

DECEMBER MEETING.

A stated monthly meeting of the Society was held this day, Thursday, December 13th, at eleven o'clock, A.M.; the President in the chair.

The Librarian announced donations from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; the City of Boston; the American Numismatic and Archæological Society; the American Tract Society, New York; the Chicago Historical Society; the Lawrence Academy, Groton; the New-Hampshire Historical Society; the Suffolk Institute of Archæology and Natural History; the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston; the Editors of "The Advocate"; the Proprietors of the "Savannah Daily Republican"; John Appleton, M.D.; Mr. John Clark; Henry B. Dawson, Esq.; Franklin B. Dexter, Esq.; Ira Divoll, Esq.; Henry W. Haynes, Esq.; Rev. Richard M. Hodges; Benjamin P. Johnson, Esq.; Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy; Orsamus H. Marshall, Esq.; Joel Munsell, Esq.; Captain George H. Preble, U.S.N.; Hon. Alexander H. Rice; Mr. L. W. Schmidt; and from Messrs. Deane, Green, Hillard, Latham, C. Robbins, Sibley, Wheatland, and Winthrop, of the Society.

The President called attention to a copy of a privately printed "Memoir of General Thomas Greely Stevenson," who was killed at Spottsylvania on the 10th of May, 1864, presented by his father, J. Thomas Stevenson, Esq., for which a suitable acknowledgment was directed to be made.

The President referred to the death of our associate, the venerable William Jenks, D.D., in the following language : —

A few days only after our last monthly meeting, we were called to attend the funeral of our late venerable associate, the Rev. William Jenks, D.D., who died in this city, on the thirteenth day of November, in the eighty-eighth year of his age. It is fit that we should devote a little time this morning, before proceeding to other business, to some notice of one who stood second in seniority upon our roll, who was the oldest in years of our whole number, and whose presence at these meetings we have so often and so recently welcomed.

Dr. Jenks was a native of Massachusetts, having been born in the neighboring town of Newton, on the 25th of November, 1778. He was a pupil of our Boston Public Latin School, and a graduate of Harvard University in the Class of 1797. Devoting himself to theological studies, after a few years of service as a teacher of youth and as a reader in the Episcopal Church at Cambridge, he was settled as pastor of a Congregational Church at Bath, in the then District of Maine. In 1818 he returned to Boston; and, after spending a few years more in the work of the education of youth, and in missionary labors among the seamen and among the poor, he became pastor of a church in Green Street, in this city, where he continued to officiate for not less than a quarter of a century.

Of his services as a minister of the Gospel, it belongs more appropriately to others, here and elsewhere, to bear testimony. Nor would it become me to pronounce a judgment on the great work which he undertook and executed in immediate connection with his theological pursuits. It is enough for me to name his comprehensive "Commentary on the Bible," published in six imperial 8vo volumes, between 1834 and 1838, of which not less than twenty thousand copies were

subscribed for, of which new editions have repeatedly been called for, and of which Dr. Allibone, in his excellent "Dictionary of Authors," has recently said, that "it still stands without a rival for the purpose for which it is intended."

I may be permitted, however, to speak more in detail of him, in his relations to this and other kindred societies, and to the literary and historical pursuits in which we are engaged.

Dr. Jenks was elected a member of this Society on the same day with the illustrious Daniel Webster, the 27th of August, 1821. He was our Librarian for nine years, — from 1823 to 1832; and was a member of the Committee of Publication for two of our volumes of Collections, — one of them published in 1825, and the other in 1852. Among his contributions to these and others of our volumes, I may mention, — A detailed account of our Society, its origin and progress, its members, its proceedings and publications, during the first half-century of its existence; a Memoir of the Rev. Dr. Holmes, the author of the "American Annals;" Memoirs of the Rev. Dr. John Codman and the Rev. Dr. Charles Lowell; and a Notice of the Sieur D'Aulnay, of Acadie, translated from the French. Nor certainly can I forget his excellent Memoir of one of our former Presidents, the late Lieutenant-governor Winthrop.

Dr. Jenks had rendered many and peculiar services, also, to the American Antiquarian Society, of which he was the senior Vice-President at his death. He not only delivered their first Anniversary Address, in 1813, but was privileged again to deliver an address before them on the occasion of their Semi-centennial Celebration, at Worcester, only three years since, when more than one of those here present enjoyed with me the rich gratification of listening to a learned and vigorous discourse on American Archæology, from one whose age covered more than one-third of the whole time which had elapsed since the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth.

During his pastorate at Bath, Dr. Jenks was connected with the government of Bowdoin College (then recently established at Brunswick, in Maine), first as Secretary of the Board of Trustees, and afterwards as Professor of Oriental and English Literature. In this connection, he was called on to pronounce a eulogy on the Hon. James Bowdoin, the munificent benefactor of that institution. This eulogy, delivered on the 2d of September, 1812, and soon afterwards published in an elegant quarto pamphlet, exhibited great familiarity both with the history of the Huguenot race, from which the Bowdoins were descended, and of the great events of our own State and nation, with which the elder and the younger Bowdoin had been more or less prominently associated.

I may not attempt, on this occasion, to give a complete account of all Dr. Jenks's literary and historical labors. From his first contribution of a succinct history of the Swiss Republic to the "Literary Miscellany," at Cambridge, in 1804, his pen seems never to have been idle. Not merely in his weekly sermons, — not merely in his numerous occasional addresses, reports, and pamphlets, but in the columns of the public journals also, — generally in prose, but sometimes in verse, — he gave frequent utterance to his thoughts and emotions on passing events, whether of religious or of secular interest. Observing, in one of our daily papers, an elaborate ode, with its strophes and anti-strophes, on the visit of the Prince of Wales to Boston in 1860, I inquired of the editor whose it was; and he told me it came from the octogenarian, Dr. Jenks. An equally elaborate ode to Garibaldi, the patriot of Italy, had preceded it from the same pen in 1859.

Among the anonymous publications of Dr. Jenks, there is one, however, of still more curious interest. It was published in 1808, and entitled "Memoir of the Northern Kingdom, written A.D. 1872, by the late Rev. Williamson Jahnsenykes, LL.D., and Honorary Member of the Royal American Board of Literature, in Six Letters to his Son. Now first published.

Quebeck, A.D. 1901." It was a political *jeu d'esprit*, of no common felicity, written during the party heats which attended the close of Mr. Jefferson's Presidency, and was designed to portray the danger of a dissolution of the Union, and the overturn of our republican institutions. Meeting our venerable friend in the street, on New-year's Day, 1863, — after exchanging the salutations of the season, — I told him I had found a copy of a pamphlet bearing this title, among my father's books; and I ventured to ask him, through that ponderous ear-trumpet, — which was the badge of the only infirmity he had, — whether he was the author of it. He replied, without an instant's hesitation, that he was.

I forbear, Gentlemen, to detain you longer by dwelling on that Christian kindness and courtesy which eminently marked the whole demeanor of our departed friend, endearing him so much to all who knew him intimately, and securing for him the respect and regard of our whole community. Upon these and other traits of his character, there are those present whose testimony will be more appropriate than my own; and I hasten, therefore, to submit, for your adoption, with the assent of our Standing Committee, the following resolution: —

Resolved, That, in the death of the Rev. William Jenks, D.D., this Society has lost one of its most respected and accomplished members; and that the President be instructed to nominate one of our number to prepare a memoir of him for the next volume of the Society's Proceedings.

Dr. ROBBINS then spoke as follows: —

By your permission, Mr. President, I move the acceptance of the resolution offered by the Standing Committee, in honor of our late venerable associate; not because I can add any thing to what you have so justly and feelingly said concerning his character and accomplishments, but to gratify the feelings of respect and attachment, which, in common with all who knew him, I cherish for his memory.

My recollection of him reaches back to the period of my boyhood, nearly fifty years ago. He then appeared to me quite old, and impressed me with reverence as a saintly man. This impression did not fade, as is too often the case, with advancing years and more intimate acquaintance; but, on the contrary, has been confirmed and deepened by maturer observation and intercourse.

The epithet which our blessed Lord applied to Nathanael seems to me singularly appropriate to him: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

The extent and variety of his knowledge, his contributions to Biblical and antiquarian literature, and his numerous and valuable services as a preacher, an instructor, a citizen, and a member of several learned societies, worthy as they are of honorable recognition, do not, I think, constitute his highest title to respect. This is secured rather by those admirable moral and Christian characteristics which adorned and distinguished his life.

There was an air of sanctity about him, such as we associate with the best of our Puritan ancestors, or with the holier prophets of more ancient times. He walked and sat amongst us as a type and relic of a truly noble order of men, — the liberally educated Congregational clergymen and Christian gentlemen of the last century.

Though of diminutive stature, there was a dignity in his carriage and a courtliness in his manners, which, in connection with the expansion of his brow, gave a certain stateliness to his person. The preciseness and slight formality, which no one could fail to notice, were relieved and softened by the kindness of his disposition, and the habitual civility and urbanity of his address.

He is a man who will be missed, not only in his family, in his church, and in these halls, where his presence has been so long and so frequently welcomed, but in the streets of our city. Even if his works and virtues were less availing to

save his name from oblivion, his venerable image itself has left a stamp upon the memory of his fellow-citizens which cannot be effaced.

The Resolution was unanimously adopted; and Dr. Blagden was appointed to prepare a memoir of Dr. Jenks, for the Society's volume of Proceedings.

A letter was read from Dr. S. S. Purple, of New York, asking for a copy of a paper contained in a volume of the "Heath Papers" (vol. i. p. 29, No. 30), being Minutes of a "Court of Inquiry on the causes of a complaint against the Director-General of the Hospital, September 19th, 1775."

The application of Dr. Purple was granted under the rules, and was referred to the Recording Secretary.

Mr. Henry G. Denny, of Dorchester, was elected a Resident Member. General John Meredith Read, jun., of Albany, N.Y., and Joseph Jackson Howard, Esq., of Blackheath, Kent County, England, were elected Corresponding Members.

Mr. WATERSTON exhibited a finely executed bronze medal, being a copy of a gold medal presented to Major-General George G. Meade, by the Union League of Philadelphia, July 4, 1865, as a token of the gratitude of his country. On the obverse of the medal is a medallion portrait of General Meade; on the reverse, this inscription: "The Victór of Gettysburg, the Deliverer of the State, the faithful Soldier of our Country, July, 1863."

Mr. DEANE said he wished to call the attention of members to a volume then lying upon the table, which

had not been announced by the President among the other donations to the Library that had been specially noticed at this meeting. He referred to the "Life and Letters of John Winthrop, from his embarkation for New England, in 1630, with the Charter and Company of the Massachusetts Bay, to his death in 1649. By Robert C. Winthrop." Mr. Deane said, that he would not, in the presence of the author, speak of this book in the terms he should otherwise be tempted to employ: he only hoped that others might derive the same pleasure from the perusal of it which he had done. It may be regarded as a companion volume to that published three years since, and entitled "Life and Letters of John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts-Bay Company, at their Emigration to New England, 1630," by the same author.

The President read a letter from the Rev. John Waddington, D.D., pastor of the Church of the Pilgrim Fathers, in Southwark, dated "9, Surrey Square, London, October 9th, 1866," communicating a "Copy of a Record in the Public Records, entitled 'State Papers, Domestic. — Elizabeth.' Bundles for Incorporation. No. 1." The papers consisted of a protest against the corruptions of the English Church, signed by twenty-seven persons. Dr. Waddington says, "I found these documents several years ago, and printed some extracts from them in a volume of tracts entitled 'Historical Papers. First Series, Congregational Martyrs. London: Paternoster Row, 1861.' On comparing the names of the members of the church of Richard Fitz [with this list of names] it will be found that they formed part of a

number of Separatists, who worshipped in Plumber's Hall, Anchor Lane, London, (in Thames Street,) June 19th, 1567, and who were committed to the Bridewell Prison, June 20, 1569."*

Mr. FOLSOM read a communication to the Society, in the form of a letter addressed to himself, from our Corresponding Member, J. Hammond Trumbull, Esq., of Hartford, Conn. He remarked, that he considered himself as favored in being the medium of this communication, which he hoped was the precursor of other similar papers on detached topics relating to the aboriginal dialects of New England. This branch of our antiquities no one of the present generation has cultivated so successfully as Mr. Trumbull; sufficient evidence of which appears in his learned and acute annotation of Roger Williams's "Key into the Language of America," just published by the "Narragansett Club" in Providence. The inhabitants of "Shawmut," in all its future extent, will be interested in this investigation of Mr. Trumbull. The Indian names of other important localities in New England await a like exhaustive treatment at his hands.

CHARLES FOLSOM, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,—At your suggestion, I venture to submit to you the results of my analysis of the name by which the peninsula of Boston is said to have been known to the Indians thereabout. If you find herein any thing likely to interest, or deserving the consideration of, the Historical Society, and if you think they will pardon the informality of the communication, I shall be doubly gratified.

* It is understood that Dr. Waddington is now engaged on an important work relating to the history of Dissent in England, which will include the "Fitz Papers," of which he has here communicated a portion. We refrain, therefore, from publishing at present what he has so generously communicated to the Society.—Eds.

Before discussing the signification of this name, it will be necessary to restore to its modern form (Shawmut) a lost initial.

Wood, in the "Nomenclator" appended to his "New England's Prospect," gives *Mishaum* as the Indian name of Charles River, and obviously *intended* to give *Mishaum* and *Mishaumut* for "Charles towne" and "Boston," respectively, — though his printer dropped the English name of each town a line below the Indian equivalent.

On the Indian title-page of a translation of the "Confession of Faith," made by Grindal Rawson and printed in 1699, *Mushawwomuk* stands, in the imprint, for "Boston" on the English title-page opposite. The name appears in the same form in the imprint of the translation of Cotton Mather's "Epistle to the Christian Indians" (*Wus-sukwhonk en Christianeue, &c.*), printed at Boston in 1700, — a copy of which is, I believe, in the Historical Society's library.

Assuming this to be the form which, in Eliot's notation, most exactly represents the original, we immediately discover the striking resemblance, if not the identity, of the names given to the two opposite peninsulas and to the river which separates them, — to the homes of Thomas Walford on one side of *Mishaum* River, and of William Blackstone on the other. *Mishaum*, *Mishaumut*, and *Mushawwomuk* differ only by their grammatical forms.

And now for the etymology. *Mushcon*, or *Mishcon* (Eliot wrote the word both ways, the first vowel being obscure, or merely representing a sheva) signifies a *boat* or *canoe*; more exactly, a canoe made by hollowing out the trunk of a tree, as distinguished from the light and frail *bark* canoe. In Eliot's translation, *mushcon* is used for "boat"; as in John vi. 22, Acts xxvii. 30. Cotton, in his Vocabulary, writes *musshōan* (3 Mass. Hist. Coll., ii. 163). In composition, the final *n* would necessarily be discarded, for it belongs to the *grammar*, not to the root. Indeed, a comparison of the forms in which this word is found, in vocabularies of the Algonkin dialects, shows that this final *n* is not constant. In the vocabularies appended to Mr. Gallatin's Report, we find for the Old Algonkin, *shiman*; Long Island, *mashuee*, &c.; in the modern Ojibwa, *chemaún*; and, in a manuscript vocabulary made by President Stiles, *meshwe* is given as the Pequot (or Mohegan) and *Umpshu* as the Narragansett word for "canoe."

The verb of simple motion — that which expressed merely the notion of *going* — was, in the third person singular of the indicative present, *com*, or, as Eliot sometimes wrote (with the pronominal prefix of the third person), *wcom*: in the plural, *comvog*, "they go."

In combination with other words, denoting the direction, manner, or agency, of going, Eliot writes *-ohham*, and *-hom*, for the singular: as, *pummohham*, he goes *by sea*; *nohham*, or *nohhom*, he goes *by sailing*, he sails, (*en nohhamun*, "to sail to," Acts xx. 16); *sohham* (= *soh-com*) he goes *forth*, &c. For *comwog*, Roger Williams writes, in the Narragansett dialect, *homwock*, "they go."

From *mushcon*, or *meshwe*, "boat," and *comwog* or *homwock*, "they go," would be formed *mushcoahomwog*, or something like it, — "they go by boat" or "by canoe." In Roger Williams's "Key," we find this phrase as one of familiar use in Narragansett: "*Comishoon-hómmis? Did you come by boate?*" (p. 8). "*Comishoónhom? Go you by water?*" (p. 109). "*MISHOON HOMWOCK, They go, or come, by water,*" i.e. by canoe (p. 72).

We are now near the mark. It is not far from *mishoon homwock* to *Mushawomuk*; but the *grammar* is not yet satisfactory. The Indians never employed a verb in the indicative plural as the name of a place. But a form very often used for that purpose was what may be termed a conditional-verbal, or gerundive, — having the termination of the third person singular of the conditional-present, passive, in *-muk*. This form was much employed where, in English, we should use the infinitive, or an abstract noun. Examples may be seen in Eliot's translation of Eccles. iii. 3-7; "a time *to kill*, — *to build up*, — *to weep*, — *to dance*;" where the verbs, preceded by the particle *adt* (= Latin *ad*), are *nushehteamuk*, *ayimuk*, *maumuk*, *pumukómuk*, &c., signifying "when (where, or, if) there is killed," or, "when killing (building, weeping, &c.) is." So *Mushawomuk* may be literally translated, "Where there is going by boat," or "where they go by boat"; and the name was applicable to any place on a river, or arm of the sea, from which boats habitually crossed to the bank or shore opposite, — in a word, to any *Ferry*. How early the crossing-place of the Charles River and the peninsulas on either side received this name, we have no means of ascertaining. I have seen no earlier authority for *Mishaum* and *Mishaumut* than Wood's "Nomenclator," and, two years before Wood wrote, there was a ferry established between Charlestown and Boston, and "a ferry-boate to conveigh passengers over Charles River, which betweene the two Townes is a quarter of a mile over" (Col. Records, i. 81, 88; N. E. Prospect, part i. ch. 10). Edward Converse's ferry-boat may, possibly, have suggested the name: but it is far more probable that it was given long before the coming of the English to the points on both sides of the river, between which the Indians were accustomed to cross in their canoes.

Other ferries besides that of the Charles were similarly designated. Compare, with the localities to which they are applied, the variously corrupted names of *Shaomet*, *Shawomock* or *Shawomut* (otherwise written *Mishawomet*), in Warwick, R.I.; a neck of land running into Narragansett Bay, on the west side of Providence River and between it and Cowesit Bay; and also the name of another point of land, now in Somerset, running southwesterly into the Bay from Slade's Ferry (Parsons's "Indian Names of Places in Rhode Island," p. 25); *Mishawum*, a neck and point in Dartmouth, Mass.; *Meeshawn* in Truro and Provincetown, and *Shaume* river and neck in Sandwich (Plym. Col. Rec., i. 134).

It is vexatious to be compelled to make so long a story of a morsel of Indian: but I could not well make it shorter without omitting some step in (what seems to me) the demonstration. So many guesses at the meaning of *Shawmut* have been proffered, that I would not suggest a new etymology, unless I was very confident it was well founded: and I wish that you and others to whom it may be communicated, before deciding to accept or to reject it, should have an opportunity of tracing the several steps by which it was arrived at.

Yesterday, I read the proof of the last signature of a reprint of Williams's "Key," — soon to be issued by the "Narragansett Club," of Providence. I hope soon to have the pleasure of offering a copy to the acceptance of the Historical Society. Some years ago, a diligent antiquary published a town-history, in the Preface to which he remarked, that "the following pages had greatly encroached on the hours which *should have been* devoted to *sleep*." Possibly you will be disposed to say as much of my notes on the "Key;" but, if time and paper are wasted, I must throw much of the responsibility upon yourself, for I should not have consented to undertake the work, had it not been for your instigation to write down whatever came uppermost, without waiting for leisure to revise or recast.

I am, my dear Sir, very respectfully and truly yours,

J. HAMMOND TRUMBULL.

HARTFORD, Nov. 5, 1866.

Mr. AMORY read the following paper on the military character and services of General John Sullivan, of New Hampshire: —

THE MEMORY OF GENERAL JOHN SULLIVAN, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, VINDICATED FROM HISTORICAL MISREPRESENTATIONS.

IN a recently published volume by George Bancroft, the ninth of a work entitled "History of the United States," and the third of that portion of it devoted to the American Revolution, certain errors are found which require correction. These reflect upon the character and conduct of several of our most honored Revolutionary officers,—in part being, it is conceived, mistakes of judgment; in other instances, misapprehensions of fact. The present object is to set right those that relate to Major-General John Sullivan, of New Hampshire.

It is unfortunate for his fame, that, with the exception of the brief memoir in the Third Volume of the Second Series of Sparks's "American Biography," no separate account has been given either of his civil or his military career. The hope had been indulged, that some citizen of New Hampshire, familiar with the part taken by that State in the war, and with the character and services of its historical personages who co-operated with Sullivan in his labors, would have felt called upon to become his biographer. But this hope has been disappointed.

His immediate descendants, incessantly employed in public or professional labor, have had neither leisure nor disposition to establish his claim to be remembered with respect among the patriots who founded the republic. But, now that aspersions have been without foundation cast upon his discretion and generalship, it has become the duty of those by whom his memory is cherished, to protect it. It might well have been wished, that some abler writer, better qualified to do justice to his devotion to the cause of his country at the critical period of its Revolutionary struggle, would have assumed the

task. In submitting with diffidence to the candor of the public and the Society, this vindication of his military character from reproaches, unwarranted by contemporary evidence, and at variance with the opinion entertained of his qualifications for command by the best and ablest of his brother officers, confidence is indulged that judgment will be reserved until both sides have been heard.

Although the name of General Sullivan and his services are generally familiar to students of American history, a brief recital of the principal incidents of his career is indispensable to a clear view or just estimate of so much of it as has been misrepresented by Mr. Bancroft. He was born at Somersworth, in New Hampshire, on the opposite side of the river from Berwick, in Maine, which was his early home, 18th February, 1740, receiving from his father, who had himself enjoyed the advantages of a liberal culture in Europe, a good education. After a voyage to the West Indies, he became a member of the family of the Hon. Isaac Livermore, a lawyer of Portsmouth, in extensive practice, and, under his instruction, prepared himself for his profession. He early exhibited ability of a high order; gained the respect and encouragement of his instructor; and soon attained, by his industry, learning, and eloquence, a distinguished position at the bar of New Hampshire. Such was his professional success, that, soon after his marriage at the age of twenty, he purchased the commodious dwelling at Durham, still in good preservation, which continued to be his abode for the remainder of his life, and that of his widow till her death in 1820.

For the next ten years, he was constantly employed in lucrative causes, taking an elevated rank as an able advocate and judicious counsellor. He enjoyed the friendship of the Wentworths and the Langdons, as well as that of Lowell, Adams, and Otis, leading members of the Massachusetts Bar. He early promoted the introduction into New Hampshire of

that manufacturing industry to which she owes so large a portion of her present prosperity, established cloth and fulling mills at Durham, and, before the breaking out of the war, had already accumulated, if not wealth, a handsome competence.

Of a robust constitution and active spirit, he had a natural taste for military life; and although, with the exception of uniting with his father and brothers in the defence of Berwick from occasional attacks by the Indians, he had, before our Revolutionary period, no actual experience of warfare, heroes of Louisbourg abounded in his neighborhood, inciting emulation. He is said to have devoted, in his historical studies, particular attention to military movements and engagements, and to have been able accurately to describe most of the great battles of ancient and modern times. In 1772, at the age of thirty-one, he held a colonial commission as major, and improved his opportunity for becoming acquainted with the practical details, as well as the rudiments, of military science.

His ardent nature and his abhorrence of oppression, his contributions to the political press, and his extended influence and popularity, marked him early as a leader in the impending struggle. In the spring of 1774, he was a member of the Provincial Assembly of New Hampshire, and, in September of the same year, was sent to Philadelphia as one of the New-Hampshire delegation to the Continental Congress. His name appeared on many of the most important committees of the latter body; and he took his part in its deliberations, standing well with his associates.

Soon after his return home, he planned, with Thomas Pickering and John Langdon, an attack, on the night of the 12th of December, upon Fort William and Mary, at Newcastle, in Portsmouth Harbor, — one of the earliest acts of hostility against the Mother Country; and, by the aid of a portion of a force he had been for some months engaged in drilling in their military

exercises, in preparation for the anticipated conflict, carried ninety-seven kegs of powder and a quantity of small arms, in gondolas, to Durham, where they were concealed, in part, under the pulpit of its meeting-house. Soon after the battles of Lexington and Concord, in April, had aroused the people to a realizing sense that they were actually engaged in hostilities, these much-needed supplies were brought by him to the lines at Cambridge, where he marched with his company, and were used at the battle of Bunker Hill.

Immediately after the attack on the fort, the Governor of the Province issued a proclamation, declaring the offenders guilty of high treason, and offering a reward for their apprehension. In open defiance of his authority, Major Sullivan, Lieutenant Adams, and other citizens of Durham holding civil or military commissions from the king, assembled at the Adams tavern, and, with Sullivan at their head, moved in procession to the Common, near the meeting-house, where they kindled a bonfire, and, in the presence of a large number of persons, burned their commissions, uniforms, and all other insignia which in any way connected them with the royal government.

Resuming his place, on the 10th of May, in the Congress, he was placed on many of its most important committees, and of that of war was chairman. When, soon after, Dickinson moved a second address to the king, John Adams says Sullivan opposed it in a strain of wit, eloquence, and fluency, unusual even for him, filling with dismay those who favored reconciliation.

In June, when Washington was elected commander-in-chief, Sullivan, appointed one of the eight brigadiers, went with him to Cambridge, where his brigade, posted at Winter Hill, with that of Greene, formed Lee's division, the left wing of the army investing Boston. He was twice detailed to the eastward to fortify against British cruisers; was active and zealous in procuring re-enforcements, rendering the war

popular, and harassing the enemy; and won the affection and respect of Washington and his brother officers. His letter from the camp, dated Dec. 12, 1775, on the formation of the constitution of New Hampshire, is replete with wise statesmanship; and the following, to John Adams, proves his zeal and activity in the performance of his military duties:—

CAMP ON WINTER HILL, Dec^r 21, 1775.

DEAR SIR,—Did not the hurry of our affairs prevent, I should often write you respecting the state of our army; but it has been my fortune to be employed almost night and day. When I had Winter Hill nearly completed, I was ordered to Ploughed Hill, where for a long time I was almost day and night in fortifying. Twice have I been ordered to the Eastward, to fortify and defend Piscataway Harbour; but unfortunately was obliged to return without an opportunity of proving the works I had taken so much pains to construct. This being over, I was called upon to raise 2000 Troops from New Hampshire, and bring them on the lines in ten days; this I undertook, and was happy enough to perform; otherwise the desertion of the Connecticut Troops might have proved fatal to us. I might add that 3,000 from your Colony arrived at the same time to supply the defect. This, with the other necessary business in my Department, has so far engaged my time and attention that I hope you will not require an apology for my not writing. I have now many things to write, but must content myself with mentioning a few of them at present, and leave the residue to another opportunity. I will in the first place inform you that we have possession of almost every advantageous post round Boston, from whence we might, with great ease, burn or destroy the town, was it not that we fail in a very *trifling* matter, namely, we have no powder to do it with. However, as we have a sufficiency for our small arms, we are not without hope to become masters of the town. Old Boreas and Jack Frost are now at work building a bridge over all the rivers and bays, which once completed, we take possession of the town, or perish in the attempt. I have the greatest reason to believe I shall be saved, for my faith is very strong. I have liberty to take possession of your house. Mrs. Adams was kind enough to honor me with a visit the other day in company with a number of other ladies and the Rev. Mr. Smith. She gave me power to enter and take possession. There is nothing now wanting but your consent, which I shall wait for till the Bridge is completed; and, unless given before that time, shall make a forcible entry,

and leave you to bring your action. I hope in less than three weeks to write you from Boston.

The prisoners taken in our privateer are sent to England for trial, and so is Col. Allen. This is glorious encouragement for people to engage in our service when their prisoners are treated with so much humanity and respect, and the law of retaliation not put in force against them. I know you have published a declaration of that sort; but I never knew a man to feel the weight of chains and imprisonment by mere declarations on paper; and, believe me, till their barbarous use of our prisoners is retaliated, we shall be miserable. Let me ask if we have anything to hope from the mercy of His Majesty or his Ministers? Have we any encouragement from the people in Great Britain? Could they exert themselves more if we had shaken off the yoke and declared ourselves independent? Why, then, in God's name, is it not done? Whence arises this spirit of moderation? This want of decision? Do the members of your respectable body think that the enemy will throw their shot and shells with more force than at present? Do they think the fate of Charlestown or Falmouth might have been worse, or the King's Proclamation more severe, if we had openly declared war? Could they have treated our prisoners worse if we were in open and avowed rebellion, than they now do?

Why, then, do we call ourselves freemen, and act the part of timid slaves? I don't apply this to you — I know you too well to suspect your firmness and resolution. But let me beg of you to use those talents I know you possess to destroy that spirit of moderation which has almost ruined, and, if not speedily rooted out, will prove the final overthrow of America. That spirit gave them possession of Boston, lost us all our arms and ammunition, and now causes our brothers which have fallen into their hands to be treated like rebels. But enough of this. I feel too sensibly to write more upon this subject. I beg you to make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Hancock and your brother delegates, also to Col. Lee and those worthy brethren who laboured with us in the vineyard, when I had the honor to be with you in the Senate. You may venture to assure them that when an opportunity presents, if I should not have courage enough to fight myself, I shall do all in my power to encourage others.

It is not proposed to present any detailed account of his services at the siege. In the archives of New Hampshire, at Concord, are to be found his letters to the Assembly and Com-

mittee of Safety upon subjects connected therewith. They prove him to have been busily employed in the performance of the duties assigned him. When, at a later period, unjustly censured, as again now, that four thousand men did not defeat thrice their number at Brandywine, he alludes, as will be seen in the sequel, to some of the services he rendered.

After the evacuation of Boston, 17th March, 1776, he took command of the army in Canada, conducting the retreat beginning with the fall of Montgomery at Quebec, and, in this arduous service, displayed skill, prudence, and energy, to the satisfaction of Washington and of Congress. When his command had been extricated from the perils, to which disease and the great superiority of the enemy's forces in Canada had exposed them, Gates was appointed to the northern army. On the 12th of July, 1776, Sullivan took leave of his officers, and they presented him, on the occasion, an address, in which the following passage evinces their sensibility to the dangers they had escaped, and the esteem in which he was held by them: "It is to you, Sir, the public are indebted for the preservation of their property in Canada. It is to you we owe our safety thus far. Your humanity will call forth the silent tear and the grateful ejaculation of the sick. Your universal impartiality will force the applause of the wearied soldier." *

In the early part of August, he was promoted to the rank of Major-General, and joined the main army under Washington, at New York. A British force, over thirty thousand strong, had recently arrived from Halifax; and, on the 22d, General Howe landed fifteen thousand troops on Long Island, increased by the 27th, the day of the battle, to twenty-four thousand, besides which he had, to his great advantage, as they were familiar with the country, a body of Loyalists, under De Lancy. His object was the city of New York, then occupied by the American army. Our success in com-

* The whole of this Address will be found at the end of the volume.

elling the evacuation of Boston, and the recent intelligence of Lee's good fortune in repulsing the British at Charleston, tended to encourage us, though neither in numbers, organization, nor equipments were we at all equal to the enemy. As the possession of the westerly portion of Long Island was indispensable to any effective operations against the city, it was probable that would be the first point of attack. Washington occupied it with about nine thousand men,—as many as he could prudently spare from his main force,—and had caused lines of intrenchment to be constructed for their protection.

Where Long Island approaches nearest to the city, there is a neck of land, about two miles and a half long, and containing about fifteen hundred acres, which is capable, on its eastern front, of being defended by works a mile and a quarter in length. Two miles in front of these lines is a range of hills,—at points two hundred feet in elevation, somewhat irregular in their general course from north to south, intersected by defiles,—through which, here and there, were roads running from the shore to the neighboring villages. As these heights commanded the interior lines about Wallabout Bay, it was necessary, for any effective defence, that they should be occupied. Greene had been in command, and, with Sullivan and Stirling, engaged in fortifying them, when he was taken ill of a fever, and compelled, on the 24th, to leave the island. Sullivan succeeded; but, as there were indications of an impending conflict with the enemy, to Putnam, whose age as well as seniority of commission, it was considered, constituted a claim to the position next in responsibility to that of the commander-in-chief, was confided the direction of our forces on the island.

While, if an effort were to be made to retain possession of New York, it was important to oppose the approach of the enemy at Brooklyn, his landing on the island might be used as a feint merely to lure our forces thither, and, by the aid of his fleet, the city be taken. This compelled the separation of

our army by the straits between the islands, and explains why a force so inadequate was left exposed.

While the British were concentrating their forces, the heights were occupied by several of our regiments; and skirmishes occasionally occurred. But as the whole line of the hills to be guarded, extending from Yellow Hook, on the Jamaica road, to what is now Greenwood Cemetery, was six miles in length, the force we employed to guard them was wholly inadequate. What force we had, from some oversight of Putnam, who disregarded the injunctions of Washington and the advice of Sullivan, was not wisely distributed. Stirling, as Sullivan says, was to have commanded outside the lines; while to him was assigned the command, under Putnam himself, of the five thousand within. As Putnam had reason to believe the enemy would advance by the shore, on the Gowanus road, at half-past three, on the morning of the 27th, he awoke Stirling in his tent, and sent him to oppose them. Sullivan went out to the heights, in front of Flatbush, where Hurd's, Parsons's, Hand's, and Miles's regiments were stationed,—General Woodhull, with a force of Long Island militia, keeping guard on the extreme left.

When he reached the front, he called for volunteers to ascertain the position of the enemy, but, out of twelve selected for the purpose, not one returned. In the plain at Flatbush, Van Heister kept his attention occupied by his artillery and occasional attacks in line. Meanwhile, Howe, Clinton, Cornwallis, and Percy—who, with the principal portion of the British army, had, the evening before, fallen back to Flatlands, and thence made a circuit of several miles during the night, sawing down the trees that obstructed their march, lest the sound of the axe should betray their design—had interposed themselves between the heights and our interior lines, two or three miles in our rear. By cutting off all our patrols and detachments, they accomplished their object without our knowledge; and when,

at half-past eight, we discovered them, it was too late to escape.

Of our force on the island, in all about nine thousand, probably four thousand, including the fifteen hundred under Stirling, were on the Heights. Sullivan, when he found his earlier anticipation fulfilled, and that his position was surrounded, made a reconnoissance with four hundred men; and, as he was returning, found himself between Van Heister's men, who were pressing up from Flatbush, and Clinton's at Bedford. His small force fought well, in the woods, from half-past nine till twelve, by which time they were killed or scattered, and he himself was taken prisoner.

When candid minds remember, that it was no disgrace to yield to superior numbers, arms, and artillery, it will seem hardly worthy of an American historian to go out of his way to assign imaginary reasons, why this and so many of our Revolutionary battles, where the odds were fourfold against us, resulted as they did. The Americans effected all, and more than all, that could have been expected under the circumstances; but, in the excited state of the public mind, it was human to attach blame to some one, in order to explain defeat. It was much to the honor of Washington, however, that he never condescended to such injustice, or sought to build up his own reputation by creating prejudice against his subordinates. It would be creditable to modern historians, eager to attract attention to their books, if they were equally conscientious, and exhibited more of the fairness and candor that distinguished Judge Marshall, in his earlier and more reliable relation of the events of the Revolution.

Mr. Bisbee, who was with Sullivan in the woods, states that when his men, feeling further resistance useless, dispersed, Sullivan rode toward the enemy, with the expectation of sharing the fate of so many of his soldiers who had received no quarter, intending to sell his life as dearly as possible. As he approached the enemy, several of their men,

instructed in capturing prisoners, contrived to arrest his course, render useless his weapons, and lift him from the saddle.

Bancroft states (p. 91) that Sullivan's party fired with nervous rapidity. Is it not possible the authority on which this statement is made was that of the British officer, who, in relating what occurred on the afternoon of the day before, says that the force with which he was connected opposite Flatbush, experiencing loss from the American batteries on the heights, quietly withdrew into the woods behind the inequalities of the ground, the shot striking the trees over their heads?

The Americans underrated the force opposed to them,—some six times their number,—or they would have withdrawn earlier within the lines. Howe over-estimated the American force, or he would have proceeded at once to take their lines by assault. The vigorous resistance by Stirling on the right, and the desperation with which the left, on retiring, sold their lives to the Hessians, who gave no quarter, led the British general, who remembered the loss sustained in attacking our lines at Bunker Hill, to make regular approaches. After two rainy days, Washington withdrew his army on the 29th, leaving on the mind of the enemy the impression, that, though we might be defeated, we could not be easily conquered.

Our loss was heavy, but not so great as might have been expected from the vast superiority of the enemy and the mode in which we were surrounded.

Congress and public opinion alike demanded that Howe should be resisted, it being deemed more judicious to sustain a partial defeat than abandon New York without an effort. The Island shore was high, and commanded the city. But the force that could be spared to keep possession was wholly inadequate to guard such an extent of country, or prevent the British, many times their number, from effecting their objects.

The inhabitants were loyalists, many of them in the British camp; pickets and patrols were easily cut off; and twenty-four thousand veterans, under accomplished officers,—such as Howe, Cornwallis, Clinton, Erskine, Grant, Percy, and Van Heister,—could find no great difficulty in environing and defeating four thousand, if these ventured to oppose them. That their resistance was creditable,—Sullivan's was declared by the enemy to have been "gallant and persistent," Stirling's by all admitted to have been brave to the point of heroism,—is proved by the hesitation of Howe to follow up his advantage by assault on the lines at Brooklyn, giving Washington time, while he was making his regular approaches, to withdraw, without further loss, from the Island.

There were reasons enough for the result, without ascribing it to neglect to guard the Bedford road,—which both Washington and Sullivan had repeatedly urged upon the attention of Putnam, and which had in reality been provided for, as well as the means at our disposal admitted, and in part by the force of Woodhull,—or casting reproach upon honorable men, who were risking life on the field and scaffold to maintain the rights and liberties of their countrymen. Sullivan certainly was vigilant, paying for some nights fifty dollars from his own resources, to procure intelligence of the enemy's movements.

Sullivan and Lord Stirling were taken, as prisoners, on board the "Eagle," the flagship of Lord Howe, the British admiral, who courteously received them. He agreed at once to their exchange, Sullivan for General Prescott, who was then at Philadelphia, where Congress was in session. The conversation of the Admiral with his prisoners was frank and friendly, expressing his wish, that such mutual concessions might be made as would adjust the dispute. The previous efforts of himself and his brother, the General, to open negotiations, had been defeated at the threshold, as his instructions forbade his recognition of the Congress; and it was

now proposed, that their desire for a conference should be informally communicated by Sullivan, who was to be released on parole to effect his exchange.

Mr. Bancroft — in his severe denunciation of what was a very simple and natural thing to do, for any one who was a prisoner in a civil war, at a time before any system of exchanges had been effected—loses sight not only of what is just, but what is dignified. It does not matter much to General Sullivan, nor will it much affect his historical position among those who are familiar with the events and characters of the Revolution, what Mr. Bancroft may think of his discretion. The majority of sensible readers will be puzzled to recognize any connection between the terms and the facts, and will conclude, upon the whole, that after a serious defeat, with a victorious army against us of double the strength of any we had to oppose to it, the chance of establishing our independence was not so great as it had been; and that, if we could make peace upon the terms we had always before the war insisted upon,—namely, allegiance to the Crown, chartered rights inviolate, independence of Parliament,—it was worthy of consideration. At all events, we gained time to recover our vigor, discouraging by negotiation the activity of the enemy, and obtaining recognition as belligerents, which, in the event of disaster, might have saved even Washington himself from the scaffold.

That Lord Howe did not divulge any such powers at the subsequent conference with Adams, Franklin, and Rutledge, the Committee of Congress appointed in pursuance of his overture for negotiation, is neither reason nor argument that he did not possess them. As the committee insisted throughout upon independence as the only admissible basis of negotiation, there was no occasion to do so. If the control of Parliament over any adjustment was likely to be paramount, it must be remembered, that Magna Charta and the settlement of 1688 had always been constitutionally regarded as

concessions from the prerogative, that the treaty-making power vested in the Crown, and that, if terms had been concluded under the powers lodged with the Howes by the king and his cabinet, upon the principle that legislation and representation, in all cases whatsoever, should go together, or upon such a system of government as that, at this time, proposed to be carried out in the Canadas, Parliament would probably have assented or acquiesced. It was, therefore, no indiscretion in Sullivan to repose the most implicit confidence in the assurances given him, that adequate powers were possessed by the Howes to effect an accommodation; or inconsistency in them to intimate as much on board the "Eagle," in confidential intercourse, and yet not make their full powers to treat known when the formal conference took place.

As it was simply intended, that Sullivan should communicate, in an informal manner, an *overture* for negotiation through such conference, only to be held if sanctioned by Congress, it was wholly unnecessary that he should have received any written instructions; indeed, instructions were wholly out of the case. He, as one of the acting parties, was receiving himself a proposition (affecting his associates as well as himself, and compromising no one), upon which he merely consented to consult. To deny the propriety of such a course in civil war, would be to close the door to all negotiation; and, if our affairs had been as desperate as they looked at that particular crisis, with thirty thousand men in the field against half that number, in the event of further disaster, it would have subjected all concerned in the rebellion to the mercy of the conquerors upon unconditional surrender.

In the freedom of confidential intercourse with his old associates of the Congress, not probably more than forty in number, General Sullivan stated with entire frankness whatever had occurred on board the vessel, as no doubt it was the wish of Lord Howe, and his manifest duty as an officer appointed under their authority, that he should. When

requested to commit to writing what he understood Lord Howe to propose, he was cautious and guarded, and no exceptions were or could be taken to his words. Subsequently, at the conference, Rutledge, in repeating from recollection, gave a force and color to what Sullivan had said several days before in his oral communication, which Howe claimed was beyond the natural import of his language. Of course, he meant if Sullivan had been correctly reported; but any fair and generous mind, knowing how easily expressions may be misinterpreted or erroneously recalled, would never think of impeaching character or impugning veracity on grounds so unsubstantial.

It should be borne in mind, that recourse was had to this indirect mode of opening communications, always of advantage to belligerents, and especially in civil war, in consequence of the prohibition of the British Government to the Howes to recognize the Congress. General Washington knew what was intended, and did not consider it proper that the military authority should prevent an appeal to the civil power. It would not only have been churlish towards Howe, to decline communicating what was a mere overture for a conference; but it would have been an imprudent oversight to have neglected so valuable an opportunity of ascertaining the extent of the boasted powers of the Commissioners, as well as a reflection upon the ability and wisdom of Congress to decide what their public duty demanded. They concluded to accept the proposition, and improved it to disabuse their constituents of any expectation of satisfactory concessions, thus gaining time needed for re-organization after defeat, and inspiring a more determined spirit to persevere in the contest.

All condemn, now, the want of wisdom of the Confederate leaders in declining, in January, 1865, the terms proposed by Mr. Lincoln. In numerous wars, and especially those of a civil character, peace has been brought about by informal propositions. Humanity demands that no reasonable means

should be neglected to stay the useless effusion of blood. Sullivan had been a respected member of the Congress. Settlement of the difficulty was as much an affair of New Hampshire as of Massachusetts. John Adams, fearing re-action, might have said, that he wished a bullet had passed through the brain of the emissary, as Mr. Bancroft courteously calls him. But this was simply his mode of expressing his extreme unwillingness to enter into any negotiation with the British Government, rather than an indication of an impaired confidence in the integrity or patriotism of that emissary. His relations with Sullivan, then and throughout the war, seem to have been respectful and friendly; and, a few days later, he himself was not unwilling to go with Franklin and Rutledge to confer with Howe on the same business, though as much convinced when he went, as before or afterwards, that no propositions would be made which were based on the independence of the States. Besides, a few years later, he writes that he would gladly exchange all prospects of success in the war for the condition existing before the commencement of hostilities. We think, therefore, that the whole passage in Mr. Bancroft's volume, to which we have referred, betrays an unreasonable prejudice on the part of the writer against General Sullivan.

In October and November, Sullivan was with Washington, in Westchester County; and, after the army crossed the Hudson, he was placed under the orders of Lee. When the latter was taken prisoner, on the 13th of December, Sullivan forthwith obeyed the orders of Washington to join him at Newtown, opposite Trenton; and, having crossed the Delaware at Easton, he effected, on the 20th, a junction with the main army. The same day, Gates arrived with five hundred men,—all that remained of four New-England regiments. Immediate measures were taken for the surprisal of Rahl at Trenton; and on the 25th, at three o'clock, with twenty-four hundred men,—one-half of his whole army,—Washington marched to MacKonkey's ferry, and, by three o'clock in the

morning of the 26th, had crossed the river. It was bitterly cold; and a storm of snow and hail set in as they started for a nine-miles' march to Trenton. Sullivan commanded the right wing, on the river-road; Greene, the left: and both reached Trenton nearly at the same moment,—at eight o'clock. The surprise was complete. Rahl was defeated and mortally wounded; and Washington recrossed the Delaware, with nine hundred prisoners.

When, on the 30th, Washington again crossed the Delaware into Jersey, taking post at Trenton, and found Cornwallis in his front, too strong to attack with any reasonable chance of success, he moved, in the night of the 2d of January, towards Princeton. On his way, several British regiments were encountered, Mercer was killed, Mawhood was repulsed by Washington in person, and the Fortieth and Fifty-fifth were pursued by Sullivan to the College, whence, after slight resistance, they fled to Brunswick, nearly two hundred (194) of them being taken prisoners.

During the next six months, Sullivan was busily engaged in front of the main army, which lay during the winter at Morristown; and at that season, incessantly vigilant, he kept the British at Brunswick and Amboy, many times his number, from marauds.

In a spirit of rivalry in the army,—falling far short of any bitterness of feeling, though not always so in Congress,—the palm of valor was disputed between the South and the North. In a letter of this period (Feb. 13, 1777) to Meshech Weare, President of the Assembly of New Hampshire, he writes, "You may want to know how your men fight. I tell you, exceedingly well, when they have proper officers. I have been much pleased to see a day approaching to try the difference between Yankee cowardice and Southern valor. The day, or rather the days, have arrived. . . . General Washington made no scruple to say, publicly, that the remnant of the Eastern regiments were the strength of his army, though their num-

bers, comparatively speaking, were but small. He calls them in front when the enemy are there; he sends them to the rear when the enemy threatens that way. All the general officers allow them to be the best of troops. The Southern officers and soldiers allow it in time of danger, but not at all other times. Believe me, Sir, the Yankees took Trenton before the other troops knew any thing of the matter. More than that, there was an engagement; and, what will surprise you still more, the line that attacked the town consisted of but eight hundred Yankees, and there were sixteen hundred Hessians to oppose them. At Princeton, when the Seventeenth regiment had thrown thirty-five hundred Southern militia into the utmost confusion, a regiment of Yankees restored the day. This General Mifflin confessed to me, though the Philadelphia papers tell us a different story. It seemed to have been quite forgotten, that, while the Seventeenth was engaging these troops, six hundred Yankees had the town to take against the Fortieth and Fifty-fifth regiments, which they did without loss, owing to the manner of attack. But enough of this. I do not wish to reflect, but beg leave to assure you, that newspapers, and even letters, do not always speak the truth."

As the summer advanced, the British general, after various efforts to cross through New Jersey, which were as often disconcerted, embarked twenty thousand men for a destination for several weeks conjectured, but not known. Sullivan lay at Hanover, about twenty miles from Staten Island, whence frequent forays had been made by the enemy on the main. Earlier in the spring, an expedition, sent from New York against Danbury, in Connecticut, had been very destructive; the banks of the Hudson had been harried; and frequently New Jersey had been visited by marauding parties, and peaceable citizens plundered or carried off. Ascertaining, that, while sixteen hundred European regulars were at the northerly end of the Island, about eight miles off, near New Brighton,

one thousand loyal militiamen were scattered at different posts along the shore, he arranged with his officers an expedition to capture the latter.

Ogden says the plan was well concerted, and perfectly consistent. The enemy were put to rout, and many prisoners were taken, with little loss. From a mistake of Smallwood, in the night, the regulars became aware of their presence on the island; and, following them to the boats, attacked the rear-guard left to pick up stragglers from the ranks. The guard "sold themselves dear," it is said, and, after vigorous resistance and some loss, about two hundred were compelled to surrender.

Judge Marshall says, "The enterprise was well planned, and, in its commencement, happily executed;" "but the boats were insufficient." The boats that carried the force to the island were certainly capable of bringing them back, and would have done so in safety, had it not been for a laxity of discipline on the part of his subordinates, which Sullivan, by the strictest orders, had done what he could to prevent. Similar enterprises, some attended with the happiest results and consequently familiar, others baffled and forgotten, were constantly occurring; and, if ever likely to prove successful, it was at that very conjuncture, when the British army was at sea.

Sullivan was censured, but the Court of Inquiry and the Congress held him blameless. Other historical writers, swift to defame, have in some instances before, as Mr. Bancroft has now, attributed his want of success to negligence in providing transportation. He no doubt procured all the boats that he could find; and opportunity, in war, would never be improved if no risks were hazarded. We do not claim for General Sullivan any particular merit for the descent on the island. Had it resulted, as might have been reasonably anticipated, in the capture of the thousand loyal militiamen, it would have been considered a very sensible enterprise. Our

general officers were encouraged to activity, and to embrace all similar occasions of inflicting loss on the enemy, by the leading men of the time; and the letter of John Adams to Sullivan, given in his Biography (Works, i. 259), probably made him emulous to do all in his power.

The following letter to Hancock explains, in a measure, the malign spirit with which he had to contend in the discharge of his duty:—

CAMP ON METUCHIN HILLS, Octob. 17th, 1777

DEAR SIR,—I do myself the Honor to enclose Congress a copy of the result of a Court of Inquiry, respecting my conduct on Staten Island, after perusing which and examining the evidence sent by me in a former letter, Congress must be at some loss, to know how it was possible for Lt. Col^o. Smith, and Major Taylor, to write so warmly against me, to their friends in Congress when there was no colour for it. I shall now give Congress the key to it, and it will no longer remain a mystery. On the 13th August, last, when my Division lay at Hanover, these two gentlemen attacked Major Sherburn who acted as Deputy Adjutant-General, on the Public Parade, before all the soldiers, about the severity of the duty, averring that there was no necessity of picquets, or out-guards, as we were in a friend's country and the enemy at such a distance. This was said with heat on the one side, and replied to with as much warmth on the other; I was much surprised at hearing so dangerous a doctrine had been advanced by field officers before the soldiers of my Division. I knew it was an established rule among military men to use the same precautions in a friend's country, as in an enemy's; for a relaxation or neglect of duty has proved the destruction of many armies. The fate of Hannibal after his troops had tasted the delights of Capua, was a striking instance of the evil tendency which follows such neglect. I therefore on the next day, issued orders to my Division, which you have, enclosed. This matter being known throughout the division, it was early perceived against whom they were pointed. This was by them deemed unpardonable, and, I suppose, retaliation determined upon.

But no opportunity offered till the affair of Staten Island. They immediately began to make a party against me, in which they were warmly seconded by General de Borre. This, Sir, was the foundation of all the clamor raised against me; and every engine was set at work

to raise a report throughout the country, that my officers in general were dissatisfied with my conduct. This report coming to the hearing of the officers, they have met on the occasion, and the regiments have many of them delivered in, and the others are making out papers, similar to the one you have, enclosed, from Col. Ford's. I believe some officers in Hazen's will not do it; but many of them have, and some conclude by saying that if they were as happy with the field officers of his regiment as with me, they would be as happy as they could wish. I hope, after having dealt thus openly with Congress, and laid every thing before them, the party who have arisen up against me, will at least be sensible that they have injured me without cause. I am happy that my conduct in military life thus far will bear the strictest scrutiny, and every inquiry into it will redound to my honour. But I am far from expecting this always to be the case. I well know that I am in common with the rest of mankind liable to errors, and it must be a miracle if I escape them all. At the same time, though at a distance from the Senate, I know there is a party who would improve the first [opportunity?] to work my ruin. This was the only motive that induced me to ask to retire from the army. It was not because I was weary of serving my country, but to rescue my reputation from ruin. It is exceedingly hard for me to fight against the enemies of my country, and at the same time combat with the very persons I am fighting for. The last action took off half of my [military] family, perhaps the next may sweep the residue, and involve me in their fate; and, what is still more deplorable, my reputation may unjustly perish by my side. This is a poor encouragement to sacrifice that life which I have often ventured in my Country's cause, and to exchange domestic ease for the dusty field of Mars. But as every American looks up to Congress, for justice, I cannot persuade myself that it will refuse, either to approve my conduct publicly, or grant me leave to retire from the army.

The following is the account of the expedition by Marshall:—

“The force of the enemy on the island amounted to between two or three thousand men, of whom nearly one thousand were Provincials, who were stationed at different places on the coast, opposite the Jersey shore. The British and German troops, amounting to sixteen hundred men, were in a fortified camp, near the Watering Place. General Sullivan thought it practicable to surprise and bring off the

Provincials before they could be supported by the European troops ; and he was the more stimulated to make the attempt by their occasional incursions into Jersey. In one of these, very lately made, they had carried off a number of cattle and about twelve individuals noted for their attachment to the American cause. This expedition was undertaken with the select troops of his division, aided by a few Jersey militia, under Colonel Frelinghuysen.

“ They had to march about twenty miles to the place of embarkation, where only six boats had been procured. Three of these were allotted to Colonel Ogden, who commanded one detachment intended to attack Colonel Lawrence, who lay near The Old Blazing Star ferry, and Colonels Dungan and Allen, who lay about two miles from each other, towards Amboy. The other three were taken by General De Borre, who was accompanied by Sullivan in person, and who was to attack Colonel Barton, near The New Blazing Star ferry, and having secured that party, to assist Ogden. General Smallwood was to cross at Halsey’s Point, and attack Buskirk’s regiment, which lay near Decker’s Ferry. All the troops crossed over into the island, before day, without being perceived by the enemy. From being misconducted by his guides, Smallwood began his attack on a different point from that which he intended, in consequence of which the regiment he attacked made its escape ; but Ogden and DeBorre succeeded in a very considerable extent. Lawrence and Barton were completely surprised ; and both of them, with several of their officers and men, were taken.

“ The alarm being given, it was necessary to use the utmost dispatch in drawing his forces off the island. It had been impracticable to obtain a sufficient number of boats to embark them all at the same time ; and some confusion appears to have prevailed in this part of the business. General Campbell, with a considerable force advanced upon them ; and the rear-guard (about two hundred) after defending themselves for some time with great gallantry, finding the boats could not be brought back to take them over the channel, were under the necessity of surrendering prisoners of war. The enterprise seems to have been well planned, and, in its commencement, to have been happily executed. Its disastrous conclusion is most probably attributable to the want of a sufficient number of boats, without which the expedition ought not to have been undertaken.” — *Life of Washington.*

The loss inflicted and sustained was nearly equal : probably about two hundred men were rendered ineffective on either

side. Sullivan brought away with him from the island twenty-eight civilians, in retaliation for similar treatment, as above mentioned, towards the friends of independence.

In his account of the expedition, Mr. Bancroft loses sight of the fact, that it was only after his return that he learned of the arrival of the British fleet in the Chesapeake; and that, while waiting for orders, it was his duty to omit no opportunity to harass the enemy.

Mr. Irving, in terms alike more generous and truthful, says that "Sullivan, while encamped at Hanover, in Jersey, made a gallant attempt to surprise and capture a corps of one thousand Provincials, stationed on Staten Island, at a distance from the fortified camp, and opposite the Jersey shore. The attempt was partially successful; a number of the Provincials were captured, but the regulars came to the rescue. Sullivan had not brought sufficient boats to secure a retreat. His rear-guard was captured while waiting for the return of the boats, yet not without a sharp resistance. There was loss on both sides; but the Americans suffered most. Congress directed Washington to appoint a court of inquiry to investigate the matter. In the meantime, Sullivan, whose gallantry remained undoubted, continued in command."

Both Marshall and Irving attribute the want of more complete success to an insufficient number of boats. But the subordinate officers, contrary to the earnest injunctions of Sullivan, had allowed men to straggle from their ranks; and a rear-guard was left to collect them, as well as to protect the embarkation of the rest. Moreover, Ogden had taken possession of a small vessel, upon which were placed his prisoners; and their red uniforms led the boatmen to suppose her an armed vessel of the enemy, and to keep off.

This was a mischance not to be guarded against, and ought not to work to the prejudice of Sullivan. He had taken part in an expedition of a similar character, eight months before, at Trenton, which had redounded to the honor of all who were

engaged, proving of infinite advantage to the cause for which we were contending. It also bore many points of resemblance to his first exploit, the attack on Fort William and Mary, at Portsmouth, in December, 1774, — by many considered as the earliest hostile proceeding against the Crown. Bunker Hill, Dorchester Heights, Trenton, Princeton, Germantown, were similar night movements, suggested by opportunity; and depending on secrecy for success; and, had this been attended with the good fortune reasonably to have been anticipated, it would have redounded as much as Trenton to the credit of our arms.

The Court of Inquiry, composed of Generals Stirling, MacDougall, and Knox, Colonels Spenser and Clark, held Oct. 12, were unanimously of opinion, —

“That the expedition against the enemy on Staten Island was eligible, and promised great advantage to the cause of America;

“That it was well concerted, and the orders for the execution proper; and would have succeeded, with reputation to the general and his troops, had it not in some measure been rendered abortive by accidents, which were out of the power of the general to foresee or prevent;

“That General Sullivan was particularly active in embarking the troops to the island, and took every precaution in his power to bring them off;

“That he made early provision at Elisabethstown for refreshing the troops of his division, when they returned to Jersey; and, upon the maturest consideration of the evidence in the possession of this Court, General Sullivan’s conduct, in planning and executing the expedition, was such, that, in the opinion of this Court, he deserves the approbation of the country, and not its censure.

“The Court, therefore, are unanimously of opinion, that he ought to stand honorably acquitted of any unsoldierlike conduct in the expedition to Staten Island.”

This decision was signed by all the members of the Court ; and Congress resolved that the result, so honorable to General Sullivan, was highly pleasing to themselves, and that the opinion of the Court should be published in justification of that injured officer.

Mr. Bancroft says, disingenuously, that Sullivan could not, in consequence of the descent on Staten Island, obey the orders which met him on his return, to join Washington with all speed. In a week, he moved three thousand men from Hanover to the Elk, — one hundred and thirty miles, probably more than less. Howe, with twenty thousand men, had effected his landing by the 26th of August, and on the 11th of September was at Kennett Square, seven miles south of the Brandywine, and thirty south from Philadelphia, of which city it was his aim to possess himself. Washington, on the north side of the river, with his centre at Chad's Ford, on the direct route to the city, had eleven thousand men, poorly armed or recent levies. Maxwell commanded the left, down the river ; Sullivan the right, above, having under him, besides his own division, those of Stirling and Stephen, with Hazen's regiment stationed three miles higher up.

Sullivan, in conversation and by letter, had previously expressed his opinion to Washington, that Howe, as a sensible officer, would cross the river above the forks. Knyphausen, with half the British army, early in the morning, marched towards the river, and engaged Washington's attention with his artillery and occasional attacks in force. At the same time, he occupied the right bank of the Brandywine, screening from observation the march of Howe and Cornwallis, who, at daybreak, had started up the Lancaster road. The morning was foggy ; and their march, from six to ten miles from the river, lay through thick woods and uneven ground, well guarded on their flanks. Sullivan had but four horsemen, two of whom were needed to keep up communication with headquarters, two miles below, and three-quarters of a mile

from Chad's Ford. It was difficult, therefore, to ascertain the movement of the hostile forces; and Washington remained several hours in suspense.

In a foot-note on page 395 of Mr. Bancroft's volume, Sparks's "Washington" (vol. v. p. 109) is cited to prove that the responsibility devolved exclusively on Sullivan to obtain intelligence; and it purports, that the letter cited corrects a misstatement of his on that point. The candid reader, on reference to that authority, will find that the letter, on the contrary, confirms his statement, and that it was alike the constant effort of both Washington and Sullivan, that anxious morning, to obtain intelligence; and what was actually brought to them was as full and frequent as circumstances could have warranted them to expect.

Towards noon came an express from Sullivan to headquarters, that Howe, with a large body of troops and a park of artillery, was pushing up the Lancaster road. Washington ordered Sullivan to cross the Brandywine at Brenton's Ford, near which he was stationed, and to attack the British left. While preparing, in obedience to these orders, to cross the river, Major Spear* came in and informed him, that he had just come down from the Lancaster road, and the country where the British should have been, if coming round by the upper fords, and that they were nowhere to be seen. Sullivan thought Spear must be mistaken, but felt bound to transmit this with all speed to headquarters, as Washington said, in the sequel, he was perfectly right in doing. The movement might well have been a feint to lure us to meet the whole British army. That Washington so reasoned, is plain from the fact, that he did not send back immediate word, as he might have done in twenty minutes, to cross notwithstanding. One hour at least passed on unimproved by Washington, while awaiting more positive information, when Cheyney came in to confirm the earlier intelligence.

* Most of the authorities write *Spear*; one of the later (Irving) *Spicer*.

It seems reasonable to believe that the information of Colonel Ross and Colonel Bland, that Howe had marched towards the forks, reached Washington soon after eleven. His order to Sullivan to cross was not later than half-past. By twelve, the reports of Major Spear and Sergeant Tucker, that the earlier intelligence was a mistake, were forwarded; and by one, certainly, orders could have been sent to Sullivan still to cross, had Washington deemed it advisable. It was after two when the fact became known to Washington, that the British army was actually coming down the left bank of the Brandywine. Ill-natured historians, eager to find fault, overlook completely the fact, that Colonel Hazen, who with his regiment was stationed three miles above Sullivan, up the river, was the person mainly relied upon for knowledge of any movement of the enemy in that direction.

As the proposed movement was based on information previously communicated, in reality correct, but now contradicted on authority equally entitled to respect, Sullivan would have been deservedly blamed if he had hesitated to transmit it, and the army had crossed to encounter the whole British force, double its numbers, with a river but partially fordable in its rear, and, as inevitably would have been the case unless by a miracle, been defeated.

Reasoning from the facts, as in reality they were, if Sullivan had crossed, and with Washington attacked Knyphausen, the force left at Kennett Square was nearly equal to what would have been engaged against it; and the contest could easily have been prolonged until Howe had reached our rear and enveloped us. It is useless to conjecture probabilities, except so far as they bear upon the claim to credit for prudence and military sagacity of those who no doubt took them into account in forming their conclusions. But it would seem that a kind Providence saved us on that day from a terrible blunder, if not the loss of our cause, by keeping us on the left bank of the Brandywine. We fought because public

opinion demanded it. It would have been a folly, with such odds, to have expected a victory. The resistance made, although resulting in retreat, was still a step in advance towards independence.

What followed we give in Sullivan's own language, in a letter which we claim to be the best evidence as to the facts related, because proceeding from him who had the best opportunity of knowing the truth; whose character for honor cannot be impeached; and where deception, had he been disposed to deceive, would have been impossible, from the whole army of witnesses to whom the incidents of the battle were perfectly familiar. We feel assured that no candid or competent judge, after reading it, will remain of the opinion, either that Sullivan made too wide a circuit, had any question of etiquette with Stirling or Stephen as to the post of honor, moved his division from half a mile to the left to their right, or that he was otherwise than worthy of all respect for his military capacity, and his natural and acquired qualifications as a general officer and commander, in critical moments requiring coolness and judgment. If we had many better officers than Sullivan, the standard in our Revolutionary struggle was a most unusual one.

The letter to which reference has been made is the following:—

CAMP ON PERKIOMY, Sept. 27, 1777.

MUCH ESTEEMED SIR,—I have long been soliciting for a court of inquiry into my conduct in the expedition against Staten Island. I had applied to the commander-in-chief for one before. I know Congress had ordered it; but such has been the state of our arms, that I have not been able to obtain one, and know not when I shall have it in my power. I however take the freedom to transmit Congress copies of the testimonies I mean to lay before the court, which I beg Congress to peruse; and they can be at no loss what must be the result of an impartial court. I am, however, happy in the assurance, that the evidence will remove every suspicion from the minds of the members of Con-

gress, and from the court, if ever I should be so happy as to obtain one ; and I shall take the proper steps to remove the effects from the minds of Americans at large. I was ever at a loss to find what great evil happened from this expedition, unless a spirit of enterprise is deemed a fault ; if so, *I think it will need but few resolves of Congress to destroy what remains of it in our army.*

In this expedition, we landed on an island possessed by the enemy ; put to rout six regiments ; killed, wounded, and made prisoners at least four or five hundred of the enemy ; * vanquished every party that collected against us ; destroyed them great quantities of stores ; took one vessel and destroyed six ; took a considerable number of arms, blankets, many cattle, horses, &c. ; marched victorious through the island ; and, in the whole course of the day, lost not more than one hundred and fifty men, most of which were lost by the imprudence of themselves and officers. Some few, indeed, were lost by cross accidents, which no human foresight could have prevented.

Whether Congress will take any steps against persons who have thus scandalously imposed their falsehoods upon them, I shall not inquire. I find it necessary for me to take the proper steps to do myself justice, which I know the impartial part of mankind will justify. I was still more astonished to find, that, upon the vague report of a single person, who pretends to know all about the late battle of Brandywine, though I am confident he saw but little of it, Congress should suddenly pass a resolve, to suspend me from the service, which resolve was afterwards rescinded. If the reputation of general officers is thus to be sported with, upon every vague and idle report, those who set less by their reputation than myself must continue in the service. Nothing can be more mortifying to a man who is conscious of having done every thing in his power for the good of his country, — has wasted his strength, and often exposed his life, in the service of it, than to

* There is no more frequent subject of dispute in history than regarding the number of combatants, the dead, wounded, or missing. Returns are rarely exact ; and, except in rare instances, where system is unusually thorough, much is left to conjecture. It was a part of even Washington's policy, full of truth and honor as he was, to mislead the enemy ; and the British officers frequently under or over-stated, either from design or mistake. If this number seems large, it is quite as likely to be exact as what was stated by the enemy disposed to conceal the extent of their loss, or of persons, from malevolent motives, eager to depreciate the results. Of course in this number are included the prisoners of Ogdén, who, if we may judge from his own correspondence, was not in an independent command, as stated by Bancroft, but formed part of that of General Sullivan.

find the representatives thereof, instead of bestowing on him the reward of his services, loading him with blame, infamy, and reproach, upon the false representations of a single person, who felt as little of the severity of the engagement, as he knows about the disposition of our troops or that of the enemy.

I enclose Congress the testimony of those brave and experienced officers, who with me endured the hottest of the enemy's fire.

I have never endeavored to establish my reputation by my own pen; nor have I, according to the modern custom, employed others for the purpose; neither have I adopted the still more infamous method, of raising my own reputation by destroying that of others. I have always contented myself with a consciousness of having done my duty with faithfulness; but, being constrained to say something at this time respecting the late battle and some other matters, I hope Congress will look upon it rather as the effect of necessity, than any desire of making a merit of my services.

I never yet have pretended that my disposition in the late battle was perfect; I knew it was very far from it: but this I will venture to affirm, that it was the best which time would allow me to make. At half-past two, I received orders to march with my division, — to join with, and take command of, that and two others to oppose the enemy, who were coming down on the right flank of our army. I neither knew where the enemy were, nor what route the other two divisions were to take, and of course could not determine where I should form a junction with them. I began my march in a few minutes after I received my orders, and had not marched a mile when I met Colonel Hazen and his regiment, which had been stationed at a ford three miles above me, who informed that the enemy were close upon his heels, and that I might depend that the principal part of the British army were there; although I knew the report sent to headquarters made them but two brigades. As I knew Colonel Hazen to be an old officer and a good judge of numbers, I gave credence to his report, in preference to the intelligence before received. While I was conversing with Colonel Hazen, and our troops still upon the march, the enemy headed us in the road, about forty rods from our advanced guard. I then found it necessary to turn off to the right to form, and so got nearer to the other two divisions, which I at that moment discovered drawn up on an eminence, both in the rear and to the right of the place I then was at. I ordered Colonel Hazen's regiment to pass a hollow way, file off to the right, and face, to cover the artillery. The enemy, seeing this, did not

press on, but gave me time to form my division on an advantageous height, in a line with the other divisions, but almost half a mile to the left.

I then rode on to consult the other general officers, who, upon receiving information that the enemy were endeavoring to outflank us on the right, were unanimously of opinion, that my division should be brought on to join the others, and that the whole should incline further to the right, to prevent our being outflanked; but while my division was marching on, and before it was possible for them to form to advantage, the enemy pressed on with rapidity and attacked them, which threw them into some kind of confusion. I had taken post myself in the centre, with the artillery, and ordered it to play briskly to stop the progress of the enemy, and to give the broken troops time to rally and form in the rear of where I was with the artillery. I sent off four aide-de-camps for this purpose, and went myself; but all in vain. No sooner did I form one party, but that which I had before formed ran off, and even at times when I, though on horseback and in front of them, apprehended no danger. I then left them to be rallied by their own officers and my aide-de-camps; I repaired to the hill where our artillery was, which by this time began to feel the effects of the enemy's fire.

This hill commanded both the right and left of our line, and, if carried by the enemy, I knew would instantly bring on a total rout, and make a retreat very difficult. I therefore determined to hold it as long as possible, to give Lord Stirling's and General Stephen's divisions, which yet stood firm, as much assistance from the artillery as possible, and to give Colonel Hazen's, Dayton's, and Ogden's regiments, which still stood firm on our left, the same advantage, and to cover the broken troops of my division, and to give them an opportunity to rally, and come to our assistance, which some of them did, and others could not by their officers be brought to do any thing but fly. The enemy soon began to bend their principal force against the hill, and the fire was close and heavy for a long time, and soon became general. Lord Stirling and General Conway, with their aide-de-camps, were with me on the hill, and exerted themselves beyond description to keep up the troops. Five times did the enemy drive our troops from the hill, and as often was it regained, and the summit often disputed almost muzzle to muzzle. How far I had a hand in this, and whether I endured the hottest of the enemy's fire, I cheerfully submit to the gentlemen who were with me. The general fire of the line lasted an hour and forty minutes; fifty-one minutes of which the hill was disputed almost muz-

zle to muzzle, in such a manner, that General Conway, who has seen much service, says he never saw so close and severe a fire. On the right where General Stephen was, it was long and severe, and on the left considerable. When we found the right and left oppressed by numbers and giving way on all quarters, we were obliged to abandon the hill we had so long contended for, but not till we had almost covered the ground between that and Birmingham meeting-house, with the dead bodies of the enemy.* When I found that victory was on the side of the enemy, I thought it my duty to prevent, as much as possible, the injurious consequences of a defeat; for which purpose I rallied my troops on every advantageous piece of ground, to retard their pursuit and give them fresh opposition. How far I exerted myself in this, Congress will readily see by consulting the enclosed testimonies; and that the last parties I assisted to rally and post against them were between sunset and dark. By this means the enemy were so much fatigued, that they suffered our whole army, with their artillery, baggage, &c., to pass off without molestation, and without attempting to pursue us a step.

I wish Congress to consider the many disadvantages I labored under on that day. It is necessary, in every action, that the commanding officer should have a perfect knowledge of the number and situation of the enemy, the route they are pursuing, the ground he is to draw up his troops on, as well as that where the enemy are formed, and that he have sufficient time to view and examine the position of the enemy, and to draw up his troops in such a manner as to counteract their design; all of which were wanting. We had intelligence only of two brigades coming against us, when in fact it was the whole strength of the British army, commanded by General Howe and Lord Cornwallis. They met us unexpectedly, and in order of battle, and attacked us before we had time to form, and upon ground we had never before seen. Under those disadvantages, and against those unequal numbers, we maintained our ground an hour and forty minutes; and, by giving fresh opposition on every ground that would admit, we kept them at bay from three o'clock until after sunset. What more would have been expected from between three and four thousand troops against the chief part of the British army?

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* Rolls of the loss of the enemy at Brandywine were captured at Germantown, and the total is set down as about two thousand. More than half of their loss, no doubt, was during the battle at Birmingham meeting-house.

I now beg Congress to consider whether my services, in political and military life, have deserved so ill as to render me liable, upon vague reports and private opinions, to have my character stigmatized by resolves against me. Though I have never yet wrote, or said any thing in favor of myself, I am compelled at once to alter my conduct. My political character is well known in most parts of America, and the part I have taken in the present dispute. I am exceeding happy, that, in the military line, I have witnesses of all my conduct. Let the commander-in-chief declare who it was that supplied cannon, arms, and ammunition to the army, when they were almost destitute at Cambridge, and who brought the troops to guard the lines, when they were almost deserted; and who, by his influence, prevailed upon them to tarry six weeks after their time was expired. To the officers I had the honor to command on Winter Hill, I appeal whether I was not the means of inducing their men to enlist for the second campaign, and whether, during the whole time I was there, I did not cheerfully brave every danger that could arise from the severe cannonade and bombardment of the enemy. To the officers of the Canada army, let me appeal for the truth of my having found, on my arrival in that quarter, a most miserable army, flying off by hundreds and leaving behind them all their sick, and all the public stores which had been sent into that quarter. Those I speedily collected, and, having joined my other forces; made an effort to penetrate into the country; but the unfortunate arrival of ten thousand British troops put it out of my power. I had then to make a retreat with five thousand sick, and two thousand two hundred and fifty well men, and to secure the public stores scattered throughout the country. This was done in the face of a veteran army, commanded by a brave and experienced officer. The sick and the public stores were not only saved, but the mills, timber, and boards were destroyed, which prevented the enemy from reducing Ticonderoga to the same unhappy situation the last year which they have done this. How far I was active in conducting this retreat, which even our enemies have applauded, let the address of the worthy officers in that army, presented at my departure from them, declare. In the attack upon Trenton, in December last, I appeal to all the officers in the three brigades commanded by Generals St. Clair, Glover, and Commandant Sergeant, whether I did not enter the town, at the head of my troops, and whether my disposition was not the most perfect that could be devised for carrying the town and preventing escapes, and whether, with my division, I did not carry the town before we received any assist-

ance. To the commander-in-chief, and to the same officers, I again appeal, whether I did not by my influence prevail on those troops to tarry six weeks after the first day of January, which in my opinion went far towards saving America; * and whether, at the attack on Princeton, I was not in the front of my line when the enemy began their fire upon us, and whether they ever saw me in the least endeavor to screen myself from the enemy's fire. For the battle of Long Island, I appeal to Major Willis and the other officers who were with me, whether any person could have exposed himself more, or made a longer resistance with such an handful of men, against so great an army.

It is an observation of one of the wisest of men, that no person can stand before envy; and I am determined not to make the rash attempt. My reputation and my freedom I hold dear. But, if I lose the former, the latter becomes of no importance. I therefore, rather than run the venture to combat against the envy of some malicious officers in the army, when cherished and supported by the influence of their too credulous correspondents in Congress, must, as soon as the court of inquiry have sat, and given their opinion, beg leave to retire from the army, while my reputation is secure. This will afford me an opportunity of doing justice to my reputation, and laying my conduct, with the evidence of it, before the public; and enable me to take the proper steps against those, who, without cause or foundation, have endeavored to ruin one, who has ever shown himself one of the warmest friends to American freedom. I beg Congress will not suppose this to proceed from disaffection, but from necessity; that I may quit a place where I have more to fear, than I could have from the most powerful enemy. If Congress grants me liberty to retire, I shall give in my resignation to the commander-in-chief, when the court of inquiry have sat, and given their judgment, and if it is against me, when a court-martial gives a final judgment, unless that should likewise be against me. But I cannot think that Congress, after examining the evidences, will be at a loss to know what the result of either court must be.

Dear Sir, I have the honor to be, with much respect,

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

JOHN SULLIVAN.

His Excellency JOHN HANCOCK, Esq.

* It was undoubtedly owing, in a great degree, to the exertions of Sullivan and Stark, that a re-enlistment of the troops was effected at this perilous juncture. — See *Collections for 1822*, p. 100.

Stephen exposed himself, that day, to reproach for unofficer-like conduct. De Borre, somewhat ignorant of our language, was obstinate, disobeyed orders, and, shortly afterwarwards, was court-martialled and resigned.

Sullivan, in defending himself from the charges of Burke, — a civilian and member of Congress, who rode out to see the fight, — criminates no one of his subordinates, but is generous to all of them, as he is, afterwards, just and discriminating in describing the battle for the public press. It seems difficult to understand, if any remark ever fell from his lips to which the wildest interpretation could attach the idea of jealousy or etiquette as to position, how any such could have entered his mind. He was commanding the whole right wing, and both Sterling and Stephen were his subordinates; while De Borre commanded the right brigade in his own division. How could it possibly have added to his dignity or responsibility or consequence, that his division should have been posted on the right. His words seem unmistakable, that, in moving to the right and rear, they were closing up to Stephen, when De Borre's brigade broke.

To be held in any degree, however, unjustly responsible for the disasters of the day, was intolerable to one so sensitive as himself; and the following letter to Mr. John Adams expresses his distress under the imputation: —

TO JOHN ADAMS.

CAMP ON PERKIOMY, Sept. 28, 1777.

DEAR SIR, — Far from addressing you in the language of friendship, and desiring your assistance as a friend, I call upon you as a friend to justice and mankind, begging you to acquaint yourself, and make Congress acquainted, with the evidence I have enclosed the President, relative to my conduct. They ought to take time to view, examine, and consider it. They have censured and condemned me without evidence; will they not acquit me upon the clearest testimony? The greatest and the only favor I request from you is, that if, by the evidence, there appears the least fault in my conduct, you will join with the rest against me, to complete that ruin which some members of Congress have long been

striving to bring about ; but if, on the contrary, you find that it is the person who has silently borne the burthen of the war, has endured the hottest of almost every fire, and braved every danger for his country's good, that Congress has been censuring and resolving against, then, Sir, call upon Congress to do me justice, and restore me that reputation which they have in some degree deprived me of. Should I fail in this, I am determined to quit the service, and employ my tongue, my pen, and every other engine that may be found necessary, to save my reputation. I am now fortifying myself for the purpose. I am well known in America, and exceeding well in the army. The officers who have served with me are worthy, as they are numerous. They will, they must, join with me to exclaim against unjust and ungenerous returns for faithful and laborious service, let them proceed from what quarter they will. No wall can be so sacred as to screen from public censure the persons who, from private views, would ruin the reputation of the faithful patriot and the brave soldier. It is the dignity of America, not the dignity of Congress, we are fighting to support. Treat us justly, reward us for our services, and don't let our characters suffer from every idle report. Pray examine the evidence I have sent to the President, and then determine, with your usual candor, whether the resolves against me were not premature ; whether I have not a right to complain ; and whether Congress ought not, in justice, to restore me that reputation which they have deprived me of. Why am I singled out as the only person for a court of inquiry, and by a resolve, afterwards rescinded, to be suspended from the service. A fleet was lost on Champlain Lake, the army in Canada ruined, Fort Washington and Fort Lee sacrificed : no courts of inquiry were thought necessary. General Parsons made an attempt on Long Island the same day I went to Staten Island. He had only one regiment to contend with ; no reinforcements could possibly come against him : yet he was repulsed, with loss. I had many regiments to contend with ; routed all I came across ; did them much mischief. Yet no court of inquiry is ordered upon him. I am the butt against which all the darts are levelled. How does this read ? How will it sound when ringing in the public ear ? But forgive me for this warmth. I know that, as a friend, you will make the proper allowances for my feeling. I rely upon your exertions to bring Congress to do justice to your much injured friend and humble servant,

JN^o SULLIVAN.

Hon. JNO ADAMS, Esq.

Congress, who had for a moment hearkened to Burke, one of its members, who professed to have been an eye-witness of what occurred on the battlefield, immediately rescinded their resolve by an overwhelming vote, one member from Delaware alone siding with Burke. His aspersions, as we hope those of Mr. Bancroft now, if fame be worth the having, will be of service rather than injury to the reputation of General Sullivan, calling attention to what can well stand the test. We select from the numberless letters of his brother officers, including nearly all those who served under him, the following, which are certainly better to be believed than Mr. Bancroft.

OCT. 20, 1777.

Since the battle of Brandywine, I have been sorry to hear illiberal complaints thrown out against the conduct of Major-General Sullivan. As I was present during the whole action, and obliged, from my situation with Lord Stirling, to be near General Sullivan, I had an opportunity of observing such examples of courage as could not escape the attention of any one. I can declare that his uniform bravery, coolness, and intrepidity, both in the heat of battle, and in rallying and forming the troops when broke from their ranks, appeared to me to be truly consistent with, or rather exceeded, any idea I had ever had of the greatest soldier.

ENOS EDWARDS,
Aide to Lord Stirling.

The notes of Lafayette, Hamilton, and Laurens are equally explicit as to his generalship in the battle; and the following from Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, afterwards candidate for the Presidency of the United States, that, in posting Weedon's brigade, and in resisting the enemy till dark, he did quite his part in the preservation of the American army:—

CAMP NEAR POTSGROVE, Sept. 24, 1777.

In compliance with the request of General Sullivan, that I would mention what I saw of his behavior at the action of Brandywine, on the 11th of this month, I declare, when I saw him in the engagement, which was in the evening, about the time that General Weedon's brigade was brought up to the right, he appeared to me to

behave with the greatest calmness and bravery; and at that time I had occasion to observe his behavior, as I was then with General Washington, and heard General Sullivan tell him that all the superior officers of his division had behaved exceedingly well, and, after some other conversation with the general, General Sullivan, turning to me, requested I would ride up to General Weedon, and desire him to halt Colonel Spottswood's and Colonel Stephen's regiments in the ploughed field, on our right, and form them there, which I did; and on my return I was informed that General Sullivan, while I was delivering his orders, had his horse shot under him.

CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY,
Colonel of the First Continental Regiment of South Carolina.

Five days after the battle, Washington again sought an engagement at Goshen; but, a storm of two days' continuance spoiling his ammunition, he was compelled to withdraw for a fresh supply, and Howe entered Philadelphia. There being no suitable accommodation within the city, the British general posted his forces at Germantown, about six miles out. Washington determining to assail them on the first opportunity, submitted the proposition to his generals, who, with few exceptions, advised delay until they had been strengthened by re-enforcements expected shortly from the North. When, soon after, intelligence was received that Howe had weakened his army by a strong detachment to Billingsport, Washington concluded upon action. At noon, on the third of October, he issued his orders; and, at nine that evening, the troops left Matuchen Hills, on the Skippack, for a night march of fourteen miles. At baybreak the next morning, the right wing, commanded by Sullivan, came into collision with the advanced posts of the British at Chestnut Hill, about two miles north of the village of Germantown.

The following letter to President Weare from Sullivan, dated Oct. 25, 1777, from the camp at Whitemarsh, gives the particulars of the fight:—

General Sullivan's Letter to the President of New Hampshire.

CAMP AT WHITEMARSH, Oct. 25, 1777.

SIR, — I hope the constant movements of our army, since the battle of Germantown, will apologize for my not having before given you a particular account of this unsuccessful affair. Upon receiving intelligence that part of the enemy's force was detached for particular purposes, and that their main army lay encamped, with their left wing on the west side of the road leading through Germantown, flanked by the Hessian forces, who were encamped on the Schuylkill, and their right on the east side of the road extending to a wood about one mile from the town, with their light infantry encamped in a line in their front, within less than a quarter of a mile of their picket at Mount Airy, — upon this intelligence, it was agreed in council that we should march the night of the 3d instant, and attack the enemy in the following manner: —

My own and Wayne's divisions were to compose the right wing, which I had the honor to command. This wing was to be sustained by the corps of reserve, composed of Nash's and Maxwell's brigades, commanded by Major-general Lord Stirling. The right wing was to be flanked by Conway's brigade, which led the column. The whole of these marched down the Skippack road, leading over Chesnut Hill into Germantown. General Armstrong, with about one thousand Pennsylvania militia, was to pass down the road which runs near the Schuylkill, and attack the Hessians, who covered the enemy's left flank. The left wing was composed of Greene's and Stephen's divisions, commanded by Major-general Greene, who were to march down the York road and attack the enemy's right, while the troops I had the honor to command attacked their left. General McDougal's brigade was to attack their right flank, and Smallwood's division and Forman's brigade of militia were to make a larger circuit, and attack the rear of their right wing. The reason of our sending so many troops to attack their right was because it was supposed, that, if this wing of the enemy could be forced, their army must be pushed into the Schuylkill or be compelled to surrender. Therefore two-thirds of the army, at least, were detached to oppose the enemy's right.

The attack was to begin on all quarters at daybreak. Our army left their encampment at Matuchen Hills at nine in the evening, marched all night, and at daybreak the right wing arrived on Chesnut Hill, when one regiment from Conway's brigade, and one from the

Second Maryland brigade, were detached to Mount Airy, followed by Conway's brigade, to attack the enemy's picket at Allen's house. My own division followed in the rear of Conway's, and Wayne's division in the rear of mine. The picket was soon attacked, and suddenly re-enforced by all their light infantry. This compelled General Conway to form his brigade to sustain the attacking regiments and to repulse the light infantry. They maintained their ground with great resolution, till my division was formed to support them. The enemy endeavoring to flank us on the left, I ordered Colonel Ford's regiment to the other side of the road to repulse them, till General Wayne's division arrived; and upon finding that our left wing, which had near four miles farther to march than the right, had not arrived, I was obliged to form General Wayne's division on the east of the road, to attack the enemy's right. I then directed General Conway to draw off such part of his brigade as was formed in the road and in front of our right, and to fall into my rear, and file off to the right to flank my division; but, the morning being too dark to discover the enemy's movements, and no evidence being given of General Armstrong's arrival, I was obliged to send a regiment from Wayne's, and another from my own division, to keep the enemy from turning our right. I also detached Colonel Moylan's regiment of light horse to watch their motions in that quarter.

This being done, my division were ordered to advance; which they did with such resolution, that the enemy's light infantry were soon compelled to leave the field, and with it their encampments. They, however, made a stand at every fence, wall, and ditch they passed, which were numerous. We were compelled to remove every fence as we passed, which delayed us much in the pursuit. We were soon after met by the left wing of the British army, when a severe conflict ensued; but, our men being ordered to march up with shouldered arms, they obeyed without hesitation, and the enemy retired. I then detached my aide-de-camp, Major Morris, to inform his Excellency, who was in the main road, that the enemy's left wing had given way, and to desire him to order General Wayne to advance against their right. His Excellency immediately detached part of the residue on my right and part on the left of the road, and directed Wayne's division to advance, which they did with great bravery and rapidity.

At Chew's house, a mile and a half from where the attack began, Wayne's division came abreast with mine, and passed Chew's house, while mine were advancing on the other side of the main road.

Though the enemy were routed, yet they took advantage of every yard, house, and hedge in their retreat, which caused an incessant fire through the whole pursuit. At this time, which was near an hour and a quarter after the attack began, General Stephen's division fell in with Wayne's on our left, and, soon after, the firing from General Greene's was heard still farther to the left. The left wing of our army was delayed much by General Greene's being obliged to counter-march one of his divisions before he could begin the attack, as he found the enemy were in a situation very different from what we had been before told. The enemy had thrown a large body of troops into Chew's house, which caused Maxwell's brigade to halt there with some artillery to reduce them. This was found very difficult, as the house, being stone, was almost impenetrable by cannon, and sufficient proof against musketry. The enemy defended themselves with great bravery, and annoyed our troops much by their fire. This, unfortunately, caused many of our troops to halt, and brought back General Wayne's division, who had advanced far beyond the house, as they were apprehensive lest the firing proceeded from the enemy's having defeated my division on the right. This totally uncovered the left flank of my division, which was still advancing against the enemy's left. The firing of General Greene's division was very heavy for more than a quarter of an hour, but then decreased, and seemed to draw farther from us. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the facts to determine with precision what was done in that quarter. A regiment commanded by Colonel Matthews advanced with rapidity near the town; but, not being supported by some other regiments, who were stopped by a breastwork near Lucan's mills, the brave colonel, after having performed great feats of bravery, and being dangerously wounded in several places, was obliged, with about a hundred of his men, to surrender.

My division, with a regiment of North Carolinians commanded by Colonel Armstrong, and assisted by part of Conway's brigade, having driven the enemy a mile and a half below Chew's house, and finding themselves unsupported by any other troops, their cartridges all expended, the force of the enemy on the right collecting to the left to oppose them, being alarmed by the firing at Chew's house so far in their rear, and by the cry of a light-horseman on the right, that the enemy had got round us, and at the same time discovering some troops flying on our right, retired with as much precipitation as they had before advanced, against every effort of their officers to rally them. When

the retreat took place, they had been engaged near three hours, which, with the march of the preceding night, rendered them almost unfit for fighting or retreating. We, however, made a safe retreat, though not a regular one; we brought off all our cannon and all our wounded. Our loss in the action amounts to less than seven hundred, mostly wounded. We lost some valuable officers, among whom were the brave General Nash and my two aides-de-camp, Majors Sherburne and White, whose singular bravery must ever do honor to their memories. Our army rendezvoused at Pawling's mills, and seems very desirous of another action. The misfortunes of this day were principally owing to a thick fog, which, being rendered still more so by the smoke of the cannon and musketry, prevented our troops from discovering the motions of the enemy or acting in concert with each other. I cannot help observing, that, with great concern, I saw our brave commander exposing himself to the hottest fire of the enemy, in such a manner, that regard to my country obliged me to ride to him, and beg him to retire. He, to gratify me and some others, withdrew a small distance; but his anxiety for the fate of the day soon brought him up again, where he remained till our troops had retreated.

I am, &c.,

JOHN SULLIVAN.

To the Hon. the President of New Hampshire.

The battle, which lasted three hours, was, where Sullivan commanded on the right wing, a complete success. It was already decided in their favor; a portion of the enemy had actually crossed the river in retreat; when a panic, from several causes, took possession first of Wayne's men, and then others of the right wing, baffling every effort of their officers to rally them. Washington had been persuaded by Knox to reduce the stone house of Chief Justice Chew, occupied by Colonel Marsgrave and six companies of the British Fortieth; and a parley was sounded, summoning them to surrender. This was mistaken for a signal to retreat; a fog, dense with the smoke of the battle, prevented perfect concert of action; and a regiment, led by an inexperienced colonel, exhausted, unseasonably, its powder. These causes occasioned confusion; but the retreat was effected with little loss. The enterprise was well planned and executed, and

inflicted a heavy blow on the enemy, raising in public estimation the character of our troops, — so soon after defeat, in condition to encounter their enemies.

Washington, in his report to Congress, says, "In justice to General Sullivan and the whole right wing of the army, whose conduct I had an opportunity of observing, as they acted immediately under my eye, I have the pleasure to inform you, that both officers and men behaved with a degree of gallantry that did them the highest honor." Mr. Bancroft, with the same ungenerous prejudice exhibited earlier, ascribes no merit to Sullivan, but cites a letter of General Armstrong to sustain a statement as to his needless waste of powder, which the letter itself fails to confirm.

After other unsuccessful efforts to bring the enemy to a conflict, in December, 1777, the American army — a large portion of it barefooted and without blankets — went into winter-quarters at Valley Forge, where Sullivan remained, busily engaged in superintending the construction of bridges and in other duties, till March, 1778, when he was ordered to take the command in Rhode Island.

Mr. Bancroft charges him, as a fault, with recommending the appointment of Conway as adjutant-general, and with being on both sides in the cabal which aimed to displace Washington by Gates. Conway had been under his command; was a brave officer who had seen much service; and, among the Sullivan papers is a virtual denial, under his signature, of ever having written to Gates the offensive passage quoted by Bancroft, which gave displeasure. Sullivan's own correspondence conclusively proves that he had never faltered in his loyalty to Washington; but it would have been highly prejudicial to the cause for which they were all contending, had he taken sides against Gates, who was then the President of the Board of War.*

* Letter to Adams, and following declaration of Conway: —

I declare that at Whitemarsh Camp, I think one or two days before my departure, I met with

In February he requested permission to visit his home, while the army remained inactive in winter-quarters; and states that his daily pay of fifteen shillings and eightpence, in the reduced currency, provided for a very inconsiderable part of his expenses. He had depended, throughout the war, on his private resources; and his available means had become exhausted. At Long Island, New York, New Rochelle, and Peekskill, his personal effects had been captured; and it was only by returning to New Hampshire that he could procure what was indispensable for his most pressing wants.

When the French alliance, following Burgoyne's surrender, led to co-operation, a combined attack by the French fleet under D'Estaing, and an army under Sullivan, was concerted against Newport, then defended by six thousand men.

Sullivan, by collecting the militia and volunteers from the neighboring States, had, for a short time, under his command, a force of ten thousand men, only fifteen hundred of whom had had any experience in war. As they approached, the British withdrew from the upper part of the island, within their lines, three miles from the town; and Sullivan crossed on to the island. It had been arranged that the French should land first, in the expectation their landing would be contested. When the British withdrew, this precedence ceased to have any significance; Sullivan improving time, which was important, and opportunity, which might have been lost had the enemy returned to dispute the landing, crossed; and D'Estaing was, without reason, offended.

A gale of unusual severity, of three days' duration, drove

General Wilkinson at Colonel Biddle's quarters; that, having called General Wilkinson to an upper room, I asked him if he had knowledge I had written to General Gates the preceding month. Upon his answer in the affirmative, I asked him if he remembered to have read in it the following paragraph:—

“Heaven has determined to save this country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it.”

General Wilkinson assured me that such a paragraph was not in my letter.

off the fleet of the allies, who, after a partial engagement with the British squadron under Lord Howe, sailed to Boston to refit.* Several thousands of the volunteers, disheartened by this seeming defection, and by exposure to cold and wet and hardships to which they were wholly unaccustomed, went home. Sullivan, with the remainder, proceeded to attack Newport; but the garrison—who, in comfortable quarters, had not suffered from the gale, and were protected by strong intrenchments—equalled in numbers his own troops, and had, besides, a powerful naval force to protect them; while D'Estaing declined to return. Upon consultation, and after taking the written opinions of his general officers, advising his withdrawal from the island, he retired to Butt's Hill in good order, thence repulsing the British, who had followed; and, on the following night, recrossed to Tiverton, without molestation or loss. The next day, Clinton arrived from New York with a re-enforcement to the garrison of four thousand strong.

If disappointed, the failure of his expedition was from no fault of Sullivan. In the estimation of the unreflecting, who possess no other criterion of merit than success, he may be censured for not effecting impossibilities. Washington himself, judged by the same standard, came near falling a victim to unreasonable prejudice.

Greene, always the steadfast friend of both Washington and Sullivan, on the 11th of September, 1778, wrote, "I have seen as much service almost as any man in the American army, and have been in as many, if not more, engagements than any one. I know the character of all our general offi-

* When, after the storm and naval engagement, the French Admiral declined to return, Sullivan, in general orders, to counteract discouragement in his army from this disappointment, expressed his confidence that they would effect their object without cooperation; but not a word was used from which any sensible person, however susceptible, could have taken umbrage. Apprehension that the expressions used might prejudice the cause, led to subsequent explanations; but no man of common sense can find fault with them now that they are divested of all power to harm.

cers; and, if I am any judge, the expedition has been prudently and well conducted. I am confident there is not a general officer, from the commander-in-chief to the youngest in the field, who could have gone greater lengths to have given success to the expedition than General Sullivan. He is sensible, active, ambitious, brave, and persevering in his temper; and the object was sufficiently important to make him despise every difficulty opposed to his success, as far as he was at liberty to consult his reputation: but the public good is of more importance than personal glory, and the one is not to be gratified at the expense of the other." On the 17th of September, Congress resolved that the retreat was prudent, timely, and well conducted; and that their thanks be given to General Sullivan, and to the officers and troops under his command, for their fortitude and bravery displayed in the action of Aug. 29th, in which they repulsed the British forces, and maintained the field.

In 1779, Sullivan commanded an expedition against the Six Nations, whose massacres and depredations at Wyoming, Cherry Valley, and along the frontier settlements, called for repression and reprisals. In carrying out his orders, which Mr. Sparks has only partially printed, he laid waste forty of their villages. The ulterior object was the invasion of Canada by the way of Niagara, and Sullivan requested from the Board of War the supplies he deemed necessary to accomplish it; but, secrecy being essential to success, they were not forthcoming, and what was provided was nearly exhausted while they still remained in the Indian country.*

* It was remarked by a cotemporary writer, that "the instructions given by General Sullivan to his officers, the order of march he prescribed to his troops, and the discipline he had the ability to maintain, would have done honor to the most experienced ancient or modern generals." This is cited as an offset to the slur of Mr. Bancroft, who certainly is no better judge of military character: indeed, his descriptions of military movements indicate a want of attention to a science indispensable to the historian. The instructions, still extant, of Sullivan, to officers acting under him in the command of expeditions, are minute and sensible, and fully prove the injustice of the

Gordon, who seems to be the favorite authority of Bancroft, exhibits, throughout his work, a carping spirit against nearly all the officers, and a prejudice against Sullivan, easily explained, which ought not, in any candid mind, to operate to his discredit. The book was published in England for a public prejudiced against America. Moreover, in the controversy in Massachusetts for the removal of Temple, he had been the opponent of James Sullivan, the brother of the General.

His health broken down by incessant exposures and hardships, General Sullivan sent in his resignation to Congress, who voted him their thanks for his services.

He had borne the brunt of the war for five years. He had endeavored zealously to do his duty. His courage, fidelity, activity, had never been questioned. His success had equalled that of Washington or Greene, — either of whom, judged by their battles gained, would not have any brighter record to show than himself. Monmouth was more a drawn battle than a victory, and its dispositions were out of the control of the commander-in-chief. By his celerity of movement, and his judicious combinations, Washington, aided by the French, having “bottled” up Cornwallis in the peninsula, conquered at Yorktown; and this, as Saratoga, was a decisive battle. But neither Lee at Fort Moultrie, Gates at Saratoga, nor Washington at Yorktown, won more substantial laurels than the latter general in his defeats at Brandywine and Germantown.

Sullivan’s generalship, as that of most other military leaders, has been subjected to criticism; but, if judged without prejudice, and by the circumstances and standards of the times, it will not suffer by comparison with that of the other leaders. He certainly made as great sacrifices as any of them.

harsh and unfounded judgment passed upon him by a civilian, confirm the favorable opinion entertained of his military aptitudes and qualifications by Washington, Greene, and those who had the best opportunity of knowing them.

He expended his private fortune. Fourteen hundred dollars, advanced by him for the public service in 1776, was only repaid in 1784; and his pay, in depreciated currency, fell far short of the unavoidable expenses of a general officer. Greene, the noblest of the generals, if we except Washington, was always his firm friend; and he also stood high in the estimation of the commander-in-chief. If he made enemies by his freedom of expression and impulsive temper, these secured him the affectionate respect of those whose respect was best worth having. Gates and St. Clair and Parsons strove to lessen his influence. Traces of their jealousy or dislike may be found in the correspondence and newspapers of the period, and used by the ill-natured to discredit him; but if sifted, and allowance made for the motives that prompted them, they will be found entitled to no weight.

In taking leave of Washington as his military commander, he alludes as follows to the combination that had long perseveringly endeavored to ruin and supplant them both. He says, "Permit me to inform your Excellency, that the faction raised against you in 1777, into which General Conway was unfortunately and imprudently drawn, is not yet destroyed. The members are waiting to collect strength, and seize some favorable moment to appear in force. I speak not from conjecture, but from certain knowledge. Their plan is to take every method of proving the danger arising from a commander who enjoys the full and unlimited confidence of his army, and alarm the people with the prospect of imaginary evils; nay, they will endeavor to convert your virtues into arrows, with which they will seek to wound you."

Washington, on the 15th of December, 1779, wrote in reply: —

MY DEAR SIR, — I had the pleasure of receiving, a few days since, by Captain Barin, your letter of the 1st instant. I assure you I am sensibly touched by so striking an instance of your friendship, at a time and in a

manner that demonstrates its sincerity, and confirms the opinion I have always entertained of your sentiments towards me. I wish you to believe, that your uneasiness on the score you mention had never the least foundation. A slender acquaintance with the world must convince every man, that deeds, not words, are the true criterion of the attachment of his friends; and that the most liberal professions of goodwill are far from being the surest marks of it. I should be happy if my own experience had afforded fewer examples of the little dependence to be placed upon them. I am particularly indebted to you for the interesting information you give me of the views of a certain party. Against intriguing of this kind, incident to every man in a public station, his best support will be a faithful discharge of his duty, and he must rely on the justice of his country for the event.

It is unnecessary for me to repeat to you how high a place you hold in my esteem. The confidence you have experienced, and the manner in which you have been employed on several important occasions, testify the value I set upon your military qualifications, and the regret I must feel that circumstances have deprived the army of your services.

In 1780, he was again a member of the Congress; and in committee, on the Vermont grants, the Pennsylvania mutiny, finance, and other subjects, he was zealous and useful. On his return home, he was created Attorney-general of New Hampshire, — an office held by himself and his gifted son and grandson for nearly half a century.

He took part in the labors of the Convention of 1783, which formed the constitution of his State; and he was thrice elected its chief magistrate. By his energy, he suppressed the insurrection of 1786; and as President of the Convention, by his influence and eloquent arguments, he induced the ratification, by that State, — which, as the ninth, secured its adoption, — of the Federal Constitution. He had the pleasure, as Governor, of extending to President Washington the hospitalities of New Hampshire; and, appointed by him its Federal Judge, he died in 1795, in that office.

In the discharge of his executive duties, he was indefatigable in promoting every interest of the State, organizing its

militia, and encouraging, by example as well as by persuasion, its manufacturing and agricultural industry. His writings, clear, vigorous, and sensible, exhibit a thorough knowledge of political science; and, collected, would prove a valuable accession to the literature of the period. His manners were easy and dignified, his address engaging and his disposition exceedingly amiable. He was a warm friend, generous and hospitable; and his character and public services would seem to entitle his memory to respect and honor.

These have not been accorded to him by the writer from whose judgment we appeal. It is for the public, now and hereafter, to decide if that judgment be correct. It is our duty, who cherish his memory,—descendants, kindred, friends of free institutions, the State he so long and faithfully served, the American people,—to take heed that every fact, circumstance, motive, be considered before he is unjustly condemned.

The specifications are: First, Want of discretion in submitting to Congress propositions of reconciliation from Lord Howe. Second, An injudicious descent on Staten Island, Aug. 21, 1777. Third, Transmitting intelligence to Washington which was subsequently found to be incorrect; disobedience of orders; and marching his troops to the right of Stirling, at Brandywine, Sept. 11, 1777. Fourth, Wasting powder at Germantown, Oct. 4, 1777. Fifth, Recommending Conway as inspector-general. Sixth, Keeping on terms of courtesy with Gates.

I. That General Sullivan should have gladly embraced the proposal of Howe, to go to Philadelphia, where he could best effect his exchange for Prescott, was far from being an indiscretion. It certainly would have been the height of indiscretion to have refused to communicate Howe's friendly dispositions, in such form as he inclined to make them,—not certainly again in writing, as they had already been so re-

ceived; and it was for Congress to determine what notice to take of them.

After such a defeat as that of Long Island, to gain time by negotiation, to recover strength for more effectual resistance, was the part of prudence; and prejudice must travel far to find, in the course pursued by Sullivan, any ground for censure.

II. Marshall says, the descent on Staten Island was well planned and conducted, although boats enough were not secured to warrant the attempt. Gordon shows there were boats enough; but the persons in charge were frightened off from the landing, by seeing the eighty prisoners captured by Ogden, in their red uniforms, on a vessel he had seized.

Smallwood was to have placed a regiment at the Crossroads, to have intercepted, at the Neck, fugitives from the Provincial regiments routed by Ogden, while on their way to give the alarm to the regulars; but, as Marshall tells us, he was misconducted by his guides. Accidents are apt to attend such attacks by night, and should not be attributed, *as faults*, to any one.

Ogden says, if Congress had not been imposed upon by misrepresentation, no court of inquiry would have been ordered, and its decree exonerated Sullivan from all reproach: if the public are not imposed upon by misrepresentations, they will also confirm the decree. Bancroft, while censuring, takes no notice of the reasons why the expedition proved less successful than anticipated. As to any consequent delay in joining Washington, this is absurd. The British fleet was reported in the Chesapeake on the 21st, and Sullivan had returned from the island on the 22d.

III. The transmission, at Brandywine, of the intelligence of Major Spear, Washington said was the duty of Sullivan.

As to disobedience of orders, had Washington seen fit to persist in his plan, orders to cross the Brandywine would have reached Sullivan in fifteen minutes; yet from one to

two hours elapsed before Cornwallis was heard of, on the left bank.

As to marching too far to the left, instead of going to the right of Lord Stirling, any person familiar with the localities and relative position of the armies, — any tyro in military science, — knows, that, instead of marching too far to the left, he was actually marching *from the left*; that, when headed off by the British, he was not far enough to the right to connect with the divisions of Stephen and Stirling; and there is no evidence his division ever endeavored to march to their right.

Muhlenberg (p. 92), which has often been quoted, goes to show that *De Borre* raised some question as to his position on the right, but not *Sullivan*; and neither De Chastelleux nor any other authority, certainly not any that are cited, sustains the statement, that “Sullivan undertook to march his division from half a mile beyond the left, to his proper place on the right.”

Sullivan's own letter is full and extremely clear as to what he did. It is the best evidence; and the natural impression left by it on any mind unprejudiced is, that we were fortunate in possessing generals as efficient as himself, in our Revolutionary armies. It certainly is unnecessary to disparage them, — to find a reason why twelve thousand British veterans triumphed, after nearly two hours' hard fighting, over four thousand American continentals and militiamen.

IV. As to powder wasted at Germantown, this is stated by Bancroft as a reflection on Sullivan. The only ground on which he makes the statement is, that an inexperienced colonel in his wing of the army, in the obscurity of the morning, did not check his men when firing oftener than was worth while, as it chanced. This is matter of opinion. It was not certainly the fault of Sullivan, who had no means of knowing, in the darkness, what any particular regiment had in its front.

The loss of the battle is generally ascribed to the loss of time at the Chew House, from Washington preferring the advice of Knox, not to leave a castle in his rear, to that of Pulaski, who cited the case of an Italian army returning from victory to capture a similar post. Washington no more than Sullivan was infallible: both were liable to mistake; both in their day were, and have been since, bitterly censured. John Adams said Washington was no general; but this does not lessen our own faith that he was first as well in war as in peace, and in the hearts of his countrymen; nor should the views of a writer aiming rather at flippancy than conscientious exactness, be entertained to the prejudice of Sullivan.

V. No one who studies the career of Conway, and realizes how sensitively he must have felt the low estimate Washington formed of his military qualifications, as communicated to Congress, can be surprised at his favoring Gates, whose army at Saratoga had achieved the great success of the war, rather than Washington, who, with the exception of Trenton and Princeton, had met only with disaster. Sullivan had had occasion to think well of him; and Congress, by giving the appointment, appear to have agreed with him.

VI. As to Sullivan siding with Gates to supplant Washington, as Bancroft would convey by an innuendo, this is sufficiently disproved by other correspondence, as well as the last letter quoted.*

This brief narrative of his career has appeared to us the best mode of refuting these charges. An extended biography, embracing documents at length, would require time for preparation. But abundant evidence has been adduced to satisfy intelligent minds, that they are without foundation, either in fact or reasonable inference. It also compels the

* Washington's letter to Sullivan, dated Dec. 15, 1779, here referred to, may be seen on page 175, *ante*.

conviction, that the writer, in making such unscrupulous statements on the testimony, betrays a prejudice and want of fidelity to historic truth, that proves him to be far less qualified for his task as an historian of the Revolution, than he would have us believe some of its most honored generals were for the command of its armies.

The character and conduct of all historical personages are fair subjects for scrutiny. Neither the descendants nor the friends of General Sullivan can desire he should be exempt from that ordeal which whoever engages in public affairs accepts. They have no reason to apprehend, that a thorough study of his life and correspondence, of his civil and military career, will otherwise than redound to his glory and honor.

Descendants may well be incensed when a writer, swayed by temper, prejudice, or caprice, is unfaithful to the authorities he quotes, in order to create an unfavorable opinion of their progenitor. No one can compare the text of the book, to which we take exceptions, with the best evidence left of the facts which the author professes to relate, without being astonished at the unscrupulous disregard for truth which its author displays when he would gain credit to himself, or circulation for his volumes, by discrediting others.

From early manhood, for thirty years, Sullivan was constantly in the public service. He shared the friendship and esteem of Washington, Greene, Jefferson, the Lees, and the best men of his day. He was repeatedly elevated by his own State to the highest places of trust and confidence. During the war, whenever censured from temporary misapprehension, he was invariably applauded when the truth was ascertained. He risked life, lost health, sacrificed a considerable portion of his fortune, in establishing the liberty of his country. He considered neither hardships nor privations of any consequence, in her service. If he had little experience of military movements, this was true also of Washington, and of nearly all our Revolutionary commanders.

He ever acted under a deep sense of responsibility to promote the cause for which, if unsuccessful, in common with other more conspicuous personages, he was likely to be selected for the pains and penalties of treason. It does seem a sorry requital for public services of such a nature, to be at the mercy of every unscrupulous writer who chooses to defame.

Lights and shades may add to the interest of a narrative; but character, and the susceptibilities of descendants, are too sacred to be sported with for the entertainment or instruction of readers. What wealth or personal endowment, what social distinction or laurels, literary or political, are more precious to possess than the privilege of having sprung from such a character as General Greene, or from Washington, had he left posterity? Not for any vainglory or consequence in the sight of other men, but from a natural pride implanted in every generous bosom. Honorable public service, self-sacrifice for national objects, transmit to those that come after a share in their rewards, and shed a lustre on succeeding generations. Under monarchical forms, this, carried to excess, might foster hereditary exclusiveness, or build up a privileged class; but there is no such tendency under free institutions. There is little danger anywhere, that the grand qualities and noble traits which history delights to honor can be too highly estimated, too much extolled or respected, either in their original brightness or their reflected splendors.

It seems difficult to credit the sincerity of one who wantonly wounds the sensitiveness of whole families, in order to create for himself the reputation of candor, or seeks his own advantage at such a cost. Heath, Putnam, Wayne, Schuyler, Greene, certainly had done enough good service in the cause of American independence to save their memories from sacrilegious sneers, or reflections on their sense or courage. Reed had committed no act, expressed no opinion, that could warrant a charge little short of treachery. If untiring and

steadfast devotion to the noblest cause ever contended for; if sacrifice of home, health, and fortune must only expose those who come after, and whose happiness by the sacred relations of nature is as dear as one's own, to harsh epithets and cruel aspersions, — there probably will be still the same noble self-immolation on national altars: but what a discouragement, what a sorry requital!

Success is a low criterion of merit or character. To struggle with adversity, to contend against odds, to be persevering notwithstanding discouragement, to have one's good evil spoken of, to be maligned and misrepresented, and yet preserve an amiable temper, an imperturbable spirit, a steadfast determination in the discharge of duty, characterized Washington, Sullivan, and many other of the patriots. Their difficulties, disappointments, or reverses afford more valuable lessons for example and emulation, and far better deserve our respect, than glory or triumph. The times that tried men's souls on the banks of the Delaware in 1776, and at Valley Forge in the winter of 1778, are more worthy of admiration than Saratoga, Monmouth, or Yorktown. He is neither generous nor patriotic who describes our great heroic epoch in a spirit of detraction or cynicism. Nor is it truth or honor to stigmatize or applaud for the sake of lights or shades which may attract or amuse. A writer of history has no peculiar privilege to dishonor the dead, nor can he with impunity wound the sensibilities of the living.

But we are led to ask who is the man who so boldly judges; and whether, should his memory survive his contemporaries, he is willing to have the same measure meted to him that he has thus cruelly and unjustly accorded to some of the noblest characters of the Revolution. We trust, if his ruling motive be other than the love of truth, that his misrepresentations will work no permanent prejudice to their fame, either as generals or statesmen.

It is unfortunate for the cause of truth, that a writer,

whose works circulate where no vindication can follow them, should make such unworthy use of his position, in a measure beyond the reach of responsibility, to tarnish reputations which are amongst the most precious heir-looms of the American people. Our generals may not have been accomplished officers, they had few opportunities of learning the profession of arms, they made occasional mistakes; so did Cæsar and Wellington: but they patiently sacrificed fortune, health, life, in the cause of our national independence; and it seems a sacrilege, in these degenerate days, to pass harsh judgment upon their services, or deprive them of their well-earned laurels.

JANUARY MEETING.—1867.

A stated monthly meeting of the Society was held this day, Thursday, January 10th, at eleven o'clock, A.M.; the President, the Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, in the chair.

The Librarian announced donations from the American Antiquarian Society; the Royal University of Norway; the Trustees of Oberlin College; the Editors of the "Advocate"; the Proprietors of the Savannah "Daily Republican"; John Appleton, M.D.; Rev. Richard B. Duane; George W. Greene, Esq.; Albert D. Hager, Esq.; Benjamin P. Johnson, Esq.; George H. Moore, Esq.; Joel Munsell, Esq.; Messrs. Newman and Scovill; M. C. Richardson, Esq.; David T. Valentine, Esq.; Hon. Henry Wilson; and from Messrs. E. Ames, Bemis,