreſs and complaint.

"Not content," continue they, "with our purchasing of Britain, at her own price, cloathing and a thousand other articles used by near three millions of people on this vast continent; not satisfied with the amazing profits arising from the monopoly of our trade, without giving us time to breathe after a long though glorious war, or the least credit for the blood and treasure we have expended in it; notwithstanding the zeal we had manifested for the service of our sovereign, and the warmest attachment to the constitution of Britain and the people of England, a black and horrid design was formed to convert us from subjects into vassals—from freemen into slaves—from friends into enemies."

They next proceed to a circumstantial enumeration of their grievances; of their repeated and vain endeavours to obtain redress; of their determination to suspend all trade with Great Britain, Ireland, and the West Indies, as the ultimate measure left them; "hoping by this peacable mode of opposition, to obtain that justice from the British ministry, which had been so long solicited in vain.

"And here," say they, "permit us to assure you, it was with the utmost reluctance we could prevail upon ourselves to cease our commercial connections with your island;—your Parliament had done us no wrong;—you had ever been friendly to the rights of mankind; and we acknowledge, with pleasure and gratitude, that your nation has produced patriots who have nobly distinguished themselves in the cause of America and humanity.

"On the other hand, we were not ignorant that the labour and manufactures of Ireland, like those of the silkworm, were of little moment to herself; and served only to give luxury to those who neither toil nor spin. We perceived, that if we continued our commerce with you, our agreement not to import from Britain would be fruitless; we were there-

fore compelled to a adopt a meaſure, to which nothing but abſolute neceſſity would have reconciled us.

" It gave us, however, ſome conſolation to reflect, that ſhould it occaſion much diſtreſs, the fertile regions of America would afford you a ſafe aſylum from poverty and oppreſſion;—an aſylum in which many thouſands of your countrymen have found hoſpitality, peace, and affluence, and beçome united to us by all the ties of conſanguinity, mutual intereſt, and affection."

They next advert to their application to their fellow ſubjects in Britain, their patience and long abſtinence from open reſiſtance againſt the violent proceedings of the Britiſh miniſtry reſpecting Boſton and the Province of Maſſachuſet, the rejection of their humble petitions, the inſults offered to their character, and their " long forbearance rewarded with the imputation of cowardice.

" Our peaceable aſſemblies," continue they, " for the purpoſe of conſulting the common ſafety, were now declared ſeditious, and our aſſerting thoſe principles which placed the crown of Great Britain on the heads of the three ſucceſſive Princes of the Houſe of Hanover, were ſtiled rebellion."

They complain that " the wild and barbarous ſavages of the wilderneſs had been ſolicited to take up the hatchet againſt them, and inſtigated to deluge their ſettlements with the blood of innocent and defenceleſs women and children."

Through thoſe and the like means, " the miniſtry, bent on pulling down the pillars of the conſtitution, has endeavoured to erect the ſtandard of deſpotiſm in America; but if ſucceſsful, Britain and Ireland may ſhudder at the conſequence."

They proceed to the commencement of hoſtilities, and charge the Britiſh military with being the aggreſſors,

aggreſſors, and with having carried the ravages of war to diſhonourable extremities.

" Though vilified," ſay they, " as wanting ſpirit, we are determined to behave like men ;—though inſulted and abuſed, we wiſh for reconciliation ;—though defamed as ſeditious, we are ready to obey the laws ;—and though charged with rebellion, will chearfully bleed in defence of our ſovereign in a righteous cauſe !—What more can we ſay ?—What more can we offer ?

" The various and fruitleſs offers we have repeatedly made, were not for penſions, for wealth, or for honours ; but for the humble boon of being permitted to poſſeſs the fruits of our honeſt induſtry, and to enjoy that degree of liberty to which God and the conſtitution have given us an undoubted right.

" Bleſſed with an indiſſoluble union, with a variety of internal reſources, and with a firm reliance on the juſtice of the ſupreme diſpoſer of all human events, we have no doubt of riſing ſuperior to all the machinations of our enemies. We already anticipate the golden period, when liberty, with all the gentle arts of peace and humanity, ſhall eſtabliſh her mild dominion in this weſtern world, and erect eternal monuments to the memory of thoſe patriots and martyrs who ſhall have ſuffered, fought, and bled in her cauſe."

After ſome ſtrictures on the conduct of miniſtry towards Ireland, they fervently hope, " that the iniquitous ſcheme of extirpating liberty from the Britiſh empire, may be ſoon defeated ; but," added they, " we ſhould be wanting to ourſelves ;—we ſhould be perfidious to poſterity ;—we ſhould be unworthy of that anceſtry from which we derive our deſcent, ſhould we ſubmit with folded arms to military butchery and depredation."

They

They concluded by appealing to the kind offices of their fellow ſubjects in Great Britain and Ireland for the reſtoration of peace and harmony. "Of their friendly diſpoſition," ſay they, "we do not yet deſpond; aware, as they muſt be, that they have nothing more to expect from the ſame common enemy, than the humble favour of being laſt devoured."

Nor did Congreſs forget to tranſmit a letter of thanks to the City of London, for its interpoſition in their behalf. They had always placed a particular reliance on its good wiſhes and concern for their welfare; and though they knew that its mediation in the preſent circumſtances would probably be of no efficacy, yet they were conſcious it was their intereſt, for a variety of reaſons, to retain as much as poſſible of its countenance, and to engage it by every motive in their power, to continue its diſapprobation of the meaſures purſued againſt them.

This letter was ſhort, but very ſpirited and deciſive. They reminded the citizens of London of their having, in all ages, approved themſelves the patrons of liberty, and the ſupporters of juſt government againſt lawleſs tyranny and oppreſſion: that the cauſe of America was the more worthy of their ſupport, as it involved the fate of the whole empire; that the Americans wiſhed for a laſting connection with Great Britain on terms of equal liberty; "leſs than which generous minds will not offer, nor brave and free minds be willing to receive."

The iſland of Jamaica had acted too friendly a part for the Colonies, not to ſhare in their remembrance on this occaſion. They voted an epiſtolary addreſs to the Aſſembly, which was conceived in the ſame ſtile and ſpirit as the preceding.

They determined, at the ſame time, to write a ſecond letter to the French inhabitants of Canada

As the firſt had been far from ineffectual, and had not a little contributed to raiſe a ſpirit of reſiſtance to the Britiſh government, they promiſed themſelves, not without reaſon, that a further application would tend to confirm them in thoſe ſentiments.

What chiefly induced them to this meaſure, was the intelligence they were daily receiving, of the repeated efforts made by government to ſtimulate the people of that Province to take an active part againſt the Colonies. They were apprehenſive that the influence ariſing from the promiſes of remuneration, added to the pecuniary encouragement which the agents of Great Britain were ſo amply empowered to beſtow, might, on this critical emergency, operate againſt all other motives, and prove at length over perſuaſive among a people, who did not look upon themſelves as ſo deeply intereſted as the Engliſh Colonies, in thwarting the deſigns of the Britiſh adminiſtration.

The very ſuperſcription of their preſent addreſs to the people of that Province, conveyed a full intimation of the ſenſe they wiſhed them to entertain of their condition .It was directed "To the oppreſſed inhabitants of Canada."

"Friends and countrymen," ſaid they, "alarmed by the deſigns of an arbitrary miniſtry to extirpate the rights and liberties of all America, a ſenſe of common danger conſpired with the dictates of humanity, in urging us to call your attention, by our late addreſs, to this very important object.

"Since the concluſion of the late war, we have been happy in conſidering you as fellow ſubjects; and ſince the commencement of the preſent plan for ſubjugating the continent, we have viewed you as fellow ſufferers with us. As we were both entitled, by the bounty of an indulgent Creator, to freedom, and being both devoted, by the edict of a deſpotic

adminiſtration, to common ruin, we perceived the fate of the Proteſtant and Catholic Colonies to be ſtrongly linked together, and therefore invited you to join with us, in reſolving to be free, and in rejecting, with diſdain, the fetters of ſlavery, however artfully poliſhed.

" We moſt ſincerely condole with you on the arrival of that day, in the courſe of which the ſun could not ſhine on a ſingle freeman in all your extenſive dominion. Be aſſured that your unmerited degradation has engaged the moſt unfeigned pity of your ſiſter Colonies; and we flatter ourſelves you will not, by tamely bearing the yoke, ſuffer that pity to be ſupplanted by contempt.

" By the introduction of your preſent form of government, or rather preſent form of tyranny, you have nothing that you can call your own. All the fruits of your labour and induſtry may be taken from you, whenever an avaricious governor and a rapacious council may incline to demand them.

" You are liable, by their edicts, to be tranſported into foreign countries, to fight battles in which you have no intereſt, and to ſpill your blood in conflicts from which neither honour nor emolument can be derived. Nay, the enjoyment of your very religion, on the preſent ſyſtem, depends on a legiſlature in which you have no ſhare, and over which you have no controul; and your Prieſts are expoſed to expulſion, baniſhment, and ruin, whenever their wealth and poſſeſſions furniſh ſufficient temptation.

" It cannot be preſumed that thoſe conſiderations will have no weight with you, and that you are ſo loſt to all ſenſe of honour. We can never believe that the preſent race of Canadians are ſo degenerated from their ſpirited anceſtors, as to permit the diſgrace and infamy of ſuch puſillanimity to reſt

on their own heads, and the conſequences of it on their children for ever.

"Permit us again to repeat, that we are your friends, not your enemies; and be not impoſed upon by thoſe who may endeavour to create animoſities. Our concern for your welfare entitles us to your friendſhip: we preſume you will not, by doing us injury, reduce us to the diſagreeable neceſſity of treating you as enemies."

Such were the chief parts of this celebrated letter. It was, like the former, carefully tranſlated into French, and numerous copies were printed and diſperſed among the inhabitants of Canada.

Another object of equal importance hung ſtill upon the mind of Congreſs:—This was the danger apprehended from the Indians. Notwithſtanding the precautions that have been mentioned, to ſecure their good will to the Colonies, rewards and encouragements were ſtill held out to them in various ways, in order to engage their aſſiſtance in the cauſe of Britain. Its emiſſaries, though checked by the meaſures taken againſt them, were ſtill very active, and loſt none of the many opportunities which a continual intercourſe with the Indians afforded, to gain over all thoſe whom views of preſent intereſt could ſeduce from their former reſolutions of neutrality.

The Congreſs was ſufficiently aware that the preſervation of friendſhip with the Indians, was an object of the utmoſt moment. They were alſo duly informed, that no pains nor expence was ſpared to excite them to take up arms againſt the Colonies; it was therefore become more neceſſary than ever, to exert the utmoſt vigilance and efforts to ſtrengthen and confirm the friendly diſpoſition they had lately manifeſted.

In order to obviate the dangers that would enſue from the enmity of the Indians, a plan was formed

by Congreſs, whereby more permanently to ſecure their fidelity and adherence to the Colonies. They were divided into ſeveral diſtricts, over which, perſons well converſant in their language, ways, and manners, were appointed as commiſſioners. They were to maintain a continual correſpondence with them; to watch all their motions; to be aſſiſting to them in all their reaſonable requeſts, and to ſupply them in their wants and neceſſities.

For this purpoſe a conſiderable ſum was raiſed, and put into the hands of theſe commiſſioners, to be diſtributed among the Indians in their reſpective departments, and thereby to counteract the endeavours of the ſame kind that were uſed by their adverſaries.

The principal tribes among the northern Indians bordering on the Britiſh Colonies, are thoſe known by the name of the Six Confederate Nations, conſiſting of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Tuſcaroras, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senekas.

It was, by Congreſs, thought highly adviſable to hold a ſolemn conference with theſe people, in order to explain to them, in as clear a manner as poſſible, the nature of the conteſt ſubſiſting between Great Britain and her Colonies, and to induce them, by proper reaſons, to abſtain from interfering in it, on either ſide.

The ſtile of the ſpeech made to them in the name of the Congreſs, is, perhaps, the moſt curious ſpecimen that ever was made public, of the manner and form of the political intercourſe between the Europeans and the original natives of America.

It was as follows:—

"Brothers, Sachems, and Warriors!

"WE, the Delegates from the Twelve United Provinces, now ſitting in General Congreſs at Philadelphia, ſend their talk to you, our brothers.

"We are ſixty-five in number, choſen and appointed by the people throughout all theſe Provinces and Colonies, to meet and ſit together in one great council, to conſult together for the common good of the land, and ſpeak and act for them."

"Brothers, in our conſultation we have judged it proper and neceſſary, to ſend you this talk, as we are upon the ſame iſland, that you may be informed of the reaſons of this great council, and our diſpoſition towards you, our Indian brothers of the Six Nations, and their allies.

"Brothers and Friends, now attend:—

"When our fathers croſſed the great water, and came over to this land, the King of England gave them a talk, aſſuring them, that they and their children ſhould be his children; and that if they would leave their native country, and make ſettlements, and live here, and buy and ſell, and trade with their brethren beyond the water, they ſhould ſtill keep hold of the ſame covenant chain and enjoy peace;—and it was covenanted that the fields, houſes, goods, and poſſeſſions which our fathers ſhould acquire, ſhould remain to them as their own, and be their children's for ever, and at their ſole diſpoſal.

"Truſting that this covenant ſhould never be broken, our fathers came a great diſtance beyond the great water, laid out their money here, built houſes, cleared fields, raiſed crops, and, through their own labour and induſtry, grew tall and ſtrong.

"They have bought, ſold, and traded with England, according to agreement, ſending to them ſuch things as they wanted, and taking in exchange ſuch things as were wanted here.

"The King of England and his people kept the way open for more than one hundred years; and by

our trade became richer, and by an union with us greater and ſtronger than the other kings and people who live beyond the water.

" All this time they lived in great friendſhip with us, and we with them; for we are brothers—one blood.

" Whenever they were ſtruck, we inſtantly felt as though the blow had been given to us:—Their enemies were our enemies.

" Whenever they went to war, we ſent our men to ſtand by their ſide, and fight for them, and our money to help them, and make them ſtrong.

" They thanked us for our love, and ſent us good talks, and renewed their promiſe to be one people for ever.

" Brothers and friends, open a kind ear!

" We will now tell you of the quarrel betwixt the counſellors of King George, and the inhabitants and Colonies of America.

" Many of his counſellors have perſuaded him to break the covenant chain, and not to ſend us any more good talks. They have prevailed upon him to enter into a covenant againſt us, and have torn aſunder, and caſt behind their backs, the good old covenant, which their anceſtors and ours entered into, and took ſtrong hold of.

" They now tell us, they will put their hands into our pocket without aſking, as though it were their own; and at their pleaſure they will take from us our charters, or written civil conſtitution, which we love as our lives; alſo our plantations, our houſes, and goods, whenever they pleaſe, without aſking our leave. They tell us that our veſſels may go to that or this iſland in the ſea, but to this or that particular iſland, we ſhall not trade any more; and in caſe of our non-compliance with theſe new orders, they ſhut up our harbours.

"Brothers, this is our preſent ſituation. Thus have many of the King's counſellors and ſervants dealt with us. If we ſubmit or comply with their demands, you can eaſily perceive to what ſtate we ſhall be reduced. If our people labour in the field, they will not know who ſhall enjoy the crop; if they hunt in the woods, it will be uncertain who ſhall taſte the meat, or have the ſkins; if they build houſes, they will not know whether they may ſit round the fire with their wives and children: they cannot be ſure whether they ſhall be permitted to eat, drink, and wear the fruits of their own labour and induſtry.

"Brethren and friends of the Six Nations, attend!—

"We upon this iſland have often ſpoke and entreated the King, and his ſervants the counſellors, that peace and harmony might ſtill continue between us; that we cannot part with, or looſe our hold of the old covenant chain, which united our fathers and theirs; that we want to brighten this chain, and keep the way open as our fathers did; that we want to live with them as brothers; labour, trade, travel abroad, eat and drink in peace: we have often aſked them to love and live in ſuch friendſhip with us, as their fathers did with ours.

"We told them again, that we judged we were exceedingly injured; that they might as well kill us as take away our property and the neceſſaries of life. We have aſked why they treat us thus? What has become of our repeated addreſſes and ſupplications to them? Who has ſhut the ears of the King to the cries of his children in America?—No ſoft anſwer, no pleaſant voice from beyond the water has yet ſounded in our ears.

"Brothers, thus ſtands the matter betwixt old England and America.

"Not-

"Notwithſtanding all our entreaties, we have but little hope the King will ſend us any more good talks, by reaſon of his evil counſellors. They have perſuaded him to ſend an army of ſoldiers, and many ſhips of war, to rob and deſtroy us; they have ſhut up many of our harbours, ſeized many of our veſſels: the ſoldiers have ſtruck the blow; the blood now runs of the American children; they have alſo burned our houſes and towns, and taken much of our goods.

"Brothers, we are now neceſſiated to riſe, and forced to fight, or give up our civil conſtitution, and run away, and leave our farms and houſes behind us: this muſt not be.—Since the King's counſellors will not open their ears, and conſider our juſt complaints, and the cauſe of our weeping, and have given the blow, we are determined to drive away the King's ſoldiers, and deſtroy all thoſe we find in arms againſt the peace of the Twelve United Colonies.

"Brothers and friends, we deſire you will hear and receive what we have now told you, and that you will open a good ear, and liſten to what we are now going to ſay. This is a family quarrel between us and old England; you Indians are not concerned in it; we do not wiſh you to take up the hatchet againſt the King's troops; we deſire you to remain at home, and not join either ſide, but let the hatchet be buried deep.

"In the name and behalf of all our people, we aſk and deſire of you to love peace, and to maintain it; and to love and ſympathize with us in all our trouble; that the path may be kept open with all our people and yours, to paſs and repaſs without moleſtation.

"Brothers, we live on the ſame ground with you; the ſame iſland is our common birth-place.—We deſire to ſit down under the ſame tree of peace

with you: let us water its roots, and cheriſh its growth, till the large leaves and flouriſhing branches ſhall extend to the ſetting ſun, and reach the ſkies.

" Brothers, obſerve well—

" What is it we have aſked of you? Nothing but peace, notwithſtanding our diſturbed ſituation. And if application ſhould be made to you by any of the King's miniſters to join on their ſide, we only adviſe you to deliberate with great caution, and in your wiſdom look forward to the conſequences of a compliance: for if the King's troops take away our property, and deſtroy us, who are of the ſame blood with themſelves, what can you, who are Indians, expect from them afterwards?

" Therefore we ſay, brothers, take care!—hold faſt to your covenant chain: you know our diſpoſition towards you, the Six Nations of Indians, and your allies. Let this our good talk remain at Onondaga, your central council-houſe. We depend upon you to ſend and acquaint your allies to the northward, the ſeven tribes on the river St. Lawrence, that you have this talk of ours at the great council fire of the Six Nations. And when you return, we invite your great men to come and converſe further with us at Albany, where we intend to re-kindle the council fire, which your and our anceſtors ſat round in great friendſhip. Brothers and friends, we greet you all:—Farewell.

" Brothers, we have ſaid we wiſh you Indians may continue in peace with one another, and with us, the white people. Let us both be cautious in our behaviour towards each other, at this critical ſtate of our affairs. This iſland now trembles;—the wind whiſtles from almoſt every quarter. Let us fortify our minds, and ſhut our ears againſt falſe rumours; let us be cautious what we receive for truth, unleſs ſpoken by wiſe and good men. If any thing diſagreeable ſhould ever fall out between

us, the Twelve United Colonies, and you, the Six Nations, to wound our peace, let us immediately ſeek meaſures for healing the breach. From the preſent ſituation of our affairs, we judge it wiſe and expedient to kindle up a ſmall fire at Albany, where we may hear each others voice, and diſcloſe our minds fully to one another."

Conferences were held, and ſpeeches of a ſimilar tenor as the above delivered to the various tribes of Indians on the back-ſettlements of the Colonies.

In the mean time, it was become neceſſary for Congreſs to come to a definitive reſolution in regard to the conciliatory motion made in Parliament by the miniſtry. It had already been glanced at in the declaration they had publiſhed touching the neceſſity of their taking up arms, and repreſented in a very unfavourable light.

But the friends to this motion in England thought very differently, and were even ſo ſanguine as to promiſe a kind reception to it, and that people in America would probably conſider it as a preliminary to reconciliation.

In this expectation, a gentleman high in office, was directed by miniſtry to draw up a formal notification of their ideas upon this matter, in order to be communicated to Congreſs.

This notification gave them to underſtand, that it was earneſtly hoped by all the real friends of America, that the terms expreſſed in the reſolution which contained the conciliatory motion, would be accepted by all the Colonies who had the leaſt affection for their King and country, or a juſt ſenſe of their own intereſt.

Theſe terms, it was ſaid, were honourable for Great Britain, and ſafe for the Colonies. If theſe were not blinded by faction, ſuch terms would remove every grievance relative to taxation, and be

the

the basis of a compact between the Colonies and the mother country.

The people in America ought therefore, on every consideration, to be satisfied with them. No farther relaxation could be admitted; as the temper and spirit of the nation were so much against concessions, that if it were the intention of administration, they could not carry the question. Administration, however, had no such intention; being fully and firmly persuaded, that further concessions would be injurious to the Colonies, as well as to Great Britain.

Congress was also informed by this notification, that there was not the least probability of a change of administration; which was at the same time perfectly united in opinion, and determined to pursue the most effectual measures, and to use the whole force of the kingdom, if it were necessary, to reduce the rebellious and refractory Colonies.

It concluded by assuring them, that there was so great a spirit in the nation against the Congress, that the people would chearfully bear the temporary distresses that might follow from a stoppage of the American trade.

This intimation the Congress might depend upon as true, and in no wise calculated to deceive them, and serve the purposes of party.

The impression which was made on the minds of the Congress by this notification, did not correspond with the expectation formed in England: they received it with seeming indifference, and instead of taking it into immediate consideration, it was ordered to lie on the table with other papers.

It was full two months before the report of the committee to which they referred it, was brought into debate. It had been received on the thirtieth of May, and the Congress came to no formal opinion about it till the last day of July ensuing.

The

The explicitneſs of the opinion they delivered upon this occaſion, made full amends however for their tardineſs. It was in every reſpect an ultimatum to all propoſals on the part of Great Britain. It ſhowed, at one view, the line of action finally embraced by America; it ſhowed too that it was irrevocable, unleſs the ſuperior ſtrength of Britiſh arms ſhould render it otherwiſe.

This opinion was, that the Colonies of America were entitled to the ſole and excluſive privilege of giving and granting their own money; that this involved a right of deliberating whether they would make any gift, for what purpoſe it ſhould be made, and what ſhould be its amount: that it was a high breach of this privilege, for any body of men, extraneous to their conſtitution, to preſcribe the purpoſes for which money was to be levied upon them, and to aſſume the authority of judging of their condition and circumſtances, and of determining the amount of the contribution to be levied.

That as the Colonies poſſeſſed a right of appropriating their gifts, ſo were they entitled at all times to inquire into their application, to ſee that they be not waſted among the venal and corrupt, for the purpoſe of undermining the civil rights of the givers, nor yet be diverted to the ſupport of ſtanding armies, inconſiſtent with their freedom, and ſubverſive of their quiet. To propoſe therefore that the monies given by the Colonies ſhould be ſubject to the diſpoſal of Parliament alone, was to propoſe that they ſhould relinquiſh this right of inquiry, and put it into the power of others to render their gifts ruinous, in proportion as they were liberal.

That this privilege of granting or withholding their money, was an important barrier againſt the undue exertion of prerogative; which if left altogether without controul, might be exerciſed to their great

great oppreſſion. All hiſtory ſhowed how efficacious its interceſſion was for the redreſs of grievances, and re-eſtabliſhment of rights, and how improvident it was to part with ſo powerful a mediator.

That a ſuſpenſion of the exerciſe of the power aſſumed by Parliament to tax the Colonies, being expreſsly made commenſurate with the continuance of their gifts, theſe muſt be perpetual, to make that ſo: whereas no experience has ſhown, that a gift of perpetual revenue ſecures a perpetual return of kind diſpoſition. On the contrary, the Parliament itſelf, wiſely attentive to this obſervation, is in the eſtabliſhed practice of granting ſupplies from year to year only.

Though deſirous, and determined to conſider in the moſt diſpaſſionate view every ſeeming advance towards a reconciliation, made by the Britiſh Parliament, they ſtill entreated their brethren of Britain to reflect, that had even acceptable terms been proffered to the Colonies, propoſals that came accompanied with fleets and armies, ſeemed addreſſed to their fears, rather than to their freedom. With what patience would Britons receive articles of treaty from any power upon earth, when borne on the point of a bayonet by military plenipotentiaries?

They thought it unequitable, that the Colonies ſhould be required to oblige themſelves to other contributions than thoſe which Great Britain received from a monopoly of their trade. This, of itſelf, was laying them under a heavy contribution. To demand therefore additional aids in the form of a tax, was to demand the double of their equal proportion.

If they were to contribute an equal ſhare of taxes with other parts of the empire, they ought, of reaſon, to enjoy equally with them free commerce with the whole world. But while the reſtrictions upon their trade excluded them from the reſources

of wealth, was it juſt they ſhould bear all other burdens equally with thoſe to whom every reſource is open.

They did not think the Britiſh Parliament had any right to intermeddle with their proviſions for the ſupport of civil government, or adminiſtration of juſtice. The proviſions they had made were ſuch as pleaſed themſelves, and were agreeable to their own circumſtances: they anſwered the ſubſtantial purpoſes of government, and of juſtice; and other purpoſes than theſe ſhould not be anſwered. They did not mean that their people ſhould be burthened with oppreſſive taxes, to provide ſinecures for the idle or corrupt, under colour of providing for a civil liſt. While Parliament purſued their plan of civil government within their own juriſdiction, they hoped alſo to purſue theirs without moleſtation.

They objected to the propoſals made to them, as implying only a ſuſpenſion of the mode, but not a renunciation of the right to tax them; neither did they imply any offer to repeal the late acts of Parliament ſo offenſive to the Colonies; on the contrary, while holding out theſe propoſals to them, Parliament was actually paſſing other acts equally obnoxious.

Great Britain, in their opinion, ſtill claimed, upon the whole, a right of demanding from the Colonies whatever ſhe thought proper; and of taxing them to the full amount, if they did not comply with the demand. But what was a claim of far higher importance, ſhe challenged a right to alter their very charters.

They were perſuaded, that when the impartial world reflected on the rapid ſucceſſion of injuries, which, during the courſe of ten years, had been aimed at the Colonies, when it reviewed the pacific and reſpectful expoſtulations, which, during that

whole

whole time, were the ſole arms they oppoſed to them; when it obſerved that their complaints were either not heard at all, or anſwered with new provocations; when it recollected the declaration that Britain ſhould not treat with America till ſhe had brought her to her feet; when it conſidered the ſentiments of enmity publicly expreſſed and avowed in Parliament againſt the Colonies; when it viewed the large armaments that invaded them, and the hoſtilities actually carrying on againſt them; when theſe things were laid together, and duly weighed, could the world call them unreaſonable, or heſitate to believe them juſtifiable in their reſiſtance?

At the time when the Congreſs drew up this anſwer to the conciliatory motion, their affairs wore a proſperous aſpect. The Royal army had, ever ſince the affair of Bunker's Hill, been blockaded in Boſton: death and illneſs had conſiderably weakened its ſtrength; and the great ſuperiority in numbers of the enemy, rendered it imprudent to attack them in the very ſtrong poſition they were in, till freſh ſuccours arrived from Britain.

The Americans, on the contrary, were daily increaſing in ſtrength, and acquiring experience:—the whole country lay before them; and proviſions were cheap and plenty every where. All poſſible encouragements were given to thoſe who took up arms; and, at preſent, the ſervice was eaſy from the little force that Britain poſſeſſed in America.

All theſe circumſtances emboldened Congreſs to declare its ſentiments to the world without any further reſtraint. They thought it neceſſary to aſſume a ſtile of firmneſs and deciſion on this occaſion, in order to forward the ſpirit of activity and enterprize which was exerting itſelf ſo diffuſively among all claſſes, and to which was due that ſucceſs in ſeveral undertakings, which partly induced

Congreſs to behave ſo reſolutely on this particular emergency.

They had now formed themſelves into a regular train of government: hoſtilities having put an entire end to the authority of Great Britain, they were acknowledged every where, and conſidered themſelves of courſe, as lawfully inveſted with the power of the ſtate.

The diſſentions prevailing in Georgia, had hitherto prevented that Colony from acceding to the general union. A powerful party ſubſiſted there in favour of Great Britain, and long prevented its antagoniſts from carrying their ſchemes into execution, with the ſame facility as in the other Provinces; but it was at length overpowered by a majority, that increaſed in a ſhort time ſo conſiderably as to bear down all oppoſition.

A Proviſicial Congreſs aſſembled in the beginning of July, which adopted, in their fulleſt extent, all the determinations that had been taken by the general Congreſs of the preſent, and that of the preceding year. Deputies were appointed to repair to Congreſs, and to notify their deſire to join the confederacy: they declared, that notwithſtanding the acts of Parliament which affected the other Colonies in ſo oppreſſive a manner, had not been extended to them, they viewed that omiſſion rather as a ſlight than a favour, and were too well convinced of the juſtice of the claims of America, and the propriety of all the colonies uniting in one body on this critical occaſion, to remain ſeparate from them, while invited by ſo many motives.

To tread, with perfect uniformity, in the ſteps of the other Colonies, they framed a petition to the King, containing repreſentations and remonſtrances ſimilar to thoſe that had already been tranſmitted to Britain from the other Colonies.

By this acceſſion the Congreſs ſaw itſelf at the head of all the Engliſh Colonies of conſequence throughout the continent, from the limits of Nova Scotia, to thoſe of Florida; neither of theſe, from various cauſes, had it either in their inclination any more than their power, to join the American alliance. But their ſituation and circumſtances were ſuch, that as no benefits could be expected from them, ſo very little detriment was apprehended.

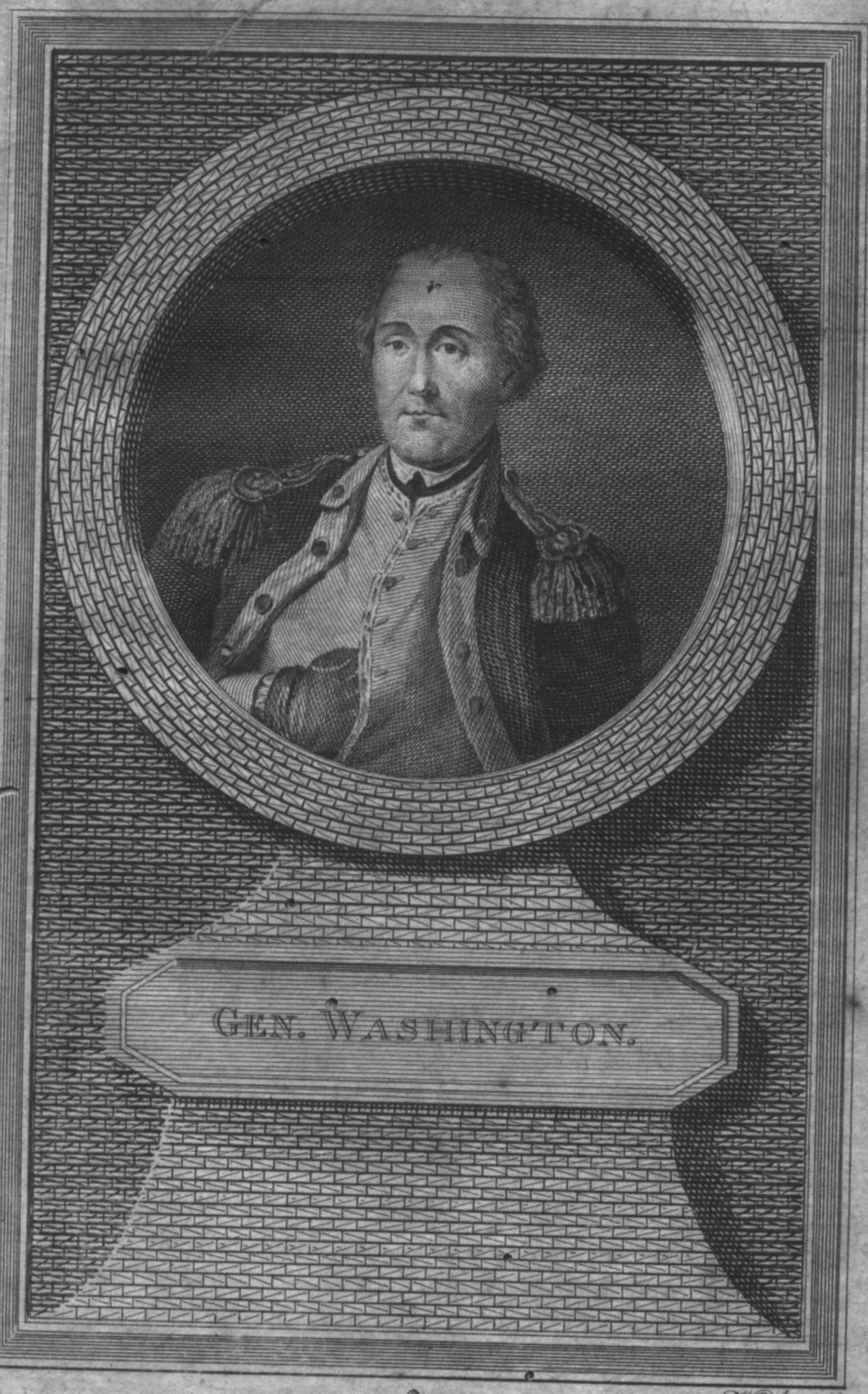
As troops were continually raiſing and training in every Colony, it was now deemed expedient to unite them more effectually together, by placing them under one head. To this intent it was reſolved, that a General ſhould be appointed to the ſupreme command of all the forces that ſhould be raiſed throughout the continent.

Before ſuch a reſolution was taken, the eyes of all America were fixed upon a man whoſe character and fitneſs for ſo important and arduous a ſituation, was probably the chief motive that induced the Congreſs to declare it expedient and neceſſary.

This perſon was George Waſhington, a gentleman well known throughout the whole continent for his gallant behaviour during the laſt war. He had, at an early period of life, diſplayed a military genius that recommended him to the peculiar notice of thoſe who were competent judges. His modeſty was equal to his merit, and his diſintereſtedneſs no leſs conſpicuous.

He was appointed, by the unanimous choice of the Congreſs, Captain General, and Commander in Chief of the American army, with as ample a ſalary as it was in their power to beſtow, and with a very extenſive degree of authority.

After accepting of their nomination with unfeigned reluctance, he generouſly declined all pecuniary emoluments. He earneſtly deſired every perſon preſent to remember that he acknowledged himſelf



GEN. WASHING'TON.

Wm Angus Sc.

Published Sept. 23. 1783, by J. Fielding, Pater Noster Row.

himself unequal to so momentous a charge, and that he undertook it solely in compliance with their positive request.

No appointment could have been more popular. Exclusive of his personal abilities, he possessed an affluent fortune, which he enjoyed in a polite and hospitable manner. His disposition was friendly and affable, and his behaviour decent and becoming a man of rank. All these circumstances contributed to render him very much beloved among his acquaintance, and highly respected by the public.

It was in consequence of the reputation he had justly obtained by these various qualifications, that he was called, by the united voice of the people, to the important employment that was now conferred upon him. It was not only in Virginia, his native country, that he stood so high in the general esteem; his popularity was not less in the other Provinces, those of New England especially; and it was, at their particular application, that he was now raised to the supreme command.

The most fortunate circumstance attending his election to this office, was, that contrary to what usually happens in such cases, it was accompanied with no competition, and followed by no envy. It produced universal satisfaction. Every one voted him, as it were, the fittest man that could be found in America, for the purpose of raising their expectations, and fixing their confidence.

To speak impartially, he fully answered every hope they had formed. In the course of an arduous war, and in the midst of frequent and severe trials, he completely justified the opinion the world had entertained of his valour, conduct, and perseverance.

The appointment of General Washington was attended with other promotions:—Horace Gates, and Charles Lee, two English officers, much

eſteemed in the military line, were choſen, the firſt Adjutant General, the ſecond Major General. Artemus Ward, Philip Schuyler, and Iſrael Putnam, American officers of known bravery and experience, were nominated Major Generals.

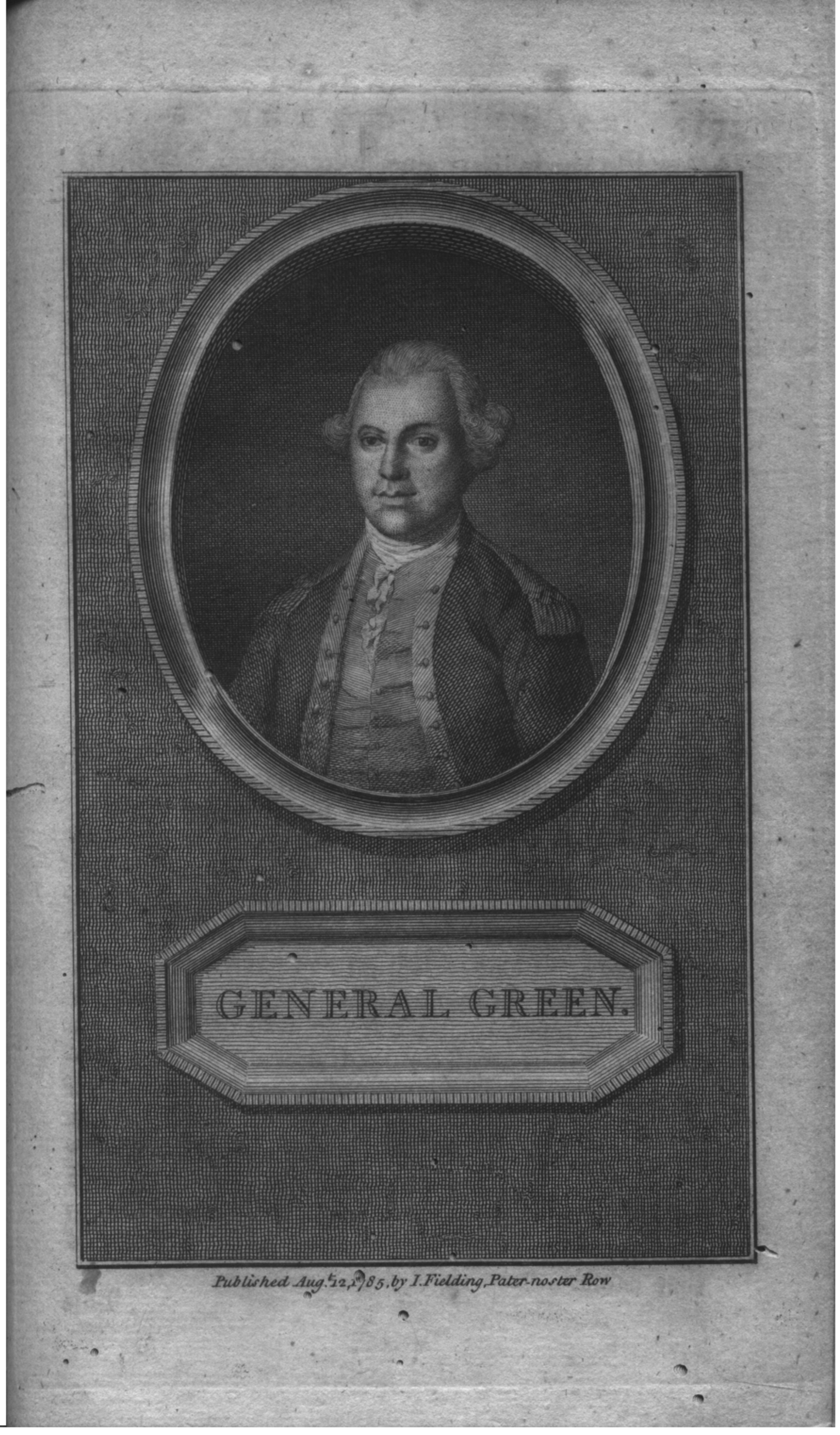
To theſe were added eight Brigadier Generals :— their names were, Seth Pomeroy, Richard Montgomery, David Wooſter, William Heath, Joſeph Spencer, John Thomas, John Sullivan, Nathaniel Green. They were all men of undoubted courage and capacity in their profeſſion.

A very ſufficient and comfortable ſubſiſtence was alſo provided for the officers and ſoldiers in the army, and every care taken to remove all occaſions of complaint on that quarter.

In the beginning of July, General Waſhington repaired to the camp before Boſton, in order to aſſume the command of the army that inveſted it. He was accompanied by General Lee. In every place through which they paſſed on their journey, they were received with every demonſtration of reſpect. They were eſcorted by numbers of gentlemen, who had formed themſelves into companies of volunteers, and honoured with public addreſſes from the Provincial Congreſs of New York, and that of Maſſachuſet.

The general Congreſs itſelf had given, as it were, the ſignal in what manner they expected the man they had choſen, to ſtand at the head of the union, ſhould be treated. The day following his appointment, they reſolved unanimouſly, in a full meeting, and in terms of great attachment and reſpect, that having elected him to the command of the forces employed in the maintenance and preſervation of American liberty, they would aſſiſt and adhere to him with their lives and fortunes in the defence of that cauſe.

This


GENERAL GREEN.
Published Aug.t 12,th 1785, by I. Fielding, Pater-noster Row

This ſpirit of unanimity and reſolution was diffuſed throughout the Colonies, in a degree that was never exceeded either in modern or ancient times. It produced the moſt extraordinary and wonderful effects. Perſons of all ranks and all ages, were now totally taken up with martial occupations and ideas. Gentlemen of birth and affluence, mixed familiarly in the ranks with the common men, and went chearfully through the ſame duties and fatigue.

At this memorable period, religious prejudices themſelves gave way to the enthuſiaſm of patriotiſm. The meek and paſſive tenets of the Quaker perſuaſion, could not prevent many of their youth from entering into military aſſociations, and learning the rudiments of war.

The number of men actually in arms at this time throughout the continent, was certainly very conſiderable: almoſt all men, indeed, that were able to bear arms, made it their buſineſs to acquire the uſe of them by conſtant practice and exerciſe, ſo far as the indiſpenſible calls of their profeſſions would permit them. Every day produced freſh proofs of the warmth and eagerneſs of all individuals to concur in this military ſpirit.

Among other particulars, one happened very worthy of being recorded, in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia:—A ſet of men aſſociated, and formed a body, which, from its being compoſed of elderly people, was denominated the Old Men's company. It conſiſted of about fourſcore men, all of them German emigrants, who had ſerved in regular armies, either in Germany, or other parts of Europe.

The man whom they appointed to lead them to the field, on the firſt day of their muſter, was near one hundred years of age. He had been forty years in the military line, and had been preſent in ſeven-

teen pitched battles. The drummer was eighty-four.

In place of a cockade in their hats, they wore a black crape, to denote their concern at thoſe unfortunate cauſes that compelled them, in the decline of life, to reſume the profeſſion of arms, in order to defend the liberty of a country which had afforded them a retreat from the oppreſſion which had forced them to abandon their own.

The very women became deſirous, on this occaſion, to ſignalize the zeal they felt in their country's cauſe. At a meeting of the gentlewomen belonging to the county of Briſtol, in Penſylvania, they made a large collection of money, to fit out a regiment raiſing there, and wrought a magnificent ſuit of colours for their uſe, with devices and mottos of their own compoſing. The gentlewoman who was appointed by the others to preſent them in their name to the regiment, made a very gallant and ſpirited ſpeech on that occaſion, which ſhe concluded by giving it in charge to the officers and ſoldiers, never to deſert the colours of the ladies, if they ever wiſhed that the ladies ſhould liſt under their banners.

Inſtances of this nature, though of little importance in themſelves, ſerve, however, to denote the general diſpoſition of a people. Theſe inſtances were numerous in every part of America, and effectually contributed to keep up and increaſe the ſpirit of independence, and the determination to face all dangers in ſupport of the common cauſe.

What aſſiſted no leſs, perhaps, in fortifying this diſpoſition, and animating all claſſes to emulate each other in the ſervice of their country, was the praiſes beſtowed on thoſe that had fallen at Lexington and Bunker's Hill. Both theſe engagements were become topics of univerſal attention: every particular relating to them, and every incident that had be-

fallen the Americans upon each of thoſe days, was dwelt upon with uncommon earneſtneſs and avidity. Thoſe who had fallen were commemorated with unceaſing applauſe, and their names were ranked among thoſe of the braveſt and moſt illuſtrious patriots.

The prints and publications of the time, reſounded, as it were, with the glory they had acquired for their country. The moſt elaborate eulogiums were penned in their honour; and whoever had expired with arms in his hands, was rewarded with every expreſſion of gratitude that could be paid to his memory.

Among the ſubjects of this kind that exerciſed the zeal and ingenuity of the Americans, the death of Warren was the principal:—He was extolled as the Hamden of his day, and propoſed as the moſt accompliſhed model of imitation, to all who, like him, were ready to devote themſelves for the public.

A pathetic encomium of him was publiſhed at Philadelphia.—Its language and imagery were bold and ſpirited in the extreme.—"He is not dead," ſaid this encomium; "ſo excellent a citizen, ſo worthy a man, can never die. His memory will be everlaſtingly preſent, everlaſtingly dear to all men of principle,—to all lovers of their country. In the ſhort period of thirty-three years of life, he diſplayed the abilities of a ſtateſman, the qualifications of a ſenator, the ſoul of a hero!—All you that are intereſted in the cauſe for which he bled, approach his bleeding remains, waſh his honourable wounds with your tears, and from the contemplation of his lifeleſs body, haſten to your homes, and there teach your children to deteſt the deeds of tyranny: lay before them the horrid ſcene you have beheld; let their hair ſtand on end; let their eyes ſparkle with fire; let reſentment kindle every feature; let their

lips vent threats and indignation;—then—then—put arms into their hands, ſend them to battle, and let your laſt injunction be, to return victorious, or to die like Warren!"

Such was the temper of the Americans at this time, and ſuch the means employed to cheriſh and confirm it. Thoſe who conſulted experience, foreboded, from the examples of paſt ages, that the reſiſtance of ſuch men would be formidable and deſperate to the laſt, and would prove highly difficult, if poſſible, to overcome.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Tranſactions in Canada.—Chamble, St. John, Montreal, taken by the Americans —Quebec attacked by Generals Arnold and Montgomery.

1775.

THE proſpect of affairs in America began now to afford a variety of ideas to the political part of the world. They ſaw a people who had long moved in a ſecondary light, aſſuming a power of which the augmentation was daily becoming more rapid. Inſtead of an humble and habitual ſubſerviency to the views of that ſtate from which they derived their origin, they now took upon themſelves to direct their own motions; and not only to differ in opinion, but to oppoſe all its commands, and bid open defiance to its authority.

They beheld them advancing ſpeedily to the completion of the deſign they had formed of eſtabliſhing a ſyſtem of government totally repugnant to the ideas of the parent ſtate; but what was more alarming to thoſe who reflected upon the natural diſpoſition of men to enlarge their views in proportion to their ſucceſſes, they clearly perceived, that having attained this primary object, they would extend their deſires ſtill farther; eſpecially when they had tried their own ſtrength, and found themſelves able to maintain their ground againſt all foreign invaſion.

Whether theſe ideas began early to operate among the leading perſons in America, may be a matter of ſome doubt; but that they ſhould very ſoon preſent themſelves to their minds, can hardly be called in queſtion, when it is conſidered that they

had the precedents of ſo many ages before them, and that ambition quickly takes poſſeſſion of men who happen to ſucceed in the beginning of any great enterprize.

The undertaking which the people of America had firſt in contemplation, was to aſcertain beyond the power of encroachment on the part of Great Britain, the right of levying taxes upon themſelves: they viewed the excluſive exerciſe of this right, free from all extraneous interference, in the ſame light as the Britiſh Parliament views its own priviledge of raiſing money independently of the Crown.

Great Britain appeared to the Americans, to ſtand in the ſame relation to them, as its Monarch does in reſpect to the Parliament. His power is bounded by that great barrier of liberty, the priviledge of granting money. While this remains in the hands of the people, their freedom reſts on a ſecure foundation; the moment it is violated, their liberty is in danger.

In the ſame manner America, in order to be ſtiled a free country, muſt alſo enjoy the excluſive prerogative of impoſing taxes upon its own inhabitants. Otherwiſe it would be in the ſame condition as the Parliament, were this aſſembly ſubjected to arbitrary exactions from the Crown.

Whether this repreſentation was well founded or not, Great Britain did not think proper to admit of it. The conteſt was now, therefore, whoſe deciſion ſhould ſtand good, that of Parliament, or that of the Congreſs.

It was certainly a bold attempt to endeavour, by force of arms, to invalidate the decrees of ſo potent and formidable a body of men as the Britiſh Parliament; certain it was, however, that hitherto the reſiſtance of America had been ſucceſsful.

Britain now plainly diſcovered that no common exertions would ſuffice to bring her with honour

out

out of this quarrel. She now began to behold it in a far more ſerious light than it had appeared at firſt; but her ſpirit was too great to bend beneath the proſpect of danger. She had ſo often been uſed to contend with the greateſt difficulties, that ſhe hoped this unexpected one, though it might involve her in a violent ſtruggle, ſtill would, like many others, add to her glory by ſurmounting it.

Though reconciliation was proferred by America, the terms, inſtead of according with thoſe ſhe had already offered, were diametrically the reverſe. To offer a reconciliation of this kind ſhe viewed as a declaration of war. In this mind, her pride was too great to ſubmit to the dictates of her inferior, and no ſufferings or diſtreſſes appeared ſo mortifying as ſuch a ſubmiſſion.

America was, on the other hand, obſtinately determined to refuſe the conditions tendered by Great Britain; and to adhere inflexibly to her own. By this determination ſhe ſeemed indifferent which of the two Britain would make choice of, peace or war; preferring the latter, rather than reſign herſelf to the diſcretion of an opponent.

It was not that ſhe apprehended any ſeverities for what was paſt: ſhe was conſcious that Britain would, for its own ſake, treat her with mildneſs and lenity: harſhneſs would only tend to renew and embitter the quarrel. But the truth was, that her ſpirit was equal to that of her parent ſtate. She thought herſelf entitled to all the demands ſhe made: they were conceſſions, indeed, on the part of Britain; but they were founded on the cleareſt equity, and could not therefore be diſgraceful to them by whom they were made: they were an act of juſtice, and not of humiliation. —Such was the perſuaſion of America.

Thoſe

Thoſe who were well acquainted with the reſpective tempers of the Engliſh and of the Americans, never heſitated in pronouncing that the conteſt would be the moſt ſerious and intereſting that England ever knew, ſince ſhe firſt began to aſſert her own rights againſt abſolute power.

It was long before people in this iſland could be perſuaded, that this unhappy quarrel would be attended with any effuſion of blood. It was with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment that numbers of the moſt ſenſible and enlightened men in this country, received the news that the Americans had dared to face the Britiſh military at Lexington, and had made ſo terrible a ſlaughter of them at Bunker's Hill.

But this aſtoniſhment was mixed with an anger and indignation that inflamed people's minds with reſentment, inſtead of cauſing the leaſt apprehenſion. Such, indeed, has always been the character of the Britiſh nation: difficulties and perils have always ſerved to rouze inſtead of depreſſing its native ſpirit and reſolution.

Fluſhed in the mean time with the ſucceſsful appearance of their affairs, the Americans were exerting their activity in improving every advantage they had gained. They now ſaw the whole continent, from Nova Scotia to Florida, entirely in their own poſſeſſion. They looked upon the troops at Boſton to be in ſuch a condition, as rather to wiſh for a releaſe from their ſufferings, by being permitted to retire from that town unmoleſted, than as inclined, or able, to venture an attack upon the powerful army that ſurrounded them.

In this proſperous ſtate of their circumſtances, they now determined to confine themſelves no longer to defenſive meaſures. Caſting their eyes on the various parts of the Britiſh empire in America, that lay moſt open to an hoſtile attempt, and from whence, in caſe of ſucceſs, they ſhould derive moſt benefit,

benefit, as well as reputation, Canada, now called the Province of Quebec, appeared the moſt likely to anſwer their wiſhes and expectations.

It was indeed inhabited by a people who had long been their natural enemies; but conqueſt and habit had now for a ſeries of years familiarized them to the manners and ideas of the Engliſh. Though of a different religion, the mild and tolerant diſpoſition of the Britiſh government in matters of this nature, had entirely quieted all apprehenſions on that account. They had too, during a long ſpace, enjoyed the advantages of an eaſy and equitable ſyſtem of ruling, and began to feel an attachment to it, founded on the beſt of reaſons, the benefits and domeſtic happineſs it had procured them. Though averſe to broils, and willing to obey without murmur, they plainly perceived that the late regulations introduced among them, were intended to render their Province totally dependent on the miniſtry, and to make the inhabitants ſubſervient to its deſigns againſt the Engliſh Colonies.

Though the clergy and the nobleſſe were in the intereſt of the miniſtry; it was far otherwiſe among the inferior orders. They were almoſt to a man diſpleaſed with the acceſſion of authority accruing to their ſuperiors in conſequence of the act lately paſſed. They remembered with what haughtineſs theſe had comported themſelves in former days, when under the dominion of France. They did not therefore wiſh for a return of that dependence and vaſſalage under which the bulk of the Canadian people had ſo long been kept, to the great impoveriſhment and oppreſſion of the community, and the evident obſtruction of the general proſperity of the Province.

The number of individuals who had removed from the Colonies into that Province, and the many others who had gone over to it from Britain, had powerfully contributed to confirm thoſe diſpoſi-

tions

tions in the French inhabitants. The late ſubverſion of the Engliſh laws, was conſidered by the Britiſh ſettlers as an act utterly unjuſtifiable. As long cuſtom emboldened theſe to ſpeak their minds with uncontroulable freedom, they repreſented to the Canadians that they were treated in the moſt unwarrantable manner, and that they were by no means bound to ſubmit to the new forms of adminiſtration framed for them by Parliament, as they were totally repugnant to the ſpirit of the Engliſh conſtitution, and abſolutely illegal.

They further repreſented this act as founded on falſehood and deception: it was obtained by their ſecret enemies, the nobleſſe, who had baſely made uſe of their name, to induce the Britiſh miniſtry to procure the paſſing of it, as an acceptable deed to the generality of the Canadians.

This unworthy and ſurreptitious manner of ill-treating their countrymen, ought therefore to be reſented, if the community meant to prevent the repetition of that tyranny which they had ſo long endured, and fruitleſsly complained of, till kind fortune placed them under the influence of an Engliſh government, the ſpirit of which did not allow any part of the community to oppreſs the other. But this oppreſſion would now return, and be felt more heavily than before, if they did not unite in defence of their juſt and natural rights, and manfully reſiſt all ſpecies of tyranny.

With ſpeeches and repreſentations of this kind did the opponents of miniſtry in Canada inflame the minds of the people againſt the meaſures propoſed by government in the planning of the Quebec act. Nor were inſinuations wanting at the ſame time, from thoſe who ſecretly wiſhed well to the Colonies, how fair an opportunity the Canadians had at this preſent time to emancipate themſelves wholly from the ſhackles impoſed on them by that act. Were

they now to hearken to the friendly advice contained in the addreſſes made to them by Congreſs, they need never after apprehend ill-uſage from Britain, or any other power, and would at once provide for an uninterrupted continuance of domeſtic tranquility and happineſs.

The Congreſs was perfectly acquainted with the diſcontents of the Canadians, and of their averſeneſs to act againſt the Colonies: they knew that the Britiſh ſettlers in that Province were, with few exceptions, inclined to favour them, if it could be done with ſafety to themſelves; and that what chiefly retained them in obedience under the new ſyſtem of government, was their inability to reſiſt it.

They reflected, at the ſame time, that unleſs the intent of that act was obſtructed by an early oppoſition, it would operate in a very fatal manner to their intereſts. Its profeſſed and avowed purpoſe was to arm Canada againſt the Colonies. With ſuch a manifeſt intimation of the danger with which they were threatened, they would ſtand inexcuſable to their conſtituents, if they neglected any practicable means of warding off ſo terrible a blow.

The only means by which to prevent it, was obviouſly by ſtriking the firſt blow themſelves, and making a vigorous attack upon that very quarter, while yet deſtitute of a power ſufficient to reſiſt a ſudden and ſpirited impreſſion.

The ſucceſs they had met with at Crown Point and Ticonderoga, had already paved the way to an enterprize of this nature. They had, by taking them, broken down the fences, that guarded the frontiers of Canada, and were now at liberty to enter, and contend on equal ground with the ſmall number of troops remaining for its defence.

They were duly ſenſible, on the other hand, that by taking ſo bold a ſtep, they changed at once the whole nature of the war. From defenſive on their

part, it then became offenſive, and ſubjected them henceforwards to the imputation of being the aggreſſors in this unfortunate quarrel: many who before ſuch an attempt had warmly eſpouſed their cauſe in Britain, would probably be offended at this meaſure, and tax them with heightening the fury, and increaſing the miſchiefs occaſioned by this diſpute.

They were fully aware, that the principles of reſiſtance, ſo far as they had hitherto adopted them, far from being condemned by the Britiſh nation, were, on the contrary, abetted, and ſtrongly juſtified by a very conſiderable party, equal at leaſt, if not ſuperior in number, to that which approved of the meaſures carried on againſt them. It might not, therefore, be prudent to expoſe themſelves to the loſs of this good-will and favourable inclination to them among their Engliſh brethren, which might, on a future opportunity, prove highly ſerviceable in their cauſe.

Theſe reflections, which were juſtly founded, occaſioned them to weigh with great deliberation the probable conſequences that might reſult from embracing or declining ſo daring a meaſure. The diſpleaſure it might create in England was undoubtedly a diſagreeable circumſtance; the Americans ought ſeriouſly to endeavour to preſerve the good opinion and friendſhip of the Engliſh nation: it was a deſirable object at all times, but more particularly in the preſent juncture. But ſtill the preſervation of themſelves was an object of far greater importance. The aſſiſtance they had looked for in England had failed them. Much eloquence had been diſplayed in Parliament in the ſupport of their cauſe; petitions and remonſtrances had been preſented in their behalf, and they had every reaſon to think that their conduct and principles were approved by a large proportion, perhaps the majority of

the people in Britain. But it was plain that these indications of amity to them were all they were to expect. A variety of causes would prevent any such assistance to them from Britain as they now stood in most need of. It would therefore be unwise to abstain from pursuing any measure, however uncommon and unprecedented, merely from the apprehension of giving umbrage to the English. If they sincerely wished the Americans to prosper in their proceedings, they would rejoice at any successes they might obtain: if, on the contrary, from a lukewarmness, or ignorance of the necessity of taking the most resolute measures, the people of England should condemn them for such an enterprize, it were better to incur their disapprobation, than to hazard the safety of America by an untimely complaisance, for which their real friends in Britain would be no less ready to blame them, than all the judicious part of the world.

As to those arguments that were drawn from the danger of exasperating the enemy to a degree that might increase the resentment he already felt, and provoke him to additional exertions, they were weak and futile: his wrath was already kindled to the highest pitch; he had done, and intended to do all the mischief that lay in his power. Intelligence was daily arriving of the vast preparations he was making to subdue the Colonies. His intentions were hostile in the highest degree. To conquer, or to ravage America, was his fixed determination.—Did it become men of sense and courage to hesitate in such a case about the propriety of any measure that could distress an enemy so outrageously bent on their destruction? The readiest method to obviate his threats, was to show him that they had not intimidated the Americans, and that instead of waiting for the issue of his menacing declarations, they would anticipate every step he proposed to take, and

carry the operations of war into his own precincts, before he was in readineſs to wage it upon their own territories.

In a quarrel ſuch as the preſent, where the ruling power was engaged on the one hand, and ſubjects on the other, it was the worſt of all policy to temporize. Moderation would only produce pride, and averſeneſs to terminate the diſpute, from a notion that their ſpirit began to fail, and that they were fearful of giving too much offence, leſt it ſhould create irreconcileableneſs in the breaſt of an irritated conqueror.

Were ſentiments of this kind to be once admitted, they would deſtroy all ſpirit and energy in their councils. America had better end the conteſt at once, by ſubmiſſion to the dictates of Britain, than perſevere in it any longer, unleſs weak and wavering meaſures were totally diſcarded. It was in vain to expect favourable conditions by forbearing to exert themſelves. This would only be giving advantages to the enemy, and protracting the war to their own detriment.

The laws of war and of nations allowed the foreſtalling of an enemy. In their particular caſe, it would in all probability prevent infinite miſchief.—If they forbore to attack the enemy in the quarter propoſed, it would be precifely from thence he would make the moſt dangerous irruption. It was there he would collect his principal force, and come upon them without delay, as ſoon as it was ready. Happily for America, he was not yet in a formidable poſture, nor could be duly prepared till next ſpring. Now therefore was the ſeaſon for action.—They had ſufficient numbers to ſpare for ſuch an expedition: it would be undertaken with more alacrity than any other, as the purpoſe of it was to ſecure their back-ſettlements from the incurſions of the Indians, whoſe barbarities they were experimentally

mentally acquainted with, and multitudes of whom would not fail to join a foe that would entice them by the double motive of pay and plunder.

This buſineſs could not be deferred. As ſoon as winter was over, fleets and armies would ſail from Britain to invade their coaſts, and their whole ſtrength would then be wanted to protect them.—Then would they feel the conſequences of having neglected to annoy the enemy in the effectual manner now propoſed; they would be aſſailed on every ſide, on that particularly to which their attention was now directed.

Theſe were no ſurmiſes: it was publicly known that large reinforcements were expected at Quebec the enſuing campaign, which would, in conjunction, with the Canadians and Indians, form a conſiderable army. With this, the deſign of the enemy was to penetrate into the heart of the Colonies, while a ſuperior force was landed on their ſhores.

The only poſſible expedient left them to leſſen theſe difficulties, was by immediately reſolving to march with all expedition to Quebec, and uſe their moſt vigorous efforts to make themſelves maſters of that place. The poſſeſſion of it would defeat the moſt dangerous project they had to apprehend, and open, in all likelihood, a variety of reſources, by enabling the inhabitants to declare and act according to their inclinations, which were well known to be favourable to the Colonies.

All theſe conſiderations duly weighed, it were inconſiſtent with ſound policy, to delay an attempt from which they had every reaſon to hope for ſucceſs. If they did not riſk a previous attack on their part, it was inevitable on that of the enemy, and no doubt could be entertained that he would take every precaution to render it ſucceſsful which pecuniary advantages could procure.

No time was to be loſt; for though the military force there was not numerous, yet it was commanded by an intrepid and vigilant officer, whoſe military ſkill, and enterprizing diſpoſition, made him formidable in any ſituation he might be. Confiding in theſe qualities, the Britiſh adminiſtration had inſtructed him with powers that rendered him abſolute maſter in the Province of which he was appointed Governor. He was commiſſioned to embody the people of Canada, and to march at their head againſt the Colonies. Though the Canadians were tardy in their obedience, yet he would, on the arrival of reinforcements, be ſoon able to compel them to it. He had already collected a numerous body of Indians, and was promiſed more. The troops he had, though few, were well diſciplined; and if further leiſure and opportunity were allowed him, every thing was to be dreaded from a perſon of his ſpirit and abilities.

It was with great reaſon that Congreſs entertained this opinion of General Carlton. Notwithſtanding the diſadvantages he laboured under in his new government, ſuch was his diligence and care, that with a handful of regulars, and a ſmall number of ſuch as he could rely upon, he found means to repreſs the ill affected, and to contain them in ſubjection, though infinitely ſuperior in ſtrength, and continually encouraged by the ſecret machinations of the Coloniſts to throw off the Engliſh yoke.

In conſequence of the determination of Congreſs, a body of three thouſand men were put under the command of Generals Montgomery and Schuyler, with orders to proceed to Lake Champlain, where flat-bottom boats were preparing to convey them to the entrance of the Sorel, a river that flows in a direct line to the fort which bears its name, and there diſcharges itſelf into the great river of St. Lawrence.

When

When General Montgomery, who headed the firſt diviſion, was arrived at Crown Point, he was informed that ſeveral armed veſſels, ſome of which were of conſiderable force, were ſtationed at St. John's, a fort of great ſtrength on the Sorel, from whence they were about to ſail, in order to obſtruct his paſſage acroſs the lake.

Upon this intelligence, he haſtened with all ſpeed, and took poſſeſſion of an iſland that commanded the mouth of the Sorel, and from whence he could prevent their entrance into the lake.

On the arrival of General Schuyler, who was the ſuperior in command, they jointly agreed in publiſhing a manifeſto, inviting the people of Canada to join them. To ſupport the deſign of this declaration, they advanced towards St. John's, ſituated about twelve miles from the lake; but they could not make good their landing under the cannon of that fort, and being apprehenſive, from the appearance of ſtrength, and the countenance of the garriſon, that they ſhould meet with great difficulties in ſuch an attempt, they landed at a diſtance, in a part of the country full of woods, ſwamps, and rivulets. But here they were immediately attacked by a large body of Indians, and found it neceſſary, from the inconveniency of their ſituation, to retreat with all ſpeed to the iſland which they had firſt occupied.

Illneſs having obliged General Schuyler to remove to Albany, the ſole command devolved upon Montgomery, a man every way fit for the buſineſs he was now intruſted with. He united in an eminent degree, the character of a ſoldier and a gentleman; polite, well-ſpoken, and humane; brave, cool, and thoroughly verſed in his profeſſion.

He ſoon found means, by his addreſs, to detach from General Carlton numbers of thoſe Indians who had joined him; and upon the arrival of the remain-

ing troops deſtined for this expedition, he determined to lay ſiege to St. John's.

In the mean time various parties of the Americans were diſperſed over the frontiers of Canada, where the inhabitants received them with great friendſhip and hoſpitality. They not only furniſhed them with proviſions, but aſſiſted in carrying on the ſiege, and reinforced them with numbers of their own people.

While General Montgomery was employed in this ſiege, Colonel Allen, a bold and enterpriſing man, to whom chiefly the Colonies were indebted for the taking of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, now formed the project of ſurpriſing Montreal. He marched to this place at the head of a ſmall party of reſolute adventurers, like himſelf; but the officers who were ſtationed there, having received intelligence of his approach, went out and attacked him with the militia and a detachment of regulars. His party was totally routed, and himſelf taken priſoner, with a number of his men. Their treatment was rather ſevere; they were loaded with irons, Allen himſelf not excepted, and ſent priſoners to England on board a man of war.

The ſiege of St. John's went on ſlowly at firſt for want of ammunition; but General Montgomery having acquired a large ſupply of powder, by the taking of Chamblee, a ſmall fort at a little diſtance from St. John's, he now was enabled to puſh his operations with vigour.

The garriſon behaved with great courage, and ſupported with uncommon patience the diſtreſſes to which they were reduced by the want of ſufficient proviſions. They were commanded by Major Preſton, who acquitted himſelf on this occaſion with equal ſkill and valour.

General Carlton, conſcious of the importance of

it. His ſituation was in every reſpect highly unfavourable: the regular troops in his province were now an inconſiderable number; the neceſſity of providing for the defence of St. John's, had obliged him to garriſon it with the major part of them: the few he had left were diſperſed at a conſiderable diſtance from each other; and it was chiefly upon new levies he was now to depend.

In this exigency, it was propoſed by Colonel Maclean, an active and gallant officer, to raiſe a regiment out of the Scotch Highlanders that had lately emigrated from their country: with this body of men, aſſiſted by ſome Canadians, the Colonel poſted himſelf at the junction of the Sorel with the river St. Lawrence.

In the mean time General Carlton repaired to Montreal; where, with infinite pains, he collected about a thouſand men, chiefly natives of Canada. With theſe, and a few regulars and Britiſh volunteers, he ſet out to join Colonel Maclean, intending to march with him directly to the relief of St. John's.

But the Provincials, who perceived his deſign, gathered a ſuperior force, and attacked him on his endeavouring to paſs from the iſland where Montreal ſtands, to the eaſtern ſhore: his Canadians were ſoon routed by the Provincials, and the whole ſcheme was defeated.

Another body of Canadians who had joined Colonel Maclean, hearing of the diſaſter that had befallen their countrymen, abandoned him inſtantly, and he was compelled to haſten back to Quebec with all poſſible ſpeed.

Theſe two ſucceſſive defeats were powerful encouragements to the Americans, who were beſieging St. John's: they carried on their works with double ardour, and made ſuch a progreſs, as to prepare for an aſſault on the body of the place. The

garriſon as reſolutely waited for it, intending to defend themſelves to the laſt extremity.

But the news of the two laſt unſucceſsful engagements being communicated to them, and the utter impoſſibility of being ſuccoured repreſented by General Montgomery, they yielded to neceſſity; and as any further defence could only occaſion needleſs bloodſhed, they conſented to treat for the ſurrender of the fort.

The terms demanded by the garriſon, were, to be permitted to withdraw to Great Britain; they had even inſiſted, at firſt, on ſome days reſpite, in expectation of General Carlton being able either to raiſe the ſiege, or throw in refreſhments and ſuccours; but both theſe requeſts were peremptorily denied. The only terms allowed them, were to march out with the honours of war, in conſideration of their gallant behaviour; but then to lay down their arms, and deliver themſelves up as priſoners. They were permitted to keep their private property; and in all other reſpects were treated with that humanity which characteriſed General Montgomery.

The reddition of fort St. John took place on the third of November, ſeventy-five. The number of priſoners amounted to upwards of five hundred regulars, and near two hundred Canadians: among theſe were ſome of the principal nobleſſe of that Province, who had very zealouſly embraced this occaſion of teſtifying their attachment and fidelity to the Britiſh government.

The loſs of this place was a heavy and unexpected blow to the Britiſh intereſt in America. The flower of the military and of the Canadians were here. It was univerſally expected that General Carlton would have been able to relieve it. His ill ſucceſs, though proceeding from cauſes that made it inevitable, and which neither ſkill nor va-

lour could oppoſe, raiſed the reputation of his antagoniſts to a high pitch, and added freſh courage to the Americans and their adherents.

The body of Provincials who had compelled Colonel Maclean to abandon the poſt of Sorel, loſt no time in erecting batteries on the point projecting furthermoſt into the river St. Lawrence, with the view of preventing the ſhipping at Montreal from going to Quebec: rafts and other conſtructions of that ſort, well provided with cannon, were ſtationed in the river, and every preparation made that could effectually obſtruct the General's paſſage.

Here, again, the Americans met with the completeſt ſucceſs. After ſeveral fruitleſs attempts made by the armed veſſels from Montreal, to force their way down the river, they were attacked in their turn, forced to retire, and purſued by the Provincials, who were now become maſters of both ſides of the ſhore, and threatened to reduce Montreal as they had already done St. John's.

After taking this fortreſs, General Montgomery advanced immediately with his victorious forces towards Montreal. His approach being daily expected, the few Britiſh forces in that town repaired for ſafety on board the ſhipping, in hopes of ſome auſpicious opportunity of eſcaping down the river; but it was ſo well and ſo cloſely guarded by the Provincial floating batteries, that all eſcape was ſoon diſcovered to be impracticable. Thus, whether in the town or in the ſhipping, they now ſaw that they muſt unavoidably fall into the hands of the Provincials.

In this extremity, the principal of the Britiſh and French inhabitants applied to General Montgomery, for the grant of a capitulation; but he gave them to underſtand, that being defenceleſs and entirely at his diſcretion, they could not expect ſuch a conceſſion on his part; as he came not, however,

with

with any intention to oppreſs or moleſt them, but, on the contrary, to give them protection and freedom, he would promiſe, in a ſolemn manner, that they ſhould remain in the unviolated poſſeſſion of all their property and rights, civil and religious. He expreſſed his hope, that the Canadians would ſpeedily have an opportunity of ſettling their government and laws conformably to their own deſire, in a Provincial Congreſs of their own chuſing. This would eſtabliſh their freedom and domeſtic affairs upon a permanent footing, and deliver them from the inconveniencies of which they juſtly complained under the form of government lately introduced among them for iniquitous purpoſes.

He engaged, that in the mean time, the execution of the laws ſhould be conducted as near as poſſible in the ſpirit of the Engliſh conſtitution, and that the people ſhould be treated with the utmoſt lenity both in private and public concerns.

Having thus adjuſted all matters to the entire ſatisfaction of the inhabitants, he took peaceable poſſeſſion of Montreal on the thirteenth day of November, ſeventy-five.

After the loſs of St. John's, and the ſurrender of Montreal, people began to think that Quebec would ſhortly ſhare the ſame fate. Deſtitute of a ſufficient garriſon for its defence, and full of mal-contents, it ſeemed to offer itſelf an eaſy conqueſt to the Provincial army, elate with ſuch rapid ſucceſſes, and led on by ſo able a commander. It was not doubted this would be his next attempt, and the general expectation was, that he would ſucceed.

What contributed particularly to this apprehenſion, was the abſence of the Governor, who was himſelf in the moſt imminent danger of being made priſoner; in which caſe all hopes of preſerving either the capital or the province itſelf, would be finally given up.

General

General Montgomery, who fully knew the importance of making ſuch a prize, neglected nothing to ſecure it: he was diligently conſtructing flat boats, to carry guns of a ſufficient weight of metal to attack the Britiſh armament on his ſide, and thus to put it between two fires.

No expectation now remained of effecting its eſcape: all that could poſſibly be attempted, was to watch the opportunity of a dark night, to carry the Governor ſafely off. This was happily executed accordingly, in a ſmall boat, rowed in the profoundeſt ſilence with muffled paddles inſtead of oars, of which the motion would, by its noiſe, have inevitably occaſioned an alarm among the enemies craft, ſo thickly ſtationed along the river.

Having thus provided for his ſafety, the next ſtep was to capitulate with the Provincials; but the conditions were entirely their own. The whole armament was obliged to ſurrender: it conſiſted of eleven armed veſſels, with a number of priſoners, ſome of them Britiſh officers of rank; General Preſcot was one; together with a very conſiderable quantity of military ſtores.

In this manner was the whole dominion of Britain in Canada reduced to the city of Quebec. The certainty of its being loſt with the reſt, appeared the more certain and indubitable, as it was now threatened by an enemy no leſs intrepid and enterpriſing than Montgomery himſelf.

This new enemy was Colonel Arnold, a man of the moſt undaunted courage and ſingular activity. While the Provincial army was encamped before Boſton, he conceived the bold deſign of invading Canada, in a manner never yet attempted, in the many expeditions that had taken place during the various wars that had been waged in America between the French and the Britiſh Colonies.

Hitherto

Hitherto the only practicable road to that Province was by the Lakes: they afforded the only convenient communication even in peace. Little was it expected that a military force, attended by all the incumbrances of war, would ever imagine it were poſſible to penetrate into that country by any other way.

About the middle of September, a body of choſen men, conſiſting of near twelve hundred, left the camp at Boſton under the command of Colonel Arnold. They proceeded to Newbury, a ſea port, ſituated at the mouth of the Merrimack, from whence they embarked for the mouth of the Kennebeck.

This was the river intended to form the line of their expedition. Its head was at no great diſtance from Quebec, the ultimate object of their undertaking; but its ſtream was rapid, and difficult to be ſtemmed; and its bed was ſtrowed with a multitude of rocks that made it exceſſively dangerous.

They begun this laborious and fatiguing navigation on the twenty-ſecond day of September.—They were obliged conſtantly to work upwards againſt an impetuous current, that frequently overſet their boats, or filled them with water. They were often compelled by cateracts and other impediments, to land and continue their march on ſhore, loaded with their boats, and other warlike burdens, no leſs cumberſome. In the encountering of theſe, and many other difficulties, they ſuffered great loſſes of ſtores, and proviſions; to ſay nothing of the exceſſive fatigue they underwent continually, the carrying places proving not ſeldom very long, and full of obſtructions, one of them ſtretching no leſs than a dozen miles.

In the midſt of theſe inceſſant difficulties, Colonel Arnold exerted all his vigilance to prevent a ſurprize. The Indians, indeed, were the only peo-

ple

ple from whom ſuch a thing could be apprehended in the frighful wilderneſs in which he was now engaged. In order, however, to obviate any danger of that kind, beſides the ſtricteſt guard and look out on every ſide, he uſed the precaution of reaſſembling every night, in one encampment, the various diviſions that had matched apart during the day.

After reaching the head of the river Kennebeck, they had ſtill to make their way through foreſts and ſwamps, and over mountains and the rocky ſummits of thoſe high ridges of land that ſeparate New England from Canada.

The prodigious hardſhips they had undergone before their arrival at this place, had occaſioned numbers of their men to be ſickly. In their progreſs along the ſhores of that river, they had ſometimes been forced to clear a paſſage, by cutting down the underwood, for miles. Theſe continual obſtructions retarded them ſo much, that on ſome days they could hardly get four or five miles forwards. Their proviſions too, from the frequent loſing of them by accidents on the water, and from the tedious and unexpected length of this painful journey, were become ſo ſcarce, that many of them were obliged at laſt to kill their dogs for food, and to have recourſe to other ſhifts of that ſort for their ſuſtenance.

On quitting Kennebeck, Colonel Arnold, in order to rid himſelf of all incumbrances, diſmiſſed the ſick and diſabled, and with his own diviſion proceeded forwards with all poſſible ſpeed; but unfortunately for the expedition, here one whole third of his people, with a Coloñel at their head, compoſing the rear diviſion, took advantage of his abſence; and pretending a want of ſufficient proviſions, deſerted him, and returned home the way they came.

Undiſmayed

Undiſmayed by this deſertion, the body under Colonel Arnold puſhed onwards, and after having, with the ſame courage and fortitude as before, overcome a variety of obſtacles, they arrived at length on the banks of the Chaudiere, which diſcharges itſelf into the river St. Lawrence, not far from the city of Quebec.

On the third day of November, full ſix weeks from the beginning of the dreadful march of which they now ſaw happily an end, they entered the cultivated parts of Canada, and met with the habitations of men, after having loſt ſight of them for above a month.

They met with the ſame welcome that had been ſhown to their countrymen in other parts; they were ſupplied with all kinds of neceſſaries, and experienced every ſort of encouragement they could deſire.

The Canadians were ſtruck with amazement, when they beheld an embodied force emerging, as it were, from the boſom of the wilderneſs. They were not unaccuſtomed themſelves occaſionally to viſit thoſe deſarts, in hunting parties; but it had never entered into their conceptions, that it was poſſible for human beings to traverſe ſuch an immenſe wild, where obſtructions aroſe at every ſtep, that had hitherto proved inſurmountable; and where Nature itſelf ſeemed to have forbidden ſuch an attempt, by throwing the moſt dreadful and terrifying diſcouragements in their way.

The novelty of the enterprize, the ſpirit that gave it birth, the intrepidity and genius that conducted it, the courage and conſtancy with which it was atchieved, all contributed to render it the moſt ſtriking and memorable event that happened during the war.

It did the higheſt honour to its conductor, and to thoſe he commanded: they were chiefly New England

England men; the major part of whom had never been in war. It ſhowed they poſſeſſed the innate bravery of their forefathers, and were truly deſerving the name of Engliſhmen.

But it was not only in America this expedition was extolled, as a feat of the moſt conſummate ſkill and bravery: it was ſpoken of in England itſelf, and over all Europe in terms of the higheſt admiration, and allowed by military judges to be an exploit of the firſt rate merit.

While it was viewed in this light by the European world, we are not to be ſurprized that throughout the American continent, the people whom it ſo deeply intereſted, ſhould repreſent it as one of the moſt ſtupendous tranſactions that ever happened in war, and compare it to the march of Hannibal over the Alps.

While the inhabitants of Canada were in this ſtate of aſtoniſhment at the boldneſs and ſucceſs of the New England people, Colonel Arnold publiſhed a declaration in the name of General Waſhington, which had been previouſly concerted between them on his departure for this expedition.

It invited them to accede to the general union of the Colonies, and to fight like them for American freedom againſt European oppreſſion. They were told that the intention of Congreſs in ſending troops amongſt them, was by no means to exerciſe hoſtilities, but to give them countenance and protection, and afford them an opportunity of aſſerting their own juſt rights. Far from conſidering the Canadians as enemies, they were ſtrictly ordered to treat them as friends and allies, with whom they were jointly to co-operate in expelling the common enemy.

In conſequence of theſe ſolemn aſſurances, they were deſired to remain in their dwellings with the

utmoſt

utmoſt confidence and ſecurity, and to furniſh the troops with all the neceſſaries in their power, for which they might depend upon full payment.

The intelligence of Colonel Arnold's arrival in Canada, together with the ſurpriſing manner of his having penetrated through ſuch a multitude of obſtacles, threw the city of Quebec into the utmoſt conſternation. It was at this juncture in a very weak ſituation. The inhabitants, and eſpecially the natives of Britain, and of the Colonies ſettled there, were highly averſe to the Quebec act, and with the general ſyſtem reſpecting the Colonies. Their diſcontents had expoſed them to the reſentment of the ruling powers; they were miſtruſted, and regarded as ſecret enemies, who would not fail to ſeize the firſt opportunity of acting openly an hoſtile part.

In the mean time, their behaviour was ſuch as manifeſted how much they conceived themſelves ill uſed by the preference given, as they ſaid, and partiality ſhown to thoſe Canadians and Britiſh individuals who differed from them in ſentiments, and affected, on that account, a ſuperior degree of loyalty.

Born and bred in principles of freedom, they complained that they could not expreſs themſelves on theſe ſubjects firmly and explicitly, without incurring the cenſure of the adverſe party, and being reproached with malevolence to their king and country.

They imputed to theſe injurious ſuſpicions the refuſal to embody them for the defence of the city, when they had requeſted it, and at a time, when from the departure of all the military, it was left in a ſtate abſolutely defenceleſs, notwithſtanding the immenſe property it contained, which muſt unavoidably have fallen into the hands of the Provincials,

cials, together with the city, had it then been attacked, as it was daily apprehended.

But the Engliſh ſettled at Quebec were not the only malcontents there; the far greater number of the French inhabitants were in the ſame diſpoſition. As the Quebec act affected the inferior claſſes among them chiefly, though they did not dare to vent their diſſatisfaction at it with the ſame freedom as the natives of Britain, yet they were no leſs ready to oppoſe it in every ſhape they could, without coming to open reſiſtance.

Neither was it doubted, that they would at laſt have recourſe to this, if ever circumſtances ſhould prove unfavourable to the intereſt of Britain in that Colony. The behaviour of their countrymen in many parts of the Province, thoſe eſpecially remote from the ſeat of government, and where the multitude was under no controul, had exhibited convincing proofs what little dependence could be placed on their attachment, and was a ſufficient earneſt of what might be expected from the French inhabitants of Quebec.

The heart-burnings and animoſities neceſſarily ariſing from theſe cauſes, were at their height when Colonel Arnold made his appearance on the oppoſite ſhore, in ſight of the town. Luckily for the place, intimation of his approach had been given time enough to remove all the boats and ſmall-craft, otherwiſe he would probably have made himſelf maſter of it in the firſt moments of the general panic he had occaſioned.

This diſappointment retarded his paſſage ſome days: he was obliged to apply to the Canadians for aſſiſtance; they gave it with the utmoſt chearfulneſs. But another difficulty remained: the river was guarded by frigates and armed veſſels, that were now poſted in ſuch a manner, as to render his paſſage impracticable by day. He was compelled

to wait for an obſcure night, favoured by which, he found means, by great management and circumſpection, to elude the vigilance of the men of wars people, and to land his men on the other ſide of the river.

In the mean time, neceſſity had effected a reunion of all parties in Quebec. The property contained in that city was ſo great, and the apprehenſion of looſing it, ſhould the city be taken, ſo well founded, that both Engliſh and Canadians agreed to join ſincerely and cordially in its defence. They were, according to their deſire, formed into an armed body, and did military duty with all poſſible alacrity.

In this exigency, application was made to the men of war in the river for the aſſiſtance of their ſailors and marines. They were landed accordingly, and were ſtationed at the cannon on the ramparts, where they behaved with their uſual intrepidity, and did eſſential ſervice.

In ſuch a march as that executed by Colonel Arnold, it had been utterly impoſſible to bring any artillery. He now greatly experienced the want of it. He had found none in his croſſing through Canada. It is probable that he relied upon ſome fortunate contingency for a ſupply ſo neceſſary for his preſent undertaking; or that he promiſed himſelf to be able to carry the place by ſurprize; or, poſſibly, that the numbers of the well-wiſhers to his cauſe, would have overpowered the other party, and delivered the town into his hands.

On the failing of theſe expectations, he had no other plan to follow than to ſeize the avenues to the city, and cut off its communication with the country, in order to diſtreſs it for want of proviſions, and thereby accelerate its reduction on the arrival of thoſe troops that were now daily expected to beſiege it in due form.

He poſted himſelf on the heights of Abram, famous for the victory and fall of General Wolfe, in the late war. From thence he ſent a flag, ſummoning the town to ſurrender; but the garriſon fired at, and refuſed to admit his meſſage. Finding this trial ineffectual, he withdrew, to ſome diſtance from it, in order to refreſh his men; not forgetting, however, to place them in ſuch a poſition as to intercept all ſupplies from without. Here he determined to remain till joined by thoſe forces that had taken St. John's and Montreal, and which he doubted not would uſe their utmoſt endeavours to cloſe the ſucceſsful campaign they had made by the taking of Quebec.

This was their earneſt deſire, as well as that of General Montgomery, who commanded them. The ſurrender of Montreal had ſupplied them with the cloathing neceſſary for ſo rigorous a climate as that of Canada during the winter ſeaſon. It was now begun, and had been ſeverely felt by them; but ſuch was their confidence in the abilities of their General, and their readineſs to ſecond his deſigns, that they bore all hardſhips with the greateſt patience and alacrity.

Such behaviour in them was the more ſingular and unexpected, as the natives of the Britiſh Colonies have a remarkable antipathy to regular and formal ſubordination: the people of New England eſpecially, are much more intolerant of controul than the others, and are peculiarly averſe to any exterior diſplay of authority. In theſe reſpects, the Coloniſts partake of the natural diſpoſition of their neighbours, the Indians, who are notoriouſly more jealous of their perſonal independence than any other race of men.

A diſpoſition of this nature was not to be combated with the ſeverity of military diſcipline, which would have quickly occaſioned diſcontent and deſer-

tion, and thus put an end to the operations intended. On this occaſion the General had conſtant employment for the various abilities he poſſeſſed. His diſcretion, his firmneſs, his talent of perſuading, were all needed to keep together men, who had no other motive to induce their obedience than zeal for the common cauſe, and reſpect for his character.

In the mean time Genéral Carlton was returned to Quebec. His preſence was itſelf a garriſon. His exertions were ſuch as béſpoke the moſt determined reſiſtance, and contributed by their prudence to revive the courage of all men. That no danger might be harboured within the walls, all that were unwilling to bear arms in defence of the town, were ordered to quit it. The force he had was carefully exerciſed, and though ſmall, and conſiſting moſtly of people unuſed to arms, it became ſhortly expert and uſeful beyond their own expectations.

Had an army of ſufficient ſtregnth inveſted the place, the garriſon it contained would not certainly have proved ſufficient to defend a town of ſuch a ſize, and encompaſſed with ſuch extenſive fortifications. Their whole amount did not exceed ſixteen hundred; among whom there was only one company of regulars, and a few marines. The chief dependence was upon the ſeamen, who were about five hundred.

Happily for the garriſon, the beſiegers were not ſo ſuperior to them in point of numbers, as to cauſe much apprehenſion on that account. It was juſtly foreſeen, that with proper management, a ſufficiency of ſtrength would be found to cope with every attack they might make; and that if they ſhould become maſters of Quebec, it would be much more owing to their activity and vigour, than to the multitude of hands they could employ.

Having thus taken effectual meaſures for a reſo-

lute

lute defence, unanimity and confidence were happily reſtored among the inhabitants, and they chearfully prepared to give the enemy a ſpirited reception, whenever he came.

Two impediments of an eſſential kind militated in their favour againſt this enemy; the lateneſs of the ſeaſon, and the defect of artillery. The ſnows were ſet in, and the roads were deep and miry, and impracticable for the conveying of heavy cannon.

But with all theſe diſadvantages, General Montgomery determined to purſue the enterprize he had projected. He was aware, that if he waited for the return of fair weather, he would have a ſtill more difficult taſk; the garriſon would be reinforced, and he would have a ſuperior ſtrength to encounter, which would at once put an end to all attempts upon Quebec.

It was the fifth of December before he arrived in ſight of that town, after enduring a variety of hardſhips in marching from Montreal. The diſtance was one hundred and fifty miles, a ſpace, which at a milder time of the year, would have been traverſed with eaſe; but it was now a ſcene of continual interruption. Winter and climate conſpired againſt him; it was a ſevere trial for the northern Coloniſts who were with him, but thoſe who came from the ſouth were ready to ſink under it.

In the midſt of all theſe diſcouragements, the ſiege of Quebec was opened. From the fewneſs of his forces, General Montgomery flattered himſelf that the garriſon might be induced to ſally forth upon him occaſionally. This would have given him an opportunity, in caſe of their being repulſed, to purſue them ſo cloſely, as to force a paſſage into the town during the confuſion of a retreat. But they ſuffered him to make his approaches without any other interruption than the fire of their guns,

which were well ſerved, and did conſiderable execution.

The Provincial forces had been much diminiſhed by the neceſſity of leaving detachments at Montreal and St. John's, and ſending parties out to collect proviſions. This proved a great hindrance to the puſhing the ſiege with vigour and diſpatch.

As it was neceſſary, however, to preſerve a good countenance, General Montgomery ſummoned the town in due form. He inſiſted upon the ſtrength and goodneſs of his troops, the ſpirit with which their ſucceſſes had inſpired them, and the danger of expoſing ſuch raw men as the garriſon was compoſed of, to the fury and conſequences of an aſſault. He repreſented, at the ſame time, the impoſſibility of relief at the preſent, and that none could be expected before next April, before the expiration of which, Quebec muſt infallibly ſurrender, were it only for want of neceſſary ſupplies.

Theſe ſummons were ſent as uſual by a flag; but they were treated as Arnold's had been, and all correſpondence was refuſed. Means were found, however, to convey the above intimation to the Governor; but he was not a man to be intimidated by any motives or repreſentations whatſoever.

The whole artillery of the beſiegers conſiſted only of five ſmall mortars, and ſix cannons of light metal: with theſe General Montgomery was now obliged to make his beſt endeavours to annoy the city. The bombardment continued ſome time without intermiſſion, but did not occaſion much damage or diſorder; and the cannonade produced little effect, from the inſufficient ſize of the pieces.

In the mean time, the news of his paſt ſucceſſes had filled the Colonies with the moſt ſanguine expectations of their continuance, and that the taking of Quebec would crown the atchievements of their firſt campaign. The General knew the conſequen-

ces

ces of popular disappointment, and was therefore determined to leave no expedient untried to satisfy the wishes of a people who honoured him with so high a degree of confidence.

But the difficulties he had to contend with were now daily increasing. He had to encounter the extremities of fatigue and of cold. His men were not sufficiently numerous to relieve each other properly in the perpetual labours they underwent, and when worn down with toil, they were still exposed to the inclemency of the weather. He began to apprehend, that disgusted at so much suffering, those whose e of service was expired, would demand and insist upon their being discharged.

On the other hand, he saw no prospect of making that impression on the place which might have staggered the resolution of the besieged. They were well supplied with artillery, and warlike stores of all kinds, and were inuring themselves to firmness and perseverance, through the example of the Governor and his officers, who by their skill and assiduity, had rendered the new levies highly serviceable, and had at the same time infused a prodigious spirit into all under their command. This was visible upon every emergency. The garrison, though composed of individuals who greatly differed in character and situations of life, united in the bearing with the utmost chearfulness the severe and continual duty that was unavoidably imposed upon them.

The depth of winter was now at hand. The General was convinced of the absolute necessity of raising the siege, or of finishing it by a speedy success. This latter was however a forlorn hope: he saw no other method of effecting it than by storming the place; but this was an attempt accompanied with infinite danger, and where it was hardly possible to succeed.

The upper part of the city of Quebec was ſurrounded with works too ſtrong for an attack with his ſmall force; and the acceſs from the lower town, on a ſuppoſition he could carry it, was exceſſively difficult, from its ſteepneſs, being in ſome places a precipice, and defenſible by a handful of men againſt multitudes.

But his native intrepidity, and that thirſt for glory which is the predominant paſſion of heroic minds, made him overlook all theſe perils, and reſolve at once to compaſs the point propoſed, or periſh in the attempt.

Truſting to the good fortune that had hitherto attended him, and confiding in the bravery of his troops, and their alacrity to follow wherever he ſhould lead, he finally determined to make a bold, and, as much as poſſible, a ſudden and unexpected effort to take the town by eſcalade.

But the vigilance of the Governor was ſuch, that every part of the place was guarded with all poſſible circumſpection, and the ſtrength he had was ſo judiciouſly diſtributed, as to be able to carry the ſpeedieſt aſſiſtance wherever it might be wanted.

Independently of this it has been ſurmiſed, that intelligence was conveyed to the garriſon of the deſign in agitation in the Provincial camp. This put the beſieged ſo much upon their guard, that by the arrangements they immediately made, it was ſeen that the plan projected againſt them was diſcovered. This, it has been ſaid, compelled the beſiegers to adopt another, which being of a more difficult operation, defeated the whole ſcheme.

The laſt day of December, ſeventy-five, was pitched upon by General Montgomery for this arduous trial. Having made all the requiſite preparations, he advanced to the attack by break of day, in the midſt of a heavy ſtorm of ſnow, which in

ſome meaſure covered his men from the ſight of the garriſon.

Four attacks were made on this occaſion:—two of them were feints upon the Upper Town; the two real aſſaults were commanded by General Montgomery on one ſide, and Colonel Arnold on the other. Theſe different approaches of the enemy, threw the garriſon into great uncertainty, whither to turn their principal attention for defence.

In order to inſpire his people with emulation, General Montgomery aſſigned one of the attacks to the New York, and the other to the New England men: theſe were headed by Arnold, the others he led on in perſon.

Through ſome miſtake, the ſignal for attacking was given before it had been intended. The beſieged, through this accident, were alarmed time enough to prevent a ſurprize, upon which the Provincials chiefly depended.

The way through which General Montgomery had to paſs, was between the river St. Lawrence, on one ſide, and the rocks on which the Upper Town ſtands, on the other.—It was narrow and incommodious. As he knew the moſt deſperate exertions of valour would be required, he had ſelected a number of his moſt reſolute men to accompany him on this firſt onſet. With theſe he made the quickeſt haſte to cloſe in upon the enemy, as near as it was practicable.

He ſoon forced his way through the firſt barrier; but the ſecond, which led immediately to the gates of the Lower Town, was much more ſtrongly fortified. Here a ſtrong body of the beſieged was poſted, with ſeveral pieces of cannon. They received him with a diſcharge of muſketry and grape ſhot, that made an inſtant and almoſt total ſlaughter of his party.—He fell himſelf with his principal officers.

The

The loſs of their General ſo much diſconcerted the body which he had commanded, that the attack was not continued, and a retreat was thought moſt adviſable.

Colonel Arnold, at the head of his New England men, was in the mean time engaged in a furious aſſault on the ſide of the Lower Town oppoſite to that where Mongomery had juſt fallen. He attacked a barrier defended with cannon, and carried it, after an hours obſtinate reſiſtance; but this ſucceſs was attended with a great loſs of his men; and he received a wound himſelf, which compelled him to withdraw from action.

Thoſe officers, however, on whom the command now devolved, continued the aſſault with unabated vigour, and took poſſeſſion of another barrier.

But the beſieged, who now perceived the ſmall number of the enemy employed in this quarter, and that nothing was to be apprehended from any other, collected the whole ſtrength of the garriſon againſt them. A large body, on the one hand, ſallied out from a gate that opened towards their rear, and fell upon them with the utmoſt fury; their whole corps lay mean while entirely expoſed to a heavy fire from the town walls, under which they were now ſo cloſely preſt, that all retreat was cut off. In this dreadful ſituation they maintained a fight of full three hours, before they conſented to ſurrender.

Such was the iſſue of an expedition, which, had it terminated to the advantage of thoſe who conducted it, might poſſibly have decided at once the fate of America.

The ſiege of Quebec forms a remarkable epocha in this unfortuate war. The behaviour of the Provincial troops was ſuch, as ſilenced all thoſe who had ſuſpected their military character. The braveſt

ceeded the firmneſs and intrepidity they diſplayed in their laſt attack.

The termination of the ſiege by this ſignal overthrow, put alſo an end to all apprehenſions for the ſafety of Quebec and of Canada. The ſtrength of the Provincials was now ſo much leſſened, that Colonel Arnold had not eight hundred effective men left under his command.

With this inconſiderable body he had, however, the boldneſs to encamp within three miles of the town. As it was out of his power to attack a place of which the garriſon doubled his own numbers, he contented himſelf with intercepting the conveyance of refreſhments and proviſions thither, and ſucceeded therein ſo well, as to prove a heavy annoyance. In order, at the ſame time, to maintain his ground in caſe of offenſive meaſures on the part of the garriſon, he fortified his encampment with all care, and took every precaution that circumſtances would allow to ſecure himſelf in the poſition he had choſen.

Notwithſtanding the loſs of Montgomery had, in manner, defeated the end of the expedition, the Provincials were ſtill determined to remain in poſſeſſion of what he had acquired for them, till circumſtances more auſpicious afforded them a ſecond opportunity of renewing the attempt in which he had unfortunately periſhed.

Colonel Arnold's ſituation was, however, extremely critical. He was at an immenſe diſtance from thoſe parts whence effectual aſſiſtance could be expected. The moſt expert officers, and the braveſt ſoldiers of the Provincial army had fallen before Quebec; and his chief reſources lay now in his own genius and abilities.

He had, on his firſt entrance into Canada, experienced much kind treatment from the French inhabitants, and been frequently promiſed to be joined

by a conſiderable number of them; but theſe promiſes, from a variety of cauſes, had not been performed. Had they been poſſeſſed of the ſame conſtancy of determination, that animated the Engliſh Coloniſts, and united under the ſtandards of Montgomery and Arnold, while they were yet victorious, it is highly probable, that notwithſtanding the courage and capacity of its Governor, the capital muſt have followed the example of the Province, and at length have ſubmitted to their arms.

But now that a total reverſe of fortune had befallen them, the utmoſt that could be expected from the Canadians, was, that they would continue friendly to the Provincials, and ſupply their wants while they continued among them.

It was even become a difficult taſk to keep the Provincial troops themſelves from diſembodying, and returning to their reſpective homes. This reluctance to remain in their preſent ſtation, did not proceed from a defect of ſpirit, or good will in the cauſe, nor from want of attachment to their commander, for whom they profeſſed the higheſt regard; but from a perſuaſion that it was needleſs, and that all reaſonable hopes of making an impreſſion upon the enemy in that quarter were entirely fruſtrated by the preceding diſaſters.

The utmoſt he could do, was to prevail upon them to remain upon the ground they occupied, and from thence to keep a ſtrict eye on the enemy, and to endeavour, in the mean time, to ſtrengthen and extend their intereſt among the people in Canada, and uſe every method to perſuade them to take at once a deciſive and active part in favour of the Engliſh Colonies.

While the remains of the late American army were thus enduring, with the utmoſt patience and fortitude, the hardſhips of a winter encampment on the frozen plains of Canada, the people at Quebec

were

were enjoying the comfortable ſituation of being completely relieved from the terrors of falling into the hands of an enemy, whoſe wants would have, in all likelihood, prompted him to ſeize upon the vaſt property they poſſeſſed.

Their ſpirits were ſo elated, and the confidence they repoſed in their commander ſo unbounded, that it was imagined by ſome, that had they been led forth after the defeat of the Provincials, they would probably have entirely routed them, and compelled them to fly out of the country; but as the advantage already gained had effected all that was neceſſary at the preſent, it was judged more prudent to run no farther hazard; and to wait quietly for the reinforcements that would not fail to come from Britain in due time, and place them henceforward out of the reach of all danger.

This deliverance of Quebec may be conſidered as one of thoſe proofs, how far the valour and military talents of one man, are able to go in the ſpeedy formation of ſoldiers. The American war itſelf was indeed a ſtriking inſtance of this kind. But nothing ſhowed this truth in a clearer light than the behaviour of thoſe men, whom Governor Carlton was compelled to employ upon this memorable occaſion. They acted with coolneſs and reſolution ſuitable to every emergency; and from the time they took up arms, to that when their ſervice was no longer needed, they teſtified a readineſs to obey command, and an acquieſcence in difficulties, that could not have been exceeded by men the moſt familiarized to the hardſhips and painful ſubordinations of a military life.

The rancour that had ſo unhappily ſubſiſted between the regular and the Provincial troops, gave way, on this occaſion, to ſentiments of humanity. The Americans who ſurrendered themſelves priſoners of war, had no reaſon to complain of ill uſage: the

wounded

wounded were treated with proper care, and no unneceſſary ſeverity was ſhown to the others.

No man that ever fell in battle during a civil conteſt, was ever more univerſally regretted than General Montgomery. He was of a reſpectable family in Ireland. After ſerving in the late war with diſtinction, he married an American lady, and ſettled in that part of the world, where he was beloved and reſpected as much as if he had been a native of the firſt rank and conſequence. Though a ſtranger by birth, the reputation of his integrity was ſuch, that from the character he bore of a warm friend to the liberty of America, he was, on the firſt breaking out of hoſtilities, conſidered as a man fit to be truſted in that cauſe. He was accordingly called forth by Congreſs, and honoured with the commiſſion of Brigadier-General.

His conduct fully correſponded with their high opinion of his abilities and fidelity. In the ſhort ſpace of time he lived to act in their ſervice, no man rendered them of more importance, or did their cauſe more honour by the magnanimity of his proceedings.

As he had ſacrificed the happineſs he enjoyed in private life, to the ſervice and defence of the community of which he was become a member, he was abſolved of all unworthy and factious views, and conſidered as a man who acted from conſcience and principle.

In this light he was viewed while living, and ſpoken of when dead. He had the ſingular felicity of being equally eſteemed by the friends and the foes of the party he had eſpouſed. When the news of his death arrived in England, it occaſioned general ſorrow: his name was mentioned in Parliament itſelf with the higheſt reſpect. Thoſe who had been his fellow-ſoldiers in the late triumphant war, wept over his untimely fate. The miniſter himſelf honoured

noured his memory; he acknowledged his worth, though he reprobated the cauſe for which he fell.

Such was the end of General Montgomery.—He died in the ſtrength and flower of his days. What has been ſaid of ſome celebrated characters, may with peculiar juſtice be applied to him:—He lived long enough for his own reputation, but died too ſoon for the good of that ſociety to which he belonged.

It may not be amiſs to add, that all due reſpect was ſhown to his remains, and that they were buried with the military ſolemnities becoming his ſtation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Tranſactions in Virginia.

1775.

WHILE the northern Colonies of America were thus involved in hoſtilities, the ſouthern were torn with diſſentions that threatened to terminate in the ſame manner.

The people of Virginia had ever ſince the commencement of this unfortunate diſpute, diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their forwardneſs in openly and explicitly condemning the pretenſions of Great Britain, and aſſerting thoſe various privileges to which they thought themſelves and the other Colonies entitled.

They ſtill continued in the ſame mind and temper. They had unanimouſly agreed in ſending Delegates to Congreſs; they had zealouſly adopted all its opinions, and conformed to all its injunctions; they had formed committees and aſſociations for every purpoſe recommended to be proſecuted in that manner: they had, in ſhort, reſolutely determined to maintain, at all hazards, the confederacy entered into by the Colonies, for the obtaining redreſs of grievances, and the reſiſting of the claims of Britain.

That Province was at this time governed by the Earl of Dunmore, a nobleman of a firm and reſolute diſpoſition, whom at firſt they treated with the higheſt marks of reſpect, and with every proof of great perſonal regard.

He had, however, at this turbulent period been, like all other Governors on the continent, often embroiled with the people of his government. He had

at

at this time been engaged in a violent altercation with the Aſſembly, the diſſolution of which afforded great cauſes of complaint, on account of the expiration of thoſe militia laws, which could not be renewed without their immediate concurrence.

Theſe laws were of peculiar conſequence in Virginia, which is inhabited by prodigious multitudes of Negro ſlaves, diſperſed over the whole Province, and amounting to twice the number of the white inhabitants.

The people on this occaſion complained of their being expoſed to the manifeſt danger of an inſurrection from the Negroes; and in default of an Aſſembly, elected a Provincial Convention, which paſſed a reſolution that each county ſhould raiſe a company for its protection.

The Governor was highly offended at their having thus aſſumed the power of the militia, which at all times, and in every Colony, is the peculiar prerogative of the Repreſentative of the Crown. Not knowing how far their intentions might reach, after taking ſo unprecedented a ſtep, he reſolved, in order to prevent, as much as lay in his power, any further proceedings of that kind, to ſecure the powder depoſited in the public ſtorehouſe of the Colony, at Williamſburgh, the capital: it was accordingly removed on board a ſhip, by a party of marines diſpatched aſhore for that purpoſe.

Notwithſtanding this was done during the night, and conducted with the utmoſt circumſpection and ſecrecy, it was known the very next day; and from the uncommon care that had been taken to conceal it, excited the moſt violent ſuſpicion that ſome dangerous deſign was in agitation.

The towns-people aſſembled in arms, in order to force the Governor to return the powder. Happily the magiſtrates interfered, and took upon themſelves to obtain the ſatisfaction that was demanded

by the inhabitants. They repreſented to him the propriety of the city being always ſupplied with ſo neceſſary an article, and the particular neceſſity of its being ready at hand at the preſent time, from the apprehenſions lately entertained of plots among the black people, who, on hearing of what had happened, would become the more intent to carry them into execution.

The Governor avowed the removal of the gunpowder was by his direction. Having received intelligence of commotions in the neighbourhood, he deemed it prudent to convey it to a place of ſafety, promiſing, however, to return it, whenever it ſhould be wanted.

With this anſwer, the magiſtrates of the city reſted ſeemingly ſatisfied; but this tranquility was quickly interrupted by a report, which was ſpread that very night, that an armed party from the man of war was marching to Williamſburgh. This brought again the inhabitants together under arms, and they directed their principal vigilance towards the magazine, fully reſolved to obſtruct all further removals of what it contained.

The conduct and violent complaints of the people on this occaſion, were highly offenſive to the Governor.

The whole of what had been removed did not exceed eight barrels of gunpowder, a quantity not of ſufficient conſideration to juſtify ſuch outrageous murmurs. In this ſtate of irritation at ſuch a defiance of authority, ſome unguarded expreſſions were dropped in preſence of the diſaffected, who did not fail to embitter them in the repreſentation that was made of them to the public.

They were menaced, it ſeems, with a ſetting up of the royal ſtandard, and a proclamation of liberty to the black ſlaves; arms were to be put into their hands, to be employed againſt their maſters;

Williamſ-

Williamſburgh was threatened with deſtruction; and other reſentful inſinuations were thrown out. All theſe produced high diſcontent and anger, and kindled a general flame throughout the colony.

Aſſemblies were held in conſequence of the foregoing tranſactions, wherein the Governor's conduct in them was cenſured with great aſperity.

But the temper of the people was ſuch, that their leaders did not think it neceſſary to ſtop at bare complaints: ſome of the moſt daring took up arms, with a reſolution to compel thoſe who had the gunpowder to reſtore it, and to ſeize, at the ſame time, on the public money into their own poſſeſſion and keeping.

They were on their march to Williamſburg with this intent, when they were met by the magiſtrates at a few miles diſtance from the city. Here an agreement was entered into, by which the Receiver General of the Colony, became ſecurity for the payment of the gunpowder; and the imhabitants promiſed, on their part, to take into their cuſtody the magazine and public revenue.

Happily for the peace of the city, no further conſequence reſulted from this inſurrection. But it alarmed the Governor, who, after diſmiſſing his lady and family on board of a man of war, ſent for a party of marines, with which he garriſoned his palace; fortifying it as well as circumſtances would allow, and furniſhing it with artillery.

He alſo iſſued a proclamation, in which he declared the promoter of the inſurrection guilty of treaſonable behaviour, in compelling the Receiver General to become bound for the price of the powder. The people were accuſed of diſaffection, and a propenſity to encourage innovations in government.

But this proclamation was of no avail againſt thoſe at whom it was levelled. Mr. Henry, the

perſon who headed the mal-contents, was one of the moſt popular men in the Colony. He had been a deputy to Congreſs, and knew that he ſhould be thoroughly ſupported in what he undertook, not only by the Colony, but by the power of that body if it ſhould become requiſite.

His conduct was in the mean time fully approved in the various meetings that were holding every where in the Province. It was unanimouſly determined to aſſiſt and indemnify him, in caſe he ſhould receive any detriment on account of his public conduct.

They retorted with great warmth the charges imputed to them of intending to ſubvert the government; they denied, with no leſs heat, that of being diſaffected; and inſiſted on their being entirely free from blame in the meaſures they had lately taken, and no ways in fault for the troubles and diſturbances that had happened.

It unfortunately fell out about this time, that the copies of ſome letters, written by the Governor to the Britiſh miniſtry, fell into the hands of ſome of the adverſe party. They made them public, and repreſented them in an odious light, as miſtating facts, and giving injurious deſcriptions of the Coloniſts.

The publication of theſe letters produced exactly the ſame conſequences that had reſulted at Boſton, from the diſcovery of the correſpondence of Governor Hutchinſon. Suſpicion and miſtruſt put an end to all confidence and cordiality; and all that was ſaid or done on either ſide, underwent a ſiniſter interpretation.

While the Colony was in this ſtate of confuſion, the conciliatory motion carried by the miniſter during the laſt ſeſſion of Parliament, arrived in Virginia. The neceſſity of obtaining, if poſſible, the Colony's acceptance of the terms therein propoſed, induced

induced the Governor to call an Aſſembly. He exerted all his abilities in order to perſuade them to coincide with the offers of Parliament: he uſed every argument that could be adduced in their favour; he laid before them the ſincerity of the efforts made on the part of Britain, to procure a reconciliation anſwerable at once to her dignity and their intereſt: both had been conſulted in the propoſals now held out to America: they had been framed with a view of leaving the final completion of them equally to the wiſdom and the good will of the Colonies: no determinate ſum was fixed, as it had been judged moſt worthy of the conſtitutional generoſity of the Britiſh government, to gratify them with the entire and undivided priviledge of ſpecifying themſelves the extent of the contribution. In this light, which was the true one it ought to be viewed in, the conciliatory motion was no more, in fact, than an earneſt admonition from Great Britain to the Colonies, of the indiſpenſible neceſſity ſhe was under of demanding their aſſiſtance: whatever, therefore, they ſhould think proper to give, would be given freely and uncompelled. They ought, for theſe reaſons, chearfully to embrace this opportunity of proving, that they poſſeſſed in reality that ſincere attachment for the parent ſtate, which they had ſo repeatedly profeſſed: Britain was manifeſtly diſpoſed to live with them on a footing of the ſincereſt amity; the King and Parliament merited, certainly, by taking ſo effectual a ſtep towards reconciliation, to be met, on their part, with an equal deſire to renew the friendlineſs that had proved ſo beneficial to America. A concurrence in the meaſure propoſed, would not only put a final period to the unhappy altercation that had ſo long interrupted their mutual felicity, but open a certain proſpect of obviating all diſſentions in future: Britain, upon receiving this proof of their dutiful inclinations,

would inſtantly remove whatever bore the leaſt appearance of an improper burden upon America, and a clear unqueſtionable line would be drawn by the terms, in which the motion was conceived, between the claims of Great Britain and the rights of the Colonies.

The manner of addreſs, the arguments employed, and the efforts uſed by Lord Dunmore on this critical occaſion, to prevail upon the Aſſembly to accede to the terms propoſed by Parliament, have by many impartial people been allowed and repreſented as equally well choſen, and juſtifiable, and perfectly adapted to the end he had in view.

But as in all human affairs there is a ſeaſon when the powers of reaſoning and perſuaſion are at an end, and the deciſion of things depends on the temper and paſſions of the day, the ſpeech of the Governor, which might, at a happier, and more peaceable period, have proved a ground of temperate diſcuſſion, was in a manner loſt and forgotten, amidſt the jars and bickerings that followed immediately on the opening of the Aſſembly.

The ſeſſion had begun by an inquiry into the origin of the late diſorders, and by a reſolution to inſpect into the public magazine, that it might be furniſhed ſuitably to exigencies. Here an altercation aroſe about the right of admiſſion to it.—Though found and ſupplied by the Colony, it was under the direction of the Governor, without whoſe permiſſion no acceſs to it was allowed.

Before this permiſſion had been formally obtained, a party of the town's-people forced an entrance, and took away a quantity of arms: ſome however were reſtored, by the intermediation of ſeveral of the deputies to the Aſſembly; but the committee appointed for the inſpection, reported that the gunpowder was buried in the ſtorehouſe yard, where it had

had been damaged; the locks had been taken off the muſkets; and that there was altogether a conſiderable deficiency of requiſites.

But that which gave moſt offence, was the diſcovery of ſpring-guns fixed in the magazine. Some of thoſe who had broken into it had ſuffered from them, and their reſentment induced them to repreſent this manner of ſecuring the place as unwarrantable.

All theſe circumſtances falling out juſt at the opening of the ſeſſion, foreboded no proſperous iſſue to the attempts that were neceſſary to be made to bring over the Aſſembly and Colony to the terms of the conciliatory motion. The endeavours of the Governor, however they might have been effectual at another time, were now combated by ſo many untoward events, that little hope remained of their meeting with any ſucceſs.

The preliminary buſineſs of the ſeſſion was hardly begun, when the Governor left his palace with the utmoſt ſecrecy during the night, and withdrew on board a man of war. He informed the Aſſembly, that his motive for taking ſuch a ſtep, was to provide for his perſonal ſafety, being duly convinced that popular fury was riſen to ſuch a height, that his life would be endangered, if he truſted himſelf any longer in a place where nothing could reſtrain the outrageouſneſs of the populace.

He did not mean by this to cauſe an interruption of buſineſs; on the contrary, he moſt earneſtly requeſted them to attend in the moſt ſerious manner to that which he had laid before them in his ſpeech; and he would in the mean time take due meaſures to facilitate the communication between him and the Aſſembly. To this end he was of opinion, that an occaſional attendance of ſome of the deputies that compoſed it, would anſwer every purpoſe. They might depend he would on his ſide, be as conſtantly attentive as ever to the functions of his ſtation, and

evince by his conduct, that a good understanding was what he sincerely sought.

The Assembly, on the other hand, answered this message with an address, wherein they solemnly declared their persuasion that there was no ground for the apprehensions he testified. Had he previously to the resolution he had taken, expressed the fears he mentioned, they would have obviated every motive to entertain them. His relinquishment of a place where the public business was officially transacted, would not only prove a material hindrance to it, but add to the discontent and alarms already too much diffused among the people at large. They offered, at the same time, to acquiesce in whatever he should think fit to propose, to secure himself, his family, and attendants, from any affronts. They strongly adverted to the impropriety and inconveniency of transacting business with him in his present situation. They requested him, therefore, to return to the place of his residence, where he might be assured of meeting with all the respect due to his character; and by doing which he would essentially contribute to remove those jealousies that intercepted all efforts towards reconciliation.

But these representations were ineffectual. The Governor gave them to understand, that he had been threatened in so violent and open a manner, and that the insurrections of late were become so dangerous, that he should betray a want of prudence to dwell in the midst of them. He taxed, at the same time, the House of Assembly itself with countenancing disturbances. The storehouse had been broke open while some of them were present, who did not, as they ought to have done, commit the offenders to prison. They had too, without his concurrence, taken upon themselves the custody of the magazine, which was an usurpation of authority of the most daring nature, and which plainly indicated; that

their

their intention was to assume the government into their own hands, and to carry their own plans into execution.

He remonstrated to them, that if they were sincerely desirous of providing for his safety, they ought to enable him to exert the power annexed to his station, open the courts of judicature for the prosecution of those who disturbed the legal exercise of government, disband those people who bore arms without his lawful commission, restore the contents of the magazine, and act themselves in support of his authority in such a manner, as should convince the public that they were firmly attached to the cause of their Sovereign, and firmly determined to oppose those tumultuous and disorderly proceedings, that tended to injure the interest, and subvert the constitutional rights of Great Britain.

To accomplish these just ends, he would repair to York Town, whither, as it would be at no great distance from Williamsburgh, they might remove the place of their sitting. Here he was willing to meet, and confer with them on the means of appeasing the present troubles; and here, if they meant not utterly to reject all proffers of accommodation, they would give him the meeting, and transact the business of the session.

If, however, they would convince him by unequivocal proofs of their sincerity, that they were ready to concur in all the just demands he had made; he would not hesitate to return to Williamsburgh, and co-operate with them in putting a fina period to all differences, and settling a happy re-union with the parent state on those equitable terms that were now offered to their consideration.

On these conditions, he would return to them according to their desire, and deem it the greatest honour and felicity to employ his mediation in reconciling them with Great Britain. But if their in-

tentions did not correſpond with what he had expreſſed, his return to Williamſburgh would anſwer no end, but to expoſe him to the dangers he had mentioned, without proving of any utility whatſoever.

The reply to this meſſage was very pointed and acrimonious. As the Governor had been ſevere in his imputations, they were equally bitter in their own juſtification, and expreſſed themſelves in terms that tended ſtrongly to widen the breach, and render both parties irreconcilable.

The Committee appointed to make an inquiry into the late diſturbances, had now finiſhed it. From the teſtimony of a great number of creditable individuals, it appeared, that the commotions among the people had ariſen from an apprehenſion that hoſtile deſigns had been formed againſt them; but that tranquility and good order were now reeſtabliſhed. They were univerſally determined, however, to abide by the reſolutions of the general Congreſs, and of their Provincial meetings. They did not, indeed, aim at independency, being thoroughly perſuaded it was the mutual intereſt of Great Britain and the Colonies to remain united; but ſtill they inſiſted on the neceſſity of repealing the late obnoxious acts, before any reconciliation could take place. When the Parliament complied with the wiſhes of the Colonies in this particular, no doubt was entertained of the immediate ceſſation of all diſcontent, and of a cordial re-union and amity with the Britiſh nation as before.

The Aſſembly now took into conſideration the conciliatory motion of the Britiſh miniſtry. But they did it in the ſame manner as the other Colonies: they uſed the ſame reaſonings againſt it, and rejected it with no leſs warmth and unanimity. They concluded their examination of this ſubject by declaring, that the final determination of this

all ſuch general matters, reſted for the future with the Continental Congreſs. This, as repreſenting all America, was the propereſt channel through which to convey to the throne a repreſentation of all grievances: more deference and attention would, it was inſinuated, be paid to that body, than to the remonſtrances of a ſingle colony.

"We have," ſaid they, "exhauſted every mode of application which our invention could ſuggeſt, as proper and promiſing. We have decently remonſtrated with Parliament; they have added new injuries to the old. We have wearied our King with ſupplications: he has not deigned to anſwer us. We have appealed to the native honour and juſtice of the Britiſh nation; but their efforts in our favour have been hitherto ineffectual."

Such was the ſtile and manner of communication between the Governor and the Aſſembly. Charges on the one hand, and recriminations on the other; invitations to return on ſhore, with promiſes of the ampleſt ſecurity; and refuſals to place any confidence in the people over whom the powers of government were exerciſed in this ſingular manner.

The ſeſſion now drawing to an end, the Aſſembly requeſted that he would make his appearance among them, once at leaſt, for the final paſſing of the bills that lay ready for his aſſent. They had, during the whole ſeſſion, however it had been inconvenient, acquieſced in his deſire; and waited upon him at the diſtance of a dozen miles, as often as a perſonal intercourſe became neceſſary. He ought now, in his turn, to condeſcend ſo far, as to cloſe the Aſſembly according to the uſual and conſtitutional forms.

But this repreſentation was as fruitleſs as the preceding.—The Governor inſiſted on the prerogative with which he was lawfully inveſted, of appointing the place where they ſhould aſſemble: he knew of

no

no bills of ſufficient conſequence to require the formality of his preſence; and before he aſſented to any, he ought to have the previous examination of their propriety.

In reply to this meſſage, the bills were ſent to him. Of theſe ſome met with his approbation, and to others he objected. The Aſſembly again entreated him to repair to Williamſburgh, in order to paſs thoſe bills he approved of; aſſuring him in the moſt ſolemn manner, that they would be bound for the ſafety of his perſon; and finally requeſting, that if he would not truſt himſelf among them, he would ſign a commiſſion to paſs them.

The Governor ſtill remained inflexible in his refuſal to meet them aſhore, inſiſting that his apprehenſions were well founded, and requeſting in his turn, that they would wait upon him themſelves on board, there to preſent the bills that were to receive his aſſent.

This was a propoſal with which the Aſſembly would by no means comply. It terminated at once all further public intercourſe between the Governor and that body. They immediately declared that ſuch a requiſition was a breach of their privileges; and that from what had paſſed, they had ſufficient grounds to apprehend that ſiniſter deſigns were entertained againſt the Colony. They adviſed people to be on their guard, and to prepare for the common defence of their country and their freedom, againſt the attempts that probably were at no great diſtance. They concluded by proteſtations of a dutiful attachment to the Crown and people of Great Britain, and of their readineſs to adhere to them upon a conſtitutional foundation.

This was the ſolemn farewel of the Colony of Virginia to the Britiſh nation. It cloſed the ſeſſion of the laſt Aſſembly that was held under the auſpices of England, of which it was the moſt ancient

ſettlement in the American hemiſphere, the foundation of it having been laid by the famous Sir Walter Raleigh, near two centuries before this final ſeparation from its mother country.

Having thus put an end to the Governor's authority, they proceeded to the election of deputies, who met in convention, and aſſumed the direction of the Province, in the ſame manner as had been done in the Province of Maſſachuſet. After the example of the New England people, the Virginians reſigned themſelves with the moſt implicit confidence to the management of their new governors.

Their firſt care was to put the Province in a proper ſtate of defence. They raiſed a conſiderable body of men, and appointed funds to maintain them, and to defray other public charges. They publiſhed, at the ſame time, a juſtification of the meaſures they had taken, in which they attributed them to the neceſſity of providing for the immediate preſervation of their freedom, their property, and all that was valuable, which were manifeſtly endangered by the deſigns that had unqueſtionably been formed againſt the juſt and long enjoyed rights of the Colonies. They repeated the concluſions of the laſt Aſſembly, declaring their loyal diſpoſition towards Great Britain; but aſſerting in the ſtrongeſt terms their determination to ſupport their lawful claims againſt all oppoſers, and at whatever price it might coſt them.

It now remained for Lord Dunmore, after the deprivation of his government, to conſider in what manner he ſhould conduct himſelf towards the people who had caſt off their obedience. Such adherents to him as had by their activity made themſelves unpopular, now repaired to him for ſafety.—Many of the ſlaves too deſerted over to him. With theſe, and the more effectual aſſiſtance of the Britiſh

armed

armed shipping on the coast, he now proposed to keep an eye upon the country, and to be in readiness to lay hold of any seasonable opportunity of thwarting the designs of the malcontents. The intersection of Virginia by the many large and navigable rivers, with which it is watered every where, made this no difficult task; as by means of these, its principal parts lie open at all times to the attempts of a keen and vigilant enemy that is master at sea.

With such view, he fitted out some vessels of sufficient force to alarm the inhabitants near the shore, but not equal to any undertaking of consequence. The truth was, that he was obliged to extort by main force the provisions he wanted, as they refused to supply him with any.

The Virginians complained, on the other hand, that he often landed with an hostile intent, setting fire to houses, destroying plantations, carrying off the slaves, and seizing on persons of the adverse party. This compelled them to stand more carefully on their defence; and produced at last continual scenes of rapine and devastation; wherein lives were lost, and mischief done to individuals, without effecting any material hurt or service to either side, and from which no reputation could be acquired to those who conducted them.

By degrees matters became more serious. Detachments of those troops levied by order of the Provincial Meeting, were now ordered to the shores of the rivers, and to the sea-coasts, which rendered attempts against the different settlements more difficult and dangerous; and occasioned, of course, more blood to be spilt in them. Enmity was now risen to such a height, that the strictest watchfulness was employed to cut off all means of subsistence from the shipping. They could obtain none any where but at the point of the sword.

Thus

Thus war, without any formal denunciation, was not the leſs real; and nothing but the want of a more conſiderable force prevented it from being carried on with more vigour and effect.

Having however collected from ſeveral quarters ſome companies of ſoldiers, the Governor determined upon an enterprize of importance. This was the burning of Hampton, a town with a good harbour. His deſign, through ſome means, came to the knowledge of the inhabitants, who made what preparations they could to obſtruct it, by ſinking craft in the place through which the ſhipping muſt paſs, and oppoſing ſuch other impediments as might prevent a landing; but the ſhips forced their way through them, and proceeded to fire upon the place with great fury. A body of rifle-men now came opportunely to the aſſiſtance of the town; theſe plied the aſſailants with their muſketry from the ſhore ſo reſolutely, and with ſo much dexterity, that they compelled them to retire with the loſs of one of their veſſels.

A proclamation was now publiſhed by the Governor, ſetting forth, that as the civil laws were no longer of force for the prevention of rebellion, and the puniſhment of traitors, it was become neceſſary to ſubſtitute martial law in its room, for the ſuppreſſion of diſorders throughout the Colony. All people able to bear arms were hereby ſummoned to repair to the King's ſtandard, under the penalty of being reputed rebels; and the ſlaves, and ſervants of perſons under this deſcription, were declared free, on condition of their taking up arms in the King's ſervice.

This proclamation gave univerſal offence to all the people of America. As every Coſony, New England only excepted, was in a manner overrun with Negro ſlaves, the letting them looſe upon their maſters, was a meaſure which excited abhorrence.

It

It was represented as a determination to carry resentment beyond the common bounds of humanity, and the rules established among civilized nations. It was authorizing domestic murders and assassinations, and encouraging the perpetration of all manner of barbarity. It involved in one common butchery the innocent as well as the guilty: Negroes could not discriminate between the friends and foes to the British government, and might be led by their ignorance, or prompted by the desire of freedom, either to suspect, or pretend suspicion of the loyalty of their masters, and from such motives would forsake or rise upon them.

It was no less reprobated as impolitic in its general tendency. It removed that necessary barrier of fear and implicit obedience, which kept the blacks in such profound submission to the white people.—By setting them at large, and prompting them to face the whites with arms in their hands, it taught them ideas of equality, and placed them on a footing with those whom they had been used to consider as their superiors in the very order of nature.

The consequences of such an emancipation were altogether equally obvious and terrible. It led to horrors of every description. Self preservation would naturally set the Colonists on their constant guard against plots and machinations from those by whom they were continually surrounded: the least suspicion would occasion the exercise of severities; these would excite resentments, and quickly be followed by desertions, insurrections, and open defiance: all confidence would vanish on either side; downright enmity and violence would succeed; and no other hope of safety would remain to either of the parties, than in the utter extermination of the other.

Such was the light in which the Americans represented this proclamation; which however was attended by none of the atrocious effects that had

been

been apprehended; and ſerved much more to exaſperate than to cauſe them any eſſential prejudice.

In the mean time Lord Dunmore was at Norfolk, a place of which the inhabitants, with thoſe of the adjacent parts, were well affected to his cauſe. He was joined here by conſiderable numbers, and he began to form hopes that he ſhould gradually be able to raiſe ſuch a force, as ſhould enable him to reſtore the authority of government throughout the whole Province.

But the ruling powers exerted themſelves with ſo much diligence, that a large body was ſpeedily collected and put in motion againſt him. On receiving intelligence of this, he poſted himſelf at a place called the Great Bridge, on the road to Norfolk, through which they were neceſſitated to paſs in marching to this town. Here he threw up ſome works, well lined with cannon, intending to make a reſolute ſtand with the whole force he could muſter.

But this was very inconſiderable: he had no more than about two hundred regulars; his remaining ſtrength conſiſted of an undiſciplined aſſemblage of white and black people. With theſe, however, he courageouſly reſolved to encounter the enemy, who were now advanced very near him, and had alſo caſt up an intrenchment within the reach of his guns.

After obſerving each others motions during ſome days, Lord Dunmore grew impatient of inaction, and formed a plan to ſtorm their intrenchment. Captain Fordyce, an officer of great bravery, commanded on this occaſion. In the front of their works lay a narrow cauſeway, which was the only avenue to them. The Captain, at the head of a body of grenadiers, advanced upon this path to their intrenchments, and attacked them with aſto-

niſhing reſolution. The enemies works were ſo conſtructed, that while he was attempting their front, his own flanks were expoſed to a ſevere fire. The valour of this gallant officer, and of the brave men that followed him, met with unſurmountable obſtacles: he was ſlain with a number of them. Such was the obſtinacy with which they fought, and the danger of the ſervice they went upon, that not one individual among them eſcaped without a wound.

They made good their retreat under the guns of their own works, the enemy not venturing to purſue them. The only priſoners made were ſuch as, on account of their wounds, were unable to retire from the field. Thoſe among them who were natives of Britain, met with very civil uſage from the Provincials; but the natives of America experienced great ſeverity; and were treated as men who had deſerted their own colours, and fought under thoſe of an enemy.

After this repulſe, the encampment at the Great Bridge was broke up; and as the enemy was daily increaſing in number, and there appeared no reaſonable hope of being able to reſiſt him, Lord Dunmore withdrew again to his ſhipping. It was now equally numerous, and crouded with people of all denominations, who were his adherents, and who had fled to it as the only place of protection from the reſentment of the Provincial party.

While Lord Dunmore was thus exerting himſelf on the coaſts of Virginia, a plan was forming to invade it, together with the other ſouthern colonies, on their back and inland parts. The people in thoſe ſettlements were conſidered as ſtrongly attached to the Engliſh government, and it was expected that large numbers of them would be diſpoſed to take up arms in its ſupport. It was alſo ſuppoſed that ſome of the Indian tribes in the neighbourhood of

thoſe parts, might be brought to join them. All this would form a force ſufficient to make an effectual impreſſion on the enemy, and to open a paſſage in the very heart of the Colonies, through which they might make an irruption into any Provinces they choſe particularly to attack.

Virginia was the Colony chiefly aimed at by this ſcheme. The projector of it was Mr. Conelly, a Pennſylvanian, a man completely qualified for its execution. He was one of thoſe reſtleſs and daring individuals that ſeemed born for the tempeſtuous period they lived in, and with whom America abounded at this time.

He communicated his project to Lord Dunmore, with the activity and reſoluteneſs of whoſe temper it perfectly correſponded. It met accordingly with his entire approbation; and Mr. Conelly ſet out immediately to carry it forwards with all poſſible expedition. Through a multiplicity of obſtacles he reached the back ſettlements, and there found means to negotiate with great ſecrecy, a treaty with the Indians ſituated on the Ohio, and to bring over to his deſign the people in thoſe remote diſtricts. On his returning to Lord Dunmore with the intelligence of his ſucceſs, he was diſpatched to Boſton with proper recommendations. Here he was commiſſioned by General Gage to act in this buſineſs as Colonel and Commander, with promiſes of being thoroughly ſupported.

By this plan it was agreed, that the Britiſh forces at Detroit, and the forts in its vicinity, with thoſe that were ſtationed in others of thoſe diſtant ſettlements, ſhould each furniſh as many men as could poſſibly be ſpared. With theſe, which would altogether form a conſiderable body, the Colonel was to proceed as early the next ſpring as practicable, to Pitſburgh, where he was to eſtabliſh his head quar-

ters, till the diſaffected party there was entirely ſuppreſſed, and the friends of government collected to a ſufficient number to form them into regiments. From Pitſburgh he was to croſs the Allegany Mountains, and penetrate into Virginia. Here, after leaving fort Cumberland ſtrongly garriſoned, he was to fall down the river Potomack, and ſeize upon Alexandria, where it was concerted that Lord Dunmore ſhould meet him with the fleet under his command, and all the force he could gather. Alexandria was then to be ſtrongly fortified, and made a place of arms, and the centre of their operations. By theſe means the friends of government would be able to declare themſelves without reſtraint, and to form a general junction with facility; and what was of more importance than all the reſt, the communication between the northern and ſouthern Colonies would be effectually cut off.

Such was the vaſt and comprehenſive plan projected by Mr. Conelly. He had made a conſiderable progreſs on his journey towards Detroit; and was now on the back frontiers of Maryland, and had ſeemingly eſcaped the principal dangers, when he was unluckily diſcovered by one of thoſe unexpected accidents that ſo often baffle the beſt concerted deſigns.

A tradeſman with whom he was acquainted and had dealt, met him on the road, and directly gave information to the neareſt committee: he was immediately ſeized upon ſuſpicion, and his papers diſcovered the whole deſign. They were communicated to the Congreſs, and the Colonel was thrown into priſon.

In this manner was fruſtrated a ſcheme equally bold and judiciouſly arranged, and which was now almoſt on the point of execution. It is not improbable that had he not been thus arreſted in the mid-

dle

dle of his career, Colonel Conelly, from the acuteneſs and activity of his character, would have conducted the operations with which he was entruſted, with equal ſkill and expedition; and would have proved one of the moſt dangerous enemies whom the Congreſs would have had to encounter.

In the mean time, the retreat of Lord Dunmore from Norfolk, left that place entirely at the mercy of the Provincials. The loyaliſts had been rather ſevere upon their adverſaries during their poſſeſſion of thoſe parts: this ſeverity was now retorted upon them; and all thoſe who had remained on ſhore experienced much ill treatment, and many mortifications.

The condition of thoſe who had fled for ſhelter on board the ſhipping was not leſs diſtreſsful; as they were cut off from all communication athore; they were deſtitute of means to provide themſelves with neceſſaries, and were reduced to the moſt dreadful extremities. In ſuch a ſituation, the calls of nature rendered them deſperate, and they neglected no opportunity of venturing to land in every place where they expected to find proviſions. This occaſioned perpetual ſkirmiſhes between them and the Provincial troops that lay in wait to intercept them.

During theſe tranſactions, a man of war of ſome force arrived in Norfolk harbour. It was now reſolved to inſiſt upon their permitting the fleet to be furniſhed with neceſſaries, and that they ſhould deſiſt from annoying the ſhipping with their muſketry, which only tended to the deſtroying of men without neceſſity, and could hardly be viewed in any light but that of abſolute murder.

The fact was, that the American ſoldiery, chiefly compoſed of rifle-men, ſtationing themſelves in the houſes, and upon the wharfs oppoſite to the ſhip-

ping, took every opportunity of firing at the people on board, and deſtroyed ſome of them daily.

The requiſition made by the Governor was accompanied with a menace to fire upon that part of the town from which the annoyance came, in caſe they refuſed to comply. But their anſwer was a peremptory denial of both his demands. In conſequence of this, notice was given to the inhabitants of what was intended, that they might previouſly remove themſelves out of danger; and after allowing them a due ſpace of time for that purpoſe, that ſide of the town was cannonaded which lay neareſt the water, and a party of ſailors and marines was landed, the more effectually to ſet fire to the houſes in that quarter.

It was not the intention of Lord Dunmore to extend the deſtruction any further. The Provincials, it has been ſaid, completed it, by ſetting fire to thoſe parts that lay at a diſtance from the water-ſide, and which, as the wind was favourable to them, would from their ſituation have eſcaped the conflagration. It has even been poſitively aſſerted, that almoſt at the very moment the houſes near the ſhore were ſet on fire, the flames were alſo perceived in ſeveral parts that were fartheſt from them, and that they were burnt by the direction of the Virginian Congreſs itſelf, in order to put an end at once to all hopes in the loyaliſts of receiving any aid from that place.

In this unfortunate manner was deſtroyed one of the fineſt towns in Virginia, and the firſt for commerce and opulence. The computation of the damage done on this occaſion, amounted to between three and four hundred thouſand pounds. Before this diſaſter, its condition was ſo flouriſhing, that the annual rents of the houſes exceeded ten thouſand pounds.

So

So great became now the inveteracy to the loyalists, that in order to deprive them of all means of ſuſtenance, the plantations of which the ſituation expoſed them to incurſions from the ſhipping, were totally deſtroyed, and the inhabitants compelled to remove up the country with their cattle, and all the effects they could carry off.

CHAP. XVI.

Tranſactions in North and South Carolina, and in Maſſachuſet.

1775.

WHILE Virginia was ſuffering in this cruel manner from inteſtine diſſentions, its neighbours, the Carolinas, were much in the ſame diſtracted ſtate. In North Carolina, Governor Martin, a gentleman of great vigour and activity, was involved in perpetual conteſts with the various committees and aſſociations it had formed, and eſpecially with the Provincial Congreſs. He was accuſed of having, like Lord Dunmore, endeavoured to excite a rebellion among the negroes; and upon that, and other charges, he was declared a public enemy to the Colonies, and to that particularly of which, as Governor, he ought to have had the intereſt moſt at heart; and all perſons were, in conſequence, interdicted from any communication with him.

He replied to this declaration by a bold and ſpirited proclamation; wherein he cleared himſelf of malevolence to the Province, and juſtified his conduct by a variety of reaſons: animadverting at the ſame time with the utmoſt freedom and pointedneſs, upon all their proceedings, and reprobating them as inimical to peace, and repugnant to the duty and obedience which they owed to Great Britain, and tending manifeſtly to breed ill blood, and kindle ſedition and rebellion.

The wrath and reſentment of the Provincial Congreſs was provoked to ſuch a pitch by this proclamation, that they voted it a libel of the moſt injurious

tious and defamatory nature; loaded it with every opprobrious epithet they could deviſe, and ordered it to be publicly burned by the common executioner.

Notwithſtanding the violence and enmity of the Congreſs, the Governor entertained a full expectation of being able to defeat their deſigns. He ſtrongly relied on the loyalty of thoſe who were ſettled in the interior parts of the Province, and ſuch as had lately emigrated from Scotland, who were chiefly Highlanders, a brave and hardy race of men.—With theſe he doubted not to form a numerous body of firm and determined adherents, to whom the Congreſs would not find it in their power to oppoſe an equal force.

While arrangements were forming to bring them together, he thought it prudent, for his own perſonal ſecurity, to fortify his reſidence at Newbern, in order to prevent a ſurprize from people, whoſe inveteracy he was apprehenſive might prompt them to offer him ſome inſult. His intention was to repleniſh it with warlike ſtores, and to ſtrengthen it ſo well, as to ſet all attempts againſt him at defiance. He had partly executed his deſign, when, on the moving in of ſome guns, a ſuſpicion of it aroſe, followed immediately by an inſurrection, which appeared ſo dangerous, that he found it moſt adviſable inſtantly to withdraw, and ſhelter himſelf on board an armed veſſel.

The populace ruſhed into his houſe in ſearch of what they ſuſpected, and diſcovered accordingly gunpowder and ball, with other military ſtores, concealed under-ground, in the garden. This confirmed the ſurmiſes that had been ſpread concerning his hoſtile intentions, and he was now regarded as a man with whom it was no longer neceſſary, or proper, to keep any meaſures.

In

In the mean time, ſimilar methods of proceeding were adopted throughout this Province as in the other Colonies. An upper council, and committees of ſafety, were nominated, and every other regulation made that was judged requiſite for good order and government. They provided in the ſame manner for the public defence, by calling out the militia, and raiſing additional forces. They acted, in ſhort, with the ſame ſpirit and determination as their neighbours. They framed a public addreſs to all the ſubjects of the Britiſh empire, in the ſame ſtile as thoſe that have already been mentioned, declaring their readineſs to be reconciled upon conſtitutional terms, and their reſolution to admit of no other.

In South Carolina the like diſturbances prevailed. The people charged their Governor, Lord William Campbell, who had oppoſed their proceedings with great ſpirit and perſeverance, with having treated with the Indians for their aſſiſtance againſt them, and induced the inhabitants of the back-ſettlements to attack their countrymen. The commotions raiſed upon this occaſion were ſo violent, that he was compelled to retreat on board a man of war.

After his departure, they took the government into their own hands; and, in order to obviate any danger that might ariſe from the negotiations that had been carried on with the back ſettlers, they deputed Mr. Drayton to confer with them, a gentleman famous for his oppoſition to the Britiſh government, and at that time the moſt popular man in the Province. He proceeded to that part of the country at the head of a conſiderable body of men. An agreement was accordingly entered into between both parties; in which all differences were ſettled to their mutual ſatisfaction; the back-ſettlers binding themſelves to a peaceable demeanour, and in no ſhape to oppoſe the meaſures that ſhould be adopted

by

by the Provincial meeting, nor to afford any assistance to the British military. In other respects they were left at freedom to act as they deemed it most expedient for their own welfare. They were to be permitted to remain perfectly neutral in the present quarrel between Great Britain and the Colonies, and were by no means to be subject to any detriment for refusing to espouse their cause.

Having delivered themselves from all apprehensions on that quarter, their next business was to settle a form of government. They appointed a council of safety to consist of thirteen members, who were to be assisted in cases of difficulty and importance, by a committee of one hundred. Hearing, at the same time, that preparations were making in England, which were particularly levelled at this Colony, they neglected no means to put it in a posture of defence, by raising forces, diligently training them, and especially by fortifying Charles Town in the strongest manner they were able.

During these transactions in the south of the Continent, the military operations in the north still continued, though not with the same vigour as at the commencement of the campaign. The British troops in Boston were too much diminished, and weakened, through sickness and fatigue, to undertake any hazardous attempt; and the Provincials thought, on the other hand, that they did enough in keeping them close confined in that town.

In the beginning of October, General Gage resigned the command of the British forces to General Howe, and took his departure for England. The new commander in chief had innumerable difficulties to contend with. The number of mal-contents among the inhabitants was very great; and they made it their continual business to convey the speediest intelligence of all that was transacted in the town, to their friends without. This, from the situation and extensiveness

tenſiveneſs of the place, and other circumſtances, it was impoſſible to prevent. A ſcarcity of freſh proviſions ſtill continued, which was diſtreſſingly felt by the garriſon, the ſick eſpecially, who were very numerous. The rooted antipathy of the generality of the natives, made it exceedingly difficult to diſcriminate between the well and the ill-affected, and prevented any dependence being placed on either. Thus the prudence and ſagacity of the commander in chief was ſeconded by none of thoſe helps, that would in his caſe have proved moſt uſeful and efficacious. He could truſt thoroughly none but his own people, in thoſe exigencies that required moſt information and advice.

In order to obviate, as affectually as it lay in his power, the dangers ariſing from this perpetual communication, and to prevent as much as poſſible the facility with which it had been carried on hitherto, a proclamation was iſſued, by which the inhabitants were forbidden to quit the town without permiſſion, on pain of ſuffering military execution if diſcovered and ſeized, and to be arraigned as guilty of treaſon if they ſhould effect their eſcape, and to forfeit their effects. Such as obtained a licenſe to depart, were prohibited, under heavy penalties, from taking with them above a certain quantity of money. An aſſociation was alſo directed to be formed, by which thoſe who remained in the town, were bound to act in its defence: ſuch of them as were thought proper to be ſelected for that purpoſe, were to be divided into companies, and properly armed and diſciplined; the others were to contribute a ſum of money in lieu of their perſonal ſervice.

It had been hoped by ſome friends to government, that at the expiration of the time for which the Provincial ſoldiers were inliſted, the majority would return to their homes, after ſo long and unuſual an abſence. The term was now approaching, and

and the Congreſs itſelf was not without its fears upon this account. For the preventing of an event, that would have been ſo prejudicial to their cauſe, they deputed a committee of their moſt popular and reſpected members, to co-operate with General Waſhington in keeping the continental army from diſbanding. In this they ſucceeded to their fulleſt expectations. The whole army re-inliſted for the term of a twelvemonth.

That object which the Colonies found it moſt difficult to compaſs in their military exertions, was the procuring a ſufficiency of gunpowder. The want of it prevented the execution and the attempt of many a deſign. They had been uncommonly induſtrious in the preparation of the ſeveral ingredients of which this manufacture is compoſed; but time only could bring this reſource to that ſtate of abundance which was at preſent ſo much needed. Mean while their chief ſupplies were from abroad; but they came in very ſlowly, and amidſt a multitude of obſtacles. The communication with thoſe European countries from whence it was to be had, was intercepted, and the navigation of their own ſhipping was ſo diligently traced, and ſo cloſely watched, that the importation of this indiſpenſible neceſſary, was attended with every kind of difficulty and diſcouragement.

As a proof to what extremities they were reduced from the ſcantineſs of gunpowder, ſome of their own officers, it has been ſaid, acknowledged, that while they lay before Boſton, they were at one time ſo ſhort, that had they been attacked, they muſt immediately have fled, and diſembodied themſelves. At Bunker's Hill and Lexington, many had expended their whole ſtock before the buſineſs was over.

To remedy ſo eſſential a deficiency, no efforts were ſpared, and no expedients left untried. The ſwifteſt

ſailing

ſailing veſſels were diſpatched to the coaſt of Guinea, in Africa, where they purchaſed all the powder that was to be ſold among the European ſhipping that was trading along the ſhores of that extenſive country: they bought it under pretence of making up their own aſſortments of articles for the trade of that country; and they went away unſuſpected. Another ſupply was brought from the iſland of Bermuda, where the crew of a veſſel, ſent for that purpoſe, landed in the night, and plundered the magazine, that lay at ſome diſtance from the town, of all the powder it contained.

In default of action between the regulars and the Provincials at Boſton, a predatory war was now carried on along the coaſt of New England, which reſembled, in ſome meaſure, that which the people of Virginia were experiencing upon their own ſhores, and aroſe alſo from ſimilar motives, the neceſſity of procuring freſh proviſions. As the inhabitants were no leſs refractory and violent in their conduct, and exerciſed all the reſiſtance they were able, the conſequence was, that they were treated occaſionally with equal ſeverity.

Among other places that ſuffered in the courſe of theſe hoſtilities, was the town of Falmouth, ſituated in Caſco Bay, in the Province of Main, which is the name given to the northern parts of Maſſachuſet, from which it is divided by the Colony of New Hampſhire. It was a commercial thriving place, conſiſting of about five hundred houſes. Its harbour was particularly commodious for its proximity to thoſe parts of the country, where ſhip timber was plenty; and it was here the ſhipping from England took in yearly a large quantity of maſts, eſpecially for the navy. A veſſel was lying here at this time for that very purpoſe: a difference unhappily aroſe about the loading of her, which occaſioned a violent diſturbance. It proceeded to ſuch

length, that in reſentment for the peoples behaviour, a reſolution was taken to deſtroy the town, which was effected accordingly, after notice had been given to the inhabitants to remove with what effects they could carry off.

The deſtruction of Falmouth was grievouſly reſented by the Provincials. The Congreſs of Maſſachuſet, which was then ſitting at Watertown, determined immediately to take every poſſible meaſure for the protection of their coaſt, and with that intent paſſed an act for granting letters of marque and repriſal, and erected Courts of Admiralty for the trial and adjudication of all Britiſh prizes brought into their harbours.

To qualify, in ſome reſpect, ſo daring a meaſure, they declared at the ſame time, that their ſole intention was to guard their ſea coaſts from violence and depredation, and to ſecure the navigation of their own veſſels: to this end thoſe ſhips only were liable to be captured, that brought ſupplies to the forces that were acting againſt them.

While hoſtilities were thus carried on by land, and preparations were making to extend them to the ſea, numbers of individuals in America were zealouſly ſtriving, by means of their connections in England, to avert the conſequences that muſt inevitably enſue from a continuation of the unnatural war entered into by Great Britain and her Colonies. They repreſented the evident danger of adding freſh cauſes of irritation to a people who were already ſufficiently exaſperated. Their affections, though of long ſtanding in favour of a country from which they originated, were now almoſt broken, and hung on ſo ſlender a thread, that little was wanting to diſconnect them from England for ever. No time was to be loſt in healing the wound, while it might yet be cloſed; but no reliance was to be placed upon diſtant hopes; the quarrel was not of a nature to

be

be made up whenever Britain ſhould think proper. The ſeaſon for action was beginning to draw towards an end; the Americans would employ that leiſure in pondering upon the future, and reflecting on the paſt; the events of the preſent campaign had been rather favourable to them; and the proſpect of the increaſing enmity of Britain, from its vaſt preparations againſt them, might, in all likelihood, drive them into meaſures, which, if once adopted, would ſet reconciliation at a woeful diſtance.

They ſtill, however, diſclaimed all ideas of that tendency: they unanimouſly proteſted that they took up arms with no other intent, than to maintain their rights, and to obtain a redreſs of grievances: they looked no further at preſent: a ſeparation from the parent ſtate was an object foreign to their wiſhes; but if the diſpute ſtill laſted, who could tell how it would terminate? If bloodſhed continued much longer, habitual enmity would obliterate all former friendſhip, and become at laſt familiar to their feelings.

Such was the matter of the epiſtolary repreſentations that were continually arriving from America; but whatever impreſſion they might make upon thoſe to whom they were addreſſed, they produced no effect with thoſe perſons whoſe influence would have been ſerviceable in promoting the ends for which they were written.

In the midſt of thoſe violent ſcenes that were acting in America, remonſtrances of this kind were not unfrequent even to the gentlemen of the army itſelf. The perſon who chiefly excited the attention of the public on this account, was General Lee, whoſe letters to Lord Percy and General Burgoyne, were originals in their kind, and fully exhibited the peculiar diſpoſition of that celebrated officer.

While theſe conciliatory attempts were made on the one hand, a circumſtance that much contribut-

ed on the other to embitter and alienate the minds of both parties in America, was the acrimonious ſtile of their public correſpondence. As the letters that paſſed between them were often occaſioned by erroneous reports, and miſtated facts, they were of courſe dictated ſometimes by the keeneſt anger and reſentment, and produced the like emotions in thoſe to whom they were directed.

The rancour that always accompanies a civil war, rendered individuals on both ſides extremely impatient at any deviation from the friendly treatment, to which, by habits of long intimacy, they were reciprocally accuſtomed. Every proof of enmity, however ſlight, ſtill was heavily felt, as proceeding from thoſe who were once friends and aſſociates. From motives of this kind, the parties who complained of being aggrieved, were apt, in the bitterneſs of their impatience, and inveteracy, frequently to aggravate the cauſes of their complaints: this of courſe inflamed the minds of thoſe who were intereſted in protecting them from ill uſage, and engaged them to eſpouſe their defence with all the warmth of indignation.

A remarkable inſtance of this nature happened at Boſton, while inveſted by the Provincial army, and produced thoſe memorable letters between the reſpective commanders, of which ſo much notice was taken at the time, and which created ſuch a diverſity of opinions concerning their merits and propriety.

That with which General Waſhington cloſed his correſpondence with General Gage, was conceived in terms of peculiar ſpiritedneſs and energy, and drew a ſtrong picture of his character and principles, as well as of thoſe that animated his countrymen at that time.

"Whether," ſaid he, "Britiſh or American mercy, fortitude, and patience, are moſt pre-emi-

nent—whether our victorious citizens, whom the hand of tyranny has forced into arms to defend their property and freedom, or the mercenary instruments of lawless domination, avarice, and revenge, best deserve the appellation of rebels, and the punishment of that cord, which your affected clemency has for born to inflict—whether the authority under which I act is usurped, or founded upon the genuine principles of liberty, such considerations are altogether foreign to the subject of our correspondence. I purposely avoid all political disquisition; nor shall I avail myself of those advantages which the sacred cause of my country, of liberty, and human nature, give me over you; much less shall I stoop to retort any invective."

After justifying the Provincials from the cruel treatment of the prisoners, imputed to them, "you advise me," said he, "to give free operation to truth, to punish misrepresentation and falsehood. If experience stamps value upon counsel, your's must have a weight which few can claim: you best can tell how far the convulsions which have brought such ruin on both countries, and shaken the mighty empire of Britain to its foundation, may be traced to these malignant causes.

"You affect, Sir, to despise all rank not derived from the same source with your own. I cannot conceive one more honourable than that which flows from the uncorrupted choice of a brave and free people, the purest source and original fountain of all power. Far from making it a plea for cruelty, a mind of true magnanimity, and enlarged ideas, would comprehend and respect it."

Such were the principal parts of this celebrated letter, which was by the Americans represented as the completest model of the stile becoming his station, and the occasion to which it was adapted, and

Europe where it was read, and even in England itſelf, as the only anſwer he could make in his preſent circumſtances.

In this letter General Waſhington boaſted, not unjuſtly, that far from being obliged to compel, or to requeſt the aſſiſtance of any of his countrymen, he was rather embarraſſed with the numbers who crouded to his camp, from the ſole impulſe of love to their country.

Certain it is, that without adverting to the rectitude or erroneouſneſs of their notions, the Americans were at this period animated with the fulleſt perſuaſion that they were acting the part of true patriots, and combating for thoſe objects which are held ſacred and inviolable in all countries.

It is no leſs true, that they were countenanced and upheld in this perſuaſion by all the European world. Compoſitions of every kind were publiſhed in their favour; their cauſe was maintained by a number of works in proſe, and poems were written in praiſe of their valour and ſucceſſes. The French, as already obſerved, were not only the foremoſt of any people in their ſecret encouragement, and open applauſe and vindication of the Americans, but loſt no opportunity of exerciſing their natural vivacity, upon this ſubject in a variety of ways. They celebrated every fortunate event that befel the Provincials, not only in odes and epic ſtrains, but in a multiplicity of ſongs, epigrams, and ſtanzas, and other productions of a ſimilar nature.

With ſo many inducements before them, it is by no means ſurprizing the Americans ſhould feel and expreſs ſuch uncommon warmth and vehemence upon every occaſion, and become perfect enthuſiaſts in a cauſe wherein they conſidered their duty and their intereſt as equally concerned, and to neglect the defence of which, they viewed in the double light of treaſon and impiety. When actuated

by ſuch motives, men are never lukewarm and remiſs; and theſe were unqueſtionably the ruling principles in America at this time.

The force and animation that accompanied their diſcuſſion of public matters, ſhowed how deeply they were affected by them, and with what weight and ſerioufneſs they dwelt upon their thoughts, and took up the whole of their ſtudy and attention.

A ſtrong ſpecimen of the maxims and ſentiments by which they were governed, was exhibited in a famous ſpeech made by one of the Delegates to the Continental Congreſs of the preſent year, on the neceſſity of their taking up arms.

"The great God," ſaid he, "who is the ſearcher of all things, will witneſs for me, that I have ſpoken from the bottom and purity of my heart.—It is an arduous conſideration we are now upon, and ſurely we have conſidered it earneſtly. I may think of every gentleman here, as I know of myſelf. For ſeven years paſt, this queſtion has filled the day with anxious thought, and the night with care.—The God, to whom we appeal, muſt judge us. If the grievances of which we complain did not come upon us unprovoked, and unexpected, when our hearts were filled with reſpectful affection for our parent ſtate, and with loyalty to our King, let ſlavery, the worſt of human ills, be our portion! Nothing leſs than ſeven years of inſulted complaints, and reiterated wrongs, could have ſhaken ſuch rooted ſentiments. Unhappily for us, ſubmiſſion and ſlavery are the ſame; and we have only the melancholy alternative left, of reſiſtance, or of ruin.

The laſt petition of this Congreſs to the King, contained all that our unhappy ſituation could ſuggeſt. It repreſented our grievances, implored redreſs, and profeſſed our readineſs to contribute for the

the general wants, to the utmoſt of our abilities, when conſtitutionally required."

He then adverted to the fate of that petition, and the determination of Parliament to concur with the miniſtry in pronouncing the Congreſs an illegal aſſembly, and their grievances meer pretences.

"I forbear," continued he, "to enter into a detail of thoſe acts, which from their atrociouſneſs, muſt be felt and remembered for ever. They are calculated to carry fire and ſword, famine and deſolation through theſe flouiſhing Colonies. The extremes of rage and revenge againſt the worſt of enemies, could not dictate meaſures more deſperate and deſtructive.

There are ſome people who tremble at the approach of war: they fear that it muſt put an inevitable ſtop to the further progreſs of theſe Colonies, and ruin irretrievably thoſe benefits which the induſtry of almoſt two centuries has called forth from this once ſavage land. I may commend the anxiety of thoſe men, without praiſing their judgment.

War, like other evils, is often wholeſome. The waters that ſtagnate, cotrupt; the ſtorm that works the ocean into rage, renders it ſalutary; Heaven has given us nothing unmixed: the roſe is not without the thorn. War calls forth the great virtues and efforts, which would ſleep in the gentle boſom of peace. It exerciſes thoſe talents, which if unemployed, are no better than if they did not exiſt: it opens reſources which would lie concealed under the inactivity of tranquil times; it rouſes and enlightens; it produces animation, energy, enterpriſingneſs, and ſucceſs.

Let us conſult hiſtory.—Did not the Grecian republics proſper amidſt continual warfare? Their proſperity, their ſplendour, and their power, aroſe from the animating ſpirit of war. Did not Rome,

the miſtreſs of the world, attain her greatneſs by the ſame means? Trace back the hiſtory of our parent ſtate: whether you view her arraying Angles againſt Danes, Saxons againſt Normans, the Barons againſt deſpotic Princes, or the civil wars of the red and white Roſes, or thoſe between the nation and the Stuarts, you ſee her in a ſtate of almoſt continual warfare. But amidſt her civil contentions, ſhe flouriſhed and grew ſtrong; trained in them, ſhe ſent her hardy legions forth, and planted the ſtandards of England on the battlements of Paris.

"The beautiful fabric of her conſtitutional liberty was reared and cemented in blood. From this fulneſs of her ſtrength thoſe ſcions iſſued, which taking deep root in this fruitful ſoil, have reared their heads, and ſpread abroad their branches like the cedars of Lebanon.

"Why fear we then to purſue through apparent evil real good? The war upon which we are to enter is neceſſary, and therefore juſt. Men whoſe only hope is in their arms, have a right to take them up. We fight to prevent our country, brought to ſuch beauty through the infinite toil and hazard of our forefathers and ourſelves, from becoming the prey of that more deſolating, cruel ſpoiler, than war, peſtilence, and famine,—abſolute rule, and lawleſs extortion!

"Our ſufferings have been great; our endurance long:—Every effort of patience, complaint, and ſupplication, has been exhauſted. Let us therefore conſult only how we ſhall defend our liberties with dignity and ſucceſs. Our parent ſtate will then think us worthy of her; when ſhe ſees, that together with her liberty, we inherit her rigid reſolution of maintaining it againſt all invaders. She calls us her children; let us by the ſpiritedneſs of

our

our behaviour, give her reaſon to pride herſelf in the relationſhip."

Such was the ſtile and method of arguing in uſe among the Americans at this time. It communicated itſelf from the higheſt to the loweſt claſſes among them. It was the language of Congreſs, and of every Provincial Meeting throughout the continent: it was that of all private companies. Men ſeemed regardleſs of all other objects but thoſe which related to their preſent ſituation. The hiſtories of all fortunate oppoſitions to tyrannical power were now read, and ſtudied with uncommon aſſiduity.—The revolutions that had eſtabliſhed popular liberty on the ruins of oppreſſion, were pointed out to public obſervation; and the reſiſtance that brought them about, was held out for their imitation. All the parallel circumſtances that repreſented a ſimilitude between themſelves and thoſe nations that had ſtruggled for their freedom, were laid before them, particularly thoſe which the hiſtory of England afforded.

It was chiefly upon the precedents they found in this, they built the propriety and lawfulneſs of their reſiſtance. It was, ſaid they, full of encouragements and authorities in their favour. The reigns of the Plantagenets, and of the Tudors, afforded a ſufficient number. But without looking back ſo far, the example of thoſe reſolute Engliſhmen who withſtood the deſigns of Charles the Firſt, was, in their opinion, the moſt appoſite caſe to their own.

It was at this time, ſaid they, the doctrine of oppoſition to unlawful power was beſt underſtood, and moſt properly exerted. Since that æra, it had been fully and explicitly eſtabliſhed, not only in meer theory, but in conſtant practice. The Engliſh hiſtory from that period is a perpetual confirmation of the perſuaſion of the people of England, that government was inſtituted ſolely for the bene-

fit of the governed, and that all ideas of a different tendency, are inconſiſtent with the common-ſenſe and feelings of mankind.

To this perſuaſion the Revolution was owing, and the ſettlement of the Crown in the Hanover line. Both theſe events were authoriſed by the determination of the people, to ſuffer no inconveniences from a compliance with the abſurd tenet, that an hereditary right ſubſiſted in the individuals of particular families, to govern that community, of which, from a concurrence of cauſes, they happened to become the principal members.

But England was not the only country that afforded inſtances of the reſolution taken by the community, to endure no oppreſſion. Two illuſtrious ſtates in Europe owed their exiſtence and proſperity to the conduct now adopted by America. The inhabitants of Switzerland, and thoſe of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands, had preceded them in the ſame noble career. They too had been oppreſſed, and had by courage and perſeverance, not only reſiſted oppreſſion, but caſt off the yoke of the oppreſſor.

The caſe of the laſt of theſe two nations bore a remarkable ſimilitude to their own. They had long endeavoured by peaceable means to obtain a redreſs of their many grievances. They had petitioned, they had remoſtrated; they had pleaded their cauſe with coolneſs and moderation; they had uſed every argument, and every entreaty to prevail on their oppreſſors to deſiſt from ill uſage: they even ſubmitted to ſeverities, rather than be thought ſeditious, and patiently bowed their necks beneath a weight of calamities, that had almoſt cruſhed them, before they could bring themſelves to make a ſtand againſt their tyrants.

It was not until they were duly convinced, that patience only ſerved to harden the hearts of their unfeeling

unfeeling rulers, and to encourage them to proceed in their deſpotic meaſures, that they took at laſt the reſolution to remain no longer in a ſtate of paſſiveneſs and forbearance, which had occaſioned an accumulation of diſtreſs upon them, and expoſed them no leſs to contempt than to harſh treatment.

Taught by repeated experience, that acquieſcence under injuries is always followed by their repetition, they began by laying aſide their obedience to illegal decrees, and by drawing the ſword in defence of their juſt rights; ſtill however profeſſing allegiance to their ſovereign, and willingneſs to lay down their arms, on condition of being reinſtated in the privileges of which they had been deprived.

But theſe offers were rejected with a haughtineſs, that compelled them, much againſt their will to continue the reſiſtance they had begun. No mitigation of the tyranny they had endured was expected, and the moſt dreadful menaces were thrown out againſt them: cruelty and inhumanity in the extreme, accompanied the hoſtilities that were exerciſed againſt them, and no hopes remained of any ſincere reconciliation. In ſuch circumſtances, it would have been the height of imprudence to truſt men who had been guilty of ſuch enormities, and had thereby forfeited all regard and confidence, and could be viewed in no other light than that of a bloody and barbarous enemy.

Impelled by theſe motives, they determined at length to have recourſe to the laſt remedy of an aggrieved and oppreſſed people, to caſt off the yoke that galled them, to take the management of their affairs into their own hands, and to declare themſelves independent and free.

They fulfilled their determination accordingly, and had no cauſe to repent it. They maintained their independence with a ſpirit and fortitude that faced all obſtacles; they ſtruggled againſt a power incom-

incomparably ſuperior to their own, with a perſeverance that rendered them proof againſt all hardſhips; and after a conteſt that aſtoniſhed the world by its duration, they came out of it at laſt completely victorious, and eſtabliſhed a commonwealth, which, for the extent of territory it poſſeſſes, is the moſt populous, the moſt opulent, and the moſt powerful ſtate, that ever was recorded in hiſtory.

Such were the repreſentations and arguments laid before the people of America, to encourage them to act with firmneſs and reſolution in the meaſures they had adopted. Though they were not invited in a direct manner to go the ſame lengths the Dutch had done, yet they were ſo fully reminded of them, that it was eaſy to perceive at what the citation of them aimed at; and that by ſeaſoning their minds with reflections of this nature, they would be duly prepared for the execution of that great deſign, which was now agitating in the councils of their leaders.

In order further to animate them, the actual ſituation of England, and the character of the Engliſh at the preſent day, was drawn with that height of colouring which was moſt favourable to the views of America. England was deſcribed as deriving all its greatneſs and importance from its dominions in that continent. Its principal trade and opulence aroſe from that quarter. It had, during the laſt triumphant war, enabled Britain to overcome her ancient and moſt formidable enemies. It had ſupplied her military and marine with ſome of her braveſt ſoldiers and ſtouteſt ſailors. America had, at that time, covered the Weſt Indian ocean with her trading veſſels and her privateers, and was become herſelf an object of terror to all the enemies of Great Britain.

The baſe imputation of timidity and backwardneſs in military affairs, had been thrown out

merely to encourage the Engliſh commonalty to enliſt in thoſe regiments that were intended to be employed againſt them. Thoſe who knew the Americans, were amply convinced that in thoſe qualifications that conſtitute a good ſoldier, they were by no means deficient, and were equal, if not ſuperior, to the Engliſh themſelves. Of what was the bulk of the Engliſh army made up, but of the very refuſe of the nation? The laborious working individuals knew their intereſt too well, to give up their liberty and a comfortable livelihood, for ſo ſlaviſh a profeſſion.

When trained and diſciplined in the tactics now moſt prevalent, ſtill their ſuperiority was a matter of great doubt. In the field of competition with America, Britain had objects of the moſt ſerious conſideration to view. It was not barely the regularity with which a man went through the parade of exerciſe, that was now to be attended to. That ſcience, ſuch as it was, might be ſoon attained. But had thoſe individuals into whoſe hands England now truſted her arms, been brought up in thoſe habits of hardineſs that fit a man for war? Could they handle the pickaxe, the hatchet, and the ſpade, with the ſame readineſs as the Americans? Theſe were implements with which every American ſoldier was acquainted; but to which few of the Britiſh ſoldiers were uſed; or if they once had been, had now forgotten it in the ſlothful life they led in England. In this reſpect the Americans might be compared with the Hebrews of old, who, while employed in rebuilding the walls of Jeruſalem, after their return from the captivity of Babylon, were compelled to hold the trowel in the one hand, and the ſword in the other. In the ſame manner the Americans were no leſs cloſely preſt; they were called from the plough and the harrow, and obliged to run to their muſkets for

the

the defence of their houſes, and poſſeſſions, and the preſervation of their perſons from the hands of the enemy.

There was, however, one circumſtance which every American ought conſtantly and thankfully to bear in his mind. Without wearing a ſoldier's garb, they perfectly underſtood the uſe of a firelock. They had been taught it from their childhood; it was the paſtime and amuſement of all, as well as the occupation of many; and, from the rural life to which they were in general habituated, they were the moſt expert handlers of that principal inſtrument in war, of any people perhaps upon earth.

But could as much be ſaid of the Engliſh?—Allowing their native courage to equal that of any nation, was it not materially reſtrained by the diſuſe, or to ſpeak with more truth, by the prohibition of fire arms amongſt the lower claſſes, who ought, as the moſt numerous part of the community, to be beſt practiſed in them. Here, again, the ſuperior freedom of an American appeared in a ſtriking light. While he ranged at large over his lands, without apprehending that a rude game-keeper ſhould wreſt the gun out of his hands, an Engliſh countryman durſt not be ſeen with ſuch an inſtrument even upon his own ground. Who would not imagine, that with all the boaſted liberty of England, the gentry were particularly ſtudious to depreſs the ſpirit of the vulgar? No law that ever was enacted by Parliament, and ſubmitted to by a free people, was ever more effectually calculated to deſtroy the warlike diſpoſition of a nation, than that which in England is called the game act. It ſhowed two things, that the upper claſſes are ſhamefully inclined to tyrannize, and that the lower are much more eaſily made to obey, than the world has been taught to believe.

It

It ſhowed, too, the difference between the Engliſh commonalty at this day, and that of times paſt. Their expertneſs in the military weapons then uſed was ſuch, that no people in Europe could equal them. Their archers, eſpecially, were the ſtrength of their armies, and the terror of their enemies. Their fame was ſo great, that in the treaties of alliance with other Princes, they always carefully ſtipulated for as large a number of Engliſh archers as they could poſſibly obtain.

The yeomanry of England had been, indeed, but was no more, its glory. They were now confounded in that croud of inſignificant clamourers for liberty and reformation of abuſes, which filled the land from one end to the other. It was aſſerting no untruth to ſay, that were the liberties of England to be invaded as thoſe of America had been, it was much to be doubted, whether the Engliſh yeomanry would defend them with the ſame vigour as the yeomanry of America. It was undeniably much leſs qualified for ſuch a trial, by its general unſkilfulneſs in arms, and ſtill more by that want of public ſpirit which was now becoming ſo common a complaint amongſt all claſſes in England.

Nor were the Engliſh commonalty ſuperior in bodily ſtrength and appearance, or in aptneſs to learn the trade of war, to the natives of America. The activity and dexterity of theſe in all matters relating to warfare could not be exceeded, and excited the aſtoniſhment and admiration of all impartial men. No people that had ever been called forth to the field ſo ſuddenly, had, in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time, made a greater, if ſo great a proficiency.

The uncommon excellence of the Britiſh troops in point of regularity and diſcipline, had been much inſiſted on. But proofs in abundance, both from ancient and modern times, could be adduced, that regular and diſciplined troops, as they were

vauntingly called, were not so invincible as prejudice and imbecility of apprehension were so ready to represent them. The Roman legions that fought and vanquished Pyrrhus, were a bold and intrepid militia: yet he and Alexander were deemed by Hannibal, a competent judge, the greatest of all commanders; and his army was composed of Greeks, at that time the most conversant of men in tactics, and all military knowledge.

Who were they that saved Carthage when menaced with destruction by an army of veterans consisting of seventy thousand men, masters of all the territory round that city, and who had reduced it to the most deplorable extremities? This veteran army was defeated and cut to pieces by its own embodied citizens, worn down with incessant toils, and brought almost to the brink of despair; but inspired with that determination to stand their ground to the last, which true patriotism is more able to render efficacious than any other motive.

Among the Athenians, so famous for their valour and their martial skill, none but citizens were thought proper to be admitted into their military bodies; and yet what men could behave more bravely and expertly? They were an over-match for all the other Grecian republics, and disputed the prize of warlike superiority with the Lacedemonians themselves, who were, in fact, a nation of meer soldiers and disciplinarians; whilst they, on the contrary, were a mixture of all professions—merchants, tradesmen, mechanics, and artificers of all denominations.

In modern times precedents were no less numerous. One of the greatest victories recorded in history, was obtained by the invincible bravery of undisciplined countrymen and citizens, fighting for their liberty against a powerful invader, at the head of the most regular army at that time in Europe.

These victorious citizens were the Swiſs; their invader was Charles the Bold, ſovereign of the Low Countries, the moſt opulent prince, and the moſt formidable warrior in his day.

The Dutch afforded them examples of the ſame nature. The armies employed againſt them, were commanded by the greateſt Generals of the age, and were compoſed of men who had for years been uſed to arms and conqueſt: but their career was arreſted, to the ſurprize of all the world, by a people who had hitherto led a peaceable commercial life, and who never would have thought of war, had they not been compelled into it for their own preſervation.

In the laſt century, Portugal had ſhown that meer diſcipline was not ſufficient to overcome courage and perſeverance. The troops ſent to reduce that Kingdom after it had ſhaken off the Spaniſh yoke, were inferior to none in Europe; yet they could not ſubdue it, though chiefly defended by new raiſed militia.

In the preſent century, three ſtriking inſtances could be cited of the prodigious ſuperiority which patriotic valour is able to confer over all military advantages. The firſt was the ſiege of Barcelona, ſuſtained with the moſt heroic ſpirit and conſtancy by its inhabitants only, againſt a large and regular army, under a celebrated General.

The ſecond was, the revolution of Genoa, during the war before the laſt, when the people of that city, unaſſiſted by any troops, and led on barely by their natural courage and ſagacity, expelled the victorious army of the Auſtrians, freſh from the defeat of a powerful enemy, and elated with conqueſt, and the expectation of enjoying the plunder of this wealthy city.

The third was the brave defence of Corſica by its inhabitants, againſt the repeated attempts of more

more than one power to bring it under ſubjection. Theſe intrepid iſlanders had only their own unconquerable reſolution to oppoſe to the numerous bodies of regular ſoldiers by whom they were continually aſſailed: they as conſtantly repulſed them; and the misfortunes of that valiant people were due much more to unlooked for accidents; and to treachery, than to the bravery and ſkill of their enemies.

The chiefs and officers of the enemy were courageous and expert; but thoſe of the Americans were not deficient either in ſpirit or knowledge: they had hitherto maintained their ground with honour; and the chances of war were ſo manifold, that patience and fortitude often proved inſurmountable, even by the greateſt generals. Theſe two qualifications were in ſome meaſure characteriſtical among the people of America, and would alone enable them to withſtand the vigour and activity peculiar to the Britiſh nation. Though they might not be able to conquer them in the field, they ſhould weary them out by perſeverance, and by improving thoſe opportunities which it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe that fortune would ſometimes throw in their way.

Such were the reaſonings and arguments employed to nouriſh and ſtrengthen the ſpirit of oppoſition and reſiſtance in America. Without inquiring how far they were appoſite and well-founded, they produced the effects propoſed, and prepared the minds and expectations of men for the events that were to follow.

END OF VOL. I.