

## CHAPTER XVI.

IN the summer of 1773 the county of Charlotte was formed. It embraced all of northern New York above Albany county as then divided, eastward of the new county of Tryon ; and it was the design of Colonel Schuyler's friends to make him the first judge of that district, with two associates. Political intrigue seems to have thwarted this design. In July Councillor Smith wrote to him :

" We have organized the county of Charlotte. It was left to Oliver [De Lancey] to speak to Colonel Reid and others, and form a list of justices, for it was long ago settled in council that the judges should be yourself, Skene, and Duer, in the order I mention them. I learnt from Reid that he, Oliver, and Duer waited upon the governor with a list not only of *justices* but of *judges*, and that Skene was put at the head of it. Oliver dictated this order to Duer, who held the pen. But all is set right I believe. The governor was displeased with this liberty, and declared that you would not serve out of the place first designated and known abroad. All this is *entre nous*, but you will get it from Duer. I told Fanning that in my opinion Skene should be last, if named at all. You see the man, after all his professions of friendship."\*

De Lancey's will prevailed. Schuyler, as the governor predicted, would not take a subordinate station upon the bench, and he was left in the field of politics, untrameled by official restraints, to serve his country more profitably than if wearing the mantle of judicial dignity.

It was at this period that fuel was added to the kindling fires of the Revolution by the folly of the British gov-

\* Autograph letter, July 5, 1773.

ernment. Early in 1773 a new thought upon taxation entered the brain of Lord North. The East India Company, a powerful monopoly of more than a hundred and fifty years duration, felt most seriously the operation of the non-importation associations in America, by which tea, the trade in which belonged exclusively to the company, was deprived of a market in the American colonies. They found themselves burdened with more than seventeen millions of pounds of tea in their warehouses in England. Unable to pay their annual bonus to the crown, or their private debts, the company sought relief in a permission to ship their teas, free of duty, wherever they could find a market, promising the government an export duty more than equal in amount. The stupid ministry could not perceive, or would not embrace, the opportunity now offered to quiet America and add to the exchequer; but, fearing such concession might be considered submission to "rebellious subjects," gave the company permission to ship their teas free of *export* duty. As this would make tea cheaper in America than in England, it was thought the colonists would not object to paying a small import duty of three pence a pound. But the proposition increased the indignation of the colonists. They saw the parent government making concessions of a pecuniary nature to a vast commercial monopoly, while spurning the appeals of a nation in behalf of a great principle.

The East India Company were as blind as the ministers, and soon after the passage of a bill in accordance with North's proposition, in May, 1773, several of their heaviest tea-ships, fully laden with the herb, were on their way to America. Information of the fact reached the colonies some time before any of the tea-ships arrived; and at no time since the passage of the Stamp Act was popular in-

dignation hotter, and the spirit of defiance more rampant. It was resolved by the people in the principal seaport towns that the tea should not be landed, and appointed consignees were warned not to disregard the popular will by receiving it. The Sons of Liberty became exceedingly active, and late in the autumn a formal reorganization of the societies took place. Their correspondence was renewed, and plans were concerted to destroy the tea should the consignees persist in having the cargoes landed.

Two of the tea-ships first arrived at Boston at the close of November, and in obedience to the wishes of the people the vessels were moored at a wharf, with a guard of twenty-five men stationed near, to see that none of the obnoxious article was landed. Finally, the people, at a public meeting, ordered the commanders of the vessels to leave the port and proceed to sea with their cargoes. The governor interfered, and took measures to prevent their sailing. This aroused public indignation to the highest pitch, and on a cold moonlight evening, the 16th of December, a crowd rushed from an excited meeting in Faneuil Hall at the signal of a savage war-whoop, some disguised as Mohawk Indians, and boarding the ships, broke open the tea chests and cast the whole of the cargoes into the waters of the harbor.

In New York the excitement was equally great. At a public meeting, held on the 20th of October, it was declared that tea consignees and stamp distributors were equally obnoxious; and they denounced the importation of tea so emphatically that some of the commission merchants in London refused to have anything to do with the shipment of the article. A New Yorker, named Kelley, canvassing for a seat in Parliament as representative of one of the English boroughs, ridiculed the reported indignation

of the Americans, and gave assurances that no danger need be apprehended from their ire. His offense was noted at home, and on the 5th of November he was burned in effigy in front of the Coffee House, in Wall street.

Concert of action in different cities was evinced by the fact that on the 25th of November, the "Mohawks" of New York city were notified to be in readiness for duty on the arrival of expected tea-ships; and we find the name of "Mohawks" connected with similar movements elsewhere. On the 29th, the Sons of Liberty were formally reorganized, and passed strong resolutions of warning to all who should in any way be concerned in the reception of tea, or even of harboring it should any be landed.

Governor Tryon declared that the tea should be delivered to the consignees, even if it was to be "sprinkled with blood." This declaration was repeated by an officer of the crown in the presence of several Sons of Liberty, when John Lamb, one of the foremost of the patriots, said, "Tell Tryon, for me, that the tea shall not be landed; and if force is attempted to effect it, his blood will be the first shed in the contest. The people of the city are firmly resolved on that head."\* The governor undoubtedly received the message, and, taking counsel of his fears or his prudence, wisely refrained from interfering in the matter.

On the 17th of December, the day after the tea was destroyed in Boston harbor, and before intelligence of the event could have reached New York, a large concourse of people assembled in "the fields," pursuant to a public call, and were addressed by Mr. Lamb. Strong resolutions in favor of resistance were passed, and a committee of fifteen were appointed to correspond with their friends in other places. While the business of the meeting was in progress,

\* Leake's Life of Lamb, p. 78.

the mayor and recorder of the city appeared, bringing assurances from Governor Tryon that when the tea should arrive it should be publicly taken into the fort, kept there until the proper orders for its distribution by the King, the council, or the owners, should be given, and then it should be sent out as publicly as it was taken in. Lamb saw through the artifice. The act of Parliament demanded payment of the duties when the article should be landed ; and Lamb warned the people that suffering the tea to be brought on shore at all would be an infraction of their solemn resolves and the pledges of the non-importation league. He then put the question, Shall the tea be landed ? when there was a most emphatic response, thrice repeated, No ! The meeting then adjourned "till the arrival of the tea-ships."

During the period of excitement concerning the tea-ships Colonel Schuyler was confined to his house most of the time with the gout, and was not in New York during the session which commenced on the 6th of January, 1774, and ended on the 19th of March following.

"We have finished a long and disagreeable session," wrote Councilor Smith, "in which I wish you had taken a part, not because I wish you trouble, but that you might have shared in the credit which Clinton\* has acquired in the course of it. There is a surprising change both within doors and without, the spirit of party being in disgrace, to the confusion of those who led it, and found it necessary to the continuation of their power that the people should not recover their senses. Their impatience under a governor who scorned to be purchased excited them to another effort to humble him, but they found themselves baffled in

\* George Clinton, one of the most efficient men during the Revolution, as brigadier general, and as governor of the State, had taken a decided republican stand, with Schuyler, during the two preceding sessions. He had studied law with Mr. Smith, and was now only twenty-five years of age. The troubled sea of politics was consonant with his nature, and he entered upon it with zeal.

our House, as they were before by your good management in the assembly."\*

At that time political affairs were in the greatest confusion. There were so many side issues continually presenting themselves, that loyalists upon one question to-day were found to be republicans upon another question to-morrow ; and even Schuyler, staunch Whig as he was, was sometimes suspected of leaning toward the crown and the aristocracy by those who could not comprehend the propriety of personal friendship with political opponents, and because of his conservatism.

Among the people loyalty and timidity developed bitter fruits which distracted the Revolutionary committees, and by adroit management moderate men and royalists gained the ascendancy. Afraid openly to oppose the popular will, they insidiously cast obstacles in the way of efficient coöperation with other colonies. Two distinct parties were formed among professed republicans, marked by a line of social distinction—the *Patricians* and the *Tribunes*, as they were called—the merchants and the gentry, and the mechanics. We shall refer to this matter again presently.

The assembly and the governor were upon amicable terms during the session of 1774. At midnight, at the close of 1773, the government house in the fort took fire. The flames spread so rapidly that the governor's family escaped with difficulty, and a servant girl, sixteen years of age, perished in the flames. The governor lost all of his personal effects. In his opening speech to the assembly he laid the matter before them, and in addition to making provisions for rebuilding the province house, they voted him a present of twenty thousand dollars in consideration of his misfortune.

\* Autograph letter, March 22, 1774.

Late in January the assembly appointed another standing committee of correspondence,\* to hold communion with the assemblies of other provinces on the great political questions of the day. In the New York Legislature, and among the Sons of Liberty, committees had been in operation for several years, but Legislative Committees, for intercolonial communication upon the rights of the people, had been suggested by Massachusetts, on motion of Samuel Adams, and acted upon by Virginia only during the preceding year.

Appropriate resolutions were adopted by the New York assembly when the committee was appointed, and the Speaker was instructed to prepare drafts of letters to the Speakers of all the colonial assemblies on the continent, inclosing these resolutions, and requesting them to lay them before their respective Legislatures. They also, by resolution, thanked the Virginia Burgesses "for their early attention to the liberties of America."

In his opening message Governor Tryon had informed the assembly that he was about to leave for England on account of the controversy with the New Hampshire Grants, and on the 19th of March they presented to him a most loyal and affectionate address at the house of Lord Stirling, in Broad street. He sailed for England on the 7th of April, leaving the government in the hands of Colden, his venerable lieutenant, then eighty-six years of age. Eleven days afterward the first of the tea-ships arrived at Sandy Hook, near New York. It was the *Nancy*, Captain Lockyer, which had been terribly-storm-tossed and beaten on her

\* The committee consisted of John Cruger, James Jauncey, Benjamin Seaman, Frederick Philipse, Zebulon Seaman, Simon Boerum, James De Lancey, Jacob Walton, Isaac Wilkins, Daniel Kissam, John Rapelye, John De Noyelles, and George Clinton.

voyage. "Ever since her departure from Europe," said Holt's *Journal*, when noticing her arrival, "she has met with a continued succession of misfortunes, having on board something worse than a Jonah, which, after being long tossed in the tempestuous ocean, it is hoped, like him, will be thrown back upon the place from whence it came. May it teach a lesson there as useful as the preaching of Jonah was to the Ninevites."

The Sons of Liberty were on the alert when intelligence of the arrival of the *Nancy* reached them. The pilots would not take her into port without consent of the patriots. A committee went down to Sandy Hook and took charge of her ; and on the solicitation of her captain, who wished to refit his vessel, she was allowed to go up to the city. The captain was met at the wharf by a large concourse of citizens. The consignee, awed by the people, advised the captain to return with his cargo as speedily as possible. He was not allowed to go near the custom-house ; and, finally, escorted by a great number of citizens, called out by the ringing of the bells, and with a band playing "God save the King," he was placed on a pilot boat and taken on board his ship, while the colors of the vessels in the harbor were gaily displayed, and a flag was unfurled from the Liberty Pole with a royal salute of artillery. Lockyer, glad to escape, immediately put to sea.

Meanwhile another vessel had arrived, having some tea concealed among its cargo. It was discovered by the Sons of Liberty, and the whole was thrown into the waters of the harbor. The commander, who at first denied having the obnoxious article, took refuge from the fury of the populace on board the *Nancy*, and went with her when she sailed away. In other seaports of the colonies similar proceedings were had when tea-ships arrived ; and all the



tea that came to America was either sent back, destroyed, or locked up, so that not a farthing of revenue was ever derived from the plausible scheme of Lord North.

The destruction of tea at Boston produced a powerful sensation throughout the British realm. The exasperated ministry at once proposed retaliatory measures, and the King and Parliament resolved to inflict severe punishment upon Boston for its treasonable and rebellious conduct, notwithstanding full compensation was offered to the East India Company for the tea that had been destroyed. On the 7th of March, 1774, Parliament, by enactment, ordered the port of Boston to be closed against all commercial transactions whatever, and the removal of the custom-house, courts of justice, and other public offices to Salem.

On the 28th of March Parliament leveled a destructive blow against the charter of Massachusetts, by so modifying it as to deprive the people of many of the dearest privileges guaranteed by that instrument. On the 21st of April, a third retaliatory act was passed, providing for the trial in England of all persons charged in the colonies with murders committed in support of government, giving, as Colonel Barré pointedly said, "encouragement to military insolence, already so insupportable." A fourth bill was passed, providing for the quartering of troops in America; and a fifth, called the Quebec Act, making great concessions to the Roman Catholics of Canada, was enacted. The latter excited the animosity of all Protestants.

These measures created unusual indignation. The Americans saw that justice from Great Britain could not be expected, and that they would soon be called upon to support and defend their rights and freedom with their own strong arms. They wisely proceeded to prepare for the inevitable conflict. They commenced arming them-

selves. They practiced daily in military exercises. The manufacture of arms and gunpowder was encouraged; and in New England, the inhabitants capable of bearing arms were enrolled in companies, and prepared to go to the field at a minute's warning. These formed the vast host of *Minute Men* of the Revolution—an army, as we have elsewhere observed, “strong, determined, generous, and panting for action, yet invisible to the superficial observer. It was not seen in the camp, the field, nor the garrison. No drum was heard calling it to action, no trumpet was sounded for battle. It was like electricity, harmless when latent but terrible when aroused. It was all over the land. It was at the plough, the workshop, and in the counting-room. Almost every household was its headquarters, and every roof its tent. It bivouacked in every church, and mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts, made cartridges for its muskets, and supplied its commissariat. It was the old story of Cadmus repeated in modern history. British oppression had sown dragons' teeth all over the land, and a crop of armed men was ready to spring up, but not to destroy each other.”\*

The Boston Port Bill was to go into operation on the 1st of June. To enforce it, General Gage had been made Governor of Massachusetts. He arrived at Boston on the 12th of May. On the following day a meeting of the inhabitants was called. Samuel Adams presided, and it was resolved to renew non-importation measures in all their stringency, and to discontinue trade to the West Indian colonies, if their sister provinces should concur with them in the expediency of the measure. The object sought to be gained by including all of the West India islands was not only to raise a clamor in the British possessions there, but to arouse those of the French, Dutch, and Danes, whose

\* Lossing's *Life of Washington*, i. 140.

respective courts would be immediately called upon to remonstrate.

Paul Revere, one of the most active Sons of Liberty in Boston, bore a letter to those of New York, giving them intelligence of what had been done in Faneuil Hall. But before his arrival, the New York Vigilance Committee, consisting chiefly of Hampden Hall patriots—the most radical of the Sons of Liberty—had written to their friends in Boston, urging them to pursue vigorous opposition measures, and assuring them of the sympathy and support of New York. This letter was dated the 14th.

We have observed that the professed republicans of New York were, at this time, separated by political distractions and social differences. Loyalists and conservatives sought to suppress if not destroy the influence of the radical democrats, and merchants were arrayed against mechanics. The merchants, always timid during commotions, were alarmed by the letter of the Vigilance Committee to the patriots of Boston, and a meeting of their class was summoned at the house of Samuel Fraunces, corner of Broad and Pearl streets, called “The Exchange,” on the evening of the 16th of May, “to consult on the measures to be pursued in consequence of the late extraordinary advices received from England”—the retaliatory measures of Parliament. That meeting nominated a Committee of Fifty as representatives of public sentiment in New York. Several well-known loyalists were placed upon it, while more radical Sons of Liberty, like John Lamb, were excluded.

A meeting of the citizens was called on the 19th to ratify the nomination, when Francis Lewis was added, and the committee consisted of fifty-one.

The spirit that ruled in the appointment of that committee may be inferred by the following extract from an

ironical letter written by Gouverneur Morris to Richard Penn, on the day after the ratification meeting was held :

“The heads of the mobility,” he said, “grow dangerous to the gentry, and how to keep them down is the question. While they correspond with the other colonies, call and dismiss popular assemblies, make resolves to bind the consciences of the rest of mankind, bully poor printers, and exert with full force all their tribunitial powers, it is impossible to curb them. But art sometimes goes further than force, and, therefore, to trick them handsomely, a Committee of Patricians was to be nominated, and into their hands was to be committed the majority of the people, and the highest trust was to be reposed in them by a mandate that they should take care *quod republica non capiat injuriam*. The Tribunes, through the want of good legerdemain in the senatorial order, perceived the finesse, and yesterday I was present at a grand division of the city, and there I beheld my fellow citizens very accurately counting their chickens not only before they were hatched, but before one half of the eggs were laid. In short, they fairly contended about the future form of our government—whether it should be founded on aristocratic or democratic principles.”

The first act of the Committee of Fifty-one was to repudiate the strong letter of the 14th to the Boston committee, and to caution the public that it was not official. On the 23d, at a meeting of the Grand Committee, Paul Revere was received, and laid before them the official proceedings of the Boston town meeting of the 13th. They did not concur with the resolutions of that meeting concerning non-intercourse with Great Britain and the West Indies, but favored the assembling of a congress of deputies. They accordingly appointed Alexander M'Dougall, Isaac Low, James Duane, and John Jay a committee to prepare a response to the Boston letter. It was written, it is supposed, by John Jay, and was reported to the Grand Committee the same evening.

“Your letter, enclosing the vote of the town of Boston, and the letter of your Committee of Correspondence,” said the response, “were

immediately taken into consideration. While we think you justly entitled to the thanks of your sister colonies for asking their advice on a case of such extensive consequences, we lament our inability to relieve your anxiety by a decisive opinion. The cause is general, and concerns a whole continent, who are equally interested with you and us; and we foresee that no remedy can be of avail unless it proceeds from the joint acts and approbation of all. From a virtuous and spirited union much may be expected, while the feeble efforts of a few will only be attended with mischief and disappointment to themselves, and triumph to the adversaries of liberty.

“ Upon these reasons we conclude that A CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES FROM THE COLONIES IN GENERAL is of the utmost importance; that it ought to be assembled without delay, and some unanimous resolutions formed in this fatal emergency, not only respecting your deplorable circumstances, but for the security of our common rights. Such being our sentiments, it must be premature to pronounce any judgment on the expedient which you have suggested. We beg, however, that you will do us the justice to believe that we shall continue to act with a firm and becoming regard to American freedom, and to cooperate with our sister colonies in every measure that shall be thought salutary and conducive to the public good. We have nothing to add but that we sincerely condole with you in your unexampled distress, and to request your speedy opinion of the proposed Congress, that if it should meet with your approbation we may exert our utmost endeavors to carry it into execution.”\*

The Virginia House of Burgesses had, three days before this letter was prepared, made a similar recommendation, but intelligence of the fact had not, of course, reached New York. Indeed the feeling was spontaneous, and was confined to no section of the country. The people everywhere began to long for a closer union against a common oppressor, and Massachusetts and other colonies promptly responded in the affirmative to the suggestion of New York for a general congress.

On the 7th of June, the New York committee sent a second letter to the Boston committee, requesting them to appoint the time and place for the assembling of the proposed congress. Ten days afterward the Massachusetts

\* American Archives, i. 297.

assembly adopted and signed a "Solemn League and Covenant," in which all former non-importation agreements and cognate undertakings were concentrated; and a committee was appointed to send the covenant as a circular to every colony in America. They also passed a resolution in favor of a general congress of deputies, and suggested the first day of the ensuing September as the time, and the city of Philadelphia as the place for the assembling of such congress. The people in other colonies acceded to the Boston proposition for non-intercourse, and New York stood almost alone in refusing to adopt those stringent and hitherto successful measures. The Loyalists rejoiced, and Rivington, the Royal Printer, published in his *Gazetteer* the following verse:

"And so, my good masters, I find it no joke,  
For YORK has stepped forward and thrown off the yoke  
Of congress, committees, and even King Sears,\*  
Who shows you good nature by showing his ears."

The Committee of Vigilance of the Sons of Liberty were not awed by the more imposing one of the Fifty-one, but were active, vigilant, and untiring. They called a meeting of the inhabitants in "the fields," on the 19th of June, when the refusal of the Fifty-one to accede to the general union in favor of non-importation, proposed by Massachusetts, was denounced, and resolutions were passed expressive of the sympathy and intended coöperation of the people of New York with the suffering Bostonians; also that delegates should be appointed to the proposed general congress, instructed to agree to a vigorous non-intercourse, in accordance with the Boston resolutions.

\* Isaac Sears, commonly called King Sears, was one of the earliest and most ardent Sons of Liberty. He was a merchant, and, though radical, was placed on the Committee of Fifty-one. The next year he avenged himself by leading a party that destroyed Rivington's printing establishment.

The Committee of Fifty-one held a meeting on the evening of the 4th of July, when, on motion of Alexander M'Dougall, Philip Livingston, John Alsop, Isaac Low, James Duane, and John Jay were nominated for delegates to the continental congress. M'Dougall also proposed to submit the nominations to the Tribunes or "committee of mechanics for their concurrence." The nomination was approved, but the reference to the mechanics was rejected. This refusal brought forth a handbill the next day (July 5), which called upon the inhabitants of the city to assemble in "the fields" on the 6th, at six o'clock in the evening, to hear matters "of the utmost importance to their reputations and security as freemen."

A great crowd was assembled at the appointed time. M'Dougall was called to the chair, and a series of resolutions, drawn by him, were adopted. These denounced the Boston Port Bill; declared that any attack upon the rights of a sister colony was immediately an attack upon the colony of New York; that the assumption of power to close ports and interrupt commerce was "highly unconstitutional;" pledged the colony to join with the others in a stringent non-importation league, and to be governed by the action of the contemplated general congress, etc. They ordered the resolutions to be printed in the public newspapers, and transmitted to the different counties in the colony, and to the committees of correspondence for the neighboring colonies.

This gathering, so great in numbers and in the importance of its action, was always referred to as THE GREAT MEETING IN THE FIELDS, and it was on that occasion that a student in King's College, known as the "Young West Indian,"—a delicate boy, girl-like in personal grace and stature, only seventeen years of age—astonished the multi-

tude by his logic and eloquence. He had been often seen walking alone under the shadow of large trees on Dey street, sometimes musing, and sometimes talking in low tones to himself. The residents near had occasionally engaged him in conversation, and were deeply impressed by his wisdom. Some of them seeing him in the crowd, urged him to address the meeting. He at first recoiled, but after listening attentively to the successive speakers, and finding several points untouched, he presented himself to the multitude.

“The novelty of the attempt, his youthful countenance, his slender, boyish form, awakened curiosity and excited attention. Overawed by the scene before him, he hesitated and faltered, but as he proceeded almost unconsciously to utter his accustomed reflections, his mind warmed with the theme—his energies were recovered. After a discussion clear, cogent, and novel, of the great principles involved in the controversy, he depicted in the glowing colors of ardent youth the long continued and long endured oppression of the mother country. Insisting upon the duty of resistance, he pointed to the means and certainty of success, and described the waves of rebellion sparkling with fire, and washing back on the shores of England the wrecks of her power, of her wealth, and her glory. The breathless silence ceased when he closed, and a whispered murmur ‘It is a collegian! it is a collegian!’ was lost in loud expressions of wonder and applause at the extraordinary eloquence of the young stranger.”\*

That orator was the destined son-in-law of Philip Schuyler, ALEXANDER HAMILTON. This was his entrance upon the theatre of public life, whereon he played a most useful and extraordinary part for thirty years.

\* *A History of the Republic of the United States, etc.*, by John C. Hamilton, i. 55.



The Committee of Fifty-one met on the evening of the 7th. They were evidently alarmed at the course of events. They reconsidered their action on the motion of M'Dougall to submit the nomination of deputies to the congress to the committee of mechanics, but proceeded to disavow and condemn the resolutions of the great meeting in "the fields" as seditious and incendiary. These denunciations offended several of the staunch republicans of the committee, and eleven of them instantly withdrew.\*

"The political sky at this place," wrote Councillor Smith to Colonel Schuyler two days afterward, "is cloudy. The Committee of Fifty-one, composed of jarring members, ten or a dozen of whom have made a secession from the main body upon the majority's disapproving some late resolves in the Fields, which you have seen in the papers. These were intended to urge the committee to join the common voice of the continent. They have since published other resolves, and to-day the town meets to approve or disapprove them. Those who know the populace say nothing will be done but a motion be made to amend them. Strange that a colony who had the first intelligence of the Parliamentary measures is behind all the rest."†

A committee appointed by the Tribunes, or mechanics, addressed a note to each of the nominees for a seat in the assembly of deputies, requesting to know whether they would support the Massachusetts resolves in that approaching congress. They answered that such a course would be in accordance with their individual opinions, but declared that they gave the assurance not with a view to secure their election, but to express their sentiments upon a question of so great importance.‡ This response was quite satisfactory, and on the 27th of July the gentlemen

\* These were Francis Lewis, Joseph Hallet, Alexander M'Dougall, Peter V. B. Livingston, Isaac Sears, Thomas Randall, Abraham P. Lott, Leonard Lispenard, John Broome, Abraham Brasher, and Jacob Van Zandt.

† Autograph letter, July 9, 1774.

‡ Leake's Life of Lamb, page 94.

who were nominated were elected delegates by the unanimous vote of the city. Suffolk county elected William Floyd ; Orange county, Henry Wisner and John Herring ; and Kings county, Simon Boerum. Dutchess and Westchester adopted the New York city delegates as their representatives.

Albany county endeavored to send a deputy from that district in the person of Colonel Schuyler, who had been all the year, thus far in its progress, a great sufferer from the pains of rheumatism and his hereditary malady. We have observed that he could not attend the session of the assembly, and while the stirring scenes which we have just considered were transpiring in New York, he was a prisoner to disease at Saratoga. His friends were anxious that one so useful should be in active public life, and as the time drew near when the great Senate of the people was to assemble, his constituents, and his friends in other districts, earnestly desired his recovery, for no man appeared so eligible for the position as he. Toward the close of July, Councillor Smith wrote to him, saying :

“ The colonies are preparing for the grand *Witenage Mote* [Great Assembly] with great spirit. At Philadelphia a plan is digesting for an American constitution. I know not the outlines of it. I hope it is for a Parliament, and to meet annually. Our people will be the last of all in the appointment of delegates. I wish your county would assist in the choice. Expresses will be sent through the whole colony to call upon the counties for the purpose. \* \* \* The people of England begin to call out for an American Parliament.”\*

Colonel Schuyler's health improved early in August, so that he rode down to Albany ; and when intelligence that an appointment of delegates to the congress had been made in New York city, his constituents felt more anxious than ever for his recovery. Late in August he received the fol-

\* Autograph letter, July 23, 1774.

lowing letter from Jacob Lansing, jr., chairman of the Albany Committee of Correspondence :

“Yours of the 22d instant I have received. These rheumatic pains, attended with a disagreeable fever, are undoubtedly very hard, but we must console ourselves in the days of affliction by hoping we shall get the better of it. I am now requested by the Committee to inform you that, by the majority of votes of that board, you are appointed our delegate for the city and county of Albany, to join the general congress at Philadelphia, which I hope you will accept, and not decline serving, as it is for the welfare of the public. \* \* \* It is proposed to meet on Tuesday next to consider the resolves—whether we are to stand by the resolves made at New York [at the great meeting in the Fields,] or make new ones.”\*

Colonel Schuyler's health would not permit him to accept the nomination, and Mr. Lansing communicated to the congress the fact that the committee of the city and county of Albany had adopted the New York city delegates as the representatives of their district.† Within sixty-three days after the proposition for a general congress went forth, twelve of the thirteen Anglo-American colonies had responded in the affirmative ; and at the beginning of September delegates from all them were on their way toward Philadelphia.

\* Autograph letter, August 23, 1774.

† Journals of the Continental Congress, September 5, 1774.