

Before the Revolution the Americans were for the most part an agricultural people. Within the tide-water line of Virginia the lands were divided into estates, and the planters devoted themselves almost exclusively to the cultivation of tobacco. Farther inland the products were more various: wheat, maize, potatoes; upland cotton, hemp, and flax. In the Carolinas and Georgia the rice crop was most important; after that, indigo, cotton, and some silk; tar, turpentine, and what the hunter and fisherman gathered from the woods and streams. New York, Philadelphia and Boston were then as now the great centers of trade; but commerce was carried on in a slow and awkward manner, wholly unlike the rushing activity of more recent times. Ship-building was one of the most important colonial interests. In the year 1738 no less than forty-one sailing vessels, with an average burden of a hundred and fifty tons, were built and launched at the ship-yards of Boston. New England was the seat of whatever manufacturing interest prevailed in the country. But all enterprise in this direction was checked and impeded by the British Board of Trade, whose stupid and arbitrary restrictions acted as a damper on every kind of colonial thrift. No sooner would some enterprising company of New England men begin the building of a factory than this officious Board would interfere in such a way as to make success impossible. So jealous was the English ministry of American progress! If, previous to the Revolution, any colonial manufacture was successfully established, it was done *against* the will of Great Britain, and in spite of her mean and churlish opposition.

Such were the American colonies—such the people whose budding nationality was now to be exposed to the blasts of war. These people, whose ancestors had been driven into exile by the exactions of European governments and the bigotry of ecclesiastical power, had become the rightful proprietors of the New World. They had fairly won it from savage man and savage nature. They had subdued it and built States within it. They owned it by all the claims of actual possession; by toil and trial; by the ordeal of suffering; by peril, privation, and hardship; by the baptism of sorrow and the shedding of blood. No wonder that patriotism was the child of such travail and discipline! No wonder that the men who from mountain and sky and river, from orchard and valley and forest, from the memories of the past, the aspirations of the present and the hopes of the future, had drunk in the spirit of Liberty until their souls were pervaded with her sublime essence,—were now ready when the iron heel of oppression was set upon their cherished rights, to draw the vindictive sword even against the venerable monarchy of England!

## PART IV.

## REVOLUTION AND CONFEDERATION.

A. D. 1775—1789.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## CAUSES.

THE war of American Independence was an event of vast moment, affecting the destinies of all nations. The question decided by the conflict was this: Whether the English colonies in America, becoming sovereign, should govern themselves or be ruled as dependencies of a European monarchy. The decision was rendered in favor of separation and independence. The result has been the grandest and most promising example of republican government in the history of the world. The struggle was long and distressing, though not characterized by great violence; the combatants were of the same race and spoke a common language. It is of the first importance to understand the causes of the war.

The most general cause of the American Revolution was THE RIGHT OF ARBITRARY GOVERNMENT, claimed by Great Britain and denied by the colonies. So long as this claim was asserted by England only as a theory, the conflict was postponed; when the English government began to enforce the principle in practice, the colonies resisted. The question began to be openly discussed about the time of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748; and from that period until the beginning of hostilities, in 1775, each year witnessed a renewal of the agitation. But there were also many subordinate causes tending to bring on a conflict.

First of these was *the influence of France*, which was constantly exerted so as to incite a spirit of resistance in the colonies. The French king would never have agreed to the treaty of 1763—by which Canada was ceded to Great Britain—had it not been with the hope of securing American independence. It was the theory of France that by giving up Canada on the north the English colonies would become so strong as to renounce their allegiance to the crown. England feared such a result. More than once it was proposed in Parliament to re-cede Canada to France

in order to check the growth of the American States. "There, now!" said a French statesman when the treaty of 1763 was signed; "we have arranged matters for an American rebellion in which England will lose her empire in the West."

Another cause leading to the Revolution was found in the *natural disposition and inherited character of the colonists*. They were, for the most part, republicans in politics and dissenters in religion. The people of England were monarchists and High Churchmen. The colonists had never seen a king. The Atlantic lay between them and the British ministry. Their dealings with the royal officers had been such as to engender a dislike for monarchical institutions. The people of America had not forgotten—could not well forget—the circumstances under which their ancestors had come to the New World. For six generations the colonists had managed their own affairs; and their methods of government were necessarily republican. The experiences of the French and Indian War had shown that Americans were fully able to defend themselves and their country.

The *growth of public opinion in the colonies* tended to independence. The more advanced thinkers came to believe that a complete separation from England was not only possible, but desirable. As early as 1755, John Adams, then a young school-teacher in Connecticut, wrote in his diary: "In another century all Europe will not be able to subdue us. The only way to keep us from setting up for ourselves is to disunite us." Such opinions were at first expressed only in private, then by hints in pamphlets and newspapers, and at last publicly and everywhere. The mass of the people, however, were slow to accept an idea which seemed so radical and dangerous. Not until the war had actually begun did the majority declare for independence.

Another cause of the conflict with the mother country was found in the *personal character of the king*. George III., who ascended the English throne in 1760, was one of the worst monarchs of modern times. His notions of government were altogether despotic. He was a stubborn, stupid, thick-headed man in whose mind the notion of human rights was entirely wanting. It was impossible for him to conceive of a magnanimous project or to appreciate the value of civil liberty. His reign of sixty years was as odious as it was long. In the management of the British empire he employed only those who were the narrow-minded partisans of his own policy. His ministers were, for the most part, men as incompetent and illiberal as himself. With such a king and such a ministry it was not likely that the descendants of the Pilgrims would get on smoothly.

The more immediate cause of the Revolution was the passage by Parliament of a *number of acts destructive of colonial liberty*. These acts were resisted by the colonies, and the attempt was made by Great Britain to enforce them with the bayonet. The subject of this unjust legislation, which extended over a period of twelve years just preceding the war, was the question of taxation. It is a well-grounded principle of English common law that the people, by their representatives in the House of Commons, have the right of voting whatever taxes and customs are necessary for the support of the kingdom. The American colonists claimed the full rights of Englishmen. With good reason it was urged that the general assemblies of colonies held the same relation to the American people as did the House of Commons to the people of England. The English ministers replied that Parliament, and not the colonial assemblies, was the proper body to vote taxes in any and all parts of the British empire. But we are not represented in Parliament, was the answer of the Americans; the House of Commons may therefore justly assess taxes in England, but not in America. Many of the towns, boroughs and shires in these British isles have no representatives in Parliament, and yet the Parliament taxes them, replied the ministers, now driven to sophistry. If any of your towns, boroughs and shires are not represented in the House of Commons, they *ought* to be, was the American rejoinder; and there the argument ended. Such were the essential points of the controversy. It is now proper to notice the several parliamentary acts which the colonies complained of and resisted.

The first of these was THE IMPORTATION ACT, passed in 1733. This statute was itself a kind of supplement to the old Navigation Act of 1651. By the terms of the newer law exorbitant duties were laid on all the sugar, molasses and rum imported into the colonies. At first the payment of these unreasonable customs was evaded by the merchants, and then the statute was openly set at naught. In 1750 it was further enacted that iron-works should not be erected in America. The manufacture of steel was specially forbidden; and the felling of pines, outside of enclosures, was interdicted. All of these laws were disregarded and denounced by the people of the colonies as being unjust and tyrannical. In 1761 a strenuous effort was made by the ministry to enforce the Importation Act. The colonial courts were authorized to issue to the king's officers a kind of search-warrants, called Writs of Assistance. Armed with this authority, petty constables might enter any and every place, searching for and seizing goods which were suspected of having evaded the duty. At Salem and Boston the greatest excitement prevailed. The application for the writs was resisted before the courts. James Otis, an

able and temperate man, pleaded eloquently for colonial rights, and denounced the parliamentary acts as unconstitutional. The address was a masterly defence of the people, and produced a profound sensation throughout the colonies. Already there were hints at resistance by force of arms.

In 1763, and again in the following year, the English ministers undertook to enforce the law requiring the payment of duties on sugar and molasses. The officers of the admiralty were authorized to seize and confiscate all vessels engaged in the unlawful trade. Before the passage of this act was known at Boston, a great town-meeting was held. Samuel Adams was the orator. A powerful argument was produced showing conclusively that under the British constitution taxation and representation were inseparable. Nevertheless, vessels from the English navy were sent to hover around the American harbors. A great number of merchantmen bearing cargoes of sugar and wine were seized; and the colonial trade with the West Indies was almost destroyed.

The year 1764 witnessed the first formal declaration of the purpose of Parliament to tax the colonies. Mr. Grenville was now prime minister. On the 10th of March a resolution was adopted by the House of Commons declaring that it would be proper to charge certain stamp-duties on the American colonies. It was announced that a bill embodying this principle would be prepared by the ministers and presented at the next session of Parliament. In the mean time, the news of the proposed measure was borne to America. Universal excitement and indignation prevailed in the colonies. Political meetings became the order of the day. Orators were in great demand. The newspapers teemed with arguments against the proposed enactment. Resolutions were passed by the people of almost every town. Formal remonstrances were addressed to the king and the two houses of Parliament. Agents were appointed by the colonies and sent to London in the hope of preventing the passage of the law.

A new turn was now given to the controversy. The French and Indian War had just been concluded with a treaty of peace. Great Britain had incurred a heavy debt. The ministers began to urge that the expenses of the war ought to be borne by the colonies. The Americans replied that England ought to defend her colonies, from motives of humanity; that in the prosecution of the war the colonists had aided Great Britain as much as Great Britain had aided them; that the cession of Canada had amply remunerated England for her losses; that it was not the payment of money which the colonies dreaded, but the surrender of their liberties. It was also added that in case of another war the American States would try to fight their own battles.

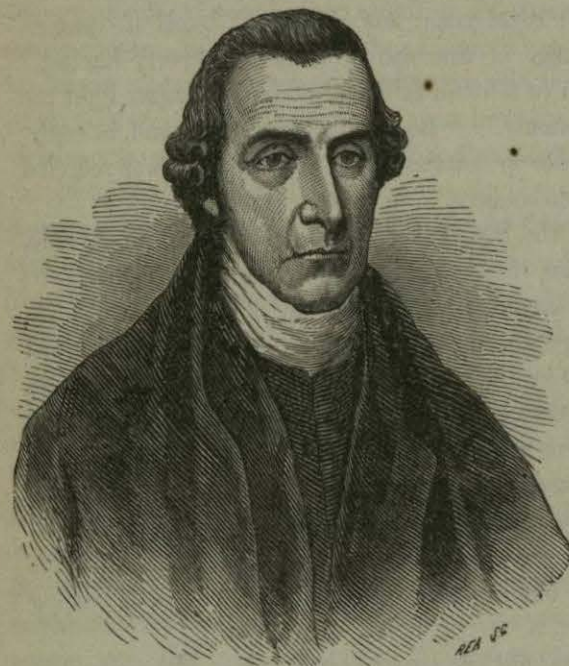
Early in March of 1765, the English Parliament, no longer guided by the counsels of Pitt, passed the celebrated STAMP ACT. In the House of Commons the measure received a majority of five to one. In the House of Lords the vote was unanimous. At the time of the passage of the act the king was in a fit of insanity, and could not sign the bill. On the 22d of the month the royal assent was given by a board of commissioners acting for the king. "The sun of American liberty has set," wrote Benjamin Franklin to a friend at home. "Now we must light the lamps of industry and economy." "Be assured," said the friend, in reply, "that we shall light torches of another sort." And the answer reflected the sentiment of the whole country.

The provisions of the Stamp Act were briefly these: Every note, bond, deed, mortgage, lease, license and legal document of whatever sort, required in the colonies, should, after the 1st day of the following November, be executed on paper bearing an English stamp. This stamped paper was to be furnished by the British government; and for each sheet the colonists were required to pay a sum varying, according to the nature of the document, from three pence to six pounds sterling. Every colonial pamphlet, almanac and newspaper was required to be printed on paper of the same sort, the value of the stamps in this case ranging from a half-penny to four pence; every advertisement was taxed two shillings. No contract should be of any binding force unless written on paper bearing the royal stamp.

The news of the hateful act swept over America like a thundercloud. The people were at first grief-stricken; then indignant; and then wrathful. Crowds of excited men surged into the towns, and there were some acts of violence. The muffled bells of Philadelphia and Boston rung a funeral peal; and the people said it was the death-knell of liberty. In New York a copy of the Stamp Act was carried through the streets with a death's-head nailed to it, and a placard bearing this inscription: THE FOLLY OF ENGLAND AND THE RUIN OF AMERICA. The general assemblies were at first slow to move; there were many loyalists among the members; and the colonial governors held their offices by appointment of the king. It was hazardous for a provincial legislator to say that an act of the British Parliament was the act of tyrants. But the younger representatives, hot-blooded as well as patriotic, did not hesitate to express their sentiments. In the Virginia House of Burgesses there was a memorable scene.

Patrick Henry, the youngest member of the House, an uneducated mountaineer recently chosen to represent Louisa county, waited for some older delegate to lead the burgesses in opposition to Parliament. But the

older members hesitated or went home. Offended at this lukewarmness, Henry in his passionate way snatched a blank-leaf out of an old law-book and hastily drew up a series of fiery resolutions, declaring that the



PATRICK HENRY.

Virginians were Englishmen with English rights; that the people of Great Britain had the exclusive privilege of voting their own taxes, and so had the Americans; that the colonists were not bound to yield obedience to any law imposing taxation on them; and that whoever said the contrary was an enemy to the country. The resolutions were at once laid before the house.

A violent debate ensued, in which the patriots had the best of the argument. It was a moment of intense interest. Two

future Presidents of the United States were in the audience; Washington occupied his seat as a delegate, and Thomas Jefferson, a young collegian, stood just outside of the railing. The eloquent and audacious Henry bore down all opposition. "Tarquin and Cæsar had each his Brutus," said the indignant orator; "Charles I. had his Cromwell, and George III.—" "Treason!" shouted the speaker. "Treason! treason!" exclaimed the terrified loyalists, springing to their feet. "—And George III. may profit by their example," continued Henry; and then added as he took his seat, "If that be treason, make the most of it!" The resolutions were put to the house and carried; but the majorities on some of the votes were small, and the next day, when Henry was absent, the most violent paragraph was reconsidered and expunged: some of the members were greatly frightened at their own audacity. But the resolutions in their entire form had gone before the country as the formal expression of the

oldest American commonwealth, and the effect on the other colonies was like the shock of a battery.

Similar resolutions were adopted by the assemblies of New York and Massachusetts—in the latter State before the action of Virginia was known. At Boston, James Otis successfully agitated the question of an American Congress. It was proposed that each colony, acting without leave of the king, should appoint delegates, who should meet in the following autumn and discuss the affairs of the nation. The proposition was favorably received; nine of the colonies appointed delegates; and on the 7th of October THE FIRST COLONIAL CONGRESS assembled at New York. There were twenty-eight representatives: Timothy Ruggles of Massachusetts was chosen president. After much discussion a DECLARATION OF RIGHTS was adopted setting forth in unmistakable terms that the American colonists, as Englishmen, could not and would not consent to be taxed but by their own representatives. Memorials were also prepared and addressed to the two houses of Parliament. A manly petition, professing loyalty and praying for a more just and humane policy toward his American subjects, was directed to the king.

The 1st of November came. On that day the Stamp Act was to take effect. During the summer great quantities of the stamped paper had been prepared and sent to America. Ten boxes of it were seized by the people of New York and openly destroyed. In Connecticut, the stamp-officer was threatened with hanging. In Boston, houses were destroyed and the stamps given to the winds and flames. Whole cargoes of the obnoxious paper were reshipped to England; and every stamp-officer in America was obliged to resign or leave the country. By the 1st of November there were scarcely stamps enough remaining to furnish after times with specimens. The day was kept as a day of mourning. The stores were closed; flags were hung at half mast; the bells were tolled; effigies of the authors and abettors of the Stamp Act were borne about in mockery, and then burned. The people of New Hampshire formed a funeral procession and buried a coffin bearing the inscription of LIBERTY. A cartoon was circulated hinting at union as the remedy for existing evils. The picture represented a snake broken into sections. Each joint was labeled with the initials of a colony; the head was marked "N. E." for New England; and the title was *Join or Die!*

At first, legal business was almost entirely suspended. The court-houses were shut up. Society was at a standstill; not even a marriage license could be legally issued. By and by, the people breathed more freely; the offices were opened, and business went on as before; but was *not* transacted with stamped paper. It was at this juncture that the

patriotic society known as THE SONS OF LIBERTY was organized. The members were pledged to oppose British tyranny to the utmost, and to defend with their lives the freedom of the colonies. Equally important was the action of the colonial merchants. The importers of New York, Boston and Philadelphia entered into a solemn compact to purchase no more goods of Great Britain until the Stamp Act should be repealed. And the people, applauding the action of their merchants, cheerfully denied themselves of all imported luxuries.

Great was the wrath of the British government when the news of these proceedings was borne across the ocean. But a large party of English tradesmen and manufacturers sided with the colonists. Better still, some of the most eminent statesmen espoused the cause of America. Even Lord Camden in the House of Lords spoke favorably of colonial rights. Before the House of Commons Mr. Pitt delivered a powerful address. "You have," said he, "no right to tax America. I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of our fellow-subjects so lost to every sense of virtue as tamely to give up their liberties would be fit instruments to make slaves of the rest." The new Whig prime minister, the marquis of Rockingham, was also a friend of the colonies, and looked with disfavor on the legislation of his predecessor. On the 18th of March, 1766, the Stamp Act was formally repealed. As a kind of balm to soothe the wounded feelings of the Tories—as the adherents of Grenville were now called—a supplemental resolution was added to the repeal declaring that Parliament had the right to *bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever*.

The joy both in England and America was unbounded. The vessels in the river Thames were decked with flags, and the colonial orators spoke to enthusiastic crowds gathered around bonfires. There was a great calm in all the country; but it was only the lull before the coming of a greater storm. A few months after the repeal of the Stamp Act the ministry of Rockingham was dissolved and a new cabinet formed under the leadership of Pitt, who was now made earl of Chatham. Unfortunately, however, the prime minister was for a long time confined by sickness to his home in the country. During his absence, Mr. Townshend, chancellor of the exchequer, in a moment of unparalleled folly, brought forward a new scheme for taxing America. On the 29th of June, 1767, an act was passed imposing a duty on all the glass, paper, painters' colors and tea which should thereafter be imported into the colonies. At the same time a resolution was adopted suspending the powers of the general assembly of New York until that body should vote certain supplies for the royal troops stationed in the province. A more rash and disastrous piece of legislation never was enacted.

All the smothered resentment of the colonies burst out anew. Another agreement not to purchase British goods was immediately entered into by the American merchants. The newspapers were filled with bitter denunciations of Parliament. Early in 1768 the assembly of Massachusetts adopted a circular calling upon the other colonies for assistance in the effort to obtain redress of grievances. The ministers were enraged and required the assembly in the king's name to rescind their action, and to express regret for that "rash and hasty proceeding." Instead of that, the sturdy legislature reaffirmed the resolution by a nearly unanimous vote. Thereupon Governor Bernard dissolved the assembly; but the members would not disperse until they had prepared a list of charges against the governor and requested the king to remove him.

In the month of June fuel was added to the flame. A sloop, charged with attempting to evade the payment of duty, was seized by the custom-house officers. The people rose in a mob; attacked the houses of the officers, and obliged the occupants to seek shelter in Castle William, at the entrance of the harbor. The governor now appealed to the ministers for help; and General Gage, commander-in-chief of the British forces in America, was ordered to bring from Halifax a regiment of regulars and overawe the people. On the 1st of October the troops, seven hundred strong, marched with fixed bayonets into the capital of Massachusetts. The people were maddened by this military invasion of their city. When the governor required the selectmen of Boston to provide quarters for the soldiers, he was met with an absolute refusal; and the troops were quartered in the state-house.

In February of 1769, Parliament advanced another step toward war. The people of Massachusetts were declared rebels, and the governor was directed to arrest those deemed guilty of treason and send them to England for trial. The general assembly met this additional outrage with defiant resolutions. Scenes almost as violent as these were at the same time enacted in Virginia and North Carolina. In the latter State a popular insurrection was suppressed by Governor Tryon; the insurgents, escaping across the mountains, obtained lands of the Cherokees, and became the founders of Tennessee.

Early in 1770 a serious affray occurred in New York. The soldiers wantonly cut down a liberty pole which had stood for several years in the park. A conflict ensued, in which the people came out best; another pole was erected in the northern part of the city. On the 5th of March a more serious difficulty occurred in Boston. An altercation had taken place between a party of citizens and the soldiers. A crowd gathered, surrounded Captain Preston's company of the city guard, hooted

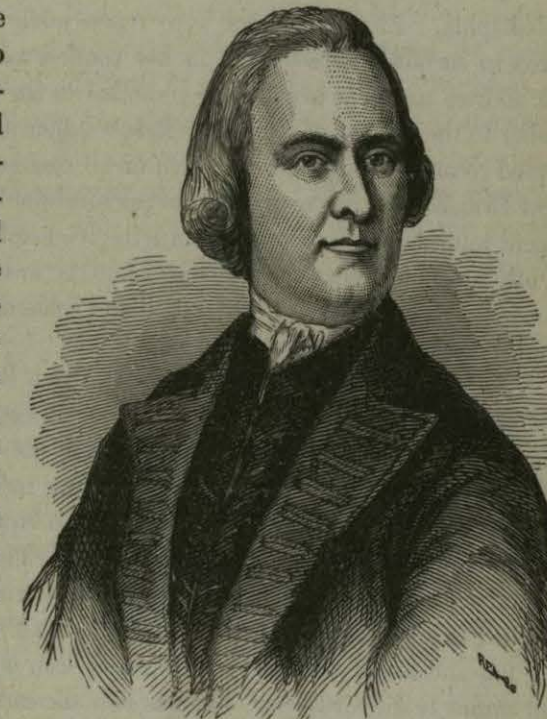
at them, and dared them to fire. At length the exasperated soldiers discharged a volley, killing three of the citizens and wounding several others. This outrage, known as the Boston Massacre, created a profound sensation. The city was ablaze with excitement. Several thousand men assembled under arms. Governor Hutchinson came out, promising that justice should be done and trying to appease the multitude. The brave Samuel Adams spoke for the people. An immediate withdrawal of the troops from the city was demanded, and the governor was obliged to yield. Captain Preston and his company were arrested and tried for murder. The prosecution was conducted with great spirit, and two of the offenders were convicted of manslaughter.

On the very day of the Boston massacre, Lord North, who had become prime minister, secured the passage by Parliament of an act repealing all the duties on American imports except that on tea. The exception was made only to show that the right of taxing the colonies was not relinquished. The merchants of New York and Boston at once relaxed their non-importation agreement except so far as it related to tea; to that extent the compact was retained; and the people voluntarily pledged themselves to use no more tea until the duty should be unconditionally repealed. The antagonism toward the mother country was abating somewhat, when in 1772 an act was passed by Parliament requiring that the salaries of the governor and judges of Massachusetts should be paid out of the colonial revenues without consent of the assembly. That body retaliated by a declaration that the parliamentary statute was a violation of the chartered rights of the people, and therefore void. About the same time the *Gaspee*, a royal schooner which had been annoying the people of Providence, was boarded by a company of patriots and burned.

In 1773 the ministers attempted to enforce the tea-tax by a stratagem. Owing to the duty, the price of tea in the American market had been doubled. But there was no demand for the article; for the people would not buy. As a consequence the warehouses of Great Britain were stored with vast quantities of tea, awaiting shipment to America. Parliament now removed the export duty which had hitherto been charged on tea shipped from England. The price was by so much lowered; and the ministers persuaded themselves that, when the cheaper tea was offered in America, the silly colonists would pay their own import duty without suspicion or complaint.

To carry out this scheme English ships were loaded with tea for the American market. Some of the vessels reached Charleston; the tea was landed, but the people forbade its sale. The chests were stored in

mouldy cellars, and the contents ruined. At New York and Philadelphia the ports were closed and the ships forbidden to enter. At Boston the vessels entered the harbor. The tea had been consigned to Governor Hutchinson and his friends; and special precautions were taken to prevent a failure of the enterprise. But the authorities stubbornly stood their ground, and would not permit the tea to be landed. On the 16th of December the dispute was settled in a memorable manner. There was a great town-meeting at which seven thousand people were assembled. Adams and Quincy spoke to the multitudes. Evening came on, and the meeting was about to adjourn, when a war-whoop was heard, and about fifty men disguised as Indians passed the door of the Old South Church. The crowd followed to Griffin's wharf, where the three tea-ships were at anchor. Then everything became quiet. The disguised men quickly boarded the vessels, broke open the three hundred and forty chests of tea that composed the cargoes, and poured the contents into the sea.



SAMUEL ADAMS.

Such was THE BOSTON TEA-PARTY.

Parliament made haste to find revenge. On the last day of March, 1774, THE BOSTON PORT BILL was passed. It was enacted that no kind of merchandise should any longer be landed or shipped at the wharves of Boston. The custom-house was removed to Salem, but the people of that town refused the benefits which were proffered by the hand of tyranny. The inhabitants of Marblehead tendered the free use of their warehouses to the merchants of Boston. The assembly stood stoutly by the cause of the people. When the news of the passage of the Port Bill reached Virginia, the burgesses at once entered a protest on the

journals of the house. When Governor Dunmore ordered the members to their homes, they met in another place, and passed a recommendation for a general congress of the colonies. On the 20th of May the venerated charter of Massachusetts was annulled by act of Parliament. The people were declared rebels; and the governor was ordered to send abroad for trial all persons who should resist the royal officers. The colonial assembly made answer by adopting a resolution that the powers of language were not sufficient to express the impolicy, injustice, inhumanity and cruelty of the acts of Parliament.

In September THE SECOND COLONIAL CONGRESS assembled at Philadelphia. Eleven colonies were represented. It was unanimously agreed to sustain Massachusetts in her conflict with a wicked ministry. One address was sent to the king; another to the English nation; and another to the people of Canada. Before adjournment a resolution was adopted recommending the suspension of all commercial intercourse with Great Britain until the wrongs of the colonies should be redressed. Parliament immediately retaliated by ordering General Gage, who had been recently appointed governor of Massachusetts, to reduce the colonists by force. A fleet and an army of ten thousand soldiers were sent to America to aid in the work of subjugation.

In accordance with the governor's orders, Boston Neck was seized and fortified. The military stores in the arsenals at Cambridge and Charlestown were conveyed to Boston; and the general assembly was ordered to disband. Instead of doing so, the members resolved themselves into a provincial congress, and voted to equip an army of twelve thousand men for the defence of the colony. There was no longer any hope of a peaceable adjustment. The mighty arm of Great Britain was stretched out to smite and crush the sons of the Pilgrims. The colonists were few and feeble; but they were men of iron wills who had made up their minds to die for liberty. It was now the early spring of 1775, and the day of battle was at hand.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## THE BEGINNING.

AS soon as the intentions of General Gage were manifest, the people of Boston, concealing their ammunition in cart-loads of rubbish, conveyed it to Concord, sixteen miles away. Gage detected the movement, and on the night of the 18th of April despatched a regiment of eight hundred men to destroy the stores. Another purpose of the expedition was to capture John Hancock and Samuel Adams, who were supposed to be hidden at Lexington or Concord. The fact was that they were not hidden anywhere, but were abroad encouraging the people. The plan of the British general was made with great secrecy; but the patriots were on the alert, and discovered the movement.

About midnight the regiment, under command of Colonel Smith and Major Pitcairn, set out for Concord. The people of Boston, Charlestown and Cambridge were roused by the ringing of bells and the firing of cannons. Two hours before, the vigilant Joseph Warren had despatched William Dawes and Paul Revere to ride with all speed to Lexington and to spread the alarm through the country. Against two o'clock in the morning the minute-men were under arms; and a company of a hundred and thirty had assembled on the common at Lexington. The patriots loaded their guns and stood ready; but no enemy appeared, and it was agreed to separate until the drum-beat should announce the hour of danger. At five o'clock the British van, under command of Pitcairn, came in sight. The provincials to the number of seventy reassembled; Captain Parker was their leader. Pitcairn rode up and exclaimed: "Disperse, ye villains! Throw down your arms, ye rebels, and disperse!" The minute-men stood still; Pitcairn discharged his pistol at them, and with a loud voice cried, "Fire!" The first volley of the Revolution whistled through the air, and sixteen of the patriots, nearly a fourth of the whole number, fell dead or wounded. The rest fired a few random shots, and then dispersed.

The British pressed on to Concord; but the inhabitants had removed the greater part of the stores to a place of safety, and there was but little destruction. Two cannons were spiked, some artillery carriages