Mackenzie Robert Shelton

America. A history

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Содержание

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THE UNITED STATES

Book First

CHAPTER I
DISCOVERY

It was late in the history of the world before Europe and America became known to each other. During the first fifteen centuries of the Christian era Europe was unaware of the vast continent which lay beyond the sea. Asia had ceased to influence her. Africa had not begun. Her history was waiting for the mighty influence which America was to exercise in her affairs through all the future ages.

Men had been slow to establish completely their dominion over the sea. They learned very early to build ships. They availed themselves very early of the surprising power which the helm exerts over the movements of a ship. But, during many ages, they found no surer guidance upon the pathless sea than that which the position of the sun and the stars afforded. When clouds intervened to deprive them of this uncertain direction, they were helpless. They were thus obliged to keep the land in view, and content themselves with creeping timidly along the coast.

But at length there was discovered a stone which the wise Creator had endowed with strange properties. It was observed that a needle brought once into contact with that stone pointed ever afterwards steadfastly to the north. Men saw that with a needle thus influenced they could guide themselves at sea as surely as on land. The Mariners' Compass untied the bond which held sailors to the coast, and gave them liberty to push out into the sea.

Just when sailors were slowly learning to put confidence in the mariners' compass, there arose in Europe a vehement desire for the discovery of unknown countries. A sudden interest sprang up in all that was distant and unexplored. The strange fables told by travellers were greedily received. The human mind was beginning to cast off the torpor of the Middle Ages. As intelligence increased, men became increasingly eager to ascertain the form and extent of the world in which they dwelt, and to acquaint themselves with those unknown races who were their fellow-inhabitants.

Portugal and Spain, looking out upon the boundless sea, were powerfully stirred by the new impulse. The Courts of Lisbon and Madrid swarmed with adventurers who had made discoveries, or who wished the means to make them. Conspicuous among these was an enthusiast, who during eighteen years had not ceased to importune incredulous monarchs for ships and men that he might open up the secrets of the sea. He was a tall man, of grave and gentle manners, and noble though saddened look. His eye was gray, "apt to enkindle" when he spoke of those discoveries in the making of which he felt himself to be Heaven's chosen agent. He had known hardship and sorrow in his youth, and at thirty his hair was white. He was the son of a Genoese wool-comber, and his name was Christopher Columbus. In him the universal passion for discovery rose to the dignity of an inspiration.

No sailor of our time would cross the Atlantic in such ships as were given to Columbus. In size they resembled the smaller of our river and coasting vessels. Only one of them was decked. The others were open, save at the prow and stern, where cabins were built for the crew. The sailors went unwillingly and in much fear – compelled by an order from the King. With such ships and such men Columbus left the land behind him and pushed out into these unknown waters. To him there were

no dangers, no difficulties – God, who had chosen him to do this work, would sustain him for its accomplishment. He sailed on the 3rd of August 1492. On the 12th of October, in the dim light of early morning, he gazed out from the deck of his little ship upon the shores of a new world. His victory was gained; his work was done. How great it was he himself never knew. He died in the belief that he had merely discovered a shorter route to India. He never enjoyed that which would have been the best recompense for all his toil – the knowledge that he had added a vast continent to the possessions of civilized men.

The revelation by Columbus of the amazing fact that there were lands beyond the great ocean, inhabited by strange races of human beings, roused to a passionate eagerness the thirst for fresh discoveries. The splendours of the newly-found world were indeed difficult to be resisted. Wealth beyond the wildest dreams of avarice could be had, it was said, for the gathering. The sands of every river sparkled with gold. The very colour of the ground showed that gold was profusely abundant. The meanest of the Indians ornamented himself with gold and jewels. The walls of the houses glittered with pearls. There was a fountain, if one might but find it, whose waters bestowed perpetual youth upon the bather. The wildest romances were greedily received, and the Old World, with its familiar and painful realities, seemed mean and hateful beside the fabled glories of the New.

Europe then enjoyed a season of unusual calm – a short respite from the habitual toil of war – as if to afford men leisure to enter on their new possession. The last of the Moors had taken his last look at Granada, and Spain had rest from her eight centuries of war. In England, the Wars of the Roses had ceased. After thirty years of hard fighting and huge waste of life and property, the fortunate English had been able to determine which branch of a certain old family was to rule over them. Henry VII., with his clear, cold head, and his heavy hand, was guiding his people somewhat forcibly towards the victories of peace. Even France tasted the joy of repose. The Reformation was at hand. While Columbus was holding his uncertain way across the great Atlantic, a boy called Martin Luther was attending school in a small German town. The time was not far off, but as yet the mind of Europe was not engrossed by those religious strifes which were soon to convulse it.

The men whose trade was fighting turned gladly in this idle time to the world where boundless wealth was to be wrung from the grasp of unwarlike barbarians. England and France had missed the splendid prize which Columbus had won for Spain. They hastened now to secure what they could. A merchant of Bristol, John Cabot, obtained permission from the King of England to make discoveries in the northern parts of America. Cabot was to bear all expenses, and the King was to receive one-fifth of the gains of the adventure. Taking with him his son Sebastian, John Cabot sailed straight westward across the Atlantic. 1497 A.D. He reached the American continent, of which he was the undoubted discoverer. The result to him was disappointing. He landed on the coast of Labrador. Being in the same latitude as England, he reasoned that he should find the same genial climate. To his astonishment he came upon a region of intolerable cold, dreary with ice and snow. John Cabot had not heard of the Gulf Stream and its marvellous influences. He did not know that the western shores of northern Europe are rescued from perpetual winter, and warmed up to the enjoyable temperature which they possess, by an enormous river of hot water flowing between banks of cold water eastward from the Gulf of Mexico. The Cabots made many voyages afterwards, and explored the American coast from extreme north to extreme south.

The French turned their attention to the northern parts of the New World. The rich fisheries of Newfoundland attracted them. A Frenchman sailed up the great St. Lawrence river. After some failures a French settlement was established there, and for a century and a half the French peopled Canada, until the English relieved them of the ownership.

Spanish adventurers never rested from their eager search after the treasures of the new continent. An aged warrior called Ponce de Leon fitted out an expedition at his own cost. He had heard of the marvellous fountain whose waters would restore to him the years of his wasted youth. He searched in vain. The fountain would not reveal itself to the foolish old man, and he had to bear

without relief the burden of his profitless years. But he found a country hitherto unseen by Europeans, which was clothed with magnificent forests, and seemed to bloom with perpetual flowers. He called it Florida. He attempted to found a colony in the paradise he had discovered. But the natives attacked him, slew many of his men, and drove the rest to their ships, carrying with them their chief, wounded to death by the arrow of an Indian.

Ferdinand de Soto had been with Pizarro in his expedition to Peru, and returned to Spain enriched by his share of the plunder. He did not doubt that in the north were cities as rich and barbarians as confiding. An expedition to discover new regions, and plunder their inhabitants, was fitted out under his command. No one doubted that success equal to that of Cortes and Pizarro would attend this new adventure. The youth of Spain were eager to be permitted to go, and they sold houses and lands to buy them the needful equipment. Six hundred men, in the prime of life, were chosen from the crowd of applicants, and the expedition sailed, high in courage, splendid in aspect, boundless in expectation. 1539 A.D. They landed on the coast of Florida, and began their march into the wilderness. They had fetters for the Indians whom they meant to take captive. They had bloodhounds, lest these captives should escape. The camp swarmed with priests, and as they marched the festivals and processions enjoined by the Church were devoutly observed.

From the outset it was a toilsome and perilous enterprise; but to the Spaniard of that time danger was a joy. The Indians were warlike, and generally hostile. De Soto had pitched battles to fight and heavy losses to bear. Always he was victorious, but he could ill afford the cost of many such victories. The captive Indians amused him with tales of regions where gold abounded. They had learned that ignorance on that subject was very hazardous. De Soto had stimulated their knowledge by burning to death some who denied the existence of gold in that country. The Spaniards wandered slowly northwards. They looked eagerly for some great city, the plunder of whose palaces and temples would enrich them all. They found nothing better than occasionally an Indian town, composed of a few miserable huts. It was all they could do to get needful food. At length they came to a magnificent river. European eyes had seen no such river till now. It was about a mile in breadth, and its mass of water swept downward to the sea with a current of amazing strength. It was the Mississippi. The Spaniards built vessels and ferried themselves to the western bank.

There they resumed their wanderings. De Soto would not yet admit that he had failed. He still hoped that the plunder of a rich city would reward his toils. For many months the Spaniards strayed among the swamps and dense forests of that dreary region. The natives showed at first some disposition to be helpful. But the Spaniards, in their disappointment, were pitiless and savage. They amused themselves by inflicting pain upon the prisoners. They cut off their hands; they hunted them with bloodhounds; they burned them at the stake. The Indians became dangerous. De Soto hoped to awe them by claiming to be one of the gods, but the imposture was too palpable. “How can a man be God when he cannot get bread to eat?” asked a sagacious savage. It was now three years since De Soto had landed in America. The utter failure of the expedition would no longer conceal, and the men wished to return home. Broken in spirit and in frame, De Soto caught fever and died. His soldiers felled a tree and scooped room within its trunk for the body of the ill-fated adventurer. They could not bury their chief on land, lest the Indians should dishonour his remains. In the silence of midnight the rude coffin was sunk in the Mississippi, and the discoverer of the great river slept beneath its waters. The Spaniards promptly resolved now to make their way to Cuba. They had tools, and wood was abundant. They slew their horses for flesh; they plundered the Indians for bread; they struck the fetters from their prisoners to reinforce their scanty supply of iron. They built ships enough to float them down the Mississippi. Three hundred ragged and disheartened men were all that remained of the brilliant company whose hopes had been so high, whose good fortune had been so much envied.

CHAPTER II
COLONIZATION

For many years European adventurers continued to resort to the American coast in the hope of finding the way to immediate wealth. Some feeble attempts had been made to colonize. Here and there a few families had been planted, but hunger or the Indians always extinguished those infant settlements. The great idea of colonizing America was slow to take possession of European minds. The Spaniard sought for Indians to plunder. The Englishman believed in gold-mines and the north-west passage to India. It was not till America had been known for a hundred years that men began to think of finding a home beyond the Atlantic.

The courage and endurance of the early voyagers excite our wonder. Few of them sailed in ships so large as a hundred tons burden. The merchant ships of that time were very small. The royal navies of Europe contained large vessels, but commerce was too poor to employ any but the smallest. The commerce of imperial Rome employed ships which even now would be deemed large. St. Paul was wrecked in a ship of over five hundred tons burden. Josephus sailed in a ship of nearly one thousand tons. Europe contented herself, as yet, with vessels of a very different class. A ship of forty or fifty tons was deemed sufficient by the daring adventurers who sought to reach the Land of Promise beyond the great sea. Occasionally toy-ships of twenty or twenty-five tons were used. The brother of Sir Walter Raleigh crossed the Atlantic in such a ship, and perished in it as he attempted to return to England.

It was not a pleasant world which the men and women of Europe had to live in during the sixteenth century. Fighting was the constant occupation of the Kings of that time. A year of peace was a rare and somewhat wearisome exception. Kings habitually, at their own unquestioned pleasure, gathered their subjects together, and marched them off to slay and plunder their neighbours. Civil wars were frequent. In these confused strifes men slew their acquaintances and friends as the only method they knew of deciding who was to fill the throne. Feeble Commerce was crushed under the iron heel of War. No such thing as security for life or property was expected. The fields of the husbandman were trodden down by the march of armies. Disbanded or deserted soldiers wandered as “masterless men” over the country, and robbed and murdered at their will. Highwaymen abounded – although highways could scarcely be said to exist. Epidemic diseases of strange type, the result of insufficient feeding and the poisonous air of undrained lands and filthy streets, desolated all European countries. Under what hardships and miseries the men of the sixteenth century passed their days, it is scarcely possible for us now to conceive.

The English Parliament once reminded James I. of certain “undoubted rights” which they possessed. The King told them, in reply, that he “did not like this style of talking, but would rather hear them say that all their privileges were derived by the grace and permission of the sovereign.” Europe, during the sixteenth century, had no better understanding of the matter than James had. It was not supposed that the King was made for the people; it seemed rather to be thought that the people were made for the King. Here and there some man wiser than ordinary perceived the truth, so familiar to us, that a King is merely a great officer appointed by the people to do certain work for them. There was a Glasgow professor who taught in those dark days that the authority of the King was derived from the people, and ought to be used for their good. Two of his pupils were John Knox the reformer, and George Buchanan the historian, by whom this doctrine, so great and yet so simple, was clearly perceived and firmly maintained. But to the great mass of mankind it seemed that the King had divine authority to dispose of his subjects and their property according to his pleasure. Poor patient humanity still bowed in lowly reverence before its Kings, and bore, without wondering or murmuring, all that it pleased them to inflict. No stranger superstition has ever possessed the human

mind than this boundless mediæval veneration for the King – a veneration which follies the most abject, vices the most enormous, were not able to quench.

But as this unhappy century draws towards its close, the elements of a most benign change are plainly seen at work. The Bible has been largely read. The Bible is the book of all ages and of all circumstances. But never, surely, since its first gift to man was it more needful to any age than to that which now welcomed its restoration with wonder and delight. It took deep hold on the minds of men. It exercised a silent influence which gradually changed the aspect of society. The narrative portions of Scripture were especially acceptable to the untutored intellect of that time; and thus the Old Testament was preferred to the New. This preference led to some mistakes. Rules which had been given to an ancient Asiatic people were applied in circumstances for which they were never intended or fitted. It is easy to smile at these mistakes. But it is impossible to over-estimate the social and political good which we now enjoy as a result of this incessant reading of the Bible by the people of the sixteenth century.

In nearly all European countries the King claimed to regulate the religious belief of his subjects. Even in England that power was still claimed. The people were beginning to suspect that they were entitled to think for themselves – a suspicion which grew into an indignant certainty, and widened and deepened till it swept from the throne the unhappy House of Stuart.

A little way into the seventeenth century America became the refuge of those who would not receive their faith at the bidding of the King. The best part of American colonization resulted from the foolish and insolent oppressions of Europe. At the beginning, however, it was not so. It was from an impulse of vagrant blackguardism that the first American colony sprang.

CHAPTER III
VIRGINIA

Sir Walter Raleigh spent a large fortune in attempting to colonize Virginia. He succeeded in directing the attention of his countrymen to the region which had kindled his own enthusiasm, but his colonies never prospered. Sometimes the colonists returned home disgusted by the hardships of the wilderness. Once they were massacred by the Indians. When help came from England the infant settlement was in ruins. The bones of unburied men lay about the fields; wild deer strayed among the untenanted houses. Once a colony wholly disappeared. To this day its fate is unknown.

Sir Walter was enduring his long captivity in the Tower, writing his “History of the World,” and moaning piteously over the havoc which prison-damps wrought upon his handsome frame. The time had now come, and his labours were about to bear fruit. The history of Virginia was about to open. It opened with meagre promise. 1606 A.D. A charter from the King established a Company whose function was to colonize – whose privilege was to trade. The Company sent out an expedition which sailed in three small vessels. It consisted of one hundred and five men. Of these one-half were gentlemen of broken fortune; some were tradesmen; others were footmen. Only a very few were farmers, or mechanics, or persons in any way fitted for the life they sought. Morally the aspect of the expedition was even more discouraging. “An hundred dissolute persons” were on board the ships. The respectable portions of the expedition must have gone into very little room.

But, happily for Virginia, there sailed with these reprobate founders of a new empire a man whom Providence had highly gifted with fitness to govern his fellow-men. His name was John Smith. No writer of romance would have given his hero this name; but, in spite of his name, the man was truly heroic. He was still under thirty, a strong-limbed, deep-chested, massively-built man. From boyhood he had been a soldier – roaming over the world in search of adventures, wherever hard blows were being exchanged. He was mighty in single combat. Once, while opposing armies looked on, he vanquished three Turks, and, like David, cut off their heads, and bore them to his tent. Returning to England when the passion for colonizing was at its height, he caught at once the prevailing impulse.

He joined the Virginian expedition; ultimately he became its chief. His fitness was so manifest, that no reluctance on his own part, no jealousies on that of his companions, could bar him from the highest place. Men became Kings of old by the same process which now made Smith a chief.

The "dissolute persons" sailed in their ships up the James river. Landing there, they proceeded to construct a little town, which they named Jamestown, in honour of the King. This was the first colony which struck its roots in American soil. The colonists were charmed with the climate and with the luxuriant beauty of the wilderness on whose confines they had settled. But as yet it was only a wilderness. The forest had to be cleared that food might be grown. The exiled gentlemen laboured manfully, but under grievous discouragements. "The axes so oft blistered their tender fingers, that many times every third blow had a loud oath to drown the echo." Smith was a man upon whose soul there lay a becoming reverence for sacred things. He devised how to have every man's oaths numbered; "and at night, for every oath, to have a can of water poured down his sleeve." Under this treatment the evil assuaged.

The emigrants had landed in early spring. Summer came with its burning heat; supplies of food ran low. "Had we been as free from all sins as from gluttony and drunkenness," Smith wrote, "we might have been canonized as saints." The colonists sickened and died. From those poor blistered fingers dropped for ever the unaccustomed axe. Before autumn every second man had died. But the hot Virginian sun, which proved so deadly to the settlers, ripened the wheat they had sowed in the spring, and freed the survivors from the pressure of want. Winter brought them a healthier temperature and abundant supplies of wild-fowl and game.

When the welfare of the colony was in some measure secured, Smith set forth with a few companions to explore the interior of the country. He and his followers were captured by the Indians, and the followers were summarily butchered. Smith's composure did not fail him in the worst extremity. He produced his pocket-compass, and interested the savages by explaining its properties. He wrote a letter in their sight – to their infinite wonder. They spared him, and made a show of him in all the settlements round about. He was to them an unfathomable mystery. He was plainly superhuman. Whether his power would bring to them good or evil, they were not able to determine. After much hesitation they chose the course which prudence seem to counsel. They resolved to extinguish powers so formidable, regarding whose use they could obtain no guarantee. Smith was bound and stretched upon the earth, his head resting upon a great stone. The mighty club was uplifted to dash out his brains. But Smith was a man who won golden opinions of all. The Indian chief had a daughter, Pocahontas, a child of ten or twelve years. She could not bear to see the pleasing Englishman destroyed. As Smith lay waiting the fatal stroke, she caught him in her arms and interposed herself between him and the club. Her intercession prevailed, and Smith was set free.

Five years later, "an honest and discreet" young Englishman called John Rolfe loved this young Indian girl. He had a sore mental struggle about uniting himself with "one of barbarous breeding and of a cursed race." But love triumphed. He laboured for her conversion, and had the happiness of seeing her baptized in the little church of Jamestown. Then he married her. After a time he took her home to England. Her appearance was pleasing; her mind was acute; her piety was sincere; her manners bore picturesque evidence of her forest upbringing. The English King and Court regarded her with lively interest as the first-fruits of the wilderness. Great hopes were founded on this union of the two races. She is the brightest picture – this young Virginian wife and mother – which the history of the doomed native races presents to us. But she did not live to revisit her native land. Death parted her very early from her husband and her child.

When Smith returned from captivity the colony was on the verge of extinction. Only thirty-eight persons were left, and they were preparing to depart. With Smith, hope returned to the despairing settlers. They resumed their work, confident in the resources of their chief. Fresh arrivals from England cheered them. The character of these reinforcements had not as yet improved. "Vagabond gentlemen" formed still a large majority of the settlers – many of them, we are told, "packed off

to escape worse destinies at home." The colony, thus composed, had already gained a very bad reputation: so bad that some, rather than be sent there, "chose to be hanged, *and were*." Over these most undesirable subjects Smith ruled with an authority which no man dared or desired to question. But he was severely injured by an accidental explosion of gunpowder. Surgical aid was not in the colony. Smith required to go to England, and once more hungry ruin settled down upon Virginia. 1610 A.D. In six months the five hundred men whom Smith had left dwindled to sixty. These were already embarked and departing, when they were met by Lord Delaware, the new governor. Once more the colony was saved.

Years of quiet growth succeeded. Emigrants – not wholly now of the dissolute sort – flowed steadily in. Bad people bore rule in England during most of the seventeenth century, and they sold the good people to be slaves in Virginia. The victims of the brutal Judge Jeffreys – the Scotch Covenanters taken at Bothwell Bridge – were shipped off to this profitable market. In 1688 the population of Virginia had increased to 50,000. The little wooden capital swelled out. Other little wooden towns established themselves. Deep in the unfathomed wilderness rose the huts of adventurous settlers, in secluded nooks, by the banks of nameless Virginian streams. A semblance of roads connected the youthful communities. The Indians were relentlessly suppressed. The Virginians bought no land; they took what they required – slaying or expelling the former occupants. Perhaps there were faults on both sides. Once the Indians planned a massacre so cunningly that over three hundred Englishmen perished before the bloody hand of the savages could be stayed.

The early explorers of Virginia found tobacco in extensive use among the Indians. It was the chief medicine of the savages. Its virtues – otherwise unaccountable – were supposed to proceed from a spiritual presence whose home was in the plant. Tobacco was quickly introduced into England, where it rose rapidly into favour. Men who had heretofore smoked only hemp knew how to prize tobacco. King James wrote vehemently against it. He issued a proclamation against trading in an article which was corrupting to mind and body. He taxed it heavily when he could not exclude it. The Pope excommunicated all who smoked in churches. But, in defiance of law and reason, the demand for tobacco continued to increase.

The Virginians found their most profitable occupation in supplying this demand. So eager were they, that tobacco was grown in the squares and streets of Jamestown. In the absence of money tobacco became the Virginian currency. Accounts were kept in tobacco. The salaries of members of Assembly, the stipends of clergymen, were paid in tobacco; offences were punished by fines expressed in tobacco. Absence from church cost the delinquent fifty pounds; refusing to have his child baptized, two thousand pounds; entertaining a Quaker, five thousand pounds. When the stock of tobacco was unduly large, the currency was debased, and much inconvenience resulted. The Virginians corrected this evil in their monetary system by compelling every planter to burn a certain proportion of his stock.

Within a few years of the settlement the Virginians had a written Constitution, according to which they were ruled. They had a Parliament chosen by the burghs, and a Governor sent them from England. The Episcopal Church was established among them, and the colony divided into parishes. A college was erected for the use not only of the English, but also of the most promising young Indians. But they never became an educated people. The population was widely scattered, so that schools were almost impossible. In respect of education, Virginia fell far behind her sisters in the North.

CHAPTER IV
NEW ENGLAND

A little more than two centuries ago New England was one vast forest. Here and there a little space was cleared, a little corn was raised; a few Indian families made their temporary abode. The savage occupants of the land spent their profitless lives to no better purpose than in hunting and fighting. The rivers which now give life to so much cheerful industry flowed uselessly to the sea.

Providence had prepared a home which a great people might fitly inhabit. Let us see whence and how the men were brought who were the destined possessors of its opulence.

The Reformation had taught that every man is entitled to read his Bible for himself, and guide his life by the light he obtains from it. But the lesson was too high to be soon learned. Protestant princes no more than Popish could permit their subjects to think for themselves. James I. had just ascended the English throne. His were the head of a fool and the heart of a tyrant. He would allow no man to separate himself from the Established Church. He would "harry out of the land" all who attempted such a thing; and he was as good as his word. Men would separate from the Church, and the King stretched out his pitiless hand to crush them.

On the northern border of Nottinghamshire stands the little town of Scrooby. Here there were some grave and well-reputed persons, to whom the idle ceremonies of the Established Church were an offence. They met in secret at the house of one of their number, a gentleman named Brewster. They were ministered to in all scriptural simplicity by the pastor of their choice – Mr. Robinson, a wise and good man. But their secret meetings were betrayed to the authorities, and their lives were made bitter by the persecutions that fell upon them. They resolved to leave their own land and seek among strangers that freedom which was denied them at home.

They embarked with all their goods for Holland. But when the ship was about to sail, soldiers came upon them, plundered them, and drove them on shore. They were marched to the public square of Boston, and there the Fathers of New England endured such indignities as an unbelieving rabble could inflict. After some weeks in prison they were suffered to return home.

Next spring they tried again to escape. This time a good many were on board, and the others were waiting for the return of the boat which would carry them to the ship. Suddenly dragoons were seen spurring across the sands. The shipmaster pulled up his anchor and pushed out to sea with those of his passengers whom he had. The rest were conducted to prison. After a time they were set at liberty, and in little groups they made their way to Holland. Mr. Robinson and his congregation were reunited, and the first stage of the weary pilgrimage from the Old England to the New was at length accomplished.

Eleven quiet and not unprosperous years were spent in Holland. The Pilgrims worked with patient industry at their various handicrafts. 1609 A.D. They quickly gained the reputation of doing honestly and effectively whatever they professed to do, and thus they found abundant employment. Mr. Brewster established a printing-press, and printed books about liberty, which, as he had the satisfaction of knowing, greatly enraged the foolish King James. The little colony received additions from time to time as oppression in England became more intolerable.

The instinct of separation was strong within the Pilgrim heart. They could not bear the thought that their little colony was to mingle with the Dutchmen and lose its independent existence. But already their sons and daughters were forming alliances which threatened this result. The Fathers considered long and anxiously how the danger was to be averted. They determined again to go on pilgrimage. They would seek a home beyond the Atlantic, where they could dwell apart and found a State in which they should be free to think.

1620 A.D. On a sunny morning in July the Pilgrims kneel upon the sea-shore at Delfthaven, while the pastor prays for the success of their journey. Out upon the gleaming sea a little ship lies waiting. Money has not been found to transplant the whole colony, and only a hundred have been sent. The remainder will follow when they can. These hundred depart amid tears and prayers and fond farewells. Mr. Robinson dismissed them with counsels which breathed a pure and high-toned wisdom. He urged them to keep their minds ever open for the reception of new truths. "The Lord," he said, "has more truth to break forth out of his holy Word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed Churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but, were they now living, would be as

willing to embrace further light as that which they first received. I beseech you, remember that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written Word of God."

Sixty-eight years later, another famous departure from the coast of Holland took place. It was that of William, Prince of Orange, coming to deliver England from tyranny, and give a new course to English history. A powerful fleet and army sailed with the prince. The chief men of the country accompanied him to his ships. Public prayers for his safety were offered up in all the churches. Insignificant beside this seems at first sight the unregarded departure of a hundred working-men and women. It was in truth, however, not less, but even more memorable. For these poor people went forth to found a great empire, destined to leave as deep and as enduring a mark upon the world's history as Rome or even as England has done.

The *Mayflower*, in which the Pilgrims made their voyage, was a ship of one hundred and sixty tons. The weather proved stormy and cold; the voyage unexpectedly long. It was early in September when they sailed; it was not till the 11th November that the *Mayflower* dropped her anchor in the waters of Cape Cod Bay.

It was a bleak-looking and discouraging coast which lay before them. Nothing met the eye but low sand-hills, covered with ill-grown wood down to the margin of the sea. The Pilgrims had now to choose a place for their settlement. About this they hesitated so long that the captain threatened to put them all on shore and leave them. Little expeditions were sent to explore. At first no suitable locality could be found. The men had great hardships to endure. The cold was so excessive that the spray froze upon their clothes, and they resembled men cased in armour. At length a spot was fixed upon. The soil appeared to be good, and abounded in "delicate springs" of water. On the 23rd December the Pilgrims landed, stepping ashore upon a huge boulder of granite, which is still reverently preserved by their descendants. Here they resolved to found their settlement, which they agreed to call New Plymouth.

The winter was severe, and the infant colony was brought very near to extinction. They had been badly fed on board the *Mayflower*, and for some time after going on shore there was very imperfect shelter from the weather. Sickness fell heavily on the worn-out Pilgrims. Every second day a grave had to be dug in the frozen ground. By the time spring came in there were only fifty survivors, and these sadly enfeebled and dispirited.

But all through this dismal winter the Pilgrims laboured at their heavy task. The care of the sick, the burying of the dead, sadly hindered their work; but the building of their little town went on. They found that nineteen houses would contain their diminished numbers. These they built. Then they surrounded them with a palisade. Upon an eminence beside their town they erected a structure which served a double purpose. Above, it was a fort, on which they mounted six cannon; below, it was their church. Hitherto the Indians had been a cause of anxiety, but had done them no harm. Now they felt safe. Indeed there had never been much risk. A recent epidemic had swept off nine-tenths of the Indians who inhabited that region, and the discouraged survivors could ill afford to incur the hostility of their formidable visitors.

The Pilgrims had been careful to provide for themselves a government. They had drawn up and signed, in the cabin of the *Mayflower*, a document forming themselves into a body politic, and promising obedience to all laws framed for the general good. Under this constitution they appointed John Carver to be their governor. They dutifully acknowledged King James, but they left no very large place for his authority. They were essentially a self-governing people. They knew what despotism was, and they were very sure that democracy could by no possibility be so bad.

The welcome spring came at length, and "the birds sang in the woods most pleasantly." The health of the colony began somewhat to improve, but there was still much suffering to endure. The summer passed not unprosperously. They had taken possession of the deserted clearings of the Indians, and had no difficulty in providing themselves with food. But in the autumn came a ship with a new company of Pilgrims. This was very encouraging; but unhappily the ship brought no provisions,

and the supplies of the colonists were not sufficient for this unexpected addition. For six months there was only half allowance to each. Such straits recurred frequently during the first two or three years. Often the colonists knew not at night "where to have a bit in the morning." Once or twice the opportune arrival of a ship saved them from famishing. They suffered much, but their cheerful trust in Providence and in their own final triumph never wavered. They faced the difficulties of their position with undaunted hearts. Slowly but surely the little colony struck its roots and began to grow.

The years which followed the coming of the Pilgrims were years through which good men in England found it bitter to live. Charles I. was upon the throne; Laud was Archbishop of Canterbury. Bigotry as blind and almost as cruel as England had ever seen thus sat in her high places. Dissent from the Popish usages, which prevailed more and more in the Church, was at the peril of life. A change was near. John Hampden was farming his lands in Buckinghamshire. A greater than he – his cousin, Oliver Cromwell – was leading his quiet rural life at Huntingdon, not without many anxious and indignant thoughts about the evils of his time. John Milton was peacefully writing his minor poems, and filling his mind with the learning of the ancients. The Men had come, and the Hour was at hand. But as yet King Charles and Archbishop Laud had it all their own way. They fined and imprisoned every man who ventured to think otherwise than they wished him to think: they slit his nose, they cut off his ears, they gave him weary hours in the pillory. They ordered that men should not leave the kingdom without the King's permission. Eight ships lay in the Thames, with their passengers on board, when that order was given forth. The soldiers cleared the ships, and the poor emigrants were driven back, in poverty and despair, to endure the misery from which they were so eager to escape.

New England was the refuge to which the wearied victims of this senseless tyranny looked. The Pilgrims wrote to their friends at home, and every letter was regarded with the interest due to a "sacred script." They had hardships to tell of at first; then they had prosperity and comfort; always they had liberty. New England seemed a paradise to men who were denied permission to worship God according to the manner which they deemed right. Every summer a few ships were freighted for the settlements. Many of the silenced ministers came. Many of their congregations came, glad to be free, at whatever sacrifice, from the tyranny which disgraced their native land. The region around New Plymouth became too narrow for the population. From time to time a little party would go forth, with a minister at its head. With wives and children and baggage they crept slowly through the swampy forest. By a week or two of tedious journeying they reached some point which pleased their fancy, or to which they judged that Providence had sent them. There they built their little town, with its wooden huts, its palisade, its fort, on which one or two guns were ultimately mounted. Thus were founded many of the cities of New England.

For some years the difficulties which the colonists encountered were almost overwhelming. There seemed at times even to be danger that death by starvation would end the whole enterprise. But they were a stout-hearted, patient, industrious people, and labour gradually brought comfort. The virgin soil began to yield them abundant harvests. They fished with such success that they manured their fields with the harvest of the sea. They spun and they weaved. They felled the timber of their boundless forests. They built ships, and sent away to foreign countries the timber, the fish, the furs which were not required at home. 1643 A.D. Ere many years a ship built in Massachusetts sailed for London, followed by "many prayers of the churches." Their infant commerce was not without its troubles. They had little or no coin, and Indian corn was made a legal tender. Bullets were legalized in room of the farthings which, with their other coins, had vanished to pay for foreign goods. But no difficulty could long resist their steady, undismayed labour.

They were a noble people who had thus begun to strike their roots in the great forests of New England. Their peculiarities may indeed amuse us. The Old Testament was their statute-book, and they deemed that the institutions of Moses were the best model for those of New England. They made attendance on public worship compulsory. They christened their children by Old Testament

names. They regulated female attire by law. They considered long hair unscriptural, and preached against veils and wigs.

The least wise among us can smile at the mistakes into which the Puritan Fathers of New England fell. But the most wise of all ages will most profoundly reverence the purity, the earnestness, the marvellous enlightenment of these men. From their incessant study of the Bible they drew a love of human liberty unsurpassed in depth and fervour. Coming from under despotic rule, they established at once a government absolutely free. They felt – what Europe has not even yet fully apprehended – that the citizens of a State should be able to guide the affairs of that State without helpless dependence upon a few great families; that the members of a Church ought to guide the affairs of that Church, waiting for the sanction of no patron, however noble and good. It was one of their fundamental laws that all strangers professing the Christian religion and driven from their homes by persecutors, should be succoured at the public charge. The education of children was almost their earliest care. The Pilgrims bore with them across the sea a deep persuasion that their infant State could not thrive without education. Three years after the landing, it was reported of them among the friends they had left in London, that "their children were not catechised, nor taught to read." The colonists felt keenly this reproach. They utterly denied its justice. They owned, indeed, that they had not yet attained to a school, much as they desired it. But all parents did their best, each in the education of his own children. In a very few years schools began to appear. Such endowment as could be afforded was freely given. Some tolerably qualified brother was fixed upon, and "entreated to become schoolmaster." And thus gradually the foundations were laid of the noble school system of New England. Soon a law was passed that every town containing fifty householders must have a common school; every town of a hundred householders must have a grammar school. Harvard College was established within fifteen years of the landing.

The founders of New England were men who had known at home the value of letters. Brewster carried with him a library of two hundred and seventy-five volumes, and his was not the largest collection in the colony. The love of knowledge was deep and universal. New England has never swerved from her early loyalty to the cause of education.

Every colonist was necessarily a soldier. The State provided him with arms, if poor; required him to provide himself, if rich. His weapons were sword, pike, and matchlock, with a forked stick on which to rest his artillery in taking aim. The people were carefully trained to the use of arms. In the devout spirit of the time, their drills were frequently opened and closed with prayer.

Twenty-three years after the landing of the Pilgrims the population of New England had grown to twenty-four thousand. Forty-nine little wooden towns, with their wooden churches, wooden forts, and wooden ramparts, were dotted here and there over the land. There were four separate colonies, which hitherto had maintained separate governments. They were Plymouth, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Haven. There appeared at first a disposition in the Pilgrim mind to scatter widely, and remain apart in small self-governing communities. For some years every little band which pushed deeper into the wilderness settled itself into an independent State, having no political relations with its neighbours. But this isolation could not continue. The wilderness had other inhabitants, whose presence was a standing menace. Within "striking distance" there were Indians enough to trample out the solitary little English communities. On their frontiers were Frenchmen and Dutchmen – natural enemies, as all men in that time were to each other. 1643 A.D. For mutual defence and encouragement, the four colonies joined themselves into the United Colonies of New England. This was the first confederation in a land where confederations of unprecedented magnitude were hereafter to be established.

CHAPTER V
THE NEW ENGLAND PERSECUTIONS

The Puritans left their native England and came to the "outside of the world," as they called it, that they might enjoy liberty to worship God according to the way which they deemed right. They had discovered that they themselves were entitled to toleration. They felt that the restraints laid upon themselves were very unjust and very grievous. But their light as yet led them no further. They had not discovered that people who differed from them were as well entitled to be tolerated as they themselves were. We have no right to blame them for their backwardness. Simple as it seems, men have not all found out, even yet, that every one of them is fully entitled to think for himself.

1631 A.D. And thus it happened that, before the Pilgrims had enjoyed for many years the cheerful liberty of their new home, doctrines raised their heads among them which they felt themselves bound to suppress. One February day there stepped ashore at Boston a young man upon whose coming great issues depended. His name was Roger Williams. He was a clergyman – "godly and zealous" – a man of rare virtue and power. Cromwell admitted him, in later years, to a considerable measure of intimacy. He was the friend of John Milton – in the bright days of the poet's youth, ere yet "the ever-during dark" surrounded him. From him Milton acquired his knowledge of the Dutch language. He carried with him to the New World certain strange opinions. Long thought had satisfied him that in regard to religious belief and worship man is responsible to God alone. No man, said Williams, is entitled to lay compulsion upon another man in regard to religion. The civil power has to do only with the "bodies and goods and outward estates" of men; in the domain of conscience God is the only ruler. New England was not able to receive these sentiments. Williams became minister at Salem, where he was held in high account. In time his opinions drew down upon him the unfavourable notice of the authorities. The General Court of Massachusetts brought him to trial for the errors of his belief. His townsmen and congregation deserted him. His wife reproached him bitterly with the evil he was bringing upon his family. Mr. Williams could do no otherwise. He must testify with his latest breath, if need be, against the "soul oppression" which he saw around him. The court heard him, discovered error in his opinions, declared him guilty, and pronounced upon him sentence of banishment.

All honour to this good and brave, if somewhat eccentric man. He of all the men of his time saw most clearly the beauty of absolute freedom in matters of conscience. He went forth from Salem. He obtained a grant of land from the Indians, and he founded the State of Rhode Island. Landing one day from a boat in which he explored his new possessions, he climbed a gentle slope, and rested with his companions beside a spring. It seemed to him that the capital of his infant State ought to be here. He laid the foundations of his city, which he named Providence, in grateful recognition of the Power which had guided his uncertain steps. His settlement was to be "a shelter for persons distressed for conscience." Most notably has it been so. Alone of all the States of Christendom, Rhode Island has no taint of persecution in her statute-book or in her history. Massachusetts continued to drive out her heretics; Rhode Island took them in. They might err in their interpretation of Scripture. Pity for themselves if they did so. But while they obeyed the laws, they might interpret Scripture according to the light they had. Many years after, Mr. Williams became President of the colony which he had founded. The neighbouring States were at that time sharply chastising the Quakers with lash and branding-iron and gibbet. Rhode Island was invited to join in the persecution. Mr. Williams replied that he had no law whereby to punish any for their belief "as to salvation and an eternal condition." He abhorred the doctrines of the Quakers. In his seventy-third year he rowed thirty miles in an open boat to wage a public debate with some of the advocates of the system. Thus and thus only could he resist the progress of opinions which he deemed pernicious. In beautiful consistency and completeness

stands out to the latest hour of his long life this good man's loyalty to the absolute liberty of the human conscience.

1651 A.D. And thus, too, it happened that when seven or eight men began to deny that infants should be baptized, New England never doubted that she did right in forcibly trampling out their heresy. The heretics had started a meeting of their own, where they might worship God apart from those who baptized their infants. One Sabbath morning the constable invaded their worship and forcibly bore them away to church. Their deportment there was not unsuitable to the manner of their inbringing. They audaciously clapped on their hats while the minister prayed, and made no secret that they deemed it sin to join in the services of those who practised infant baptism. For this "separation of themselves from God's people" they were put on trial. They were fined, and some of the more obdurate among them were ordered to be "well whipped." We have no reason to doubt that this order was executed in spirit as well as in letter. And then a law went forth that every man who openly condemned the baptizing of infants should suffer banishment. Thus resolute were the good men of New England that the right which they had come so far to enjoy should not be enjoyed by any one who saw a different meaning from theirs in any portion of the Divine Word.

1656 A.D. Thus, too, when Massachusetts had reason to apprehend the coming of certain followers of the Quaker persuasion, she was smitten with a great fear. A fast-day was proclaimed, that the alarmed people might "seek the face of God in reference to the abounding of errors, especially those of the Ranters and Quakers." As they fasted, a ship was nearing their shores with certain Quaker women on board. These unwelcome visitors were promptly seized and lodged in prison; their books were burned by the hangman; they themselves were sent away home by the ships which brought them. All ship-masters were strictly forbidden to bring Quakers to the colony. A poor woman, the wife of a London tailor, left her husband and her children, to bring, as she said, a message from the Lord to New England. Her trouble was but poorly bestowed; for they to whom her message came requited her with twenty stripes and instant banishment. The banished Quakers took the earliest opportunity of finding their way back. Laws were passed dooming to death all who ventured to return. A poor fanatic was following his plough in distant Yorkshire, when the word of the Lord came to him saying, "Go to Boston." He went, and the ungrateful men of Boston hanged him. Four persons in all suffered death. Many were whipped; some had their ears cut off. 1661 A.D. But public opinion, which has always been singularly humane in America, began to condemn these foolish cruelties. And the Quakers had friends at home – friends who had access at Court. There came a letter in the King's name directing that the authorities of New England should "forbear to proceed further against the Quakers." That letter came by the hands of a Quaker who was under sentence of death if he dared to return. The authorities could not but receive it – could not but give effect to it. The persecution ceased; and with it may be said to close, in America, all forcible interference with the right of men to think for themselves.

The Quakers, as they are known to us, are of all sects the least offensive. A persecution of this serene, thoughtful, self-restrained people, may well surprise us. But, in justice to New England, it must be told that the first generation of Quakers differed extremely from succeeding generations. They were a fanatical people – extravagant, disorderly, rejecters of lawful authority. A people more intractable, more unendurable by any government, never lived. They were guided by an "inner light," which habitually placed them at variance with the laws of the country in which they lived, as well as with the most harmless social usages. George Fox declared that "the Lord forbade him to put off his hat to any man." His followers were inconveniently and provokingly aggressive. They invaded public worship. They openly expressed their contempt for the religion of their neighbours. They perpetually came with "messages from the Lord," which it was not pleasant to listen to. They appeared in public places very imperfectly attired, thus symbolically to express and to rebuke the spiritual nakedness of the time. After a little, when their zeal allied itself with discretion, they became a most valuable element in American society. But we can scarcely wonder that they created alarm at first. The men

of New England took a very simple view of the subject. They had bought and paid for every acre of soil which they occupied. Their country was a homestead from which they might exclude whom they chose. They would not receive men whose object was to overthrow all their institutions, civil and religious. It was a mistake, but a most natural mistake. Long afterwards, when New England saw her error, she nobly made what amends she could, by giving compensation to the representatives of those Quakers who had suffered in the evil times.

CHAPTER VI
WITCHCRAFT IN NEW ENGLAND

When the Pilgrims left their native land, the belief in witchcraft was universal. England, in much fear, busied herself with the slaughter of friendless old women who were suspected of an alliance with Satan. King James had published his book on Demonology a few years before, in which he maintained that to forbear from putting witches to death was an "odious treason against God." England was no wiser than her King. All during James's life, and long after he had ceased from invading the kingdom of Satan, the yearly average of executions for witchcraft was somewhere about five hundred.

The Pilgrims carried with them across the Atlantic the universal delusion, which their way of life was fitted to strengthen. They lived on the verge of vast and gloomy forests. The howl of the wolf and the scream of the panther sounded nightly around their cabins. Treacherous savages lurked in the woods watching the time to plunder and to slay. Every circumstance was fitted to increase the susceptibility of the mind to gloomy and superstitious impressions. But for the first quarter of a century, while every ship brought news of witch-killing at home, no Satanic outbreak disturbed the settlers. The sense of brotherhood was yet too strong among them. Men who have braved great dangers and endured great hardships together, do not readily come to look upon each other as the allies and agents of the Evil One.

In 1645 four persons were put to death for witchcraft. During the next half century there occur at intervals solitary cases, when some unhappy wretch falls a victim to the lurking superstition. It was in 1692 that witch-slaying burst forth in its epidemic form, and with a fury which has seldom been witnessed elsewhere.

In the State of Massachusetts there is a little town, then called Salem, sitting pleasantly in a plain between two rivers; and in the town of Salem there dwelt at that time a minister whose name was Paris. In the month of February the daughter and niece of Mr. Paris became ill. It was a dark time for Massachusetts; for the colony was at war with the French and Indians, and was suffering cruelly from their ravages. The doctors sat in solemn conclave on the afflicted girls, and pronounced them bewitched. Mr. Paris, not doubting that it was even so, bestirred himself to find the offenders. Suspicion fell upon three old women, who were at once seized. And then, with marvellous rapidity, the mania spread. The rage and fear of the distracted community swelled high. Every one suspected his neighbour. Children accused their parents; parents accused their children. The prisons could scarcely contain the suspected. The town of Falmouth hanged its minister, a man of intelligence and worth. Some near relations of the Governor were denounced. Even the beasts were not safe. A dog was solemnly put to death for the part he had taken in some satanic festivity.

For more than twelve months this mad panic raged in the New England States. It is just to say that the hideous cruelties which were practised in Europe were not resorted to in the prosecution of American witches. Torture was not inflicted to wring confession from the victim. The American test was more humane, and not more foolish, than the European. Those suspected persons who denied their guilt, were judged guilty and hanged; those who confessed were, for the most part, set free. Many hundreds of innocent persons, who scorned to purchase life by falsehood, perished miserably under the fury of an excited people.

The fire had been kindled in a moment; it was extinguished as suddenly. The Governor of Massachusetts only gave effect to the reaction which had occurred in the public mind, when he abruptly stopped all prosecutions against witches, dismissed all the suspected, pardoned all the condemned. The House of Assembly proclaimed a fast – entreating that God would pardon the errors of his people "in a late tragedy raised by Satan and his instruments." One of the judges stood up in church in Boston, with bowed down head and sorrowful countenance, while a paper was read, in which he begged the prayers of the congregation, that the innocent blood which he had erringly shed might not be visited on the country or on him. The Salem jury asked forgiveness of God and the community for what they had done under the power of "a strong and general delusion." Poor Mr. Paris was now at a sad discount. He made public acknowledgment of his error. But at his door lay the origin of all this slaughter of the unoffending. His part in the tragedy could not be forgiven. The people would no longer endure his ministry, and demanded his removal. Mr. Paris resigned his charge, and went forth from Salem a broken man.

If the error of New England was great and most lamentable, her repentance was prompt and deep. Five-and-twenty years after she had clothed herself in sackcloth, old women were still burned to death for witchcraft in Great Britain. The year of blood was never repeated in America.

CHAPTER VII
THE INDIANS

The great continent on which the Pilgrims had landed was the home of innumerable tribes of Indians. They had no settled abode. The entire nation wandered hither and thither as their fancy or their chances of successful hunting directed. When the wood was burned down in their neighbourhood, or the game became scarce, they abandoned their villages and moved off to a more inviting region. They had their great warriors, their great battles, their brilliant victories, their crushing defeats – all as uninteresting to mankind as the wars of the kites and crows. They were a race of tall, powerful men – copper-coloured, with hazel eye, high cheek-bone, and coarse black hair. In manner they were grave, and not without a measure of dignity. They had courage, but it was of that kind which is greater in suffering than in doing. They were a cunning, treacherous, cruel race, among whom the slaughter of women and children took rank as a great feat of arms. They had almost no laws, and for religious beliefs a few of the most grovelling superstitions. They worshipped the Devil because he was wicked, and might do them an injury. Civilization could lay no hold upon them. They quickly learned to use the white man's musket; they never learned to use the tools of the white man's industry. They developed a love for intoxicating drink passionate and irresistible beyond all example. The settlers behaved to them as Christian men should. They took no land from them; what land they required they bought and paid for. Every acre of New England soil was come by with scrupulous honesty. The friendship of the Indians was anxiously cultivated – sometimes from fear, oftener from pity. But nothing could stay their progress towards extinction. Inordinate drunkenness and the gradual limitation of their hunting-grounds told fatally on their numbers. And occasionally the English were forced to march against some tribe which refused to be at peace, and to inflict a defeat which left few survivors.

1646 A.D. Early in the history of New England, efforts were made to win the Indians to the Christian faith. The Governor of Massachusetts appointed ministers to carry the gospel to the savages. Mr. John Eliot, the Apostle of the Indians, was a minister near Boston. Moved by the pitiful condition of the natives, he acquired the language of some of the tribes in his neighbourhood. He went and preached to them in their own tongue. He printed books for them. The savages received his words. Many of them listened to his sermons in tears. Many professed faith in Christ, and were gathered into congregations. He gave them a simple code of laws. It was even attempted to establish a college for training native teachers; but this had to be abandoned. The slothfulness of the Indian youth, and their

devouring passion for strong liquors, unfitted them for the ministry. These vices seemed incurable in the Indian character. No persuasion could induce them to labour. They could be taught to rest on the Sabbath; they could not be taught to work on the other six days. And even the best of them would sell all they had for spirits. These were grave hindrances; but, in spite of them, Christianity made considerable progress among the Indians. The hold which it then gained was never altogether lost. And it was observed that in all the misunderstandings which arose between the English and the natives, the converts steadfastly adhered to their new friends.

CHAPTER VIII
NEW YORK

During the first forty years of its existence, the great city which we call New York was a Dutch settlement, known among men as New Amsterdam. 1609 A.D. That region had been discovered for the Dutch East India Company by Henry Hudson, who was still in search, as Columbus had been, of a shorter route to the East. The Dutch have never displayed any aptitude for colonizing. But they were unsurpassed in mercantile discernment, and they set up trading stations with much judgment. Three or four years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, the Dutch West India Company determined to enter into trading relations with the Indians along the line of the Hudson river. They sent out a few families, who planted themselves at the southern extremity of Manhattan Island. A wooden fort was built, around which clustered a few wooden houses – just as in Europe the baron's castle arose and the huts of the baron's dependants sheltered beside it. The Indians sold valuable furs for scanty payment in blankets, beads, muskets, and intoxicating drinks. The prudent Dutchmen grew rich, and were becoming numerous. 1643 A.D. But a fierce and prolonged war with the Indians broke out. The Dutch, having taken offence at something done by the savages, expressed their wrath by the massacre of an entire tribe. All the Indians of that region made common cause against the dangerous strangers. All the Dutch villages were burned down. Long Island became a desert. The Dutchmen were driven in to the southern tip of the island on which New York stands. They ran a palisade across the island in the line of what is now Wall Street. To-day, Wall Street is the scene of the largest monetary transactions ever known among men. The hot fever of speculation rages there incessantly, with a fury unknown elsewhere. But then, it was the line within which a disheartened and diminishing band of colonists strove to maintain themselves against a savage foe.

1645 A.D. The war came to an end as wars even then required to do. For twenty years the colony continued to nourish under the government of a sagacious Dutchman called Petrus Stuyvesant. Petrus had been a soldier, and had lost a leg in the wars. He was a brave and true-hearted man, but withal despotic. When his subjects petitioned for some part in the making of laws, he was astonished at their boldness. He took it upon him to inspect the merchants' books. He persecuted the Lutherans and "the abominable sect of Quakers."

It cannot be said that his government was faultless. The colony prospered under it, however, and a continued immigration from Europe increased its importance. But in the twentieth year, certain English ships of war sailed up the bay, and, without a word of explanation, anchored near the settlement. Governor Petrus was from home, but they sent for him, and he came with speed. He hastened to the fort and looked out into the bay. There lay the ships – grim, silent, ominously near. Appalled by the presence of his unexpected visitors, the Governor sent to ask wherefore they had come. His alarm was well founded; for Charles II. of England had presented to his brother James of York a vast stretch of territory, including the region which the Dutch had chosen for their settlement. It was not his to give, but that signified nothing either to Charles or to James. These ships had come to take possession in the Duke of York's name. A good many of the colonists were English, and they were well pleased to be under their own Government. They would not fight. The Dutch remembered the Governor's tyrannies, and they would not fight. Governor Petrus was prepared to fight single-

handed. He had the twenty guns of the fort loaded, and was resolute to fire upon the ships. So at least he professed. But the inhabitants begged him, in mercy to them, to forbear; and he suffered himself to be led by two clergymen away from the loaded guns. It was alleged, to his disparagement, afterwards, that he had "allowed himself to be persuaded by ministers and other chicken-hearted persons." Be that as it may, King Charles's errand was done. The little town of fifteen hundred inhabitants, with all the neighbouring settlements, passed quietly under English rule. And the future Empire City was named New York, in honour of one of the meanest tyrants who ever disgraced the English throne. With the settlements on the Hudson there fell also into the hands of the English those of New Jersey, which the Dutch had conquered from the Swedes.

CHAPTER IX
PENNSYLVANIA

It was not till the year 1682 that the uneventful but quietly prosperous career of Pennsylvania began. The Stuarts were again upon the throne of England. They had learned nothing from their exile; and now, with the hour of their final rejection at hand, they were as wickedly despotic as ever.

William Penn was the son of an admiral who had gained victories for England, and enjoyed the favour of the royal family as well as of the eminent statesmen of his time. The highest honours of the State would in due time have come within the young man's reach, and the brightest hopes of his future were reasonably entertained by his friends. To the dismay of all, Penn became a Quaker. It was an unspeakable humiliation to the well-connected admiral. He turned his son out of doors, trusting that hunger would subdue his intractable spirit. After a time, however, he relented, and the youthful heretic was restored to favour. His father's influence could not shield him from persecution. Penn had suffered fine, and had lain in the Tower for his opinions.

Ere long the admiral died, and Penn succeeded to his possessions. It deeply grieved him that his brethren in the faith should endure such wrongs as were continually inflicted upon them. He could do nothing at home to mitigate the severities under which they groaned, therefore he formed the great design of leading them forth to a new world. King Charles owed to the admiral a sum of £16,000, and this doubtful investment had descended from the father to the son. Penn offered to take payment in land, and the King readily bestowed upon him a vast region stretching westward from the river Delaware. Here Penn proposed to found a State free and self-governing. It was his noble ambition "to show men as free and as happy as they can be." He proclaimed to the people already settled in his new dominions that they should be governed by laws of their own making. "Whatever sober and free men can reasonably desire," he told them, "for the security and improvement of their own happiness, I shall heartily comply with." He was as good as his word. The people appointed representatives, by whom a Constitution was framed. Penn confirmed the arrangements which the people chose to adopt.

Penn dealt justly and kindly with the Indians, and they requited him with a reverential love such as they evinced to no other Englishman. The neighbouring colonies waged bloody wars with the Indians who lived around them – now inflicting defeats which were almost exterminating – now sustaining hideous massacres. Penn's Indians were his children and most loyal subjects. No drop of Quaker blood was ever shed by Indian hand in the Pennsylvanian territory. Soon after Penn's arrival he invited the chief men of the Indian tribes to a conference. The meeting took place beneath a huge elm-tree. The pathless forest has long given way to the houses and streets of Philadelphia, but a marble monument points out to strangers the scene of this memorable interview. Penn, with a few companions, unarmed, and dressed according to the simple fashion of their sect, met the crowd of formidable savages. They met, he assured them, as brothers "on the broad pathway of good faith and good will." No advantage was to be taken on either side. All was to be "openness and love;" and Penn meant what he said. Strong in the power of truth and kindness, he bent the fierce savages of the Delaware to his will. They vowed "to live in love with William Penn and his children as long

as the moon and the sun shall endure." They kept their vow. Long years after, they were known to recount to strangers, with deep emotion, the words which Penn had spoken to them under the old elm-tree of Shakamaxon.

The fame of Penn's settlement went abroad in all lands. Men wearied with the vulgar tyranny of Kings heard gladly that the reign of freedom and tranquillity was established on the banks of the Delaware. An asylum was opened "for the good and oppressed of every nation." Of these there was no lack. Pennsylvania had nothing to attract such "dissolute persons" as had laid the foundations of Virginia. But grave and God-fearing men from all the Protestant countries sought a home where they might live as conscience taught them. The new colony grew apace. Its natural advantages were tempting. Penn reported it as "a good land, with plentiful springs, the air clear and fresh, and an innumerable quantity of wild-fowl and fish; what Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be well-contented with." During the first year, twenty-two vessels arrived, bringing two thousand persons. In three years, Philadelphia was a town of six hundred houses. It was half a century from its foundation before New York attained equal dimensions.

When Penn, after a few years, revisited England, he was able truly to relate that "things went on sweetly with Friends in Pennsylvania; that they increased finely in outward things and in wisdom."

CHAPTER X
GEORGIA

The thirteen States which composed the original Union were, Virginia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

1732 A.D. Of these the latest born was Georgia. Only fifty years had passed since Penn established the Quaker State on the banks of the Delaware. But changes greater than centuries have sometimes wrought had taken place. The Revolution had vindicated the liberties of the British people. The tyrant house of Stuart had been cast out, and with its fall the era of despotic government had closed. The real governing power was no longer the King, but the Parliament.

Among the members of Parliament during the rule of Sir Robert Walpole was one almost unknown to us now, but deserving of honour beyond most men of his time. His name was James Oglethorpe. He was a soldier, and had fought against the Turks and in the great Marlborough wars against Louis XIV. In advanced life he became the friend of Samuel Johnson. Dr. Johnson urged him to write some account of his adventures. "I know no one," he said, "whose life would be more interesting: if I were furnished with materials I should be very glad to write it." Edmund Burke considered him "a more extraordinary person than any he had ever read of." John Wesley "blessed God that ever he was born." Oglethorpe attained the great age of ninety-six, and died in the year 1785. The year before his death he attended the sale of Dr. Johnson's books, and was there met by Samuel Rogers the poet. "Even then," says Rogers, "he was the finest figure of a man you ever saw; but very, very old – the flesh of his face like parchment."

In Oglethorpe's time it was in the power of a creditor to imprison, according to his pleasure, the man who owed him money and was not able to pay it. It was a common circumstance that a man should be imprisoned during a long series of years for a trifling debt. Oglethorpe had a friend upon whom this hard fate had fallen. His attention was thus painfully called to the cruelties which were inflicted upon the unfortunate and helpless. He appealed to Parliament, and after inquiry a partial remedy was obtained. The benevolent exertions of Oglethorpe procured liberty for multitudes who but for him might have ended their lives in captivity.

This, however, did not content him. Liberty was an incomplete gift to men who had lost, or perhaps had scarcely ever possessed, the faculty of earning their own maintenance. Oglethorpe devised how he might carry these unfortunates to a new world, where, under happier auspices, they

might open a fresh career. 1732 A.D. He obtained from King George II. a charter by which the country between the Savannah and the Alatamaha, and stretching westward to the Pacific, was erected into the province of Georgia. It was to be a refuge for the deserving poor, and next to them for Protestants suffering persecution. Parliament voted £10,000 in aid of the humane enterprise, and many benevolent persons were liberal with their gifts. In November the first exodus of the insolvent took place. Oglethorpe sailed with one hundred and twenty emigrants, mainly selected from the prisons – penniless, but of good repute. He surveyed the coasts of Georgia, and chose a site for the capital of his new State. He pitched his tent where Savannah now stands, and at once proceeded to mark out the line of streets and squares.

Next year the colony was joined by about a hundred German Protestants, who were then under persecution for their beliefs. The colonists received this addition to their numbers with joy. A place of residence had been chosen for them which the devout and thankful strangers named Ebenezer. They were charmed with their new abode. The river and the hills, they said, reminded them of home. They applied themselves with steady industry to the cultivation of indigo and silk; and they prospered.

The fame of Oglethorpe's enterprise spread over Europe. All struggling men against whom the battle of life went hard looked to Georgia as a land of promise. They were the men who most urgently required to emigrate; but they were not always the men best fitted to conquer the difficulties of the immigrant's life. The progress of the colony was slow. The poor persons of whom it was originally composed were honest but ineffective, and could not in Georgia more than in England find out the way to become self-supporting. Encouragements were given which drew from Germany, from Switzerland, and from the Highlands of Scotland, men of firmer texture of mind – better fitted to subdue the wilderness and bring forth its treasures.

1736 A.D. With Oglethorpe there went out, on his second expedition to Georgia, the two brothers John and Charles Wesley. Charles went as secretary to the Governor. John was even then, although a very young man, a preacher of unusual promise. He burned to spread the gospel among the settlers and their Indian neighbours. He spent two years in Georgia, and these were unsuccessful years. His character was unformed; his zeal out of proportion to his discretion. The people felt that he preached "personal satires" at them. He involved himself in quarrels, and at last had to leave the colony secretly, fearing arrest at the instance of some whom he had offended. He returned to begin his great career in England, with the feeling that his residence in Georgia had been of much value to himself, but of very little to the people whom he sought to benefit.

Just as Wesley reached England, his fellow-labourer George Whitefield sailed for Georgia. There were now little settlements spreading inland, and Whitefield visited these, bearing to them the word of life. He founded an Orphan-House at Savannah, and supported it by contributions – obtained easily from men under the power of his unequalled eloquence. He visited Georgia very frequently, and his love for that colony remained with him to the last.

Slavery was, at the outset, forbidden in Georgia. It was opposed to the gospel, Oglethorpe said, and therefore not to be allowed. He foresaw, besides, what has been so bitterly experienced since, that slavery must degrade the poor white labourer. But soon a desire sprung up among the less scrupulous of the settlers to have the use of slaves. Within seven years from the first landing, slave-ships were discharging their cargoes at Savannah.

CHAPTER XI
SLAVERY

In the month of December 1620, the Pilgrim Fathers landed from the *Mayflower*. Their landing takes rank among our great historical transactions. The rock which first received their footsteps is a sacred spot, to which the citizens of great and powerful States make reverential pilgrimages. And

right it should be so; for the vast influence for good which New England exerts, and must ever exert, in the world's affairs, has risen upon the foundation laid by these sickly and storm-wearied Pilgrims.

A few months previously another landing had taken place, destined in the fulness of time to bear the strangest of fruits. In the month of August a Dutch ship of war sailed up the James river and put twenty negroes ashore upon the Virginian coast. It was a wholly unnoticed proceeding. No name or lineage had these sable strangers. No one cared to know from what tribe they sprang, or how it fared with them in their sorrowful journeying. Yet these men were Pilgrim Fathers too. They were the first negro slaves in a land whose history, during the next century and a half, was to receive a dark, and finally a bloody, colouring from the fact of Negro Slavery.

The negro slave trade was an early result of the discovery of America. To utilize the vast possessions which Columbus had bestowed upon her, Spain deemed that compulsory labour was indispensable. The natives of the country naturally fell the first victims to this necessity. Terrible desolations were wrought among the poor Indians. Proud and melancholy, they could not be reconciled to their bondage. They perished by thousands under the merciless hand of their new task-masters.

1542 A.D. Charles V. heard with remorse of this ruin of the native races. Indian slavery was at once and peremptorily forbidden. But labourers must be obtained, or those splendid possessions would relapse into wilderness. Spanish merchants traded to the coasts of Africa, where they bought gold dust and ivory for beads and ribands and scarlet cloaks. They found there a harmless idle people, whose simple wants were supplied without effort on their part; and who, in the absence of inducement, neither laboured nor fought. The Spaniards bethought them of these men to cultivate their fields, to labour in their mines. They were gentle and tractable; they were heathens, and therefore the proper inheritance of good Catholics; by baptism and instruction in the faith their souls would be saved from destruction. Motives of the most diverse kinds urged the introduction of the negro. At first the traffic extended no further than to criminals. Thieves and murderers, who must otherwise have been put to death, enriched their chiefs by the purchase-money which the Spaniards were eager to pay. But on all that coast no rigour of law could produce offenders in numbers sufficient to meet the demand. Soon the limitation ceased. Unoffending persons were systematically kidnapped and sold. The tribes went to war in the hope of taking prisoners whom they might dispose of to the Spaniards.

England was not engaged in that traffic at its outset. Ere long her hands were as deeply tainted with its guilt as those of any other country. But for a time her intercourse with Africa was for blameless purposes of commerce. And while that continued the English were regarded with confidence by the Africans. 1557 A.D. At length one John Lok, a shipmaster, stole five black men and brought them to London. The next Englishman who visited Africa found that that theft had damaged the good name of his countrymen. His voyage was unprofitable, for the natives feared him. When this was told in London the mercantile world was troubled, for the African trade was a gainful one. The five stolen men were conveyed safely home again.

This was the opening of our African slave-trade. Then, for the first time, did our fathers feel the dark temptation, and thus hesitatingly did they at first yield to its power. The traffic in gold dust and ivory continued. Every Englishman who visited the African coast had occasion to know how actively and how profitably Spain, and Portugal too, traded in slaves. He knew that on all that rich coast there was no merchandise so lucrative as the unfortunate people themselves. It was not an age when such seductions could be long withstood. The English traders of that day were not the men to be held back from a gainful traffic by mere considerations of humanity.

1562 A.D. Sir John Hawkins made the first English venture in slave-trading. He sailed with three vessels to Sierra Leone. There, by purchase or by violence, he possessed himself of three hundred negroes. With this freight he crossed the Atlantic, and at St. Domingo he sold the whole to a great profit. The fame of his gains caused sensation in England, and he was encouraged to undertake a second expedition. Queen Elizabeth and many of her courtiers took shares in the venture. After

many difficulties, Hawkins collected five hundred negroes. His voyage was a troublous one. He was beset with calms; water ran short, and it was feared that a portion of the cargo must have been flung overboard. “Almighty God, however,” says this devout man-stealer, “who never suffers his elect to perish,” brought him to the West Indies without loss of a man. But there had arrived before him a rigorous interdict from the King of Spain against the admission of foreign vessels to any of his West Indian ports. Hawkins was too stout-hearted to suffer such frustration of his enterprise. After some useless negotiation, he landed a hundred men with two pieces of cannon; landed and sold his negroes; paid the tax which he himself had fixed; and soon in quiet England divided his gains with his royal and noble patrons. Thus was the slave-trade established in England. Three centuries after, we look with horror and remorse upon the results which have followed.

In most of the colonies there was unquestionably a desire for the introduction of the negro. But ere many years the colonists became aware that they were rapidly involving themselves in grave difficulties. The increase of the coloured population alarmed them. Heavy debts, incurred for the purchase of slaves, disordered their finances. The production of tobacco, indigo, and other articles of Southern growth, exceeded the demand, and prices fell ruinously low. There were occasionally proposals made – although not very favourably entertained – with a view to emancipation. But the opposition of the colonists to the African slave-trade was very decided. Very frequent attempts to limit the traffic were made even in the Southern colonies, where slave labour was most valuable. 1787 A.D. Soon after the Revolution, several Slave-owning States prohibited the importation of slaves. The Constitution provided that Congress might suppress the slave-trade after the lapse of twenty years. But for the resistance of South Carolina and Georgia the prohibition would have been immediate. 1807 A.D. And at length, at the earliest moment when it was possible, Congress gave effect to the general sentiment by enacting “that no slaves be imported into any of the thirteen United Colonies.”

And why had this not been done earlier? If the colonists were sincere in their desire to suppress this base traffic, why did they not suppress it? The reason is not difficult to find. England would not permit them. England forced the slave-trade upon the reluctant colonists. The English Parliament watched with paternal care over the interests of this hideous traffic. During the first half of the eighteenth century Parliament was continually legislating to this effect. Every restraint upon the largest development of the trade was removed with scrupulous care. Everything that diplomacy could do to open new markets was done. When the colonists sought by imposing a tax to check the importation of slaves, that tax was repealed. Land was given free, in the West Indies, on condition that the settler should keep four negroes for every hundred acres. Forts were built on the African coast for the protection of the trade. So recently as the year 1749 an Act was passed bestowing additional encouragements upon slave-traders, and emphatically asserting “the slave-trade is very advantageous to Great Britain.” There are no passages in all our history so humiliating as these.

It is marvellous that such things were done – deliberately, and with all the solemnities of legal sanction – by men not unacquainted with the Christian religion, and humane in all the ordinary relations of life. The Popish Inquisition inflicted no suffering more barbarously cruel than was endured by the victim of the slave-trader. Hundreds of men and women, with chains upon their limbs, were packed closely together into the holds of small vessels. There, during weeks of suffering, they remained, enduring fierce tropical heat, often deprived of water and of food. They were all young and strong, for the fastidious slave-trader rejected men over thirty as uselessly old. But the strength of the strongest sunk under the horrors of this voyage. Often it happened that the greater portion of the cargo had to be flung overboard. Under the most favourable circumstances, it was expected that one slave in every five would perish. In every cargo of five hundred, one hundred would suffer a miserable death. And the public sentiment of England fully sanctioned a traffic of which these horrors were a necessary part.

At one time the idea was prevalent in the colonies that it was contrary to Scripture to hold a baptized person in slavery. The colonists did not on that account liberate their slaves. They escaped

the difficulty in the opposite direction. They withheld baptism and religious instruction. England took some pains to put them right on this question. The bishops of the Church and the law-officers of the Crown issued authoritative declarations, asserting the entire lawfulness of owning Christians. The colonial legislatures followed with enactments to the same effect. The colonists, thus reassured, gave consent that the souls of their unhappy dependants should be cared for.

Up to the Revolution it was estimated that three hundred thousand negroes had been brought into the country direct from Africa. The entire coloured population was supposed to amount to nearly half a million.

CHAPTER XII
EARLY GOVERNMENT

There was at the outset considerable diversity of pattern among the governments of the colonies. As time wore on, the diversity lessened, and one great type becomes visible in all. There is a Governor appointed by the King. There is a Parliament chosen by the people. Parliament holds the purse-strings. The Governor applies for what moneys the public service seems to him to require. Parliament, as a rule, grants his demands; but not without consideration, and a distinct assertion of its right to refuse should cause appear. As the Revolution drew near, the function of the Governor became gradually circumscribed by the pressure of the Assemblies. When the Governor, as representing the King, fell into variance with the popular will, the representatives of the people assumed the whole business of government. The most loyal of the colonies resolutely defied the encroachments of the King or his Governor. They had a pleasure and a pride in their connection with England; but they were at the same time essentially a self-governing people. From the government which existed before the Revolution it was easy for them to step into a federal union. The colonists had all their interests and all their grievances in common. It was natural for them, when trouble arose, to appoint representatives who should deliberate regarding their affairs. These representatives required an executive to give practical effect to their resolutions. The officer who was appointed for that purpose was called, not King, but President; and was chosen, not for life, but for four years. By this simple and natural process arose the American Government.

At first Virginia was governed by two Councils, one of which was English and the other Colonial. Both were entirely under the King's control. In a very few years the representative system was introduced, and a popular assembly, over whose proceedings the Governor retained the right of veto, regulated the affairs of the colony. Virginia was the least democratic of the colonies. Her leanings were always towards monarchy. She maintained her loyalty to the Stuarts. Charles II. ruled her in his exile, and was crowned in a robe of Virginian silk, presented by the devoted colonists. The baffled Cavaliers sought refuge in Virginia from the hateful triumph of Republicanism. Virginia refused to acknowledge the Commonwealth, and had to be subjected by force. When the exiled House was restored, her joy knew no bounds.

The New England States were of different temper and different government. While yet on board the *Mayflower*, the Pilgrims, as we have seen, formed themselves into a body politic, elected their Governor, and bound themselves to submit to his authority, "confiding in his prudence that he would not adventure upon any matter of moment without consent of the rest." Every church member was an elector. For sixty years this democratic form of government was continued, till the despotic James II. overturned it in the closing years of his unhappy reign. The Pilgrims carried with them from England a bitter feeling of the wrongs which Kings had inflicted on them, and they arrived in America a people fully disposed to govern themselves. They cordially supported Cromwell. Cromwell, on his part, so highly esteemed the people of New England, that he invited them to return to Europe, and offered them settlements in Ireland. They delayed for two years to proclaim Charles II. when he was restored to the English throne. They sheltered the regicides who fled from the King's vengeance.

They hailed the Revolution, by which the Stuarts were expelled and constitutional monarchy set up in England. Of all the American colonies, those of New England were the most democratic, and the most intolerant of royal interference with their liberties.

New York was bestowed upon the Duke of York, who for a time appointed the Governor. Pennsylvania was a grant to Penn, who exercised the same authority. Ultimately, however, in all cases, the appointment of Governor rested with the King, while the representatives were chosen by the people.

Book Second

CHAPTER I
GEORGE WASHINGTON

In the year 1740 there fell out a great European war. There was some doubt who should fill the Austrian throne. The emperor had just died, leaving no son or brother to inherit his dignities. His daughter, Maria Theresa, stepped into her father's place, and soon made it apparent that she was strong enough to maintain what she had done. Two or three Kings thought they had a better right than she to the throne. The other Kings ranged themselves on this side or on that. The idea of looking on while foolish neighbours destroyed themselves by senseless war, had not yet been suggested. Every King took part in a great war, and sent his people forth to slay and be slain, quite as a matter of course. So they raised great armies, fought great battles, burned cities, wasted countries, inflicted and endured unutterable miseries, all to settle the question about this lady's throne. But the lady was of a heroic spirit, well worthy to govern, and she held her own, and lived and died an empress.

During these busy years, a Virginian mother, widowed in early life, was training up her eldest son in the fear of God – all unaware, as she infused the love of goodness and duty into his mind, that she was giving a colour to the history of her country throughout all its coming ages. That boy's name was George Washington. He was born in 1732. His father – a gentleman of good fortune, with a pedigree which can be traced beyond the Norman Conquest – died when his son was eleven years of age. Upon George's mother devolved the care of his upbringing. She was a devout woman, of excellent sense and deep affections; but a strict disciplinarian, and of a temper which could brook no shadow of insubordination. Under her rule – gentle, and yet strong – George learned obedience and self-control. In boyhood he gave remarkable promise of those excellences which distinguished his mature years. His schoolmates recognized the calm judicial character of his mind, and he became in all their disputes the arbiter from whose decision there was no appeal. He inherited his mother's love of command, happily tempered by a lofty disinterestedness and a love of justice, which seemed to render it impossible that he should do or permit aught that was unfair. His person was large and powerful. His face expressed the thoughtfulness and serene strength of his character. He excelled in all athletic exercises. His youthful delight in such pursuits developed his physical capabilities to the utmost, and gave him endurance to bear the hardships which lay before him.

Young gentlemen of Virginia were not educated then so liberally as they have been since. It was presumed that Washington would be a mere Virginian proprietor and farmer, as his father had been; and his education was no higher than that position then demanded. He never learned any language but his own. The teacher of his early years was also the sexton of the parish. And even when he was taken to an institution of a more advanced description, he attempted no higher study than the keeping of accounts and the copying of legal and mercantile papers. A few years later, it was thought he might enter the civil or military service of his country; and he was put to the study of mathematics and land-surveying.

George Washington did nothing by halves. In youth, as in manhood, he did thoroughly what he had to do. His school exercise books are models of neatness and accuracy. His plans and measurements made while he studied land-surveying were as scrupulously exact as if great pecuniary interests depended upon them. In his eighteenth year he was employed by Government as surveyor of public lands. Many of his surveys were recorded in the county offices, and remain to this day. Long experience has established their unvarying accuracy. In all disputes to which they have any relevancy, their evidence is accepted as decisive. During the years which preceded the Revolution he managed his estates, packed and shipped his own tobacco and flour, kept his own books, conducted

his own correspondence. His books may still be seen. Perhaps no clearer or more accurate record of business transactions has been kept in America since the Father of American Independence rested from book-keeping. The flour which he shipped to foreign ports came to be known as his, and the Washington brand was habitually exempted from inspection. A most reliable man; his words and his deeds, his professions and his practice, are ever found in most perfect harmony. By some he has been regarded as a stolid, prosaic person, wanting in those features of character which captivate the minds of men. It was not so. In an earlier age George Washington would have been a true knight-errant with an insatiable thirst for adventure and a passionate love of battle. He had in high degree those qualities which make ancient knighthood picturesque. But higher qualities than these bore rule within him. He had wisdom beyond most, giving him deep insight into the wants of his time. He had clear perceptions of the duty which lay to his hand. What he saw to be right, the strongest impulses of his soul constrained him to do. A massive intellect and an iron strength of will were given to him, with a gentle, loving heart, with dauntless courage, with purity and loftiness of aim. He had a work of extraordinary difficulty to perform. History rejoices to recognize in him a revolutionary leader against whom no questionable transaction has ever been alleged.

The history of America presents, in one important feature, a very striking contrast to the history of nearly all older countries. In the old countries, history gathers round some one grand central figure – some judge, or priest, or king – whose biography tells all that has to be told concerning the time in which he lived. That one predominating person – David, Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon – is among his people what the sun is in the planetary system. All movement originates and terminates in him, and the history of the people is merely a record of what he has chosen to do or caused to be done. In America it has not been so. The American system leaves no room for predominating persons. It affords none of those exhibitions of solitary, all-absorbing grandeur which are so picturesque, and have been so pernicious. Her history is a history of her people, and of no conspicuous individuals. Once only in her career is it otherwise. During the lifetime of George Washington her history clings very closely to him; and the biography of her great chief becomes in a very unusual degree the history of the country.

CHAPTER II
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

While Washington's boyhood was being passed on the banks of the Potomac, a young man, destined to help him in gaining the independence of the country, was toiling hard in the city of Philadelphia to earn an honest livelihood. His name was Benjamin Franklin; his avocations were manifold. He kept a small stationer's shop; he edited a newspaper; he was a bookbinder; he made ink; he sold rags, soap, and coffee. He was also a printer, employing a journeyman and an apprentice to aid him in his labours. He was a thriving man; but he was not ashamed to convey along the streets, in a wheelbarrow, the paper which he bought for the purposes of his trade. As a boy he had been studious and thoughtful; as a man he was prudent, sagacious, trustworthy. His prudence was, however, somewhat low-toned and earthly. He loved and sought to marry a deserving young woman, who returned his affection. There was in those days a debt of one hundred pounds upon his printing-house. He demanded that the father of the young lady should pay off this debt. The father was unable to do so. Whereupon the worldly Benjamin decisively broke off the contemplated alliance.

When he had earned a moderate competency he ceased to labour at his business. Henceforth he laboured to serve his fellow-men. Philadelphia owes to Franklin her university, her hospital, her fire-brigade, her first and greatest library.

He earned renown as a man of science. It had long been his thought that lightning and electricity were the same; but he found no way to prove the truth of his theory. 1752 A.D. At length he made a kite fitted suitably for his experiment. He stole away from his house during a thunder-storm, having

told no one but his son, who accompanied him. The kite was sent up among the stormy clouds, and the anxious philosopher waited. For a time no response to his eager questioning was granted, and Franklin's countenance fell. But at length he felt the welcome shock, and his heart thrilled with the high consciousness that he had added to the sum of human knowledge.

1766 A.D. When the troubles arose in connection with the Stamp Act, Franklin was sent to England to defend the rights of the colonists. The vigour of his intellect, the matured wisdom of his opinions, gained for him a wonderful supremacy over the men with whom he was brought into contact. He was examined before Parliament. Edmund Burke said that the scene reminded him of a master examined by a parcel of schoolboys, so conspicuously was the witness superior to his interrogators.

1777 A.D. Franklin was an early advocate of independence, and aided in preparing the famous Declaration. In all the councils of that eventful time he bore a leading part. He was the first American Ambassador to France; and the good sense and vivacity of the old printer gained for him high favour in the fashionable world of Paris. He lived to aid in framing the Constitution under which America has enjoyed prosperity so great. 1799 A.D. Soon after he passed away. A few months before his death he wrote to Washington: – "I am now finishing my eighty-fourth year, and probably with it my career in this life; but in whatever state of existence I am placed hereafter, if I retain any memory of what has passed here, I shall with it retain the esteem, respect, and affection with which I have long regarded you."

CHAPTER III
THE VALLEY OF THE OHIO

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which gave a brief repose to Europe, left unsettled the contending claims of France and England upon American territory. 1748 A.D. France had possessions in Canada and also in Louisiana, at the extreme south, many hundreds of miles away. She claimed the entire line of the Mississippi river, with its tributaries; and she had given effect to her pretensions by erecting forts at intervals to connect her settlements in the north with those in the south. Her claim included the Valley of the Ohio. This was a vast and fertile region, whose value had just been discovered by the English. It was yet unpeopled; but its vegetation gave evidence of wealth unknown to the colonists in the eastern settlements. The French, to establish their claim, sent three hundred soldiers into the valley, and nailed upon the trees leaden plates which bore the royal arms of France. They strove by gifts and persuasion to gain over the natives, and expelled the English traders who had made their adventurous way into those recesses. The English, on their part, were not idle. A great trading company was formed, which, in return for certain grants of land, became bound to colonize the valley, to establish trading relations with the Indians, and to maintain a competent military force. This was in the year 1749. In that age there was but one solution of such difficulties. Governments had not learned to reason; they could only fight. Early in 1751 both parties were actively preparing for war. That war went ill with France. When the sword was sheathed in 1759, she had lost not only Ohio, but the whole of Canada.

1754 A.D. When the fighting began it was conducted on the English side wholly by the colonists. Virginia raised a little army. Washington, then a lad of twenty-one, was offered the command, so great was the confidence already felt in his capacity. It was war in miniature as yet. The object of Washington in the campaign was to reach a certain fort on the Ohio, and hold it as a barrier against French encroachment. He had his artillery to carry with him, and to render that possible he had to make a road through the wilderness. He struggled heroically with the difficulties of his position, but he could not advance at any better speed than two miles a-day; and he was not destined to reach the fort on the Ohio. After toiling on as he best might for six weeks, he learned that the French were seeking him with a force far outnumbering his. He halted, and hastily constructed a rude intrenchment, which he called Fort Necessity, because his men had nearly starved while they

worked at it. He had three hundred Virginians with him, and some Indians. The Indians deserted so soon as occasion arose for their services. The French attack was not long withheld. Early one summer morning a sentinel came in bleeding from a French bullet. All that day the fight lasted. At night the French summoned Washington to surrender. The garrison were to march out with flag and drum, leaving only their artillery. Washington could do no better, and he surrendered. Thus ended the first campaign in the war which was to drive France from Ohio and Canada. Thus opened the military career of the man who was to drive England from the noblest of her colonial possessions.

But now the English Government awoke to the necessity of vigorous measures to rescue the endangered Valley of the Ohio. A campaign was planned which was to expel the French from Ohio, and wrest from them some portions of their Canadian territory. The execution of this great design was intrusted to General Braddock, with a force which it was deemed would overbear all resistance. Braddock was a veteran who had seen the wars of forty years. Among the fields on which he had gained his knowledge of war was Culloden, where he had borne a part in trampling out the rebellion of the Scotch. He was a brave and experienced soldier, and a likely man, it was thought, to do the work assigned to him. But that proved a sad miscalculation. Braddock had learned the rules of war; but he had no capacity to comprehend its principles. In the pathless forests of America he could do nothing better than strive to give literal effect to those maxims which he had found applicable in the well-trodden battle-grounds of Europe.

The failure of Washington in his first campaign had not deprived him of public confidence. Braddock heard such accounts of his efficiency that he invited him to join his staff. Washington, eager to efface the memory of his defeat, gladly accepted the offer.

1755 A.D. The troops disembarked at Alexandria. The colonists, little used to the presence of regular soldiers, were greatly emboldened by their splendid aspect and faultless discipline, and felt that the hour of final triumph was at hand. After some delay, the army, with such reinforcements as the province afforded, began its march. Braddock's object was to reach Fort Du Quesne, the great centre of French influence on the Ohio. It was this same fort of which Washington endeavoured so manfully to possess himself in his disastrous campaign of last year.

Fort Du Quesne had been built by the English, and taken from them by the French. It stood at the confluence of the Alleghany and Monongahela; which rivers, by their union at this point, form the Ohio. It was a rude piece of fortification, but the circumstances admitted of no better. The fort was built of the trunks of trees; wooden huts for the soldiers surrounded it. A little space had been cleared in the forest, and a few patches of wheat and Indian corn grew luxuriantly in that rich soil. The unbroken forest stretched all around. Three years later the little fort was retaken by the English, and named Fort Pitt. Then in time it grew to be a town, and was called Pittsburg. And men found in its neighbourhood boundless wealth of iron and of coal. To-day a great and fast-growing city stands where, a century ago, the rugged fort with its cluster of rugged huts were the sole occupants. And the rivers, then so lonely, are ploughed by many keels; and the air is dark with the smoke of innumerable furnaces. The judgment of the sagacious Englishmen who deemed this a locality which they would do well to get hold of, has been amply borne out by the experience of posterity.

Braddock had no doubt that the fort would yield to him directly he showed himself before it. Benjamin Franklin looked at the project with his shrewd, cynical eye. He told Braddock that he would assuredly take the fort if he could only reach it; but that the long slender line which his army must form in its march "would be cut like thread into several pieces" by the hostile Indians. Braddock "smiled at his ignorance." Benjamin offered no further opinion. It was his duty to collect horses and carriages for the use of the expedition, and he did what was required of him in silence.

The expedition crept slowly forward, never achieving more than three or four miles in a day; stopping, as Washington said, "to level every mole-hill, to erect a bridge over every brook." It left Alexandria on the 20th April. On the 9th July Braddock, with half his army, was near the fort. There was yet no evidence that resistance was intended. No enemy had been seen; the troops marched on as

to assured victory. So confident was their chief, that he refused to employ scouts, and did not deign to inquire what enemy might be lurking near.

The march was along a road twelve feet wide, in a ravine, with high ground in front and on both sides. Suddenly the Indian war-whoop burst from the woods. A murderous fire smote down the troops. The provincials, not unused to this description of warfare, sheltered themselves behind trees and fought with steady courage. Braddock, clinging to his old rules, strove to maintain his order of battle on the open ground. A carnage, most grim and lamentable, was the result. His undefended soldiers were shot down by an unseen foe. For three hours the struggle lasted; then the men broke and fled in utter rout and panic. Braddock, vainly fighting, fell mortally wounded, and was carried off the field by some of his soldiers. The poor pedantic man never got over his astonishment at a defeat so inconsistent with the established rules of war. "Who would have thought it?" he murmured, as they bore him from the field. He scarcely spoke again, and died in two or three days. Nearly eight hundred men, killed and wounded, were lost in this disastrous encounter – about one-half of the entire force engaged.

All the while England and France were nominally at peace. But now war was declared. The other European powers fell into their accustomed places in the strife, and the flames of war spread far and wide. On land and on sea the European people strove to shed blood and destroy property, and thus produce human misery to the largest possible extent. At the outset every fight brought defeat and shame to England. English armies under incapable leaders were sent out to America and ignominiously routed by the French. On the continent of Europe the uniform course of disaster was scarcely broken by a single victory. Even at sea, England seemed to have fallen from her high estate, and her fleets turned back from the presence of an enemy.

The rage of the people knew no bounds. The admiral who had not fought the enemy when he should have done so, was hanged. The Prime Minister began to tremble for his neck. One or two disasters more, and the public indignation might demand a greater victim than an unfortunate admiral. The Ministry resigned, and William Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, came into power.

And then, all at once, the scene changed, and there began a career of triumph more brilliant than even England had ever known. The French fleets were destroyed; French possessions all over the world were seized; French armies were defeated. Every post brought news of victory. For once the English people, greedy as they are of military glory, were satisfied.

1759 A.D. One of the most splendid successes of Pitt's administration was gained in America. The colonists had begun to lose respect for the English army and the English Government, but Pitt quickly regained their confidence. They raised an army of 50,000 men to help his schemes for the extinction of French power. A strong English force was sent out, and a formidable invasion of Canada was organized.

Most prominent among the strong points held by the French was the city of Quebec. Thither in the month of June came a powerful English fleet, with an army under the command of General Wolfe. Captain James Cook, the famous navigator, who discovered so many of the sunny islands of the Pacific, was master of one of the ships. Quebec stands upon a peninsula formed by the junction of the St. Charles and the St. Lawrence rivers. The lower town was upon the beach; the upper was on the cliffs, which at that point rise precipitously to a height of two hundred feet. Wolfe tried the effect of a bombardment. He laid the lower town in ruins very easily, but the upper town was too remote from his batteries to sustain much injury. It seemed as if the enterprise would prove too much for the English, and the sensitive Wolfe was thrown by disappointment and anxiety into a violent fever. But he was not the man to be baffled. The shore for miles above the town was carefully searched. An opening was found whence a path wound up the cliffs. Here Wolfe would land his men, and lead them to the Heights of Abraham. Once there, they would defeat the French and take Quebec, or die where they stood.

On a starlight night in September the soldiers were embarked in boats which dropped down the river to the chosen landing-place. As the boat which carried Wolfe floated silently down, he recited to his officers Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," then newly received from England; and he exclaimed at its close, "I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec to-morrow." He was a man of feeble bodily frame, but he wielded the power which genius in its higher forms confers. Amid the excitements of impending battle he could walk, with the old delight, in the quiet paths of literature.

The soldiers landed and clambered, as they best might, up the rugged pathway. All through the night armed men stepped silently from the boats and silently scaled those formidable cliffs. The sailors contrived to drag up a few guns. When morning came, the whole army stood upon the Heights of Abraham ready for the battle.

1759 A.D. Montcalm, the French commander, was so utterly taken by surprise that he refused at first to believe the presence of the English army. He lost no time in marching forth to meet his unexpected assailants. The conflict which followed was fierce but not prolonged. The French were soon defeated and put to flight; Quebec surrendered. But Montcalm did not make that surrender, nor did Wolfe receive it. Both generals fell in the battle. Wolfe died happy that the victory was gained. Montcalm was thankful that death spared him the humiliation of giving up Quebec. They died as enemies; but the men of a new generation, thinking less of the accidents which made them foes than of the noble courage and devotedness which united them, placed their names together upon the monument which marks out to posterity the scene of this decisive battle.

France did not quietly accept her defeat. Next year she made an attempt to regain Quebec. It was all in vain. In due time the success of the English resulted in a treaty of peace, under which France ceded to England all her claims upon Canada. Spain at the same time relinquished Florida. England had now undisputed possession of the western continent, from the region of perpetual winter to the Gulf of Mexico.

CHAPTER IV
AMERICA ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

A century and a half had now passed since the first colony had been planted on American soil. The colonists were fast ripening into fitness for independence. They had increased with marvellous rapidity. Europe never ceased to send forth her superfluous and needy thousands. America opened wide her hospitable arms and gave assurance of liberty and comfort to all who came. The thirteen colonies now contained a population of about three million.

They were eminently a trading people, and their foreign commerce was already large and lucrative. New England built ships with the timber of her boundless forests, and sold them to foreign countries. She caught fish and sent them to the West Indies. She killed whales and sent the oil to England. New York and Pennsylvania produced wheat, which Spain and Portugal were willing to buy. Virginia clung to the tobacco-plant, which Europe was not then, any more than she is now, wise enough to dispense with. The swampy regions of Carolina and Georgia produced rice sufficient to supply the European demand. As yet cotton does not take any rank in the list of exports. But the time is near. Even now Richard Arkwright is brooding over improvements in the art of spinning cotton. When these are perfected the growing of cotton will rise quickly to a supremacy over all the industrial pursuits.

England had not learned to recognize the equality of her colonists with her own people. The colonies were understood to exist not for their own good so much as for the good of the mother country. Even the chimney-sweepers, as Lord Chatham asserted, might be heard in the streets of London talking boastfully of their subjects in America. Colonies were settlements "established in distant parts of the world for the benefit of trade." As such they were most consistently treated. The

Americans could not import direct any article of foreign production. Everything must be landed in England and re-shipped thence, that the English merchant might have profit. One exemption only was allowed from the operation of this law – the products of Africa, the unhappy negroes, were conveyed direct to America, and every possible encouragement was given to that traffic. Notwithstanding the illiberal restrictions of the home government, the imports of America before the Revolution had risen almost to the value of three million sterling.

New England had, very early, established her magnificent system of Common Schools. For two or three generations these had been in full operation. The people of New England were now probably the most carefully instructed people in the world. There could not be found a person born in New England unable to read and write. It had always been the practice of the Northern people to settle in townships or villages where education was easily carried to them. In the South it had not been so. There the Common Schools had taken no root. It was impossible among a population so scattered. The educational arrangements of the South have never been adequate to the necessities of the people.

In the early years of America, the foundations were laid of those differences in character and interest which have since produced results of such magnitude. The men who peopled the Eastern States had to contend with a somewhat severe climate and a comparatively sterile soil. These disadvantages imposed upon them habits of industry and frugality. Skilled labour alone could be of use in their circumstances. They were thus mercifully rescued from the curse of slavery – by the absence of temptation, it may be, rather than by superiority of virtue. Their simple purity of manners remained long uncorrupted. The firm texture of mind which upheld them in their early difficulties remained unenfeebled. Their love of liberty was not perverted into a passion for supremacy. Among them labour was not degraded by becoming the function of a despised race. In New England labour has always been honourable. A just-minded, self-relying, self-helping people, vigorous in acting, patient in enduring – it was evident from the outset that they, at least, would not disgrace their ancestry.

The men of the South were very differently circumstanced. Their climate was delicious; their soil was marvellously fertile; their products were welcome in the markets of the world; unskilled labour was applicable in the rearing of all their great staples. Slavery being exceedingly profitable, struck deep roots very early. It was easy to grow rich. The colonists found themselves not the employers merely, but the owners of their labourers. They became aristocratic in feeling and in manners, resembling the picturesque chiefs of old Europe rather than mere prosaic growers of tobacco and rice. They had the virtues of chivalry, and also its vices. They were generous, open-handed, hospitable; but they were haughty and passionate, improvident, devoted to pleasure and amusement more than to work of any description. Living apart, each on his own plantation, the education of children was frequently imperfect, and the planter himself was bereft of that wholesome discipline to mind and to temper which residence among equals confers. The two great divisions of States – those in which slavery was profitable, and those in which it was unprofitable – were unequally yoked together. Their divergence of character and interest continued to increase, till it issued in one of the greatest of recorded wars.

Up to the year 1764, the Americans cherished a deep reverence and affection for the mother country. They were proud of her great place among the nations. They gloried in the splendour of her military achievements; they copied her manners and her fashions. She was in all things their model. They always spoke of England as “home.” To be an Old England man was to be a person of rank and importance among them. They yielded a loving obedience to her laws. They were governed, as Benjamin Franklin stated it, at the expense of a little pen and ink. When money was asked from their Assemblies, it was given without grudge. “They were led by a thread,” – such was their love for the land which gave them birth.

Ten or twelve years came and went. A marvellous change has passed upon the temper of the American people. They have bound themselves by great oaths to use no article of English manufacture – to engage in no transaction which can put a shilling into any English pocket. They have formed “the

inconvenient habit of carting," – that is, of tarring and feathering and dragging through the streets such persons as avow friendship for the English Government. They burn the Acts of the English Parliament by the hands of the common hangman. They slay the King's soldiers. They refuse every amicable proposal. They cast from them for ever the King's authority. They hand down a dislike to the English name, of which some traces lingered among them for generations.

By what unhallowed magic has this change been wrought so swiftly? By what process, in so few years, have three million people been taught to abhor the country they so loved?

The ignorance and folly of the English Government wrought this evil. But there is little cause for regret. Under the fuller knowledge of our modern time, colonies are allowed to discontinue their connection with the mother country when it is their wish to do so. Better had America gone in peace. But better she went, even in wrath and bloodshed, than continued in paralyzing dependence upon England.

For many years England had governed her American colonies harshly, and in a spirit of undisguised selfishness. America was ruled, not for her own good, but for the good of English commerce. She was not allowed to export her products except to England. No foreign ship might enter her ports. Woollen goods were not allowed to be sent from one colony to another. At one time the manufacture of hats was forbidden. In a liberal mood Parliament removed that prohibition, but decreed that no maker of hats should employ any negro workman, or any larger number of apprentices than two. Iron-works were forbidden. Up to the latest hour of English rule the Bible was not allowed to be printed in America.

The Americans had long borne the cost of their own government and defence. But in that age of small revenue and profuse expenditure on unmeaning continental wars, it had been often suggested that America should be taxed for the purposes of the home Government. Some one proposed that to Sir Robert Walpole in a time of need. The wise Sir Robert shook his head. It must be a bolder man than he was who would attempt that. A man bolder, because less wise, was found in due time.

1764 A.D. The Seven Years' War had ended, and England had added a hundred million to her national debt. The country was suffering, as countries always do after great wars, and it was no easy matter to fit the new burdens on to the national shoulder. The hungry eye of Lord Grenville searched where a new tax might be laid. The Americans had begun visibly to prosper. Already their growing wealth was the theme of envious discourse among English merchants. The English officers who had fought in America spoke in glowing terms of the magnificent hospitality which had been extended to them. No more need be said. The House of Commons passed a resolution asserting their right to tax the Americans. No solitary voice was raised against this fatal resolution. Immediately after, an Act was passed imposing certain taxes upon silks, coffee, sugar, and other articles. The Americans remonstrated. They were willing, they said, to vote what moneys the King required of them, but they vehemently denied the right of any Assembly in which they were not represented to take from them any portion of their property. They were the subjects of the King, but they owed no obedience to the English Parliament. Lord Grenville went on his course. He had been told the Americans would complain but submit, and he believed it. Next session an Act was passed imposing Stamp Duties on America. The measure awakened no interest. Edmund Burke said he had never been present at a more languid debate. In the House of Lords there was no debate at all. With so little trouble was a continent rent away from the British Empire.

1765 A.D. Benjamin Franklin told the House of Commons that America would never submit to the Stamp Act, and that no power on earth could enforce it. The Americans made it impossible for Government to mistake their sentiments. Riots, which swelled from day to day into dimensions more "enormous and alarming," burst forth in the New England States. Everywhere the stamp distributers were compelled to resign their offices. One unfortunate man was led forth to Boston Common, and made to sign his resignation in presence of a vast crowd. Another, in desperate health, was visited in his sick-room and obliged to pledge that if he lived he would resign. A universal resolution was come

to that no English goods would be imported till the Stamp Act was repealed. The colonists would "eat nothing, drink nothing, wear nothing that comes from England," while this great injustice endured. The Act was to come into force on the 1st of November. That day the bells rang out funereal peals, and the colonists wore the aspect of men on whom some heavy calamity has fallen. But the Act never came into force. Not one of Lord Grenville's stamps was ever bought or sold in America. Some of the stamped paper was burned by the mob; the rest was hidden away to save it from the same fate. Without stamps, marriages were null; mercantile transactions ceased to be binding; suits at law were impossible. Nevertheless the business of human life went on. Men married; they bought, they sold; they went to law; – illegally, because without stamps. But no harm came of it.

England heard with amazement that America refused to obey the law. There were some who demanded that the Stamp Act should be enforced by the sword. But it greatly moved the English merchants that America should cease to import their goods. William Pitt – not yet Earl of Chatham – denounced the Act, and said he was glad America had resisted. 1766 A.D. Pitt and the merchants triumphed, and the Act was repealed. There was illumination in the city that night. The city bells rang for joy; the ships in the Thames displayed all their colours. The saddest heart in all London was that of poor King George, who never ceased to lament "the fatal repeal of the Stamp Act." All America thrilled with joy and pride when news arrived of the great triumph. They voted Pitt a statue; they set apart a day for public rejoicing; all prisoners for debt were set free. A great deliverance had been granted, and the delight of the gladdened people knew no bounds. The danger is over for the present; but whosoever governs America now has need to walk warily.

It was during the agitation arising out of the Stamp Act that the idea of a General Congress of the States was suggested. A loud cry for union had arisen. "Join or die" was the prevailing sentiment. The Congress met in New York. It did little more than discuss and petition. It is interesting merely as one of the first exhibitions of a tendency towards federal union in a country whose destiny, in all coming time, this tendency was to fix.

The repeal of the Stamp Act delayed only for a little the fast-coming crisis. A new Ministry was formed, with the Earl of Chatham at its head. But soon the great Earl lay sick and helpless, and the burden of government rested on incapable shoulders. Charles Townshend, a clever, captivating, but most indiscreet man, became the virtual Prime Minister. The feeling in the public mind had now become more unfavourable to America. Townshend proposed to levy a variety of taxes from the Americans. The most famous of his taxes was one of threepence per pound on tea. All his proposals became law.

This time the more thoughtful Americans began to despair of justice. The boldest scarcely ventured yet to suggest revolt against England, so powerful and so loved. But the grand final refuge of independence was silently brooded over by many. The mob fell back on their customary solution. Great riots occurred. To quell these disorders English troops encamped on Boston Common. The town swarmed with red-coated men, every one of whom was a humiliation. Their drums beat on Sabbath, and troubled the orderly men of Boston, even in church. At intervals fresh transports dropped in, bearing additional soldiers, till a great force occupied the town. The galled citizens could ill brook to be thus bridled. The ministers prayed to Heaven for deliverance from the presence of the soldiers. The General Court of Massachusetts called vehemently on the Governor to remove them. The Governor had no powers in that matter. He called upon the court to make suitable provision for the King's troops, – a request which it gave the court infinite pleasure to refuse.

1770 A.D. The universal irritation broke forth in frequent brawls between soldiers and people. One wintry moonlight night in March, when snow and ice lay about the streets of Boston, a more than usually determined attack was made upon a party of soldiers. The mob thought the soldiers dared not fire without the order of a magistrate, and were very bold in the strength of that belief. It proved a mistake. The soldiers did fire, and the blood of eleven slain or wounded persons stained

the frozen streets. This was "the Boston Massacre," which greatly inflamed the patriot antipathy to the mother country.

Two or three unquiet years passed, and no progress towards a settlement of differences had been made. From all the colonies there came, loud and unceasing, the voice of complaint and remonstrance. It fell upon unheeding ears, for England was committed. To her honour be it said, it was not in the end for money that she alienated her children. The tax on tea must be maintained to vindicate the authority of England. But when the tea was shipped, such a drawback was allowed that the price would actually have been lower in America than it was at home.

The Americans had, upon the whole, kept loyally to their purpose of importing no English goods, specially no goods on which duty could be levied. Occasionally, a patriot of the more worldly-minded sort yielded to temptation, and secretly despatched an order to England. He was forgiven, if penitent. If obdurate, his name was published, and a resolution of the citizens to trade no more with a person so unworthy soon brought him to reason. But, in the main, the colonists were true to their bond, and when they could no longer smuggle they ceased to import. The East India Company accumulated vast quantities of unsaleable tea, for which a market must be found. 1773 A.D. Several ships were freighted with tea, and sent out to America.

Cheaper tea was never seen in America; but it bore upon it the abhorred tax which asserted British control over the property of Americans. Will the Americans, long bereaved of the accustomed beverage, yield to the temptation, and barter their honour for cheap tea? The East India Company never doubted it; but the Company knew nothing of the temper of the American people. The ships arrived at New York and Philadelphia. These cities stood firm. The ships were promptly sent home – their hatches unopened – and duly bore their rejected cargoes back to the Thames.

When the ships destined for Boston showed their tall masts in the bay, the citizens ran together to hold council. It was Sabbath, and the men of Boston were strict. But here was an exigency, in presence of which all ordinary rules are suspended. The crisis has come at length. If that tea is landed it will be sold, it will be used, and American liberty will become a byword upon the earth.

Samuel Adams was the true King in Boston at that time. He was a man in middle life, of cultivated mind and stainless reputation – a powerful speaker and writer – a man in whose sagacity and moderation all men trusted. He resembled the old Puritans in his stern love of liberty – his reverence for the Sabbath – his sincere, if somewhat formal, observance of all religious ordinances. He was among the first to see that there was no resting-place in this struggle short of independence. "We are free," he said, "and want no King." The men of Boston felt the power of his resolute spirit, and manfully followed where Samuel Adams led.

It was hoped that the agents of the East India Company would have consented to send the ships home; but the agents refused. Several days of excitement and ineffectual negotiation ensued. People flocked in from the neighbouring towns. The time was spent mainly in public meeting; the city resounded with impassioned discourse. But meanwhile the ships lay peacefully at their moorings, and the tide of patriot talk seemed to flow in vain. Other measures were visibly necessary. One day a meeting was held, and the excited people continued in hot debate till the shades of evening fell. No progress was made. At length Samuel Adams stood up in the dimly-lighted church, and announced, "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country." With a stern shout the meeting broke up. Fifty men disguised as Indians hurried down to the wharf, each man with a hatchet in his hand. The crowd followed. The ships were boarded; the chests of tea were brought on deck, broken up, and flung into the bay. The approving citizens looked on in silence. It was felt by all that the step was grave and eventful in the highest degree. So still was the crowd that no sound was heard but the stroke of the hatchet and the splash of the shattered chests as they fell into the sea. All questions about the disposal of those cargoes of tea at all events are now solved.

This is what America has done; it is for England to make the next move. Lord North was now at the head of the British Government. It was his lordship's belief that the troubles in America sprang

from a small number of ambitious persons, and could easily, by proper firmness, be suppressed. “The Americans will be lions while we are lambs,” said General Gage. The King believed this, and Lord North believed it. In this deep ignorance he proceeded to deal with the great emergency. He closed Boston as a port for the landing and shipping of goods. He imposed a fine to indemnify the East India Company for their lost teas. He withdrew the Charter of Massachusetts. He authorized the Governor to send political offenders to England for trial. Great voices were raised against these severities. Lord Chatham, old in constitution now, if not in years, and near the close of his career, pled for measures of conciliation. Edmund Burke justified the resistance of the Americans. Their opposition was fruitless. All Lord North’s measures of repression became law; and General Gage, with an additional force of soldiers, was sent to Boston to carry them into effect. Gage was an authority on American affairs. He had fought under Braddock. Among blind men the one-eyed man is king; among the profoundly ignorant, the man with a little knowledge is irresistibly persuasive. “Four regiments sent to Boston,” said the hopeful Gage, “will prevent any disturbance.” He was believed; but, unhappily for his own comfort, he was sent to Boston to secure the fulfilment of his own prophecy. He threw up some fortifications and lay as in a hostile city. The Americans appointed a day of fasting and humiliation. They did more. They formed themselves into military companies; they occupied themselves with drill; they laid up stores of ammunition. Most of them had muskets, and could use them. He who had no musket now got one. They hoped that civil war would be averted, but there was no harm in being ready.

Sept. 5, 1774 A.D. While General Gage was throwing up his fortifications at Boston, there met in Philadelphia a Congress of delegates, sent by the States, to confer in regard to the troubles which were thickening round them. Twelve States were represented. Georgia as yet paused timidly on the brink of the perilous enterprise. They were notable men who met there, and their work is held in enduring honour. “For genuine sagacity, for singular moderation, for solid wisdom,” said the great Earl of Chatham, “the Congress of Philadelphia shines unrivalled.” The low-roofed quaint old room in which their meetings were held, became one of the shrines which Americans delight to visit. George Washington was there, and his massive sense and copious knowledge were a supreme guiding power. Patrick Henry, then a young man, brought to the council a wisdom beyond his years, and a fiery eloquence, which, to some of his hearers, seemed almost more than human. He had already proved his unfitness for farming and for shop-keeping. He was now to prove that he could utter words which swept over a continent, thrilling men’s hearts like the voice of the trumpet, and rousing them to heroic deeds. John Routledge from South Carolina aided him with an eloquence little inferior to his own. Richard Henry Lee, with his Roman aspect, his bewitching voice, his ripe scholarship, his rich stores of historical and political knowledge, would have graced the highest assemblies of the Old World. John Dickenson, the wise farmer from the banks of the Delaware, whose Letters had done so much to form the public sentiment – his enthusiastic love of England overborne by his sense of wrong – took regretful but resolute part in withstanding the tyranny of the English Government.

We have the assurance of Washington that the members of this Congress did not aim at independence. As yet it was their wish to have wrongs redressed and to continue British subjects. Their proceedings give ample evidence of this desire. They drew up a narrative of their wrongs. As a means of obtaining redress, they adopted a resolution that all commercial intercourse with Britain should cease. They addressed the King, imploring his majesty to remove those grievances which endangered their relations with him. They addressed the people of Great Britain, with whom, they said, they deemed a union as their greatest glory and happiness; adding, however, that they would not be hewers of wood and drawers of water to any nation in the world. They appealed to their brother colonists of Canada for support in their peaceful resistance to oppression. But Canada, newly conquered from France, was peopled almost wholly by Frenchmen. A Frenchman of that time was contented to enjoy such an amount of liberty and property as his King was pleased to permit. And so from Canada there came no response of sympathy or help.

Here Congress paused. Some members believed, with Washington, that their remonstrances would be effectual. Others, less sanguine, looked for no settlement but that which the sword might bring. They adjourned, to meet again next May. This is enough for the present. What further steps the new events of that coming summer may call for, we shall be prepared, with God's help, to take.

England showed no relenting in her treatment of the Americans. The King gave no reply to the address of Congress. The Houses of Lords and of Commons refused even to allow that address to be read in their hearing. The King announced his firm purpose to reduce the refractory colonists to obedience. Parliament gave loyal assurances of support to the blinded monarch. All trade with the colonies was forbidden. All American ships and cargoes might be seized by those who were strong enough to do so. The alternative presented to the American choice was without disguise – the Americans had to fight for their liberty, or forego it. The people of England had, in those days, no control over the government of their country. All this was managed for them by a few great families. Their allotted part was to toil hard, pay their taxes, and be silent. If they had been permitted to speak, their voice would have vindicated the men who asserted the right of self-government – a right which Englishmen themselves were not to enjoy for many a long year.

1775 A.D. General Gage had learned that considerable stores of ammunition were collected at the village of Concord, eighteen miles from Boston. He would seize them in the King's name. Late one April night eight hundred soldiers set out on this errand. They hoped their coming would be unexpected, as care had been taken to prevent the tidings from being carried out of Boston. But as they marched, the clang of bells and the firing of guns gave warning far and near of their approach. In the early morning they reached Lexington. Some hours before, a body of militia awaited them there. But the morning was chill and the hour untimely, and the patriots were allowed to seek the genial shelter of the tavern, under pledge to appear at beat of drum. Seventy of them did so, mostly, we are told, "in a confused state." Major Pitcairn commanded them to disperse. The patriots did not at once obey the summons. It was impossible that seventy volunteers could mean to fight eight hundred British soldiers; it is more likely they did not clearly understand what was required of them. Firing ensued. The Americans say that the first shot came from the British. Major Pitcairn always asserted that he himself saw a countryman give the first fire from behind a wall. It can never be certainly known, but there was now firing enough. The British stood and shot, in their steady unconcerned way, at the poor mistaken seventy. The patriots fled fast. Eighteen of their number did not join the flight. These lay in their blood on the village green, dead or wounded men. Thus was the war begun between England and her colonies.

The British pushed on to Concord, and destroyed all the military stores they could find. It was not much, for there had been time to carry off nearly everything. By noon the work was done, and the wearied troops turned their faces towards Boston.

They were not suffered to march alone. All that morning grim-faced yeomen – of the Ironside type, each man with a musket in his hand – had been hurrying into Concord. The British march was mainly on a road cut through dense woods. As they advanced, the vengeful yeomanry hung upon their flanks and rear. On every side there streamed forth an incessant and murderous fire, under which the men fell fast. No effort could dislodge those deadly but almost unseen foes. During all the terrible hours of that return march the fire of the Americans never flagged, and could seldom be returned. It was sunset ere the soldiers, half dead with fatigue, got home to Boston. In killed, wounded, and prisoners, this fatal expedition had cost nearly three hundred men. The blood shed at Lexington had been swiftly and deeply avenged.

CHAPTER V
BUNKER HILL

The encounters at Lexington and Concord thoroughly aroused the American people. The news rang through the land that blood had been spilt – that already there were martyrs to the great cause. Mounted couriers galloped along all highways. Over the bustle of the market-place – in the stillness of the quiet village church – there broke the startling shout, "The war has begun." All men felt that the hour had come, and they promptly laid aside their accustomed labour that they might gird themselves for the battle. North Carolina, in her haste, threw off the authority of the King, and formed herself into military companies. Timid Georgia sent gifts of money and of rice, and cheering letters, to confirm the bold purposes of the men of Boston. In aristocratic and loyal Virginia there was a general rush to arms. From every corner of the New England States men hurried to Boston. Down in pleasant Connecticut an old man was ploughing his field one April afternoon. His name was Israel Putnam. He was now a farmer and tavern-keeper – a combination frequent at that time in New England, and not at all inconsistent, we are told, "with a Roman character." Formerly he had been a warrior. He had fought the Indians, and had narrowly escaped the jeopardies of such warfare. Once he had been bound to a tree, and the savages were beginning to toss their tomahawks at his head, when unhoped-for rescue found him. As rugged old Israel ploughed his field, some one told him of Lexington. That day he ploughed no more. He sent word home that he had gone to Boston. Unyoking his horse from the plough, in a few minutes he was mounted and hastening towards the camp.

Boston and its suburbs stand on certain islets and peninsulas, access to which, from the mainland, is gained by one isthmus which is called Boston Neck, and another isthmus which is called Charlestown Neck. A city thus circumstanced is not difficult to blockade. The American Yeomanry blockaded Boston. There were five thousand soldiers in the town; but the retreat from Concord inclined General Gage to some measure of patient endurance, and he made no attempt to raise the blockade.

The month of May was wearing on, and still General Gage lay inactive. Still patriot Americans poured into the blockading camp. They were utterly undisciplined, and wholly without uniform. The English scorned them as a rabble "with calico frocks and fowling-pieces." But they were Anglo-Saxons with arms in their hands, and a fixed purpose in their minds. It was very likely that the unwise contempt of their enemies would not be long unrebuked.

On the 25th, several English ships of war dropped their anchors in Boston Bay. It was rumoured that they brought large reinforcements under Howe, Burgoyne, and Clinton – the best generals England possessed. Shortly it became known that Gage now felt himself strong enough to break out upon his rustic besiegers. But the choice of time and place for the encounter was not to be left with General Gage.

On Charlestown peninsula, within easy gun-shot of Boston, there are two low hills, one of which, the higher, is called Bunker Hill, and the other Breed's Hill. In a council of war the Americans determined to seize and fortify one of these heights, and there abide the onslaught of the English. There was not a moment to lose. It was said that Gage intended to occupy the heights on the night of the 18th June. But Gage was habitually too late. On the 16th, a little before sunset, twelve hundred Americans were mustered on Cambridge Common for special service. Colonel Prescott, a veteran who had fought against the French, was in command. Putnam was with him, to be useful where he could, although without specified duties. Prayers were said; and the men, knowing only that they went to battle, and perhaps to death, set forth upon their march. They marched in silence, for their way led them under the guns of English ships. They reached the hill-top undiscovered by the supine foe. It was a lovely June night – warm and still. Far down lay the English ships – awful, but as yet harmless. Across the Charles river, Boston and her garrison slept the sleep of the unsuspecting. The "All's well"

of the sentinel crept, from time to time, dreamily up the hill. Swift now with spade and mattock, for the hours of this midsummer night are few and precious – swift, but cautious, too, for one ringing stroke of iron upon stone may ruin all!

When General Gage looked out upon the heights next morning, he saw a strong intrenchment and swarms of armed men where the untrodden grass had waved in the summer breeze a few hours before. He looked long through his glass at this unwelcome apparition. A tall figure paced to and fro along the rude parapet. It was Prescott. "Will he fight?" asked Gage eagerly. "Yes, sir," replied a bystander; "to the last drop of his blood."

It was indispensable that the works should be taken, and a plan of attack was immediately formed. It was sufficiently simple. No one supposed that the Americans would stand the shock of regular troops. The English were therefore to march straight up the hill and drive the Americans away. Meanwhile reinforcements were sent to the Americans, and supplies of ammunition were distributed. A gill of powder, to be carried in a powder-horn or loose in the pocket, two flints and fifteen balls, were served out to each man. To obtain even the fifteen balls, they had to melt down the organ-pipes of an Episcopal church at Cambridge.

At noon English soldiers to the number of two thousand crossed over from Boston. The men on the hill-top looked out from their intrenchments upon a splendid vision of bright uniforms and bayonets and field-pieces flashing in the sun. They looked with quickened pulse but unshaken purpose. To men of their race it is not given to know fear on the verge of battle.

The English soldiers paused for refreshments when they landed on the Charlestown peninsula. The Americans could hear the murmur of their noisy talk and laughter. They saw the pitchers of grog pass along the ranks. And then they saw the Englishmen rise and stretch themselves to their grim morning's work. From the steeples and house-tops of Boston – from all the heights which stand round about the city – thousands of Americans watched the progress of the fight.

The soldiers had no easy task before them. The day was "exceeding hot," the grass was long and thick, the up-hill march was toilsome, the enemy watchful and resolute. As if to render the difficulty greater, the men carried three days' provision with them in their knapsacks. Each man had a burden which weighed one hundred and twenty pounds in knapsack, musket, and other equipments. Thus laden they began their perilous ascent.

While yet a long way from the enemy they opened a harmless fire of musketry. There was no reply from the American lines. Putnam had directed the men to withhold their fire till they could see the white of the Englishmen's eyes, and then to aim low. The Englishmen were very near the works when the word was given. Like the left-handed slingers of the tribe of Benjamin, the Americans could shoot to a hairbreadth. Every man took his steady aim, and when they gave forth their volley few bullets sped in vain. The slaughter was enormous. The English recoiled in some confusion, a pitiless rain of bullets following them down the hill. Again they advanced almost to the American works, and again they sustained a bloody repulse. And now, at the hill-foot, they laid down their knapsacks and stripped off their great-coats. They were resolute this time to end the fight by the bayonet. The American ammunition was exhausted, and they could give the enemy only a single volley. The English swarmed over the parapet. The Americans had no bayonets, but for a time they waged unequal war with stones and the butt-ends of their muskets. They were soon driven out, and fled down the hill and across the Neck to Cambridge, the English ships raking them with grape-shot as they ran.

They had done their work. Victory no doubt remained with the English. Their object was to carry the American intrenchments, and they had carried them. Far greater than this was the gain of the Americans. It was proved that, with the help of some slight field-works, it was possible for undisciplined patriots to meet on equal terms the best troops England could send against them. Henceforth the success of the Revolution was assured. "Thank God," said Washington, when he heard of the battle, "the liberties of the country are safe." Would that obstinate King George could have

been made to see it! But many wives must be widows, and many children fatherless, before those dull eyes will open to the unwelcome truth.

Sixteen hundred men lay, dead or wounded, on that fatal slope. The English had lost nearly eleven hundred; the Americans nearly five hundred. Seldom indeed in any battle has so large a proportion of the combatants fallen.

The Americans, who had thus taken up arms and resisted and slain the King's troops, were wholly without authority for what they had done. No governing body of any description had employed them or recognized them. What were still more alarming deficiencies, they were without a general, and without adequate supply of food and ammunition. 1775 A.D. Congress now, by a unanimous vote, adopted the army, and elected George Washington Commander-in-Chief of the patriot forces. They took measures to enlist soldiers, and to raise money for their support.

When Washington reached the army before Boston, he found it to consist of fourteen thousand men. They were quite undisciplined, and almost without ammunition. Their stock of powder would afford only nine rounds to each man. They could thus have made no use of their artillery. Their rude intrenchments stretched a distance of eight or nine miles. At any moment the English might burst upon them, piercing their weak lines, and rolling them back in hopeless rout. But the stubborn provincials were, as yet, scarcely soldiers enough to know their danger. Taking counsel only of their own courage, they strengthened their intrenchment, and tenaciously maintained their hold on Boston.

From a convenient hill-top Washington looked at his foe. He saw a British army of ten thousand men, perfect in discipline and equipment. It was a noble engine, but, happily for the world, it was guided by incompetent hands. General Gage tamely endured siege without daring to strike a single blow at the audacious patriots. It was no easy winter in either army. The English suffered from small-pox. Their fleet failed to secure for them an adequate supply of food. They had to pull down houses to obtain wood for fuel, at the risk of being hanged if they were discovered. They were dispirited by long inaction. They knew that in England the feeling entertained about them was one of bitter disappointment. Poor Gage was recalled by an angry Ministry, and quitted in disgrace that Boston where he had hoped for such success. General Howe succeeded to his command, and to his policy of inactivity.

Washington on his side was often in despair. His troops were mainly enlisted for three months only. Their love of country gave way under the hardships of a soldier's life. Washington was a strict disciplinarian, and many a free-born back was scored by the lash. Patriotism proved a harder service than the men counted for. Fast as their time of service expired they set their faces homeward. Washington plied them with patriotic appeals, and even caused patriot songs to be sung about the camp. Not thus, however, could the self-indulgent men of Massachusetts and Connecticut be taught to scorn delights and live laborious days. "Such dearth of public spirit," Washington writes, "and such want of virtue, such fertility in all the low arts, I never saw before." 1776 A.D. When January came he had a new army, much smaller than the old, and the same weary process of drilling began afresh. He knew that Howe was aware of his position. The inactivity of the English general astonished Washington. He could explain it no otherwise than by believing that Providence watched over the liberties of the American people.

In February liberal supplies of arms and ammunition reached him. There came also ten regiments of militia. Washington was now strong enough to take a step.

To the south of Boston city lie the Heights of Dorchester. If the Americans can seize and hold these heights, the English must quit Boston. The night of the 4th of March was fixed for the enterprise. A heavy fire of artillery occupied the attention of the enemy. By the light of an unclouded moon a strong working-party took their way to Dorchester Heights. A long train of waggons accompanied them, laden with hard-pressed bales of hay. These were needed to form a breastwork, as a hard frost bound the earth, and digging alone could not be relied upon. The men worked with such spirit, that by dawn the bales of hay had been fashioned into various redoubts and other defences of most formidable

aspect. A thick fog lay along the heights, and the new fortress looked massive and imposing in the haze. “The rebels,” said Howe, “have done more work in one night than my whole army would have done in a month.”

And now the English must fight, or yield up Boston. The English chose to fight. They were in the act of embarking to get at the enemy when a furious east wind began to blow, scattering their transports and compelling the delay of the attack. All next day the storm continued to rage, and the English, eager for battle, lay in unwilling idleness. The vigorous Americans never ceased to dig and build. On the third day the storm abated. But it was now General Howe’s opinion that the American position was impregnable. It may be that he was wisely cautious; it may be that he was merely fearful. But he laid aside his thoughts of battle, and prepared to evacuate Boston. On the 17th the last English soldier was on board, and all New England was finally wrested from King George.

CHAPTER VI
INDEPENDENCE

Even yet, after months of fighting, the idea of final separation from Great Britain was distasteful to a large portion of the American people. To the more enlightened it had long been evident that no other course was possible, but very many still clung to the hope of a friendly settlement of differences. Some, who were native Englishmen, loved the land of their birth better than the land of their adoption. The Quakers and Moravians were opposed to war as sinful, and would content themselves with such redress as could be obtained by remonstrance. Some, who deeply resented the oppressions of the home Government, were slow to relinquish the privilege of British citizenship. Some would willingly have fought had there been hope of success, but could not be convinced that America was able to defend herself against the colossal strength of England. The subject was discussed long and keenly. The intelligence of America was in favour of separation. All the writers of the colonies urged incessantly that to this it must come. Endless pamphlets and gazette articles set forth the oppressions of the old country, and the need of independence in order to the welfare of the colonies. Conspicuous among those whose writings aided in convincing the public mind stands the unhonoured name of Thomas Paine the infidel. Paine had been only a few months in the colonies, but his restless mind took a ready interest in the great question of the day. He had a surprising power of direct, forcible argument. He wrote a pamphlet styled “Common Sense,” in which he urged the Americans to be independent. His treatise had, for those days, a vast circulation, and an extraordinary influence.

1776 A.D. The time was now ripe for the consideration by Congress of the great question of Independence. It was a grave and most eventful step, which no thinking man would lightly take, but it could no longer be shunned. On the 7th of June a resolution was introduced, declaring “That the United Colonies are and ought to be free and independent.” The House was not yet prepared for a measure so decisive. Many members still paused on the threshold of that vast change. Pennsylvania and Delaware had expressly enjoined their delegates to oppose it; for the Quakers were loyal to the last. Some other States had given no instructions, and their delegates felt themselves bound, in consequence, to vote against the change. Seven States voted for the resolution; six voted against it. Greater unanimity than this was indispensable. With much prudence it was agreed that the matter should stand over for two or three weeks.

On the 4th of July the Declaration of Independence was adopted, with the unanimous concurrence of all the States. In this famous document the usurpations of the English Government were set forth in unsparing terms. The divinity which doth hedge a King did not protect poor King George from a rougher handling than he ever experienced before. His character, it was said, “was marked by every act which can define a tyrant.” And then it was announced to the world that the Thirteen Colonies had terminated their political connection with Great Britain, and entered upon their career as free and independent States.

The vigorous action of Congress nerved the colonists for their great enterprise. The paralyzing hope of reconciliation was extinguished. The quarrel must now be fought out to the end, and liberty must be gloriously won or shamefully lost. Everywhere the Declaration was hailed with joy. It was read to the army amidst exulting shouts. The soldiers in New York expressed their transference of allegiance by taking down a leaden statue of King George and casting it into bullets to be used against the King's troops. Next day Washington, in the dignified language which was habitual to him, reminded his troops of their new duties and responsibilities. "The general," he said, "hopes and trusts that every officer and soldier will endeavour so to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country."

CHAPTER VII
AT WAR

England put forth as much strength as she deemed needful to subdue her rebellious colonists. She prepared a strong fleet and a strong army. She entered into contracts with some of the petty German princes to supply a certain number of soldiers. It was a matter of regular sale and purchase. England supplied money at a fixed rate; the Duke of Brunswick and some others supplied a stipulated number of men, who were to shed their blood in a quarrel of which they knew nothing. Even in a dark age these transactions were a scandal. Frederick of Prussia loudly expressed his contempt for both parties. When any of the hired men passed through any part of his territory he levied on them the toll usually charged for cattle – like which, he said, they had been sold!

So soon as the safety of Boston was secured, Washington moved with his army southwards to New York. Thither, in the month of June, came General Howe. Thither also came his brother, Lord Howe, with the forces which England had provided for this war. These reinforcements raised the British army to twenty-five thousand men. Lord Howe brought with him a commission from King George to pacify the dissatisfied colonists. He invited them to lay down their arms, and he assured them of the King's pardon. His proposals were singularly inopportune. The Declaration of Independence had just been published, and the Americans had determined to be free. They were not seeking to be forgiven, and they rejected with scorn Lord Howe's proposals. The sword must now decide between King George and his alienated subjects.

Lord Howe encamped his troops on Staten Island, a few miles from New York. His powerful fleet gave him undisputed command of the bay, and enabled him to choose his point of attack. The Americans expected that he would land upon Long Island, and take possession of the heights near Brooklyn. He would then be separated from New York only by a narrow arm of the sea, and he could with ease lay the city in ruins. Washington sent a strong force to hold the heights, and throw up intrenchments in front of Brooklyn. General Putnam was appointed to the command of this army. Staten Island lies full in view of Brooklyn. The white tents of the English army, and the formidable English ships lying at their anchorage, were watched by many anxious eyes, for the situation was known to be full of peril. Washington himself did not expect success in the coming fight, and hoped for nothing more than that the enemy's victory would cost him dear.

After a time it was seen that a movement was in progress among the English. One by one the tents disappeared. One by one the ships shook their canvas out to the wind, and moved across the bay. Then the Americans knew that their hour of trial was at hand.

Aug. 27, 1776 A.D. Putnam marched his men out from their lines to meet the English. At daybreak the enemy made his appearance. The right wing of the American army was attacked, and troops were withdrawn from other points to resist what seemed the main attack. Meanwhile a strong English force made its way unseen round the American left, and established itself between the Americans and their intrenchments. This decided the fate of the battle. The Americans made a brave but vain defence. They were driven within their lines after sustaining heavy loss.

Lord Howe could easily have stormed the works, and taken or destroyed the American army. But his lordship felt that his enemy was in his power, and he wished to spare his soldiers the bloodshed which an assault would have caused. He was to reduce the enemy's works by regular siege. It was no part of Washington's intention to wait for the issue of these operations. During the night of the 29th he silently withdrew his broken troops, and landed them safely in New York. So skilfully was this movement executed, that the last boat had pushed off from the shore before the British discovered that their enemies had departed.

But now New York had to be abandoned. Washington's army was utterly demoralized by the defeat at Brooklyn. The men went home, in some instances, by entire regiments. Washington confessed to the President of Congress with deep concern that he had no confidence "in the generality of the troops." To fight the well-disciplined and victorious British with such men was worse than useless. He marched northwards, and took up a strong position at Haerlem, a village nine miles from New York. But the English ships, sweeping up the Hudson river, showed themselves on his flank and in his rear; the English army approached him in front. There was no choice but retreat. Washington crossed his soldiers over to the Jersey side of the river. The English followed him, after storming a fort in which nearly three thousand men had been left, the whole of whom were made prisoners.

The fortunes of the revolted colonies were now at the very lowest ebb. Washington had only four thousand men under his immediate command. They were in miserable condition – imperfectly armed, poorly fed and clothed, without blankets, or tents, or shoes. An English officer said of them, without extreme exaggeration, "In a whole regiment there is scarce one pair of breeches." This was the army which was to snatch a continent from the grasp of England! As they marched towards Philadelphia the people looked with derision upon their ragged defenders, and with fear upon the brilliant host of pursuers. Lord Howe renewed his offer of pardon to all who would submit. This time his lordship's offers commanded some attention. Many of the wealthier patriots took the oath, and made their peace with a Government whose authority there was no longer any hope of throwing off.

Washington made good his retreat to Philadelphia, so hotly pursued that his rear-guard, engaged in pulling down bridges, were often in sight of the British pioneers sent to build them up. When he crossed the Delaware he secured all the boats for a distance of seventy miles along the river-course. Lord Howe was brought to a pause, and he decided to wait upon the eastern bank till the river should be frozen.

Washington knew well the desperate odds against him. He expected to be driven from the Eastern States. It was his thought, in that case, to retire beyond the Alleghanies, and in the wilderness to maintain undying resistance to the English yoke. Meantime he strove like a brave strong man to win back success to the patriot cause. It was only now that he was able to rid himself of the evil of short enlistments. Congress resolved that henceforth men should be enlisted to serve out the war.

Winter came, but Lord Howe remained inactive. He himself was in New York; his army was scattered about among the villages of New Jersey, fearing no evil from the despised Americans. All the time Washington was increasing the number of his troops, and improving their condition. But something was needed to chase away the gloom which paralyzed the country. Ten miles from Philadelphia was the village of Trenton, held by a considerable force of British and Hessians. At sunset on Christmas evening Washington marched out from Philadelphia, having prepared a surprise for the careless garrison of Trenton. The night was dark and tempestuous, and the weather was so intensely cold that two of the soldiers were frozen to death. The march of the barefooted host could be tracked by the blood-marks which they left upon the snow. At daybreak they burst upon the astonished Royalists. The Hessians had drunk deep on the previous day, and they were ill prepared to fight. Their commander was slain as he attempted to bring his men up to the enemy. After his fall the soldiers laid down their arms, and surrendered at discretion.

1777 A.D. A week after this encounter three British regiments spent a night at Princeton, on their way to Trenton to retrieve the disaster which had there befallen their Hessian allies. Washington

made another night march, attacked the Englishmen in the early morning, and after a stubborn resistance defeated them, inflicting severe loss.

These exploits, inconsiderable as they seem, raised incalculably the spirits of the American people. When triumphs like these were possible under circumstances so discouraging, there was no need to despair of the Commonwealth. Confidence in Washington had been somewhat shaken by the defeats which he had sustained. Henceforth it was unbounded. Congress invested him with absolute military authority for a period of six months, and public opinion confirmed the trust. The infant Republic was delivered from its most imminent jeopardy by the apparently trivial successes of Trenton and Princeton.

CHAPTER VIII
SYMPATHY BEYOND THE SEA

France still felt, with all the bitterness of the vanquished, her defeat at Quebec and her loss of Canada. She had always entertained the hope that the Americans would avenge her by throwing off the English yoke. To help forward its fulfilment, she sent occasionally a secret agent among them, to cultivate their good-will to the utmost. When the troubles began she sent secret assurances of sympathy, and secret offers of commercial advantages. She was not prepared as yet openly to espouse the American cause. But it was always safe to encourage the American dislike to England, and to connive at the fitting out of American privateers, to prey upon English commerce.

The Marquis de Lafayette was at this time serving in the French army. He was a lad of nineteen, of immense wealth, and enjoying a foremost place among the nobility of France. The American revolt had now become a topic at French dinner-tables. Lafayette heard of it first from the Duke of Gloucester, who told the story at a dinner given to him by some French officers. That conversation changed the destiny of the young Frenchman. “He was a man of no ability,” said Napoleon. “There is nothing in his head but the United States,” said Marie Antoinette. These judgments are perhaps not unduly severe. But Lafayette had the deepest sympathies with the cause of human liberty. They may not have been always wise, but they were always generous and true. No sooner had he satisfied himself that the American cause was the cause of liberty than he hastened to ally himself with it. He left his young wife and his great position, and he offered himself to Washington. His military value may not have been great; but his presence was a vast encouragement to a desponding people. He was a visible assurance of sympathy beyond the sea. America is the most grateful of nations; and this good, impulsive, vain man has ever deservedly held a high place in her love. Washington once, with tears of joy in his eyes, presented Lafayette to his troops. Counties are named after him, and cities and streets. Statues and paintings hand down to successive generations of Americans the image of their first and most faithful ally.

Lafayette was the lightning-rod by which the current of republican sentiments was flashed from America to France. He came home when the war was over and America free. He was the hero of the hour. A man who had helped to set up a Republic in America was an unquiet element for old France to receive back into her bosom. With the charm of a great name and boundless popularity to aid him, he everywhere urged that men should be free and self-governing. Before he had been long in France he was busily stirring up the oppressed Protestants of the south to revolt. Happily the advice of Washington, with whom he continued to correspond, arrested a course which might have led the enthusiastic Marquis to the scaffold. Few men of capacity so moderate have been so conspicuous, or have so powerfully influenced the course of human affairs.

CHAPTER IX
THE WAR CONTINUES

Spring-time came – "the time when Kings go out to battle" – but General Howe was not ready. Washington was contented to wait, for he gained by delay. 1777 A.D. Congress sent him word that he was to lose no time in totally subduing the enemy. Washington could now afford to smile at the vain confidence which had so quickly taken the place of despair. Recruits flowed in upon him in a steady, if not a very copious stream. The old soldiers whose terms expired were induced, by bounties and patriotic appeals, to re-enlist for the war. By the middle of June, when Howe opened the campaign, Washington had eight thousand men under his command, tolerably armed and disciplined, and in good fighting spirit. The patriotic sentiment was powerfully reinforced by a thirst to avenge private wrongs. Howe's German mercenaries had behaved very brutally in New Jersey – plundering and burning without stint. Many of the Americans had witnessed outrages such as turn the coward's blood to flame.

Howe wished to take Philadelphia, then the political capital of the States. But Washington lay across his path, in a strong position, from which he could not be enticed to descend. Howe marched towards him, but shunned to attack him where he lay. Then he turned back to New York, and embarking his troops, sailed with them to Philadelphia. The army was landed on the 25th August, and Howe was at length ready to begin the summer's work.

The American army waited for him on the banks of a small river called the Brandywine. The British superiority in numbers enabled them to attack the Americans in front and in flank. The Americans say that their right wing, on which the British attack fell with crushing weight, was badly led. One of the generals of that division was a certain William Alexander – known to himself and the country of his adoption as Lord Stirling – a warrior brave but foolish; "aged, and a little deaf." The Americans were driven from the field; but they had fought bravely, and were undismayed by their defeat.

A fortnight later a British force, with Lord Cornwallis at its head, marched into Philadelphia. The Royalists were strong in that city of Quakers – specially strong among the Quakers themselves. The city was moved to unwonted cheerfulness. On that September morning, as the loyal inhabitants looked upon the bright uniforms and flashing arms of the King's troops, and listened to the long-forbidden strains of "God save the King," they felt as if a great and final deliverance had been vouchsafed to them. The patriots estimated the fall of the city more justly. It was seen that if Howe meant to hold Philadelphia, he had not force enough to do much else. Said the sagacious Benjamin Franklin, – "It is not General Howe that has taken Philadelphia; it is Philadelphia that has taken General Howe."

The main body of the British were encamped at Germantown, guarding their new conquest. So little were the Americans daunted by their late reverses, that, within a week from the capture of Philadelphia, Washington resolved to attack the enemy. At sunrise on the 4th October the English were unexpectedly greeted by a bayonet-charge from a strong American force. It was a complete surprise, and at first the success was complete. But a dense fog, which had rendered the surprise possible, ultimately frustrated the purpose of the assailants. The onset of the eager Americans carried all before it. But as the darkness, enhanced by the firing, deepened over the combatants, confusion began to arise. Regiments got astray from their officers. Some regiments mistook each other for enemies, and acted on that belief. Confusion swelled to panic, and the Americans fled from the field.

Winter was now at hand, and the British army returned to quarters in Philadelphia. Howe would have fought again, but Washington declined to come down from the strong position to which he had retired. His army had again been suffered to fall into straits which threatened its very existence. A patriot Congress urged him to defeat the English, but could not be persuaded to supply his soldiers

with shoes or blankets, or even with food. He was advised to fall back on some convenient town where his soldiers would find the comforts they needed so much. But Washington was resolute to keep near the enemy. He fixed on a position at Valley Forge, among the hills, twenty miles from Philadelphia. Thither through the snow marched his half-naked army. Log-huts were erected with a rapidity of which no soldiers are so capable as Americans. There Washington fixed himself. The enemy was within reach, and he knew that his own strength would grow. The campaign which had now closed had given much encouragement to the patriots. It is true they had been often defeated, but they had learned to place implicit confidence in their commander. They had learned also that in courage they were equal, in activity greatly superior, to their enemies. All they required was discipline and experience, which another campaign would give. There was no longer any reason to look with alarm upon the future.

CHAPTER X
THE SURRENDER AT SARATOGA

In the month of June, when Howe was beginning to win his lingering way to Philadelphia, a British army set out from Canada to conquer the northern parts of the revolted territory. 1777 A.D. General Burgoyne was in command. He was resolute to succeed. “This army must not retreat,” he said, when they were about to embark. The army did not retreat. On a fair field general and soldiers would have played a part of which their country would have had no cause to be ashamed. But this was a work beyond their strength.

Burgoyne marched deep into the New England States. But he had to do with men of a different temper from those of New York and Philadelphia. At his approach every man took down his musket from the wall and hurried to the front. Little discipline had they, but a resolute purpose and a sure aim. Difficulties thickened around the fated army. At length Burgoyne found himself at Saratoga. It was now October. Heavy rains fell; provisions were growing scanty; the enemy was in great force, and much emboldened by success. Gradually it became evident that the British were surrounded, and that no hope of fighting their way out remained. Night and day a circle of fire encompassed them. Burgoyne called his officers together. They could find no place for their sorrowful communing beyond reach of the enemy’s musketry, so closely was the net already drawn. There was but one thing to do, and it was done. The British army surrendered. Nearly six thousand brave men, in sorrow and in shame, laid down their arms. The men who took them were mere peasants, no two of whom were dressed alike. The officers wore uncouth wigs, and most of them carried muskets and large powder-horns slung around their shoulders. No humiliation like this had ever befallen the British arms.

These grotesque American warriors behaved to their conquered enemies with true nobility. General Gates, the American commander, kept his men strictly within their lines, that they might not witness the piling of the British arms. No taunt was offered, no look of disrespect was directed against the fallen. “All were mute in astonishment and pity.”

England felt acutely the shame of this great disaster. Her people were used to victory. For many years she had been fighting in Europe, in India, in Canada, and always with brilliant success. Her defeat in America was contrary to all expectation. It was a bitter thing for a high-spirited people to hear that their veteran troops had surrendered to a crowd of half-armed peasantry. Under the depressing influence of this calamity it was determined to redress the wrongs of America. Parliament abandoned all claim to tax the colonies. Every vexatious enactment would be repealed; all would be forgiven, if America would return to her allegiance. Commissioners were sent bearing the olive-branch to Congress. Too late – altogether too late! Never more can America be a dependency of England. With few words Congress peremptorily declined the English overtures. America had chosen her course; for good or for evil she would follow it to the end.

CHAPTER XI
HELP FROM EUROPE

A great war may be very glorious, but it is also very miserable. Twenty thousand Englishmen had already perished in this war. 1778 A.D. Trade languished, and among the working-classes there was want of employment and consequent want of food. American cruisers swarmed upon the sea, and inflicted enormous losses upon English commerce. The debt of the country increased. And for all these evils there was no compensation. There was not even the poor satisfaction of success in our unprofitable undertaking.

If it was any comfort to inflict even greater miseries than she endured, England did not fight in vain. The sufferings of America were very lamentable. The loss of life in battle and by disease, resulting from want and exposure, had been great. The fields in many districts were unsown. Trade was extinct; the trading classes were bankrupt. English cruisers had annihilated the fisheries and seized the greater part of the American merchant ships. Money had well-nigh disappeared from the country. Congress issued paper-money, which proved a very indifferent substitute. The public had so little confidence in the new currency, that Washington declared, “A waggon-load of money will scarcely purchase a waggon-load of provisions.”

But the war went on. It was not for England, with her high place among the nations, to retire defeated from an enterprise on which she had deliberately entered. As for the Americans, after they had declared their resolution to be independent, they could die, but they could not yield.

The surrender of Burgoyne brought an important ally to the American side. The gods help those who help themselves. So soon as America proved that she was likely to conquer in the struggle, France offered to come to her aid. France had always looked with interest on the war; partly because she hated England, and partly because her pulses already throbbed with that new life, whose misdirected energies produced, a few years afterwards, results so lamentable. Even now a people contending for their liberties awakened the sympathies of France. America had sent three Commissioners – one of whom was Benjamin Franklin – to Paris, to cultivate as opportunity offered the friendship of the French Government. For a time they laboured without visible results. But when news came that Burgoyne and his army had surrendered, hesitation was at an end. A treaty was signed by which France and America engaged to make common cause against England. The King opposed this treaty so long as he dared, but he was forced to give way. England, of course, accepted it as a declaration of war.

Spain could not miss the opportunity of avenging herself upon England. Her King desired to live at peace, he said, and to see his neighbours do the same. But he was profoundly interested in the liberties of the young Republic, and he was bound by strong ties to his good brother of France. Above all, England had in various quarters of the world grievously wronged him, by violating his territory and interfering with the trade of his subjects. And so he deemed it proper that he should waste the scanty substance of his people in equipping fleets and armies. When his preparations were complete he joined France and America in the league, and declared war against England.

The fleets of France and Spain appeared in the English Channel, and England had to face the perils of invasion. The spirit of her people rose nobly to meet the impending trial. The southern counties were one great camp. Voluntary contributions from all parts of the country aided Government to equip ships and soldiers. The King was to head his warlike people, should the enemy land, and share their danger and their glory. But the black cloud rolled harmlessly away, and the abounding heroism of the people was not further evoked. The invading admirals quarrelled. One of them wished to land at once; the other wished first to dispose of the English fleet. They could not agree upon a course, and therefore they sailed away home each to his own country, having effected nothing.

The war spread itself over a very wide surface. In the north, Paul Jones with three American ships alarmed the Scotch coast and destroyed much shipping. Spain besieged Gibraltar, but failed to regain that much-coveted prize. On the African coast, the French took Senegal from the English, and the English took Goree from the French. In the West Indies, the French took St. Vincent and Granada. On the American Continent, from New York to Savannah, the same wasteful and bloody labour was ruthlessly pursued.

The remaining years of the war were distinguished by few striking or decisive enterprises. The fleet sent by France sailed hither and thither in a feeble manner, accomplishing nothing. When General Howe was made aware of its approach, he abandoned Philadelphia and retired to New York. Washington followed him on his retreat, but neither then nor for some time afterwards could effect much. Congress and the American people formed sanguine expectations of the French alliance, and ceased to put forth the great efforts which distinguished the earlier period of the war. The English overran Georgia and the Carolinas. The Americans captured two or three forts. The war degenerated into a series of marauding expeditions. Some towns, innumerable farm-houses, were burned by the English. Occasional massacres took place. With increasing frequency, prisoners were, under a variety of pretexts, put to death. On both sides feeling had become intensely bitter. On both sides cruelties of a most savage type were perpetrated.

To the very end Washington's army was miserably supplied, and endured extreme hardships. Congress was a weak, and, it must be added, a very unwise body. The ablest men were in the army, and Congress was composed of twenty or thirty persons of little character or influence. They had no authority to impose taxes. They tried to borrow money in Europe, and failed. They had only one resource – the issue of paper currency, and this was carried to such a wild excess that latterly a colonel's pay would not buy oats for his horse. Washington ceased to have the means of purchasing. Reluctantly, and under pressure of extreme necessity, he forcibly exacted supplies of meat and flour from the neighbourhood. Not otherwise could he save his army from dissolution and the country from ruin.

But there was one respect in which the cause grew constantly in strength. Men do not fight for eight years, in a war like this, without learning to hate each other. With a deep and deadly hatred the American people hated the power which ruthlessly inflicted upon them such cruel sufferings. Under the growing influence of this hatred, men became soldiers with increasing alacrity. The hardships of soldier-life no longer daunted them, so long as they had the English to resist. The trouble of short enlistments had ceased, and Washington was at length at the head of an army, often ill fed and always ill clad, but disciplined and invincibly resolved that their country should be free.

CHAPTER XII
MAJOR ANDRÉ

The Americans had a strong fortress at West Point, on the Hudson river. It was one of the most important places in the country, and its acquisition was anxiously desired by the English. Possession of West Point would have given them command of the Hudson, up which their ships of war could have sailed for more than a hundred miles. But that fort, sitting impregnably on rocks two hundred feet above the level of the river, was hard to win; and the Americans were careful to garrison effectively a position so vitally important.

In the American army was an officer named Arnold, who had served, not without distinction, from the beginning of the war. He had fought in Canada when the Americans unsuccessfully invaded that province. His courage and skill had been conspicuous in the engagements which led to the surrender of Burgoyne. He was, however, a vain, reckless, unscrupulous person. He had by extravagance in living involved himself in debt, which he aggravated hopelessly by ill-judged mercantile speculations. He had influence with Washington to obtain the command of West Point.

There is little doubt that when he sought the appointment it was with the full intention of selling that important fortress to the enemy. He opened negotiations at once with Sir Henry Clinton, then in command of the English army at New York.

Clinton sent Major André to arrange the terms of the contemplated treachery. A mournful interest attaches to the name of this young officer: the fate which befell him was so very sad. He was of French descent – high-spirited, accomplished, affectionate, merry-hearted. It was a service which a high-principled man would scarcely have coveted. But André desired eagerly to have the merit of gaining West Point, and he volunteered for this perilous enterprise.

Sept. 1780 A.D. At midnight Major André landed from the boat of a British ship of war, at a lonely place where Arnold waited him. Their conference lasted so long that it was deemed unsafe for André to return to the ship. He was conducted to a place of concealment within the American lines, to await the return of darkness. He completed his arrangement with Arnold, and received drawings of the betrayed fortress. His mission was now accomplished. The ship from which he had come lay full in view. Would that he could reach her! But difficulties arose, and it was resolved that he must ride to New York, a distance of fifty miles. Disguising himself as he best could, André reluctantly accepted this very doubtful method of escape from his fearful jeopardy.

Within the American lines he had some narrow escapes, but the pass given by Arnold carried him through. He was at length beyond the lines. His danger might now be considered at an end, and he rode cheerfully on his lonely journey. He was crossing a small stream – thick woods on his right hand and his left enhanced the darkness of the night. Three armed men stepped suddenly from among the trees and ordered him to stand. From the dress of one of them, André thought he was among friends. He hastened to tell them he was a British officer, on very special business, and he must not be detained. Alas for poor Major André, they were not friends; and the dress which deceived him had been given to the man who wore it when he was a prisoner with the English, in place of a better garment of which his captors had stripped him.

André was searched; but at first nothing was found. It seemed as if he might yet be allowed to proceed, when one of the three men exclaimed, “Boys, I am not satisfied. His boots must come off.” André’s countenance fell. His boots were searched, and Arnold’s drawings of West Point were discovered. The men knew then that he was a spy. He vainly offered them money; they were incorruptible. He was taken to the nearest military station, and the tidings were at once sent to Washington, who chanced to be then at West Point. Arnold had timely intimation of the disaster, and fled for refuge to a British ship of war.

André was tried by a court formed of officers of the American army. He gave a frank and truthful account of his part in the unhappy transaction – bringing into due prominence the circumstance that he was brought, without intention or knowledge on his part, within the American lines. The court judged him on his own statement, and condemned him to be hanged as a spy.

His capture and sentence caused deep sensation in the English army, and every effort was made to save him. But Washington was resolute that he should die. The danger to the patriot cause had been too great to leave any place for relenting. There were dark intimations of other treasons yet unrevealed. It was needful to give emphatic warning of the perils which waited on such unlawful negotiations. André begged that he might be allowed to die a soldier’s death. Even this poor boon was refused to the unhappy young man. Since the awful lesson must be given, Washington considered that no circumstance fitted to enhance its terrors should be withheld. But this was mercifully concealed from André to the very last.

Ten days after his arrest, André was led forth to die. He was under the impression that his last request had been granted, and that he would die by the bullet. It was a fresh pang when the gibbet, with its ghastly preparations, stood before him. “How hard is my fate,” he said; “but it will soon be over.” He bandaged his own eyes; with his own hands adjusted the noose to his neck. The cart on

which he stood moved away, and poor Major André was no longer in the world of living men. Forty years afterwards his remains were brought home to England and laid in Westminster Abbey.

CHAPTER XIII
THE CLOSE OF THE WAR

During the later years of the war the English kept possession of the Southern States, which, as we have seen, they had gained so easily. 1781 A.D. When the last campaign opened, Lord Cornwallis with a strong force represented British authority in the South, and did all that he found possible for the suppression of the patriots. But the time was past when any real progress in that direction could be made. A certain vigorous and judicious General Greene, with such rough semblance of an army as he could draw together, gave Lord Cornwallis many rude shocks. The English gained little victories occasionally, but they suffered heavy losses, and the territory over which they held dominion was upon the whole becoming smaller.

About midsummer, the joyous news reached Washington that a powerful French fleet, with an army on board, was about to sail for America. With this reinforcement, Washington had it in his power to deliver a blow which would break the strength of the enemy, and hasten the close of the war. Clinton held New York, and Cornwallis was fortifying himself in Yorktown. The French fleet sailed for the Chesapeake, and Washington decided in consequence that his attack should be made on Lord Cornwallis. With all possible secrecy and speed the American troops were moved southwards to Virginia. They were joined by the French, and they stood before Yorktown a force twelve thousand strong. Cornwallis had not expected them, and he called on Clinton to aid him. But it was too late. He was already in a grasp from which there was no escaping.

Throughout the war, the weakness of his force often obliged Washington to adopt a cautious and defensive policy, which grievously disappointed the expectations of his impatient countrymen. It is not therefore to be imagined that his leadership was wanting in vigour. Within his calm and well-balanced mind there lurked a fiery energy, ready to burst forth when occasion required. The siege of Yorktown was pushed on with extraordinary vehemence. The English, as their wont is, made a stout defence, and strove by desperate sallies to drive the assailants from their works. But in a few days the defences of Yorktown lay in utter ruin, beaten to the ground by the powerful artillery of the Americans. The English guns were silenced; the English shipping was fired by red-hot shot from the French batteries. Ammunition began to grow scarce. The place could not be held much longer, and Clinton still delayed his coming. Lord Cornwallis must either force his way out and escape to the North, or surrender. One night he began to embark his men in order to cross the York river and set out on his desperate march to New York; but a violent storm arose and scattered his boats. The men who had embarked got back with difficulty, under fire from the American batteries. All hope was now at an end. In about a fortnight from the opening of the siege, the British army, eight thousand strong, laid down its arms.

The joy of America over this great crowning success knew no bounds. One highly emotional patriot was said to have expired from mere excess of rapture. Some others lost their reason. In the army, all who were under arrest were at once set at liberty. A day of solemn thanksgiving was proclaimed and devoutly observed throughout the rejoicing States.

1782 A.D. Well might the colonists rejoice, for their long and bitter struggle was now about to close. Stubborn King George would not yield yet. But England and her Parliament were sick of this hopeless and inglorious war. The House of Commons voted that all who should advise the continuance of the war were enemies to the country. A new Ministry was formed, and negotiations with a view to peace were begun. The King had no doubt that if America were allowed to go, the West Indies would go – Ireland would go – all his foreign possessions would go; and discrowned England would sink into weakness and contempt. But too much heed had already been given to the King and his

fancies. Jan. 20, 1783 A.D. Peace was concluded with France and Spain, and the independence of America was at length recognized.

Eight years had passed since the first blood was shed at Lexington. Thus long the unyielding English, unused to failure, had striven to regain the lost ascendency. Thus long the colonists had borne the miseries of invasion, not shaken in their faith that the independence which they had undertaken to win was well worth all it cost them. And now they were free, and England was the same to them as all the rest of the world, – "in peace, a friend; in war, a foe." They had little left them but their liberty and their soil. They had been unutterably devastated by those eight bloody years. Their fields had been wasted; their towns had been burned; commerce was extinct; money had almost disappeared from the country. Their public debt reached the large sum of one hundred and seventy million dollars. The soldiers who had fought out the national independence were not paid till they showed some disposition to compel a settlement. There was nothing which could be called a Government. There were thirteen sovereign States, loosely knit together by a Congress. That body had power to discuss questions affecting the general good; to pass resolutions; to request the several States to give effect to these resolutions. The States might or might not comply with such request. Habitually they did not, especially when money was asked for. Congress had no power to tax. It merely apportioned among the States the amounts required for the public service, and each State was expected to levy a tax for its proportion. But in point of fact it became utterly impossible to get money by this process.

1786 A.D. Great hardships were endured by the labouring population. The impatience of a suffering people expressed itself in occasional sputterings of insurrection. Two thousand men of Massachusetts rose in arms to demand that the collection of debts should be suspended. It was some weeks before that rising could be quelled, as the community generally sympathized with the insurgents. During four or five years the miseries of the ungoverned country seemed to warrant the belief that her war of independence had been a mistake.

But a future of unparalleled magnificence lay before this sorely vexed and discouraged people. The boundless corn-lands of the west, the boundless cotton-fields of the south, waited to yield their wealth. Pennsylvania held unimagined treasures of coal and iron – soon to be evoked by the irresistible spell of patient industry. America was a vast store-house, prepared by the Great Father against the time when his children would have need of it. The men who are the stewards over its opulence have now freed themselves from some entanglements and hindrances which grievously diminished their efficiency, and stand prepared to enter in good earnest upon that high industrial vocation to which Providence has called them.

There had been periods during the war when confidence in Washington's leadership was shaken. He sustained many reverses. He oftentimes retreated. He adhered tenaciously to a defensive policy, when Congress and people were burning with impatience to inflict crushing defeat upon the foe. The deplorable insufficiency of his resources was overlooked, and the blame of every disaster fell on him. And when at length the cause began to prosper, and hope brightened into triumph, timid people were apt to fear that Washington was growing too powerful. He had become the idol of a great army. He had but to signify his readiness to accept a throne, and his soldiers would have crowned him King. It was usual in the revolutions of the world that a military chief should grasp at supreme power; and so it was feared that Washington was to furnish one example more of that lawless and vulgar lust of power by which human history has been so largely dishonoured.

But Washington sheathed his sword, and returned gladly to his home on the banks of the Potomac. He proposed to spend his days "in cultivating the affections of good men, and in the practice of the domestic virtues." He hoped "to glide gently down the stream which no human effort can ascend." He occupied himself with the care of his farm, and had no deeper feeling than thankfulness that he was at length eased of a load of public care. The simple grandeur of his character was now revealed beyond possibility of misconception. The measure of American veneration for this greatest of all Americans was full. Henceforth Mount Vernon was a shrine to which pilgrim feet were ever

turned – evoking such boundless love and reverence as never were elsewhere exhibited on American soil.

CHAPTER XIV
THE THIRTEEN STATES BECOME A NATION

Washington saw from the beginning that his country was without a government. Congress was a mere name. There were still thirteen sovereign States – in league for the moment, but liable to be placed at variance by the differences which time would surely bring. Washington was satisfied that without a central government they could never be powerful or respected. Such a government, indeed, was necessary in order even to their existence. European powers would, in its absence, introduce dissensions among them. Men's minds would revert to that form of government with which they were familiar. Some ambitious statesman or soldier would make himself King, and the great experiment, based upon the equality of rights, would prove an ignominious failure.

The more sagacious Americans shared Washington's belief on this question. Conspicuous among these was Alexander Hamilton – perhaps, next to Washington, the greatest American of that age. Hamilton was a brave and skilful soldier, a brilliant debater, a persuasive writer, a wise statesman. In his nineteenth year he entered the army, at the very beginning of the war. The quick eye of Washington discovered the remarkable promise of the lad. He raised him to high command in the army, and afterwards to high office in the government. It was Hamilton who brought order out of the financial chaos which followed the war. It was Hamilton who suggested the convention to consider the framing of a new Constitution. Often, during the succeeding years, Hamilton's temperate and sagacious words calmed the storms which marked the infancy of the great Republic. His career had a dark and bloody close. 1804 A.D. In his forty-seventh year he stood face to face, one bright July morning, with a savage politician named Aaron Burr – a grandson of Jonathan Edwards the great divine. Burr had fastened a quarrel upon him, in the hope of murdering him in a duel. Hamilton had resolved not to fire. Burr fired with careful aim, and Hamilton fell, wounded to death. One of the ablest men America has ever possessed was thus lost to her.

1783 A.D. Immediately after the close of the war, Hamilton began to discuss the weakness of the existing form of government. He was deeply convinced that the union of the States, in order to be lasting, must be established on a solid basis; and his writings did much to spread this conviction among his fellow-countrymen. Washington never ceased from his retirement to urge the same views. Gradually the urgent need of a better system was recognized. It indeed soon became too obvious to be denied. Congress found it utterly impossible to get money. Between 1781 and 1786, ten million dollars were called for from the States, but only two million and a half were obtained. The interest on the debt was unpaid; the ordinary expenses of the government were unprovided for. The existing form of government was an acknowledged failure. Something better had to be devised, or the tie which bound the thirteen States would be severed.

1787 A.D. Hamilton obtained the sanction of Congress to his proposal that a convention of delegates from the several States should be held. This convention was to review the whole subject of the governing arrangement, and to recommend such alterations as should be considered adequate to the exigencies of the time. Philadelphia, as usual, was the place of meeting. Thither, in the month of May, came the men who were charged with the weighty task of framing a government under which the thirteen States should become a nation.

Fifty-five men composed this memorable council. Among them were the wisest men of whom America, or perhaps any other country, could boast. Washington himself presided. Benjamin Franklin brought to this – his latest and his greatest task – the ripe experience of eighty-two years. New York sent Hamilton – regarding whom Prince Talleyrand said, long afterwards, that he had known nearly all the leading men of his time, but he had never known one on the whole equal to Hamilton. With

these came many others whose names are held in enduring honour. Since the meeting of that first Congress which pointed the way to independence, America had seen no such Assembly.

The convention sat for four months. The great work which occupied it divided the country into two parties. One party feared most the evils which arise from weakness of the governing power, and sought relief from these in a close union of the States under a strong government. Another party dwelt more upon the miserable condition of the over-governed nations of Europe, and feared the creation of a government which might grow into a despotism. The aim of the one was to vest the largest possible measure of power in a central government. Hamilton, indeed – to whom the British Constitution seemed the most perfect on earth – went so far as to desire that the States should be merely great municipalities, attending only, like an English corporation, to their own local concerns. The aim of the other was to circumscribe the powers accorded to the general government – to vindicate the sovereignty of the individual States, and give to it the widest possible scope. These two sets of opinions continued to exist and conflict for three-quarters of a century, till that which assigned an undue dominion to what were called State Rights, perished in the overthrow of the great Rebellion.

Slowly and through endless debate the convention worked out its plan of a government. The scheme was submitted to Congress, and thence sent down to the several States. Months of fiery discussion ensued. Somewhat reluctantly, by narrow majorities, in the face of vehement protests, the Constitution was at length adopted under which the thirteen States were to become so great.

Great Britain has no written Constitution. She has her laws; and it is expected that all future laws shall be in tolerable harmony with the principles on which her past legislation has been founded. But if Parliament were to enact, and the Sovereign to sanction, any law at variance with these principles, there is no help for it. Queen, Lords, and Commons are our supreme authority, from whose decisions there lies no appeal. In America it is different. There the supreme authority is a written Constitution. Congress may unanimously enact, and the President may cordially sanction, a new law. Two or three judges, sitting in the same building where Congress meets, may compare that law with the Constitution. If it is found at variance with the Constitution, it is unceremoniously declared to be no law, and entitled to no man's obedience. With a few alterations, this Constitution remains in full force now – gathering around it, as it increases in age, the growing reverence of the people. The men who framed it must have been very wise. The people for whom it was framed must possess in high degree the precious Anglo-Saxon veneration for law. Otherwise the American paper Constitution must long ago have shared the fate of the numerous documents of this class under which the French vainly sought rest during their first Revolution.

Each of the thirteen States was sovereign, and the government of America hitherto had been merely a league of independent powers. Now the several States parted with a certain amount of their sovereignty, and vested it in a General Government. The General Government was to levy taxes, to coin money, to regulate commercial relations with foreign countries, to establish post-offices and post-roads, to establish courts of law, to declare war, to raise and maintain armies and navies, to make treaties, to borrow money on the credit of the United States. The individual States expressly relinquished the right to perform these sovereign functions.

These powers were intrusted to two Houses of Legislation and a President. The House of Representatives is composed of two hundred and forty-three members. The members hold their seats for two years, and are paid five thousand dollars annually. Black men and Indians were not allowed to vote; but all white men had a voice in the election of their representatives. To secure perfect equality of representation, members are distributed according to population. Thus, in 1863 a member was given to every 124,000 inhabitants. Every ten years a readjustment takes place, and restores the equality which the growth of the intervening period has disturbed.

The large States send necessarily a much larger number of members to the Lower House than the small States do. Thus New York sends thirty-one, while Rhode Island sends only two, Delaware and Florida only one. The self-love of the smaller States was wounded by an arrangement which

resembled absorption into the larger communities. The balance was redressed in the constitution of the Upper Chamber – the Senate. That body is composed of seventy-six members, elected by the legislatures of the States. Every State, large or small, returns two members. The small States were overborne in the Lower House, but in the Senate they enjoyed an importance equal to that of their most populous neighbours. The senators are elected for six years, and are paid at the same rate as the members of the House of Representatives.

The head of the American Government is the President. He holds office for four years. Each State chooses a number of persons equal to the total number of members whom it returns to the Houses of Legislation. These persons elect the President. They elect also a Vice-President, lest the President should be removed by death or otherwise during his term of office. All laws enacted by Congress must be submitted to the President. He may refuse to pass them – sending them back with a statement of his objections. But should both Houses, by a vote of two-thirds of their number, adhere to the rejected measures, they become law in spite of the President's veto. The President appoints his own Cabinet Ministers, and these have no seats in Congress. Their annual reports upon the affairs of their departments are communicated to Congress by the President, along with his own Message. The President is Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy. With concurrence of the Senate, he appoints ambassadors, judges of the Supreme Court, and other public officers.

Every State has a government after the same pattern, composed of two Houses of Legislation and a Governor. These authorities occupy themselves with the management of such affairs as exclusively concern their own State, and have, therefore, not been relinquished to the General Government. They legislate in regard to railway and other public companies. They see to the administration of justice within their own territory, unless in the case of crimes committed against the Government. They pass such laws as are required in regard to private property and rights of succession. Above all, they retained all the powers of which they were ever possessed in regard to slavery. The Constitution gave Congress authority to suppress the importation of slaves after the year 1808. Not otherwise was the slave-question interfered with. That remained wholly under the control of the individual States.

But the men who framed this Constitution, however wise, were liable to err. And if they were found in after years to have erred, what provision – other than a revolution – was made for correcting their mistakes? A very simple and very effective one. When two-thirds of both Houses of Legislation deem it necessary that some amendment of the Constitution should be made, they propose it to the legislatures of the several States. When three-fourths of these judicatories adopt the proposal, it becomes a part of the Constitution. There have been in all fifteen amendments adopted, most of them very soon after the Constitution itself came into existence.

And now the conditions of the great experiment are adjusted. Three million Americans have undertaken to govern themselves. Europe does not believe that any people can prosper in such an undertaking. Europe still clings to the belief that, in every country, a few Heaven-sent families must guide the destinies of the incapable, child-like millions. America – having no faith in Heaven-sent families – believes that the millions are the best and safest guides of their own destinies, and means to act on that belief. On her success great issues wait. If the Americans show that they can govern themselves, all the other nations will gradually put their hands to the same ennobling work.

1789 A.D. The first step to be taken under the new Constitution was to elect a President. There was but one man who was thought of for this high and untried office. George Washington was unanimously chosen. Congress was summoned to meet in New York on the 4th of March. But the members had to travel far on foot, or on horseback. Roads were bad, bridges were few; streams, in that spring-time, were swollen. It was some weeks after the appointed time before business could be commenced.

That Congress had difficult work to do, and it was done patiently, with much plain sense and honesty. As yet there was no revenue, while everywhere there was debt. The General Government

had debt, and each of the States had debt. There was the Foreign Debt – due to France, Holland, and Spain. There was the Army Debt – for arrears of pay and pensions. There was the Debt of the Five Great Departments – for supplies obtained during the war. There was a vast issue of paper money to be redeemed. There were huge arrears of interest. And, on the other hand, there was no provision whatever for these enormous obligations.

Washington, with a sigh, asked a friend, "What is to be done about this heavy debt?" "There is but one man in America can tell you," said his friend, "and that is Alexander Hamilton." Washington made Hamilton Secretary to the Treasury. The success of his financial measures was immediate and complete. "He smote the rock of the national resources," said Daniel Webster, "and abundant streams of revenue gushed forth. He touched the dead corpse of the public credit, and it sprang upon its feet." All the war debts of the States were assumed by the General Government. Efficient provision was made for the regular payment of interest, and for a sinking fund to liquidate the principal. Duties were imposed on shipping, on goods imported from abroad, and on spirits manufactured at home. The vigour of the Government inspired public confidence, and commerce began to revive. In a few years the American flag was seen on every sea. The simple manufactures of the country resumed their long interrupted activity. A National Bank was established. Courts were set up, and judges were appointed. The salaries of the President and the great functionaries were settled. A home was chosen for the General Government on the banks of the Potomac; where the capital of the Union was to supplant the little wooden village – remote from the agitations which arise in the great centres of population. Innumerable details connected with the establishment of a new government were discussed and fixed. Novel as the circumstances were, little of the work then done has required to be undone. Succeeding generations of Americans have approved the wisdom of their early legislators, and continue unaltered the arrangements which were framed at the outset of the national existence.

Thirty years of peace succeeded the War of Independence. There were, indeed, passing troubles with the Indians, ending always in the sharp chastisement of those disagreeable savages. 1804 A.D. There was an expedition against Tripoli, to avenge certain indignities which the barbarians of that region had offered to American shipping. There was a misunderstanding with the French Directory, which was carried to a somewhat perilous extreme. 1789 A.D. A desperate fight took place between a French frigate and an American frigate, resulting in the surrender of the former. But these trivial agitations did not disturb the profound tranquillity of the nation, or hinder its progress in that career of prosperity on which it had now entered.

Washington was President during the first eight years of the Constitution. 1799 A.D. He survived his withdrawal from public life only three years, dying, after a few hours' illness, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. His countrymen mourned him with a sorrow sincere and deep. Their reverence for him has not diminished with the progress of the years. Each new generation of Americans catches up the veneration – calm, intelligent, but profound – with which its fathers regarded the blameless Chief. To this day there is an affectionate watchfulness for opportunities to express the honour in which his name is held. To this day the steamers which ply upon the Potomac strike mournful notes upon the bell as they sweep past Mount Vernon, where Washington spent the happiest days of his life, and where he died.

CHAPTER XV
THE WAR WITH GREAT BRITAIN

America was well contented during many years to be merely a spectator of the Great European War. In spite of some differences which had arisen, she still cherished a kindly feeling towards France – her friend in the old time of need. She had still a bitter hatred to England, her tyrant, as she deemed, and her cruel foe. But her sympathies did not regulate her policy. She had no call to avenge the dishonour offered to royalty by the people of France. As little was it her business to strengthen

France against the indignation of outraged monarchs. Her distance exempted her from taking any part in the bloody politics of Europe, and she was able to look quietly on while the flames of war consumed the nations of the Old World. Her ships enjoyed a monopoly. She traded impartially with all the combatants. The energies of Europe were taxed to the uttermost by a gigantic work of mutual destruction. The Americans conveyed to the people thus unprofitably occupied the foreign articles of which they stood in need, and made great gain of their neighbours' madness.

1806 A.D. But the time came when France and England were to put forth efforts more gigantic than before, to compass the ruin of each other. England gave out a decree announcing that all the coasts of France and her allies were in a state of blockade, and that any vessels attempting to trade with the blockaded countries were liable to seizure. At that time nearly all the Continent was in alliance with France. Napoleon replied by declaring the British Isles in a state of blockade. These decrees closed Europe against American vessels. Many captures were made, especially by English cruisers. American merchants suffered grievous losses, and loudly expressed their just wrath against the wicked laws which wrought them so much evil.

There was another question out of which mischief arose. England has always maintained that any person who has once been her subject can never cease to be so. He may remove to another country; he may become the citizen of another state. English law recognizes no such transaction. England claims that the man is still an English subject – entitled to the advantages of that relation, and bound by its obligations. America, on the other hand, asserted that men could lay down their original citizenship, and assume another – could transfer their allegiance – could relinquish the privileges and absolve themselves from the obligations which they inherited. The Englishmen who settled on her soil were regarded by her as American citizens and as nothing else.

Circumstances arose which bestowed dangerous importance upon these conflicting doctrines. England at that time obtained sailors by impressment. That is to say, she seized men who were engaged on board merchant vessels, and compelled them to serve on board her ships of war. It was a process second only to the slave-trade in its iniquity. The service to which men were thus introduced could not but be hateful. There was a copious desertion, as opportunity offered, and America was the natural refuge. English ships of war claimed the right to search American vessels for men who had deserted; and also for men who, as born English subjects, were liable to be impressed. It may well be believed that this right was not always exercised with a strict regard to justice. It was not always easy to distinguish an Englishman from an American. Perhaps the English captains were not very scrupulous as to the evidence on which they acted. The Americans asserted that six thousand men, on whom England had no shadow of claim, were ruthlessly carried off to fight under a flag they hated; the English Government admitted the charge to the extent of sixteen hundred men. The American people vehemently resented the intolerable pretension of England. Occasionally an American ship resisted it, and blood was freely shed.

1807 A.D. When England and France decreed the closing of all European ports against commerce, America hastened to show that she could be as unwise as her neighbours. Congress prohibited commerce with the European powers which had so offended. The people, wiser than their rulers, disapproved this measure; but the Government enforced it. The President was empowered to call out militia and employ armed vessels to prevent cargoes of American produce from leaving the country. It was hoped that England and France, thus bereaved of articles which were deemed necessary, would be constrained to repeal their injurious decrees.

Thus for four years commerce was suspended, and grass grew on the idle wharves of New York and Philadelphia. The cotton and tobacco of the Southern States, the grain and timber of the North, were stored up to await the return of reason to the governing powers of the world. Tens of thousands of working people were thrown idle. The irritation of the impoverished nation was fast ripening towards war.

America wanted now the wise leadership which she enjoyed at the period of her revolutionary struggle. Washington had never ceased to urge upon his countrymen the desirableness of being on good terms with England. But Washington was dead, and his words were not remembered. Franklin was dead, Hamilton had fallen by the murdering hand of Aaron Burr. There was a strong party eager for war. The commercial towns on the sea-board dreaded the terrible ships of England, and desired to negotiate for redress of grievances. The people of the interior, having no towns to be bombarded, preferred to try their strength with England in battle. Some attempts at negotiation resulted in failure. June 18, 1812 A.D. At length Congress ended suspense by passing a Bill which declared war against Great Britain.

It was a bolder challenge than America supposed it to be. England, indeed, had her hands full, for the power of her great foe seemed to be irresistible. But even then the axe was laid to its roots. In that same month of June Napoleon crossed the river Niemen and entered Russia upon his fatal march to Moscow. A few weeks before, the Duke of Wellington had wrenched from his grasp the two great frontier fortresses of Spain, and was now beginning to drive the French armies out of the Peninsula. England would soon have leisure for her new assailant; but all this was as yet unseen.

When war was declared, England possessed one thousand ships of war, and America possessed twenty. Their land forces were in like proportion. England had nearly a million of men under arms. America had an army reckoned at twenty-four thousand, many of them imperfectly disciplined and not yet to be relied upon in the field. Her treasury was empty. She was sadly wanting in officers of experience. She had declared war, but it was difficult to see what she could do in the way of giving effect to her hostile purposes.

But she held to these purposes with unfaltering tenacity. Four days after Congress had resolved to fight, England repealed those blockading decrees which had so justly offended the Americans. There remained now only the question of the right of search. The British Minister at Washington proposed that an attempt should be made to settle peaceably this sole remaining ground of quarrel. The proposal was declined. The American war party would not swerve from its unhappy determination. The first efforts of the Americans were signally unsuccessful. They attacked Canada with an army of two thousand five hundred men. But this force had scarcely got upon Canadian ground when it was driven back. August, 1812 A.D. It was besieged in Fort Detroit by an inferior British army and forced to surrender. The unfortunate General Hull, who commanded, was brought to trial by his angry countrymen and sentenced to be shot. He was pardoned, however, in consideration of former services.

A second invasion followed, closed by a second surrender. During two other campaigns the Americans prosecuted their invasion. Ships were built and launched upon the great lakes which lie between the territories of the combatants. Sea-fights were fought, in one of which the American triumph was so complete that all the British vessels surrendered. Many desperate engagements took place on shore. Some forts were captured; some towns were burned. Many women and children were made homeless; many brave men were slain. But the invaders made no progress. Everywhere the Canadians, with the help of the regular troops, were able to hold their own. It was a coarse method of solving the question which was in dispute between the countries, and it was utterly fruitless.

At sea a strange gleam of good fortune cheered the Americans. It was there England felt herself omnipotent. She, with her thousand ships, might pardonably despise the enemy who came against her with twenty. But it was there disaster overtook her.

1812 A.D. During the autumn months a series of encounters took place between single British and American ships. In every instance victory remained with the Americans. Five English vessels were taken or destroyed. The Americans were in most of these engagements more heavily manned and armed than their enemies. But the startling fact remained. Five British ships of war had been taken in battle by the Americans; five defeats had been sustained by England. Her sovereignty of the sea had received a rude shock.

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