

LIVES
OF THE
GOVERNORS
OF
PENNSYLVANIA,

WITH THE
INCIDENTAL HISTORY OF THE STATE,

FROM
1609 TO 1873.

BY
WILLIAM C. ARMOR.

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THOMAS WHARTON, JR.,

PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

March 5, 1777, to May 23, 1778.

THE Provincial Convention which had been elected to frame a new Constitution, and which, upon meeting on the 15th of July, 1776, assumed the entire government of the Colony, elected, on the 24d of the same month, a Council of Safety, composed of twenty-five members, to which was committed the executive department of the Government until the new frame of the constitution about to be promulgated should be put in operation. This Council was organized by the selection of Thomas Rittenhouse as chairman, and Jacob S. Howell, Secretary. By this action the Proprietary Government was completely superseded, and the title of the Proprietors to landed estate in Pennsylvania was suspended. An estimate commenced by Thomas Penn, and completed by Franklin, in 1759, made the value of this estate about ten millions of pounds sterling. It should here be observed that the Legislature of Pennsylvania, on the 27th of November, 1779, passed an Act for vesting the estate of the Proprietors in the Commonwealth, but reserving to the Proprietors all their private estates, including the tenths of manors, and paying to them the sum of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds sterling "in remembrance of the enterprising spirit of the Founder," and "of the expectations and dependence of his descendants." In addition to this, Parliament, in 1790, granted an annuity of four thousand pounds per annum to the heirs and descendants of the Founder, "in consideration of the meritorious services of the said William Penn, and of the losses which his family have sustained." This annuity has ever since been regularly

paid, and in a reference made to it a short time ago [1872] in the House of Commons, Chancellor Lowe stated that the pension would not be discontinued.

On the 6th of August, a formal organization of the Council of Safety was effected, when Thomas Wharton, Jr., was elected President. On the 28th of September, the new constitution was completed and passed unanimously, taking effect from the date of its passage. It provided for an annual Assembly and for a Supreme Executive Council, to consist of twelve persons to be chosen by the people, and to hold office for three years. Members of Congress were to be appointed by the Assembly. Assembly men were eligible to membership but four years out of seven, and members of Council but one term in seven years. The Constitution could not be changed for the space of seven years. At the expiration of that time censors were to be elected, who were to consider whether a revision was demanded, and if so, they were to call a convention for the purpose. The Council was charged with the due execution of the laws, its powers being not materially different from those of the Council under the Proprietary Government. From the first, this instrument met with violent opposition.

On the first day of January, 1776, Washington unfurled over his camp, at Cambridge, for the first time, the Union Flag. It had thirteen stripes of alternate red and white, with the cross of St. George in the upper left-hand corner. For this cross Congress ordered, on the 14th of June, 1777, thirteen white stars in a field of blue to be substituted, and this design became the emblem of nationality. The Continental Congress, before the close of the year 1775, had agreed upon certain articles of war, declared the cause for which arms had been taken up, and had issued bills of credit for prosecuting the war to the amount of six millions of dollars. The Parliament of Great Britain had, on the other hand, declared the Colonists rebels; had authorized the seizure or destruction of American vessels; had voted a force of fifty-five thousand men for compelling obedience to its man-

dates in America, with over a million of dollars for their pay; and had, in addition to these, hired from the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, and other German rulers, seventeen thousand men, agreeing in their absence to defend these States, and paying for them over eight hundred thousand dollars. All this was done while yet the Americans were supplicating for terms of reconciliation in the most respectful and earnest tones. These acts, however, had the effect to convince all thinking men, that there was but one alternative, either a slavish submission or a bitter and wasting struggle.

Washington, who, from the moment of taking command, had been busy in organizing and gathering in his forces, determined to drive the enemy from Boston. To this end he sent forces under General Thomas, under cover of darkness, on the night of March 4th, 1776, to a commanding position on Dorchester Heights, where, by morning, they had thrown up considerable works, and were prepared to open upon the city and the shipping in the harbor. All efforts to dislodge this force proved futile, and, seeing that destruction or capture awaited him, General Howe, the commander of the British troops, sought terms of capitulation. Upon tacit condition that he would leave the city unharmed, he was allowed to depart without injury; and on the 17th of March, eleven thousand soldiers and sailors, and a number of Loyalist families, sailed away to Halifax.

Washington, having been apprised early in the year that Sir Henry Clinton had sailed from Boston on a secret expedition, presumed its destination to be New York, and accordingly sent General Charles Lee thither to defend it. Clinton arrived off Sandy Hook in March, but finding Lee in possession of the city, withdrew, and being joined some time afterwards by Admiral Sir Peter Parker, proceeded South for the reduction of Charleston, South Carolina; and on the 28th of June opened a combined land and naval attack upon the defences on Sullivan's Island, commanding the entrance to the harbor. He was met by the Carolina militia under General William Moultrie, which had thrown up a breast-work

of palmetto logs and sand, and had twenty-six pieces of artillery mounted. For ten hours the battle raged with great violence. The Provincials stood manfully to their guns, doing terrible execution upon the British fleet. At nightfall the action ceased, and Clinton, finding his forces decimated and his little armada terribly shattered, decided to withdraw from the contest, and returned to New York.

Taught by this unfortunate experience, the British commander determined to concentrate all his forces, and strike with overwhelming power. General Howe, who had gone from Boston to Halifax, returned early in July, and proceeded directly to New York. Here he was joined by Clinton with the remnant of his army from before Charleston, and by Admiral Lord Howe with a large fleet directly from England. To this powerful combination, Washington had no adequate forces to oppose, and the events which followed were most unfortunate for the American arms. Driven from Long Island, from Harlem, from White Plains, Washington, at length, determined to withdraw in the direction of Philadelphia, and was closely pursued by Cornwallis with a heavy detachment of the British army, causing him to abandon, in succession, Newark, New Brunswick, Princeton, and Trenton, and finally to cross to the west bank of the Delaware to Pennsylvania soil. Cornwallis would have pushed forward vigorously, and constructed boats for crossing the river in pursuit; but Howe ordered a cautious policy, directing Cornwallis to wait until the ice should be frozen sufficiently upon the river to bear the troops and trains. The approach of a hostile army to the banks of the Delaware created consternation in Philadelphia. In the Council of Safety, on the 30th of November, the following order was issued: "It is no less necessary than painful, that the present movements of General Howe's army requires that we should apprise the inhabitants of this city who wish to avoid the insults and oppressions of a licentious soldiery, that they prepare for removing their wives and children, and valuable effects, on a short warning to some place of security." On the 2d of September the Council ordered all

shops in the city to be closed, and the schools to be broken up, and by the 10th, General Cadwalader, with a brigade of twelve hundred men, was on his way to join Washington's army. Congress now became thoroughly alarmed, and on the 12th, after having invested Washington with dictatorial powers, adjourned to meet at Baltimore, taking with them all the public papers, but leaving a committee behind, of which Robert Morris was chairman, to act in concert with the army for the defence of the city. On the same day Washington dispatched General Putnam, clothed with absolute power, to take command in the city.

The want of troops rendered the American commander powerless to oppose the advancing foe. In this alarming posture of affairs, the Council of Safety issued a stirring address, calling upon all able-bodied men to come to the rescue. "If you wish," say they, "to live in freedom, and are determined to maintain that best boon of heaven, you have no time to deliberate. A manly resistance will secure every blessing; inactivity and sloth will bring horror and destruction. . . . Shall we, with Heaven and justice on our side, (unless we could impiously suppose that the Almighty had devoted mankind to slavery,) shall we hesitate to meet our enemies in the hostile field? . . . May Heaven, which has bestowed the blessings of liberty upon you, awaken you to a proper sense of your danger, and arouse that manly spirit of virtuous resolution which has ever bidden defiance to the efforts of tyranny. May you ever have the glorious prize of liberty in view, and bear with a becoming fortitude the fatigues and severities of a winter campaign. That, and that only, will entitle you to the superlative distinction of being deemed, under God, the deliverers of your country."

The frequent reverses of the American arms, and the repeated retreats before a victorious foe, had caused great depression in the public mind. Washington felt deeply the humiliation, and sought earnestly for an opportunity to strike a blow that should revive confidence in the patriot cause. A detachment of Hessian troops had been posted at Trenton.

while the main body of the enemy, under Cornwallis, was at Princeton. Christmas-time was approaching. Believing that the Hessian hirelings would celebrate this festival by long potations, Washington formed the purpose of assuming the offensive, and, crossing the Delaware, of falling suddenly upon the enemy resting securely in their cantonments. Accordingly, on the evening of the 25th, taking a picked force to a point some eight or ten miles above Trenton, where now is located the village of Taylorsville, he succeeded, though the current was strong and the river filled with floating ice, in crossing in flat-boats, and in making his way unperceived to the neighborhood of the British encampment. It was already sunrise when they arrived, and the Hessian leader, Rall, was still at his cups, having spent the night in debauch. The struggle for the mastery was brief. Forty or fifty of the enemy were killed or mortally wounded, and more than a thousand were made prisoners, and marched away in the train of the victors; arms, ammunition, and stores, captured in considerable quantities, swelling the triumphal train. The victory was, in regard to numbers engaged, insignificant; but it was complete and, in its bearing upon the cause of the patriots, momentous. It inspired hope and confidence in every breast, and the daring and triumph of the American leader became the subject of eulogy in every European court. Cadwalader, who was in command of the Pennsylvania troops, had been ordered to cross and co-operate with the attacking column; but was unable to carry out his instructions on account of the force of the current and the power of the floating ice. Three days after, nine hundred of these prisoners were marched through the city of Philadelphia on their way to the prison camp at Lancaster, forming a line on Front Street two deep from Market to Walnut. Inspired by his success, Washington resumed the offensive, and moving all his forces into New Jersey, prepared to face the British troops; but too feeble in numbers to successfully cope with the main body which had approached Trenton, eluding the grasp of the confident foe, he, by a night march, descended

upon the British reserves at Princeton, and fought them with sturdy valor; but Cornwallis, warned by the booming of cannon of their peril, and grown vigilant since the late disaster, hastened to their relief, compelling Washington to withdraw. The activity and enterprise of the Americans frightened the enemy into the adoption of the most cautious policy, causing him to call in and confine his troops to their encampments upon the Raritan; while Washington, with his main body, encamped at Morristown, and sent out detachments in all directions to keep the country clear, and pick up stragglers and deserters.

This active winter campaign had the effect to relieve Pennsylvania, and enabled Congress, which had assembled in Baltimore on the 20th of December, to return again to Philadelphia. General Putnam, who had been invested with authority, had ordered fortifications to be commenced at Red Bank, on the Delaware, and at various points about the city, using for the purpose the timber upon the Proprietors' lands in the neighborhood. Upon the retreat of the enemy through New Jersey, Putnam rejoined the army, and was succeeded by General Irvine, and subsequently by General Gates, in the command in Philadelphia.

The elections having been held according to the provisions of the new Constitution, the Supreme Executive Council met on the 4th of March, 1777, and organized on the 5th, by the election, in joint convention of the members of the Assembly and the Council, of Thomas Wharton, Jr., as President, and George Bryan as Vice-President; whereupon the Council of Safety was dissolved. To impress the multitude with an adequate idea of the power and dignity of the office, the inauguration was attended with much pomp and ceremony; the result of the election being declared from the Court-House amid the shouts of the multitude and the booming of the captured cannon from the field of Trenton. The title given to the new dignitary was a long and loud resounding one: "His Excellency Thomas Wharton, Junior, Esquire, President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania.

Captain-General and Commander-in-chief in and over the same."

Among the earliest acts of Council was the appointment of a Board of War, consisting of nine members, and one of the Navy of eleven. The Board of War immediately applied to Congress for one hundred thousand dollars for defence, which not being immediately granted, this sum was appropriated by the Council. The activity of the enemy at New York, in gathering transports and moving troops, gave indication of an intention to make a descent upon some other part of the coast, and Philadelphia was judged to be its destination. On the 8th of April, General Putnam advised Congress of the movements of the enemy at Amboy, and gave it as his opinion that the capture of Philadelphia was the purpose. On the following day the Council published a proclamation urging instant action, and concluding thus: "It has been repeatedly and justly observed, and ought to be acknowledged as a signal evidence of the favor of Divine Providence, that the lives of the militia in every battle during this just war have been remarkably spared. Confiding, therefore, in the continuance of the blessing of Him, who is indeed the God of armies, let every man among us hold himself ready to march into the field whenever he shall be called upon to do so." Congress resolved to establish a camp for recruits on the west side of the Delaware, to the command of which General Benedict Arnold was assigned, General Philip Schuyler being at this time in command in the city. On the 10th of June, General Mifflin appeared in person before Congress with a letter from General Washington, expressing his firm conviction that the enemy meditated an immediate descent upon some part of Pennsylvania. A French engineer, by the name of Du Coudray, in company with General Mifflin, was sent to examine the condition of the defences of the city and its approaches, who recommended that preparations should be made at Billingsport for the chief point of defence, the works at Red Bank being declared useless.

The blow aimed at Philadelphia did not fall till near the

close of July. In a fleet of two hundred and forty war-ships and transports, Lord Howe, with a force of eighteen thousand men, making as if he would ascend the Hudson, suddenly changed his course and steered for the mouth of the Delaware. Washington followed overland, passing through Philadelphia on Sunday, the 24th of August, and taking the road to Chester. The militia of the city, which had been divided into three classes, and the first two of which had been already called, were now ordered out entire, one detachment being stationed at Downingtown, and the other at Chester. Leaden spouts upon the houses were torn off for use in making bullets. A fleet of twelve fire-ships was held in readiness for protection on the Delaware, and every preparation made for a vigorous defence. But Howe, instead of ascending the Delaware, moved up the Chesapeake, and, debarking, commenced the march across the country by a route where no preparations had been made to check him. With the enemy's designs in full prospect, the Council put forth every effort to bring out the entire fighting force of the Colony. In a proclamation issued on the 10th, they say: "The time is at length come, in which the fate of ourselves, our wives, children, and posterity, must be speedily determined. General Howe, at the head of a British army, the only hope and last resource of our enemies, has invaded this State. . . . Blessed be God! Providence seems to have left it to ourselves, to determine whether we shall triumph in victory, and rest in freedom and peace; or, by tamely submitting or weakly resisting, deliver ourselves up a prey to an enemy than whom none more cruel and perfidious was ever suffered to vex and destroy any people. . . . Above all, consider the mournful prospect of seeing Americans, like the wretched inhabitants of India, stripped of their freedom, robbed of their property, degraded beneath the brutes, and left to starve amid plenty, at the will of their lordly masters; and let us determine once for all, that we will *die or be free!* . . . The Council, therefore, most humbly beseech and entreat all persons whatsoever, to exert themselves, without delay, to seize this present opportunity of crushing the foe now in the

bowels of our country, by marching forth instantly under their respective officers to the assistance of our great General, that he may be enabled to environ and demolish the only British army that remains formidable in America. . . . GOD SAVE THE PEOPLE!"

Washington pushed forward with his little army. At Newark the advance guards met and skirmished lightly. Discovering that it was the design of the British commander to turn his right, he fell back behind the Brandywine, and prepared to defend the line of that stream. At Pyle's Ford General Armstrong with the Philadelphia militia was posted; Washington, in person, took position at Chad's Ford; and Sullivan at Brinton's, two miles further up. Howe laid his plans skilfully, and fortune favored their execution. He sent Knyphausen with a detachment to Chad's Ford, in Washington's immediate front, to make a noisy demonstration, as if intent to cross, while, with the main body of his army in light marching order, he pushed on up the Valley under cover of a dense fog to Trumbull's and Jeffrey's Fords, far past the American right, where he crossed without opposition. Still, Washington was deceived. Intelligence that this movement was being executed was brought him; but soon after came messengers contradicting this report, and he made all his dispositions to meet Knyphausen, who, judging by the incessant pounding that he kept up, was determined to break through and effect a crossing. Howe soon came unawares upon Sullivan, who was on Washington's extreme right. Beaten by this adroit manœuvre, the latter turned to make such a stand as he was able, with a force a third smaller than that of his adversary, and but indifferently armed and equipped; and in the neighborhood of the Birmingham meeting-house, on the 11th of September, a severe battle ensued, which lasted the whole day. General Lafayette, a young French nobleman, who had but a few days before arrived in the country, and been given a command, was here wounded, and some of the bravest of the American troops were cut down. The severely wounded were carried into the meeting-house,

and to this day the stains of blood from the wounds of the patriot-soldiers remain upon its floor. The Americans were finally forced back, and retired to Chester; the British encamping upon the field.

Washington again confronted Howe, moving leisurely towards Philadelphia, at a point twenty miles from the city, on the 16th; but was prevented from joining in a general engagement by a severe and continuous rain, which completely ruined his ammunition. At Paoli, on the night of the 20th, General Wayne, who was hanging upon the rear of the British army with a force of eighteen hundred men, was surprised by General Gray; and nearly three hundred of his men were wounded or massacred. Fifty-three of the patriots were buried in one grave, and over their remains the Republican Artillerists of Chester County, forty years afterwards, erected a monument. At Reading, considerable quantities of military stores had been gathered, and fearing that Howe might strike for their capture or destruction, Washington withdrew in that direction. Howe, being left without opposition, moved in the direction of Philadelphia, which he entered on the 26th. Washington, having reorganized his shattered army, moved forward, and on the 3d of October attacked the enemy at Germantown. At the opening of the battle, he felt sanguine of success; but hampered by a dense fog which settled down over the field, occasioning confusion in his ranks, he was at length, after a hard-fought battle, obliged to withdraw. Howe put his army in winter-quarters in Philadelphia, and Washington retired to White Marsh, and subsequently went into winter-quarters at Valley Forge.

In the meantime General Burgoyne, with an army of ten thousand men, moving up the Hudson, had captured Fort Ticonderoga on the 5th of July; the garrison, under General St. Clair, escaping. On the 19th of September, and again on the 7th of October, Burgoyne was met at Saratoga by the Americans, now under General Gates, where he suffered severely; and ten days afterwards, finding retreat impossible, his whole army was compelled to lay down its arms, and sur-

render prisoners of war. A fine train of brass field-pieces, five thousand muskets, and large quantities of much-needed munitions of war, were captured.

Congress and the Executive Council remained in Philadelphia during the exciting events that were transpiring before the city. On the 18th of September, Congress adjourned to meet at Lancaster, where it convened on the 27th; but on the 30th removed to York, where it remained in session until the following summer. The Council remained until the 24th, when—the money and papers belonging to the loan office, and the books belonging to the State, in the Philadelphia Library, having been removed to Easton—it adjourned to Lancaster. On the 26th the vanguard of the British army entered the city. Deborah Logan has left some interesting reminiscences of the event. She says: “The army marched in and took possession of the city in the morning. We were up-stairs [at the Norris mansion between Fourth and Fifth] and saw them pass the State House. They looked well, clean, and well clad, and the contrast between them and our own poor, barefooted, ragged troops was very great, and caused a feeling of despair. . . . Early in the afternoon Lord Cornwallis’s suite arrived, and took possession of my mother’s house. But my mother was appalled by the numerous train which took possession of her dwelling, and shrunk from having such inmates, for a guard was mounted at the door, and the yard was filled with soldiers and baggage of every description; and I well remember what we thought of the haughty looks of Lord Rawdon and the other aid-de-camp, as they traversed the apartments. My mother desired to speak with Lord Cornwallis, and he attended her in the front parlor. She told him of her situation, and how impossible it would be for her to stay in her own house with such a numerous train as composed his Lordship’s establishment. He behaved with great politeness to her; said he should be sorry to give trouble, and would have other quarters looked out for him. They withdrew that very afternoon, and he was accommodated at Peter Reeves’, in Second Street, near Spruce;

but it did not last long, for directly the quartermasters were engaged in billeting the troops, and we had to find room for two officers of artillery, and afterward, in addition, for two gentlemen, secretaries of Lord Howe."

The first care of the British General, after gaining possession of the city, was to complete the defensive works which had been commenced while General Putnam was in command, and to construct such others as were necessary to make its occupation secure. The Delaware below the city was still held by the Americans. Mud Fort upon Fort Island, Fort Mercer at Red Bank, and Fort Mifflin at Mud Island, still held patriot garrisons. There would be no safety to the royal army until the navigation of the river was clear for the royal fleet. Washington recognized the importance of holding these forts, and immediately sent veteran troops to garrison them. Varnum's R. I. brigade, under Colonels Greene and Angell, was selected to occupy Fort Mercer, and this the enemy attacked on the 21st of October with twenty-five hundred picked men, under Colonel Count Donop. The assaulting party moved in two columns with great gallantry and determination; but the deliberate and deadly fire of the defenders became too terrible to face, and it was swept back in confusion, with a loss of over four hundred; Count Donop, the leader, being mortally wounded. The discomfited party did not renew the attack, but withdrew rapidly to Philadelphia. To reduce Fort Mifflin and open a passage through the *chevaux-de-frise*, which had been placed in the channel, now became an object of solicitude to the commanders of both army and fleet, and the most elaborate preparations were made for its reduction by the erection of works to command it on all sides, and by the powerful guns of the fleet. On the 10th of November the enemy opened upon it, and for the space of six days the missiles of the assailants from forts and fleet were poured upon this one small defensive work. Nothing daunted, the little garrison answered with effect, and gallantly maintained the unequal contest. Finally the enemy having run close up with his gunboats, and manned the yards with

sharpshooters, it became impossible for the defenders to work their guns, when, on the night of the 16th, the garrison, having removed or destroyed everything of value, retired without molestation. Red Bank was soon after abandoned, and the river was opened to the enemy's fleet.

Before the final reduction of Fort Mifflin, Howe's army had begun to suffer from want of many articles not obtainable in the city, and which he was prevented from securing from abroad by the vigilance of Washington. The river now being opened, an active commerce sprung up, and many merchants rushed to the city to open business. The relief of his army being effected, Howe determined to attack Washington in his camp at White Marsh, sixteen miles from the city; and with fifteen thousand men, on the morning of the 4th of December, marched out, confident of easy victory, and as he himself declared, of "driving General Washington over the Blue Mountains." But Washington, through intelligence gained from the faithful Lydia Darrah, who, under pretence of passing the lines to get flour, had hastened to acquaint him with the enemy's design, was prepared to meet them, and, after a wearisome march and fruitless manœuvres, they returned to the city.

The winter of 1777-8 was remarkably severe, and the American soldiers, indifferently clad, were subjected to extreme suffering, their footprints often marking the snow with their blood. Their camp was at Valley Forge, on the banks of the Schuylkill, twenty miles from Philadelphia. In the meantime the British army was enjoying the comforts of a luxurious city, its officers passing their time in a continued round of gayeties and dissolute living. Reconnoitring parties were frequently sent from both armies during the winter, which often met, resulting in daring and desperate encounters; but no general engagement occurred. Early in the year 1778, Lord Howe was superseded in the chief command by Sir Henry Clinton, who arrived in Philadelphia on the 7th of May. The departure of Howe was made the occasion of a gorgeous display, regatta, and tournament, in which the glitter of costly apparel, the

march of troops, and the thunder of artillery, could not have been exceeded had it been produced to signalize the triumphs of a mighty conqueror returning from countless conquests.

As early as the 22d of September, 1776, Congress had sent as ambassadors to the court of France, Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee, who succeeded in securing arms and money for the patriot cause, and finally in negotiating a treaty of alliance whereby substantial aid was to be extended to America. In compliance with this agreement, the French Ministry dispatched a fleet of twelve ships and four frigates, under command of Count d'Estang, to blockade the British flotilla in the Delaware. Of this determination the British Cabinet became cognizant, and instantly sent orders for the evacuation of Philadelphia. Howe at once put to sea and steered for New York, and when, on the 8th of July, D'Estang arrived at the mouth of the Delaware, he found that his adversary had escaped. The British Admiral took shelter in Raritan Bay, where, on account of the bar at its mouth, the heavy French frigates could not reach him. With his army Sir Henry Clinton moved in the same direction across the country by the way of New Brunswick and Amboy. Washington, ever on the alert, had divined the purpose of the British commander, and early put his forces in motion to follow and offer battle. The two armies met on the plains of Monmouth, on Sunday the 28th of June. The day was intensely hot. The battle was opened by the division of General Lee, which, for lack of skilful handling, was thrown into confusion and disastrous retreat. Washington met the flying column, and by his steadiness and courage restored order. After a severe battle, which lasted the whole day, the enemy was beaten, retreating during the night, having sustained heavy losses, and leaving his dead and wounded in the hands of the victors.

The Assembly and the Executive Council remained in session at Lancaster during the winter of 1777-8, and cooperated with Congress, which was at York, and Washington at Valley Forge. Legislation was principally devoted to the

interests of the army and the American cause, the most notable civil act being that by which the authority of the Trustees of the Philadelphia Academy and College were suspended for a limited time.

On the 23d of May, 1778, Thomas Wharton, Jr., President of the Council, died suddenly of an attack of quinsy, at Lancaster. He was descended from an ancient English family, one of whom, Richard, of Kellorth, in Orton parish, Westmoreland county, England, emigrated to Pennsylvania about 1683. One of his sons, John, was the father of President Wharton, who was born at Philadelphia in 1735. He was twice married: first to Susan, daughter of Thomas Lloyd; and, after her death, to Elizabeth, daughter of William Fishbourn. He had several children by each marriage, the descendants of whom are now living in Philadelphia and its vicinity. He was by profession a merchant; and by his patriotism and virtue commanded the respect and esteem of the best cultivated classes, and, when the new Constitution was adopted, he was elected as the chief executive officer,—a position which he held to the day of his death, discharging its duties in a most trying emergency with singular ability and success. To the weight of his character, and his firmness in the executive trust, was due, in a good degree, the permanence of the new Constitution, the adherence of the Colony to the patriot cause, and thus, indirectly, the success of the struggle for Independence. Some of the minor details of that frame of government may have been conceived in error; but in its bill of rights were embodied the great principles of liberty and of republican institutions, which have been the glory of the Commonwealth in succeeding time. The estimate which was formed of economy, integrity, and virtue, by the framers of that instrument, is strikingly illustrated by the following section: “As every freeman, to preserve his independence (if without a sufficient estate), ought to have some profession, calling, trade, or farm, whereby he may honestly subsist, there can be no necessity for, nor use in, establishing offices of profit, the usual effects of which are

dependence and servility, unbecoming freemen, in the possessors and expectants; faction, contention, corruption, and disorder among the people. But if any man is called into public service to the prejudice of his private affairs, he has a right to a reasonable compensation; and whenever an office, through increase of fees or otherwise, becomes so profitable as to occasion many to apply for it, the profits ought to be lessened by the legislature."

The ardent attachment which President Wharton had for the principles embodied in the new Constitution, and the unselfish motives by which he was actuated in its support, are aptly exemplified in a letter addressed by him to Arthur St. Clair soon after its adoption. The letter has never before been published, and has been furnished by his grandson, G. M. Wharton, Esq., for use in this memoir. "It is too true," he says, "that the differences amongst ourselves have been attended with bad consequences, and I am much afraid they will not soon be at an end. People have different purposes to answer; and I doubt much, if all those that are taking an active part against the present frame of government, are actuated by a love of [torn]. True it is, there are many faults which I hope one day to see removed; but it is true that, if the Government should at this time be overset, it would be attended with the worst consequences, not only to this State, but to the whole continent in the opposition we are making to the tyranny of Great Britain. If a better frame of government could be adopted,—such a one as would please a much greater majority than the present one,—I should be very happy in seeing it brought about; and any gentleman that should be thought by the public qualified to take my seat, should have my hearty voice for it. My ardent ambition never led me to expect or ask for it; if I have any, it is to be thought, and to merit, the character of an honest man. I feel myself very inadequate to the station I am in; but some that were fit for it have either withdrawn themselves entirely, or are opposing the Government. However, as it is in the power of every man to act with integrity and

uprightness, he that does that, will at least have the approbation of his own conscience, and merit that of the public." . . .

Mr. Wharton was a warm supporter of the principles of the Revolution, and risked his life and fortune in the cause. He owned a country-seat, called Twickenham, situated near Abington Meeting-House, in Montgomery County, where he occasionally resided; and on the lawn, in front of his dwelling, occurred a sharp skirmish between the British and American troops. His funeral was a public one, being conducted by a committee of the State Government, and the carriers and pall-bearers were from among the members of the Assembly and Council, by whom he was greatly respected and loved. He was buried with military honors as commander-in-chief of the forces of the State; and, at the request of the elders and vestry of the Evangelical Trinity Church of Lancaster, his body was interred within the walls of that edifice.