

of the army of the South. Many men high in military and civil station left the great leader unsupported in the hour of his grief; even Samuel Adams, impatient under calamity, withdrew his confidence. There was a miserable conspiracy headed by Gates, Conway and Mifflin. Washington was to be superseded, and Gates or Lee was to be made commander-in-chief. But the alienation was only for a moment; the allegiance of the army remained unshaken, and the nation's confidence in the troubled chieftain became stronger than ever. Still, at the close of 1777, the patriot cause was obscured with clouds and misfortune.

---

## CHAPTER XLI.

### FRANCE TO THE RESCUE.

**F**OUR months before the declaration of independence, Silas Deane of Connecticut was appointed commissioner to France. His business at the French court was to act as the political and commercial agent of the United Colonies. His first service was to make a secret arrangement with Beaumarchais, a rich French merchant, by which the latter was to supply the Americans with the materials necessary for carrying on the war. The king of France and his prime minister, Vergennes, winked at this proceeding; but the agents of Great Britain were jealous and suspicious, and it was not until the autumn of 1777 that a ship laden with two hundred thousand dollars' worth of arms, ammunition and specie could be sent to America. In that ship came Baron Steuben, a veteran soldier and disciplinarian from the army of Frederic the Great. Arriving at Portsmouth, the baron tarried a short time in New England, and then repaired to York, where Congress was in session. From that body he received a commission, and at once joined Washington at Valley Forge. His accession to the American army was an event of great importance. He received the appointment of inspector-general; and from the day in which he entered upon the discharge of his duties there was a marked improvement in the condition and discipline of the soldiers. The American regulars were never again beaten when confronted by the British in equal numbers.

In November of 1776 Arthur Lee and Benjamin Franklin were appointed by Congress to negotiate an open treaty of friendship and com-

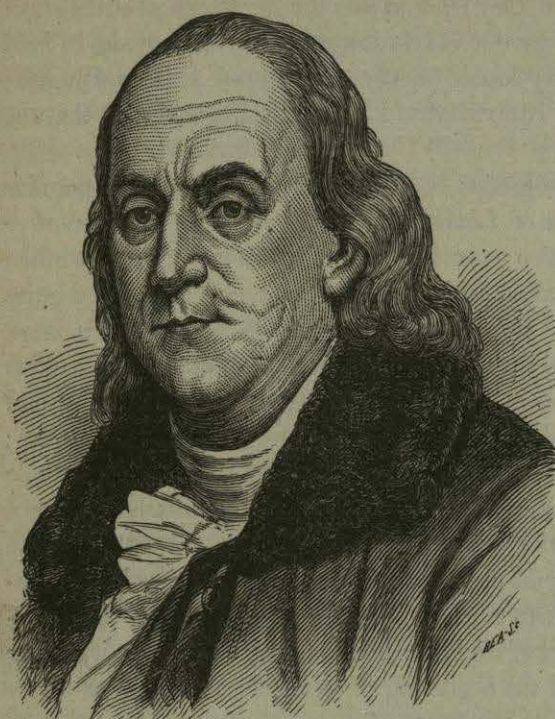
merce with the French king. In the following month they reached Paris and began their conferences with Vergennes. For a long time King Louis and his minister were wary of the proposed alliance. They cordially hated Great Britain, they rejoiced that the British empire was about to be dismembered, they gave secret encouragement to the colonies to hold out in their rebellion, they loaned money and shipped arms to America; but an open alliance was equivalent to a war with England, and that the French court dreaded.

Now it was that the genius of Dr. Franklin shone with a peculiar lustre. At the gay court of Louis XVI. he stood as the representative of his country. No nation ever had an ambassador of greater wisdom and sagacity. His reputation for learning had preceded him; the dignity of his demeanor and the simplicity of his manners added to his fame. Whether as philosopher or diplomatist, no man in that great city of fashion was the equal of the venerable American patriot. His wit and genial humor made him admired; his talents and courtesy commanded respect; his patience and perseverance gave him final success. During the whole of 1777 he remained at Paris and Versailles, availing himself of every opportunity to promote the interests of his country. At last came the news of Burgoyne's surrender. A powerful British army had been subdued by the colonists without aid from abroad. The success of the American arms and the prospect of commercial advantage decided the wavering policy of the king, and in the beginning of winter he made an announcement of his determination to accept an alliance with the colonies. On the 6th of February, 1778, a treaty was concluded; France acknowledged the independence of the United States and entered into relations of reciprocal friendship with the new nation. It was further stipulated that in case England should declare war against France, the Americans and the French should make common cause, and that neither should subscribe to a treaty of peace without the concurrence of the other. In America the news of the new alliance was received with great rejoicing; in England, with vindictive anger.

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**, the author of the first treaty between the United States and a foreign nation, was born in Boston on the 17th of January, 1706. His father was a manufacturer of soap and candles. To this humble vocation the young Benjamin was devoted by his parents; but the walls of a candle-shop were too narrow for his aspiring genius. At the age of twelve he was apprenticed to his brother to learn the art of printing; but the brother beat him, and he ran off to New York. There he found no employment. In 1723 he repaired to Philadelphia, entered a printing-office, and rose to distinction. He visited England; returned;



founded the first circulating library in America; became a man of science; edited *Poor Richard's Almanac*; originated the American Philosophical



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Society; discovered the identity of electricity and lightning; made himself known in both hemispheres; espoused the cause of the patriots; and devoted the unimpaired energies of his old age to perfecting the American Union. The name of Franklin is one of the brightest in the history of any nation.

In May of 1778 Congress ratified the treaty with France. A month before this time a French fleet, commanded by Count d'Estaing, had been despatched to America. The object was to sail into the Del-

aware and blockade the British squadron at Philadelphia. Both France and Great Britain understood full well that war was inevitable, and each immediately prepared for the conflict. George III. now became willing to treat with his American subjects. Lord North, the prime minister, brought forward two bills in which everything that the colonists had claimed was conceded. The bills were passed by Parliament, and the king assented. Commissioners were sent to America; but Congress informed them that nothing but an express acknowledgment of the independence of the United States would now be accepted. Then the commissioners tried bribery and intrigue; and Congress would hold no further conference with them.

From September of 1777 until the following June the British army remained at Philadelphia. The fleet of Admiral Howe lay in the Delaware. In the spring of 1778, General Howe was superseded by Sir Henry Clinton. When the rumor came that the fleet of D'Estaing was

approaching, the English admiral withdrew from the Delaware and sailed for New York. Finally, on the 18th of June, the British army evacuated Philadelphia and retreated across New Jersey. Washington occupied the city, crossed the river, and followed the retreating foe. At Monmouth, eighteen miles south-east of New Brunswick, the British were overtaken. On the morning of the 28th General Lee was ordered to attack the enemy. The first onset was made by the American cavalry under La Fayette; but they were driven back by Cornwallis and Clinton. Lee, who had opposed the battle, and was not anxious for victory, ordered his line to fall back to a stronger position; but the troops mistook the order and began a retreat, the British charging after them. Washington met the fugitives, rallied them, administered a severe rebuke to Lee, and ordered him to the rear. During the rest of the engagement the haughty officer, half treacherous in his principles and practices, remained at a distance, making satirical remarks about the battle. The fight continued till night-fall; the advantage was with the Americans; and Washington, in hope of a complete victory, anxiously waited for the morning. During the night, however, Clinton succeeded in withdrawing his forces from the field, and thus escaped the peril of defeat.

The loss of the Americans in the battle of Monmouth was sixty-seven killed and a hundred and sixty wounded. The British left nearly three hundred dead on the field. On the day after the battle Washington received an insulting letter from Lee demanding an apology for the language which the commander-in-chief had used. Washington replied that the language was warranted by the circumstances. This Lee answered in a still more offensive manner, and was thereupon arrested, tried by a court-martial, and dismissed from his command for twelve months. The brave, rash man never re-entered the service, and did not live to see his country's independence.

The British land and naval forces were now concentrated at New York. Washington followed, crossed the Hudson, and took up his headquarters at White Plains. On the 11th of July Count d'Estaing's fleet arrived off Sandy Hook and attempted to attack the British squadron in the bay; but the bar at the entrance prevented the passage of the French vessels. D'Estaing next sailed for Newport, Rhode Island, where the British, commanded by General Pigot, were in strong force. At the same time a division of the American army, led by General Sullivan, proceeded to Providence to co-operate with the French fleet in the attack on Newport. Greene and La Fayette came with reinforcements, and the whole army took post at Tiverton. On the 9th of August Sullivan succeeded in crossing the eastern passage of the bay, and secured a favorable position



on the island. A joint attack by land and sea was planned for the following day. On that morning, however, the fleet of Lord Howe, who had left New York in pursuit of the French, came in sight; and D'Estaing, instead of beginning the bombardment of Newport, sailed out to give battle to Howe. Just as the two squadrons were about to begin an engagement a violent storm arose by which the fleets were parted and greatly damaged. D'Estaing repaired to Boston, and Howe returned to New York.

Sullivan laid siege to Newport; but when the French squadron sailed away, he found it necessary to retreat. The British pursued the Americans, and overtook them in the northern part of the island; a battle ensued, and Pigot was repulsed with a loss of two hundred and sixty men. On the following night Sullivan succeeded in reaching the mainland; and it was well that he did so; for on the next day General Clinton arrived at Newport with a division of four thousand regulars. The Americans saved themselves by hastily retiring from the neighborhood. Clinton, having sent out a detachment under Colonel Grey to burn the American shipping in Buzzard's Bay, destroy the stores in New Bedford and ravage Martha's Vineyard, returned to New York.

The command of the British naval forces in America was now transferred from Lord Howe to Admiral Byron. Sir Henry Clinton, unable to accomplish anything in honorable warfare, descended to marauding and robbery. Early in October a band of incendiaries, led by Ferguson, burned the American ships at Little Egg Harbor. For several miles inland the country was devastated, houses pillaged, barns burned, patriots murdered. To the preceding July belongs the sad story of the Wyoming massacre. Major John Butler, a tory of Niagara, raised a company of sixteen hundred loyalists, Canadians and Indians, and marched into the valley of Wyoming, county of Luzerne, Pennsylvania. The settlement was defenceless. The fathers and brothers were away in the patriot army. There were some feeble forts on the Susquehanna in the neighborhood of Wilkesbarre, but they were useless without defenders. On the approach of the tories and savages the few militia remaining in the valley, together with the old men and boys, rallied for the defence of their homes. A battle was fought, and the poor patriots were utterly routed. The fugitives fled to the principal fort, which was crowded with women and children. On came the murderous horde, and demanded a surrender. Honorable terms were promised by Butler, and the garrison capitulated. On the 5th of July the gates were opened, and the barbarians entered. Immediately they began to plunder, then to burn, and then to use the hatchet and the scalping-knife. There is no authentic

record of the horrible atrocities that followed. The savages divided into parties, scattered through the valley, plundered, robbed, burned, and drove almost every surviving family into the swamps or mountains. In this way George III. would subdue the American colonies.

November witnessed a similar massacre at the village of Cherry Valley, Otsego county, New York. This time the invaders were led by Joseph Brant, the Mohawk sachem, and Walter Butler, a son of Major John Butler. The people of Cherry Valley were driven from their homes; every house in the village was burned; women and children were tomahawked and scalped; and forty miserable sufferers dragged into captivity. To avenge these outrages an expedition was sent against the savages on the Upper Susquehanna; and they in turn were made to feel the terrors of war. In the preceding December the famous Major Clarke had received from Patrick Henry, then governor of Virginia, a commission to proceed against the Indians west of the Alleghanies. The expedition left Pittsburg in the spring of 1778; descended to the mouth of the Ohio; and on the 4th of the following July captured Kaskaskia. Other important posts were taken; and in August Vincennes was forced to capitulate.

On the 3d of November Count d'Estaing's fleet sailed from Boston for the West Indies. In December Admiral Byron, in command of the British squadron, left New York to try the fortunes of war on the ocean. A few days previously, Colonel Campbell, with a force of two thousand men, was sent by General Clinton for the conquest of Georgia. On the 29th of December the expedition reached Savannah. The place was defended by General Robert Howe with a regiment of five hundred and fifty regulars, and three hundred militia. Notwithstanding the superior numbers of the British, Howe determined to risk a battle; but the result was disastrous. The Americans were routed and driven out of the city. Escaping up the river, the defeated patriots crossed into South Carolina and found refuge at Charleston. Such was the only real conquest made by the British during the year 1778. It was now nearly four years since the battle of Concord, and Great Britain had lost vastly more than she had gained in her struggle with the colonies. The city of New York was held by Clinton; Newport was garrisoned by a division under Pigot; the feeble capital of Georgia was conquered; all the rest remained to the patriots.



## CHAPTER XLII.

## MOVEMENTS OF '79.

THE winter of 1778-79 was passed by the American army at Middlebrook, New Jersey. With the opening of spring there was much discouragement among the soldiers; for they were neither paid nor fed. Only the personal influence of Washington and the patriotism of the camp prevented a mutiny. Clinton opened the campaign with a number of predatory incursions into the surrounding country. In February, Tryon, the old tory governor of New York, a man so savage in his nature that the Indians called him *the Big Wolf*, marched from Kingsbridge with a body of fifteen hundred regulars and Tories to destroy the salt-works at Horse Neck, Connecticut. General Putnam, who chanced to be in that neighborhood, rallied the militia and made a brave defence. The Americans planted some cannon on the brow of a hill and fought with much spirit until they were outflanked by the British and obliged to fly. It was here that General Putnam, pursued and about to be overtaken by a party of dragoons, turned out of the road, spurred his horse down a precipice and escaped.\* Tryon destroyed the salt-works, plundered and burned the village of West Greenwich and returned to Kingsbridge.

In the latter part of May Clinton himself sailed with an armament up the Hudson to Stony Point. This strong position, commanding the river, had been chosen by Washington as the site of a fort; the Americans were engaged upon the unfinished works when Clinton's squadron came in sight. The feeble garrison, unable to resist the overwhelming numbers of the enemy, escaped from the fortifications. On the 1st of June the British entered, mounted cannon and began to bombard Verplanck's Point, on the other side of the river. Here the patriots made a brave resistance; but the British landed a strong force, surrounded the fort and compelled a surrender. Both Verplanck's and Stony Point were strongly fortified and garrisoned by the enemy. About the same time Virginia suffered from an incursion of the Tories. A vast amount of public and private property was destroyed; and several towns, including Norfolk and Portsmouth, were laid in ashes.

\* After all, Putnam's exploit was not so marvelous. In 1825 some of General La Fayette's dragoons rode down the same hill *for sport*.

In July the ferocious Tryon again distinguished himself. With a force of twenty-six hundred Hessians and Tories he sailed to New Haven, captured the city and would have burned it but for fear of the gathering militia. Having set East Haven on fire, the destroyers sailed down the Sound to the beautiful town of Fairfield, which was given to the flames. At Norwalk, while the village was burning and the terrified people flying from their homes, Tryon, on a neighboring hill, sat in a rocking-chair and laughed heartily at the scene. It was not long until these dastardly outrages were made to appear more dastardly by contrast with a heroic exploit of the patriots.

Early in July General Wayne received orders to attempt the recapture of Stony Point. On the 15th of the month he mustered a force of light infantry at a convenient point on the Hudson and marched against the seemingly impregnable fortress. The movement was not discovered by the enemy. At eight o'clock in the evening Wayne halted a mile from the fort and gave orders for the assault. A negro who had learned the countersign went with the advance; the British pickets were deceived, caught and gagged. The Americans advanced in two columns, the first led by Wayne, and the second by the gallant Frenchman, Colonel De Fleury. Everything was done in silence. Muskets were unloaded and bayonets fixed; not a gun was to be fired. The two divisions, attacking from opposite sides, were to meet in the middle of the fort. The assault was made a little after midnight. Within pistol-shot of the sentinels on the height, the Americans were discovered. There was the cry, *To arms!* the rattle of drums, and then the roar of musketry and cannon. The patriots never wavered. The ramparts were scaled; and the British, finding themselves between two closing lines of bayonets, cried out for quarter. Sixty-three of the enemy fell in the struggle; the remaining five hundred and forty-three were made prisoners. Of the Americans only fifteen were killed and eighty-three wounded. In the days that followed the assault Wayne secured the ordnance and stores, valued at more than a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, then destroyed the fort and marched away. On the 20th a division of the British army, arriving at Stony Point, found nothing but a desolated hill. In honor of his brave deed General Wayne received a gold medal from Congress.

Three days after the taking of Stony Point, Major Lee with a company of militia attacked the British garrison at Jersey City. Again the assault was successful, the enemy losing nearly two hundred men. On the 25th of the same month a fleet of thirty-seven vessels, which had been equipped by Massachusetts, was sent against a British post recently established at the mouth of the Penobscot. The enterprise, however, was



managed with little skill and less success. On the 13th of August, while the American ships were still besieging the post, they were suddenly attacked and destroyed by a British fleet. In the summer of this year an army of four thousand six hundred men, commanded by Generals Sullivan and James Clinton, was sent against the Indians of the Upper Susquehanna. The atrocities of Wyoming were now fully avenged, and the savages driven to destruction. At Elmira, on the Tioga River, the Indians and Tories had fortified themselves; but on the 29th of August they were forced from their stronghold and utterly routed. The whole country between the Susquehanna and the Genesee was wasted by the patriots, who, in the course of the campaign, destroyed forty Indian villages. In the latter part of October Sir Henry Clinton, alarmed by the rumored approach of the French fleet, withdrew the British forces from Rhode Island. The retirement from Newport was made with so much haste that the heavy guns and large quantities of stores were left behind. Such were the leading military movements in the North.

Meanwhile, the war had continued in Georgia and South Carolina; and the patriots had met with many reverses. At the beginning of the year Fort Sunbury, on St. Catherine's Sound, was the only post held by the Americans south of the Savannah. On the 9th of January this fort was captured by a body of British troops from Florida, led by General Prevost. This officer then joined his forces with those of Colonel Campbell, who had just effected the conquest of Savannah, and assumed command of the British army in the South. A force of two thousand regulars and loyalists, commanded by Campbell, was at once despatched against Augusta; for there the republican legislature had assembled after the fall of Savannah. On the 29th of January the British reached their destination, and Augusta fell a prey to the invaders. For a while the whole of Georgia was prostrated before the king's soldiery.

In the mean time, the Tories of Western Carolina had risen in arms and were advancing to join the forces of Campbell at Augusta. While marching thither they were attacked and defeated in a canebrake by the patriots under Captain Anderson. On the 14th of February the Tories were again overtaken in the country west of Broad River. Colonel Pickens, at the head of the Carolina militia, fell upon them with such fury that the whole force was annihilated. Colonel Boyd, the Tory leader, and seventy of his men were killed. Seventy-five others were captured, tried for treason and condemned to death; but only five of the ringleaders were hanged. On receiving intelligence of what had happened, Campbell hastily evacuated Augusta and retreated toward Savannah. The western half of Georgia was recovered more quickly than it had been lost.

While the British were retreating down the river, General Lincoln, who now commanded the American forces in the South, sent General Ashe with a division of two thousand men to intercept the enemy. On the 25th of February the Americans crossed the Savannah and pursued Campbell as far as Brier Creek, forty-five miles below Augusta. The bridge over this stream had been destroyed by the retreating British, and the patriots came to a halt. While they were delayed General Prevost marched with a strong force from Savannah, crossed Brier Creek above the American position, and completely surrounded General Ashe's command. A battle was fought on the 3d of March; the Americans, after losing more than three hundred men in killed, wounded and prisoners, were totally routed and driven into the swamps and river. The remnants of Ashe's army rejoined General Lincoln at Perrysburg. The shock of this defeat again prostrated Georgia, and a royal government was established over the State.

But the Carolinians rallied with great vigor. Within a month General Lincoln was again in the field with a force of more than five thousand men. Still hoping to reconquer Georgia, he advanced up the left bank of the river in the direction of Augusta; but at the same time General Prevost crossed the Savannah and marched against Charleston. On the 12th of May he summoned the city to surrender, but General Moultrie, who commanded the patriots, was in no humor to do it. Prevost made preparations for a siege; but learning that General Lincoln had turned back to attack him, he made a hasty retreat. The Americans pursued, overtook the enemy at Stono Ferry, ten miles west of Charleston, made an imprudent attack and were repulsed with considerable loss. Before retiring from the State, Prevost succeeded in establishing a post at Beaufort, and then fell back to Savannah. From June until September military operations were almost wholly suspended.

And now came Count d'Estaing with his fleet from the West Indies to Carolina to co-operate with General Lincoln in the reduction of Savannah. Prevost was alarmed, and concentrated his forces for the defence of the city. The storm-winds of the equinox were approaching, and D'Estaing stipulated with the Americans that his fleet should not be long detained on that coast devoid of harbors. On the 12th of September the French, numbering six thousand, effected a landing, and advanced to the siege. Eleven days elapsed before the slow-moving General Lincoln arrived with his forces. Meanwhile, on the 16th of the month, D'Estaing had demanded a surrender; but Prevost, who asked a day for consultation and used it in strengthening his works and in receiving reinforcements from Beaufort, answered with a message of defiance. After Lin-



coln's arrival the siege was prosecuted with great vigor. The city was bombarded wellnigh to destruction; the people were driven into the cellars, and dared not venture forth on peril of their lives. But the British defences remained unshaken. At last the impatient D'Estaing notified Lincoln that the city must be stormed or the siege abandoned. The former course was preferred. On the 8th of October a conference was held, and it was determined to make the assault at daylight on the following morning.

Accordingly, an hour before sunrise the allies advanced against the redoubts of the British. The attack was made irregularly, but with great vehemence; the defence, with desperate determination. The struggle around the ramparts was brief but furious. At one time it seemed that the works would be carried. The French and the patriots mounted the parapet and planted the flags of Carolina and France. But the emblems of victory, with those who bore them, were hurled into the dust. Here the brave Sergeant Jasper, the hero of Fort Moultrie, fell to rise no more. After an hour of the most gallant fighting, the allied columns were shattered and driven back with fearful losses. D'Estaing was twice wounded. The noble Pulaski was struck with a grape-shot and borne dying from the field. The repulse was complete, humiliating, disastrous. D'Estaing retired with his men on board the fleet and sailed for France. Lincoln with the remnants of his army retreated to Charleston.

While the siege of Savannah was progressing, the American arms were made famous on the ocean. On the 23d of September Paul Jones, cruising off the coast of Scotland with a flotilla of French and American vessels, fell in with a fleet of British merchantmen, convoyed by two men-of-war. The battle that ensued was bloody beyond precedent in naval warfare. For an hour and a half the *Serapis*, a British frigate of forty-four guns, engaged the *Poor Richard*\* within musket-shot. Then the vessels, both in a sinking condition, were run alongside and lashed together. The marines fought with the fury of madmen until the *Serapis* struck her colors. Jones hastily transferred his men to the conquered ship, and the *Poor Richard* went down. The remaining British vessel was also attacked and captured. So desperate was the engagement that of the three hundred and seventy-five men on board the fleet of Jones three hundred were either killed or wounded.

So closed the year 1779. The colonies were not yet free. The French alliance, which had promised so much, had brought but little benefit. The credit of Congress had sunk almost to nothing; the national treasury was bankrupt. The patriots of the army were poorly fed, and

\* So named in honor of Dr. Franklin's almanac.

paid only with unkept promises. The disposition of Great Britain was best illustrated in the measures adopted by Parliament for the campaigns of the ensuing year. The levies made by the House of Commons were eighty-five thousand marines and thirty-five thousand additional troops; while the extraordinary expenses of the War Department were set at twenty million pounds sterling.

---

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### REVERSES AND TREASON.

**D**URING the year 1780 military operations at the North were, for the most part, suspended. Twice did the British under Knyphausen advance from New York into New Jersey; and twice they were driven back. Early in July Admiral De Ternay arrived at Newport with a French squadron and six thousand land-troops under Count Rochambeau. The Americans were greatly elated at the coming of their allies; but Washington's army was in so destitute a condition that active co-operation was impracticable. In September the commander-in-chief held a conference with Rochambeau, and the plans of future campaigns were in part determined.

In the South there was much activity, and the patriots suffered many reverses. South Carolina was completely overrun with the invading armies. On the 11th of February Admiral Arbuthnot, in command of a British squadron, anchored before Charleston. Sir Henry Clinton and a division of five thousand men from the army in New York were on board the fleet. The plan of the campaign was to subjugate the whole South, beginning with Charleston. The city was defended by fourteen hundred men, under General Lincoln, who began his preparations by fortifying the neck of the peninsula. The British effected a landing a few miles below the harbor, advanced up the right bank of Ashley River, and crossed to the north of the city. A month was spent by Clinton in making cautious approaches toward the American entrenchments. On the 7th of April General Lincoln was reinforced by seven hundred veterans from Virginia. Two days afterward Admiral Arbuthnot, favored by the wind and tide, succeeded in passing Fort Moultrie with his fleet, and anchored within cannon-shot of the city. A summons to surrender was