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HISTORY

OF

THE UNITED STATES,

FROM

THE DISCOVERY OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT TO
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

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IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

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P R E F A C E.

THE present volume completes the History of the American Revolution, considered in its causes. The three last explain the rise of the union of the United States from the body of the people, the change in the colonial policy of France, and the consequences of the persevering ambition of Great Britain to consolidate its power over America. The penal Acts of 1774 dissolved the moral connection between the two countries, and began the civil war.

The importance of the subject justified comprehensive research. Of printed works my own collection is not inconsiderable; and whatever else is to be found in the largest public or private libraries, particularly in those of Harvard College, the Boston Athenæum, which is very rich in pamphlets, and the British Museum, have been within my reach.

Still greater instruction was derived from manuscripts. The records of the State-paper Office of Great Britain best illustrate the colonial system of that country. The opportunity of consulting them was granted me by the Earl of Aberdeen, when secretary of state, and continued by Viscount Palmerston, by Earl Grey, and by the Duke of Newcastle. They include the voluminous correspondence of all military and civil officers, and Indian agents, employed in America; memorials of the American Commissioners of Customs; narratives, affidavits, informations, and answers of witnesses, illustrating the most important occurrences; the journals of the Board of Trade; its representations to the king; its intercourse with the secretary of state; the instructions and letters, sent to America, whether from the king, the secretary of state, or the Board of Trade; the elaborate abstracts of documents prepared for the council; opinions of the attorney and solicitor general; and occasionally private letters. I examined these masses of documents slowly and carefully; I had access to

everything that is preserved; and of no paper, however secret it may have been in its day, or whatever its complexion, was a copy refused me.

I owe to Lord John Russell permission to extend my inquiries to the records of the Treasury, of which he at the time was the head; so that all the volumes of its minutes and its letter-books, which could throw light on the subject of my inquiries, came under my inspection.

The proceedings in Parliament till 1774 had something of a confidential character; from sources the most various, private letters, journals, and reports, preserved in France, or England, or in America, I have obtained full and trustworthy accounts of the debates on the days most nearly affecting America.

Many papers, interesting to Americans, are preserved in the British Museum, where I have great reason to remember the considerate attention of Sir Henry Ellis. At the London Institution, in Albemarle-street, also, the secretary, Mr. Barlow, obtained for me leave to make use of its great collection of American military correspondence.

It was necessary to study the character and conduct of the English ministers themselves. Of Chatham's private letters perhaps few remain unpublished; Mr. Disney imparted to me at the Hyde, two volumes of familiar notes, that passed between Chatham and Hollis, full of allusions to America. The Marquis of Lansdowne consented to my request for permission to go through the papers of his father, the Earl of Shelburne, during the three periods of his connection with American affairs; and allowed me to keep them, till by a continued examination and comparison they could be understood in all their aspects. Combined with manuscripts which I obtained in France, they give all the information that can be desired for illustrating Lord Shelburne's relations with America. My thanks are also due to the Duke of Grafton, for having communicated to me unreservedly the autobiography of the third duke of that name, who besides having himself been a prime minister, held office with Rockingham, Chatham, Lord North, and Shelburne. The late Earl of Dartmouth showed me parts of the journal of his grandfather, written while he occupied the highest place at the Board of Trade.

Of all persons in England, it was most desirable to have a just conception of the character of the king. Mr. Everett, when Minister at the Court of St. James, keeping up in his busiest hours the habit of doing kind offices, obtained for me from Lady Charlotte Lindsay, copies of several hundred notes, or abstracts of notes, from George the Third to her father, Lord North. Afterwards I received from Lady Charlotte herself communications of great interest, and her sanction to make such use of the letters as I might desire, even to the printing of them all. Others written by the king in his boyhood to his governor Lord Harcourt, Mr. Harcourt was so obliging as to allow me to peruse at Nuneham.

The controversy between Great Britain and her colonies attracted the attention of all Europe, till at length it became universally the subject of leading interest. To give completeness to this branch of my inquiries, in so far as Great Britain was concerned either as a party or an observer, the necessary documents, after the most thorough and extensive search, were selected from the correspondence with ministers, agents, and others in France, Spain, Holland, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and several of the smaller German Courts, especially Hesse Cassel and Brunswick. The volumes examined for this purpose were very numerous, and the copies for my use reach to all questions directly or indirectly affecting America; to alliances, treaties of subsidy, mediations, and war and peace.

The relations of France to America were of paramount importance. I requested of Mr. Guizot, then the minister, authority to study them in the French archives. "You shall see everything that we have," was his instant answer, enhancing his consent by the manner in which it was given. The promise was most liberally interpreted and most fully redeemed by Mr. Mignet, whose good advice and friendly regard lightened my toils, and left me nothing to desire. Mr. Dumont, the assistant keeper of the archives, under whose immediate superintendence my investigations were conducted, aided them by his constant good will. The confidence reposed in me by Mr. Guizot was continued by Mr. Lamartine, Mr. Drouin de Lhuys, and by Mr. de Tocqueville.

As the Court of France was the centre of European diplomacy, the harvest from its archives was exceedingly great.

There were found the reports of the several French agents sent secretly to the American colonies; there were the papers tracing the origin and progress of the French alliance, including opinions of the ministers, read in the Cabinet Council to the king. Many volumes illustrate the direct intercourse between France and the United States. But besides these, I had full opportunity to examine the subject in its complication with the relations of France to England, Spain, Holland, Prussia, Russia, and other powers; and this I did so thoroughly, that when I took my leave, Mr. Dumont assured me, that I had seen everything; that nothing, not the smallest memorandum, had been withheld from me.

Besides this, I acquired papers from the Ministry of the Marine, and from that of War. The Duke de Broglie gave me a most pleasing journal of his father when in America; Mr. Augustin Thierry favoured me with exact and interesting anecdotes, derived from Lafayette; and my friend Count Circourt was never weary of furthering my inquiries.

My friend Mr. J. Romeyn Brodhead was so kind as to make for me selections of papers in Holland, and I take leave to acknowledge that Mr. J. A. de Zwaan, of the Royal archives at the Hague, was most zealous and unremitting in his efforts to render the researches undertaken for me, effective and complete.

I have obtained so much of Spanish correspondence, as to have become accurately acquainted with the maxims by which the Court of Spain governed its conduct towards our part of America.

Accounts of the differences between America and England are to be sought, not only in the sources already referred to, but specially in the correspondence of the colony agents resident in London with their respective constituents. I pursued the search for papers of this class, till I succeeded in securing letters, official or private, from Bollan; Jasper Mauduit; Richard Jackson—the same who was Grenville's secretary at the Exchequer, a distinguished Member of Parliament, and at one time agent for three colonies;—Arthur Lee; several unpublished ones of Franklin; the copious and most interesting, official and private correspondence of William Samuel Johnson, agent for Connecticut; one letter and frag-