

TEN Crucial Days

THE ROAD TO LIBERTY

Lesson Plans Developed by
American Institute for History Education

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To accompany NJN Public Television's Documentary
Ten Crucial Days: The Road to Liberty



Public Television

Civic Involvement and Public Opinion

Grade Level: 6–12 *United States History*

Time Needed: Two 45-minute periods or one 90-minute block

Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Explain what makes a particular battle especially important to the outcome of a war.
2. Describe how Washington and other Patriot leaders used the Battles of Trenton and Princeton to boost support for their cause.
3. Describe and evaluate how successful Washington and other Patriot leaders were in inspiring patriotism and civic responsibility.

NJCCC Standards

- 6.1.B.1.** Understand the major historical events and important ideas that led to and have sustained the constitutional government of the United States.

Background for Teachers:

It is generally accepted that the Battles of Trenton and Princeton in December 1776 and January 1777 were crucial turning points in the Revolutionary War. General Washington's army was at the breaking point—low on morale, supplies, and manpower—in December of 1776. Washington himself privately conceded in mid-December that he could hold the army together for only about another ten days at that point. The British had turned the victory Washington had enjoyed when he drove them out of Boston into a virtual rout, when the British invaded the New York area. They defeated and pushed Washington's army out of New York, across New Jersey, and finally into Pennsylvania, with only a remnant of his troops remaining with him and with winter closing in quickly.

Yet, on December 25, 1776, Christmas night, Washington managed to cross the Delaware River and launch a successful surprise attack on Hessian troops at Trenton on the morning of the December 26, followed up by another impressive victory against a British force near Princeton nine days later. These wins were even more impressive, considering the extremely harsh weather conditions at the time.

More significant than the military victory, however, was the psychological effect that these battles had on the people on both sides of the conflict. Overconfident British generals, who had ridiculed the “rabble in arms” as they called the American army, were forced to think again. British soldiers, and their friends and families back in England, suddenly realized that the war could take years, not months to win, if it were winnable at all. Some started to question if it was worth it. Americans, who had been elated by the early victories in Massachusetts, had received a harsh dose of reality in the New York/New Jersey campaign of mid-1776. On the heels of these setbacks, Washington's army had melted down from over 20,000 to only about 5,000 poorly equipped holdouts. Many civilians who had been cautiously optimistic about independence were hedging their bets by December, but that changed in January. Enlistments went up and Washington was poised to launch a spring offensive against British posts in New Jersey by April.

How did Washington accomplish such a turnaround? The American general could not change the weather, or multiply his troops at will, but by applying the resources he did have in creative ways, he

managed to snatch victory (or at least the chance for victory) from the jaws of defeat. In this lesson, we will look at three areas in which Washington had it within his power to take decisive action to turn the war around.

The three areas were innovative battle strategy, personal courage and leadership, and, just as important, the use of the mass media of his time to promote the Patriot position among the people.

Innovative Battle Strategy

In the area of battle strategy, Washington essentially threw away the rulebook of practical military tactics, and looked at the military situation with a thoroughly open mind. The first rule he threw out was the one that said you don't launch attacks in the middle of the winter. Roads were marginal in 18th-century America in good weather. Winter made them much worse. This winter had more snow and ice than normal. Temperatures were below freezing, and Washington's men were ill-clothed and short on serviceable shoes.

It would be difficult to attack in the winter, but the upside was that the British would not be expecting an attack in the winter. Washington knew this because the British defenses arrayed against his army were relatively weak. By late December, Washington's men only totaled about 5,000. However, the Hessian force in Trenton, posted to keep Washington's army in check, numbered only 1,500. Clearly, the British high command did not expect Washington to attack.

Once the December 26 attack on Trenton had succeeded, General Howe dispatched General Cornwallis with a large British force from Princeton to put down Washington's troublesome army once and for all. On January 2, Cornwallis moved on Washington in Trenton, with fighting lasting through the afternoon until nightfall. Leaving more than 300 soldiers in Trenton, Washington marched the rest of his troops through the night around the British flank and surprised the British rear guard of 1,200 men in Princeton. In a chance meeting, Washington encountered part of this rear guard marching out of Princeton and in a sharp fight won the day and entered Princeton unchallenged. With the British in close pursuit, Washington marched northward, reaching Morristown by January 6.

Personal Courage and Leadership

It was an audacious and risky plan, but it was successful. How was Washington able to inspire his ragtag army to go through all the hardship necessary to carry it off. It was here that his personal courage and leadership came into play. He had to rely on the respect that he had earned from the men over the course of the previous year and the personal appeals he issued for their support. Making this more difficult, many of his troops' original enlistment terms were due to expire on January 1. For his plan to work, he had to convince them to extend their service at least another month. This was a lot to ask, when many of the men had families at home who needed them.

Washington accomplished this in a number of ways. For one thing, unlike some generals, he put himself in the forefront of battle situations, not ordering his men to take risks that he himself wouldn't take. He would be there with them, enduring the winter cold and leading them into battle, not ordering them into battle from his headquarters.

Washington inspired his troops by being a visible, bold leader on the battlefield, especially during the Battle of Princeton, where he kept himself conspicuously at the front of his troops, an easy target mounted on a horse. Many of his officers and men were awed by his courage, but also sure he would be killed. He survived, however, and word of his bravery on the battlefield spread, enhancing his reputation and rallying support for his cause.

Washington took advantage of the popular image he had developed by maintaining a constant stream of correspondence with Congress and anyone else who would listen, pushing to generate and maintain support for the war effort and his army. Despite many other demands on his time, he wrote a barrage of letters. These efforts were often frustrating, but they were important in keeping the Revolution alive and keeping the support of the states. The victories at Trenton and Princeton did make Congress more receptive to the army's requests for funding, at least partly due to Washington's constant requests for support.

Power of the Media

Washington also motivated his troops by using the media materials available at the time. On December 19, 1776, Thomas Paine, the famous revolutionary, writer, and pamphleteer, published an essay, titled "The Crisis," in the *Pennsylvania Journal*. When word of the power of this essay reached Washington, he ordered that it be read to the head of each regiment to prepare them for the action he had in mind. Paine's essay galvanized Washington's men.

Like many leaders today, Washington understood the power of the media to influence people's opinions. "The Crisis" was reprinted in newspapers and pamphlets throughout the country, and was read by thousands and thousands of people. This essay did much to bolster the faith of the Patriots in their cause that winter, as well as boost enlistments in the Continental army.

The result of this desperate effort in the winter of 1776–1777 was that the Continental army bounced back from near collapse to become a force to be reckoned with against one of the world's superpowers. This would become an American legend—a story that would give encouragement to resourceful people championing desperate causes around the world up to the present day.

Procedures:

1. Previous Night's Homework:
Have students compile a list of people in history they know about who were considered "underdogs," but somehow were successful despite the odds against them. In each case, they should list how they made that happen.
2. Choose three students at random to tell who they put on their list for homework and why.
3. Sum up this activity after 5–10 minutes and introduce the lesson.
4. Students will watch the video *Ten Crucial Days: The Road to Liberty*, focusing on the following questions:
 - a. What did Washington personally do to make his plan for Trenton and Princeton successful?
 - b. Were Washington and his troops considered the "underdogs"? Why or why not?
 - c. How bad were things going for Washington and his army before he attacked Trenton and Princeton in December 1776-January 1777?

Homework:

Students will receive parts of “The Crisis” by Thomas Paine (December 23, 1776) (selected by teacher discretion), and write a short list of the reasons why Paine thought Americans should support the Revolution more than they had.

1. Opening Question to students:
Washington had Paine’s essay “The Crisis” read to his troops prior to the crossing of the Delaware River. Why do you think he did that? Do you think that made them more motivated for the attack? Why or why not? (A paraphrased version of “The Crisis” is included in the supporting documents for this lesson.)
2. Distribute copies of three period letters to Congress and Paine’s January 13, 1777 version of “The Crisis,” number II. (You may choose to edit the January 13 edition of “The Crisis,” since it is a lengthy document.)
3. Divide the class into four groups. Each will read one document and come up with a consensus on the following questions:
 1. How was this document, or the person or people who wrote it, influenced by the actions of Washington in the Battles of Princeton and Trenton?
 2. How did Paine’s attitude change in the time between his writing of the December 23 and the January 13 essays?

Assessment:

- Students should score 80 percent or higher on an objective quiz or test based on the Trenton/Princeton campaign.
- Monitor the responses of students in the class activity for understanding.

Links:

Hessian Barracks:

<http://www.barracks.org/>

Battle of Trenton:

http://www.theamericanrevolution.org/battles/bat_tren.asp

<http://www.patriotresource.com/battles/trenton.html>

<http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/761226.htm>

http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/chronicle_trenton1776.html

Battle of Princeton:

<http://www.patriotresource.com/battles/princeton.html>

<http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/770103.htm>

<http://virtualology.com/revolutionarywarhall/BATTLEOFPRINCETON.COM/>

Revolutionary War in New Jersey

<http://www.doublegv.com/ggv/NJrev.html>

http://mapmaker.rutgers.edu/HISTORICALMAPS/REVOLUTIONARYWAR/Revolutionary_War.html

<http://www.njskylands.com/hsAmRev225.htm>

“The Crisis” by Thomas Paine

December 23, 1776

THESE are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: ’Tis dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to set a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right (not only to TAX) but “to BIND us in ALL CASES WHATSOEVER” and if being bound in that manner, is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious; for so unlimited a power can belong only to God.

Whether the independence of the continent was declared too soon, or delayed too long, I will not now enter into as an argument; my own simple opinion is, that had it been eight months earlier, it would have been much better. We did not make a proper use of last winter, neither could we, while we were in a dependent state. However, the fault, if it were one, was all our own; we have none to blame but ourselves. But no great deal is lost yet. All that Howe has been doing for this month past, is rather a ravage than a conquest, which the spirit of the Jerseys, a year ago, would have quickly repulsed, and which time and a little resolution will soon recover.

I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who have so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have I so much of the infidel in me, as to suppose that He has relinquished the government of the world, and given us up to the care of devils; and as I do not, I cannot see on what grounds the king of Britain can look up to heaven for help against us: a common murderer, a highwayman, or a house-breaker, has as good a pretence as he.

’Tis surprising to see how rapidly a panic will sometimes run through a country. All nations and ages have been subject to them. Britain has trembled like an ague at the report of a French fleet of flat-bottomed boats; and in the fourteenth [fifteenth] century the whole English army, after ravaging the kingdom of France, was driven back like men petrified with fear; and this brave exploit was performed by a few broken forces collected and headed by a woman, Joan of Arc. Would that heaven might inspire some Jersey maid to spirit up her countrymen, and save her fair fellow sufferers from ravage and ravishment! Yet panics, in some cases, have their uses; they produce as much good as hurt. Their duration is always short; the mind soon grows through them, and acquires a firmer habit than before. But their peculiar advantage is, that they are the touchstones of sincerity and hypocrisy, and bring things and men to light, which might otherwise have lain forever undiscovered. In fact, they have the same effect on secret traitors, which an imaginary apparition would have upon a private murderer. They sift out the hidden thoughts of man, and hold them up in public to the world. Many a disguised Tory has lately shown his head, that shall penitentially solemnize with curses the day on which Howe arrived upon the Delaware.

As I was with the troops at Fort Lee, and marched with them to the edge of Pennsylvania, I am well acquainted with many circumstances, which those who live at a distance know but little or nothing of. Our situation there was exceedingly cramped, the place being a narrow neck of land between the North River and the Hackensack.

Our force was inconsiderable, being not one-fourth so great as Howe could bring against us. We had no army at hand to have relieved the garrison, had we shut ourselves up and stood on our defence. Our ammunition, light artillery, and the best part of our stores, had been removed, on the apprehension that Howe would endeavor to penetrate the Jerseys, in which case Fort Lee could be of no use to us; for it must occur to every thinking man, whether in the army or not, that these kind of field forts are only for temporary purposes, and last in use no longer than the enemy directs his force against the particular object which such forts are raised to defend. Such was our situation and condition at Fort Lee on the morning of the 20th of November, when an officer arrived with information that the enemy with 200 boats had landed about seven miles above; Major General [Nathaniel] Green, who commanded the garrison, immediately ordered them under arms, and sent express to General Washington at the town of Hackensack, distant by the way of the ferry = six miles. Our first object was to secure the bridge over the Hackensack, which laid up the river between the enemy and us, about six miles from us, and three from them. General Washington arrived in about three-quarters of an hour, and marched at the head of the troops towards the bridge, which place I expected we should have a brush for; however, they did not choose to dispute it with us, and the greatest part of our troops went over the bridge, the rest over the ferry, except some which passed at a mill on a small creek, between the bridge and the ferry, and made their way through some marshy grounds up to the town of Hackensack, and there passed the river. We brought off as much baggage as the wagons could contain, the rest was lost. The simple object was to bring off the garrison, and march them on till they could be strengthened by the Jersey or Pennsylvania militia, so as to be enabled to make a stand. We staid four days at Newark, collected our out-posts with some of the Jersey militia, and marched out twice to meet the enemy, on being informed that they were advancing, though our numbers were greatly inferior to theirs. Howe, in my little opinion, committed a great error in generalship in not throwing a body of forces off from Staten Island through Amboy, by which means he might have seized all our stores at Brunswick, and intercepted our march into Pennsylvania; but if we believe the power of hell to be limited, we must likewise believe that their agents are under some providential control.

I shall not now attempt to give all the particulars of our retreat to the Delaware; suffice it for the present to say, that both officers and men, though greatly harassed and fatigued, frequently without rest, covering, or provision, the inevitable consequences of a long retreat, bore it with a manly and martial spirit. All their wishes centred in one, which was, that the country would turn out and help them to drive the enemy back. Voltaire has remarked that King William never appeared to full advantage but in difficulties and in action; the same remark may be made on General Washington, for the character fits him. There is a natural firmness in some minds which cannot be unlocked by trifles, but which, when unlocked, discovers a cabinet of fortitude; and I reckon it among those kind of public blessings, which we do not immediately see, that God hath blessed him with uninterrupted health, and given him a mind that can even flourish upon care.

I shall conclude this paper with some miscellaneous remarks on the state of our affairs; and shall begin with asking the following question, Why is it that the enemy have left the New England provinces, and made these middle ones the seat of war? The answer is easy: New England is not infested with Tories, and we are. I have been tender in raising the cry against these men, and used numberless arguments to show them their danger, but it will not do to sacrifice a world either to their folly or their baseness. The period is now arrived, in which either they or we must change our sentiments, or one or both must fall. And what is a Tory? Good God! What is he? I should not be afraid to go with a hundred Whigs against a thousand Tories, were they to attempt to get into arms. Every Tory is a coward; for servile, slavish, self-interested fear is the foundation of Toryism; and a man under such influence, though he may be cruel, never can be brave.

But, before the line of irrecoverable separation be drawn between us, let us reason the matter together: Your conduct is an invitation to the enemy, yet not one in a thousand of you has heart enough to join him. Howe is as much deceived by you as the American cause is injured by you. He expects you will all take up arms, and flock to his standard, with muskets on your shoulders. Your opinions are of no use to him, unless you support him personally, for 'tis soldiers, and not Tories, that he wants.

I once felt all that kind of anger, which a man ought to feel, against the mean principles that are held by the Tories: a noted one, who kept a tavern at Amboy, was standing at his door, with as pretty a child in his hand, about eight or nine years old, as I ever saw, and after speaking his mind as freely as he thought was prudent, finished with this unfatherly expression, "Well! give me peace in my day." Not a man lives on the continent but fully believes that a separation must some time or other finally take place, and a generous parent should have said, "If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace;" and this single reflection, well applied, is sufficient to awaken every man to duty. Not a place upon earth might be so happy as America. Her situation is remote from all the wrangling world, and she has nothing to do but to trade with them. A man can distinguish himself between temper and principle, and I am as confident, as I am that God governs the world, that America will never be happy till she gets clear of foreign dominion. Wars, without ceasing, will break out till that period arrives, and the continent must in the end be conqueror; for though the flame of liberty may sometimes cease to shine, the coal can never expire.

America did not, nor does not want force; but she wanted a proper application of that force. Wisdom is not the purchase of a day, and it is no wonder that we should err at the first setting off. From an excess of tenderness, we were unwilling to raise an army, and trusted our cause to the temporary defence of a well-meaning militia. A summer's experience has now taught us better; yet with those troops, while they were collected, we were able to set bounds to the progress of the enemy, and, thank God! they are again assembling. I always considered militia as the best troops in the world for a sudden exertion, but they will not do for a long campaign. Howe, it is probable, will make an attempt on this city [Philadelphia]; should he fail on this side the Delaware, he is ruined. If he succeeds, our cause is not ruined. He stakes all on his side against a part on ours; admitting he succeeds, the consequence will be, that armies from both ends of the continent will march to assist their suffering friends in the middle states; for he cannot go everywhere, it is impossible. I consider Howe as the greatest enemy the Tories have; he is bringing a war into their country, which, had it not been for him and partly for themselves, they had been clear of. Should he now be expelled, I wish with all the devotion of a Christian, that the names of Whig and Tory may never more be mentioned; but should the Tories give him encouragement to come, or assistance if he come, I as sincerely wish that our next year's arms may expel them from the continent, and the Congress appropriate their possessions to the relief of those who have suffered in well-doing. A single successful battle next year will settle the whole. America could carry on a two years' war by the confiscation of the property of disaffected persons, and be made happy by their expulsion. Say not that this is revenge, call it rather the soft resentment of a suffering people, who, having no object in view but the good of all, have staked their own all upon a seemingly doubtful event. Yet it is folly to argue against determined hardness; eloquence may strike the ear, and the language of sorrow draw forth the tear of compassion, but nothing can reach the heart that is steeled with prejudice.

Quitting this class of men, I turn with the warm ardor of a friend to those who have nobly stood, and are yet determined to stand the matter out: I call not upon a few, but upon all: not on this state or that state, but on every state: up and help us; lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope

and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and to repulse it. Say not that thousands are gone, turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but “show your faith by your works,” that God may bless you. It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the home counties and the back, the rich and the poor, will suffer or rejoice alike. The heart that feels not now is dead; the blood of his children will curse his cowardice, who shrinks back at a time when a little might have saved the whole, and made them happy. I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death. My own line of reasoning is to myself as straight and clear as a ray of light. Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder; but if a thief breaks into my house, burns and destroys my property, and kills or threatens to kill me, or those that are in it, and to “bind me in all cases whatsoever” to his absolute will, am I to suffer it? What signifies it to me, whether he who does it is a king or a common man; my countryman or not my countryman; whether it be done by an individual villain, or an army of them? If we reason to the root of things we shall find no difference; neither can any just cause be assigned why we should punish in the one case and pardon in the other. Let them call me rebel and welcome, I feel no concern from it; but I should suffer the misery of devils, were I to make a whore of my soul by swearing allegiance to one whose character is that of a sottish, stupid, stubborn, worthless, brutish man. I conceive likewise a horrid idea in receiving mercy from a being, who at the last day shall be shrieking to the rocks and mountains to cover him, and fleeing with terror from the orphan, the widow, and the slain of America.

There are cases which cannot be overdone by language, and this is one. There are persons, too, who see not the full extent of the evil which threatens them; they solace themselves with hopes that the enemy, if he succeed, will be merciful. It is the madness of folly, to expect mercy from those who have refused to do justice; and even mercy, where conquest is the object, is only a trick of war; the cunning of the fox is as murderous as the violence of the wolf, and we ought to guard equally against both. Howe's first object is, partly by threats and partly by promises, to terrify or seduce the people to deliver up their arms and receive mercy. The ministry recommended the same plan to Gage, and this is what the Tories call making their peace, “a peace which passeth all understanding” indeed! A peace which would be the immediate forerunner of a worse ruin than any we have yet thought of. Ye men of Pennsylvania, do reason upon these things! Were the back counties to give up their arms, they would fall an easy prey to the Indians, who are all armed: this perhaps is what some Tories would not be sorry for. Were the home counties to deliver up their arms, they would be exposed to the resentment of the back counties who would then have it in their power to chastise their defection at pleasure. And were any one state to give up its arms, that state must be garrisoned by all Howe's army of Britons and Hessians to preserve it from the anger of the rest. Mutual fear is the principal link in the chain of mutual love, and woe be to that state that breaks the compact. Howe is mercifully inviting you to barbarous destruction, and men must be either rogues or fools that will not see it. I dwell not upon the vapors of imagination; I bring reason to your ears, and, in language as plain as A, B, C, hold up truth to your eyes.

I thank God, that I fear not. I see no real cause for fear. I know our situation well, and can see the way out of it. While our army was collected, Howe dared not risk a battle; and it is no credit to him that he decamped from the White Plains, and waited a mean opportunity to ravage the defenceless Jerseys; but it is great credit to us, that, with a handful of men, we sustained an orderly retreat for near an hundred miles, brought off our ammunition, all our field pieces, the greatest part of our stores, and had four rivers to pass. None can say that our

retreat was precipitate, for we were near three weeks in performing it, that the country might have time to come in. Twice we marched back to meet the enemy, and remained out till dark. The sign of fear was not seen in our camp, and had not some of the cowardly and disaffected inhabitants spread false alarms through the country, the Jerseys had never been ravaged. Once more we are again collected and collecting; our new army at both ends of the continent is recruiting fast, and we shall be able to open the next campaign with sixty thousand men, well armed and clothed. This is our situation, and who will may know it. By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue; by cowardice and submission, the sad choice of a variety of evils — a ravaged country — a depopulated city — habitations without safety, and slavery without hope — our homes turned into barracks and bawdy-houses for Hessians, and a future race to provide for, whose fathers we shall doubt of. Look on this picture and weep over it! and if there yet remains one thoughtless wretch who believes it not, let him suffer it unlamented.

December 23, 1776

“The Crisis II” by Thomas Paine

TO LORD HOWE.

‘What’s in the name of lord, that I should fear
To bring my grievance to the public ear?’

CHURCHILL.

UNIVERSAL empire is the prerogative of a writer. His concerns are with all mankind, and though he cannot command their obedience, he can assign them their duty. The Republic of Letters is more ancient than monarchy, and of far higher character in the world than the vassal court of Britain; he that rebels against reason is a real rebel, but he that in defence of reason rebels against tyranny has a better title to “Defender of the Faith,” than George the Third.

As a military man your lordship may hold out the sword of war, and call it the “ultima ratio regum”: the last reason of kings; we in return can show you the sword of justice, and call it “the best scourge of tyrants.” The first of these two may threaten, or even frighten for a while, and cast a sickly languor over an insulted people, but reason will soon recover the debauch, and restore them again to tranquil fortitude. Your lordship, I find, has now commenced author, and published a proclamation; I have published a Crisis. As they stand, they are the antipodes of each other; both cannot rise at once, and one of them must descend; and so quick is the revolution of things, that your lordship’s performance, I see, has already fallen many degrees from its first place, and is now just visible on the edge of the political horizon.

It is surprising to what a pitch of infatuation, blind folly and obstinacy will carry mankind, and your lordship’s drowsy proclamation is a proof that it does not even quit them in their sleep. Perhaps you thought America too was taking a nap, and therefore chose, like Satan to Eve, to whisper the delusion softly, lest you should awaken her. This continent, sir, is too extensive to sleep all at once, and too watchful, even in its slumbers, not to startle at the unhallowed foot of an invader. You may issue your proclamations, and welcome, for we have learned to “reverence ourselves,” and scorn the insulting ruffian that employs you. America, for your deceased brother’s sake, would gladly have shown you respect and it is a new aggravation to her feelings, that Howe should be forgetful, and raise his sword against those, who at their own charge raised a monument to his brother. But your master has commanded, and you have not enough of nature left to refuse. Surely there must be something strangely degenerating in the love of monarchy, that can so completely wear a man down to an ingrate, and make him proud to lick the dust that kings have trod upon. A few more years, should you survive them, will bestow on you the title of “an old man”: and in some hour of future reflection you may probably find the fitness of Wolsey’s despairing penitence- “had I served my God as faithful as I have served my king, he would not thus have forsaken me in my old age.”

The character you appear to us in, is truly ridiculous. Your friends, the Tories, announced your coming, with high descriptions of your unlimited powers; but your proclamation has given them the lie, by showing you to be a commissioner without authority. Had your powers been ever so great they were nothing to us, further than we pleased; because we had the same right which other nations had, to do what we thought was best. “The **UNITED STATES of AMERICA**,” will sound as pompously in the world or in history, as “the kingdom of Great Britain”; the character of General Washington will fill a page with as much lustre as that of Lord Howe: and the Congress have as much right to command the king and Parliament in London to desist from legislation, as they or you have to command the Congress. Only suppose how laughable such an edict would appear from

us, and then, in that merry mood, do but turn the tables upon yourself, and you will see how your proclamation is received here. Having thus placed you in a proper position in which you may have a full view of your folly, and learn to despise it, I hold up to you, for that purpose, the following quotation from your own lunarian proclamation.- “And we (Lord Howe and General Howe) do command (and in his majesty’s name forsooth) all such persons as are assembled together, under the name of general or provincial congresses, committees, conventions or other associations, by whatever name or names known and distinguished, to desist and cease from all such treasonable actings and doings.”

You introduce your proclamation by referring to your declarations of the 14th of July and 19th of September. In the last of these you sunk yourself below the character of a private gentleman. That I may not seem to accuse you unjustly, I shall state the circumstance: by a verbal invitation of yours, communicated to Congress by General Sullivan, then a prisoner on his parole, you signified your desire of conferring with some members of that body as private gentlemen. It was beneath the dignity of the American Congress to pay any regard to a message that at best was but a genteel affront, and had too much of the ministerial complexion of tampering with private persons; and which might probably have been the case, had the gentlemen who were deputed on the business possessed that kind of easy virtue which an English courtier is so truly distinguished by. Your request, however, was complied with, for honest men are naturally more tender of their civil than their political fame. The interview ended as every sensible man thought it would; for your lordship knows, as well as the writer of the Crisis, that it is impossible for the King of England to promise the repeal, or even the revisal of any acts of parliament; wherefore, on your part, you had nothing to say, more than to request, in the room of demanding, the entire surrender of the continent; and then, if that was complied with, to promise that the inhabitants should escape with their lives. This was the upshot of the conference. You informed the conferees that you were two months in soliciting these powers. We ask, what powers? for as commissioner you have none. If you mean the power of pardoning, it is an oblique proof that your master was determined to sacrifice all before him; and that you were two months in dissuading him from his purpose. Another evidence of his savage obstinacy! From your own account of the matter we may justly draw these two conclusions: 1st, That you serve a monster; and 2d, That never was a messenger sent on a more foolish errand than yourself. This plain language may perhaps sound uncouthly to an ear vitiated by courtly refinements, but words were made for use, and the fault lies in deserving them, or the abuse in applying them unfairly.

Soon after your return to New York, you published a very illiberal and unmanly handbill against the Congress; for it was certainly stepping out of the line of common civility, first to screen your national pride by soliciting an interview with them as private gentlemen, and in the conclusion to endeavor to deceive the multitude by making a handbill attack on the whole body of the Congress; you got them together under one name, and abused them under another. But the king you serve, and the cause you support, afford you so few instances of acting the gentleman, that out of pity to your situation the Congress pardoned the insult by taking no notice of it.

You say in that handbill, “that they, the Congress, disavowed every purpose for reconciliation not consonant with their extravagant and inadmissible claim of independence.” Why, God bless me! what have you to do with our independence? We ask no leave of yours to set it up; we ask no money of yours to support it; we can do better without your fleets and armies than with them; you may soon have enough to do to protect yourselves without being burdened with us. We are very willing to be at peace with you, to buy of you and sell to you, and, like young beginners in the world, to work for our living; therefore, why do you put yourselves out of cash, when we know you cannot spare it, and we do not desire you to run into debt? I am willing, sir, that you should see your folly in every point of view I can place it in, and for that reason descend sometimes to tell you in jest

what I wish you to see in earnest. But to be more serious with you, why do you say, “their independence?” To set you right, sir, we tell you, that the independency is ours, not theirs. The Congress were authorized by every state on the continent to publish it to all the world, and in so doing are not to be considered as the inventors, but only as the heralds that proclaimed it, or the office from which the sense of the people received a legal form; and it was as much as any or all their heads were worth, to have treated with you on the subject of submission under any name whatever. But we know the men in whom we have trusted; can England say the same of her Parliament?

I come now more particularly to your proclamation of the 30th of November last. Had you gained an entire conquest over all the armies of America, and then put forth a proclamation, offering (what you call) mercy, your conduct would have had some specious show of humanity; but to creep by surprise into a province, and there endeavor to terrify and seduce the inhabitants from their just allegiance to the rest by promises, which you neither meant nor were able to fulfil, is both cruel and unmanly: cruel in its effects; because, unless you can keep all the ground you have marched over, how are you, in the words of your proclamation, to secure to your proselytes “the enjoyment of their property?” What is to become either of your new adopted subjects, or your old friends, the Tories, in Burlington, Bordentown, Trenton, Mount Holly, and many other places, where you proudly lorded it for a few days, and then fled with the precipitation of a pursued thief? What, I say, is to become of those wretches? What is to become of those who went over to you from this city and State? What more can you say to them than “shift for yourselves?” Or what more can they hope for than to wander like vagabonds over the face of the earth? You may now tell them to take their leave of America, and all that once was theirs. Recommend them, for consolation, to your master’s court; there perhaps they may make a shift to live on the scraps of some dangling parasite, and choose companions among thousands like themselves. A traitor is the foulest fiend on earth.

In a political sense we ought to thank you for thus bequeathing estates to the continent; we shall soon, at this rate, be able to carry on a war without expense, and grow rich by the ill policy of Lord Howe, and the generous defection of the Tories. Had you set your foot into this city, you would have bestowed estates upon us which we never thought of, by bringing forth traitors we were unwilling to suspect. But these men, you’ll say, “are his majesty’s most faithful subjects;” let that honor, then, be all their fortune, and let his majesty take them to himself.

I am now thoroughly disgusted with them; they live in ungrateful ease, and bend their whole minds to mischief. It seems as if God had given them over to a spirit of infidelity, and that they are open to conviction in no other line but that of punishment. It is time to have done with tarring, feathering, carting, and taking securities for their future good behavior; every sensible man must feel a conscious shame at seeing a poor fellow hawked for a show about the streets, when it is known he is only the tool of some principal villain, biassed into his offence by the force of false reasoning, or bribed thereto, through sad necessity. We dishonor ourselves by attacking such trifling characters while greater ones are suffered to escape; ’tis our duty to find them out, and their proper punishment would be to exile them from the continent for ever. The circle of them is not so great as some imagine; the influence of a few have tainted many who are not naturally corrupt. A continual circulation of lies among those who are not much in the way of hearing them contradicted, will in time pass for truth; and the crime lies not in the believer but the inventor. I am not for declaring war with every man that appears not so warm as myself: difference of constitution, temper, habit of speaking, and many other things, will go a great way in fixing the outward character of a man, yet simple honesty may remain at bottom. Some men have naturally a military turn, and can brave hardships and the risk of life with a cheerful face; others have not; no slavery appears to them so great as the fatigue of arms, and no terror so powerful as that of personal danger. What can

we say? We cannot alter nature, neither ought we to punish the son because the father begot him in a cowardly mood. However, I believe most men have more courage than they know of, and that a little at first is enough to begin with. I knew the time when I thought that the whistling of a cannon ball would have frightened me almost to death; but I have since tried it, and find that I can stand it with as little discomposure, and, I believe, with a much easier conscience than your lordship. The same dread would return to me again were I in your situation, for my solemn belief of your cause is, that it is hellish and damnable, and, under that conviction, every thinking man's heart must fail him.

From a concern that a good cause should be dishonored by the least disunion among us, I said in my former paper, No. I. "That should the enemy now be expelled, I wish, with all the sincerity of a Christian, that the names of Whig and Tory might never more be mentioned;" but there is a knot of men among us of such a venomous cast, that they will not admit even one's good wishes to act in their favor. Instead of rejoicing that heaven had, as it were, providentially preserved this city from plunder and destruction, by delivering so great a part of the enemy into our hands with so little effusion of blood, they stubbornly affected to disbelieve it till within an hour, nay, half an hour, of the prisoners arriving; and the Quakers put forth a testimony, dated the 20th of December, signed "John Pemberton," declaring their attachment to the British government.¹ These men are continually harping on the great sin of our bearing arms, but the king of Britain may lay waste the world in blood and famine, and they, poor fallen souls, have nothing to say.

In some future paper I intend to distinguish between the different kind of persons who have been denominated Tories; for this I am clear in, that all are not so who have been called so, nor all men Whigs who were once thought so; and as I mean not to conceal the name of any true friend when there shall be occasion to mention him, neither will I that of an enemy, who ought to be known, let his rank, station or religion be what it may. Much pains have been taken by some to set your lordship's private character in an amiable light, but as it has chiefly been done by men who know nothing about you, and who are no ways remarkable for their attachment to us, we have no just authority for believing it. George the Third has imposed upon us by the same arts, but time, at length, has done him justice, and the same fate may probably attend your lordship. You avowed purpose here is to kill, conquer, plunder, pardon, and enslave: and the ravages of your army through the Jerseys have been marked with as much barbarism as if you had openly professed yourself the prince of ruffians; not even the appearance of humanity has been preserved either on the march or the retreat of your troops; no general order that I could ever learn, has ever been issued to prevent or even forbid your troops from robbery, wherever they came, and the only instance of justice, if it can be called such, which has distinguished you for impartiality, is, that you treated and plundered all alike; what could not be carried away has been destroyed, and mahogany furniture has been deliberately laid on fire for fuel, rather than the men should be fatigued with cutting wood.² There was a time when the Whigs confided much in your supposed candor, and the Tories rested themselves in your favor; the experiments have now been made, and failed; in every town, nay, every cottage, in the Jerseys, where your arms have been, is a testimony against you. How you may rest under this sacrifice of character I know not; but this I know, that you sleep and rise with the daily curses of thousands upon you; perhaps the misery which the Tories have suffered by your proffered mercy may give them some claim to their country's pity, and be in the end the best favor you could show them.

In a folio general-order book belonging to Col. Rhal's battalion, taken at Trenton, and now in the possession of the council of safety for this state, the following barbarous order is frequently repeated, "His excellency the Commander-in-Chief orders, that all inhabitants who shall be found with arms, not having an officer with them, shall be immediately taken and hung up." How many you may thus have privately sacrificed, we know not, and

the account can only be settled in another world. Your treatment of prisoners, in order to distress them to enlist in your infernal service, is not to be equalled by any instance in Europe. Yet this is the humane Lord Howe and his brother, whom the Tories and their three-quarter kindred, the Quakers, or some of them at least, have been holding up for patterns of justice and mercy!

A bad cause will ever be supported by bad means and bad men; and whoever will be at the pains of examining strictly into things, will find that one and the same spirit of oppression and impiety, more or less, governs through your whole party in both countries: not many days ago, I accidentally fell in company with a person of this city noted for espousing your cause, and on my remarking to him, "that it appeared clear to me, by the late providential turn of affairs, that God Almighty was visibly on our side," he replied, "We care nothing for that you may have Him, and welcome; if we have but enough of the devil on our side, we shall do." However carelessly this might be spoken, matters not, 'tis still the insensible principle that directs all your conduct and will at last most assuredly deceive and ruin you.

If ever a nation was made and foolish, blind to its own interest and bent on its own destruction, it is Britain. There are such things as national sins, and though the punishment of individuals may be reserved to another world, national punishment can only be inflicted in this world. Britain, as a nation, is, in my inmost belief, the greatest and most ungrateful offender against God on the face of the whole earth. Blessed with all the commerce she could wish for, and furnished, by a vast extension of dominion, with the means of civilizing both the eastern and western world, she has made no other use of both than proudly to idolize her own "thunder," and rip up the bowels of whole countries for what she could get. Like Alexander, she has made war her sport, and inflicted misery for prodigality's sake. The blood of India is not yet repaid, nor the wretchedness of Africa yet requited. Of late she has enlarged her list of national cruelties by her butcherly destruction of the Caribbs of St. Vincent's, and returning an answer by the sword to the meek prayer for "Peace, liberty and safety." These are serious things, and whatever a foolish tyrant, a debauched court, a trafficking legislature, or a blinded people may think, the national account with heaven must some day or other be settled: all countries have sooner or later been called to their reckoning; the proudest empires have sunk when the balance was struck; and Britain, like an individual penitent, must undergo her day of sorrow, and the sooner it happens to her the better. As I wish it over, I wish it to come, but withal wish that it may be as light as possible.

Perhaps your lordship has no taste for serious things; by your connections in England I should suppose not; therefore I shall drop this part of the subject, and take it up in a line in which you will better understand me.

By what means, may I ask, do you expect to conquer America? If you could not effect it in the summer, when our army was less than yours, nor in the winter, when we had none, how are you to do it? In point of generalship you have been outwitted, and in point of fortitude outdone; your advantages turn out to your loss, and show us that it is in our power to ruin you by gifts: like a game of drafts, we can move out of one square to let you come in, in order that we may afterwards take two or three for one; and as we can always keep a double corner for ourselves, we can always prevent a total defeat. You cannot be so insensible as not to see that we have two to one the advantage of you, because we conquer by a drawn game, and you lose by it. Burgoyne might have taught your lordship this knowledge; he has been long a student in the doctrine of chances.

I have no other idea of conquering countries than by subduing the armies which defend them: have you done this, or can you do it? If you have not, it would be civil in you to let your proclamations alone for the present; otherwise, you will ruin more Tories by your grace and favor, than you will Whigs by your arms.

Were you to obtain possession of this city, you would not know what to do with it more than to plunder it. To hold it in the manner you hold New York, would be an additional dead weight upon your hands; and if a general conquest is your object, you had better be without the city than with it. When you have defeated all our armies, the cities will fall into your hands of themselves; but to creep into them in the manner you got into Princeton, Trenton, &c. is like robbing an orchard in the night before the fruit be ripe, and running away in the morning. Your experiment in the Jerseys is sufficient to teach you that you have something more to do than barely to get into other people's houses; and your new converts, to whom you promised all manner of protection, and seduced into new guilt by pardoning them from their former virtues, must begin to have a very contemptible opinion both of your power and your policy. Your authority in the Jerseys is now reduced to the small circle which your army occupies, and your proclamation is no where else seen unless it be to be laughed at. The mighty subduers of the continent have retreated into a nutshell, and the proud forgivers of our sins are fled from those they came to pardon; and all this at a time when they were despatching vessel after vessel to England with the great news of every day. In short, you have managed your Jersey expedition so very dexterously, that the dead only are conquerors, because none will dispute the ground with them.

In all the wars which you have formerly been concerned in you had only armies to contend with; in this case you have both an army and a country to combat with. In former wars, the countries followed the fate of their capitals; Canada fell with Quebec, and Minorca with Port Mahon or St. Phillips; by subduing those, the conquerors opened a way into, and became masters of the country: here it is otherwise; if you get possession of a city here, you are obliged to shut yourselves up in it, and can make no other use of it, than to spend your country's money in. This is all the advantage you have drawn from New York; and you would draw less from Philadelphia, because it requires more force to keep it, and is much further from the sea. A pretty figure you and the Tories would cut in this city, with a river full of ice, and a town full of fire; for the immediate consequence of your getting here would be, that you would be cannonaded out again, and the Tories be obliged to make good the damage; and this sooner or later will be the fate of New York.

I wish to see the city saved, not so much from military as from natural motives. 'Tis the hiding place of women and children, and Lord Howe's proper business is with our armies. When I put all the circumstances together which ought to be taken, I laugh at your notion of conquering America. Because you lived in a little country, where an army might run over the whole in a few days, and where a single company of soldiers might put a multitude to the rout, you expected to find it the same here. It is plain that you brought over with you all the narrow notions you were bred up with, and imagined that a proclamation in the king's name was to do great things; but Englishmen always travel for knowledge, and your lordship, I hope, will return, if you return at all, much wiser than you came.

We may be surprised by events we did not expect, and in that interval of recollection you may gain some temporary advantage: such was the case a few weeks ago, but we soon ripen again into reason, collect our strength, and while you are preparing for a triumph, we come upon you with a defeat. Such it has been, and such it would be were you to try it a hundred times over. Were you to garrison the places you might march over, in order to secure their subjection, (for remember you can do it by no other means,) your army would be like a stream of water running to nothing. By the time you extended from New York to Virginia, you would be reduced to a string of drops not capable of hanging together; while we, by retreating from State to State, like a river turning back upon itself, would acquire strength in the same proportion as you lost it, and in the end be capable of overwhelming you. The country, in the meantime, would suffer, but it is a day of suffering, and we ought to expect it. What we contend for is worthy the affliction we may go through. If we get but bread to eat, and any

kind of raiment to put on, we ought not only to be contented, but thankful. More than that we ought not to look for, and less than that heaven has not yet suffered us to want. He that would sell his birthright for a little salt, is as worthless as he who sold it for pottage without salt; and he that would part with it for a gay coat, or a plain coat, ought for ever to be a slave in buff. What are salt, sugar and finery, to the inestimable blessings of "Liberty and Safety!" Or what are the inconveniences of a few months to the tributary bondage of ages? The meanest peasant in America, blessed with these sentiments, is a happy man compared with a New York Tory; he can eat his morsel without repining, and when he has done, can sweeten it with a repast of wholesome air; he can take his child by the hand and bless it, without feeling the conscious shame of neglecting a parent's duty.

In publishing these remarks I have several objects in view.

On your part they are to expose the folly of your pretended authority as a commissioner; the wickedness of your cause in general; and the impossibility of your conquering us at any rate. On the part of the public, my intention is, to show them their true and sold interest; to encourage them to their own good, to remove the fears and falsities which bad men have spread, and weak men have encouraged; and to excite in all men a love for union, and a cheerfulness for duty.

I shall submit one more case to you respecting your conquest of this country, and then proceed to new observations.

Suppose our armies in every part of this continent were immediately to disperse, every man to his home, or where else he might be safe, and engage to reassemble again on a certain future day; it is clear that you would then have no army to contend with, yet you would be as much at a loss in that case as you are now; you would be afraid to send your troops in parties over to the continent, either to disarm or prevent us from assembling, lest they should not return; and while you kept them together, having no arms of ours to dispute with, you could not call it a conquest; you might furnish out a pompous page in the London Gazette or a New York paper, but when we returned at the appointed time, you would have the same work to do that you had at first.

It has been the folly of Britain to suppose herself more powerful than she really is, and by that means has arrogated to herself a rank in the world she is not entitled to: for more than this century past she has not been able to carry on a war without foreign assistance. In Marlborough's campaigns, and from that day to this, the number of German troops and officers assisting her have been about equal with her own; ten thousand Hessians were sent to England last war to protect her from a French invasion; and she would have cut but a poor figure in her Canadian and West Indian expeditions, had not America been lavish both of her money and men to help her along. The only instance in which she was engaged singly, that I can recollect, was against the rebellion in Scotland, in the years 1745 and 1746, and in that, out of three battles, she was twice beaten, till by thus reducing their numbers, (as we shall yours) and taking a supply ship that was coming to Scotland with clothes, arms and money, (as we have often done,) she was at last enabled to defeat them. England was never famous by land; her officers have generally been suspected of cowardice, have more of the air of a dancing-master than a soldier, and by the samples which we have taken prisoners, we give the preference to ourselves. Her strength, of late, has lain in her extravagance; but as her finances and credit are now low, her sinews in that line begin to fail fast. As a nation she is the poorest in Europe; for were the whole kingdom, and all that is in it, to be put up for sale like the estate of a bankrupt, it would not fetch as much as she owes; yet this thoughtless wretch must go to war, and with the avowed design, too, of making us beasts of burden, to support her in riot and debauchery, and to assist her afterwards in distressing those nations who are now our best friends. This ingratitude may suit a Tory, or the unchristian peevishness of a fallen Quaker, but none else.

'Tis the unhappy temper of the English to be pleased with any war, right or wrong, be it but successful; but they soon grow discontented with ill fortune, and it is an even chance that they are as clamorous for peace next summer, as the king and his ministers were for war last winter. In this natural view of things, your lordship stands in a very critical situation: your whole character is now staked upon your laurels; if they wither, you wither with them; if they flourish, you cannot live long to look at them; and at any rate, the black account hereafter is not far off. What lately appeared to us misfortunes, were only blessings in disguise; and the seeming advantages on your side have turned out to our profit. Even our loss of this city, as far as we can see, might be a principal gain to us: the more surface you spread over, the thinner you will be, and the easier wiped away; and our consolation under that apparent disaster would be, that the estates of the Tories would become securities for the repairs. In short, there is no old ground we can fail upon, but some new foundation rises again to support us. "We have put, sir, our hands to the plough, and cursed be he that looketh back."

Your king, in his speech to parliament last spring, declared, "That he had no doubt but the great force they had enabled him to send to America, would effectually reduce the rebellious colonies." It has not, neither can it; but it has done just enough to lay the foundation of its own next year's ruin. You are sensible that you left England in a divided, distracted state of politics, and, by the command you had here, you became a principal prop in the court party; their fortunes rest on yours; by a single express you can fix their value with the public, and the degree to which their spirits shall rise or fall; they are in your hands as stock, and you have the secret of the alley with you. Thus situated and connected, you become the unintentional mechanical instrument of your own and their overthrow. The king and his ministers put conquest out of doubt, and the credit of both depended on the proof. To support them in the interim, it was necessary that you should make the most of every thing, and we can tell by Hugh Gaine's New York paper what the complexion of the London Gazette is. With such a list of victories the nation cannot expect you will ask new supplies; and to confess your want of them would give the lie to your triumphs, and impeach the king and his ministers of treasonable deception. If you make the necessary demand at home, your party sinks; if you make it not, you sink yourself; to ask it now is too late, and to ask it before was too soon, and unless it arrive quickly will be of no use. In short, the part you have to act, cannot be acted; and I am fully persuaded that all you have to trust to is, to do the best you can with what force you have got, or little more. Though we have greatly exceeded you in point of generalship and bravery of men, yet, as a people, we have not entered into the full soul of enterprise; for I, who know England and the disposition of the people well, am confident, that it is easier for us to effect a revolution there, than you a conquest here; a few thousand men landed in England with the declared design of deposing the present king, bringing his ministers to trial, and setting up the Duke of Gloucester in his stead, would assuredly carry their point, while you are grovelling here, ignorant of the matter. As I send all my papers to England, this, like Common Sense, will find its way there; and though it may put one party on their guard, it will inform the other, and the nation in general, of our design to help them.

Thus far, sir, I have endeavored to give you a picture of present affairs: you may draw from it what conclusions you please. I wish as well to the true prosperity of England as you can, but I consider **INDEPENDENCE** as America's natural right and interest, and never could see any real disservice it would be to Britain. If an English merchant receives an order, and is paid for it, it signifies nothing to him who governs the country. This is my creed of politics. If I have any where expressed myself over-warmly, 'tis from a fixed, immovable hatred I have, and ever had, to cruel men and cruel measures. I have likewise an aversion to monarchy, as being too debasing to the dignity of man; but I never troubled others with my notions till very lately, nor ever published a syllable in England in my life. What I write is pure nature, and my pen and my soul have ever gone together. My writings

I have always given away, reserving only the expense of printing and paper, and sometimes not even that. I never courted either fame or interest, and my manner of life, to those who know it, will justify what I say. My study is to be useful, and if your lordship loves mankind as well as I do, you would, seeing you cannot conquer us, cast about and lend your hand towards accomplishing a peace. Our independence with God's blessing we will maintain against all the world; but as we wish to avoid evil ourselves, we wish not to inflict it on others. I am never over-inquisitive into the secrets of the cabinet, but I have some notion that, if you neglect the present opportunity, it will not be in our power to make a separate peace with you afterwards; for whatever treaties or alliances we form, we shall most faithfully abide by; wherefore you may be deceived if you think you can make it with us at any time. A lasting independent peace is my wish, end and aim; and to accomplish that, I pray God the Americans may never be defeated, and I trust while they have good officers, and are well commanded, and willing to be commanded, that they **NEVER WILL BE**.

COMMON SENSE.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 13, 1777.

1. I have ever been careful of charging offences upon whole societies of men, but as the paper referred to is put forth by an unknown set of men, who claim to themselves the right of representing the whole: and while the whole Society of Quakers admit its validity by a silent acknowledgment, it is impossible that any distinction can be made by the public: and the more so, because the New York paper of the 30th of December, printed by permission of our enemies, says that "the Quakers begin to speak openly of their attachment to the British Constitution." We are certain that we have many friends among them, and wish to know them.

2. As some people may doubt the truth of such wanton destruction, I think it necessary to inform them that one of the people called Quakers, who lives at Trenton, gave me this information at the house of Mr. Michael Hutchinson, (one of the same profession,) who lives near Trenton ferry on the Pennsylvania side, Mr. Hutchinson being present.

Thomas Paine's "The Crisis," December 23, 1776

Selected sections paraphrased and interpreted

"THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph."

Paraphrased: Things are tough right now. Anyone who is still supporting the Patriot cause is really special.

Paine's Spin: He draws a sharp contrast between how much harder it is to soldier through the winter than it is in the summer. Of course, being a "summer soldier" was not easy, either. He then tries to get people to commit to the harder conflict by saying that it will lead to greater glory in the end.

"I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who have so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have I so much of the infidel in me, as to suppose that He has relinquished the government of the world, and given us up to the care of devils; and as I do not, I cannot see on what grounds the king of Britain can look up to heaven for help against us: a common murderer, a highwayman, or a house-breaker, has as good a pretence as he."

Paraphrased: Paine does not believe that God would allow good people like the colonists to lose the war to such evil people as the British.

Paine's Spin: By incorporating an appeal to religious faith, Paine hopes to persuade the many religious people in the colonies to support the Patriot cause. This is especially interesting since Paine himself was notoriously anti-religious. But here he presents the Americans as the "good guys" and refers to the British as "devils," and the king as a criminal.

"As I was with the troops at Fort Lee, and marched with them to the edge of Pennsylvania, I am well acquainted with many circumstances, which those who live at a distance know but little or nothing of. Our situation there was exceedingly cramped, the place being a narrow neck of land between the North River and the Hackensack. Our force was inconsiderable, being not one-fourth so great as Howe could bring against us. We staid four days at Newark, collected our out-posts with some of the Jersey militia, and marched out twice to meet the enemy, on being informed that they were advancing, though our numbers were greatly inferior to theirs. Howe, in my little opinion, committed a great error in generalship in not throwing a body of forces off from Staten Island through Amboy, by which means he might have seized all our stores at Brunswick, and intercepted our march into Pennsylvania; but if we believe the power of hell to be limited, we must likewise believe that their agents are under some providential control."

Paraphrased: Paine gives his own eyewitness account of Washington's retreat across New Jersey. He describes the courage of Washington and his men, while pointing out that General Howe fumbled the chance to crush Washington's army by not hitting him hard with his full forces. He attributes this to God exerting power over the British, whom he refers to as "agents" of hell.

Paine's Spin: In telling the story of a retreat, Paine makes it actually sound heroic, and once again implies that God is taking an active role on the side of the Americans.

“I shall not now attempt to give all the particulars of our retreat to the Delaware; suffice it for the present to say, that both officers and men, though greatly harassed and fatigued, frequently without rest, covering, or provision, the inevitable consequences of a long retreat, bore it with a manly and martial spirit. All their wishes centred in one, which was, that the country would turn out and help them to drive the enemy back. Voltaire has remarked that King William never appeared to full advantage but in difficulties and in action; the same remark may be made on General Washington, for the character fits him. There is a natural firmness in some minds which cannot be unlocked by trifles, but which, when unlocked, discovers a cabinet of fortitude; and I reckon it among those kind of public blessings, which we do not immediately see, that God hath blessed him with uninterrupted health, and given him a mind that can even flourish upon care.”

Paraphrased: Even though Washington's army was in retreat, they still remained committed to defeating the British.

Paine's Spin: Though he's describing an army and a general in retreat from a superior force, Paine uses phrases to describe them that suggest stability and resoluteness, not flight or panic, such as manly and martial spirit, natural firmness, and a cabinet of fortitude.

“And what is a Tory? Good God! What is he? I should not be afraid to go with a hundred Whigs against a thousand Tories, were they to attempt to get into arms. Every Tory is a coward; for servile, slavish, self-interested fear is the foundation of Toryism; and a man under such influence, though he may be cruel, never can be brave.”

Paraphrased: Here Paine describes the Tories, or Loyalists—the colonists who chose to remain loyal to Britain. He considers them poor fighters, cowardly, selfish, and cruel.

Paine's Spin: In wartime, supporters of each side tend to ridicule or dehumanize the enemy, as a way to build hostility against them among the people. That is the strategy of Paine uses in this passage.

“Not a place upon earth might be so happy as America. Her situation is remote from all the wrangling world, and she has nothing to do but to trade with them. A man can distinguish himself between temper and principle, and I am as confident, as I am that God governs the world, that America will never be happy till she gets clear of foreign dominion. Wars, without ceasing, will break out till that period arrives, and the continent must in the end be conqueror; for though the flame of liberty may sometimes cease to shine, the coal can never expire.”

Paraphrased: America would be much better off if the only interaction we had with European nations was by trading with them. If we don't keep our distance from them, we will constantly be embroiled in Europe's frequent wars and remain under European control. So, sooner or later, America will have to fight to be free of European entanglements.

Paine's Spin: This isolationist argument draws on America's geographic isolation—between two large oceans—and calls for America to make its own way in the world without forming alliances that will distract us from our mission and development as a nation. [We could add the following] Isolationism, which was first spelled out here as a foreign policy, has been in and out of favor at various points in U.S. history.

“I consider Howe as the greatest enemy the Tories have; he is bringing a war into their country, which, had it not been for him and partly for themselves, they had been clear of. Should he now be expelled, I wish with all the devotion of a Christian, that the names of Whig and Tory may never more be mentioned; but should the Tories give him encouragement to come, or assistance if he come, I as sincerely wish that our next year’s arms may expel them from the continent, and the Congress appropriate their possessions to the relief of those who have suffered in well-doing. A single successful battle next year will settle the whole. America could carry on a two years’ war by the confiscation of the property of disaffected persons, and be made happy by their expulsion. Say not that this is revenge, call it rather the soft resentment of a suffering people, who, having no object in view but the good of all, have staked their own all upon a seemingly doubtful event. Yet it is folly to argue against determined hardness; eloquence may strike the ear, and the language of sorrow draw forth the tear of compassion, but nothing can reach the heart that is steeled with prejudice.”

Paraphrased: Paine argues that if the British continue the war and the Tories (Loyalists) aid and support them, then the Tories should be run out of the country and their property confiscated.

According to Paine, this is just and fair—inevitable, actually—because the hard feelings engendered by the war would lead to this outcome regardless.

Paine’s Spin: Paine excuses the anticipated expulsion of the Loyalists, minus their property, not as a vengeful reaction, but as an expression of “the soft resentment of a suffering people,” referring to the Patriots. This reaction is justified and can’t be stopped, even if the leaders wanted to stand in the way of it.

“It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the home counties and the back, the rich and the poor, will suffer or rejoice alike. The heart that feels not now is dead; the blood of his children will curse his cowardice, who shrinks back at a time when a little might have saved the whole, and made them happy. I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. ’Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death.”

Paraphrased: The events of the war will affect everyone, no matter what each individual might think. Therefore everyone should pitch in to help the Patriot cause, or suffer the disapproval of society.

Paine’s Spin: He praises the type of man who “pursues his principles unto death,” but only if that person shares the same principles as Paine does.

“Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder; but if a thief breaks into my house, burns and destroys my property, and kills or threatens to kill me, or those that are in it, and to “bind me in all cases whatsoever” to his absolute will, am I to suffer it? ... Let them call me rebel and welcome, I feel no concern from it; but I should suffer the misery of devils, were I to make a whore of my soul by swearing allegiance to one whose character is that of a sottish, stupid, stubborn, worthless, brutish man.”

Paraphrased: Paine does not support attacking others, but he supports the Americans’ right to defend their own country from attack by criminals, including the king of England.

Paine’s Spin: The Americans see the British not as the Mother Country, but as outside invaders. The king is viewed as “sottish, stupid, stubborn, worthless and brutish.”

Thomas Paine's "The Crisis II," January 13, 1777

Selected text, paraphrased and interpreted

"A bad cause will ever be supported by bad means and bad men; and whoever will be at the pains of examining strictly into things, will find that one and the same spirit of oppression and impiety, more or less, governs through your whole party in both countries: not many days ago, I accidentally fell in company with a person of this city noted for espousing your cause, and on my remarking to him, "that it appeared clear to me, by the late providential turn of affairs, that God Almighty was visibly on our side," he replied, "We care nothing for that you may have Him, and welcome; if we have but enough of the devil on our side, we shall do." However carelessly this might be spoken, matters not, 'tis still the insensible principle that directs all your conduct and will at last most assuredly deceive and ruin you.

If ever a nation was made and foolish, blind to its own interest and bent on its own destruction, it is Britain. There are such things as national sins, and though the punishment of individuals may be reserved to another world, national punishment can only be inflicted in this world. Britain, as a nation, is, in my inmost belief, the greatest and most ungrateful offender against God on the face of the whole earth. Blessed with all the commerce she could wish for, and furnished, by a vast extension of dominion, with the means of civilizing both the eastern and western world, she has made no other use of both than proudly to idolize her own "thunder," and rip up the bowels of whole countries for what she could get. Like Alexander, she has made war her sport, and inflicted misery for prodigality's sake. The blood of India is not yet repaid, nor the wretchedness of Africa yet requited. Of late she has enlarged her list of national cruelties by her butcherly destruction of the Caribbs of St. Vincent's, and returning an answer by the sword to the meek prayer for "Peace, liberty and safety." These are serious things, and whatever a foolish tyrant, a debauched court, a trafficking legislature, or a blinded people may think, the national account with heaven must some day or other be settled: all countries have sooner or later been called to their reckoning; the proudest empires have sunk when the balance was struck; and Britain, like an individual penitent, must undergo her day of sorrow, and the sooner it happens to her the better. As I wish it over, I wish it to come, but withal wish that it may be as light as possible.

Perhaps your lordship has no taste for serious things; by your connections in England I should suppose not; therefore I shall drop this part of the subject, and take it up in a line in which you will better understand me.

By what means, may I ask, do you expect to conquer America? If you could not effect it in the summer, when our army was less than yours, nor in the winter, when we had none, how are you to do it? In point of generalship you have been outwitted, and in point of fortitude outdone; your advantages turn out to your loss, and show us that it is in our power to ruin you by gifts: like a game of drafts, we can move out of one square to let you come in, in order that we may afterwards take two or three for one; and as we can always keep a double corner for ourselves, we can always prevent a total defeat. You cannot be so insensible as not to see that we have two to one the advantage of you, because we conquer by a drawn game, and you lose by it. Burgoyne might have taught your lordship this knowledge; he has been long a student in the doctrine of chances.

I have no other idea of conquering countries than by subduing the armies which defend them: have you done this, or can you do it? If you have not, it would be civil in you to let your proclamations alone for the present; otherwise, you will ruin more Tories by your grace and favor, than you will Whigs by your arms.

Were you to obtain possession of this city, you would not know what to do with it more than to plunder it. To hold it in the manner you hold New York, would be an additional dead weight upon your hands; and if a general conquest is your object, you had better be without the city than with it. When you have defeated all our armies, the cities will fall into your hands of themselves; but to creep into them in the manner you got into Princeton, Trenton, &c. is like robbing an orchard in the night before the fruit be ripe, and running away in the morning.”

Paraphrased: This essay is addressed directly to General Howe. Now that Washington has won the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, Paine is sure that the Americans will be victorious. He tells Howe that Britain is brutal, foolish, and doomed to failure, and that Washington has beaten the British simply by surviving with his army.

Paine’s Spin: Referring to Britain as “the most ungrateful offender against God on the face of the earth,” he sets up a moral contrast between them and the Americans, an unusual tactic for someone who was very critical of religion. He also speaks down to General Howe, a strong leveling device in a society that was much more stratified than ours is today.

Letters of Delegates to Congress: Volume 5
August 16, 1776 - December 31, 1776
Executive Committee to George Washington

Dear Sir Philada. Decemr. 28th. 1776

We have the pleasure to own receipt of your acceptable favour of yesterday by Colo. Bayler (1) & most sincerely do we rejoice in your Excellencys success at Trentown as we conceive it will have the most important publick consequences and because we think it will do justice in some degree to a Character we admire & which we have long wished to appear in the World with that Brilliancy that success always obtains & which the Members of Congress know you deserve. Permit us to Congratulate you on this success & to suppose it is only the beginning of more important advantages. You will excuse us for taking up so much of your time as will be necessary to read this letter which is not intended as an official letter of business but meerly to gratify our present feelings & to offer you such thoughts as occur on the present state of affairs without intending you the trouble of any reply as we know you have too much writing necessarily. It appears to us that your attack on Trentown was totally unexpected, the Surprize compleat, & the Success beyond expectation. Could Generals Ewing & Cadwallader have executed their parts no doubt but more good consequences must have followed instantly. However we apprehend it is not yet too late, as it appears by Genl Cadwalladers letter to Genl Putnam that the Enemy have abandoned all their Posts from Bordentown downward & fled with precipitation towards South Amboy. Its probable they are Seized with a panic whilst your Forces are flushed with success and such precious moments shou'd not be lost. We apprehend if your Victory is immediately pursued & no time allowed the Enemy to recover from their surprize you will have little difficulty in clearing the Jerseys of them. It is probable that those Troops whose times of enlistment are now expiring will follow their successfull General altho they wou'd have left him whilst acting a defensive part. Be that as it may, we have the pleasure to know that considerable bodies of associators are marching from every part of the State to your assistance. These have been put in Motion when our affairs were at the Worst but you have given a spring to the tardy Spirits & we think their Numbers will be greatly augmented. In short it is our opinion that you may from this time form a reasonable dependance on daily additions to your Force. Common Fame will double the Numbers of those that actually do turn out & if such reports reach our Enemies it will probably have great effect on their fears and assist wonderfully in causing them to evacuate their lately acquired territory in New Jersey. We have recd. a letter from Colo Fleming of the 9th Virginia Regiment which is on its march from the Eastern Shoar & we have ordered them a supply of money at the Head of Elk and the necessary Cloathing to be got in readiness against they come here.(2) We also expect the Pennsylvania Regulars that have been lately raised in the back Counties of this State & we understand Militia & other reinforcements are coming from Maryland & Virginia. You may depend we will give every assistance in our power to forward these reinforcements to you & that we shall assist & advise far as we are able in every Publick department here. We have considered that part of your Excellencys letter of the 25th Inst.(3) to Mr Morris that relates to the Seamen in the two New England Battalions whose times expire with this Year, and shoud any of them obstinately persist in being discharged from your Service on New Years day We think it adviseable to prevail on them to come down here & assist in getting the Frigates out. When they come we will make the best bargain we can with them & if nothing else will do We will engage to send them home in one or two of those Ships. If they come on these terms we think Capt Read & his officers shou'd come with them that we may if possible get away the Washington as well as the Delaware. Congress are very anxious to have these ships out & will be pleased if this measure is pursued. We cannot avoid mentioning that we dont think it adviseable to exchange your Hessian Prisoners at this time. We think their Capture affords a favourable

opportunity of making them acquainted with the Situation & Circumstances of many of their Country men who came here without a farthing of property & have by care & industry acquired plentiful Fortunes which they have enjoyed in perfect Peace & tranquility until these Invaders have thought proper to disturb & destroy those possessions. It will be proper to separate the Officers from the Men & to Canton the latter in the back Counties which may be done by the Council of Safety untill the Congress are Consulted thereon. Your Excellency will excuse us for troubling you with our Sentiments on these matters & we think it necessary to appologize for doing so as its probable the whole has occurred to yourself. We remain with perfect regard & Esteem, Your Excellencys most Obedt. & most hble servants, Robt Morris Geo Clymer Geo Walton

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August 16, 1776—December 31, 1776

Robert Morris to John Hancock

Sir Philada. Decemr. 26th. 1776

I have just received by the return of Pluckrose the Express your favour of the 23d and am very happy to find my Conduct meets the approbation of Congress. They may depend on my utmost exertions to promote the Publick good on every occasion that offers. And it is with singular pleasure I communicate any thing that will give you satisfaction as I know what follows must. Capt Charles Alexander whom I sent up to Colo Cadwallader for a few Tradesmen necessary to finish his Ship the Delaware, is just returned and says that whilst he was with the Colo. a Note came in from Trenton giving an Acct. that Genl. Washington is now Master of that place, that he had sent down to the Ferry 300 Prisoners, had taken all the Enemies baggage & Stores at that place, that the Action had been pretty hot for an hour or an hour & a half, that the British then run away towards Bordentown & our People after them. This Acct is just confirmed by a letter from Mr Barkly to Mr Mease who says Mr. Tilghman had come down to the Ferry & gave him the Acct. This Maneuvre of the Genl had been determined on some days ago but he kept it Secret as the nature of the Service would admit. Colo Cadwallader & Genl Ewing had orders to Cross the River from their respective Posts at the same time the Genl Crossed from his, but the Ice driving down from the Falls impeded & indeed prevented them from affecting their business. Colo Cadwallader got over 1000 men near Burlington but cou'd not land his artillery on Acct of the Ice & this day being such extream bad Weather, he was compelled to bring them back, but on receiving the advice from Trenton he determined to go again and as the weather is now clearing up, I am Confident he will be over this Night and I do suppose Genl Ewing will not remain on this side, so that if Genl Washington does but follow up the blow & pursue them downwards I think this will prove a Mortal Stroke to the Enemies intended expedition against this City. Colo Griffin is returned from his Expedition after a little Skirmishing as the Enemy brought too powerfull a body against him. However about 400 Jersey Militia remain at Mount Holly & I think Genl Putnam shoud reinforce them as here are lately come in a considerable number of Militia, indeed I believe he has sent over a reinforcement but tomorrow Morning I will speak to him on this subject. It is now too late at night. Mr Sherman arrived here yesterday. I have not seen him but am told he brings an Acct that Genl. Heath has Crossed the No River, retaken Fort Lee & Hackensack with all the baggage & Stores at those places & 130 Prisoners & that he was employing Waggons to remove the Stores into places of greater safety and from another quarter I am told Genl Washington previous to his Attack on Trentown had given Genl. Heath suitable orders.

You will observe I am not perfectly master of Genl. Washingtons plan but it appears to me, that if he has directed Genl. Heath to continue his March in the Enemies Rear, those that are between Hackensack & Trenton will be drawn off from Genl Washington and leave him to pursue the flying Hero's towards Burlington where I expect Colo Cadwallader will cut of [fl the Communication between them & about 200 Hessians & Highlanders that came to Moors Town against Griffin. If this is the plan, I think it well laid & if the General is properly supported in the Execution, why shall we not put a glorious end to the Campaigne of 1776. It must I had like to say it shall be so.

Capt Robison of the Andrew Doria tells me just now that he hears his Prize Sloop is got up to the Cheveaux de Frize. I hope it is true & as this is the first of King George's own Vessells that we have taken, I shou'd be glad the Congress wou'd Order her into their service and give the Command to Lieutt Dun of the Andw Doria who has been in the service from the first & is said to be an officer of Merit. Shou'd Genl Washington follow up his blow we may get time to fit out all these Vessells, but if Howe comes here we cannot do it for want of Tradesmen.

The letter for Genl Washington from Congress shall be sent to him in the Morning by Major Pierce and a Copy of the Resolves you enclosed. I suppose there is a Copy in the letter to him but as you do not mention it I think it best to send them.

I am happy to find the attention Congress have paid to Genl Lee and flatter myself they will be well pleased to learn that I had wrote a letter to him enclosing a bill drawn by two Officers of the. Royal Highland Emigrants on Major Small for £116 Sterlg that had been supplied them by my Friends in Carolina where they are Prisoners. This letter I sent open to Genl Washington who promised to send

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August 16, 1776 - December 31, 1776

Robert Morris to John Hancock

Sir Philada. Decr. 27th. 1776 11 oClock A.M.

Capt Peters informs me he has just seen a letter from Colo Cadwallader wrote late last night to the Council of Safety wherein he says he has no acct from Genl Washington, but from private information that he can depend on, our Victory at Trenton has been compleat, the Killed, wounded & Prisoners are very considerable, that we have taken 16 pieces of their Cannon [**Note: There actually were only six cannons captured.**], a Wagon load of Hessian Arms with some Hessians were sent over the Ferry. Colo Cadwallader was to Cross over from Bristol this morning before day with his whole Force. Genl. Putnam is now sending him a reinforcement of 1500 men & the Gondolas under Command of Genl Mifflin who is returned from a Successfull excursion. We shall change the face of affairs & I hope soon to see you back here. I am respectfully yours &c, Robt Morris

P.S. Capt Peters will soon follow this but he must go via Lancaster.