

## PREFACE.

The trying winter of 1777-8 passed without any attempt on the part of Howe to molest the army, weakened by sickness and desertion, in cantonments at Valley Forge. In March, Count Pulaski, a distinguished Polish officer who had offered his services to the patriotic cause and been appointed brigadier general, undertook the formation of an independent corps of horse and foot, known as Pulaski's Legion, or "the Maryland Legion" (p. 341). He established his headquarters in Baltimore, and the Legion was made part of the Maryland contingent in the Continental service.

During this winter a treaty of alliance had been concluded between the United States and France, and in the spring a French fleet under Count d'Estaing arrived to coöperate with the Americans, bringing with them an ambassador, Alexander Gérard, accredited to the States.

On June 27, Sir Henry Clinton, who had succeeded Howe, evacuated Philadelphia, and moving towards New York was met by the Americans at Monmouth Court House, New Jersey. In the engagement which followed, the misconduct of Major General Charles Lee threw the American forces into confusion, and a great disaster was averted only by the prompt action of Washington, who ordered Ramsay and his Marylanders to check the British advance until he could re-form his line. When order was restored, the enemy were driven from the field, but the victory cost the life of the gallant Ramsay.

American affairs were still in a very critical state. Much apathy prevailed among the people, who cherished the delusion that the war was nearly over; a feeling largely due to hand-bills which Howe had circulated containing drafts of Acts of Parliament, making certain concessions which it was hoped would allay all discontents (p. 43). The public finances were in a frightful state owing to the repeated issues of paper with no provision for its redemption. As a natural consequence this currency almost lost its purchasing power. In April, 1779, we find the Council offering twenty pounds a hundred for flour. Discontent was rife in the army, and Congress was paralysed by factions. But the Governor and Council of Maryland were indefatigable in their exertions to fill up the quota of the State and provide for the wants of the soldiers, and the pages of this volume show their ceaseless activity.