A MEMORIAL

containing

Travels Through Life or Sundry Incidents
in the Life of

DR. BENJAMIN RUSH

Born Dec. 24, 1745 (Old Style) Died April 19, 1813

Written by Himself

also

Extracts from His Commonplace Book

as well as

A Short History of the Rush Family in Pennsylvania

Published privately for the benefit of his Descendants

By

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LANORAIE

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PART I

An Account of Sundry Incidents in the Life of Benjamin Rush, Written by Himself

into country practice. In this situation I resolved to study the law and come forward to the bar in New Jersey. My Father-in-law highly approved of the proposal when I mentioned it to him and promised his influence to have me admitted to practice in a year or two years at farthest. My age, which was then 32, and the labor of acquiring a second profession did not discourage me from this undertaking. Just as I was preparing to begin my new studies, I heard that the British army was preparing to evacuate Philadelphia. This suspended my new enterprize. In a few weeks they left the city, and I returned to it with my family on the 21st of July. I now turned my back for a while upon public pursuits and devoted myself exclusively to the duties of my profession. From the filth left by the British army in all the streets, the city became sickly, and I was suddenly engaged in extensive and profitable business.

Before I proceed any further in the narrative of such of my transactions as were of a political nature, I shall give a short account of those gentlemen who were most conspicuous for their talents and virtues, or for the offices they filled between the years 1774 and 1778. I shall begin with the characters of the members of Congress who subscribed the declaration of independence. They were drawn during the war. Some additions have been made to them since, which were suggested by subsequent events.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

Josiah Bartlett, a practitioner of physic, of excellent character and strongly attached to the liberties of his country.

William Whipple, an old sea captain, but liberal in his principles and manners, and a genuine friend to liberty and independence.

Matthew Thornton, a practitioner of physic, of Irish extraction. He abounded in anecdotes, and was for the

most part happy in the application of them. He was ignorant of the world, but was believed to be a sincere patriot and an honest man.

MASSACHUSETTS

John Hancock.—He was a man of plain understanding and good education. He was fond of the ceremonies of public life, but wanted industry and punctuality in business. His conversation was desultory, and his manners much influenced by frequent attacks of the gout which gave a hypochondriacal peevishness to his temper. With all these infirmities, he was a disinterested patriot, and made large sacrifices of an ample estate to the liberties and independence of his country.

Samuel Adams.—He was near sixty years of age when he took his seat in Congress, but possessed all the vigor of mind of a young man of five and twenty. He was a republican in principle and manners. He once acknowledged to me "that the independence of the United States upon Great Britain had been the first wish of his heart for seven years before the war." About the same time he said to me, "if it were revealed to him that 999 Americans out of 1000 would perish in a war for liberty, he would vote for that war, rather than see his country enslaved. The survivors in such a war, though few, (he said) would propagate a nation of freemen." He abhorred a standing army, and used to say they were the "shoe-blacks of society." He dreaded the undue influence of an individual in a republic, and once said to me; "Let us beware of continental and state great men." He loved simplicity and economy in the administration of government and despised the appeals which are made to the *eyes* and *ears* of the common people in order to govern them. He considered national happiness and the public patronage of religion as inseparably connected, and so great was his regard for public worship as the means of promoting religion, that he constantly attended divine service in the German Church in Yorktown

(while Congress sat there) when there was no service in their chapel, although he was ignorant of the German language. His morals were irreproachable, and even ambition and avarice the usual vices of politicians, seemed to have no place in his breast. He seldom spoke in Congress, but was active in preparing and doing business out of doors. In some parts of his conduct I have thought he discovered more of the prejudices of a Massachusetts man, than the liberal sentiments of a citizen of the United States. His abilities were considerable, and his knowledge extensive and correct upon revolutionary subjects, and both friends and enemies agree in viewing him as one of the most active instruments of the American Revolution.

John Adams.—He was a distant relation of Samuel Adams, but possessed another species of character. He had been educated a lawyer, and stood high in his profession in his native State. He was a most sensible and forcible speaker. Every member of Congress in 1776 acknowledged him to be the first man in the house. Dr. Brownson (of Georgia) used to say when he spoke, he fancied an angel was let down from heaven to illumine the Congress. He saw the whole of a subject at a single glance, and by a happy union of the powers of reasoning and persuasion often succeeded in carrying measures which were at first sight of an unpopular nature. His replies to reflections upon himself or upon the New England States were replete with the most poignant humour or satire. I sat next to him while Gen'l. Sullivan was delivering a request to Congress from Lord Howe for an interview with a committee of the house in their private capacities, after the defeat of the American Army on Long Island on the 26 of August 1776. Mr. Adams under a sudden impression and dread of the consequences of the measure, whispered to me a wish "that the first ball that had been fired on the day of the defeat of our Army had gone through his head." When he rose to speak against the proposed interview, he called Gen'l. Sullivan a "decoy duck whom Lord Howe has sent among us

to seduce us into a renunciation of our independence." In a debate in which Mr. —— criminated the New England troops as the principal cause of the failure of the expedition into Canada in 1775, he said, "the cause of the failure of that expedition was chiefly to be ascribed to the imprudence of the gentleman from Maryland who had fomented jealousies and quarrels between the troops from the New England and Southern States, in his visit to Canada, and (said Mr. Adams) if he were now penetrated, as he ought to be, with a sense of his improper and wicked conduct, he would fall down upon his knees, on this floor, and ask our forgiveness. He would afterwards retire with shame, and spend the remainder of his life in sackcloth and ashes, deploring the mischief he has done his country." He was equally fearless of men and of the consequences of a bold assertion of his opinions in *all* his speeches. Upon a motion in Congress Feb. 19th 1777 to surrender up to Gen'l. Washington the power of appointing his general officers, he said in opposition to it. "There are certain principles which follow us through life, and none more certainly than *the love of the first place.* We see it in the forms on which children sit at schools. It prevails equally to the latest period of life. I am sorry to see it prevail so little in this house. I have been distressed to see some of our members disposed to idolize the image which their own hands have molten. I speak here of the superstitious veneration which is paid to Gen'l. Washington. I honour him for his good qualities, but in this house I feel myself his superior. In private life I shall always acknowledge him to be mine." He wrote much as well as spoke often and copiously in favor of the liberties of his country. All his publications and particularly his letter to Mr. Wythe, containing a plan of a constitution for Virginia, discover a strong predilection for republican forms of government. To be safe, powerful and durable he always urged that they should be composed of three legislative branches, but that each of them should be the offspring directly or indirectly of the suffrages of the peo-

ple. So great was his disapprobation of a government composed of a single legislature, that he said to me upon reading the first constitution of Pennsylvania. "The people of your State will sooner or later fall upon their knees to the King of Great Britain to take them again under his protection to deliver them from the tyranny of their own government." I could mention many conversations with him in which he appeared to be actuated by the highest tone of a republican temper as well as principles. When Congress agreed to send commissioners to France and endeavour to make a treaty with her, I asked him at his lodgings what he thought of Mr. —— as a commissioner. "I would not vote for him (said he) above any man. He idolizes monarchy in his heart, and the first thing he would do when he arrived in France, would be to fall upon his knees and worship the King of France." The independence of the United States was first brought before the public mind in 1775 by a letter from him to one of his friends in Massachusetts that was intercepted and published in Boston in which he expressed a wish for that measure. It exposed him to the execrations of all the prudent and moderate people in America, insomuch that he was treated with neglect by many of his old friends. I saw this profound and enlightened patriot who in the year 1798 was admired and celebrated in prose and verse by the first citizens in Philadelphia, walk our streets alone after the publication of his intercepted letter in our newspapers in 1775 an object of nearly universal detestation. Events soon justified the wish contained in his letter, after which he rose in the public estimation, so as to become in the subsequent years of the revolution in some measure the oracle of the Whigs. He was a stranger to dissimulation, and appeared to be more jealous of his reputation for integrity, than for talents or knowledge. He was strictly moral and at all times respectful to religion. In speaking to me of the probable issue of the war, he said to me, in Baltimore in the winter of 1777; "We shall succeed in our struggle, provided we repent of our sins and forsake them,"

and then added, "I will see it out, or go to Heaven in its ruins." He possessed more learning probably, both ancient and modern, than any man who subscribed the declaration of independence. His reading was various. Even the old English poets were familiar to him. He once told me he had read all Bolingbroke's works with great attention. He admired nothing in them but the style, and to acquire it, he said he had when a young man, transcribed his "ideas of a patriot king." When he went to Holland to negotiate a treaty with that country, he left a blank in Congress. I can say but little of his public conduct while he was in Europe, but that he was able, faithful and successful in all the business that was committed to him.

I cannot conclude this account of Mr. Adams without expressing my obligations to him for the friendship with which he honoured me during the whole of his public life from 1774 to 1800. I possess a large collection of his letters written to me in Europe and America which I prize as records of his genius and patriotism. There was no diminution of our intimacy after he became President of United States, nor did his high stations preclude controversy between us, on subjects upon which we differed, especially while he was President. Many delightful evenings have I passed at his house, in listening to the details of his public situations at home and abroad, and to anecdotes of public men. The pleasure of these evenings was much enhanced by the society of Mrs. Adams, who in point of talents, knowledge, virtue and female accomplishments, was in every respect fitted to be the friend and companion of her husband in all his different and successive stations, of private citizen, member of Congress, foreign Minister, Vice President and President of the United States.

Robert Treat Paine.—He was educated a clergyman, and afterwards became a lawyer. He had a certain obliquity of understanding which prevented his seeing public objects in the same light in which they were seen by other people. He seldom proposed anything, but opposed nearly

every measure that was proposed by other people, and hence got the name of "the objection maker" in Congress. His temper was amiable, and his speeches and conversation often facetious. He was moderate in his feelings for his country. This was so much the case, that he told me the first time I saw him in 1774 that his constituents considered him as one of their "cool devils." He was notwithstanding a firm, decided and persevering patriot and eminently useful in Congress particularly upon committees, in which he was remarkable for his regular and punctual attendance.

Elbridge Gerry.—He was a respectable young merchant, of a liberal education and considerable knowledge. He had no local or State prejudices. Every part of his conduct in 1775 & 1776 and 1777 indicated him to be a sensible, upright man, and a genuine friend to republican forms of government.

RHODE ISLAND

William Ellery, a lawyer, somewhat cynical in his temper, but a faithful friend to the liberties of his country. He seldom spoke in Congress, but frequently amused himself in writing epigrams on the speakers which were generally witty and pertinent, and sometimes poetical. Mr. Paine had once given in a report in favor of purchasing some guns for the United States that were not bored. Some time after this, a motion was made to call upon the citizens of Philadelphia to furnish ready made clothes for the army, for materials to make them could not then be obtained in any of the stores. Mr. Paine opposed this motion, by holding up to the imagination the ridiculous figure our soldiers would make when paraded or marching in clothes of different lengths and colors. While he was speaking Mr. Ellery struck off with his pencil, the following lines.

"Say, O! my muse—Why all this puzzle
Talk against *long* clothes, and give guns without a muzzle."

Stephen Hopkins, a venerable old man of the Society of Friends, of an original understanding, extensive reading, and great integrity. He perfectly understood the principles of liberty and government and was warmly attached to the independence of his country. I once heard him say in 1776, "the liberties of America would be a cheap purchase with the loss of 100,000 lives!" He disliked hearing long letters read from the Generals of our Army, and used to say "he never knew a General Quillman that was good for anything." As the result of close observation, he remarked to me in walking home from Congress, that he "had never known a modest man that was not brave."

CONNECTICUT

Roger Shearman, a plain man of slender education. He taught himself mathematics, and afterwards acquired some property and a good deal of reputation by making almanacks. He was so regular in business, and so democratic in his principles that he was called by one of his friends "a republican machine." Patrick Henry asked him in 1774 why the people of Connecticut were more zealous in the cause of liberty than the people of the other States; he answered "because we have more to lose than any of them." "What is that," said Mr. Henry. "Our beloved charter," replied Mr. Shearman. He was not less distinguished for his piety, than his patriotism. He once objected to a motion for Congress sitting on Sunday upon an occasion which he thought did not require it, and gave as a reason for his objection a regard for the commands of his Maker. Upon hearing of the defeat of the American army on Long Island, where they were entrenched and fortified by a chain of hills, he said to me, in coming out of Congress, "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains."*

Samuel Huntingdon. A sensible, candid and worthy man, and wholly free from State prejudices.

* Jeremiah.

William Williams. A well meaning man but often misled by State prejudices.

Oliver Wolcott. A worthy man of great modesty, and sincerely attached to the interests of his country.

NEW YORK.

William Floyd, a mild and decided republican. He seldom spoke in Congress, but always voted with the zealous friends to liberty and independence.

Philip Livingston, a blunt but honest man. He was supposed to be unfriendly to the declaration of independence, when it took place, but he concurred afterwards in all the measures that were adopted to support it. He was very useful in committees where a knowledge in figures on commercial subjects was required. A secret of Congress having transpired, he proposed that every member of Congress should declare upon oath that he had not divulged it, in order that the rascal (to use his own words) "might add the sin of *perjury* to that of *treachery*, and thereby damn his soul forever."

Francis Lewis, a moderate Whig, but a very honest man, and very useful in executive business.

Lewis Morris, a cheerful, amiable man, and a most disinterested patriot. He had three sons at one time in the army, and suffered the loss of many thousand pounds by the depredations of the British army, upon his property near New York without repining. Every attachment of his heart yielded to his love of his country.

NEW JERSEY

Richard Stockton. An enlightened politician, and a correct and graceful speaker. He was timid where bold measures were required, but was at all times sincerely devoted to the liberties of his country. He loved law, and order, and once offended his constituents by opposing the

seizure of private property in an illegal manner by an officer of the army. He said after the treaty with France took place, "that the United States were placed in a more eligible situation by it, than they had been during their connection with Great Britain." His habits as a lawyer, and a Judge (which office he had filled under the British government) produced in him a respect for the British Constitution; but this did not lessen his attachment to the Independence of the United States.

John Witherspoon.—A well informed statesman, and remarkably luminous and correct in all his speeches. His influence was less than might have been expected from his abilities and knowledge owing in part to his ecclesiastical character. He was a zealous Whig, but free from the illiberality which sometimes accompanies zeal. In a report brought into Congress by a member from Virginia, George the 3d was called the "tyrant of Britain." Dr. Witherspoon objected to the word "tyrant," and moved to substitute king in its room. He gave as reasons for his objection, "That the epithet was both *false* and *undignified*. It was *false*, because George 3d was not a *tyrant* in Great Britain; on the contrary he was beloved and respected by his subjects in Great Britain, and perhaps the more, for making war upon us. It was *undignified*, because it did not become one sovereign power to abuse or use harsh epithets, when it spoke of another." The motion was negatived, and the amendment proposed by Dr. Witherspoon adopted.

Francis Hopkinson. An ingenious agreeable man. He took but a small part in the business of Congress, but served his country very essentially by many of his publications during the war.

John Hart. A plain, honest, well-meaning Jersey farmer, with but little education, but with good sense and virtue enough to discover the true interests of his country.

Abraham Clark, a sensible, but cynical man. He was uncommonly quick sighted in seeing the weakness and defects of public men and measures. He was attentive to

business, and excelled in drawing up reports and resolutions. He was said to study more to *please* the people than to promote their real and permanent interests. He was warmly attached to the liberties and independence of his country.

PENNSYLVANIA

Robert Morris. A bold, sensible, and agreeable speaker. His perceptions were quick and his judgments sound upon all subjects. He was opposed to the *time* (not the *act*) of the declaration of independence, but he yielded to no man in his exertions to support it, and a year after it took place, he publicly acknowledged on the floor of Congress, that he had been mistaken in his former opinion as to its *time*, and said that it would have been better for our country had it been declared *sooner*. He was candid and liberal in a debate, so as always to be respected by his opponents, and sometimes to offend the members of the party with whom he generally voted. By his extensive commercial knowledge and connections he rendered great services to his country in the beginning, and by the able manner in which he discharged the duties of financier, he revived and established her credit on the close of the revolution. In private life he was friendly, sincere, generous and charitable, but his peculiar manners deprived him of much of that popularity which usually follows great exploits of public and private virtue.

Benjamin Rush. He aimed well.*

Benjamin Franklin. He seldom spoke in Congress, but was useful in committees in which he was punctual and indefatigable. He was a firm republican, and treated kingly power at all times with ridicule and contempt. He early declared himself in favor of independence. John Adams used to say he was more of a philosopher than a politician. I sat next to him in Congress, when he was elected by the unanimous vote of every State in the Union to an embassy to the Court of France in the year 1776. When the vote was declared, I congratulated him upon it. He thanked me,

*Dr. Rush's estimate of himself.

and said, "I am like the remnant of a piece of unsaleable cloth. You may have it, as the shopkeepers say, for what you please." He was then 70 years of age. His services to his country in effecting the treaty with France were highly appreciated at the time that event took place. He was treated with great respect by the French Court. A letter from Paris written while he was there, contained the following expressions. "Dr. Franklin seldom goes to Court, when he does he says but little, but what he says, flies by the next post to every part of the kingdom."

John Morton. A plain farmer, but from his former station as a Judge, was well acquainted with the principles of government, and public business. His hatred to the new Constitution of Pennsylvania, and his anticipation of its evils were such, as to bring on a political hypochondriasis which it was said put an end to his life a year or two after the declaration of independence.

George Clymer. A cool, firm, consistent republican who loved liberty and government with an equal affection. Under the appearance of manners that were cold and indolent he concealed a mind that was always warm and active towards the interests of his country. He was well informed in history ancient and modern and frequently displayed flashes of wit and humor in conversation. His style in writing was simple, correct and sometimes eloquent. "The mould in which this man's mind was cast (to use the words of Lord Peterborough when speaking of Wm. Law) was seldom used."

James Smith, a pleasant, facetious lawyer. His speeches in Congress were in general declamatory, but from their humour, frequently entertaining.

George Taylor. A respectable country gentleman. Not active in Congress.

James Wilson. An eminent lawyer and a great and enlightened statesman. He had been educated for a clergyman in Scotland, and was a profound and accurate scholar. He spoke often in Congress, and his eloquence was of the

most commanding kind. He reasoned, declaimed and persuaded, according to circumstances, with equal effect. His mind while he spoke, was one blaze of light. Not a word ever fell from his lips out of *time*, or out of *place*, nor could a word be taken from or added to his speeches without injuring them. He rendered great and essential services to his country in every stage of the Revolution.

George Ross. A man of great wit, good humour and considerable eloquence. His manner in speaking was agreeable and commanded attention. He disliked business, and hence he possessed but little influence in Congress.

DELAWARE

Caesar Rodney. A plain man of good judgment and agreeable conversation; and sincerely devoted to the welfare of his country.

George Read. A lawyer of gentle manners and considerable talents and knowledge. He was firm, without violence, in all his purposes, and was much respected by all his acquaintances.

MARYLAND

Samuel Chase. This man's life and character was a good deal checkered. He rendered great services to his country, by awakening and directing the public spirit of his native State in the first years of the Revolution. He possessed more learning than knowledge, and more of both than judgment. His person and attitude in speaking were graceful and his elocution commanding, but his speeches were more oratorial than logical.

William Paca. A good tempered worthy man, with a sound understanding which he was too indolent to exercise; and hence his reputation in public life was less than his talents. He was beloved and respected by all who knew him, and considered at all times as a sincere patriot and honest man.

Thomas Stone. An able lawyer, and a friend to universal liberty. He spoke well, but was sometimes mistaken upon plain subjects. I once heard him say, "he had never known a single instance of a negro being contented in slavery."

Charles Carroll, an inflexible patriot, and an honest, independent friend to his country. He had been educated at St. Omer's, and professed considerable learning. He seldom spoke, but his speeches were sensible and correct, and delivered in an oratorial manner.

VIRGINIA

George Wythe. A profound lawyer, and able politician. He seldom spoke in Congress, but when he did, his speeches were sensible, correct and pertinent. I have seldom known a man possess more modesty, or a more dovelike simplicity and gentleness of manner. He lived many years after he left Congress, the pride and ornament of his native State.

Richard Henry Lee, a frequent, correct and pleasing speaker. He was very useful upon committees, and active in expediting business. He made the motion for the declaration of independence, and was ever afterwards one of its most zealous supporters.

Thomas Jefferson. He possessed a genius of the first order. It was universal in its objects. He was not less distinguished for his political, than his mathematical and philosophical knowledge. The objects of his benevolence were as extensive as those of his knowledge. He was not only the friend of his country, but of all nations and religions. While Congress were deliberating upon the measure of sending commissioners to France, I asked him, "What he thought of being one of them." He said, "he would go to hell to serve his country." He was afterwards elected a commissioner, but declined it at that time on account of the sickness of his wife. He seldom spoke in Congress, but was a member of all the important committees. He was the penman of the declaration of independence. He once

shewed me the original in his own handwriting. It contained a noble testimony against negro slavery which was struck out in its passage through Congress. He took notes of all the debates upon the declaration of independence and the first confederation.

Benjamin Harrison. He was well acquainted with the *forms* of public business. He had strong State prejudices and was very hostile to the leading characters from the New England States. In private life he preferred pleasure and convivial company to business of all kinds. His taste in this respect was discovered in a letter to Genl. Washington, which was intercepted and published in Boston. He was upon the whole a useful member of Congress, sincerely devoted to the welfare of his country.

Thomas Nelson. A respectable country gentleman, with excellent dispositions both in public and private life. He was educated in England. He informed me that he was the only person out of nine or ten Virginians that were sent with him to England for education that had taken a part in the American Revolution. The rest were all Tories.

Francis Lightfoot Lee. He was brother to Richard Henry Lee, but possessed I thought a more acute and correct mind. He often opposed his brother in a vote, but never spoke in Congress. I seldom knew him wrong eventually upon any question. Mr. Madison informed me that he had observed the same thing in many silent members of public bodies.

Carter Braxton. He was not deficient in political information, but was suspected of being less detached than he should be from his British prejudices. He was an agreeable and sensible speaker, and in private life an accomplished gentleman.

NORTH CAROLINA

Joseph Hewes, a plain, worthy merchant, and well acquainted with business. He seldom spoke in Congress, but was very useful upon committees.

William Hooper, a sensible, sprightly young lawyer and a rapid but correct speaker.

John Penn. A good humoured man, very talkative in company, but seldom spoke in Congress. He was honest, and warmly attached to the liberties of his country.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Edward Rutledge. A sensible young lawyer, of great volubility in speaking, and very useful in the business of Congress.

Thomas Heyward, Junr. A firm republican of good education and most amiable manners. He possessed an elegant poetical genius, which he sometimes exercised with success upon the various events of the war.

Thomas Lynch, Junr. A man of moderate talents, and not bold in difficult circumstances of his country.

Arthur Middleton. A man of cynical temper, but of upright intentions towards his country. He had been educated in England and was a critical Latin and Greek scholar. He read Horace and other classics during his recess from Congress. He spoke frequently, and always with asperity or personalities. He disliked business, and when put upon the committee of accounts he refused to serve, and gave as a reason for it that, "he hated accounts—that he did not even keep his own accounts, and that he knew nothing about them."

GEORGIA

Button Guinett. A zealous democrat. He carried a copy of the first constitution of Pennsylvania with him to Georgia, where he had address enough to get it adopted. He fell soon afterwards in a duel in that State.

Lyman Hall, a native of Connecticut, and strongly impressed with the principles and habits of republicanism which then prevailed in that State. He was a man of considerable learning, with an excellent judgment and very amiable manners.

George Walton. A sensible young man. He possessed knowledge and a pleasing manner of speaking. He was the youngest member of Congress being not quite three and twenty when he signed the declaration of independence. He filled the offices of Governor and Chief Justice for many years in Georgia, and evinced in his public conduct the same attachment to government and order that he had done in 1776 to liberty and independence.

The act for renouncing the allegiance to the King of Great Britain by the declaration of independence has ever been considered as a very bold one. It was done in the face of a powerful army, with but slender resources for war, and without any assurance of foreign aid. The first vote in favor of it was carried by the majority of a single State, which places it upon a footing with several of the first political events that have occurred in the world. The States that ripened most rapidly into a willingness to adopt the measure, were New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Virginia and Georgia. New Jersey and Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, Delaware, Maryland and New York, followed in the order in which they have been named. I speak of the delegates of those States only, not of the people who composed them. Upon all great national questions the four Eastern States, Virginia and Georgia concurred in their votes. Thirty-four out of fifty-four of the men who signed the declaration of independence died before the year 1800.

I shall now mention some of the leading traits of the characters of several other persons, who were active in the first years of the American Revolution. What will be said of them shall be from personal knowledge and fellowship of labors with them.

John Dickinson. Few men wrote, spoke and acted more for their country from the year 1764 to the establishment of the federal government, than Mr. Dickinson. He was alike eloquent at the bar, in a popular assembly and in conversation. Count Winguiski a Polish nobleman who

travelled through the United States soon after the peace, said, "he was the most learned man he had met with in America." He possessed the air of a camp, and the ease of the court in his manners. He was opposed to the declaration of independence at the *time* it took place, but concurred in supporting it. During the war and for some years after it, he admired and preferred the British Constitution. Towards the close of his life, he became a decided and zealous republican.

Charles Thompson. A man of great learning and general knowledge, at all times a genuine republican, and in the evening of his life a sincere Christian. He was the intimate friend of John Dickinson. He was once told in my presence, that he ought to write a history of the revolution. "No (said he) I ought not, for I should contradict all the histories of the great events of the revolution, and shew by my account of *men, motives* and *measures*, that we are wholly indebted to the agency of Providence for its successful issue. Let the world admire the supposed wisdom and valor of our great men. Perhaps they may adopt the qualities that have been ascribed to them and thus good may be done. I shall not undeceive future generations."

Thomas Mifflin. Those who knew this man in the close of the revolution and in the evening of his life, will hardly believe, *what is strictly true*, that he possessed genius, knowledge, eloquence, patriotism, courage, self-government and an independent spirit, in the first years of the war. He was extremely useful in the gloomy winter of 1776 by rallying the drooping courage of the militia of his native State, which he did by riding through all the populous counties, and exhorting them to turn out to check the progress of the British army. His influence was much promoted by an elegant person, an animated countenance and popular manners. Had he fallen in battle in the year 1778, he would have ranked with Warren and the first patriots and heroes of the revolution.

General Charles Lee. His character was a medley of

opposite and contradictory qualities. He loved and admired public virtue, but was addicted to many private vices. He was obscene, profane and at all times impious in his conversation. His avarice discovered itself in every transaction of his life. He studied singularity and eccentricity in his dress, appetite, accommodations, style of writing, speaking and swearing. Even his Will partook of this weakness in his character. He had many successive intimates whom he called friends, but he appeared to have no affection for anything human. A troop of dogs which he permitted to follow him everywhere seemed to engross his whole heart. He despised prudence and used to call it a rascally virtue. With all these vices and oddities, he was sincere and no one ever detected him in a lie, or even in an equivocation. He likewise possessed courage which he evinced in many battles and duels in different parts of the world. His genius was considerable, and his attainments great in classical learning, and in modern languages. He was eloquent and at times witty and brilliant in conversation. He was useful in the beginning of the war, by inspiring our citizens with military ideas, and lessening in our soldiers their superstitious fear of the valor and discipline of the British Army. When he heard of the sentence of the court martial which suspended him from his command he said, "Oh! that I were a dog, that I might not call man my brother."

General Horatio Gates. Though born in England and educated in the British Army, he was a genuine republican, and a sincere friend to the independence of the United States. He was a correct officer, and not deficient in military skill. His conquest of Burgoyne ruined his character by exciting envy. His defeat at Camden gave more pleasure than pain to thousands—inasmuch as it brought him back to a level with his colleagues in war. His secretary said to me after that defeat, "that it was happy for him he had been unfortunate—for had he been again successful, he would have been crucified." He possessed some learning, a great deal of reading, and talents for extensive and accurate obser-

vation. His conversation abounded in anecdotes and was entertaining upon all subjects. He was accused of wishing to supplant General Washington, by aiming to place General Mifflin at the head of the army. From an intimate knowledge of him I believe that this charge was without foundation. He had many pertinent common sayings, which he applied to the affairs of the world. Two of them I recollect were, "Parties like armies receive all able-bodied men", and "The world will do its own business."

General Nathaniel Green. He was a pupil of Genl. Lee, and afterwards the privy counsellor of Genl. Washington. Genius supplied in him the place of a learned education. He was active and intelligent, but *thought* more than he *felt*, and hence he was said to be more qualified for the cabinet than the field. His temper was gentle, and his manners engaging. He was beloved and respected by all who knew him.

General Henry Knox. A brave and intelligent officer, and an open hearted, honest hearted man.

Lord Sterling. A learned sensible man, but somewhat vain and like Charles 2nd apt to tire his company by a repetition of the same stories. He was prudent and wise in council, and brave in the field. His manners were gentle and agreeable. His misfortunes before the war had led him to seek relief in toddy, with which he sometimes impaired his judgment. Congress honoured him with a vote of approbation and praise after his death.

General McDougall. Nature, and an application to books late in life did wonders for this man. He possessed genius, knowledge and uncommon fervor of mind tempered by a solid judgment. Genl. Lee used to say, he was the only cool headed enthusiast he had ever known in his life. He loved liberty above all things, but he was an enemy to mob governments. His person was dignified and his conversation sensible and methodical, but somewhat formal, produced by a slight stammering in his speech. He performed but few services to his country in the field, but

was extremely useful to her in the cabinet. His talents were less active, than contemplative, and judicial.

Commodore Jno. Paul Jones. He united in his military character the *boldness* which is produced by madness,—the *bravery* which is the effect of animal spirits—and the *courage*, which is the result of reflection. He once put into my hands a history of his naval exploits. He exulted in having first hoisted the American flag on board the first armed vessel that was commissioned by the United States. I heard him give a minute account of his engagement with the Serapis in a small circle at a dinner. It was delivered with great apparent modesty, and commanded the most respectful attention. Towards the close of the battle while his deck was swimming in blood, the Captain of the Serapis called him to strike. "No sir, said he,—I will not,—we have had but a small fight as yet." He had been well educated in Scotland (his native country) and discovered style and taste both in writing and conversation. His countenance was strongly marked with thought. I know nothing of his private character.

General Arnold. I lodged three weeks in the same family with this man in Philadelphia in the Spring of 1777. His person was low but well made, and his face handsome. His conversation was uninteresting, and sometimes indelicate. His language was ungrammatical and his pronunciation vulgar. I once heard him say, "his courage was acquired, and that he was a coward until he was fifteen years of age." His character in his native State, Connecticut, was never respectable, and hence its vote alone was withheld from him when he was created a General by the Congress of the United States. His public vices are recorded in the printed histories of the American revolution.

Soon after the British Army left Philadelphia an attempt was made by a number of citizens to alter and amend the constitution of Pennsylvania, which had been formed in haste. Those citizens united themselves into what they called a republican society. I became a member

of it. They were soon afterwards opposed by a numerous class of citizens who styled themselves constitutionalists, and who were attached to the constitution of the State. Their contest about the constitution soon ended, for it was supported by being exclusively in the hands of its friends, who did not see its defects or who were too much interested to acknowledge it required any amendment, especially at the time in which it was proposed. The government of the State, as was natural, where all legislative power is lodged in a single body of men, was administered in an arbitrary manner. Test, and other laws of an unconstitutional nature were passed, and even outrages upon the persons and property of peaceful citizens, contrary to law, were committed with impunity. These oppressions produced a contest for the power of the State which ended in a few years in the success of the party who had called themselves Republicans. By my activity in this struggle I made many enemies, and became the subject of much newspaper abuse. My labors were not lost. The light which was thrown upon the subject of government, by the controversy in which I bore a part, finally produced the present form of the constitution of Pennsylvania.

From this period until the year 1786 I passed my time chiefly in my professional studies and labors. The situation of the United States during this time was far from being an agreeable one. The weakness of the confederation, and the injustice of most of the States, in enforcing the circulation of paper money by tender laws, had limited the commerce of our country, and produced universal distress in our cities. In the year 1788 there were one thousand empty houses in Philadelphia. Bricklayers and house carpenters and all the mechanics and labourers who are dependent upon them were unemployed. The value of property in and near the city was two-thirds less than before the year 1774. Bankruptcies were numerous and beggars were to be seen at the doors of the opulent in every street of our city. Taxes were heavy and subscriptions for the relief

of the poor still more oppressive. In this melancholy state of our country it occurred to thinking men that all her evils originated in the weakness of the general government. These evils were pointed out in many publications, in all the States, and a convention was finally called to correct the defects of the confederation. While they were sitting in the year 1787, I received a letter from Mr. Dickinson who was a member of the convention calling me to come forward in support of the proposed Constitution of the United States. I had heard enough of its form and principles to be satisfied with it and readily obeyed the call of my friend by recommending and defending it in a number of addresses to the citizens of the United States. The zeal I had discovered in my publications and speeches at town meetings, induced the citizens of Philadelphia to elect me a member of the convention that met in Pennsylvania to adopt, or reject the proposed Constitution. It was adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the convention, but its execution was opposed by the minority, who dissented from its adoption. I continued to write in its favor until it was adopted by all the States. In this labor I was assisted and exceeded by Mr. Dickinson under the signature of Fabius, and by Tench Coxe under a variety of signatures. Their performances did equal honor to themselves and to the State of Pennsylvania. The opponents to the establishment of the Constitution, were the same men who had established and adhered to the first Constitution of Pennsylvania, and of course hostile to the men who wrote in defence of it.

I had resolved and repeatedly declared I would close my political labors with the establishment of a safe and efficient general government. I considered this as an act of consistency, for to assist in making a people free, without furnishing them with the means of preserving their freedom, would have been doing them more harm than good, and would have justly exposed me to their reproaches. I now realized my long contemplated purpose, and in the year 1789 took leave of political life, I hope, forever.

I review the time I spent in the service of my country with pleasure and pain. I derive *pleasure* from the recollection of the integrity of all my public pursuits. I sought no honors, and repeatedly refused the offer of profitable offices between the year 1774 and 1789. I befriended the persecuted and distressed enemies of the revolution, and rescued many of them from ruin and banishment by my influence with the governing powers. I obtained offices and favors for many hundred persons from the new governments of our country. But this constituted but a part of the pleasure I enjoyed in my political pursuits. I was animated constantly by a belief that I was acting for the benefit of the whole world, and of future ages, by assisting in the formation of new means of political order and general happiness. Whether my belief as far as it relates to the last great object will be realized, or not, is yet a secret in the womb of time. Late events have at times induced me to believe my hopes were visionary and my labors lost, and with them the more valuable labors of all the patriots and the blood of all the heroes of the revolution. At other times I have consoled myself by recollecting that the seeds of all the great changes, for the better, in the condition of mankind, have been sowed, years, and centuries before they came to pass. I still believe the American revolution to be big with important consequences to the world, and that the labor of no individual however feeble his contributions to it were, could not have been spared. It was said by the philanthropic Dr. Jebb, "that no good effort was lost." Still less can it be true, that the American revolution will be an abortive event in the government of the world.

I feel *pain* in a review of my political life, when I recollect the unfriendly influence which party spirit (the unavoidable concomitant of politics) had upon my moral and social feelings, and the controversies, and enmities to which it exposed me. In estimating the services of public men, let public gratitude swell to its highest pitch, when the diminution or loss of benevolent feelings and the pain of public

slander and private disputes are mentioned, property and even life itself are light as a feather when weighed in the opposite scale to them.

Having briefly stated many of the *literary*, *medical* and *political* events of my life, it remains only that I say a few words upon my *religious* principles.

Religious Convictions

I was baptized by the Rev. Eneas Ross, an Episcopal minister, and heard divine worship for the first time in Christ's Church in Philadelphia. After the death of my father, I went with my mother to the Rev. Mr. Tennent's meeting which was held in the building afterwards converted into a college and university in Fourth Street. My mother was a constant attendant upon his Presbyterian place of worship and educated her children in the principles taught by him which were highly Calvinistical.

At Dr. Finley's school, I was more fully instructed in those principles by means of the Westminster catechism. I retained them without any affection for them until about the year 1780. I then read for the first time Fletcher's controversy with the Calvinists, in favor of the universality of the atonement. This prepared my mind to admit the doctrine of universal salvation, which was then preached in our city by the Rev. Mr. Winchester. It embraced and reconciled my ancient Calvinistical and my newly adopted Arminian principles. From that time I have never doubted upon the subject of the salvation of all men. My conviction of the truth of this doctrine was derived from reading the works of Stonehouse, Seigvolk, White, Chauncey and Winchester, and afterwards from an attentive perusal of the Scriptures. I always admitted with each of those authors future punishment, and of long duration.

The early part of my life was spent in dissipation, folly, and in the practice of some of the vices to which young men are prone. The weight of that folly and those vices has been felt in my mind ever since. They have often been