

of a congress. It was the people themselves who met in their own rough, but efficient way, and elected from amongst themselves, this and that and the other individuals to be their delegates; to represent their will and their wishes, first, in their committees of public safety—afterwards, in their state legislatures. The latter when convened resolved it to be expedient to send delegates from each state to form a general congress. The deputies to this congress derived authority for every vote they gave, from letters of instruction given them at the time of their appointment, or forwarded from time to time by the legislature of the state they severally represented. To them they applied for special instructions in every interesting case that arose—In obedience to the express instructions thus received from the Legislature of Maryland, it was, that the delegates of Maryland gave the vote of this state in congress, for the Declaration of Independence. The people in their primary assemblies, had already canvassed and decided the question for themselves, and instructed their agents to carry their will into execution.

The profound interest with which the people of the several states at that time regarded the question of Independence, and the necessity there was of the states deciding it for themselves, was then perfectly understood. The difficulty of obtaining the assent of the state of Pennsylvania, retarded the declaration for some time. Some of the most patriotic of her states-