

A portrait of Benjamin Franklin, an elderly man with long, wavy hair, wearing a white coat and a white cravat. He is looking slightly to the right of the viewer. The background is dark and indistinct.

**THE WORKS OF  
BENJAMIN  
FRANKLIN**

**VOLUME 7: 1775 - 1779**

The Works of Benjamin  
Franklin

Volume 7

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

*The Works of Benjamin Franklin, Volume 7*  
*Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck*  
*86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9*  
*Deutschland*

*ISBN: 9783849654047*

*[www.jazzybee-verlag.de](http://www.jazzybee-verlag.de)*  
*[admin@jazzybee-verlag.de](mailto:admin@jazzybee-verlag.de)*

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**CORRESPONDENCE AND MISCELLANEOUS  
WRITINGS  
1775 - 1779**

**DXCVIII: AN ACCOUNT OF NEGOTIATIONS IN  
LONDON FOR EFFECTING A RECONCILIATION  
BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE AMERICAN  
COLONIES (*Continued.*)**

The 9th article was so drawn, in compliance with an idea of Dr. Fothergill's, started at our first meeting, viz., that government here would probably not be satisfied with the promise of voluntary grants in time of war from the Assemblies, of which the quantity must be uncertain; that, therefore, it would be best to proportion them in some way to the shillings in the pound raised in England; but how such proportion could be ascertained he was at a loss to contrive. I was desired to consider it. It has been said, too, that Parliament was become jealous of the right claimed and heretofore used by the crown, of raising money in the colonies without parliamentary consent; and, therefore, since we would not pay parliamentary taxes, future requisitions must be made with consent of Parliament, and not otherwise. I wondered that the crown should be willing to give up that separate right, but had no objection to its limiting itself, if it thought proper; so I drew the article accordingly, and contrived to proportion the aid by the tax of the last year of peace. And since it was thought that the method I should have liked best would never be agreed to,

viz., a Continental Congress to be called by the crown, for answering requisitions and proportioning aids, I chose to leave room for voluntary additions by the separate Assemblies, that the crown might have some motive for calling them together, and cultivating their goodwill, and they have some satisfaction in showing their loyalty and their zeal in the common cause, and an opportunity of manifesting their disapprobation of a war, if they did not think it a just one. This article therefore met with no objection *from them*; and I had another reason for liking it, viz., that the view of the proportion to be given in time of war might make us the more frugal in time of peace.

For the 10th article, I urged the injustice of seizing that fortress (which had been built at an immense charge by the province, for the defence of their port against national enemies), and turning it into a citadel for awing the town, restraining their trade, blocking up their port, and depriving them of their privileges. That a great deal had been said of their injustice in destroying the tea; but here was a much greater injustice uncompensated, that castle having cost the province three hundred thousand pounds. And that such a use made of a fortress they had built would not only effectually discourage every colony from ever building another, and thereby leave them more exposed to foreign enemies, but was a good reason for their insisting that the crown should never erect any hereafter in their limits, without the consent of the legislature. The gentlemen had not much to say against this article, but thought it would hardly be admitted.

The 11th article, it was thought, would be strongly objected to; that it would be urged the old colonists could have nothing to do with the affairs of Canada, whatever we had with those of the Massachusetts; that it would be considered as an officious meddling merely to disturb government; and that some even of the Massachusetts acts were thought by administration to be improvements of that

government, viz., those altering the appointment of counsellors, the choice of jurymen, and the forbidding of town meetings. I replied, that we having assisted in the conquest of Canada, at a great expense of blood and treasure, we had some right to be considered in the settlement of it. That the establishing an arbitrary government on the back of our settlements might be dangerous to us all; and that, loving liberty ourselves, we wished it to be extended among mankind, and to have no foundation for future slavery laid in America. That, as to amending the Massachusetts government, though it might be shown that every one of these pretended amendments were real mischiefs, yet that charters being compacts between two parties, the king and the people, no alteration could be made in them, even for the better, but by the consent of both parties. That the Parliament's claim and exercise of a power to alter our charters, which had always been deemed inviolable but for forfeiture, and to alter laws made in pursuance of these charters, which had received the royal approbation, and thenceforth deemed fixed and unchangeable, but by the powers that made them, had rendered all our constitution uncertain, and set us quite afloat. That as by claiming a right to tax us *ad libitum*, they deprived us of all property; so, by this claim of altering our laws and charters at will, they deprived us of all privilege and right whatever, but what we should hold at their pleasure. That this was a situation we could not be in, and must risk life and every thing rather than submit to it. So this article remained.

The 12th article I explained by acquainting the gentlemen with the former situation of the judges in most colonies, viz., that they were appointed by the crown, and paid by the assemblies. That the appointment being during the pleasure of the crown the salary had been during the pleasure of the Assembly. That, when it has been urged against the Assemblies that their making judges dependent

on them for their salaries was aiming at an undue influence over the courts of justice; the Assemblies usually replied that making them dependent on the crown for continuance in their places was also retaining an undue influence over those courts, and that one undue influence was a proper balance for the other; but that whenever the crown would consent to acts making the judges during *good behavior*, the Assemblies would at the same time grant their salaries to be permanent during their continuance in office. This the crown has, however, constantly refused. And this equitable offer is now again here proposed; the colonies not being able to conceive why their judges should not be rendered as independent as those in England. That, on the contrary, the crown now claimed to make the judges in the colonies dependent on its favor for both place and salary, both to be continued at its pleasure. This the colonies must oppose as inequitable, as putting both the weights into one of the scales of justice. If, therefore, the crown does not choose to commission the judges during good behavior, with equally permanent salaries, the alternative proposed that the salaries continue to be paid during the pleasure of the Assemblies as heretofore. The gentlemen allowed this article to be reasonable.

The 13th was objected to, as nothing was generally thought more reasonable here than that the king should pay his own governor, in order to render him independent of the people, who otherwise might aim at influencing him against his duty by occasionally withholding his salary. To this I answered that governors sent to the colonies were often men of no estate or principle, who came merely to make fortunes, and had no natural regard for the country they were to govern. That to make them quite independent of the people was to make them careless of their conduct, whether it was beneficial or mischievous to the public, and giving a loose to their rapacious and oppressive dispositions. That the influence supposed could never



extend to operate any thing prejudicial to the king's service, or the interest of Britain; since the governor was bound by a set of particular instructions, which he had given surety to observe; and all the laws he assented to were subject to be repealed by the crown, if found improper. That the payment of the salaries by the people was more satisfactory to them, as it was productive of a good understanding and mutual good offices between governor and governed, and therefore the innovation lately made in that respect at Boston and New York had, in my opinion, better be laid aside. So this article was suffered to remain.

But the 14th was thought totally inadmissible. The monopoly of the American commerce could never be given up, and proposing it would only give offence without answering any good purpose. I was therefore prevailed on to strike it wholly out.

The 15th was readily agreed to.

The 16th it was thought would be of little consequence, if the duties were given to the colony treasuries.

The 17th it was thought could hardly be obtained, but might be tried.

Thus having gone through the whole, I was desired to make a fair copy for Dr. Fothergill, who now informed us that having an opportunity of seeing daily Lord Dartmouth, of whose good disposition he had a high opinion, he would communicate the paper to him, as the sentiments of considerate persons, who wished the welfare of both countries. "Suppose," said Mr. Barclay, "I were to show this paper to Lord Hyde; would there be any thing amiss in so doing? He is a very knowing man; and, though not in the ministry, properly speaking, he is a good deal attended to by them. I have some acquaintance with him; we converse freely sometimes; and, perhaps, if he and I were to talk these articles over, and I should communicate to him our conversation upon them, some good might arise out of it."

Dr. Fothergill had no objection, and I said I could have none. I knew Lord Hyde a little, and had an esteem for him. I had drawn the paper at their request, and it was now theirs to do with it what they pleased. Mr. Barclay then proposed that I should send the fair copy to him, which, after making one for Dr. Fothergill and one for himself, he would return to me. Another question then arose, whether I had any objection to their mentioning that I had been consulted. I said none that related to myself; but it was my opinion, if they wished any attention paid to the propositions, it would be better not to mention me; the ministry having, as I conceived, a prejudice against me, and every thing that came from me. They said on that consideration it might be best not to mention me; and so it was concluded. For my own part, I kept this whole proceeding a profound secret; but I soon after discovered that it had taken air by some means or other.

Being much interrupted the day following, I did not copy and send the paper. The next morning I received a note <sup>Ref.</sup> 002 from Mr. Barclay, pressing to have it before twelve o'clock. I accordingly sent it to him. Three days after I received the following note from him:

“D. Barclay presents his respects, and acquaints Dr. Franklin that, being informed a pamphlet, entitled ‘A Friendly Address,’ has been dispersed to the *disadvantage* of America (in particular by the Dean of Norwich), he desires Dr. F. will peruse the enclosed, just come to hand from America, and, if he approves of it, republish it, as D. B. wishes something might be properly spread in Norwich. D. B. saw to-day a person with whom he had been yesterday (before he called on Dr. F.), and had the satisfaction of walking part of the way with him to another noble person’s house, to meet on the *business*, and he told him that he could say that he saw some *light*.

*Cheapside,*

*11th instant."*

The person so met and accompanied by Mr. Barclay I understood to be Lord Hyde, going either to Lord Dartmouth's or Lord North's, I know not which.

In the following week arrived the proceedings of the Congress, which had been long and anxiously expected, both by the friends and adversaries of America.

The petition of Congress to the king was enclosed to me, and accompanied by the following letter from their president, addressed to the American agents in London, as follows:

*"To Paul Wentworth, Esquire, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, William Bolla, Esquire, Dr. Arthur Lee, Thomas Life, Esquire, Edmund Burke, Esquire, Charles Garth, Esquire.*

Philadelphia, October 26, 1774.

Gentlemen:—

We give you the strongest proof of our reliance on your zeal and attachment to the happiness of America, and the cause of liberty, when we commit the enclosed papers to your care.

We desire you will deliver the petition into the hands of his Majesty, and after it has been presented, we wish it may be made public through the press, together with the list of grievances. And as we hope for great assistance from the spirit, virtue, and justice of the nation, it is our earnest desire that the most effectual care be taken, as early as possible, to furnish the trading cities and manufacturing towns throughout the United Kingdom with our memorial to the people of Great Britain.

We doubt not but that your good sense and discernment will lead you to avail yourselves of every assistance that may be derived from the advice and friendship of all great and good men who may incline to aid the cause of liberty and mankind.

The gratitude of America, expressed in the enclosed vote of thanks, we desire may be conveyed to the deserving objects of it, in the manner that you think will be most acceptable to them. Ref. 003

It is proposed that another Congress be held on the 10th of May next, at this place, but in the meantime we beg the favor of you, gentlemen, to transmit to the Speakers of the several Assemblies, the earliest information of the most authentic accounts you can collect, of all such conduct and designs of ministry or Parliament, as it may concern America to know. We are, with unfeigned esteem and regard, gentlemen, etc.

By order of the Congress.

*Henry Middleton, President.*"

The first impression made by the proceedings of the American Congress on the people in general, was greatly in our favor. Administration seemed to be staggered, were impatient to know whether the *Petition* mentioned in the proceedings was come to my hands, and took a roundabout method of obtaining that information, by getting a ministerial merchant, a known intimate of the Solicitor-General, to write me a letter, importing that he heard I had received such a petition, that I was to be attended in presenting it by the merchants, and begging to know the time, that he might attend "on so important an occasion, and give his testimony to so good a work." Before these proceedings arrived, it had been given out that no petition from the Congress could be received, as they were an illegal body; but the Secretary of State after a day's perusal (during which a council was held), told us it was a decent and proper petition, and cheerfully undertook to present it to his Majesty, who, he afterwards assured us, was pleased to receive it very graciously, and to promise to lay it, as soon as they met, before his two Houses of Parliament; and

we had reason to believe that, at that time, the petition was intended to be made the foundation of some change of measures; but that purpose, if such there were, did not long continue.

About this time, I received a letter from Mr. Barclay, then at Norwich, dated December 18th, expressing his opinion, that it might be best to postpone taking any further steps in the affair of procuring a meeting and petition of the merchants, (on which we had had several consultations,) till after the holidays, thereby to give the proceedings of Congress more time to work upon men's minds; adding: "I likewise consider that our superiors will have some little time for reflection, and perhaps may contemplate on the propriety of the 'Hints' in their possession. By a few lines I have received from Lord Hyde, he intimates his hearty wish that they may be productive of what may be practicable and advantageous for the mother country and the colonies."

On the 22d, Mr. Barclay was come to town, when I dined with him, and learnt that Lord Hyde thought the propositions too hard.

On the 24th, I received the following note from a considerable merchant in the city, viz.:

"Mr. William Neate presents his most respectful compliments to Dr. Franklin, and, as a report prevailed yesterday evening that all the disputes between Great Britain and the American colonies were, through his application and influence with Lord North, amicably settled, conformable to the wish and desire of the late Congress, W. N. desires the favor of Dr. Franklin to inform him by a line, per the bearer, whether there is any credit to be given to the report.

*St. Mary Hill, 24th December, 1774."*

My answer was to this effect; that I should be very happy to be able to inform him that the report he had heard had

some truth in it; but I could only assure him that I knew nothing of the matter. Such reports, however, were confidently circulated, and had some effect in recovering the stocks, which had fallen three or four per cent.

On Christmas-day, visiting Mrs. Howe, she told me as soon as I came in, that her brother, Lord Howe, wished to be acquainted with me; that he was a very good man, and she was sure we should like each other. I said I had always heard a good character of Lord Howe, and should be proud of the honor of being known to him. "He is but just by," said she; "will you give me leave to send for him?" "By all means, madam, if you think proper." She rang for a servant, wrote a note, and Lord Howe came in a few minutes.

After some extremely polite compliments as to the general motives for his desiring an acquaintance with me, he said he had a particular one at this time, which was the alarming situation of our affairs with America, which no one, he was persuaded, understood better than myself; that it was the opinion of some friends of his that no man could do more towards reconciling our differences than I could, if I would undertake it; that he was sensible that I had been very ill-treated by the ministry, but he hoped that would not be considered by me in the present case; that he himself, though not in opposition, had much disapproved of their conduct towards me; that some of them, he was sure, were ashamed of it and sorry it had happened; which he supposed must be sufficient to abate resentment in a great and generous mind; that, if he were himself in administration, he should be ready to make me ample satisfaction, which, he was persuaded, would one day or other be done; that he was unconnected with the ministry, except by some personal friendships, wished well, however, to government, was anxious for the general welfare of the whole empire, and had a particular regard for New England, which had shown a very endearing respect to his

family; that he was merely an independent member of Parliament, desirous of doing what good he could, agreeably to his duty in that station; that he therefore had wished for an opportunity of obtaining my sentiments on the means of reconciling our differences, which he saw must be attended with the most mischievous consequences, if not speedily accommodated; that he hoped his zeal for the public welfare would, with me, excuse the impertinence of a mere stranger, who could have otherwise no reason to expect, or right to request, me to open my mind to him on these topics; but he did conceive that, if I would indulge him with my ideas of the means proper to bring about a reconciliation, it might be of some use; that perhaps I might not be willing myself to have any *direct* communication with this ministry on this occasion; that I might likewise not care to have it known that I had any *indirect* communication with them, till I could be well assured of their good dispositions; that, being himself upon no ill terms with them, he thought it not impossible that he might, by conveying my sentiments to them and theirs to me, be a means of bringing on a good understanding, without committing either them or me, if his negotiation should not succeed; and that I might rely on his keeping perfectly secret every thing I should wish to remain so.

Mrs. Howe here offering to withdraw, whether of herself, or from any sign by him, I know not, I begged she might stay, as I should have no secret in a business of this nature that I could not freely confide to her prudence; which was truth; for I had never conceived a higher opinion of the discretion and excellent understanding of any woman on so short an acquaintance. I added that, though I had never before the honor of being in his lordship's company, his manner was such as had already engaged my confidence, and would make me perfectly easy and free in communicating myself to him.

I begged him, in the first place, to give me credit for a sincere desire of healing the breach between the two countries; that I would cheerfully and heartily do every thing in my small power to accomplish it; but that I apprehended from the king's speech, and from the measures talked of, as well as those already determined on, no intention or disposition of the kind existed in the present ministry, and therefore no accommodation could be expected till we saw a change. That, as to what his Lordship mentioned of the *personal injuries* done me, those done my country were so much greater, that I did not think the other, at this time, worth mentioning; that, besides, it was a fixed rule with me, not to mix my private affairs with those of the public; that I could join with my personal enemy in serving the public, or, when it was for its interest, with the public in serving that enemy; these being my sentiments, his lordship might be assured that no private considerations of the kind should prevent my being as useful in the present case as my small ability would permit.

He appeared satisfied and pleased with these declarations, and gave it me as his sincere opinion, that some of the ministry were extremely well disposed to any reasonable accommodation, preserving only the dignity of government; and he wished me to draw up in writing some propositions containing the terms on which I conceived a good understanding might be obtained and established, and the mode of proceeding to accomplish it; which propositions, as soon as prepared, we might meet to consider, either at his house, or at mine, or where I pleased; but, as his being seen at my house, or me at his, might, he thought, occasion some speculation, it was concluded to be best to meet at his sister's, who readily offered her house for the purpose, and where there was a good pretense with her family and friends for my being often seen, as it was known we played together at chess. I undertook, accordingly, to draw up something of the kind;



and so for that time we parted, agreeing to meet at the same place again on the Wednesday following.

I dined about this time by invitation with Governor Pownall. There was no company but the family; and after dinner we had a *tête-à-tête*. He had been in the opposition; but was now about making his peace, in order to come into Parliament upon ministerial interest, which I did not then know. He told me, what I had before been told by several of Lord North's friends, that the American measures were not the measures of that minister, nor approved by him; that, on the contrary, he was well disposed to promote a reconciliation upon any terms honorable to government; that I had been looked upon as the great fomenter of the opposition in America, and as a great adversary to any accommodation; that he, Governor P., had given a different account of me, and had told his lordship that I was certainly much misunderstood. From the governor's further discourse I collected, that he wished to be employed as an envoy or commissioner to America, to settle the differences, and to have me with him; but, as I apprehended there was little likelihood that either of us would be so employed by government, I did not give much attention to that part of his discourse.

I should have mentioned in its place (but one cannot recollect every thing in order), that, declining at first to draw up the propositions desired by Lord Howe, I alleged its being unnecessary, since the Congress in their petition to the king, just then received and presented through Lord Dartmouth, had stated their grievances, and pointed out very explicitly what would restore the ancient harmony; and I read a part of the petition to show their good dispositions, which, being very pathetically expressed, seemed to affect both the brother and sister. But still I was desired to give my ideas of the steps to be taken, in case some of the propositions in the petition should not be

thought admissible. And this, as I said before, I undertook to do.

I had promised Lord Chatham to communicate to him the first important news I should receive from America. I therefore sent him the proceedings of the Congress as soon as I received them; but a whole week passed after I received the petition, before I could, as I wished to do, wait upon him with it, in order to obtain his sentiments on the *whole*; for my time was taken up in meetings with the other agents to consult about presenting the petition, in waiting three different days with them on Lord Dartmouth, in consulting upon and writing letters to the Speakers of Assemblies, and other business, which did not allow me a day to go to Hayes.

At last, on Monday, the 26th, I got out, and was there about one o'clock. He received me with an affectionate kind of respect, that from so great a man was extremely engaging; but the opinion he expressed of the Congress was still more so. They had acted, he said, with so much temper, moderation, and wisdom, that he thought it the most honorable assembly of statesmen since those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, in the most virtuous times. That there were not in their whole proceedings above one or two things he could have wished otherwise; perhaps but one, and that was their assertion that the keeping up a standing army in the colonies in time of peace, without consent of their legislatures, was against law. He doubted that was not well founded, and that the law alluded to did not extend to the colonies. The rest he admired and honored. He thought the petition decent, manly, and properly expressed. He inquired much and particularly concerning the state of America, the probability of their perseverance, the difficulties they must meet with in adhering for any long time to their resolutions, the resources they might have to supply the deficiency of commerce; to all which I gave him answers with which he

seemed well satisfied. He expressed a great regard and warm affection for that country, with hearty wishes for their prosperity; and that government here might soon come to see its mistakes, and rectify them; and intimated that possibly he might, if his health permitted, prepare something for its consideration, when the Parliament should meet after the holidays; on which he should wish to have previously my sentiments.

I mentioned to him the very hazardous state I conceived we were in, by the continuance of the army in Boston; that whatever disposition there might be in the inhabitants to give no just cause of offence to the troops, or in the general to preserve order among them, an unpremeditated, unforeseen quarrel might happen between perhaps a drunken porter and a soldier, that might bring on a riot, tumult, and bloodshed, and in its consequences produce a breach impossible to be healed; that the army could not possibly answer any good purpose *there*, and might be infinitely mischievous; that no accommodation could properly be proposed and entered into by Americans while the bayonet was at their breasts; that to have an agreement binding, all force should be withdrawn. His lordship seemed to think these sentiments had something in them that was reasonable.

From Hayes I went to Halstead, Mr. Sargent's place, to dine, intending thence to visit Lord Stanhope at Chevening; but hearing that his lordship and the family were in town, I stayed at Halstead all night, and the next morning went to Chislehurst to call upon Lord Camden, it being in my way to town. I met his lordship and family in two carriages just without his gate, going on a visit of congratulation to Lord Chatham and his lady, on the late marriage of their daughter to Lord Mahon, son of Lord Stanhope. They were to be back at dinner; so I agreed to go in, stay dinner, and spend the evening there, and not return to town till next morning. We had that afternoon and evening a great deal of

conversation on American affairs, concerning which he was very inquisitive, and I gave him the best information in my power. I was charmed with his generous and noble sentiments; and had the great pleasure of hearing his full approbation of the proceedings of the Congress, the petition, etc., etc., of which, at his request, I afterwards sent him a copy. He seemed anxious that the Americans should continue to act with the same temper, coolness, and wisdom with which they had hitherto proceeded in most of their public assemblies, in which case he did not doubt they would succeed in establishing their rights, and obtain a solid and durable agreement with the mother country; of the necessity and great importance of which agreement, he seemed to have the strongest impressions.

I returned to town the next morning, in time to meet at the hour appointed by Lord Howe. I apologized for my not being ready with the paper I had promised, by my having been kept longer than I intended in the country. We had, however, a good deal of conversation on the subject, and his lordship told me he could now assure me, of a certainty, that there was a sincere disposition in Lord North and Lord Dartmouth to accommodate the differences with America, and to listen favorably to any proposition that might have a probable tendency to answer that salutary purpose. He then asked me what I thought of sending some person or persons over, commissioned to inquire into the grievances of America upon the spot, converse with the leading people, and endeavor with them to agree upon some means of composing our differences. I said that a person of rank and dignity, who had a character of candor, integrity, and wisdom, might possibly, if employed in that service, be of great use.

He seemed to be of the same opinion, and that whoever was employed should go with a hearty desire of promoting a sincere reconciliation, on the foundation of mutual interests and mutual good-will; that he should endeavor,

not only to remove their prejudices against government, but equally the prejudices of government against them, and bring on a perfect good understanding, etc. Mrs. Howe said: "I wish, brother, you were to be sent thither on such a service; I should like that much better than General Howe's going to command the army there." "I think, madam," said I, "they ought to provide for General Howe some more honorable employment." Lord Howe here took out of his pocket a paper, and offering it to me said, smiling: "If it is not an unfair question, may I ask whether you know any thing of this paper?" Upon looking at it, I saw it was a copy, in David Barclay's hand, of the "Hints" before recited; and said that I had seen it; adding, a little after, that since I perceived his lordship was acquainted with the transaction, my concern in which I had understood was to have been kept a secret, I should make no difficulty in owning to him that I had been consulted on the subject, and had drawn up that paper. He said he was rather sorry to find that the sentiments expressed in it were mine, as it gave him less hopes of promoting, by my assistance, the wished-for reconciliation; since he had reason to think there was no likelihood of the admission of those propositions. He hoped, however, that I would reconsider the subject, and form some plan that would be acceptable here. He expatiated on the infinite service it would be to the nation, and the great merit in being instrumental in so good a work; that he should not think of influencing me by any selfish motive, but certainly I might with reason expect any reward in the power of government to bestow.

This to me was what the French vulgarly call *spitting in the soup*. However, I promised to draw some sketch of a plan, at his request, though I much doubted, I said, whether it would be thought preferable to that he had in his hand. But he was willing to hope that it would; and, as he considered my situation, that I had friends here and constituents in America to keep well with, that I might

possibly propose something improper to be seen in my handwriting; therefore, it would be better to send it to Mrs. Howe, who would copy it, send the copy to him to be communicated to the ministry, and return me the original. This I agreed to, though I did not apprehend the inconvenience he mentioned. In general, I liked much his manner, and found myself disposed to place great confidence in him on occasion; but in this particular the secrecy he proposed seemed not of much importance.

In a day or two I sent the following paper, enclosed in a cover, directed to the Honorable Mrs. Howe.

“It is supposed to be the wish on both sides not merely to put a stop to the mischief at present threatening the general welfare, but to cement a *cordial union*, and remove, not only every real grievance, but every cause of jealousy and suspicion.

With this view, the first thing necessary is to know what is, by the different parties in the dispute, thought essentially necessary for the obtaining such a union.

The American Congress, in their petition to the king, have been explicit, declaring that by a repeal of the oppressive acts therein complained of, *the harmony between Great Britain and the colonies, so necessary to the happiness of both, and so ardently desired of them, will, with the usual intercourse, be immediately restored.*

If it has been thought reasonable here to expect that, previous to an alteration of measures, the colonies should make some declaration respecting their future conduct, they have also done that by adding: *That when the causes of their apprehensions are removed, their future conduct will prove them not unworthy of the regard they have been accustomed in their happier days to enjoy.*

For their sincerity in these declarations, they solemnly call to witness the Searcher of all hearts.

If Britain can have any reliance on these declarations (and perhaps none to be extorted by force can be more

relied on than these, which are thus freely made), she may, without hazard to herself, try the expedient proposed, since, if it fails, she has it in her power at any time to resume her present measures.

It is then proposed: That Britain should show some confidence in these declarations, by repealing all the laws, or parts of laws, that are requested to be repealed in the petition of the Congress to the king; And that, at the same time, orders should be given to withdraw the fleet from Boston, and remove all the troops to Quebec, or the Floridas, that the colonies may be left at perfect liberty in their future stipulations.

That this may, for the honor of Britain, appear not the effect of any apprehension from the measures entered into and recommended to the people by the Congress, but from good-will, and a change of disposition towards the colonies, with a sincere desire of reconciliation, let some of their other grievances, which in their petition they have left to the magnanimity and justice of the king and Parliament, be at the same time removed, such as those relating to the payment of governors' and judges' salaries, and the instructions for dissolving Assemblies, etc., with the declarations concerning the statute of Henry the Eighth.

And to give the colonies an immediate opportunity of demonstrating the reality of their professions, let their proposed ensuing Congress be authorized by government (as was that held at Albany, in 1754), and a person of weight and dignity of character be appointed to preside at it on behalf of the crown.

And then let requisition be made to the Congress, of such points as government wishes to obtain for its future security, for aids, for the advantage of general commerce, for reparation to the India Company, etc., etc.

A generous confidence thus placed in the colonies, will give ground to the friends of government there, in their endeavors to procure from America every reasonable

concession, or engagement, and every substantial aid, that can fairly be desired."

On the Saturday evening, I saw Mrs. Howe, who informed me she had transcribed and sent the paper to Lord Howe in the country, and she returned me the original. On the following Tuesday, January 3d, I received a note from her (enclosing a letter she had received from Lord Howe the last night), as follows:

"Mrs. Howe's compliments to Dr. Franklin; she encloses him a letter she received last night, and returns him many thanks for his obliging present, <sup>Ref. 004</sup> which has already given her great entertainment. If the Doctor has any spare time for chess, she will be exceedingly glad to see him any morning this week, and as often as will be agreeable to him, and rejoices in having so good an excuse for asking the favor of his company.

*Tuesday.*"

"Porter's Lodge, January 2, 1775.

*To The Honorable Mrs. Howe, Grafton Street.*

I have received your packet; and it is with much concern that I collect, from sentiments of such authority as those of our worthy friend, that the desired accommodation threatens to be attended with much greater difficulty than I had flattered myself, in the progress of our intercourse, there would be reason to apprehend.

I shall forward the propositions as intended, not desirous of trespassing further on our friend's indulgence; but retaining sentiments of regard, which his candid and obliging attention to my troublesome inquiries will render ever permanent to the memory of your affectionate, etc.,

*Howe.*

"I ought to make excuses likewise to you."



His lordship had, in his last conversation with me, acknowledged a communication between him and the ministry, to whom he wished to make my sentiments known. In this letter from the country he owns the receipt of them, and mentions his intention of forwarding them, that is, as I understood it, to the ministers; but expresses his apprehensions that such propositions were not likely to produce any good effect. Some time after, perhaps a week, I received a note from Mrs. Howe, desiring to see me. I waited upon her immediately, when she showed me a letter from her brother, of which having no copy, I can only give from the best of my recollection the purport of it, which I think was this: that he desired to know from their friend, meaning me, through her means, whether it might not be expected that, if that friend would engage for their payment of the tea as a preliminary, relying on a promised redress of their grievances on future petitions from their Assembly, they would approve of his making such engagement; and whether the proposition in the former paper (the "Hints"), relating to aids, was still in contemplation of the author. As Mrs. Howe proposed sending to her brother that evening, I wrote immediately the following answer, which she transcribed and forwarded:

"The proposition in the former paper, relating to aids, is still in contemplation of the author, and, as he thinks, is included in the last article of the present paper.

The people of America, conceiving that Parliament has no right to tax them, and that therefore all that has been extorted from them by the operation of the duty acts, with the assistance of an armed force, *preceding* the destruction of the tea, is so much injury, which ought in order of time to be first repaired, before a demand on the tea account can be justly made of them, are not, he thinks, likely to approve of the measure proposed, and pay *in the first place* the value demanded, especially as twenty times as much injury has since been done them by blocking up their port; and

their castle also, seized before by the crown, has not been restored, nor any satisfaction offered them for the same."

At the meeting of Parliament after the holidays, which was on the 19th of January, 1775, Lord Howe returned to town, when we had another meeting at which he lamented that my propositions were not such as probably could be accepted; intimated, that it was thought I had powers or instructions from the Congress to make concessions on occasion, that would be more satisfactory. I disclaimed the having any of any kind, but what related to the presenting of their petition. We talked over all the particulars in my paper, which I supported with reasons; and finally said that, if what I had proposed would not do, I should be glad to hear what would do; I wished to see some propositions from the ministers themselves. His lordship was not, he said, as yet fully acquainted with their sentiments, but should learn more in a few days. It was, however, some weeks before I heard any thing further from him.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Barclay and I were frequently together on the affair of preparing the merchants' petition, which took up so much of his time that he could not conveniently see Lord Hyde; so he had no information to give me concerning the "Hints," and I wondered I heard nothing of them from Dr. Fothergill. At length, however, but I cannot recollect about what time, the Doctor called on me, and told me he had communicated them, and with them had verbally given my arguments in support of them, to Lord Darmouth, who, after consideration, had told him some of them appeared reasonable, but others were inadmissible or impracticable. That having occasion to see frequently the Speaker, <sup>Ref. 005</sup> he had also communicated them to him, as he found him very anxious for a reconciliation. That the Speaker had said it would be very humiliating to Britain to be obliged to submit to such terms; but the Doctor told him she had been unjust, and

ought to bear the consequences, and alter her conduct; that the pill might be bitter, but it would be salutary, and must be swallowed. That these were the sentiments of impartial men, after thorough consideration and full information of all circumstances, and that sooner or later these or similar measures must be followed, or the empire would be divided and ruined. The Doctor, on the whole, hoped some good would be effected by our endeavors.

On the 19th of January, I received a card from Lord Stanhope, acquainting me that Lord Chatham, having a motion to make on the morrow in the House of Lords concerning America, greatly desired that I might be in the House, into which Lord Stanhope would endeavor to procure me admittance. At this time it was a rule of the House that no person could introduce more than one friend. The next morning his lordship let me know by another card that, if I attended at two o'clock in the lobby, Lord Chatham would be there about that time, and would himself introduce me. I attended, and met him there accordingly. On my mentioning to him what Lord Stanhope had written to me, he said: "Certainly; and I shall do it with the more pleasure, as I am sure your being present at this day's debate will be of more service to America than mine"; and so taking me by the arm was leading me along the passage to the door that enters near the throne, when one of the door-keepers followed, and acquainted him that, by the order, none were to be carried in at that door but the eldest sons or brothers of peers; on which he limped back with me to the door near the bar, where were standing a number of gentlemen waiting for the peers who were to introduce them, and some peers waiting for friends they expected to introduce; among whom he delivered me to the door-keepers, saying aloud: "This is Dr. Franklin, whom I would have admitted into the House"; when they readily opened the door for me accordingly.

As it had not been publicly known that there was any communication between his lordship and me, this I found occasioned some speculation. His appearance in the House, I observed, caused a kind of bustle among the officers, who were hurried in sending messengers for members, I suppose those in connection with the ministry, something of importance being expected when that great man appears; it being but seldom that his infirmities permit his attendance. I had great satisfaction in hearing his motion and the debate upon it, which I shall not attempt to give here an account of, as you may find a better in the papers of the time. It was his motion for withdrawing the troops from Boston, as the first step towards an accommodation.

The day following, I received a note from Lord Stanhope expressing that, "at the desire of Lord Chatham, was sent me enclosed the motion he made in the House of Lords, that I might be possessed of it in the most authentic manner, by the communication of the individual paper which was read to the House by the mover himself." I sent copies of this motion to America, and was the more pleased with it, as I conceived it had partly taken its rise from a hint I had given his lordship in a former conversation. It follows in these words.

*"LORD CHATHAM'S MOTION, JANUARY 20, 1775*

That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, most humbly to advise and beseech his Majesty that, in order to open the way towards a happy settlement of the dangerous troubles in America, by beginning to allay ferments and soften animosities there, and above all, for preventing in the meantime any sudden and fatal catastrophe at Boston, now suffering under the daily irritation of an army before their eyes, posted in their town, it may graciously please his Majesty that immediate orders may be despatched to General Gage for removing his

Majesty's forces from the town of Boston, as soon as the rigor of the season and other circumstances, indispensable to the safety and accommodation of the said troops, may render the same practicable."

I was quite charmed with Lord Chatham's speech in support of his motion. He impressed me with the highest idea of him, as a great and most able statesman. <sup>Ref.</sup>  
<sup>006</sup> Lord Camden, another wonderfully good speaker and close reasoner, joined him in the same argument, as did several other lords, who spoke exceedingly well, but all availed no more than the whistling of the winds. The motion was rejected. Sixteen Scotch peers, and twenty-four bishops, with all the lords in possession or expectation of places, when they vote together unanimously, as they generally do for ministerial measures, make a dead majority, that renders all debating ridiculous in itself, since it can answer no end. Full of the high esteem I had imbibed for Lord Chatham, I wrote back to Lord Stanhope the following note, viz.:

"Dr. Franklin presents his best respects to Lord Stanhope, with many thanks to his lordship and Lord Chatham for the communication of so authentic a copy of the motion. Dr. F. is filled with admiration of that truly great man. He has seen, in the course of life, sometimes eloquence without wisdom, and often wisdom without eloquence; in the present instance he sees both united, and both, as he thinks, in the highest degree possible.

*Craven Street, January 23, 1775."*

As in the course of the debate some lords in the administration had observed, that it was common and easy to censure their measures, but those who did so proposed nothing better, Lord Chatham mentioned that he should not be one of those idle censurers; that he had thought long and closely upon the subject, and proposed soon to lay

before their lordships the result of his meditation, in a plan for healing our differences, and restoring peace to the empire, to which his present motion was preparatory. I much desired to know what his plan was, and intended waiting on him to see if he would communicate it to me, but he went the next morning to Hayes, and I was so much taken up with daily business and company that I could not easily get out to him. A few days after, however, Lord Mahon called on me, and told me Lord Chatham was very desirous of seeing me, when I promised to be with him the Friday following, several engagements preventing my going sooner.

On Friday the 27th I took a post-chaise about nine o'clock and got to Hayes about eleven; but, my attention being engaged in reading a new pamphlet, the post-boy drove me a mile or two beyond the gate. His lordship, being out on an airing in his chariot, had met me before I reached Hayes, unobserved by me, turned and followed me, and not finding me there, concluded, as he had seen me reading, that I had passed by mistake, and sent a servant after me. He expressed great pleasure at my coming, and acquainted me, in a long conversation, with the outlines of his plan, parts of which he read to me. He said he had communicated it only to Lord Camden, whose advice he much relied on, particularly in the law part; and that he would, as soon as he could, get it transcribed, put it into my hands for my opinion and advice, but should show it to no other person before he presented it to the House; and he requested me to make no mention of it, otherwise parts might be misunderstood and blown upon beforehand, and others perhaps adopted and produced by ministers as their own. I promised the closest secrecy, and kept my word, not even mentioning to any one that I had seen him. I dined with him, his family only present, and returned to town in the evening.