

THE WRITINGS
OF
SAMUEL ADAMS

VOLUME III.

1773-1777

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THE WRITINGS
OF
SAMUEL ADAMS

COLLECTED AND EDITED
BY
HARRY ALONZO CUSHING

VOLUME III

1773-1777

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were taken at Fort Chamblee; the garrison surrendered prisoners of war to Major Brown of the Massachusetts forces, with one hundred and twenty-four barrels of gunpowder! May heaven grant us further success.¹

TO JAMES WARREN.

[MS., Samuel Adams Papers, Lenox Library.]

PHILAD^a Novr 4 1775

MY DEAR SIR

I thank you heartily for your acceptable Letter of the 23^d of Octob by Fessenden. It is very afflicting to hear the universal Complaint of the Want of that necessary Article Gun powder especially in the

¹ In the Samuel Adams Papers, Lenox Library, is the draft of a letter, endorsed as to James Warren, the body of which is almost identical with the foregoing. The postscript, however, is as follows:

Novr 4th

My Time is so little at my own Disposal that I am obligd to improve a Moment as I can catch it to write to a Friend. I wish I was at Liberty to communicate to you some of our Proceedings, but I am restraind, and though it is painful to me to keep Secrets from a few confidential Friends, I am resolvd that I will not violate my Honor. I may venture to tell you one of our Resolutions which in the Nature of it must be immediately made publick, and that it is to recommend to our Sister Colony of N Hampshire to exercise Government in such a form as they shall judge necessary for the preservation of peace and good order, during the continuance of the present Contest with Britain. This I would not have you mention abroad till you see it published or hear it publickly talkd of. The Government of the N England Colonies I suppose will soon be nearly on the same Footing, and I am of opinion that it will not be long before every Colony will see the Necessity of setting up Government within themselves for reasons that appear to me to be obvious.

Yesterday the Congress was presented with the Colors of the 7th Regiment taken at Fort Chamblee which was a few days ago surrendered to Major Brown—*One hundred & twenty four Barrils of Gun powder*—May Heaven grant us further success. I am

Your affectionate Friend,

Camp before Boston. I hope however that this Want will be soon supplied, and God grant that a good Use may be made of it.

The Congress yesterday was presented with the Colours of the 7th Regiment taken in Fort Chamblee, which is surrenderd to Major Brown. The Acquisition of 124 Barrils of powder gives a happy Turn to our Affairs in that Quarter, the Success of which I almost began to despair of.

The Gentlemen who have lately returnd from the Camp, may, *perhaps* all of them entertain a more favorable Opinion of our Colony. I may possibly be partial in saying, not more favorable than it deserves.

In Addition to the Continental Army four new Battalions are to be raisd viz three for the Defence of S^o Carolina & one for Georgia. These, with 1000 men before orderd for N^o Carolina, with the Assistance of provincial Forces, it is hoped will be sufficient to defend the three southermost Colonies.

It is recommended to N Hampshire to form a Governm^t to their liking during this Contest;¹ and S^o Carolina is allowd to do the same if they judge it necessary.² I believe the Time is near when the most timid will see the absolute Necessity of every one of the Colonies setting up a Governm^t within it self.

No Provisions or Produce is to be exported from any of the united Colonies to any part of the World till the 1st of March next, except for the Importation of Arms and Ammunition, and for Supplys from one Colony to another under the Direction of Committees;

¹ Vote of November 3, 1775; *Journals* (1904 edit.) vol. iii., p. 319.

² Vote of November 4, 1775; *ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 326.

and a further Exception of live Stock under the first head, and Horses are allowd to be sent to the foreign West Indies. We shall by the Spring know the full Effects of our Non exportation Agreement in the West Indies. Perhaps Alliances may be formd with foreign Powers and Trade open to all the World, Great Britain excepted.

You will possibly think I have set my self down to furnish a few Paragraphs for Edes & Gills News Paper¹; and what is still more that I am betraying the Secrets of the Congress. I confess I am giving my Friend as much Information as I dare, of things which are of such a Nature as that they cannot long be kept secret, and therefore I suppose it never was intended they should be. I mention them however in Confidence that you will not publish them. I wish I was at Liberty to tell you many of the Transactions of this Body; but I am restraind by the Ties of Honor and tho' it is painful to me, you know, to keep Secrets, I will not violate my Honor to relieve my self or please my Friend.

We live my Friend in a most important Age, w^{ch} demands that every Moment should be improv'd to some serious Purpose. It is the Age of George the Third, and to do Justice to our *most gracious King*, I will affirm it as my opinion, that his Councils and Administration will necessarily produce the grandest Revolutions the World has ever seen. The Wheels of Providence seem to be in their swiftest Motion. Events succeed each other so rapidly, that the most industrious and able politicians can scarcely im-

¹ The *Boston Gazette*.

prove them to the full Purposes for which they seem to be design'd. You must send your best Men here ; therefore recall me from this Service. Men of moderate Abilities, especially when weakned with Age are not fit to be employ'd in *founding Empires*.

Let me talk with you a little about the Affairs of our own Colony. I perswade my self, my dear Friend, that the greatest Care and Circumspection will be used to conduct its internal Police with Wisdom and Integrity. The Eyes of Mankind will be upon you to see whether the Government, which is now more popular than it has been for many years past, will be productive of more Virtue moral and political. We may look up to Armies for our Defence, but Virtue is our best Security. It is not possible that any State sh^d long remain free, where Virtue is not supremely honor'd. This is as seasonably as it is justly said by one of the most celebrated Writers of the present time. Perhaps the Form of Governm^t now adopted & set up in the Colony may be permanent. Should it be only temporary the golden opportunity of recovering the Virtue & reforming the Manners of our Country should be industriously improv'd. Our Ancestors in the most early Times laid an excellent Foundation for the security of Liberty by setting up in a few years after their Arrival a publick Seminary of Learning ; and by their Laws they oblig'd every Town consisting of a certain Number of Families to keep and maintain a Grammar School. I shall be very sorry, if it be true as I have been inform'd, that some of our Towns have dismiss'd their Schoolmasters, alledging

that the extraordinary Expence of defending the Country renders them unable to support them. I hope this Inattention to the Principles of our Forefathers does not prevail. If there should be any Danger of it, would not the leading Gentlemen do eminent Service to the Publick, by impressing upon the Minds of the People, the Necessity & Importance of encouraging that System of Education, which in my opinion is so well calculated to diffuse among the Individuals of the Community the Principles of Morality, so essentially necessary to the Preservation of publick Liberty.

There are Virtues & vices which are properly called *political*. "Corruption, Dishonesty to ones Country Luxury and Extravagance tend to the Ruin of States." The opposite Virtues tend to their Establishment. But "there is a Connection between Vices as well as Virtues and one opens the Door for the Entrance of another." Therefore "Wise and able Politicians will guard against other Vices," and be attentive to promote every Virtue. He who is void of virtuous Attachments in private Life, is, or very soon will be void of all Regard for his Country. There is seldom an Instance of a Man guilty of betraying his Country, who had not before lost the Feeling of moral Obligations in his private Connections. Before ——— was detected of holding a criminal Correspondence with the Enemies of his Country, his Infidelity to his Wife had been notorious. Since private and publick Vices, are in Reality, though not always apparently, so nearly connected, of how much Importance, how necessary is it, that the utmost

Pains be taken by the Publick, to have the Principles of Virtue early inculcated on the Minds even of Children, and the moral Sense kept alive, and that the wise Institutions of our Ancestors for these great Purposes be encouragd by the Government. For no People will tamely surrender their Liberties, nor can any be easily subdued, when Knowledge is diffusd and Virtue is preservd. On the Contrary, when People are universally ignorant, and debauchd in their Manners, they will sink under their own Weight without the Aid of foreign Invaders.

There are other things which I humbly conceive require and therefore I trust will have the most serious Consideration of the Government. We have heretofore complaind, and I think justly, that bad Men have too often found their Way into places of publick Trust. "Nothing is more essential to the Establishment of Manners in a State than that all Persons employd in Places of Power and Trust be Men of unexceptionable Characters. The Publick cannot be too curious concerning the Characters of publick Men"—We have also complaind that a Plurality of Places incompatible with each other have sometimes been given to one Person. If under the former Administration, there was no Danger to be apprehended from vesting the different Powers of Governm^t in the same Persons, why did the Patriots object to it? If Danger is always to be apprehended from it, should we not, by continuing the Practice, too much imitate the degenerate Romans, who upon the Fall of Julius set up Augustus. "They changd indeed their Masters, and when they had destroyd the Tyrant sufferd

the Tyranny to continue"—Tell me if you can, how a Judge of Probate can consistently sit at the Council Board and joyn in a Determination there upon an Appeal from *his own* Judgment. Perhaps I may view another Appointment, being personally interested in it, with a more partial Eye. But you may well remember that the Secretary of the Colony declind taking a Seat at the Council Board to which he had been elected *prior* to his Appointment until in the House of Representatives he had publickly requested their opinion of the Propriety of it; and an eminent and truly patriotick Member had explicitly declared it as his opinion, that as the Place was not then as it formerly had been the Gift of the Crown but of the People, there was no Impropriety in his holding it. Major H ——¹ has as much of the stern Virtue and Spirit of a Roman Censor as any Gentleman I ever conversd with. The Rest of the Members were silent. The Appointment of the Secretary and his Election to a Seat at the Board were both made in the Time of his Absence from the Colony, and without the Sollicitation of any of his Friends that he knows of. Most assuredly without his own. As he is resolvd never wittingly to disgrace himself or his Country, he still employs his Mind on the Subject, and wishes for your candid and impartial Sentiments.

I fear I have greatly trespassd on your Leisure, and therefore conclude with my best Regards to the Circle of Friends to our Country in Watertown, assuring you that I am very affectionately,

Yours,

¹ Joseph Hawley.