

The Struggle
for American Independence

VH 7-10 A
91-71
3786

The Struggle *for* American Independence

By
Sydney George Fisher

Author of "The Making of Pennsylvania," "Men, Women, and Manners
in Colonial Times," "The True Benjamin
Franklin," etc.

ILLUSTRATED

Vol. I.



Philadelphia & London
J. B. Lippincott Company

A

COPYRIGHT, 1908
BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

4-6499-71

*Electrotyped and Printed by J. B. Lippincott Company
The Washington Square Press, Philadelphia, U. S. A.*

PREFACE

The present work is a continuation and enlargement of "The True History of the American Revolution," published some years ago in one volume. That work, while being a brief general account of the contest, dwelt more particularly on certain phases of the struggle which had been omitted or ignored by the historians. It soon became obvious that it did not go far enough, that the original plan should be extended and carried out in more detail, and that the whole mass of original evidence in libraries and historical societies should be made accessible, and revealed to the public in as complete a manner as possible. Our people have little or no conception of what the Revolution really was, no conception of the nature of the original evidence; and the unwillingness of our writers of general histories to cite that evidence keeps it a sealed book to the public.

Our national feeling is bound up in the Revolution, and the extreme importance of such an event, which was the foundation of our nationality and of the political and social principles by which we are still guided, seems to deserve all the light that it is possible to obtain. We naturally want to know the origin of our political existence and exactly why and how we broke away from that great empire which since then has never allowed another dependency to escape, which has reduced republics to colonies, and brought into subjection innumerable peoples and races, and whose rule, we are told, is an unmixed blessing, far preferable to independence.

Although our Revolution is said to have changed the thought of the world, like the epochs of Socrates, of Christ, of the Reformation, and of the French Revolution, yet no complete history of it has ever been written upon the plan of dealing frankly with all the contemporary evidence and withholding

PREFACE

nothing of importance that is found in the original records. Our histories are able rhetorical efforts, enlarged Fourth-of-July orations, or pleasing literary essays on selected phases of the contest. There has been no serious attempt to marshal all the original sources of information and reveal them to the reader, as has been done for the history of England, of France, and of other countries.

Our writers ignore the position of the loyalists and their terrible conflict with the patriots, whom they almost equalled in numbers. They have failed to describe the methods by which the loyalists were subdued, which amounted to another war in addition to that carried on by Washington against the British army. They ignore the controversy over General Howe's methods of carrying out his instructions from the British Ministry, the investigation of those methods by a Parliamentary inquiry, and Howe's defense of himself. They ignore the Clinton-Cornwallis controversy, without a knowledge of which it is impossible to understand the strategy of the last three years of the war, as it is impossible to understand the first three years without a knowledge of the Howe controversy.

There is no general history of the Revolution from which one can obtain an intelligent understanding of the Navigation and Trade Laws, and the part they played in the contest; of the smuggling in defiance of them, and the nature of the controversy over the writs of assistance that were issued to stop the smuggling. There is no history which tells us what became of the navigation and trade laws and the writs of assistance after our Revolution, whether they were continued in force among Great Britain's remaining colonies, or when they were repealed, and what were the reasons for the repeal.

Indeed, the effect of our Revolution on Great Britain's colonial policy never seems to have been honored with any serious investigation. We seek in vain to learn from the histories how England governed her colonies for half a century after our separation, what lessons she learned from our Revolution, and in what respects her present policy differs from or resembles the policy against which we rebelled.