

CHAPTER V

ENGLISH LIFE AND THE AMERICAN COLONIES IN 1775

I

THE first four years of Fox's career matter little in the interpretation of his political character. When he left office in 1774, he had displayed a brilliant talent, but without authority or depth of conviction. To ask for matured responsibility in a statesman at the age of twenty-five is to be unhumorously exacting. It is enough that once he had broken with the Tory leaders, he regarded his early connection with them as an indiscretion, upon which there was no need to waste penitential tears. It would be too much to say that his parliamentary gifts had so far been put to merely frivolous uses, but in those early sessions we hear a skilful player tuning his instrument rather than a prelude indicating what was to follow. Faction does not dignify itself in reproaching the fame of a great man with the caprices of intellectual adolescence.

His personal behaviour to his chief is not quite so easily excused. In bringing the government, of which he was a member, into derision, he indulged the temper of an undergraduate "rag." To Fox's incipient liberalism, North must sometimes have been an exasperating leader, and it is fair to add that immediately Charles found himself at variance with authority on a serious political issue, he resigned. But even so, he seems in those days more than once to have strained propriety to the extreme limit of high spirits. It must nevertheless be remembered that party cohesion was not then the principle of administration that it has since become; that even a cabinet minister could dissociate himself publicly from his colleagues, and keep his place. Further, North conducted government not by party under control

of the public will, but by faction under control of the King's. Ministers whose opinion was rarely asked and never honoured, and who realised that they might be dropped at any moment at the sovereign's pleasure, knew nothing of the ties of loyalty by which the cabinet system was later to be bound.

Charles Fox was now, in 1774, twenty-five years of age. In July of the same year, a lank, pale boy of fifteen returned to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, having been nursed back to some health after a breakdown in his first term. As a child he had shown remarkable promise, beyond the usual blank verse tragedy, in this instance called *Laurentius, King of Clarinium*. His mother, Lady Chatham, with a maternal partiality no less cordial than Lady Holland's, had written in 1772: "The fineness of William's mind makes him enjoy with the highest pleasure what would be above the reach of any other creature of his small age." Above all, under his father's incomparable direction, he was already a sedulous orator, trained in "sonorous elocution" by a daily recitation from Shakespeare or Milton, and expanding his vocabulary by translations at sight from the classics. Such accomplishments are, indeed, not uncommon in youths of fifteen; the distinction being that while in most cases there is no advance beyond these early good intentions, William Pitt in ten years' time was to be Prime Minister of England.

In the meantime, another little boy had been no less the object of parental solicitude, but with far less promising results. On the day of Charles Fox's dismissal, the Queen, who had now been married thirteen years, was delivered of her tenth child, Adolphus Frederick, Duke of Cambridge, who lived on till 1850. His eldest brother, George, Prince of Wales, now twelve years of age, was being brought up on the principle of strict confinement from the contagions of the world. His doting father had him dressed and de-

livered at punctual hours for the royal promenade, told him to be a good fellow, and for the rest left him to his tutor, Markham of Westminster, to treat him and the Duke of York as "the sons of any private gentleman," which Markham did with applications of the birch and a generous display of pedantry. But the small prince had a great deal of difficulty in ascertaining what it was all about. It all seemed very stiff and cold, and nobody troubled to explain things to him. "I wish anybody would tell me what I ought to do; nobody gives me any instructions for my conduct." There were the rules, of course, and the time schedules, and the sums and declensions; but why? It wasn't too bad in a way, and it was jolly to sow wheat in the gardens at Kew and reap it and bake little loaves from the flour for distribution among the royal family. But what was going on in that world outside, from which messengers were always arriving in a hurry, and of which he could sometimes get a furtive glimpse through the palings or the coach window? And why, when Dr. Markham wasn't there and the King did not want him, was he left to himself so much? Though, to be sure, there were friends in the kitchen from whom an extra cake of gingerbread might sometimes be secured. And why was he always getting these disagreeable splotches on his face? Yes, somebody might tell him about it all. But nobody did. There were moments when he couldn't bear it, and then he would take a chance shot with such scraps of gossip as his small mind could pick up in this puzzling home where everything was so secret. Occasionally he scored an unexpected effect. Once, on being punished for an offence that he had not committed, he rushed in a rage to his father's room and screamed outside the door: "Wilkes and Number Forty-Five for ever!" Some day he would teach them; which he did.

To take a little further note of our scene in 1774.

Having as a cockswain fought a bear in the neighbourhood of the North Pole, a midshipman named Horatio Nelson was shortly to be promoted at the age of seventeen to an acting lieutenancy, sailing with a convoy for Gibraltar. In Ireland, the Honourable Arthur Wellesley, aged five, was playing with no knowledge whatever of another small boy, aged five also, who was known in an obscure Corsican family as Napoleon Buonaparte. Rodney, Hood, and Howe were in the full prime of their powers.

II

And, for all it was the eighteenth century, peace had her ebb and flow of heroes no less than war. John Wesley, having ridden a hundred thousand miles on horseback—usually reading the poets and the philosophers—had recently at the age of sixty-nine yielded reluctantly to the persuasion of friends and taken to a carriage. His custom was to rise at four in the morning and preach at five, “one of the healthiest exercises in the world,” and in his seventy-eighth year he was to announce, “By the blessing of God I am just the same as I was in my twenty-eighth.” Joseph Priestley at forty was investigating with equal zest the principles of oxygen and nonconformity, and James Watt, three years younger, was about to enter the Soho Engineering Works at Birmingham, with fantastic notions about steam. At Etruria in Staffordshire, Josiah Wedgwood was producing his jasper ware under patronage of the Queen, and William Herschel at Bath was neglecting music for astronomy, making a five-foot Newtonian reflector with his own hands, and embarking on those heavenly voyages that seven years later were to be crowned by the discovery of Uranus.

The arts, too, were rich in distinction and prophecy. If Handel had departed, Thomas Arne was still there,

and with ampler achievements than "Rule, Britannia!" to his credit. In 1774, Garrick, at the height of his fame, was presiding over the fortunes of Drury Lane, and in the following year a girl of twenty, by name Sarah Siddons, was to appear under his management, failing incisively in the rôle of Juliet. It was reserved for Manchester to recognise her genius a year later. Garrick himself had his mortifications. In 1777 he was commanded to beguile a domestic evening at the Queen's House (Buckingham Palace), and chose a farce of his own composition; "but the comparative coldness with which he was heard by the royal party greatly damped his exertions."

Thomas Gainsborough had recently come up to town from Bath, and was disputing supremacy as a portrait-painter with Reynolds and Romney. Thomas Lawrence was as yet but a boy of five. The great Hogarth had been dead ten years, but Thomas Rowlandson and James Gillray were showing signs of a not unworthy succession in social and political satire. Paul Sandby, born in 1725, had laid the foundations of an exquisite English school of water-colour, that was already being enriched by Alexander Cozens, the Eton drawing-master and reputed son of Peter the Great, and by the yet rarer talent of Alexander's own son, John Robert. The lovely tradition then established came in 1775 under its most fortunate star, for in that year Joseph Mallord, William Turner and Thomas Girtin were born, the trinity of genius being fulfilled seven years later with the birth of John Sell Cotman. In 1773, a boy of ten, by name George Morland, had exhibited at the Royal Academy; three years later John Constable was born. And in the year of Fox's resignation, Robert and James Adam, Esquires, who had recently completed the Adelphi, published the second volume of their *Works in Architecture*; while a new boy at Eton, Richard Porson, was disconcerting his masters by an uncanny dexterity in the classics.

In literature Samuel Johnson at the age of sixty-five enjoyed an undisputed and oracular pre-eminence. Engaged at present on an account of his Journey to the Hebrides, he kept Mr. Boswell in a twitter of delight during an absence from London by sending frequent requests for information by post, and asking for assistance in such matters as forwarding small casks of porter to acquaintances who had been civil to him in Scotland. But one letter, dated July 4, 1774, was heavy with deep and personal sorrow. "Of poor dear Dr. Goldsmith there is little to be told, more than the papers have made publick. He died of a fever, made, I am afraid, more violent by uneasiness of mind. His debts began to be heavy, and all his resources were exhausted. Sir Joshua is of opinion that he owed not less than two thousand pounds. Was ever poet so trusted before?" William Cowper, at Olney, was wrestling in his young middle-age with the terrors of melancholia, supported in a slender hold on sanity by the devotion of Mary Unwin, and by an affecting submission to gentle pursuits that in less dis-tempered moods were yet to enrich the urbanities of English verse. An Ayrshire peasant, at the age of fifteen, was writing his first Poems in the Scottish Dialect. It was a moment when, if a great age was passing, a greater was being born. In 1770, the boy Chatterton had ended his tragedy in starvation, and the same year had seen the birth of William Wordsworth. In 1771 Christopher Smart at the age of forty-nine had died within the rules of the King's Bench, his poor clouded mind recalling snatches of the *Song of David*, his body wasted in penury. On July 30, 1771, Thomas Gray died at Cambridge; and a fortnight later Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh. In 1772, 1774, and 1775 the names of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey and Charles Lamb were added to the roll.

Sheridan belongs more conspicuously to our narrative;

but there are others who may adorn it with a passing word. The official Muse in 1774 was represented by William Whitehead, in the dreary succession of Nahum Tate, Nicholas Rowe, and Lawrence Eusden; himself to be followed by the livelier Thomas Warton and the no livelier Henry James Pye. In 1774, a boy of seventeen was serving his apprenticeship to Basire the engraver, but in his own time William Blake was to be little observed by the world of fashion and authority. George Crabbe, three years older, was preparing in Suffolk for an excursion to London, with a bundle of poems as a precarious passport to attention, of which he was later to receive a civil measure from Fox. Samuel Rogers, who was to live to be over ninety, to know and gossip about everybody, and to see the birth of Edmund Gosse and, bar a few months, of Bernard Shaw, was now a schoolboy receiving the liberal education that should fit him for partnership in his father's banking business.

In 1774, too, Edward Gibbon, still under forty and already intent on Rome, succeeded Goldsmith as Professor in Ancient History at the Royal Academy, with a much more imposing equipment than the poet's somewhat flighty scholarship. But in the Literary Club, founded by Johnson and Reynolds in 1764, but not so named until Garrick's death in 1779, the "kind of sneering infidelity" that Boswell was pained to discover in his "Historical Writings" was an even graver disability than Poor Poll's occasional petulance. The Club members, of whom Gibbon became one in 1774, would hardly at that date notice the misfortunes of the unhappy man who was three years later to be an object of deep anxiety to their presiding spirit. It was in December, 1773, that Walpole noted the disgrace of Dr. Dodd, the macaroni parson, who had made improper approaches to preferment, and had been deprived of his royal chaplaincy.

The subsequent forgery and its miserable expiation were not to engage Johnson's attention till 1777.

But Gibbon was not the only new member distinguished in 1774 by election to the most renowned of clubs. When all the charges against Fox's early years have been heard, no more conclusive testimony to his essential worth and integrity need be advanced than the letter written by Johnson to Boswell on March 5 of that year: "We have added to the Club, Charles Fox, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr. Fordyce, and Mr. Steevens." Admission to Johnson's hierarchy could be no guarantee for the future; but it was as desirable a certificate of character as the society of that day could award.

III

Horace Walpole, who in 1772 had been out of politics for over four years, but continued to survey the English world with a discrimination that has enlivened the history of an age, wrote on April 7 of that year: "Though I had never been in the House of Commons since I had quitted Parliament, the fame of Charles Fox raised my curiosity, and I went this day to hear him." Walpole was then fifty-five, and too experienced and fastidious a connoisseur of affairs to be taken by sham sensations; Fox was twenty-three. The circumstance of Walpole's visit to the House after so long an absence is in itself significant of the impact that the youthful member had made upon the town. The occasion was Charles's motion for leave to bring in his Marriage Bill, "and he introduced it with ease, grace, and clearness, and without the prepared or elegant formality of a young speaker." Charles took no pains to shine in the substance of his opening, "but his sense and facility showed that he could shine." Burke opposed the motion in a long speech, profuse in metaphor and commanding in diction, but copious above

measure, and resembling "the beginning of a book on speculative doctrines." During this performance, Fox had been moving about the House in animated conversation at large, apparently taking no notice of the member who held the floor. But as Burke finished, he rose, and to Walpole's astonishment answered the elaborate pleadings of the great Irishman with a fluent precision that left no thrust uncountered. As the advancing years matured those tones of stubborn deliberation that induced the positive Brougham to designate him as, "if not the greatest orator, certainly the most accomplished debater, that ever appeared upon the theatre of public affairs in any age of the world," fluency became less characteristic of Fox's speech. In the height of his powers, it was only at rare moments of excitement that the steady drive of his words approached volubility. But as Walpole listened in 1772, the facile rhetoric of youth had not yet exhausted itself. It was, however, already the instrument of a mind wide in its grasp and sparkling in resource. Charles had returned to the House late from Newmarket, where he had lost a mere thousand or so; he had not been to bed for over twenty-four hours, and he had not prepared the draft of his Bill. And yet he was not for a moment at a loss in presenting his design in coherent and lucid form. "This," exclaims Walpole, "was genius—was almost inspiration." Without partiality, Walpole noted the judgment, the courage, the dawning of an essential truthfulness, that were already beyond the reach of virtuosity, and concluded: "If Fox once reflects and abandons his vices, in which he is as proud of shining as by his parts, he will excel Burke." And in a letter on the same occasion to Sir Horace Mann, he wrote: "[Tully's] laboured orations are puerile in comparison with this boy's manly vigour." Such was the impression made upon this shrewdest of observers by the man who two years later, with augmented powers,

woke to a sense of his public destiny, and cut loose from a party with which his maturing conscience could have no ties. It is with justice that Lord John Russell observes: "In 1774 we may place the real commencement of Mr. Fox's political career."

Mr. Reginald Lucas, in his valuable if seasonably prejudiced *Life of Lord North*, quotes Sir George Trevelyan as saying, "Never was there a man whose faults were so largely those of his time, whilst his eminent merits and enormous services to his country were so peculiarly his own." Mr. Lucas replies that "his faults were manifold and conspicuous enough," but that "we shall find some difficulty in discovering what were the enormous services that he rendered to his country." It all depends on the point of view. If patriotic service consists merely in beating the Froggies or making the damned Yanks run, and in planting suitable flags from pole to pole, then Fox little merits the admiration of his countrymen. But if to find that corruption in your own house is even more intolerable than it is elsewhere; if to care more for honour than for gain; if to insist on toleration in thought and speech; if, in short, to have been, more perhaps than any other man, the origin of much that is best in English liberalism, its courage and generosity and far-sightedness, is to deserve the gratitude of Englishmen, then Fox's place in our national life is a secure and eminent one. And his honour is enhanced when we remember that he laid these foundations in an age when Wilkes with his claims for the most elementary public rights was regarded as a portent, and that he himself was born and bred in a society in which a fawning self-interest was the most respectable of motives. Chatham's powerful rhetoric, magnificently supported by the intrepidity of heroes on sea and land, could show the world that Britons never would be slaves, but the ruling classes, to which Fox belonged, contaminated even this rudimentary patriotism

with the paltry intrigues of avarice. So far, at the dictates of expediency and with questionable candour, they might be persuaded to go; that there could be a yet deeper patriotism never came into the range of their speculation. Liberalism still has to endure taunts that readily inflame reactionary sentiment, but liberalism is to-day a compact body well able to withstand such onsets. Fox in his time had to endure the taunts almost alone, and they left him unintimidated. Speaking in the House of Commons in 1815, Sir James Mackintosh used these remarkable words: "When Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox exhorted Great Britain to be wise in relation to America, and just towards Ireland, they were called Americans and Irishmen. But they considered it as the greatest of all human calamities to be unjust. They thought it worse to inflict than to suffer wrong: and they rightly thought themselves then most really Englishmen, when they most laboured to dissuade England from tyranny." And, in more detail, Lord John Russell advances the same view: "It was the task of Mr. Fox to vindicate, with partial success, but with brilliant ability, the cause of freedom and the interests of mankind. He resisted the mad perseverance of Lord North in the project of subduing America. He opposed the war undertaken by Mr. Pitt against France, as unnecessary and unjust. He proved himself at all times the friend of religious liberty, and endeavoured to free both the Protestant and Roman Catholic dissenter from disabilities on account of their religious faith. He denounced the slave trade. He supported at all times a reform of the House of Commons." Such resolution is high testimony to character at the most favourable times; in Fox under George III. it was heroic. The American Revolution first brought it into play.

IV

The Peace of Paris in 1763, which closed the Seven Years War, had established British control in the continent of North America. For a hundred and fifty years the territories of the New World had been disputed by Spanish, French, Dutch and English settlers, boundaries being gradually defined in a succession of wars, raids, treaties and charters. Exploited and oppressed in turn by each of the rival interests, the American Indians had dwindled towards extermination in an epic tale of fortitude and cruelty. A strange diversity of character had gone to the founding and development of the colonies, governed by as wide a diversity of motive. Fugitives from religious persecution, soldiers and merchants of fortune, evangelists and undischarged debtors, prophets in the wilderness and prophets at ten per cent., pioneers led by hope and prodigals driven by despair—all had assembled in these precarious origins of the United States. And while the communities of the Atlantic seaboard had been progressing towards social and economic prosperity, no race had been so adventurous as the French in opening up the immense fertility that stretched away towards the west. When, therefore, the Paris treaty gave the rewards of colonisation exclusively into British hands, the French population of America conceived a very natural distaste for their Anglo-Saxon neighbours. When these neighbours decided to revolt against their mother-country, they had to reckon not only with the British crown, but also with the French settlers. In the same way, the Indians had no quarrel with a King who lived across an incalculable expanse of waters. It was, indeed, not until his redcoats came so spectacularly on to the scene that George III. was even a name to the warriors of the Five Nations. But his name then was an enchanted one, for his redcoats came as deliverers. The English pale-faces of

New England had been terrible enemies; their governors had even offered rewards—in one case no less than a hundred pounds apiece—for Indian scalps. And now the marching files, so splendidly dressed, had come from the great King to chastise the men who had done these things. Why the English King should be fighting Englishmen, the Indian was not curious to know. For the Indian, like the French, formed a natural alliance with a mother-country, of whom he knew nothing, against her American colonists, of whom he knew a great deal too much.

Without attempting even to summarise the history of New World colonisation, one or two capital considerations must be noted here. The colonies at the time of which we are writing were thirteen in number.* Their trade was a very valuable asset to the mother-country, its profits being estimated at the then important figure of two millions annually. The origins of the separate communities differed greatly in character: Pennsylvania, for example, was the territorial expansion of William Penn's Quaker settlement at Philadelphia; the Carolinas were founded by lawless elements that, unable to accommodate themselves to the order of existing colonies, inaugurated an irregular society of their own, living in a state not far removed from outlawry, and distinguishing themselves for ever in American history by the institution of negro slavery; while New Jersey, when it was partitioned from the older colony of New York, opened its account in the full enjoyment of a settled and liberal constitution. In the same way, the charters under which the thirteen colonies operated were of many kinds, instruments sometimes of public commonweal, and sometimes of little more than private corruption. But they proclaimed one principle in common—that the colony was to be subject

* Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

to the crown of England, but that taxation could be levied within the colony only by its own representatives. The terms of this agreement were not always identical, and in some cases were not even specifically defined, but it was recognised, always by custom and usually by legal sanction, that the American colonist was outside the scope of direct levies made by the English exchequer.

For more than a century various expedients had been contrived by the mother-country for the purpose of tapping a source of revenue that was closed to the tax-collector. Most obnoxious among these were the Navigation Acts, whereby colonial imports and exports could be carried by none but English vessels, which meant enforced contributions from all colonial trade with foreign countries, and even from intercolonial trade itself. These measures were resisted, and often openly set at defiance, but the home government persisted in attempting to maintain them. Colonial manufactures were discouraged as being an invasion of the British markets, and the direct exchange of commodities between one colony and another was forbidden. If Rhode Island wanted hats from Georgia, it had to get them through the agency of British merchants. Under these conditions smuggling became a general practice, and the colonists lost no opportunity of showing their disrespect for legislation that they considered to be devoid of equity. Of a million and a half pounds of tea consumed by them yearly, it is said that not ten per cent. conformed to regulations by passing through English ports. Inevitably a mood of hostility developed between the crown and its American dependents. The devices adopted by the colonists to assert what they conceived to be their natural rights were viewed by ministers at home as acts of rebellion. Any concerted policy of reconciliation based on mutual interest was beyond the imagination of George III. and his Friends, and more and more they accustomed their

minds to the necessity of suppressing the incipient danger of revolt. The operation of the Navigation Acts was stiffened, and fresh impositions were laid. For a time resistance did not go beyond private evasion of the law, and a public demand for representation in the British House of Commons. The evasion was penalised wherever it could be exposed, and the demand received no serious consideration. English statesmanship was unable to get beyond a manifestly confused doctrine that while the propriety or even the legality of taxing the colonies was questionable, colonial establishment was possible only on such principles as those of the Navigation Acts, which gave taxation an undisguised approval. In 1765, George Grenville, Chancellor of the Exchequer, a leading exponent of this official casuistry, passed his notorious Stamp Act, whereby over fifty separate duties were imposed on the colonists, ranging from a halfpenny on one-sheet newspapers to documentary stamps of ten pounds. Popular feeling in America was roused to a fury hardly controlled by the misgivings of more moderate counsellors who pleaded that submission to injury was better than the disasters that might be precipitated by organised resistance. Patrick Henry excited the Virginian House of Burgesses to cries of "Treason! Treason!" as he reminded George III. that Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles I. his Cromwell, but, treason or no treason, the warning was echoed throughout the colonies. Riots were of frequent occurrence, Lord Bute and other unpopular personages were burnt in effigy, stamp-offices were destroyed by mobs composed largely of sober and responsible citizens, and a congress of the colonies was summoned to New York for the purpose of repudiating the odious Act. It met, acknowledged the supremacy of the crown, and declared the colonies that it represented to be outside the jurisdiction of the King's revenue officers. In 1776, the older Pitt exclaimed in the House of Commons: "I

rejoice that America has resisted. . . . In a just cause of quarrel you may crush America to atoms, but in this crying injustice I am one who will lift up my hands against it. . . . America, if she fell, would fall like the strong man; she would embrace the pillars of the state, and pull down the constitution along with her." In the same year the Stamp Act was repealed, but the machinery for obtaining colonial revenue under the old pretences was again tightened up. New taxes were levied, and it became a point of national honour among the colonists to boycott goods to which they applied.

V

The word "national" is used in this connection advisedly. Whatever the faults of policy and temper may have been, on either side in the quarrel between Great Britain and her American colonies, the first capital consequence of that quarrel was that the separate communities, under what they conceived to be a common injustice, were rapidly forming a common consciousness. It was a process of which the official mind in England was sublimely unaware, and one of which the colonists themselves for long had but a very imperfect realisation. Whether an America developing to its full powers as part of the British Empire would have been a blessing or a misfortune to the world, it is idle to speculate, but it is certain that fiscal demands of the home government and the manner of their presentation stirred an instinct of national unity in the colonies, that once it had taken root could lead to nothing but separation in the end. In the meantime, a few men alone in either country felt dimly what was going forward. While Lord North was announcing that he would or would not do this or that until he saw America prostrate at his feet, Edmund Burke was signalling his first appearance in parliament by advocating

a recognition of the colonial claims that he was to support with so steady an eloquence in the coming days, and in America George Washington, seeing the trade of his people crippled and their liberties encroached upon by the increasing activities of the royal billet-sergeants and press-masters, wrote to a friend that "our lordly masters in Great Britain" were clearly set on the destruction of American freedom, and that as a last resource, no man should hesitate to "use arms in defence of so valuable a blessing." In 1770, North, a little undecided now as to the doctrine of prostration, removed the offending duties save that on tea. For a time the situation quietened, but the concessions were not followed by any determined effort to give real safeguards to colonial interests, and while the Navigation Acts continued to take effect, the military governors of the crown became increasingly severe in their edicts. In 1772 a schooner that had been sent to patrol the coast of Rhode Island in search of smugglers was seized and burnt by the citizens of Providence. The tea duties became a storm centre, and bodies of colonists were organised in the seaboard states to prevent the landing of any consignments of tea from English ports. On December 16, 1773, the famous Tea Party, news of which we have seen Horace Walpole recording in his journal, took place in Boston.

Punitive steps were at once taken by the King. The Boston Port Act was passed, forbidding any vessel to discharge goods at that city; other measures legalised a standing army to maintain crown interests in the colonies, gave additional powers to the military governors, tampered with existing charters, and ordained redistribution of certain territories. Protests against these enactments were summarily dismissed by the military authorities. Another congress of colonies was summoned, and met at Philadelphia in September, 1774. George Washington was a delegate; Patrick Henry, in words that might have

startled the complacency of Westminster, declared: "I am not a Virginian, but an American." The claims of the crown to direct taxation of America and to garrison the colonies in time of peace at the expense of the colonists, were repudiated in formal resolutions. Hardly anyone as yet discussed independence openly as an issue. Washington himself still regarded the idea as outside the designs of "any thinking man in all North America." In a letter written in this year, he says: "I think I can announce it as a fact, that it is not the wish or interest of government, or any other upon this continent, separately or collectively, to set up for independence." But he and thousands of others were now resolved never to give way in their demand for autonomy in their domestic affairs. The astonishing thing is that the authorities in England did not for a moment pause to consider whether the demand was reasonable. That subjects overseas should question the beneficent wisdom of His Majesty's government was not to be tolerated—that was the compass of the ministerial view. Since these subjects were in fact presuming in this way, only one conclusion was possible—they must very severely be taught a lesson.

And so General Gage, Governor of Massachusetts, was ordered to teach it. He proceeded to mobilise his political and military forces, only to find himself confronted by preparations of an exceedingly alarming nature. Throughout the New England states, the colonists were forming themselves into bands of "minute-men"—men pledged to take up arms on the spot at a minute's warning. It was computed that twelve thousand of them were already thus enlisted. The King at home continued fondly to hope that with a little energetic action in the House "this arduous business will be gone through with much less trouble than was supposed"; he was delighted to observe "the feebleness and futility" of the opposition to the Port of Boston Bill; he derived "infinite satis-

faction" from Lord North's conduct of the Bill for the better Administration of Justice in the Massachusetts Bay, directed chiefly against the lawless Bostonians, and he was edified by reports (July, 1774) that the insurgents seemed much dispirited by the arrival of troops in Boston, and would undoubtedly be brought to a "speedy submission." In September a less confident tone asserts itself: "The dye is now cast, the Colonies must either submit or triumph. I do not wish to come to severer measures, but we must not retreat. . . . I have no objection afterwards to their seeing, that there is no inclination for the present to lay fresh taxes upon them, but I am clear there must always be one tax to keep up the right, and as such I approve of the Tea-Duty." This, it will be noted, is nine months after the Bostonians had demonstrated that they did not approve of it at all.

On November 18 the King writes, again to North: "I am not sorry that the line of conduct seems now chalked out . . . the New English Governments are in a state of rebellion, blows must decide whether they are to be subject to this country or independent." At this point Gage recommended temporising measures; the King instantly replied, through North: "His idea of suspending the Acts appears to me the most absurd that can be suggested. The people are ripe for mischief, upon which the mother-country adopts suspending the measures she has thought necessary; this must suggest to the colonies a fear that alone prompts them to their present violence; we must either master them or totally leave them to themselves and treat them as aliens. I do not by this mean to insinuate that I am for advising new measures: but I am for supporting those already undertaken."

On November 29 a new parliament assembled, and on the next day the King in his address strongly denounced the revolting colonies. The Lords and the Commons responded in unison. In the Upper House Pitt, now Lord

Chatham, raised an unheeded protest: "I contend not for indulgence, but for justice to America . . . tyranny, whether ambitioned by an individual part of the legislature, or by the bodies who compose it, is equally intolerable to all British subjects. . . . All attempts to impose servitude on such men, to establish despotism over a mighty continental nation, must be vain, must be futile. . . . Woe be to him who sheds the first, the inexpiable drop of blood, in an impious war with a people contending in the great cause of public liberty." Burke, who a few months before on the same theme had declared that "nothing in this world can read so awful and so instructive a lesson, as the conduct of Ministry in this business, upon the mischief of not having large and liberal ideas in the management of great affairs," and had charged his hearers to "reflect how you are to govern a people who think they ought to be free and think they are not. . . ." adding, "such is the state of America, that after wading up to your eyes in blood, you could only end just where you had begun," pleaded with the Commons to give heed to a petition from the City of London for a fair investigation of colonial claims, and was as little heeded as Chatham. North and the King had the parliamentary vote firmly in hand, and it was announced in plain terms that no argument was to be permitted. Unconditional submission was the minimum demand to be made. This temper could now meet with but one response from the temper of the colonists. Long years of unprincipled misgovernment were at last to be brought to reckoning. Actual hostilities did not commence until April, 1775, by which time the voice of Charles Fox had joined with no uncertainty in the dispute.