

I will not dwell on this subject. Their eyes seemed to be opening, just as they are drowning.

[Concluded in our next.]

WILLIAMSBURG, August 14.

The following is a true Copy of a HANDBILL written by Mr. MA-DUIT, under the direction of Lord HORTH, and circulated by order of Administration.

ARTHUR LEE.

PARIS, April 8, 1778.

SO long as there were any hope of preserving the American empire we could not begin a treaty with acknowledging the American independence in the first article, because they might have broke off the treaty as soon as they had gained that first article, and made use of the concession to justify other nations in trading with them, and we could not then have taken foreign ships that came upon their coasts. That precaution is now useless, for France will treat and trade with them; and if France will do it, we can have no interest in keeping other nations from trading with them too; rather let other nations come in for a part than France have the whole. The Americans will now be supplied from France with all military stores whether we will or not, and (if we go to war) with ships and men, and all they want for their defence and our annoyance. All hope of conquest is therefore over. America stands on high ground; France and England must now court her. We have no possible chance of making peace with them but by an immediate act of parliament giving her perfect independence. If we pretend to retain any authority over them, we immediately throw them into the arms of France, and oblige them to look up to France as their protectors and defenders, by whose aid only they can gain and secure what they call their liberty. If this be not done immediately, and an act passed and sent over before they hear of a commencement of hostilities between France and us, the Americans will then become associates with France in a common cause, and a common war against us; and after that alliance we shall be at the mercy not only of the Americans, but of the French. Now we may treat with America only, and having their independence granted them, they have no reason to desire the continuance of war with us. If we drive them to a close alliance with France in a war against us, our future treaty with America must be made by the concurrence of France, who will excite them to make the most extravagant claims, in order to delay the peace, and alienate them so much the more from us. To retain them as subjects is now impossible; the only hope left is to regain them as friends. But they never will be friends with us so long as they have any thing to fear from us, by our keeping up any the least claim of authority over them. I need not paint the dreadful consequence of our going to war with both, and how much they can assist each other in all respects against us, but more especially in gaining and giving intelligence peculiar to such a war. Instantly declare them independent, and you have no cause of quarrel with France. We have no reason to differ with France for having declared them free states when we have done it ourselves. The Americans will then have full liberty to trade with which nation they please; they will like best to trade with both, and we shall have our full share. Their manners, habits, and clothing, are now English. If we instantly declare their independence, they will continue so; if we continue a long war with them, they will in time be totally gallicized and estranged from us, and prefer French manufactures, of all kinds, to ours. Their children will be sent to France for their education, to learn the French language (as Franklin has begun already) and to be apprenticed in French houses, and set up French factories, &c. Could we be sure of prevailing at last against France and them, we could gain nothing by victory, at the end of a long war, that could compensate for that estrangement of their affections and habits from the English manners and manufactures, which the Americans would contract in that period, to say nothing of the heavy debt we must have incurred, even if our funds should hold out so long, which will enhance the price of our labourers and manufactures above that of other nations, and all this expence of the war incurred to no purpose. Should hostilities be commenced between France and us, yet the sooner this act of independence is passed and sent to them the better. They may not then ratify a French treaty, or at least be less ready to assist the French, when, having

gained what they wanted, they will stand less in need of their help. France has sent this message on purpose to provoke us to go to war, and thereby secure all these good effects to themselves, and to bring down and perpetuate all these evils to England. The menace of it is peculiarly calculated for that purpose. Politicians know no passions or resentments, but consider only what is the nation's interest. For that very reason, because it is the interest of France to provoke us to a war, it is our interest to avoid it till we have made up with America. France may not long refrain. But this makes it so necessary instantaneously to pass an act for American independence, and to hasten a peace with America before we precipitate ourselves into a war with France. There can be no great hurt in recalling our cruizers, and suffering French ships to pass, and then France has no pretence to go to war with us; and the few we should take out of the many that will sail to America will not compensate for the evils of precipitating the rupture. So long as you keep the Americans in fear, by retaining any, even a latent claim of authority over them, so long will they unite together against you. Quit that claim; they will then have each to consider of settling a government for themselves. They may then differ with one another, and some of them may come, in time, to think that they were better off when they were united with England, and offer to return, which they never will do while we are striving with them; so that the only chance we have of recovering some is to give them all up.

PHILADELPHIA, July 25.

IN CONGRESS, July 18, 1778.

A LETTER signed Carlisle, H. Clinton, Wm. Eden, Geo. Johnstone, dated New York, July 11, 1778, and directed "To his Excellency Henry Laurens, the President, and other the Members of Congress," was received and read, whereupon Congress came to the following resolution:

Whereas Congress, in a letter to the British Commissioners of the 17th of June last, did declare that they would be ready to enter upon the consideration of a treaty of peace and commerce, not inconsistent with treaties already subsisting, when the King of Great Britain should demonstrate a sincere disposition for that purpose, and that the only solid proof of this disposition would be an explicit acknowledgement of the independence of these states, or withdrawing his fleets and armies, and whereas neither of these alternatives have been complied with, therefore

Resolved, that no answer be given to the letter of the 11th inst. from the British Commissioners.

Ordered, that the said letter and the foregoing resolution be published.

Extract from the minutes.

CHARLES THOMSON, Sec'ry.

The letter from the BRITISH Commissioners is as follows.

To his Excellency HENRY LAURENS, the President, and other the Members of Congress.

GENTLEMEN,

WE received, soon after our arrival at this place, your answer to our letter of the 10th of June, and are sorry to find on your part any difficulties raised which must prolong the calamities of the present war.

You propose to us as matter of choice one or other of two alternatives, which you state as preliminaries necessary even to the beginning of a negotiation for peace to this empire.

One is an explicit acknowledgment of the independence of these states. We are not inclined to dispute with you about the meaning of words, but so far as you mean the entire privilege of the people of North America to dispose of their property, and to govern themselves without any reference to Great Britain, beyond what is necessary to preserve that union of force, in which our mutual safety and advantage consist, we think that, so far, their independency is fully acknowledged in the terms of our letter of the 10th of June; and we are willing to enter upon a fair discussion with you of all the circumstances that may be necessary to ensure, or even to enlarge, that independency.

In the other alternative, you propose that his Majesty should withdraw his fleets and his armies.