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From the BOSTON CHRONICLE.

A Summary, Historical and Political Review of the Revolution, the Constitution and Government of the United States: an ORATION, delivered at Sheffield, July 4th, 1805.

BY BARNABAS BIDWELL.

BY the Declaration of Independence which has just been read, a nation was politically born in a day. On this 29th anniversary of our national birth, we are convened, my friends and fellow-citizens, to commemorate that event, and to unite in mutual congratulation.

A commemoration of Independence naturally leads the mind to a view of the Revolution, by which it was established. The Revolutionary war occupied little more than seven years and a half, from the battle of Lexington, on the 19th of April 1775, to the signing of the Provisional Articles of Peace, on the 30th of November 1782. But the Revolution itself embraced a longer period, including the original dispute between the Colonies and the mother country, which was the cause of the war, and the establishment of a federal government, which was the consequence of national Independence.

The controversy, which severed the Colonies from Great Britain, began after the Peace of 1763. It was occasioned by Parliament's claiming a right to tax us without our consent. The first exercise of that claim was in the memorable Stamp act, passed under the auspices of Mr. Grenville in 1765. That long mediated commencement of a system of American revenue incurred the pointed opposition of the Colonies, especially of Virginia, whose spirited Resolutions, adopted May 28, 1766, on the motion of the eloquent PATRICK HENRY, set an example to the other Colonies, and led the public sentiment on the great constitutional question of Parliamentary taxation. For thus laying the foundation of a revolution, their House of Burgesses were dissolved by the royal Governor.

In June following the General Court of Massachusetts convened, approved the Virginia Resolutions, and added a proposal for a Continental Congress, which was accordingly holden at New-York, in October of the same year. That body, as well as the assemblies of most of the Colonies, resolved and petitioned against the Stamp Act. Associations were formed for suspending the importation of British manufactures, until it should be repealed. The stamp officers were compelled to resign. Dr. FRANKLIN, then residing at London, as a Colonial agent, in a public examination at the bar of the House of Commons, persuasively pointed out the probable consequences of attempting to enforce the collection of the Stamp duties. The ministry was changed, and the obnoxious statute was repealed; but the repeal was accompanied by a legislative declaration, "that the Parliament had, and of right ought to have, power to bind the Colonies in all cases whatever." The repealing and declaratory acts may be considered as one connected measure, the author of which was EDMUND BURKE, the soul of the Rockingham administration. The relinquishment of the Stamp duties, altho' a matter of joy at the time, was only a postponement of the rupture. The ground of contest still remained. In execution of the power declared, a subsequent administration, in 1767, introduced a Bill laying duties, in the Colonies, upon glass, paper, painter's colours and tea, and constituting a board of Commissioners to superintend the collection. The principle of this new revenue act was controverted, with great ability, by the celebrated JOHN DICKINSON, in a series of impressive Letters, addressed to the public, over the signature of a *Pennsylvania Farmer*. It became a subject of general discussion. The Representatives of Massachusetts addressed a Circular Letter, on the occasion, to the other colonial assemblies, recommending union and concert. They were afterwards required to rescind their vote on this subject, and were dissolved for refusing to comply with the requisition. The Legislature of Virginia remonstrated against the duties, and responded the recommendations of Massachusetts, for which they also were the next day dissolved. The other Colonies generally concurred in the recommended concert.—Resolution, on ostracisms and associations for non-importation were again resorted to.

Parliament determined on measures of coercion; but in 1770 repealed all the duties, except three pence a pound on tea. That was retained, as a test of Parliamentary authority. For the same reason, it was resisted here. It was not the amount, or the mode of the tax, but the

principle that was the ground of the revolutionary contest. The Colonists contended that taxation and Representation ought to be mutual and inseparable counterparts. From the particular subject of taxation the dispute was extended to general legislation. In 1773 the question of the legislative supremacy of Parliament over the Colonies was discussed between Gov. Hutchinson and the two branches of the General Court of Massachusetts, in the form of Speeches and Answers.

To counteract the effect of non-importation agreements, and ensure the payment of the duty, as a practical acknowledgment of the right, the ministry engaged the East India company to send out the dutied article, and vend it in this country, on their own account. The policy was understood. In some of the Ports the patriots prevented the landing of the tea, and in others procured it to be reshipped without sale. In Boston, neither of those objects being attainable, it was violently thrown over board into the harbour, by persons in disguise. This outrage drew down British vengeance upon the capital and whole Province of Massachusetts. Troops were stationed in Boston. An Act, for blocking up the Port, and another for rendering the Governor, the Council and the judiciary more independent of the people, and in other respects materially changing the character of the Province: and other acts and measures, enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, were adopted by the King and Parliament.

As Judge MARSHALL, in his history of the life of WASHINGTON, justly observes, "it was expected, that by directing these measures of punishment particularly against Boston, not only the union between the Colonies could be broken, but Massachusetts herself could be divided." (a)

It was indeed a critical distressing period. In the language of Dr. RAMSAY, another elegant Historian of the Revolution, "the patriots, who had hitherto guided the helm, knew well, that if the other colonies did not support the people of Boston, they must be crushed; and it was equally obvious that in their coercion a precedent, injurious to liberty, would be established. It was, therefore, the interest of Boston to draw in the other colonies. It was also the interest of the patriots in all the colonies, to bring over the bulk of the people to adopt such efficient measures, as were likely to extricate the inhabitants of Boston from the unhappy situation, in which they were involved. To effect these purposes much prudence, as well as patriotism, was necessary. The other provinces were but remotely affected with the state of Massachusetts. They were happy, and had no cause, on their own account, to oppose the government of Great Britain. That a people so circumstanced, should take part with a distressed neighbor, at the risk of incurring the resentment of the mother country, did not accord with the selfish maxims, by which states, as well as individuals, are usually governed. The ruled are, for the most part, prone to suffer, as long as evils are tolerable; and, in general, they must feel before they are roused to contend with their oppressors; but the Americans acted on a different principle." (b.)

This observation of the historians was fully justified by the fact. Yes, fellow-citizens of Massachusetts, we ought not, in the midst of our prosperity, to forget that our sister colonies did not desert us in the hour of danger and distress. "The Legislature of Virginia, says Judge MARSHALL in his history, was in session, when the first intelligence of the Boston Port Bill reached that Province. The house of Burgesses appointed the first of June, the day on which the bill was to commence in operation, to be set apart for fasting, prayer and humiliation, to implore the divine interposition to avert the heavy calamity, which threatened destruction to their civil rights, and the evils of a civil war; and to give one heart and one mind to the people, firmly to oppose every invasion of their liberties. Similar resolutions were adopted almost every where, and the first of June became, throughout the colonies, a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, in the course of which sermons were universally preached to the people, well calculated to inspire them with the utmost horror against the authors of the unjust sufferings of their fellow-subjects in Boston.

"In consequence of this measure the assembly was dissolved; but before their separation, an association was entered into, signed by eighty-nine members, in which they declared that an attack on one colony, to compel submission to arbitrary taxes, is an attack on all British America, and threatens ruin to the rights of all, unless the united wisdom of the whole be applied in prevention. They, therefore, recommended to the committee of correspondence, to communicate with the several committees of the other provinces, on the expediency of appointing Deputies from the different colonies to meet annually in general Congress, and to deliberate on those general measures, which the united interest of America might from time to time render necessary." (c.)

These facts, fellow-citizens, I have stated to you, in the very words of a historian, whose authenticity will not be questioned. You will permit me to add, this is the third time the house of Burgesses of Virginia were dissolved, for their spirited measures in opposition to parliamentary encroachments on our common

rights. Their two last dissolutions were incurred by exertions in support of their brethren in Massachusetts, particularly the suffering citizens of Boston. Such patriotic sympathy, such prompt and effective co-operation in a time of need, received at that day a grateful acknowledgement, and is still entitled to an honorable recollection. Many of my hearers, whose heads are whitened with age, and whose memories reach back to those "times which tried men's souls," are living witnesses of the fact, that the oldest, the most unanimous of the states, took as leading a part in the Republican cause, at the commencement and through all the successive stages of the revolution, as at any later period of our government. But we did not then complain of "Virginia influence." "Virginia domination," and every thing else that either was, or was alleged to be Virginian. It was not then thought excusable, much less patriotic, to array the Northern against the Southern States, and to stimulate their mutual envy, jealousy, antipathy and habitual hatred, by contrasting their customs and laws, by magnifying their real or imaginary diversities of interests, by tracing their favorite public characters, and touching all the little discordant strings of local prejudices and rival passions. On the contrary, it was esteemed a duty of primary importance, enjoined alike by policy and sound morality, to conciliate, to unite and cooperate in the common cause of our country. Massachusetts and Virginia pre-eminently harmonized in the general objects of the revolution. In such a spirit of union the proposed Congress met at Philadelphia, in September 1774, and again in May 1775, and were thence continued through the revolution.

The British troops commenced actual hostilities in April 1775. An army was raised for defence, and GEORGE WASHINGTON, of Virginia, was appointed commander in chief. The war progressed: But there was still a general hope of reconciliation. Independence was not originally the aim of the colonies in their opposition to the claim of British supremacy. SAMUEL ADAMS, indeed, and a few other patriots of sagacious and enterprising minds, foresaw that there would be no practicable medium between unconditional submission, and absolute Independence, and early took measures to prepare for the latter. At first the idea was whispered in confidence. By degrees it became more generally diffused, till at length it was directly and openly advocated. The progress of the public sentiment to that necessary conclusion, was accelerated by "Common Sense," the most popular pamphlet ever published, admitted by patriots, who with SAMUEL ADAMS, have reprobated and lamented some later publications of the same author on the subject of the christian religion. Boston & several other towns made serious advances towards a Declaration of Independence, by their patriotic votes. But Virginia was the first colony that set the bold example. As early as the 15th of May 1776, their Legislature instructed their Delegates to move the resolution in Congress, and enforced their instructions by declaring that colony an independent State, before the measures were sanctioned by Congress. On the 7th of June the motion was accordingly made by RICHARD HENRY LEE. It was ably supported by JOHN ADAMS. Notwithstanding many strong objections, and after fair and full discussion, it prevailed by a vast majority. The declaration was drawn by THOMAS JEFFERSON; who in the figurative language of the late Dr. SMITH, President of Yale College, "poured the soul of the continent into the monumental act of Independence." It is familiarly known to you all that it was signed on the memorable fourth of July.

After such a lapse of years, such a succession of events, and such a change of circumstances, it is difficult, indeed it is impossible, even for those of you who were then on the stage of active life, to go back and realize the anxious, interesting, eventful scene of 1776. History informs us, that in one of the ancient nations, when any man proposed an alteration in their government, he was required to appear, for that purpose, in an assembly of the people, with a halter round his neck; that, if his proposition was rejected, he might be hanged upon the spot. With hallets about their necks, the signers of the declaration of Independence set their names to an instrument, which, in case of failure, they knew must be their death warrant. Yes, my friends, had the revolution been crushed, they would have been distinguished from common rebels, and signally executed or exiled, like the regicides of Charles the 1st, of England, or the Emmetts and other revolutionary martyrs of Ireland. The usual consequences of a suppressed rebellion would have pervaded the land. Is any one curious to know the details of wretchedness, which, in such an event, would have been the bitter portion of our fathers, of us and our children? Let him listen to the groans of wretched Ireland. Let him read the description of her oppressions and miseries, in the living pages of CURRAN, till his eyes are suffused with tears, and his heart melts with compassion; and, when he closes the volume, to bless God for the successful issue of the American revolution, let him remember, with gratitude, the patriots of 1776, who, in the face of danger and death, declared our Independence, and for its support, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, pledged "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor." While

reaping the harvest which they sowed, we ought, once a year at least, to think of them, and of their declaration, the native political creed of the United States.

When we ventured upon independence, our state governments were but imperfectly organized, and we had no organization of a general government. The only authority which Congress possessed, was contained in their respective credentials of appointment. Without power to enact and enforce laws, they could only recommend; and patriotism alone carried their recommendations into execution. A national constitution was requisite. Accordingly in 1777, congress submitted to the states, "articles of confederation and perpetual union." In July 1778, ten states having agreed to those articles, they were signed in congress; but, to give them validity, the concurrence of every state was necessary; and Maryland did not concur, until March 1st, 1781, when independence had been maintained nearly five years, and the war had been prosecuted almost six.

By the confederation an important point was gained. The system, however, was radically defective; and the finger of experience soon pointed to its defects. Congress were not authorized to raise a revenue themselves; but only to determine the amount to be raised, and to apportion it among the states, in the form of requisitions. The very apportionment, by the rule prescribed, that is according to the value of improved lands and buildings, was found to be impracticable, as well as unjust. To remove that preliminary obstacle, in 1783, congress proposed by way of amendment to the confederation, to substitute, for the rule of apportionment, the number of inhabitants in each state, including three fifths, and excluding two fifths of the slaves. A resolution, containing that proposition, which was the result of long and thorough investigation, passed by nearly an unanimous vote. In an address, reported by MR. MADISON, Mr. ELLSWORTH and MR. HAMILTON, and directed to the states, in explanation and enforcement of the resolve, congress said, "this rule, although not free from objections, is liable to fewer than any other that could be devised. The only material difficulty which attended it, in the deliberations of congress, was to fix the proper difference between the labour and industry of free inhabitants and of all other inhabitants. The ratio ultimately agreed on was the effect of mutual concessions, and if it should be proposed not to correspond precisely with the fact, no doubt ought to be entertained that an equal spirit of accommodation, among the several legislatures, will prevail against little inequalities, which may be calculated on one side or the other." In a temperate state of the public mind, such reasoning could hardly fail of being satisfactory. The general sentiment was strong in favor of the principle of the amendment.—It was successively adopted by most of the states; and afterwards introduced into the new constitution, as the ratio of apportioning both taxes and representatives, because, as Mr. KING declared in the convention of Massachusetts, "it was the language of all America." But before it had in fact become a part of the confederation, the attention of the public was drawn to a more fundamental defect, the total want of authority in the national government to levy taxes for national uses, and to regulate trade, without the co-operation of all the state governments.

After various ineffectual efforts to modify the confederation, by specific amendments, suggested by congress and individual states, the legislatures of Virginia, on the motion of Mr. MADISON, proposed a general convention, which was partially attended at Annapolis in 1786, and finally held at Philadelphia in 1787. That assembly was composed of gentlemen of different and even opposite principles of government; and the instrument produced was the result of mutual concessions. Some of the members wished for what they termed a more energetic, or as others would call it a more aristocratic form. One gentleman in particular, who afterwards acquired a paramount influence with the party denominated federalists, subscribed the constitution, as his funeral eulogist has informed us, under a conviction which he appears to have retained through life, and impressed on his political friends, that "it did not contain sufficient means of strength for its own preservation, and that, in consequence, we must follow the fate of other republics, and pass through anarchy to despotism." Those who were of that sentiment, would, of course, endeavor, in practice, to accumulate the powers of the administration, in order to conform it to their standard of good government. This accounts for a train of measures which were afterwards introduced, and on which the two parties separated. On the other hand, many republicans were of opinion that the constitution originally needed more guards against the accumulation and abuse of power; and hesitated as to the propriety of receiving it without explanatory and restrictive amendments. In the convention of Massachusetts, after long deliberation, the turning question was whether such explanations & restrictions should be insisted on as the condition of ratifying the constitution, or be left to the good sense of the nation, to be added by way of subsequent amendment, in the mode provided by the fifth article. On this point the republicans were divided. At length a conciliatory proposition, moved by JOHN HANCOCK, and seconded by his co-patriot SAMUEL ADAMS, com-

prising an unconditional ratification, accompanied with a recommendation of amendments, turned the scale in favor of adoption. A similar mode of decision was pursued in New Hampshire, New York, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The government was organized, under the new form, March 4th, 1789; and, in the first congress, Mr. MADISON, to whom perhaps more than to any other person, we are indebted for the constitution, as it now is, brought forward a motion, in consequence of which two thirds of both houses of congress, in pursuance of the recommendations of the state conventions, agreed to twelve articles of amendment, ten of which were afterwards ratified by a constitutional majority of the states. They were all of a republican character; and by their incorporation the republicans, as a party, were not merely reconciled, but firmly attached to the constitution.

The constitutional process of amendment, requiring a proposed alteration to be, in the first place, approved by two thirds of both houses of Congress, and afterwards to receive the separate and successive approbation of all branches of three fourths of the state legislatures, is wisely calculated to admit the improvements dictated by experience, and to exclude dangerous and unnecessary innovations. Such it was in theory, and such it has proved in practice. Various further alterations have been attempted; but only two have prevailed; one of them, upon the motion of Massachusetts, declaring a state not sueable by a private citizen; and the other, requiring the electoral votes for president and vice-president to be distinguished, like our votes for governor and lieutenant-governor. These also, were republican amendments. The last was, indeed, originally patronized by both political parties, and recommended by almost unanimous resolutions of New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts; but its actual proposition by congress, and final ratification by the states, were strenuously opposed by the whole federal party.

Thus twelve important amendments have been constitutionally introduced, agreeably to the ideas of the republicans, and not one in conformity with the wishes of their opponents. In this history of the formation, adoption and improvement of the constitution, we see the reasons why it has been rising in the esteem of one party, and sinking in the estimation of the other.

(To be continued.)

(a) 2nd Vol. 160. (b) 1st Vol. 112. (c) 2nd Vol. 162.

NEW-YORK, August 26.

The Royal Direction of the quarantine institution at Copenhagen, has under date of the 1st of June, requested the Danish Consul in this city, to publish, for the regulation of whom it may concern, that vessels coming from the North Sea and wishing to enter the Baltic through the channel of Holstein, will not be admitted to pass it, unless they provide themselves, at Tonnigen, with a certificate of the Health Commission there; which certificate will have the same force as that given at the Custom House in Helsingo, Nyborg and Fridericia.

Danish Consulate Office,
New-York, 24th August, 1805.

An English 50 gun ship and a frigate (supposed to be the Leander and Cambrian, from Halifax) were off Sandy Hook yesterday. We are informed that they captured an inward-bound ship.

COCOA.

80,000 lbs. first quality RED CARRACAS COCOA. For sale by
J. F. KENNEDY.
August 28 d4t

Columbia Garden.

On THURSDAY EVENING, August 29,
The garden will open with

A Grand Concert of

Vocal and Instrumental Music;
To commence with a musical sketch with song

Duet and Dialogue, called

Kathleen & Darby

THE MINUET AND GAVOT.
Danced by Master and Miss Durand.

A variety of feats of agility in the circus department.

A characteristic song and dialogue called,
A Tinker & his Budget.

A historical ballad on the occasion, with song & dance called

The Valliant Soldier,

OR THE TWO ROBBERS.

Robbers returning home with his discharge who will dance a hornpipe and manoeuvre as a military man.

Madison, wife to the soldier

Two children of Madelon

Madelon, the mother

Madelon, the father

Robbers, between the Soldier and the

August 28

A new Academy.

HIGH-STREET, OLD-TOWN.

The subscriber, recently one of the

parents of the Pantheon Academy,

respectfully informs parents guardians and

other friends, he purposes on the first

Monday of September next, to open a SCHOOL

in high street, opposite Renshaws Tavern, Old-Town, wherein shall be taught to the best of his abilities, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, &c.—together with all the general rudiments of an English education.—He will only promise to those who may please to entrust children to his care, that every attention shall be paid, both to improvement of their education, and the purity of their morals.

JOHN SKELTON,