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A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity. An Essay on Translation with an Introduction.

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1.1 Introduction.

> Allen seems to be a curious combination of a Hercules, a Joe Miller, a Bayard, and a Tom Hyer; had a person like the Belgian giants; mountain music in him like a Swiss; a heart plump as coeur de Lion's. Though born in New England, he exhibited no trace of her character. He was franc, bluff, companionable as a Pagan, convivial, a Roman, hearty as a harvest. His spirit was essentially Western; and herein is his particular Americanism; for the western spirit is, or will yet be (for no other is, nor can be), the true American one.[1]
>
> (Herman Melville, *Israel Potter*)

The complex figure of colonel Ethan Allen can be legitimately considered as a seminal character for the foundation of the United States of America, from several points of view, as John Mcwilliams suggests when, in comparing him to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or Thomas Paine he defines him suitable to bear the "mantle of the founding fathers"(McWilliams, p. 258). The birth of America as a modern nation was the result of many processes, and it took place in more than one stage, be that the battlefield of Saratoga, the port of Boston, or a political pamphlet. Ethan Allen, through his life and written production, can be worthily included among the founding actors of those building phases, and represents a fundamental protagonist of the American Revolution.

Ethan Allen included in his personality and political trajectory a wide fan of different facets, not always coherent one to the other, not always parts of the same shape. The XIX century

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[1] See Melville, Herman, *Israel Potter*, Electronic Classics Series, Pennsylvania, 2011.

perception of Charles Jacobs Petersen described him as it follows:"He was a man of strong, natural powers of mind, but possessing little cultivation.- He was, perhaps, somewhat too self-confident in all things. His courage was bold even to rashness.[...] His manners were eccentric. He was frank, generous and warm-hearted" (Peterson 1848, p. 243). However, in several periods of the American history, his character was adapted to the current circumstances of the time, so as to highlight his full American essence and see him as a model. According to John McWilliams, "The historical man had been so shifting and many-sided a personality that selected aspects of his public self could be fashioned into various models for the much-discussed but elusive abstraction."(McWilliams, 1976) In other words, Allen has been part of the matter through which an American mythology was invented and taught.

Born in 1738, in Litchfield County, Connecticut, Allen was not a son of the American rising *intellighentia*, but, firstly rather a son of the frontier, a farmer and a hunter; therefore, he totally missed a liberal education, as he personally admitted in the introduction to his captivity *Narrative*, such as, one may assume, the case was for Washington or Adams. When he had the chance to pursue a preparatory study to enter Yale University, he lost his father, and by consequence, being the eldest of eight children, became the leading figure of his family, and took care of their activities, possibly trying to ensure a decent existence to everybody. By his thirties, Allen had tried several professional careers: at first he became a farmer, later he was involved in the iron mines business, and finally he was implicated in land speculation. As a result of such a productive path, together with other issues, he ran into many problems with the legal system of Connecticut. After marrying Mary Brownson, he moved to Sheffield, Massachusetts, where they resided with their five children from 1767 until 1778.

In 1770, his activity as a land-speculator brought Allen to purchase three lots of an area called New Hampshire Grants, which was included between the colonies of New York and New Hampshire. Those territories had previously been disputed, and attributed to New York directly by the authority of king George III. Yet, like a sort of American Palestine, before such institutional

mediation, the Grants had been populated by people from the New England area, who were openly hostile to the authority of New York. Being a member of such group of defrauded landowners, Ethan Allen decided not to be the victim of an abuse, and made himself the leader of a paramilitary unit whose aim was to protect the self-determination of the Grants. In the meantime, the royal authorities of New York had set out for the region at the center of the controversy, determined to solve the issue, even through the usage of weapons. Nonetheless, what they unexpectedly found was an irregular, but well organized guerrilla military corps, named the Green Mountain Boys. Such unit was formed by local self-organized militias coming from all the surrounding towns. Allen was named their Colonel Commandant. During the following meetings the militia officers defined the creation of committees of safety, and disposed rules by which to resist all the attempts by the New York provincial administration to impose its authority on the New Hampshire Grants territory. The presence of a new organized military force further worsened the relationships between the Grants and the New York Governor, William Tryon, who reached the point of establishing a 25 dollars reward for the arrest of Ethan Allen.[2] From 1770 to 1774 the tension between the parties increased: Tryon and the Green Mountain Boys exchanged threats, truce offers, and legal actions, never being able to solve the controversy peacefully. Most of the incidents did not provoke bloodshed, although several cases of brawls and vandalism did occur. Allen himself was resolute not to commit any violence to the civilians, but his actions often went beyond the regulation of the Committee of Safety, including oral threats, the burning of settlers' houses and the demolition of a millstone. Notwithstanding their lack of military education, the Green Mountain "Army" succeeded in protecting what they already conceived as the future state of Vermont from all the attempts of restoration of the New York power on the Grants.

At the breaking out of the American Revolution, the controversial situation of the New Hampshire Grants was suspended; to Ethan Allen, fighting against the British authority of the king meant a more efficient way to fight the royal delegates in New York. Consequently, he made the

[2] See Holbrook, 1940.

Green Mountain Boys available to help the continental council in a war against Great Britain. The most famous result of their participation to the military action was provided in May 1775 by their capture of Fort Ticonderoga, a garrison snatched from a redcoats unit, with the use of a very limited number of soldiers. Such a victory, thoroughly narrated in the first section of Allen's captivity *Narrative*, apparently enlightened colonel Allen's fame to its top, but moved by his "sense of duty,"[3] (3) and his "sincere passion for liberty"(3) he did the impossible in order to speed up the defeat of the English army: he attempted the conquest of the city of Montreal, situated in British Canada, which was strongly held by the English forces. Unfortunately, the attempt failed, both because of the insufficient preparation and limited number of the corps Allen led, and because of some cases of treason within his own line. Thus in September 1775, together with a good number of his unit, he was captured by the British army, and kept prisoner until the day of his exchange, on March the 6th, 1778.

The narration of his life as a captive is narrated in detail in the core-text of my analysis, *A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity*, published on March 25th, 1779. The text provides a full narration of what is known about Allen's imprisonment.[4] The accuracy of the report allows to know about a number of British prison-ships and the officers he met during his personal misadventure, which he depicted with great meticulousness. After his liberation, he went back to the Grants, which had declared their independence together with a section of Connecticut, which would be united in the new (future) state of Vermont, of which Ethan Allen is nowadays considered the founder. Stephen Carl Arch,[5] in his introduction to the Copley edition of the *Narrative*, highlights the implicit meaning of the conclusion in Allen's text: for the author recalls the celebration of his return from the British dungeons as it follows:"Three cannons were fired that

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3 All references to the text are taken from Ethan Allen, *A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity*, edited by Robert Bell, Philadelphia, 1779. Henceforth the text will be referred to as N. E. A. and every quotation of the original text is followed by the page number in parenthesis.

4 Several historical books on the life of Ethan Allen were entirely based only on his *Narrative*: see Charles Walter Brown, 1902.

5 Allen, Ethan, *A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity*, Edited by Stephen Carl Arch, A Copley Edition, Massachussets, 2000.

evening, and next morning colonel Herrick gave orders, and fourteen more were discharged, [...] thirteen for the United States, and one for young Vermont" (45). After declaring its own independence, the territory of Vermont submitted a request, in 1781, to the Continental Congress, in order to become a state member of the young Union, but this one was refused, and it was recognized as such only ten years later, after Allen's death (1789). Colonel Ethan Allen had been very active in the struggle for membership, but it can be argued that he was completely committed to the cause of free Vermont, more than to the higher cause of a free America. For a while, he considered even to negotiate the return of the Vermont territories to the British empire, which could apparently grant more autonomy than the Continental Congress.[6] Such a radical projection might appear as a manifestation of treason towards the ideals of the Revolution, but from Allen's viewpoint, it stood as a sort of revenge against the New York administration, which had betrayed the heroic people of Vermont, whose military service would not deserve, according to the circumstances, a political legitimation until 1791.

It is from such an extraordinary wide and multifaceted biography that the importance of Allen's character can be inferred in the creative process of the American identity. As a matter of fact, in several occasions, his behavior set a precedent for the historical prosecution of the United States.

1.2 The literary genre issue.

A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity developed, from the point of view of its implicit and explicit content, several thematic and ideological characteristics that concurred, together with other documents of the period, to the constitution of a solid and shared identity and sense of belonging for a new born country. However, the propulsive traits of the book are not limited to an

[6] See Bemis, 1916.

issue of content, but also to a certain choice as far as the literary form was concerned. The first fundamental element is the title. Allen labeled it his "captivity narrative" on purpose, as John McWilliams states:"[The Narrative] was published in nineteen editions before the Civil War, skillfully adapts the conventions of the 'captivity narrative' to stimulate patriotic feeling and to keep the author-hero in the public eye"[7] (McWilliams, p.267). Since Allen did not believe in a distinction in education, the book was originally meant for a large multitude of readers, both uprightly and horizontally, all of whom could appreciate it for its educational character. In this sense, the work diverges form the literary products of other seminal authors of the Revolution, like Thomas Paine or Thomas Jefferson, who discussed theoretical reflections and ideal concepts. On the contrary Allen's *Narrative* is a concrete text, written for concrete people: the events, the language, the rhetorical apparatus and the message conveyed are entirely explained in order to let them reach the average man, the private or the farmer. According to Stephen Carl Arch, "Allen wrote it in the context of literature that he knew, and that included that genre we now refer to as captivity narrative"[8] (Arch, p. 10), but that specific literary form was also the "context of literature" that most of his countrymen appreciated. Such cognitive panorama can be deduced from the long tradition of Puritan captivity narratives that characterized American literature for two centuries. By consequence, as the literary critic Daniel Williams has observed, Allen's text can be considered as "a captivity narrative that reflects the conventions of earlier Indian captivity narratives"[9] (Williams, p. 331). Certainly, Allen's captivity *Narrative* diverts in many contextual aspects from the Puritan works of the XVII century. Aesthetically his book maintains most of those common traits, filling such structure with a new American superstructure, made of patriotic struggle for freedom and self-determination, in other words, filling an old structure with a contemporary content.

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7 McWilliams, John, *The Faces of Ethan Allen: 1760-1860*, New England Quarterly: A historical Review of New England Life and Letters, MLA International Bibliography,1976.

8 Introduction to Allen, Ethan, *A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity*, Edited by Stephen Carl Arch, A Copley Edition, Massachussets, 2000.

9 Williams, Daniel E, *Zealous in the Cause of Liberty: Self-Creation and Redemption in the Narrative of Ethan Allen*, Press of case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio 1971.

A Narrative on Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity stands as a turning point within American literature. On the one hand, it is built on the basis of the conventional narratives of the Puritan age; on the other hand, however, it stretches one arm forward, reaching a large circulation with the outburst of the Civil War and consistently inspiring the genre of war narratives. According to critics, the narrative tradition finds its roots in the colonial period, establishing a literary and historical continuum even after WWII. In such evolutionary line, the main traits of the literary form remained unaltered, proposing, however, a progressive change as far as content and message are concerned. In their research titled *War Narratives: Framing Our Understanding of the War on Terror*, Kathe Callahan, Melvin J. Dubnick and Dorothy Olshfski discern the existence of different roles played by the same kind of narratives throughout American history: at the beginning of the Colonial Era, church ministers used narratives in order to incite the Puritans to resist and fight against the opposition of the natives. From the last decades of the XVII century, the position of the Puritans shifted from defensive to offensive, and consequently, the role of narratives was to encourage the colonists to fight, charging their actions with a sort of commitment in a "'Holy War' against the savages" (Callahan, Dubnick and Olshfski, 2006). It is in this context that one should place the canonical captivity narratives,[10] that is to say personal narratives of settlers who experienced a period of captivity among the Indians, during which they generally became acquainted with the customs by getting used to the others' habits, as the example of Mary Rowlandson's several removals in which she was involved together with the tribe, clearly manifests.[11]

However, Allen's case is different with regard to the historical context and objectives. Even though the author himself classified his book as a part of the captivity narrative genre, a more accurate definition (according to historical scenario in which it took place) would consider it an "imprisonment narrative": as a matter of fact, Allen is subjected to an institution, and he bears the

[10] Among which the most notable examples are: *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* and *the Narrative of Robert Adams, a Sailor*.

[11] Rowlandson, Mary. *A true history of the captivity & restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, a minister's wife in New-England*, Cambridge: printed by Samuel Green, 1682.

status of 'prisoner', as opposed to 'captive,' in which the first implies a complex system of conventions, such as the concept of 'offensive power' or 'capital offender', which set the figure of Allen within the British penal system, both theoretically by naming him a criminal offender, and physically, by putting him into prisons. These two details are not accidental: the biggest diversion between *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* and the main corpus of Puritan narratives is provided exactly from the definitions of 'prisoner' as an enemy of a national institution, and 'prison,' as a place where to supervise such prisoner. Ethan Allen was certainly influenced by the literary legacy of his time, but his text could be regarded as a fundamental point of contact between the canonical type of captivity narratives (for example the already mentioned by Rowlandson or Jemison) and the war narratives that became so popular after the burst of the Civil war. As a sort of literary ancestor, Allen's *Narrative* maintained the traits of Indian captivity narratives, but influenced the production of other autobiographical narrations, entirely set during a period of war, or containing only a warlike content. *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* is indeed the first example of that kind of self-narration, concerning a wartime period (with the exception of a corpus of texts written during King Philip's War[12]). Moreover though it should rightly be considered as an important part in the evolution of war narratives as an American point of view in its confrontation with the "other", as Callahan, Dubnick and Olshfski when they write that "war narratives have played a central role in American history from the outset of colonization. Today, there is a growing literature documenting the efforts to establish narratives that defined the nation's enemies and the threats they posed."[13] Such an assertion finds a confirmation in the huge amount of war narratives published during or immediately after the American Civil war, by all sorts of authors: women (*A*

[12] King Philip's War the first and only armed conflict occurred throughout the XVII century between Native American inhabitants of New England and English colonists, in 1675–78. The name of the war derives from the main leader of the Indians Metacomet, who was named "King Philip" from the English. In one year of hostilities, the war caused the destruction of twelve cities in the area, and the death of the majority of the colonists (see www.bio.umass.edu).

[13] Ibid.

Virginia Girl in the Civil War,[14] *The Woman in Battle: The Civil War Narrative of Loreta Janeta Velazquez, Cuban Woman and Confederate Soldier*[15]), private soldiers (*A Soldier-Boy's Letters, 1862-1865*[16], *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers*[17]) and officers (*A Biographical Memorial of General Daniel Butterfield*[18]). This recurrent aspect of depicting the enemy/other will find a broad development throughout the rest of American history, from WWI until the Vietnam War, and although, retrospectively, the first literary boom of the genre took place in the years of the Civil War, the first archetype of American narrative of war can be definitely identified with *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*. In the case of Allen though, his *Narrative* recorded an act of disruption from the previous *status quo*, into a sort of founding revolutionary act which would hugely influence the following war literature to the point of rendering such genre, as Jonathan E. Vincent defines them, "a literary record of Americans performing acts of 'risk,' 'duty,' and 'sacrifice' for the preservation of the political order." (Vincent, p. 28) The mentioned ideals can be abstracted and referred to the entire American history; by consequence, every form of war literature which provides those ideals to the reader is read as patriotic and flowing directly from the actions of whose men embody such values. Walter Hölbling confirms the last statement in the following words: "The literature of war brings forth models of a nation's 'storifying of experience'"[19] (Hölbling, p. 212).

A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity can therefore be retained as a progenitor book for the literary genre of narratives of war, nevertheless, not only because he argued that not always can the mere publication of a text impact by itself the entire production of a literary genre, as in Allen's case, indeed, the relevance of his *Narrative* was increased by its widespread distribution, as the complex philological history of the book clearly shows.

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14 Avary, Myrta Lockett. *A Virginian Girl in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. New York: Appleton and Company, 1903.
15 Velazquez, Loreta Janeta. London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.
16 Bradley, Leverett. *A Soldier-Boy's Letters, 1862-1865*: Boston: Privately Printed, 1905.
17 Dawes, R. Rufus. *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers. Marietta (*OH): Aldeman and Sons, 1890.
18 *A Biographical Memorial of General Daniel Butterfield*. New York: Grafton Press, 1904.
19 Hölbling, Walter, The Second World War: American Writing. The Cambridge Companion to War Writing, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2009.

1.3 *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*: philological story.

The very beginning of such story coincided with the date in which *A Narrative on Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* was published: at the very bottom of the introduction to the text by Allen, one can read 'Bennington, March 25th, 1779." However, the place that gave birth to the first published edition of the narrative was not Bennington. It was instead printed and published in the same year in Philadelphia, Third Street, in the printing house of Robert Bell[20] (Description: v.2, p. [471]-534).

The resonance for the theme of the pursuit of freedom, which is clearly exposed in *A Narrative on Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, was one of the aspects that facilitated the encounter between Allen and Bell, two very different men, but equally committed to the cause of liberty. The ideals that Ethan Allen developed in his autobiographical report on the American Revolution were largely shared from the great majority of the Americans, and they needed an enormous divulgation. The *Narrative* was the most adequate relief for a population who was vexed by the British and longed for liberty. By consequence the quick publications of five concurrent editions to the Bell, within the years 1779 and 1780 it is not surprising. Among the most famous ones, the following editions should be noted: in Boston, 1779, Draper and Folsom published a version of the *Narrative* (40 p. 21 cm), and explicitly affirmed that it was a reprint of the text published in Philadelphia (the

[20] Robert Bell (1732-1784) was Born in Glasgow, Scotland, and was trained as a bookbinder. He worked with success as a journeyman in Berwick-upon-Tweed, England, and as an independent craftsman and bookseller in Dublin, Ireland. In 1766, he immigrated to Pennsylvania. Bell succeeded in the colonies, quickly establishing himself as a leading bookseller in Philadelphia. Like many other colonial booksellers, Bell played an important role in the diffusion of American media. Bell traveled the East Coast purchasing and reselling entire libraries along with smaller lots of books. He was a successful publisher, as the wide list of his publications attest: an early edition of William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1762), the first comprehensive codification of English common law and a major influence on American law in the post-revolutionary era, which Bell published in 1771–1772. In 1776 Bell published the first edition of Thomas Paine's pamphlet, titled*Common Sense*, which is undoubtedly considered as one of the main fuses of the American Revolution. The British occupation of Philadelphia did not imply limitations for Bell's aggressive distribution of books. Bell's circulating library continued to function during the occupation, and even after the Revolution, he actively promoted a wide distribution of texts. In his pamphlet *Bell's Memorial on the Free Sale of Books* (1784), he argued that free access to reading material represented a fundamental element for a society which aspired to be free. He followed this with a second pamphlet, *Bell's Address to Every Free-Man* (1784), which attacked the Pennsylvania assembly's new restrictions on the auctioning of books, which Bell ignored, continuing to conduct auctions outside Pennsylvania (Encyclopedia of American Literature, 2013).

Bell first edition). Allen's text is generally identified as one of the main texts published by them, indeed, the Draper and Folsom printing house emerged out of a partnership of printers in 1778 (it was abolished in 1783). In addition, in 1779, William Mentz, another bookseller, competitor of Robert Bell, published his edition of *A Narrative on Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*. In 1780, other editions were added to the so-far mentioned booksellers: John Trumbull published an edition of the book inNorwich, whereas John Mycall did the same in Newbury (82 p. 19 cm). This latter is the only version of Allen's text, which does not include a quotation from Philip Freneau in the frontispiece. All the so far discussed editions present the same text, but they are characterized by several differences in orthography and layout. Most of those printers and booksellers worked strictly during the core period of the Revolution, and disappeared soon after. On the one hand, such trend would display how much the diffusion of Allen's text was requested, but on the other hand, that Robert Bell was one of the few publishers of which a tradition has survived, probably because of his long term experience; the other printers significantly helped the expansion of the book's audience, but did not survive its fame.

The impact that *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* had on the American rebels during the Revolution was huge, as we shall later see: but quite significantly, its widespread distribution in the late XVII century was not destined to be concluded together with the end of the War of Independence. The text contains ideals and embryos of the future American identity, and this relevance has been already perceived in those years, to the extent that the book's duty was not completely fulfilled: the philological history of the *Narrative* identifies in the American Revolution just the first of the many stages in which Ethan Allen could take part. In those years, piracy was a common sort of procedure among minor booksellers, for this reason, the first official 'second' version of the *Narrative* can be identified with the 1807 edition, published in Walpole, New Hampshire by Isaiah and Alexander Thomas (158 p. 18 cm). Their legal property on the book is testified by Cutts Shannon, clerk of the District of New Hampshire, as we can read from his deposition:“Be it remembered, that on this twenty second day of January, in the thirty first year of

the independence of the United States of America-Isaiah Thomas and Alexander Thomas of said district, booksellers, have deposited in this office the title of a book, whereof they claim as proprietors, in the following words, to wit: *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* [...]".[21] What Thomas and Thomas proposed was firstly the second legal edition of the *Narrative*, namely derived from an authoritative bookseller (Robert Bell), who was the legal owner of the book, and secondly, the first re-edited edition of the text. As a matter of fact the Walpole text presents, in addition to frontispiece and the author's introduction, also a table of contents, an advertisement and the first system of unnumbered footnotes to the text, all written by the editors. It is worthy to note that through such an apparatus, the length of the text shifts from the original 46 pages of the Philadelphia edition, to the 158 pages of the Walpole version. Moreover, such text is the final result of a process of filing and grammatical and orthographical correction of the first version, as the frequent variations (mainly single letters) clearly show.

In 1838 the property of Ethan Allen's *Narrative* passed to Chauncey Goodrich (Noah Webster's son-in-law) who kept it and was the only editor for the following three legal editions. The official third edition of the *Narrative* (with notes) was published by H. Johnson & Co., in 1838, in Burlington (144 p. 18 cm). Such version can be accepted as official as it presents the following note:"Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1838, by Chauncey Goodrich, in the Clerks office of the District of Vermont." Such statement is further confirmed by the presence of the Thomas &Thomas edition's advertisement, that is to say, the previous legal owners of the book. The Burlington version proposes also the Walpole advertisement together with its own one, a complex system of footnotes, but does not have a table of contents, for a total length of 144 pages. The fourth edition was published in 1846 (120 p. 18 cm) and it appears as perfectly consecutive to the third: it was printed in Burlington. The already mentioned Chauncey Goodrich, who was still the legal owner of *A Narrative on Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, edited a new edition of the text, a

[21] The note is included in the following edition:"*A Narrative on Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, published by Thomas and Thomas, printed from the Press of Charer and Hale, Walpole, New Hampshire, 1807. The not is subscribed by R. Cutts Shannon, clerk.

reprint that presents the same length, footnotes and advertisements (that is to say, to the second and third editions) of the previous publication. Not much changed in the passage from the third and the fourth editions, to the fifth one: it was published in 1849 in Burlington (50 p. 23 cm), and it is described as a fifth edition with notes; the editor was still Chauncey Goodrich, who was now associated with S. B. Nichols. The text edited is exactly the same as the third and fourth editions but, surprisingly the title was slightly changed into: *Ethan Allen's Narrative of the Capture of Ticonderoga, and of his Captivity and Treatment by the English*. The most relevant interruption in such chain of the Goodrich editions, given by a 1814 version of the *Narrative*, printed in Albany by Pratt and Clark (144 p. 19 cm) without any footnote. This latter edition was a sample of more modern edition: as a matter of fact, italicized sections (which were very common in the XVIII century press) were not maintained, and orthography and punctuation were standardized.

1.4 Themes: American mythology.

The complexity of the story of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, implicitly reveals the resonance that such a container of American values and ideals was supposed to have on American culture, history and even ideological position. Perhaps, the fact that he wanted it published hastily in 1779 confirms his intention to manifest his zeal in favor of the cause of freedom, and to extend it to his countrymen. As a matter of fact This form of proselytism is indeed suggested in the introductory part to the *Narrative*, where he affirmed to have published the text of "The extraordinary scenes of [his] captivity, and the discoveries which [he] made in the course of the same, of the cruel and relentless disposition and behavior of the enemy, towards the prisoners in their power"(2). Allen argued that because of the existence of some people who did not comprehend the importance and the seriousness of the War of Independence, á propos whom he also wrote :"Some men are appointed into office, in these states, who read the history of the cruelties of this

war with the same careless indifferency, as they do the pages of the Roman history"(2), In plain terms, he stated to have written his *Narrative* in order to show the Americans, through his own personal experience what cruelties can be perpetrated by the English, and consequently, he highlighted solid reasons to convince them reluctant Americans to join the fight against their enemy. He did that in order to attract the involvement of all those Americans who still were not engaged in the cause of the liberty of their nation, and metaphorically fight their "Careless indifference."[22] As Williams argues, "Allen became a successful preacher, converting hundreds to the American cause. With his boundless enthusiasm and towering confidence, he used his powers of persuasion to proselytize for liberty. […] He attempted to move his audience by first scaring them with visions of hell, in this case the British prisons, and then offering them salvation in the form of liberty"[23] (Williams, p. 330). In addition to that, Williams affirms that "In his«Introduction», Allen clearly articulated his intention to convert his readers"[24] (Williams, p. 331).

Once liberated from the British, Allen considered it his duty to commit himself to struggle to which he added the duty that his *Narrative* had to pursue, even if posthumously on the same terms. The distribution of later editions of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* amounted to "nineteen editions before the Civil War" (McWilliams, p. 267). To the use of the present introduction the editions that have been discussed so far do not coincide with the entire corpus of reprints, but only the most commonly known will be thoroughly analyzed. Yet, the number is relevant: from the end of the American War of Independence, until 1861, the same text was re-proposed nineteen times, in several situations in which it was thought it necessary to inflame the Americans' patriotic feeling.

The first fundamental moment in which the story of Allen's *Narrative* and the American History related to each other was the year 1807. Such date could be easily associated to one of the most controversial phases of the American history. The world was characterized by the conflict

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22 The word used in the original text is "Indifferency", an archaism (see Webster, 1828).

23 Williams, Daniel E, *Zealous in the Cause of Liberty: Self-Creation and Redemption in the Narrative of Ethan Allen*, Press of case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio 1971.

24 Ibid.

between Napoleon and the British Empire, and the United States, under the presidency of Thomas Jefferson, were aligned with France. Such condition determined the raise of an anti-British feeling which was one of the causes that would eventually provoke a war against Great Britain, in 1812-1814. The triggering action of the new conflict with England was the approval (for the second time) by president James Madison, of the *Non-Intercourse Act*, which authorized the United States to export their goods towards all European ports with the exception of France and England. The break out of a new war against the British found the United States army still unprepared to face the redcoats.[25] For the United States, the year 1814 was characterized by the serious possibility to be subjected for the second time by the British crown. However, the fire of the White House inspired the Americans to raise up again and defend their freedom. In such a historical and emotional context, the publication of a new edition of one of the most patriotic among the American books, meant even more: in the same way as it was conceived to be in 1779, *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, was distributed as a sort of ideological propellent for the US citizens in a very complex and difficult situation for the Union.

Another period in which the divulgation of Ethan Allen was most meaningful was the decade between 1838 and 1849. During such period of time Ethan Allen's *Narrative* was re-published not less than five times. In 1838, the third edition of the *Narrative* was published by Johnson & Co. as a result of the handover of printing houses, from Isaiah Thomas, to Chauncey Goodrich. In those years the American patriotic discourse was reaching one of its most fundamental stages.[26] The declaration of war against Mexico, after a ten years incubation, determined a strong

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[25] The British forces, therefore, prevailed, and during the summer of 1814, a part of the British army entered in Washington and set fire to most of the governmental buildings, the White House included. However the offensive was somehow stopped, thanks to patriotic rage, rather than to military superiority. The British were blocked in Baltimore, the invasion stopped in New England, and Andrew Jackson (the future president) won several battles in the South, opposing to redcoats with the Kentucky and Tennessee militias, two corps composed of creoles, pirates and Afro-Americans (see Del Pero, 2008).

[26] The 30s and 40s of the XIX century were marked by several contacts between the Union and Mexico, that will determine the break out of the Mexican-American War. The problem generated by the status of the region of Texas cannot be considered, though, the only consistent reason for a war: the American foreign policy was shaping the concept of expansionism, and the defeat of Mexico was the only way possible to fix the US borders on the Rio Grande. President Polk declared war to general Sant'Ana in May 1846, and in February 1848, with the Guadalupe-

patriotic zeal: more than 100,000 men enlisted, and the action had the favor of most intellectuals of the time, like Walt Whitman[27] or Nathaniel Hawthorne.[28] Yet, such general enthusiastic feeling for the destiny of America could not derive only from a land controversy which resulted in a two-year war. Such spirit had been evolving through gradual passages: in 1845 John o'Sullivan, in the Democratic Review, coined the famous expression "Manifest Destiny". In 1848, Charles J. Peterson published in Philadelphia a book titled *The Military Heroes of the Revolution, with a Narrative of the War of Independence*. The text can be considered one of the first authoritative historical reconstruction of the American wars until the Mexican war, which had been so pivotal for American history, to have "ruined" the author's plan, and required an additional volume to his work (Peterson, 1848). The intention of such a scientific text, was certainly cognitive, but it is undoubtedly a celebratory revival of the American most famous heroes, during a period in which patriotic fervor needed to be fed with old models. That was the historical and ideological context that retrospectively allows us to understand and place the dense distribution of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*. In these years the *Narrative* was published in 1838 by Nichols & Co, known as the Goodrich edition, and the text proposed a preface from the editor of clearly celebratory character towards the hero of Ticonderoga. Together with that edition, one should also contemplate the first edition of the *Memoir of Ethan Allen*, written by Hugh Moore and published in Plattsburg (NY) in 1834. The text was one of the first historiographical works on Allen, and included an introduction written by Moore, which begins as follows: "It is well, then, to transmit to posterity, as an inheritance worthy of preservation, the lessons our fathers have taught us, and the benefits they have conferred upon mankind.- Earth contains no brighter treasure, than the unsullied

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Hidalgo treaty, hostilities ceased. The United States obtained Texas, California, New Mexico and Arizona (see Del Pero, 2008).

27 Walt Whitman wrote:"Yes, Mexico must be thoroughly chastised! Let our arms now be carried with a spirit which shall teach the world that, while we are not forward for a quarrel, American knows how to crush, as well as expand!" (See *Weeks, Building the Continental Empire*, pag. 121).

28 The writer wrote:"There is nothing in any other country similar to what we see in our own when the blast of the trumpet at once converts men of peaceful pursuits into warriors. […] The valor that wins our battles is not the trained hardihood of veterans, but a native and spontaneous fire, and there is surely a chivalrous beauty in the devotion of the citizen soldier to his country's cause, which the man who makes arms his profession and is but doing his duty cannot pretend to rival." (See *The Life of Franklin Pierce*, 1852).

lustre of patriotism-and a country, like our own, can boast no dearer feeling than the veneration she may entertain for the valour and bravery of her sons"(Moore, 1834). The statement is anything but implicit, and affirms the importance of creating a shared sentiment of patriotism in the nation; to achieve such intent, Moore did something that Allen himself had done through his own *Narrative*: he proposed admirable models to emulate:"The American Revolution called forth the latent energies of many individuals, who would, in a more peaceable state of political affairs, have slumbered in obscurity, and gone to the grave unhonored and unknown. […] Perhaps no individual, of equal advantages, and the station he occupied in life, contributed more towards establishing the independence of our country, than Ethan Allen" (Moore, 1834). In other words, the editor comment suggests the importance of shaping an American nationalistic feeling which could, if needed, defend the liberty of the nation, as the famous patriot had done before.

In 1845, Oliver L. Perkins edited another edition of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, published in Boston, prior to the declaration of the Mexican war. The beginning of the preface rephrased the contents of Moore's lines, claiming for action: if the Perkins had foreseen the importance of building American patriotism, Moore covertly asserted that the time for such sentiment had arrived, as the the following words show:"Ethan Allen, the author and subject of the following narrative, was certainly one of the most noted and notable men of his time. Bold, ardent and unyielding, he possessed an unusual degree of vigor both of body and mind, and an unlimited confidence in his own abilities." (Perkins, 1845). The message maintains a celebratory tone, by highlighting some features that would become part of the XIX century American legacy, and had consequently to be imitated and adopted.

As previously said, what discussed so far finds a confirmation in other publications of the time: in 1846 and 1849, Chauncey Goodrich published respectively the fourth and the fifth editions of Allen's *Narrative* in Burlington. The two texts do not show any difference in contents, but the moment when they appeared is clear enough to underline the patriotic charge they provoked: the fourth edition was published in the proximity of James Polk's declaration of the war to Mexico, as a

sort of incitement for the Americans before the struggle, whereas the fifth was published after the end of the conflict, as an act of celebration for the winners.

The history of the editions of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* demonstrates how wide the propagation of Allen's message was. When he wrote the text in 1779, the addressee of his message were the new Americans, and in plain terms, Allen was trying to tell them not to give up, but strengthen their efforts in the fight against their common enemy. Allen's more charged argumentation was the example of success that he could offer: his own one, based on the success of his own personal experience. The prompt to imitate a model became the pattern taught to the American new generation during the XIX century, and such prompt could come exactly from a text that had already succeeded in working for that purpose.

Undeniably, the relevance of Allen's *Narrative*, in all the fields it could reach (from literary influences to distribution), is strictly related to the content which it proposes to the readers. As a matter of fact, it is arguable that, on the most superficial level of analysis, it is the very subject of the text to determine such wide popular demand: Allen resorted to the well-known features to highlight three fundamental issues. The first dimension of the text regards the creation of a sort of American mythology at the service of independence, which could inspire not only his readers, but also the soldiers implicated in the war. The conquest of Fort Ticonderoga can be certainly incorporated in such depiction: the author presents the sortie as an epic deed in which he appears as an American hero, to be inserted in a sort of Olympus of patriots. Allen's audience needed the story of a hero to emulate and to sympathize with, and by consequence, in his *Narrative*, every anti heroic aspect of the author's life is eliminated from the literary stage and substituted, or rather shaped, to the figure of a heroic model. For this reason, Ethan Allen narrated his conquest of Fort Ticonderoga according to the topos of a legendary deed, brought to its achievement through shrewdness, courage and a slight amount of luck, despite the disparity of the number of soldiers in action. Yet, it is arguable that such a presentation was definitely more literary, than real, at least according to what Daniel E. Williams argues:

> “Between Allen's experiences and his descriptions, however, there are a number of discrepancies. […] Mighty Fort Ticonderoga was not so mighty. After receiving the Fort from the French at the close of the Seven Years' War, the British had neglected to maintain the structure. With one outer wall broken through, and other walls and roofs crumbling, the fort's commander, less than a year before Allen's attack, complained to the home government that «The Fort and Barracks are in a most ruinous situation.» […] Allen also neglected to mention that Ticonderoga was guarded only by a skeletal force of fifty soldiers.”(Williams pp. 326-327)

If one had to stand in Allen's position, he would never think that a new nation could rise from a fake myth, on the story of an easy victory, inadequate to show the heroic dimension of the man, and by extension, of the American people. The very fact that, nowadays, Colonel Ethan Allen is mostly known as the glorious conqueror of Ticonderoga, implies the explicit confirmation that, in 1775, a myth was fundamental for the feelings of a country of rebels, and that just a victory obtained uniquely with a stroke of luck would have not justified the glory of the ultimate success. There was certainly some good luck in events presented in Allen's *Narrative*, but such aspect becomes visible in the culmination of the virtuous trajectory of the main character is complete: having showed intelligence, courage and devotion to the cause during the entire imprisonment made Allen deserving of as much luck as he needed in order to achieve his objective. In such moral structure Allen tried to insert the most representing parts of his life as a patriot through his text: for example, the conquest of Ticonderoga was thought to be impossible, but Allen meant to narrate such episode as an example of his “American fortitude,” worthily rewarded by victory, and by Allen's ultimate liberation as a conclusion of his two-year captivity. The construction of this sort of rhetoric constituted a clear motivation for the manifestation of heroism in fighting the enemy,thus anticipating several recognizable traits of the “American Dream” myth: the idea that a patriot's commitment, devotion and courage, if true and honest towards the safety of America, would

deserve the achievement of his aim, and that in if he, for some reason, could not succeed, external help would arrive and help the virtuous man (be that Providence or destiny), this being at the root of one of the fundamental topoi of the United States' culture. Nevertheless, according to the perception of the hero that Allen depicted, the model that he meant to present was not only the result of his heroic actions, but also of his personality. For this reason virtue had to shine through his attitude and words: the very first words pronounced by Allen after the conquest of Ticonderoga, before his soldiery and the defeated army, unequivocally reflect his ideals as for what he deemed be a hero's essence, honesty and sense of honor:"[Captain Delaplace] asked me by what authority I demanded it: I answered him, 'In the name of the great Jehovah, and the Continental Congress (4)." The author sounds polite and resolute, and bestows the conquest of the fort to the honor of the most representative power of the United States. Yet, his writing would not correspond to the actual events, since as according to historians, Allen's words on the occasion sounded different in tone and underwent a rewriting for the sake of the narrative. Daniel E. Williams argues:

> "What Allen actually said during the final confrontation has also been amended by the later recollections of those who accompanied him to the officers' quarters. As opposed to initially shouting for the fort's surrender in the thunderous name of Jehovah and Congress, one account stated that Allen shouted:"Come out of there, you damned old rat,"while another claimed that he called:"Come out of there you sons of British whores, or I'll smoke you out."(Williams, p. 327)

Allen's literary fining provided a slight alteration of the facts in order to shape the myth of Ticonderoga in a more incisive representation. The American independence requested heroes to worship through imitation: Allen himself depicted his supreme general, George Washington, as the quintessential model to follow, presented in mythological shades, as the author argued in his *Narrative*: "But this scene of adverse fortune did not discourage a Washington: the illustrious American hero remained immovable. In liberty's cause he took up his sword" (33). Allen devoted

the same level of admiration to another member of the 'American Olympus' of the Revolution, namely general Horacio Gates, the hero of Saratoga, celebrated by the author as the following lines clearly show:"The downfall of general Burgoyne […] exalted the valour of the free-born sons of America […] and immortalized General Gates with laurels of eternal duration" (43). As we can see, even from an iconographic standpoint, the image of a Greek demigod, who wears the laurel of victory, suggest the celebrative goal he foresaw for the *Narrative*.

The disparity between a model like Ethan Allen and other figures such as Washington induced some critics to argue that Allen was but a 'poor' myth, too concrete and temporal to be able to provide an ideological texture to the American rebels; however, purposely or not, it is the instructive character of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* that concurs to the elevation of the protagonist to the position of hero for the masses: his resistance, pride and provocative attitude towards the enemy have rendered Allen a beloved example much closer to the ordinary people that to the top brass of the American politics and army. In addition to the mythological content, due to several aspects that it develops, Allen's *Narrative* could be codified as sort of political pamphlet. Obviously a text of such political and ideological relevance could not stop to the personal use the author made of his enterprise, having to go beyond personal borders and impact a larger public, like a sort of revolutionary 'guide' for the masses.

One of the widest concepts stressed by the author is his commitment to freedom. In such a bestseller as the *Narrative* became, one of the major issues to emerge was the love for freedom, which was becoming one of the pillars of the American identity, which Ethan Allen was one of the first authors to celebrate in all of its pragmatic expression. Freedom was presented from different perspectives: firstly as personal liberty, secondly as a political category, thirdly as a distinctive American characteristic.

On a very first level of reading, Allen constantly drives the reader to perceive his aversion for the English and their absolute monarchy, according to a double pattern: on one side he oftentimes professed his devotion through maxims, while on the other side he built a polar

opposition between “the good friends of America” and the royal supporters. The aim of such trend was to create a positive response to the cause of the rebels, through an increased hatred towards the enemy. Such a straightforward opposition allowed the author to enrich his message with some political traits in support of his standpoint, by inserting concepts like the idea of despotism or monarchy to the use of a non-educated kind of audience; those issues are used in a direct way, in perfect coherency with the general clarity of Allen's vocabulary. As a consequence, *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* can be definitely considered as a simple and yet dense kind of text, able to deal with abstract and complex concepts, no matter what its audience's level of education was, presenting itself as political text on the same level of a text like *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine, but able to 'convert' larger numbers of people. The emotional progression of such education of the masses is developed through an transparent syllogism: Allen's intention is to show that English and monarchists coincide, and that since the English are capable of the whole range of brutal and inhuman treatments and punishments that Allen himself suffered, so it is for the monarchists. The conclusion that the author meant to underline is exactly the result of such argument: absolute monarchy corresponds to confinement, death and violence. According to the same pattern, Allen continued the process of preaching and teaching American patriots, by highlighting other situations which contained a strong political implication and that he succeeded to translate into popular 'language'. The first of those lessons is contained in the following section:“I was persuaded that it was a premeditated and systematical plan of the British council, to destroy the youths of our land, with a view thereby to deter the country, and make it submit to their despotism”(30). In such passage, Allen warned the Americans about the British repression, about which he used the words 'premeditated and systematical' as referred to an act of mass elimination. Even though the readers of the time were probably more shocked by the actual effects of the British' actions, Allen implicitly condemned the plan which supported their procedure, that is to say based on general massacre, starvation and captivity, whose design meant to erase every possible revolutionary form of resistance, even among younger Americans. Allen was certainly concerned with the importance of

helping and saving the future citizens of the United States, but he was equally worried about the survival of the love for freedom which was at the basis of the entire principle of the Revolution, as he had already declared:“Strong indeed must the internal principle of virtue be, which supported them to brave death, and one of them went thro' the operation, as did many hundred others” (31). Also in this latter case one can easily perceive the intention of the author to affirm an ideal through the use of a more tangible and transparent explanation to reach the point.

Another theme that Allen constantly preached to his readers was a sort of cult for honor and respect for the American cause: according to his words, devotion was the necessary prerogative of the patriots, and it implied to be ready for all sorts of pains to suffer, just like he faced a captivity, or others passed through tortures or even death. The whole Narrative is presented as a proof of Allen's devotion to the cause, but it is also used as a document to testify other virtuous examples of people who were completely committed to the cause, as the following episode shows:“He further-informed me, that he and his brother had been urged to enlist into the British, but had both resolved to die first; that his brother had died last night, […] and that he expected shortly to follow him” (30). People like the two brothers Allen refers to, constituted half of another fundamental polarization that Allen built, namely, the opposition between people who were devoted and faithful to the cause, and traitors of the same, namely the Tories. The first mention of the latter group appears in Allen's introduction to his *Narrative* where he described the Tory influence as characterized by a “careless indifference” of the cruelties of war and, perhaps even worse than that, by its susceptibility for profit. Throughout the whole text, Allen professes his univocal repulsion for the Tories, defining them as unfair and lacking any sense of honor. The following quotation shows how Allen plainly refers to them as brutal and ruthless:“I have seen whole gangs of Tories making derision, and exulting over the dead, saying there goes another load of damned rebels” (30). Again in referring to a Tory officer wanting to underline the fact that he was even worse than a British officer, he writes:“A lieutenant among the Tories, insulted me in a grievous manner, saying, that I ought to have been executed for my rebellion against New York, and spit in my face” (13). The

author tried to oppose the Tories characteristics to another one: the good American unknown private soldier had to be considered an even better man as opposed to the absolute cruelty and viciousness of the traitors of America. Once again Allen tried to implicitly influence his public, through a exaltation of devoted Americans, which derived from the condemnation of the non-devoted ones.

According to what has been explained so far, one could state that through his own personal experience, Allen silently spoke to the rebels, proposing them to abstract all the episodes of his captivity, and to internalize and sympathize with those situations, in order to react in the proper way, following a good model. Another aspect of such tendency can be found within Allen's perception of resistance. As a matter of fact, the experience of imprisonment was wide common among the American rebels, and by stressing its frequency during the years of the American Revolution, Ethan Allen meant to show how such period of time could be read as referred to all the Americans: according to the ancestors of the revolutionary generation, America had always been the place where the prisoners of an old world escaped, a place where to start again, with new rules and new rights: a Promised Land. The achievement of a new condition for the pursuit of happiness passed through a process of expiation and purification, which allowed the re-birth of those who were worthy of a similar divine gift. Such an idea could perfectly fit the thirteen colonies, with their struggle for independence. However, it could not be limited only to the fatigues and sorrows of the soldiers on the battlefield: such a 'regeneration through violence'[29] regarded broader levels of the rebels, from civil people, to prisoners. Inserting Allen's experience in such a trial becomes a fundamental aspect for his regeneration, because the confrontation with his terrible destiny implied a chance to purify the soul and enable it to be reborn as a stronger patriot. After the episode of the conquest of Ticonderoga, being one of the most recognized anti-British heroes, Allen is condemned to bear all the cruelty the English were capable of: threats, insults and inhuman conditions of life are only part of his sacrifice. He was indeed often offended by the majority of the English officers he

[29] Slotkin, Richard. Regeneration through Violence, the Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860. Norman (OK): Oklahoma University Press, 2000.

came across with, being called “criminal,”(11) “rebel,”[30](9) “capital offender,”(17) up to the point of being considered crazy and delirious. But their “trash talk” often exceedes those limits, to enter the area of constantly reiterated tangible menaces, which generally referred to the gallows, as the following examples explicitly highlight: “A doctor Dace, who told me that I was outlawed by New York, and deserved death for several years past, was at last fully ripen for the halter, and in a fair way to obtain it”(11), or “he stood well to his text of hanging me”(22). The several 'removes'[31] of the prisoners from one British prison to another form a *crescendo* of cruelty and violence. However, throughout the story all those episodes are generally alternated with moments of relief, due to the good nature of some British officers. Such sections tend to make the following plague look even worst than the previous one, and consequently, a more difficult phase of purification. Firstly, Allen went through irons on his hands and feet. Yet, the following passage describes a more horrifying scene:“Into this place we were all, to the number of thirty-four, thrust and handcuffed, […], and were provided with two excrement tubs; in this circumference we were obliged to eat and to perform the office of evacuation, during the voyage to England,”(12) to which an even more painful scene follows:“Each of us was soon followed with a diarrhea and fever, which occasioned an intolerable thirst. When we asked for water, we were most commonly insulted and derided.”(13) In other words, those prisoners were kept into sewers to the point to get sick. But the most interesting information Allen provides the reader with is the one about the duration of such a treatment:“About forty days we existed in this manner”, which is a clear blink to the most famous and illustrious period of expiation of the gospels, namely, Christ's voyage of purification in the desert, completely without water, and tempted by Satan. The Christians adopted in their calendar, a forty days period, called Lent, to worship their God (their leader), through imitation.

Daniel E. Williams perfectly summarizes the concept of the rebirth process as it follows: “Allen's *Narrative* journey had taken him, literally and figuratively, through hell. His return 'from

[30] The author disliked this particular insult in particular. He considered such offense very dishonorable for a gentleman, and repeatedly react vehemently against everyone who addresses him as such.

[31] Definition willingly borrowed from Mary Rowlandson (see Rowlandson, 1682).

the dead' signified a successful pilgrimage which had brought him through the gradual stages of conversion. His enthusiasm had been tested, strengthened, and shaped by the ordeals of the captivity, finally resulting in a passionate commitment to liberty" (Williams, p. 340). Such level of enthusiasm was the personal result that Allen achieved at the end of his resistant attitude during the captivity. As has been previously discussed, in the same way as he did for other issues, the author tried to instill in his readers a thought from which they could reinforce their believes and their identity in the Revolution, to make themselves able to resist the British forces and keep fighting until the final victory.

1.5 Conclusion.

The result of the present introduction includes several dimensions of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*: the historical context in which the text was written, its literary genre, and the thematic aspects that the author meant to stress. In all these fields the book can reasonably be considered a seminal document for the formation of the American identity and culture. From the point of view of its distribution, the text was one of the first American bestsellers, not only circumscribed in the years of the American War of Independence, but it was also able to impact American patriotism for almost more than a century. As a matter of fact, the book has had one of the most relevant philological histories in the rise of American literature. While from the standpoint of its popular acceptance the text has been both a strongly emotional manifestation of shared patriotism against the British monarchy, and an instructive pamphlet for non-educated Americans since it contains several political explanations of the War of Independence. In both forms, *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* developed ideals, concepts and attitudes which would eventually become characteristic features of the modern United States. Those aspects have certainly evolved along the centuries, but their 'genes' were thoroughly influences by Ethan Allen's book.

Undoubtedly, themes like freedom or patriotism nowadays are the result of several historical and ideological steps, that may have produced something completely different from the time when Allen wrote; however, the peculiarity of its reflections, read in a unique period of time as the American Revolution was, rendered the book a guide not only for the years of the war for a long time in the history of the United States, as its distribution clearly indicates. Moreover, the obvious consequence of the large divulgation of a book whose content is hugely requested, is a further enlargement of its trade, as the fame of Allen's *Narrative* proves still in modern years.

A Note on the Translation

The present translation of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity* is based on the first edition of the text, published in 1779 by Robert Bell of Philadelphia. The following editions have also been consulted for further analysis of the *Narrative*, in view also of an accurate interpretation of the text in translation. Following the order of publication we find, the William Mentz and the Folsom and Draper editions which were respectively published in Philadelphia and Boston, in 1779; two other editions, published in 1780, namely the Trumbull (Norwich) and the Mycall (Newbury) were also consulted. In addition to these texts, I have thoroughly exploited the 1807 edition, the first annotated version of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, published in Walpole by Thomas and Thomas, whose text is, from the material point of view, the less altered from the 1779 original edition.

The whole work of translating the book raised problems of different nature: firstly, in its reproduction,[1] the Bell edition presents the most damaged text among all the editions, including several gaps of single letters, words and even entire sentences. Secondly, confronting the Bell edition with the following versions, it displays a quantity of words (last names, toponyms, adverbs) whose spelling diverts over the years. This is certainly due to a lack of a common regulation for spelling and pronunciation until the publication of Noah Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language in 1828; some of the most notable examples are farthermore-furthermore, cloathing-clothing, tire-tier, centry-sentry. The orthographic dimension opens up to a broader analysis: several last names and toponyms present the English form, or French spelling. Although this type of diversions are generally labeled as “mistakes” made by the author or the printer, it is arguable that some words were intentionally written in French in the light of the contemporary use and of the author's specific political orientation, rather than being due to historical inaccuracy. One should keep in mind that Allen himself explicitly confessed that “His affections are

1 The text that has been consulted is a facsimile reproduction of the original, and it can be found online in the Google

frenchified”(44). Such statement on the side of the author would justify cases in which the same word is written with a different spelling: for example, the name of the settlement, 'Laprair' can be also found as 'Laprairie', which not only sounds as french, but undoubtedly is a French word; another example is marked by the case of the 'district of Longale', also written as 'Longueil', a francophone spelling. The hypothesis of French variations applied on purpose to the text, finds confirmation in a quantity of words used by Allen which can be considered as Gallicisms (for example, 'to rendevous', 'to forfeit', 'parole'). However, it is arguable that the so-far given examples are not to be referred to the presence of spelling variations in English terms and last names (many can be tracked by confronting the Bell edition with the Walpole version): for example 'Ramsay' is also found as 'Ramsey', or 'Jesus' as 'Jasus'. Such instances reflect the tendency to write the same sound with different phonemes, a consequence of the previously mentioned absence of a general system of rules, and not at all to a political issue.

From the point of view of the layout, the Bell edition was printed according to some conditions and conventions which cannot be found in the later Walpole edition, such as for example, the division of each page in two columns of text. In the XVII and XVIII centuries, an usual aspect of the layout was the double-columned structure of each page: as far as the present translation, such characteristic of the first edition has not been maintained, as well as the presence, at the bottom of each page, of the first word of the following page, which was constantly anticipated and has not been observed. But the use of italics which permeates the entire *Narrative* (four long sections and several isolated sentences) has been preserved as a fundamental part in the instructive intention of the work. As a matter of fact, although Stephen Carl Arch stated that the presence of such long tranches of italics could have been “the result of the shortage of type in war-time Philadelphia,” (Arch 2000) it should also be noted that all the long sections that were not printed in roman characters coincide with specific and limited moments of the *Narrative*: for example, the first section (from page 9 to page 11) underlines the very beginning of Allen's imprisonment.

Books archive.

The second section in italics (page 18) is eleven lines long, but could theoretically be removed without a consistent change of the story: considering its strictly nautical content, the purpose of the section is clearly pedagogic. The long section on page 40 and 41 is strictly limited to a battle scene. In addition to the mentioned parts, the text is rich of isolated sentences printed in italics. They show, together with their length, the character of maxims, of *sententiae* that are printed in a different style from the main text in order to be graphically highlighted: that is the case of statements such as "I was a *full blooded Yankee*"(16), or "*I should die of old age*"(20). Such lines require to visually stand out from the rest of the text, because they assume the traits of a motto. For the same reason, general Burgoyne's proclamation was entirely printed in regular characters, which means that such a political and military speech was not meant to be highlighted as much as the one of a patriot. Nevertheless, these are mere assumptions, not being there any evident justification to sustain them, and perhaps Stephen Carl Arch is right in arguing that such use of italics was much more subordinated to the tangible availability of types, rather than to a arbitrary decision of the author or the bookseller. Simply assuming that some choice had to be made, one may deduct that they were meant to stress some passages by giving them visual relevance.

One other question, *A Narrative on Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, posed to the translator was that of transposing the punctuation in use during the 17th century, to a prose addressed to the nowadays reader. The regulation of such aspect thoroughly diverts, and in order to enable the Italian reader to the fruition of the *Narrative*, adaptation of the original punctuation to a modern convention was required: the large use of comas and semicolons has been limited for a more fluent structure of the text. Many aspects of the early American style have been purposely omitted because incoherent with the Italian style: punctuation at the end of sentence in parenthesis, question marks in indirect interrogative clauses and the use of the character '&' as correspondent to the conjunction 'and' have been avoided. For the same principle of translation from one linguistic style to the other, the use of capital letters has been reduced to proper names, toponyms and the beginning of sentences, but all those cases of words that are highlighted through capital

letters have been eliminated according to the Italian convention. Nonetheless, in the case of a direct speech, the use of inverted comas, which recurs in the entire speech at the beginning of each line, has been maintained with the intention to show the part of the rhetorical rules of the time, since it is a visual solution which does not impact the reading of the text. Several occasional characteristics of the punctuation, that are no longer in use, have been elided, but thoroughly discussed in the footnotes: for example the consequential repetition of the type '&c' by which the printer might have used to substitute the word 'etcetera', or the censure of the 'o' in the word 'God'. Moreover, the abundant use of long dashes at the end of certain sentences which were not followed by a new paragraph, and have been maintained in the Italian translation, as respectfully as possible of the original edition, in order to reflect the original style.

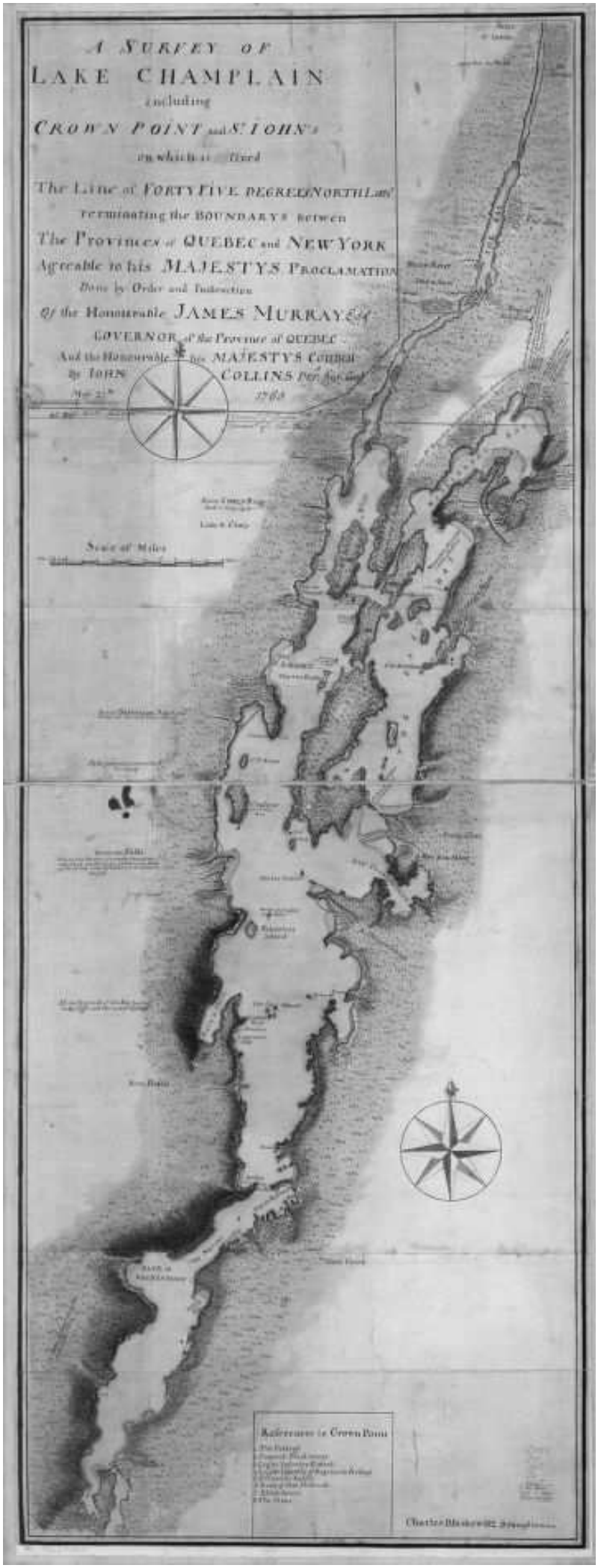
Ethan Allen's captivity *Narrative* shows the complex scenario of American society and culture in the second half of the XVIII century, including a detailed testimony on measurement units and currencies of the time, which have required to be somehow translated into coherent references to the Italian culture; for example, “A ten-penny nail”(11) or “Eight Spanish milled dollars”(36). The translation here proposed has tried to clarify such expressions as closely as possible to their original definition. However, the American units of measurement (pounds, yards, inches, ect,) have been almost entirely maintained unvaried in order to enable the reader to better understand the majority of the data that the author provided, as signs of the culture of the time.

One of the most challenging aspects of the present translation regarded the language and the lexicon employed by the author. The lexical patrimony proposed throughout the text shows two dimensions of complexity: on the one hand, a use of the English language that was quite as common at the time: simple, straightforward and consistently concrete. What apparently might suggest Ethan Allen's limited competence as a writer (in his introduction to the *Narrative* he confessed his having missed a 'liberal education'), reveals instead a great sensibility in choosing a form of divulgation as vast as possible, able to reach as many as possible at the time. Such preventive intention implied the use of a restricted number of recurrent

terms to the point of reiterate a fore-mentioned concept, rather than express it through a sophisticated dominion of synonyms, and the reason for such choice resides in the educative character of the *Narrative*. Consequently, the work of translation had to face words that are repeated several times, and implied the decision whether to maintain the repetition of terms rather than express them through a larger range of vocabulary: for example, words like 'soldier', 'officer', 'gentleman' recur throughout the text often repeated within short paragraphs or sentences, and their faithful translation required a choice that could affect the fluency of the Italian version. According to the same educative pattern, Allen limited the use of abstractions or theoretical concepts, as it is showed by the restricted choice of words like 'revolution' or 'despotism', which do not appear in the book more than two times (the word 'despotism' appears only one time at page 30). *A Narrative on Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, has also required a translation to handle the huge amount of vernacular phrases of the time, nautical terminology, and several objects and cultural aspect that are no longer in use. As far as the colloquial content of Allen's language is concerned, the Italian present translation has tried to express the sense of those idioms at the expense, sometimes, of form: such process might have determined a linguistic loss, allowing the foreign reader, though, to understand the relevance of Allen's original expressions. For example, “A cat's paw”(39), if translated literally into Italian, would not provide the same metaphorical meaning and the sense of Allen's phrase would be lost. Another case can be found in the expression “To come Yankee over him”(15), which could be paraphrased as 'to cheat', but in such case, the presence of the word 'Yankee' plays a fundamental part as opposed to the British interlocutor of Allen. Obviously, the provided Italian form offers the contextual understanding of such idiom, but the specific cultural connotation cannot be maintained.

To the modern reader, Allen's *Narrative* appears also as a precise document as far as nautical and war terminology is concerned. Several expression to which the author recurred have been largely in use throughout the XIX century, for example 'dragoons', 'master-at-arms' and 'horse light', consequently it has been easier to propose a translation which could enable an Italian reader to understand the aspect of war

narrative included in the text, by transposing those terms into correspondent expressions that have been developed in Italian too. Nevertheless, before the Napoleonic wars, some nautical expression like 'man-of-war' or 'frigate', did not refer to a specif type of vessel, but rather to an entire nautical class of warship. Such generic definition has allowed the translator to vary the use of corresponding expressions in the Italian nautical lexicon, without any significant loss of precision, since oftentimes the very text leaves some definition adaptable to the audience experience. The difficulty of the translation is confirmed by the Walpole edition of 1807, where a modernization of the terminology can already be found. In addition to the so far explained cases, the Bell edition proposes a number of archaisms which perfectly reflect the language in use in the seventies of the XVIII century, but whose translation can hardly preserve the antiquated terms: some of those words would be printed in a different form, yet in the Walpole edition, published in 1807, less the thirty years later. For example, in the Bell edition the reader can find words like 'birth' or 'rod', which are respectively archaic variations of 'berth' and 'road'.


A SURVEY OF
LAKE CHAMPLAIN
including
CROWN POINT and St. JOHN's
in which is fixed
The Line of FORTY FIVE DEGREES NORTH Lat.
terminating the BOUNDARYS between
The Provinces of QUEBEC and NEW YORK
Agreeable to his MAJESTYS PROCLAMATION
Done by Order and Instruction
Of the Honourable JAMES MURRAY Esq.
GOVERNOR of the Province of QUEBEC
And the Honourable his MAJESTYS Council
by JOHN COLLINS Deputy Surveyor
1763
Scale of Miles
References to Crown Point

UN

R A C C O N T O

D I

P R I G I O N I A

D E L

COLONNELLO E T H A N A L L E N,

Dai giorni della sua cattura da parte degli Inglesi, nei pressi di Montreal, il 25 di Settembre 1775, fino alla sua liberazione, il 6 Maggio 1778:

INCLUDE,

I SUOI VIAGGIE E SPEDIZIONI,

I più rilevanti avvenimenti riguardanti l'autore e molti altri prigionieri dell'esercito continentale, di diverso ordine e grado, che furono oggetto delle sue osservazioni nel corso dei medesimi, con particolare riferimento al massacro dei prigionieri a New York, per mano del generale William Howe, negli anni 1776 e 1777.

Inframezzato da alcune OSSERVAZIONI DI POLITICA.

Scritto di proprio pugno, e ora pubblicato per informare i tutti coloro che ne sono interessati.-

Prezzo: dieci dollari.

Quando Dio dal caos creò il mondo,
Creò gli uomini, e li creò liberi.

American Independence, una poesia di Freneau.

PHILADELPHIA:

STAMPATO DA ROBERT BELL E VENDUTO IN THIRD STREET.

M. DCC. LXXIX.

I N T R O D U Z I O N E.

Spinto da senso di dovere verso il mio paese e dalle richieste di molti miei onorevoli amici, alcuni dei quali sono personaggi di rilievo, decisi di scrivere la seguente storia delle incredibili vicende della mia prigionia, delle scoperte che feci nel corso della stessa sulla crudele e spietata natura del nemico e sul suo comportamento nei confronti dei prigionieri in suo potere; gli uomini politici, di qualsiasi livello sociale, a partire dal rispettabile lavoratore della terra, ne facciano proprie le conclusioni, qualora lo ritengano giusto. In questi stati alcuni uomini sono stati nominati d'ufficio ed essi leggono la storia della crudeltà di questa guerra con la stessa incurante indifferenza con cui leggono una pagina di storia romana; anzi, alcuni furono scelti per incarichi di fiducia e profitto, sotto l'influenza dei lealisti.[1] Tuttavia tali casi sono (spero) rari; e va da sé che sta a tutti gli uomini qui considerati, prevenire ulteriori influenze di costoro, che, fra tutto, sarebbe quanto di più funesto per la libertà e la felicità di questo paese; e fintanto che tale influenza troverà riscontro, ci deruberà della vittoria che abbiamo ottenuto, al prezzo di così tanto sangue e tanti beni.

Avrei potuto presentare al pubblico il resoconto dei fatti qui contenuti subito dopo la mia liberazione, se l'impellenza dei miei affari privati uniti a ben più urgenti questioni pubbliche non avesse richiesto la mia attenzione fino a poche settimane dalla data odierna. Il lettore comprenderà certamente che[2] da prigioniero non avrei potuto scrivere un racconto di questo tipo: il mio baule e i miei scritti venivano rovistati con ogni pretesto, pertanto non scrissi mai nemmeno una sillaba, né presi appunti da cui avrei potuto sviluppare il mio racconto ma, per tutto quanto, confidai solo sulla mia memoria. Tuttavia, ho avuto la massima cura e scrupolo possibile nel ricordare i fatti e nel dar loro ordine; ma poiché essi abbracciano una varietà di personaggi ed interessi contrastanti, mi rendo conto del fatto che non tutti saranno contenti di

1 I have decided to transpose the meaning of “Whig” as “indipendentista”, in opposition to “Tory”, that I have translated as “lealista;” both translations try to maintain the political implications of the two terms, which correspond to the progressive party and to the conservative one.

2 Coherently with the punctuation rules of its time, *Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity Narrative* provides a usage of punctuation which could hardly work in a similar way into an Italian version. Consequently, I have chosen to change some aspects of the style from the English text to the Italian one, according to a different regulation. My

quanto riporto su di loro: sia come sia, ho fatto della verità la mia guida incondizionata e affidato il mio onore all'attendibilità dei fatti. Sono stato molto generoso con gli Inglesi, dando loro pieno e ampio credito per l'attenzione con cui trattarono le possibili conseguenze della mia prigionia presso di loro;[3] cosa che feci agevolmente, essendo poca cosa in confronto ai trattamenti malvagi, che, in considerazione della loro grande quantità, non potevano essere contenuti in un racconto tanto conciso; sono quindi certo di aver ampiamente enumerato maggiormente i favori ricevuti, piuttosto che gli abusi sofferti. Sia la critica indulgente nello scusare le imprecisioni di questa prosa, poiché l'autore non ha sfortunatamente goduto di un'educazione liberale.[4]

Bennington, 25 Marzo 1779.

ETHAN ALLEN.

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intent was to provide an Italian solution as usable as the English one.

3 In the Bell edition (1779) the original text contains several gaps which make a number of words incomprehensible throughout the text. In the largest part of such cases, the natural translation of those gaps is deducible from the context, or, if the blank is limited only to a single letter in a given word, from the rest of the letters involved in a certain word. I have therefore chosen to use as a comparison for my deductions, the second edition of the text at issue, Walpole, N. H. printed by Carter&Hale, New Hampshire, 1807.

4 The expression is a hardly untranslatable phrase, which was very common within the author's cultural and historical context: it was meant to be a general and extensive form of education, inclusive of literature and sciences, and whose aim was the general broadening of the mind, not professional or technical (see Webster, 1828).

RESOCONTO DELLE OSSERVAZIONI SULLA PRIGIONIA

DEL COLONNELLO ETHAN ALLEN.

Non appena raggiunsi l'età adulta e presi coscienza della storia del genere umano, ho sempre sentito un sincero fervore per la libertà. Leggo con una sorta di filosofico orrore la storia delle nazioni, condannate a una perpetua schiavitù, conseguenza della sottomissione delle proprie libertà innate ai tiranni. Pertanto, quel primo sistematico e sanguinoso tentativo a Lexington[5] di soggiogare l'America, mi elettrizzò[6] completamente la mente e accese in me il desiderio di schierarmi dalla parte del mio paese: e[7] mentre sospiravo un'occasione per mettermi in evidenza a favore di tale causa, privatamente mi furono inviate delle disposizioni dall'allora colonia (oggi stato) del Connecticut,[8] di radunare i Green Mountain Boys,[9] e con loro, se possibile, sorprendere la fortezza Ticonderoga e impadronirsene.[10] Intrapresi con gioia tale impresa; e dopo aver fatto la guardia a tutte le vie che portavano in quella direzione, con lo scopo di tagliare le comunicazioni tra la guarnigione ed il resto della regione, condussi una marcia forzata da Bennington, giungendo al lago sulla sponda opposta a Ticonderoga, la sera del 9 Maggio 1775, con duecentotrenta valorosi Green Mountain Boys; fu con estrema difficoltà che riuscii a procurarmi delle imbarcazioni per attraversare il lago. Ciononostante sbarcai ottantatré uomini nei pressi della fortificazione,

5 In Lexington, the first skirmish of the of the American revolutionary War took place. In the battle of Lexington, the English troops easily defeated a local militia of rebels, but such event had a huge resonance in all the colonies, and was the first spark of a chain reaction which determine the break out of the American Revolution (See Peterson, 1848).

6 The expression was born and spread in languages during the XVIII century. The word 'electricity' was used for the first time by the English physician Sir Thomas Browne in 1646, consequently, by the time of publication of *A Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, the expression had already entered in common use (see Skeat, 1936).

7 In the original version of *Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity Narrative* the word “And” is presented, written with capitol letter, even though the conjunction does not appear at the beginning of a sentence. Such a practice was widely common in XVIII century Anglo-Saxon writings, mostly connected to issues of emphasis on certain words or parts of the sentence. In Italian, a similar use of capital letters is circumscribed to a respectful register of speech, such as in first and last names, and in those words which follow a punctuation mark. For this reason, I have chosen not to continue the author's style concerning capital letters, but to subordinate the issue to the Italian style.

8 In 1779, year of publication of Ethan Allen's narrative, the *status* of “State” was still not applicable to the thirteen colonies”, whose new denomination was instead recognized from Great Britain in 1783 (see Peterson, 1848).

9 Military corp formed in 1760 as a militia of resistance in the controversy between the state of New York and the New Hampshire Grants (later, state of Vermont). The Green mountain boys, lead by Ethan Allen, fought in order to prevented the New York armed control on the Grants (see Moore, 1834).

10 Ticonderoga was a British garrison in the present Vermont territory (see Hall, 1892).

e rimandai le barche alla retroguardia, comandata dal Colonnello Seth Warner;[11] tuttavia iniziava ad albeggiare e fui costretto ad attaccare il forte, prima che la retroguardia potesse attraversare il lago. E poiché l'atto appariva azzardato, pronunciai la seguente arringa agli ufficiali e ai soldati:"Amici e compagni d'armi, per un certo numero di anni, siete stati soggetti al castigo e al terrore di un potere arbitrario. Il vostro valore è divenuto noto già fuori confini e riconosciuto, come dimostrano l'avvertimento e gli ordini che ho ricevuto dall'Assemblea Generale del Connecticut di sorprendere e assalire la guarnigione che ci è di fronte. Mi propongo ora di avanzare alla vostra testa e di condurvi personalmente attraverso il portone; perché stamattina dobbiamo abbandonare ogni audace ambizione o assicurarci il controllo della fortezza nel giro di pochi minuti; e per quanto sia il nostro un tentativo disperato che nessuno tranne gli uomini più coraggiosi osano intraprendere, non intendo costringervi chiunque sia di opinione contraria. Coloro i quali volontariamente mi seguano al rischio della vita, imbraccino i fucili!"

In quel momento gli uomini allineati su tre file imbracciarono il fucile. Ordinai loro di voltarsi sul fianco destro; e, alla testa della colonna centrale, li condussi immediatamente verso il già menzionato portone dove c'era una sentinella[12] di guardia, la quale all'istante sparò un colpo d'allarme verso di me: gli corsi subito contro, e lui si ritirò passando per un camminamento coperto fino alla piazza d'armi interna alla guarnigione, diede quindi un "ohé" e corse sotto un riparo. Disposi la squadra che mi aveva seguito all'interno del forte, in modo tale da fronteggiare le due guarnigioni, che si trovavano una davanti all'altra. Demmo tre urrà[13] che sorpresero terribilmente il nemico, dal momento che tutti stavano dormendo eccetto le sentinelle. Una si avvicinò a uno dei miei ufficiali con la baionetta innestata, ferendolo di striscio: il mio

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11 Seth Warner (1743-1784) was a revolutionary officer during the American Revolution, who rose to rank of Continental colonel. Before the war, he was a founder and an officer of a local militia in Vermont, known as the Green Mountain Boys. He was outlawed by New York until he fought for the Independence .He is most generally known for his leadership in the capture Fort Crow Point, the Battle of Longueuil, and the battle of Bennington (see Peterson, 1848).

12 The word used is an archaic version of "sentry". Such a spelling represents the typical Anglo-Saxon style of writing before a unification of phonetic rules, valid for all the literature. Consequently, the word used is "centry", which obviously diverges from the current phonetic order of the term, through which the sibilant sound /s/ is conveyed from the letter [c] instead of [s]. In the second edition of the *Narrative* the same word is written in the current phonetic structure (see Webster, 1828).

13 The original version presents the word "Huzza", which was, back then, a common expression of victory or

primo istinto fu quello di ucciderlo con la spada; ma nel giro di un istante cambiai idea e tradussi la furia del colpo in un taglio superficiale sul lato della sua testa; al che gettò l'arma e chiese quartiere, cosa che io prontamente gli garantii, e domandandogli dove risiedeva l'ufficiale in comando: egli mi indicò sulla facciata di una delle caserme, nel lato ovest della fortificazione, delle scale che portavano al secondo piano del suddetto edificio verso cui mi diressi immediatamente, ordinando al comandante (Capitano Delaplace) di uscire all'istante, altrimenti avrei eliminato l'intera guarnigione. A tali parole il capitano si presentò immediatamente sulla porta ancora con i calzoni in mano e all'ordine di resa immediata del forte, mi chiese con quale autorità richiedevo ciò: gli risposi, "In nome del grande Jeova e del Congresso Continentale" (L'autorità del Congresso era davvero poco conosciuta all'epoca). Fece per parlare nuovamente ma lo interruppi e con la spada sguainata, pendente sulla sua testa, domandai nuovamente l'immediata resa della guarnigione; a quel punto ottemperò all'ordine e comandò ai suoi uomini di serrare i ranghi seduta stante disarmati giacché si era arreso. Nel frattempo alcuni de miei ufficiali avevano impartito ordini e di conseguenza tutte le porte delle caserme vennero sfondate e circa un terzo dei soldati furono fatti prigionieri, tra questi, il menzionato capitano, un tale luogotenente Feltham, un comandante d'artiglieria, un fuciliere, due sergenti, e quarantaquattro soldati regolari; [furono requisiti] circa un centinaio di pezzi d'artiglieria, un mortaio da 13 pollici,[14] e una buona quantità di perni.[15]

L'incursione fu portata a compimento nel grigiore mattutino del 10 Maggio 1775. Il sole sembrò sorgere più luminoso, Ticonderoga e i suoi territori arridevano ai conquistatori, i quali brindavano alla vittoria e auguravano tanto successo al Congresso e tanta libertà e indipendenza all'America. Quello fu per me un momento felice, giacché le pagine venture del Libro del Destino ancora celavano alla mia vista il misero scenario di due anni e otto mesi di prigionia. Ma tornando alla mia narrazione: il colonnello Warner

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exhortation (see Arch, 2000).

14 Light weapon, mostly implied during sieges and in defense of garrisons. Such measure indicated the bore diameter of the mortar (see www.universe-weapon.com).

15 Metallic connection within a chain that allows a the connected object to rotate, either horizontally and also vertically. It was mostly used for the transportation and storage of heavy weapons such as cannons and mortars (see Oxford, 2007).

attraversò il lago con la retroguardia, e mi raggiunse di buon mattino. Senza perdere tempo lo inviai con circa un centinaio di uomini a prendere possesso di Crown Point, avamposto[16] piantonato da un sergente con dodici uomini; ne prese il controllo il giorno stesso, come pure di cento cannoni. A quel punto, restava ancora una cosa da fare, vale a dire assicurarci il pieno controllo del lago Champlain; per far questo occorreva impadronirsi di una corvetta[17] da combattimento, allora ormeggiata presso St. John; durante un consiglio di guerra si stabilì inoltre di armare ed equipaggiare una certa goletta,[18] attraccata a South Bay, agli ordini del capitano (ora generale) Arnold, mentre io avrei preso il comando di un battello. Fatti i preparativi necessari, spiegammo le vele da Ticonderoga alla volta della corvetta, che oltre a un tonnellaggio maggiore portava più artiglieria e una quantità maggiore di munizioni rispetto alla goletta. Quest'ultima, con a bordo il generale Arnold, navigava più veloce del battello e quindi arrivò prima a St. John; con mia sorpresa Arnold prese possesso della corvetta da solo, prima ancora che io potessi arrivare con il battello: riuscì perfino a fare prigionieri il sergente e i dodici uomini distaccati in quel posto. Mi preme segnalare che, non appena il generale Arnold ebbe sistemato i prigionieri a bordo ed ebbe fatto tutti i preparativi per spiegare le vele, il vento, che fino a poche ore prima soffiava favorevole da sud e che ben ci aveva sospinto fino a St. John, in quel momento cambiò direzione e iniziò a soffiare altrettanto da nord; e nel giro di un'ora il generale veleggiava verso Ticonderoga con il bottino e la goletta: quando lo incontrai con il mio reggimento, a poche miglia da St. John, mi salutò con una salva di cannone, alla quale io risposi con una raffica di armi leggere: ciò si ripeté per tre volte, al che con i miei uomini abbordai la nave sulla quale furono fatti molti brindisi alla salute del Congresso. Eravamo in possesso del lago Champlain e delle sue fortificazioni. Vidi questo successo come un risultato della condotta politica americana; poiché, se fosse

16 Crown Point was a British fort built in co-operation from the British army and the Provincial troops of the New England Colonies,in 1759, on Lake Champlain, between the State of New York and the territory of Vermont. The Fort was located near the town of Crown Point, and was the largest earthen fortress built in the United States (see Moore, 1834).

17 A small sailing warship provided with guns only on the upper deck. The exact meaning of such name is “which glides”, and the origins are Dutch, *sloepe*, southern Germany, *sluup* or *slupe*. The term shares its root with the French *chaloupe*, and with the Spanish *chalupa* (see Sweat, 1936).

18 A small sailing vessel, entirely rigged for battles, originally with two masts, later with three or four. The word derives from the dutch, *schooner*, but it was first called as *Scooner* in 1713, when the first was named as such in

stato preso un accordo tra le allora colonie e la Gran Bretagna, sarebbe stato facile riprendersi le suddette conquiste; ma in considerazione di una futura e sanguinosa guerra quale effettivamente diede prova di essere, il controllo del lago, delle fortificazioni, dell'artiglieria eccetera, dovevano intendersi come un importante segnale a favore della causa americana ed è meraviglioso secondo me, che mai ne perdemmo più il controllo. Niente tranne la resa di un Borgoyne[19] con tutto l'esercito britannico, avrebbe potuto a mio avviso renderne merito. E nonostante una vittoria di tal fatta saremmo stati costretti a riconquistare il controllo del lago un'altra volta, qualunque fosse il costo. Così facendo, infatti, il Canada sarebbe facilmente entrato a far parte dell'Unione e della confederazione con gli Stati Uniti d'America. Un tale evento avrebbe impedito alle tribù indiane dell'Ovest di muovere una guerra contro di noi, e avrebbe costituito una solida e durevole barriera contro ogni ulteriore disumana barbarie, commessa nei confronti degli abitanti della nostra frontiera da parte di crudeli selvaggi assetati di sangue; infatti per loro è impossibile condurre una guerra a meno che non siano sostenuti da commerci e scambi con qualche nazione civilizzata; per loro comunque insostenibile, se il Canada avesse fatto parte dell'impero americano.[20]

Agli inizi dell'autunno di quell'anno fu comandato a un piccolo esercito, agli ordini dei generali Schuyler e Montgomery, di entrare nel Canada. Quando giunse l'ordine io mi trovavo a Ticonderoga; il generale mi chiese di unirmi alla spedizione, e con lui la maggior parte degli ufficiali di campo; e sebbene a

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Gloucester, Massachussetts (see Sweat, 1936).

19 General John Burgoyne (1722–1792) was a British officer. His first experience in action took place during the Seven Years' War, but he mostly served the crown during the American Revolution. The 10/17, 1777, after finding himself completely surrounded by enemy armies, he surrendered to the rebel forces, commanded by general Horatio Gates, in Saratoga. Such defeat can be considered the first British opening to negotiation with the Americans, to conclude the war (see Peterson, 1848).

20 Ethan Allen's Captivity Narrative can be reasonably included among the founding text of the United States of America, both from the practical and theoretical point of view. As a matter of fact, from Allen's personal biography, it is possible to abstract recurrent themes that are central for the Union throughout its entire history. Freedom is the main focus, but also the here mentioned concept of empire. It politically anticipates the future of the thirteen colonies: what would be named “Manifest Destiny”, for the United States, consisted of the continental unification, followed by the birth of an American Empire, and the XIX was completely permeated by such kind of rhetoric. In this very passage of the Narrative, it is interesting to perceive how, even before the existence of the United States, the idea of an American Empire was preparatory for the survival of the nation. Liberty and empire are two dimensions considered as a whole from the Italian historian Mario Del Pero in his book, *Libertà e Impero, gli Stati Uniti e il Mondo 1776-2006*, Editori Laterza, Bari, 2008.

quel tempo io non avessi ancora avuto una conferma del mio incarico da parte del Congresso mi reclutarono ugualmente, in modo che io fossi confermato come ufficiale, proprio come ne avessi avuto mandato, potendo in tal modo se necessario comandare certi distaccamenti dell'esercito.

La considerai una proposta onorevole, che non esitai ad accettare, quindi avanzai con l'esercito fino all'isola di Auix Noix; da quel momento mi fu ordinato dal generale di recarmi, assieme al maggiore Brown e ad alcuni interpreti attraverso i boschi fino in Canada, con delle lettere indirizzate ai canadesi, per far loro sapere che l'azione dell'esercito era esclusivamente diretta contro le guarnigioni inglesi e non contro il paese, le sue libertà e la sua religione. Avendo negoziato la questione dopo mille pericoli tornai all'inizio di settembre all'isola di Auix Noix, mentre il generale Schuyler fece ritorno ad Albany. L'intero comando fu così trasferito al generale Montgomery che io avevo aiutato nel disporre una linea di difesa attorno a forte St. John. Dopodiché il generale mi ordinò di compiere un secondo viaggio attraverso il Canada, con lo stesso piano di quello precedente; e allo stesso tempo, per osservare gli umori, i progetti e i movimenti degli abitanti del paese: feci quella ricognizione con riluttanza, preferendo[21] piuttosto partecipare all'assedio di St. John, che incombeva di lì a poco; tuttavia, la stima che nutrivo per la persona del generale e l'alta considerazione che ne nutrivo come politico e come coraggioso ufficiale, mi indusse a procedere.

Predicando le nostre idee politiche, attraversai tutti i distretti lungo il fiume Sorrel fino ad un distretto all'imboccatura dello stesso, chiamato con il medesimo nome; e da lì proseguii attraverso il fiume Sorrel fino al fiume St. Lawrence,[22] risalendolo e passando per i distretti di Longale,[23] non incontrando fino a quel punto del viaggio che buoni successi. In quest'avventura, la mia guardia era costituita da canadesi,

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21 The verb to “chuse” is an archaic version of “to choose”. Such a spelling represents the typical Anglo Saxon style of writing before a unification of phonetic rules, valid for all the literature. Consequently, the word used is “Chusing”, which obviously diverges from the current phonetic order of the term in the vowel sound /u:/. Such sound is conveyed through the phoneme [u], instead of [oo], for whose existence, the current proper spelling is “Choosing”. In the second edition of the *Narrative* the same word is written in the current phonetic structure (see Webster, 1828).

22 St Lawrence river constitutes a well-known geographical reference throughout Early American Literature, so that its translation to “San Lorenzo” is generally enough accurate even in a foreign language, and it would be not incorporated in the text as a stylistic interference. Yet, since I have established to have every toponym or name of city in their original version, I have chosen, by consequence, not to make an exception for the case at issue, even though, it would have been reasonable, according to its fame.

eccezion fatta per il mio interprete e alcuni attendenti. Il mattino del 24 settembre, partii da Longale con una guardia di circa ottanta uomini, per andare a Lapraier.[24] Da lì decisi di dirigermi al campo del generale Montgomery; tuttavia, dopo essere avanzato di appena due miglia, incontrai il maggiore Brown (che era intanto stato promosso al grado di colonnello) che mi chiese di fermarmi, dicendo di avere qualcosa di molto importante da comunicare a me e ai miei sodali; al che fermai la mia compagnia, entrai in una casa, dove ebbi un colloquio con lui e alcuni miei compagni. Il colonnello Brown mi propose di "Tornare a Longale, procurarmi alcune canoe, in modo da attraversare il fiume St. Lawrence poco a nord di Montreal, mentre lui lo avrebbe attraversato a sud della città con circa duecento uomini, poiché aveva barche a sufficienza, e infine, conquistare Montreal."

Io e tutti quanti i presenti sposammo subito il piano; pertanto, tornai a Longale, radunai alcune canoe e aggiunsi una trentina di inglesi americani alla mia compagnia, quindi come d'accordo con il piano precedentemente esposto, attraversai il fiume la notte del 24. A quel punto tutta la mia compagnia constava di circa centodieci uomini, quasi ottanta dei quali erano Canadesi. passammo la maggior parte della notte nell'attraversamento del fiume, poiché avevamo così poche canoe che dovemmo attraversare e riattraversare il fiume per tre volte per poter trasportare tutta la compagnia sull'altra sponda. Poco dopo l'alba, predisposi una pattuglia a metà strada tra me e la città, con l'ordine preciso di non lasciare passare nessuno in un senso o nell'altro e predisposi un'altra pattuglia nella direzione opposta della strada, con gli stessi compiti; nel frattempo feci una ricognizione alla ricerca del terreno più adatto per organizzare la difesa, presumendo che la compagnia del colonnello Brown fosse sbarcata sull'altro lato della città e avendo il giorno prima stabilito di dare tre hurrà con i suoi uomini di prima mattina, al cui segnale noi avremmo dovuto rispondere, in modo che ambedue sapessimo che entrambi i battaglioni erano sbarcati; tuttavia essendo in quel momento, il sole già alto da due ore ed il segnale fallito, conclusi di essere in

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23 The spelling of the word is subjected to a change from the first to the second edition. In the latter one the same place is spelled in "Longueil", whose structure in the second syllable suggests a french phonetics.

24 The Spelling of this name diverts at page 7, where we find the same person called "Lapraiere". If read in french, the latter form has a specif meaning, namely "Prairie". Obviously, the form "Lapraier" does not contain a semantic

anticipo e pensai di riattraversare il fiume, ma sapevo che il nemico avrebbe scoperto un simile tentativo. Poiché non più di un terzo delle mie truppe poteva passare il fiume in una sola volta, le altre sarebbero senz'altro cadute in mano nemica. Una simile evenienza non poteva conciliarsi con i miei sentimenti di uomo, figurarsi di ufficiale: pertanto decisi di mantenere (se possibile) la posizione lo stesso. A seguito di tale decisione, inviai due corrieri, uno a Lapraire, al colonnello Brown e uno a Lasumption, insediamento francese al signor Walker che era nostro alleato, richiedendo il loro pronto sostegno, facendo presente contemporaneamente la criticità della mia situazione. Nel frattempo vari figuri si avvicinavano alle mie guardie, spacciandosi per alleati, ma furono fatti prigionieri, e portati da me.

Ordinai che li detenessero sottochiave finché la loro amicizia potesse essere meglio confermata; infatti sospettavo che si trattasse di spie, come poi si dimostrarono. Uno dei loro capi, fuggito, riferì la debolezza della mia compagnia e fu la causa principale della mia sventura; in effetti, ero stato informato che il signor Walker, ben disposto verso la mia richiesta, si era impegnato e aveva raccolto un numero considerevole di uomini per venire in mio aiuto, cosa che lo avrebbe successivamente messo in difficoltà; eppure, non appena udì della mia sorte, li disperse di nuovo.

La città di Montreal era in grande subbuglio. Il generale Carlton e l'esercito reale fecero tutti i preparativi per salire sui vascelli che avevano in forza, ma (come seppi poi) la spia che era scappata alla mia guardia e aveva raggiunto la città, provocò un cambio nei piani del nemico e spronò il generale Carlton a mandare contro di me le forze che aveva riunito. Per parte mia, avevo scelto il campo di battaglia, quando vidi però il numero di nemici uscire all'improvviso dalla città, compresi che sarebbe stato un giorno difficile, se non di nero biasimo; non avevo modo di fuggire, perché Montreal era situata su un'isola e il fiume St. Lawrence mi tagliava la comunicazione con il campo del generale Montgomery. Incitai i miei soldati a difendersi fieramente, poichè presto avremmo ricevuto aiuto e saremmo stati capaci non solo di tenere la nostra posizione, ma anche di più. Questo e molto altro, affermai con la maggiore convinzione

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meaning in English as the french version does.

possibile, veramente da parte mia sincera.

Il nemico consisteva di non più di quaranta truppe regolari, insieme a una moltitudine eterogenea, principalmente di Canadesi, con un certo numero di Inglesi che vivevano in città e alcuni Indiani. Il numero si avvicinava in tutto ai cinquecento uomini.

Il lettore noterà che la maggior parte della mia compagnia era costituita da Canadesi; entrambe le parti infatti erano composte solo da una variegata quantità di soldati. Così il nemico iniziò l'attacco da una considerevole distanza, protetto da cataste di tronchi, fossati, costruzioni e difese simili, ed io risposi al fuoco da una posizione altrettanto vantaggiosa. L'attacco iniziò tra le due e le tre del pomeriggio, poco prima che ordinassi a un volontario, di nome di Richard Young, di avanzare sul fianco con un distaccamento di nove uomini, che, coperti dallargine del fiume, potessero non solo creare problemi al nemico, ma anche, allo stesso tempo, agire come guardia al fianco sinistro del reggimento principale.

Gli spari continuarono per un certo tempo da entrambe le parti; io ero certo che un attacco portato da così lontano non sarebbe riuscito a prendere il campo (quantunque si protraesse fino a notte), ma quasi metà delle unità nemiche cominciarono ad aggirare il mio fianco destro; a quel punto ordinai ad un volontario, chiamato John Dugan, che aveva vissuto per molti anni in Canada e capiva la lingua francese, di formare un distaccamento di circa cinquanta Canadesi e di posizionarsi in un fossato in posizione vantaggiosa, che si trovava alla mia destra, al fine di impedire di essere accerchiato. Avanzò con i suoi uomini, ma invece di occupare la posizione, se la diede a gambe sulla mia sinistra con i rispettivi soldati, e lo stesso fece il signor Young. Ben presto mi resi conto che il nemico controllava la posizione che Dugan avrebbe dovuto occupare. In quel momento non avevo che circa quarantacinque uomini con me; alcuni dei quali erano feriti: il nemico continuava a circondarmi, né io ero nella posizione di evitarlo; ciò significava che quella che era stata la mia posizione di vantaggio durante la prima fase dell'attacco aveva cessato di esserlo; quasi interamente circondati da una tale sproporzione di forze, ordinai la ritirata, ma mi resi conto che quelli dello schieramento nemico, che erano originari del luogo, e i loro Indiani, riuscivano a correre

veloci quanto i miei uomini, mentre i soldati regolari non ce la facevano a tenere il loro passo. Pertanto mi ritirai per quasi un miglio, con i selvaggi che continuavano a starmi ai fianchi, e tutti gli altri mi erano alle calcagna; alla fine, in poco tempo, pensai che fosse giunta la mia ora; tanto più che temevo che non mi fosse garantita salva la vita. Tuttavia ero determinato a vendere la pelle più cara possibile; uno degli ufficiali nemici, premendo alle nostre spalle, scaricò il suo fucile[25] contro di me; il pallettone mi fischiò molto vicino, come più volte avvenne in quella giornata. Risposi al fuoco e lo mancai, poiché l'inseguimento aveva sfiancato entrambi; conclusi che eravamo atterriti: quindi mi rivolsi a lui sfrontatamente, e gli dissi che nella misura in cui i suoi numeri erano tanto superiori ai miei, mi sarei arreso, purché trattato con onore, e sicuro di ricevere buon quartiere per me e per i miei uomini; mi rispose che avrei potuto farlo; un altro ufficiale, giunto subito dopo, confermò l'accordo; a quel punto acconsentii di arrendermi insieme alla mia compagnia che in quel momento consisteva di trentuno effettivi e sette feriti. Ordinai loro di deporre le armi e così fecero.

L'ufficiale davanti al quale dovetti cedere a patti, ordinò quindi a me ed alla mia compagnia di avanzare verso di lui, cosa che fu fatta; gli porsi la mia spada e mezzo minuto dopo un selvaggio, parte del cui capo era rasato, mezzo nudo e dipinto, con delle piume d'uccello tra i capelli sull'altro lato della sua testa, venne correndo verso di me con rapidità incredibile; pareva avanzare con una velocità sovrumana; quando mi si avvicinò, il suo viso demoniaco era indescrivibile; gli occhi di un serpente sembravano innocenti se paragonati ai suoi. I suoi lineamenti erano orripilanti. Malizia, morte, assassinio, la collera dei diavoli e degli spiriti del male erano gli emblemi del suo aspetto e a meno di dodici piedi[26] da me spianò il fucile contro di me; non appena lo fece, io spinsi l'ufficiale a cui avevo consegnato la spada tra me e il

25 The word “Fusee” is an archaic way to mean a rifle. Its origin is related to the French word “Fusée” [fyze], nowadays translated as “rocket”. Such word provoked an etymological evolution to the currently used “fusil” [fyzi], whose phonological transcription could absolutely be influenced by the English contamination. As a matter of fact, the phoneme [i] represent the same phonetic way in which the English language would read the letter [e] in the word “fusée”. The Oxford dictionary suggests that the word at issue exists in current English in a different way of writing it: it is spelled as it follows “fusil”, so it conserves the same sound in a different phonetic structure (see Webster, 1828).

26 I have decided to maintain all the American units of measurement that appear throughout the text. One foot is equivalent to 0,304 meters, consequently, 12 feet approximately amount to 4 meters (see www.digitaldutch.com).

selvaggio; ma questi di scatto si portò ad un lato cercando di isolarmi e spararmi senza uccidere l'ufficiale; ma io fui quasi altrettanto veloce nel tenere l'ufficiale a farmi da scudo per cui la sua disgrazia sarebbe stata la mia salvezza; ma nel giro di pochi secondi fui tuttavia attaccato da un altro demonio come il precedente: allora feci voltare l'ufficiale con un'incredibile destrezza, per pochi istanti, finché mi accorsi che un Canadese (che era privo di un occhio) prese le mie difese contro i selvaggi. Un attimo dopo un Irlandese venne in mio aiuto con la baionetta innestata, e scacciò via i demóni, giurando su Cristo[27] che li avrebbe uccisi. Questo tragico episodio mi fece riflettere. Sfuggire una morte orribile rendeva persino la prigionia felice; tanto più che i vincitori mi trattarono con grande gentilezza ed educazione.

Gli[28] ufficiali regolari dissero che erano molto contenti di vedere il colonnello Allen: risposi loro che avrei preferito vederli al campo del generale Montgomery. I gentiluomini risposero che davano pieno credito alle mie parole, e nel dirigermi verso la città, che distava (immagino) più di due miglia, un ufficiale britannico camminò alla mia destra, e un nobile francese alla mia sinistra; a quest'ultimo un colpo di striscio aveva portato via un sopracciglio, ma restava comunque allegro e spiritoso, e non ricevetti abuso alcuno fino a che non arrivai all'accampamento di Montreal, dove incontrai il generale Prescott, che mi chiese come mi chiamassi, al che io risposi: allora mi domandò se fossi quel Colonnello Allen che aveva preso Ticonderoga. Gli dissi che ero proprio io. A quel punto come una furia mi agitò lo scudiscio sopra la testa, insultandomi pesantemente, e usando frequentemente la parola ribelle. Io gli dissi che avrebbe fatto meglio a non frustarmi, perché non ci ero abituato, poi gli agitai il pugno, dicendogli che quello sarebbe stato il maglio della morte per lui, se davvero pensava di colpirmi; al che il capitano M'Cloud, degli Inglesi, lo tirò per la

27 In the original text, the word “Jesus” is spelled as “Jasus”.

28 First section of four, printed in italics. It is arguable that it was a choice of the printer, or the author, in order to distinguish (also visually) a certain part of the text, by changing printing style to make it recognizable: in the present case, the purpose could be the underlining of the beginning of Allen's captivity. However, one should notice that before XIX century, and the subsequent normalization of press, each printer/bookseller could make changes to the text as availability of paper, type-fonts, and momentary exigencies determined layout, number of pages, and ultimately cost. Such profession included also the change that the printer/typesetter had run out of "regular" type fonts and used the less-often used *italics* fonts. As previously stated, in the time of the publication of the book at issue, there was no prescriptive rule on issues related to the printing style.

camicia, sussurrandogli (come poi mi disse) quanto segue, ossia che era sconveniente per il suo onore picchiare un prigioniero. Quindi ordinò alla squadra di un sergente, che aveva le baionette innestate, di venire avanti e uccidere tredici Canadesi, compresi nell'accordo precedentemente menzionato.

Mi straziò il cuore vedere i Canadesi in una situazione tanto disperata per il fatto di essermi stati fedeli; si torcevano le mani, recitando preghiere, aspettandosi morte certa. A quel punto feci un passo avanti, andandomi a mettere tra gli esecutori e i Canadesi, mi aprii la giacca e dissi al generale Prescott di affondare la baionetta nel mio di petto, poiché ero io l'unica causa per la quale i Canadesi avevano preso le armi.

Le guardie nel frattempo spostavano lo sguardo dal generale a me, come se impazientemente attendessero il drastico ordine di ficcare le loro baionette nel mio cuore; tuttavia mi rendevo perfettamente conto che la situazione lo agitava e turbava[29] *riguardo al da farsi. Ciò aumentò in me le speranze di cavarmela; infatti non intendevo morire bensì trovare uno stratagemma per salvare i Canadesi con astuzia. Il generale restò immobile per un minuto, poi mi rispose come segue:* "Non vi giustizierò ora; ma certamente salirete sulla forca di Tyburn,[30] siate maledetto."[31]

Ricordo che rabbrivii al suo menzionare un posto simile: ciononostante ero dentro di me compiaciuto per quella frase, poiché ne trassi la conclusione che l'imminenza della morte era per il momento posticipata; per quanto riguarda l'impiccagione però, la sua frase non era ottimista e dopo essere sbarcato in Inghilterra io ne fossi ancora preoccupato, come il lettore capirà con il procedere di questa storia. Il generale Prescott ordinò a uno dei suoi ufficiali di portarmi a bordo

29 "Suspence" is printed with [c] instead of [s] as standard English would require, with the same phonic effect of a sibilant vowel.

30 For many centuries, the name of Tyburn was associated to capital punishment: Tyburn was indeed a well-known scaffold in England for capital criminals, traitors and religious martyrs (see Oxford, 2007).

31 The change of font determines a return to the regular style, probably, in order to specifically highlight the officer's words from the surrounding section, entirely printed in italics. The very fact that only the words that are included in

della goletta da guerra "Gaspee," e di mettermi ai ferri, mani e piedi, cosa che avvenne lo stesso pomeriggio in cui fui fatto prigioniero.

La battaglia era durata un'ora e tre quarti di orologio e tutt'oggi non so quanti dei miei uomini vennero uccisi, anche se sono certo che non furono molti; se ricordo bene, sette furono feriti; uno di questi, di nome William Stewart, fu ferito da un selvaggio con un tomahawk,[32] *dopo essere stato preso e disarmato, ma fu salvato da alcuni nemici generosi; in seguito si riprese dalle ferite, per poi raggiungere gli altri prigionieri in Inghilterra.*

Tra le file del nemico cadde un certo maggiore Carden, che era stato ferito in undici diverse battaglie, Patterson, noto mercante di Montreal, e alcuni altri, ma non conobbi mai il totale ammontare delle loro perdite poiché le informazioni divergevano. Ho la sensazione che non sia normale che ne venissero catturati in gran numero, e ne conseguissero così poche esecuzioni; sebbene i membri della mia compagnia rimanessero sul campo e si comportassero con molto coraggio, e ben più del nemico, essi non erano altrettanto buoni cecchini e temo che siano stati tutti uccisi o presi; i feriti furono portati all'ospedale di Montreal e coloro che non lo erano, caricati su altri battelli sul fiume, ammanettati insieme, cioè a due a due, legati da un solo paio di manette, chiuse strette ai polsi di ciascuno di loro, ed erano trattati con la più grande severità, nemmeno fossero delinquenti.

Descrivo ora i ferri che mi furono messi addosso: le manette erano di misura e di forma comune, ma i blocchi alle gambe dovevano pesare almeno trenta libbre;[33] *la barra era lunga otto*

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the inverted comas are subjected to the change of font excludes the possibility of a mistake by the printer. Such precision show a prior intention.

32 A North American Indian light war-hatchet, characterized by a sharp head, generally made of stone or (later) iron. The etymological origin of the word shows a similarity among several of the most important tribes, such as Algonkin (*tomehagen*), Mohegan (*tumnahegan*) and Delaware (*tamoihecan*). The specific definition of tomahawk was explained by Lacombe from the Cree dialect: to knock someone down, to be knocked down. The use of such word has developed a number of expression connected to war and hostility (To bury the tomahawk, to dig up the tomahawk) (see Sweat, 1936).

33 One pound is equivalent to 0,45 kilograms, consequently, 30 pounds approximately amount to 13 kilograms (see www.digitaldutch.com).

piedi[34] *ed era molto pesante; i ceppi che mi stringevano le caviglie erano molto stretti. l'ufficiale che me li mise, mi disse che era la placca del re e sentii altri dire che pesava oltre trenta libbre.*[35] *I ferri mi erano così stretti sulle caviglie che non mi era possibile sdraiarmi in nessuna posizione, se non sulla schiena. Fui messo nella parte più bassa e squallida della nave, dove ottenni il privilegio di una cassa dove sedermi; la stessa mi faceva da letto durante la notte e, avendo ottenuto alcuni piccoli ceppi dalle guardie (che mi controllavano giorno e notte con le baionette innestate), da mettere sotto ciascuna estremità della barra di metallo che mi teneva le gambe, al fine di impedire che le mie caviglie facessero infezione mentre rimanevo seduto sulla cassa se mi ci sdraiassi sopra sebbene ci rimasi seduto, per la maggior parte del tempo, giorno e notte. Alla lunga, desiderando potermi sdraiare su un fianco, cosa che la presa dei ferri mi impediva, chiesi al capitano di allentarmeli, favore che mi fu negato. Il capitano rispondeva al nome di Royal e non sembrava uomo privo di umanità; eppure mi diceva spesso che aveva ordini precisi per trattarmi con tanta severità che a lui stesso risultava spiacevole; mai mi insultò, sebbene molti ufficiali venuti a bordo lo facevano. Uno degli ufficiali, che rispondeva al nome di Bradley, fu molto generoso con me; spesso mi mandava provviste dalla sua tavola; né passò mai giorno senza che mi facesse avere un buon bicchiere di grog.*[36]

Ma si torni al momento in cui fui messo ai ferri. Chiesi il permesso di scrivere al generale Prescott, cosa che mi fu accordata. Gli ricordai delle maniere gentili e civili con cui avevo trattato i prigionieri a Ticonderoga confrontata l'ingiustizia e la brutalità dei modi che avevo incontrato

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34 One foot is equivalent to 0,304 metres, by consequence, 8 feet amount to 2,43 metres (see www.digitaldutch.com).

35 The original measure indicated in the text is of “forty weight.” Such information presumably refers to the Troy Weight system of units of mass, which is no longer in use in most applications. One weight, defined as troy pound, corresponds to 5,760 grains, and 373,241 grams. The origin of the troy weight system is believed to come from the Champagne fairs in Troyes (Aube department). English troy weights were likely to derive from the similar troy weight system of Bremen. The British Empire abolished the 12-ounce troy pound in the 19th century, though it is rarely in use in the American system, especially through the submultiple of 'pennyweights' (see www.unitconversion.com).

36 A drink consisting of spirits (originally rum) diluted with water. However, oftentimes the expression was generically referred to an alcoholic drink of any sort. The word 'Grog' is the abbreviation *Old Grogram*, nickname of admiral Edward Vernon (1684-1757), who for the first time ordered the dilution of his crew's rum, in 1740 (see Sweat, 1936)

presso di lui; richiesi quindi un trattamento consono a dei gentiluomini, ma non ottenni risposta. Poco dopo scrissi al generale Carlton, con lo stesso risultato. Nel frattempo molti di coloro ai quali era permesso di vedermi furono molto insolenti nei miei confronti.

Rimasi confinato, così come ho descritto, a bordo della goletta "Gaspee" per circa sei settimane, durante le quali fui costretto ad ascoltare discorsi quantomai stravaganti e che all'epoca rispondevano a determinati obiettivi politici, più che a rendere giustizia alla storia.

Per fare un esempio degli insulti che ricevevo, in un attacco di collera svitai un chiodo di circa tre pollici di lunghezza con i denti;[37] stava nella mortasa della barra delle mie manette e armato di questo mi diressi con fare spavaldo contro coloro che mi avevano offeso; in particolare tale dottor Dace, il quale mi disse che ero stato dichiarato fuorilegge da New York e che meritavo la morte già da molto tempo e che quindi ero ben pronto per la forca. Quando lo sfidai si giustificò dicendo che ero un criminale; gli rovesciai addosso una tale marea di insulti che traumatizzò sia lui che gli spettatori, tanta era la mia rabbia. Udii qualcuno dire:"sia dannato, può anche mangiare il ferro?" Dopo che avvenne tutto ciò, al posto del chiodo fu fissato un piccolo lucchetto alle manette; infatti mi parve che alla meschinità con cui mi trattavano si unissero anche paura e codardia.

Fui poi mandato insieme ai prigionieri catturati con me su un vascello armato sul fiume, alla fonda di fronte a Quebec, sotto al comando del capitano M'Cloud degli inglesi, il quale mi trattò in modo benevolo e rispettoso, come si conveniva al mio grado; nel giro di ventiquattro ore gli dissi addio con dispiacere; eppure la fortuna non mi abbandonava: il nome del capitano del vascello sul quale fui imbarcato era Little John e insieme come i suoi ufficiali, si comportava in modo civile, generoso e cordiale. Vivevo in cabina con loro, passandomela abbastanza bene; i ferri mi furono tolti a dispetto dell'ordine che il capitano aveva ricevuto dall'ufficiale in capo; ma Little John dichiarò che un che un uomo coraggioso a bordo della sua nave non poteva essere trattato come un farabutto.

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37 A nail three inches (7.6 centimeters) long. The name is taken from its original price per hundred of pieces (see

Così ancora una volta mi ritrovai in buono stato, al punto da sentire un inconsueto sollievo per i mali che avevo sofferto di recente.

Il capitano Little John soleva recarsi a Quebec quasi ogni giorno, per portare i suoi rispetti ad altri gentiluomini e alcune dame; una volta trovandosi là, gli capitò di imbattersi in uno spiacevole incontro con un tenente di un vascello da guerra,[38] finché di parola in parola, il tenente lo sfidò a duello sulle pianure di Abraham. Il capitano Little John era un gentiluomo che possedeva un alto senso dell'onore e non poté fare altro che accettare la sfida.

Il duello fu fissato alle nove del mattino del giorno successivo. Il capitano tornò quella sera e informò me ed il suo vice[39] della questione: quest'ultimo era uno scozzese proprio come lui, dalla testa calda e rispose al proprio capitano che non avrebbe dovuto chiedere un secondo. A quel punto io lo interruppi e feci capire al capitano, che visto che se ne presentava l'occasione, sarei stato onorato di dimostrargli la mia gratitudine, facendo la parte del suo fedele padrino, al che mi strinse la mano e disse che non poteva desiderare uomo migliore. Disse:"Sono un ufficiale del re e voi un prigioniero sotto la mia custodia; dovrete tuttavia venire con me dove stabilito sotto falso nome," e aggiunse:"Dovete giurarmi sul vostro onore di gentiluomo che, sia che io viva o che io muoia, o qualunque cosa accada, voi ritornerete dal mio luogotenente a bordo di questa nave." Gli giurai solennemente quanto chiedeva. I duellanti si sarebbero dovuti scaricare addosso una rivoltella di piccole dimensioni,[40] per poi finirsi all'arma bianca con

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www.onlineconversion.com).

38 Man-of-War was a general British Royal Navy expression for a sailing warship of considerable tonnage, often meant as a frigate. The ship at issue was generally equipped with three masts, it could be up to 200 feet long and could carry up to 124 guns. The term reflects the evolution of the phrase "man-of-war ship", that was to say, a warship heavily armed with soldiers. With the passing of time, the component "ship" was less and less used, up to the point of being omitted; the result was the phrase "man-of-war." Throughout my edition, I have tried to translate the expression in different ways, avoiding a specific class of ship, but suggesting its characteristics of big dimension and powerful fitting-out: I have generally translated the expression to Italian in "vascello" or "nave da guerra." The expression sometimes included Frigates as a correspondent class of warships, however, since in the narrative, Allen oftentimes mentioned the latter, I have decided to separate the two classes of vessels (see www.thedearsurprise.com).

39 Although the word is the same of some lines before, I have decided to translate "lieutenant" to "vice" in order not to make such an evident repetition in the Italian edition.

40 During the 17th century, pocket pistols were small, concealable flintlock known as the Queen Anne pistol, the coat pistol, or the pocket pistol; their use was generally limited to self-defense and duels (see Sweat, 1936).

due grosse sciabole.[41] Una di queste fu assegnata a me; tuttavia alcuni ufficiali inglesi, che erano intervenuti quella mattina, sistemarono la controversia senza combattimento.

Dopo aver goduto di otto o nove giorni di benessere, grazie al trattamento gentile e cortese del capitano Little John e dei suoi ufficiali, fui costretto a dir loro addio,[42] separandomene nel modo amichevole con cui ero stato con loro. Accadde, come credo di rammentare, l'11 di novembre: quando apparve a punta Levy, sulla sponda opposta a Quebec, un distaccamento del piccolo esercito del generale Arnold (che aveva compiuto una marcia straordinaria nelle regioni selvagge, con l'intento di sorprendere la capitale del Canada). Fui allora portato a bordo di un vascello chiamato "Adamant" insieme ai prigionieri catturati con me e messo sotto il controllo di un commerciante inglese di Londra il cui nome era Brook Watson: un uomo dal temperamento crudele e malvagio, che probabilmente era sostenuto nell'esercizio della sua crudeltà, insieme a una cricca di lealisti con i quali egli aveva navigato fino in Inghilterra; tra questi c'erano il colonnello Guy Johnson, il colonnello Closs, con i loro pari e sottoposti, per un numero di circa una trentina di uomini.

Tutto l'equipaggio ad eccezione del colonnello Closs si rivolgeva ai prigionieri con quel fare brusco, peculiare dei lealisti quando hanno potere sugli amici dell'America, commisurando la lealtà verso il re d'Inghilterra alla barbarie, la frode e l'inganno perpetrati ai danni degli indipendentisti.

A me e ai prigionieri fu assegnata una piccola parte della nave demarcata da assi di quercia bianca. Penso che non si trattasse di più di venti piedi da una parte, e ventidue[43] dall'altra: eravamo stipati e ammanettati tutti e trentaquattro in questo spazio (al nostro numero erano infatti stati aggiunti due prigionieri in più), e ci diedero due tinozze per i nostri bisogni; durante tutto il viaggio verso l'Inghilterra entro questo angusto perimetro fummo costretti a mangiare e a compiere l'uffizio dell'evacuazione. Inoltre venivamo

41 Slang and vulgar expression which included several references (even penis). In the text, the word refers to a sword of big dimensions, since the verb "to whang" could be used meaning "to hit" and "to cut," with a very violent connotation. According to the author, the weapons where provided of a large hand guard, and also of a big blade; these information suggests that the sword at issue was a saber, which is the expression through which I have translated it (see Matthews, 1951).

42 In the original text, the current word "Farewell" has a different spelling:"Farewel."

insultati nel più duro dei modi da qualunque losco marinaio o lealista a bordo. Ma ciò che più sorprende è che nessuno di noi morisse nel corso della traversata. Quando mi fu ordinato per la prima volta di entrare in una di quelle sudicie zone attraverso una specie di porticina, mi rifiutai categoricamente di farlo, sforzandomi di dissuadere il già menzionato Brook Watson da una condotta tanto sprezzante di ogni sentimento di onore e di umanità ma non ottenni risultato e i miei uomini furono costretti a mettere piede in quel buco; il mascalzone di guardia ai prigionieri mi comandò di entrarci all'istante, insieme a tutti gli altri: per di più aggiunse che era il posto che meglio si conveniva a un ribelle e che era impertinente che un condannato a morte parlasse di umanità ed onore, che qualunque cosa che non fosse la forca andava anche troppo bene per me, e che era ciò che mi attendeva subito dopo essere sbarcato in Gran Bretagna, giacché ero mandato laggiù solo a quello scopo. Poco dopo un tenente lealista mi insultò atrocemente, dicendo che avrei dovuto essere giustiziato per essermi ribellato a New York,[44] quindi mi sputò in faccia; a quel punto (sebbene fossi ammanettato) gli saltai addosso con entrambe le mani e lo stesi, ma egli balzò dentro alla cabina con me alle calcagna; là, fu protetto da alcuni uomini con le baionette innestate, ai quali era stato ordinato di condurmi nella già menzionata latrina. Nonostante i ceppi alle mani, lo sfidai a battersi, ed ebbi l'immenso piacere di vedere che il delinquente tremava di paura; non ricordo il suo nome, ma Watson ordinò alle sue guardie di portarmi in quel postaccio con gli altri prigionieri, vivo o morto; avrei quasi preferito lasciarmi morire, e li sfidai tutti finché non mi circondarono con le baionette; quei disgraziati erano tanto brutali, miserevoli e sventurati che da loro non potevo aspettarmi altro se non ferite o morte: eppure dissi loro che erano gente buona e onesta, che non potevo biasimarli, che io ero coinvolto solo in una disputa con un commerciante di cotone[45] il quale non sapeva come comportarsi nei confronti di un galantuomo d'arme. Dissi questo più che altro per ammansirli, per garantire la mia incolumità e per mostrare disprezzo verso Watson; tuttavia capii che erano determinati a forzarmi al maledetto trattamento

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43 These measures are respectively equivalent to 6 meters and 7 meters (see www.digitaldutch.com).

44 Such accusation is referred to the contentious for the territory of the New Hampshire Grants, after which Allen gave birth to the Green Mountain Boys militia.

45 Here Allen treats ironically Watson, by opposing the humbleness of Watson's profession, to his own status of

che le loro menti perverse cariche di pregiudizi avevano in serbo per me; avrei preferito morire, ma mi arresi a quell'oltraggio, essendo portato con le baionette nella sozza stiva[46] con gli altri prigionieri; là non ci fu concessa acqua, se non il minimo, ma del tutto insufficiente ai nostri bisogni; e a seguito del fetore di quel luogo furono tutti colpiti da diarrea e febbre, che ci provocava una sete insopportabile. Quando chiedevamo dell'acqua (invece che ottenerla) venivamo generalmente insultati e derisi; e come se non bastasse tutto l'orrore di quel luogo, era così buio che non riuscivamo a vederci l'un l'altro ed eravamo invasi dai pidocchi; nonostante le durezze subite avevamo pieno accesso alle provviste di sale ed un quarto di pinta di rum al giorno;[47] quest'ultimo fu di estremo aiuto per noi e probabilmente fu grazie al rum che ci salvammo. Campammo così per quaranta giorni,[48] finché dalla cima dell'albero maestro non fu avvistata la costa dell'Inghilterra; a quel punto i prigionieri furono portati fuori dalla loro tetra dimora, e fu loro permesso di vedere la luce del sole e respirare l'aria fresca della brezza marina che per noi fu molto tonificante. Il giorno seguente sbarcammo a Falmouth.

Alcuni giorni prima di essere fatto prigioniero mi ero cambiato d'abito, per cui capitò che fui catturato vestito da canadese, cioè con una giacca corta in doppio petto di pelle di cervo, panciotto e calzoni di saia,[49] calze di lana, un buon paio di scarpe, due camicie bianche e un cappello di lana rosso: questi erano tutti gli abiti che avevo, e con i quali mi presentai in Inghilterra.

Quando i prigionieri furono sbarcati, (mossi dalla curiosità) gruppi di cittadini di Falmouth si affollarono per vederci, cosa che ci fece molto piacere. Vidi un buon numero di persone sui tetti delle case e i terreni adiacenti erano affollati di persone di entrambi i sessi: la calca era così fitta che gli ufficiali reali

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soldier and gentleman (see Arch, 2000).

46 The translation that I have chosen can be considered dissonant from the original word, but, “dungeon” is generally applicable to a semantic area related to fortification structures and cellars, The use of such term into a ship may be intended as the best choice in order to suggest a dark, lonely and gloomy setting such as the latrines where Allen is confined.

47 Measure of capacity, equal to 0,142 l (see www.digitaldutch.com).

48 Such a detail stands out among other biblical references provided from the author; as a matter of fact, a period of 40 days spent in suffering and expiation clearly allows a religious reading of captivity: the protagonist partially rereads his experience of imprisonment as a sort of American Lent.

49 Sagathy was a mixed woven fabric of silk and cotton, or wool, also known as sayette (see www.merriam-webster.com).

furono costretti a sguainare le spade per aprirsi il passaggio fino al castello di Pendennis,[50] che si trovava a circa un miglio dal paese, e dove fummo posti sotto stretta sorveglianza, per ordine del generale Carlton, allora comandante in Canada.

Quel furfante di Brook Watson partì allora di gran carriera per Londra, attendendosi una lauta ricompensa per il suo zelo; invece (come fui poi informato) il ministro lo ricevette piuttosto freddamente; intanto la minoranza del parlamento ne approfittò, asserendo che l'opposizione dell'America alla Gran Bretagna non era un atto di ribellione:"se lo fosse stato perché non giustiziare il colonnello Allen secondo la legge?" Ma la maggioranza argomentava che avrei dovuto essere giustiziato e che tale opposizione fu davvero una ribellione ma che la diplomazia impediva loro di procedere, in quanto il Congresso Americano aveva nelle sue mani più prigionieri di quanti loro ne avessero. Pertanto l'avermi mandato in Inghilterra con l'obiettivo di giustiziarmi e il fatto che convenisse loro, si presentava come un fallimento delle loro leggi e della loro autorità e di conseguenza non approvarono il fatto di avermi mandato fin là: tuttavia non sentii mai il minimo cenno delle loro discussioni in parlamento, o sulla loro attività politica finché poco tempo dopo non lasciai l'Inghilterra.

Da qui, il lettore comprenderà prontamente quanto io fossi in ansia per la mia incolumità (sapendo di trovarmi in mano ad una nazione considerata crudele ed arrogante). Cionondimeno, il primo intento che razionalmente mi proposi, fu quello che il senso umano e i principi morali non interferissero con il mio destino: coloro i quali quotidianamente venivano a trovarmi, non resistendo alla curiosità, gentili e semplici com'erano, convenivano sul fatto che sarei finito impiccato. Un gentiluomo americano, noto come Temple (e che fu benevolo nei miei confronti), mi sussurrò all'orecchio che a Londra si scommetteva sul fatto che sarei stato giustiziato; allo stesso modo mi diede, senza farsi vedere, una ghinea[51] aggiungendo poco altro.

Sebbene, pur mantenendo i miei propositi di non far interferire i giudizi morali con il mio destino,

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50 Pendennis Castle, built in 1539, was one of the fortresses which formed a line of defense along the coast of the southern half of Cornwall, as a precautionary measure against the threat of invasion to Henry VIII from the French and Spanish (see Oxford, 2007).

51 Coin in use within the British empire from 1663 till 1814, to the original value of twenty shillings. Such currency was

ero ricorso ad uno stratagemma, che speravo circolasse nel giro della loro politica. Chiesi al comandante in capo del castello l'autorizzazione di scrivere al Congresso, e questi, dopo aver consultato un ufficiale di rango superiore che viveva nel paese, mi diede il permesso di farlo. Composi, nella prima parte della lettera, un breve resoconto dei maltrattamenti cui fui sottoposto, ma, volli anche far sapere che, sebbene fossi trattato come un criminale in Inghilterra, e sempre tenuto ai ferri insieme a coloro che erano stati catturati con me, ciò fosse dovuto agli ordini che il comandante della fortezza aveva ricevuto dal generale Carlton; perciò invitai il Congresso a desistere da ogni tentativo di rappresaglia, almeno finché non avessero saputo le decisioni del governo Inglese riguardo al trattamento riservato agli altri prigionieri, e che si regolassero di conseguenza. In particolare chiesi, che se la vendetta fosse considerata necessaria, che questa fosse eseguita non in nome della mia misera persona, ma in considerazione dell'importanza della causa per la quale io tanto soffrivo- Questa è, secondo quanto posso ricordare, la sostanza della lettera firmata e sottoscritta *All'Illustrissimo Congresso Continentale*.[52] Questa lettera fu redatta[53] con l'idea che si sarebbe dovuta mandare al ministero di Londra, piuttosto che al Congresso, con l'intento di intimidire l'arrogante governo inglese, e proteggere il mio collo dalla forca.

Il giorno successivo l'ufficiale (dal quale avevo ottenuto il permesso di scrivere) venne a farmi visita, irritato per l'impudenza della lettera, (così come lo espresse) e aggiunse inoltre, “Pensate forse che siamo degli stupidi in Inghilterra, e che avremmo mandato la vostra lettera al Congresso, con tanto di istruzione su come rendere pan per focaccia alla nostra gente? Ho mandato la vostra lettera a Lord North.”-- Ciò mi diede grande soddisfazione (che celai accuratamente mostrandomi risentito) perché capii che lo avevo messo nel sacco,[54] e perché la lettera era andata proprio alla persona per la quale era stata concepita. Non ho idea (ancora oggi) se conseguì l'effetto sperato, anche se non seppi più nulla della lettera.

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so called because first coined in 1663 from gold brought from the Guinea coast (see Sweat, 1936).

52 The expression is charged with reverence and respect through a shift from regular characters to italics, in order to highlight it from the rest of the text.

53 The original text presents the verbal phrase “was wrote”, which is currently incorrect for modern English. The presence of such “mistake” bears witness of the lack of prescriptive rules in the American English at the time, as regarding not only spelling issues, but also grammatical aspects.

Il tenente Hamilton, comandante del castello, mi trattò sempre con molta gentilezza. Ogni giorno mi mandava una buona colazione e una cena direttamente dal suo desco, insieme ad una bottiglia di buon vino. Un altro gentiluomo di una certa età, il cui nome non riesco a ricordare, mi mandò un buon pranzo: ma in termini di razioni, non c'era palese distinzione tra me e i soldati; eravamo tutti sistemati in un locale comune, su una sorta di letti a castello, e ci fu concessa della paglia. I soldati furono ben nutriti con provviste fresche, e (ed io con loro) prendemmo le misure opportune per liberarci dai pidocchi.

Non potevo non provare intimamente grande angoscia per il mio destino.-- Tuttavia la nascondevo agli altri prigionieri, e anche ai nemici, che alludevano quotidianamente al cappio che mi aspettava. Tuttavia li trattavo con sdegno e disprezzo; e dopo aver mandato la lettera al ministero, non riuscivo a pensare a nient'altro da fare se non tener alto il morale, comportarmi con la dignità di un soldato, così da esibire un buon esempio di autentica forza d'animo americana. Un simile comportamento (pensavo) avrebbe favorito molto di più la mia sopravvivenza, piuttosto che un comportamento timido e sottomesso. Tale, pertanto, fu la mia condotta, e alla fine decisi (fra me e me), che se per me c'era in serbo una morte crudele, allora l'avrei fronteggiata impassibile, benché ora sia immensamente felice di essere tornato nel mio paese dai miei amici, e di aver visto umiliati il potere e l'orgoglio britannici; tuttavia posso affermare che avrei potuto (allora) morire senza il minimo segno di costernazione.

Ora ricordo chiaramente di essere stato così risoluto da non tremare né mostrare traccia di paura, poiché mi rendevo conto che essa non poteva cambiare il mio destino, né fare più che biasimare la mia memoria, rendere vili le mie ultime azioni, e mettere in ombra le altre cose che feci nel corso della mia vita. Infatti ragionavo come segue, ovvero che non c'è nulla di più normale per gli uomini, che morire con tutti i loro amici attorno, che afflitti li piangono, ma incapaci di aiutarli, cosa che, in fondo, non era molto diversa dalla morte per la quale ero così in ansia; e, siccome la morte era la conseguenza naturale alla vita animale, a cui le leggi di natura subordinano il genere umano, aver paura ed essere preoccupati sia per l'evento che

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54 The expression “to come yankee over somebody” is an archaic way to mean to take in, to humbug, to cheat (see

per il modo di affrontarlo, non si addiceva al carattere di un filosofo o di un soldato. Ritenevo sempre degno rischiare la vita per la causa che avevo sposato, né fui mai (neanche nei momenti più critici) dispiaciuto per averla intrapresa; e per quanto riguarda l'aldilà, sebbene non ne sapessi nulla, mi aspettavo cionondimeno, una volta arrivato laggiù, che sarei stato trattato come qualsiasi gentiluomo del mio calibro.

Tra tutti coloro che erano venuti al castello per far visita ai prigionieri, alcuni gentiluomini mi dissero di aver percorso cinquanta miglia per venirmi a trovare, e desiderosi di pormi molte domande e di poter parlare con me. Io risposi che sceglievo la libertà in ogni senso della parola: allora uno di quelli mi chiese quale fosse stata la mia occupazione precedente alla guerra.[55] Io gli risposi che da ragazzo avevo studiato teologia, ma che ero un rivoluzionario di professione. Egli ribatté che avevo congiurato male quando fui catturato; fui costretto ad ammettere di non avercela fatta quella volta, ma che a suo tempo li avevo cacciati da Ticonderoga. Quello era un luogo ben noto in Inghilterra, cosicché la battuta sembrò giocare a mio favore.

Era diventata un'abitudine per me, uscire da quell'angusto carcere, e lasciato nello spazioso cortile del castello, o meglio, camminare dove molti gentiluomini e dame mi aspettavano per vedermi e sentirmi. Spesso intrattenevo quel tipo di spettatori con arringhe sull'inattuabilità del dominio della Gran Bretagna sulle (allora) tredici colonie americane. In una di queste occasioni chiesi ad un signore una tazza di punch, e questi ordinò al suo servitore di portarla, cosa che fece, porgendomela, ma io rifiutai di prenderla dalle mani del suo servo; egli allora me la porse dalle sue mani, rifiutando però di bere con me, poiché ero un criminale di stato; tuttavia, io presi il punch e lo bevetti d'un fiato e porsi al gentiluomo la tazza: ciò divertì tanto gli spettatori quanto me. Mi dilungai a parlare della libertà americana: questo mi procurò il risentimento di un giovane gentiluomo imberbe della compagnia, il quale si dava grandi arie e rispose che lui "conosceva gli americani molto bene, e che era certo che non potessero reggere l'odore di polvere "da sparo." Replicai che la prendevo come una sfida, e che ero pronto a convincerlo all'istante che un

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Matthews, 1951).

americano poteva sopportare l'odore di polvere da sparo; al che egli mi rispose che non si sarebbe messo alla mia stregua. A quel punto gli chiesi di trattare la tempra degli americani con il dovuto rispetto: mi rispose che io ero irlandese; ma io gli assicurai che ero un *americano purosangue*,[56] e alla fine lo irrisi a tal punto, che abbandonò il campo di battaglia, guadagnandosi solo delle risate. Vennero a trovarmi due sacerdoti,[57] e dato che si comportarono in modo molto civile nei miei confronti, io ricambiai nella stessa maniera: discorremmo di vari aspetti di filosofia morale e di cristianità; parevano sorpresi del fatto che tali questioni mi fossero familiari, che potessi capire un sillogismo o seguire un'argomentazione. Temevo che i miei abiti canadesi contribuissero non poco alla sorpresa e all'interesse dei curiosi: vedere un gentiluomo in Inghilterra, ben vestito e di buona educazione, non era una cosa eccezionale, ma un simile ribelle, come piaceva loro chiamarmi, non si era mai visto prima in Gran Bretagna.

I prigionieri vennero sbarcare a Falmouth alcuni giorni prima di Natale, e l'8 gennaio 1776, giorno in cui ci furono tolte le manette, fu loro ordinato dal capitano Symons, di salire sulla fregata[58] "Solebay". La rimozione seguì (come fui poi informato) a un decreto di habeas corpus,[59] che fu garantito da alcuni gentiluomini Inglesi, al fine di ottenere la mia liberazione.

La "Solebay" si incontrò[60] con alcune altre navi da guerra e una quarantina di imbarcazioni da trasporto, nella baia di Cork, in Irlanda, per fare provvista d'acqua.

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55 I have translated the expression "In life" non literally in "prima della guerra."

56 The patriotic claim is printed in italics, as a way to highlight it from the rest of the text, which is printed in regular characters.

57 The word clergyman refers to a man ordained minister of the church of England, the Anglican church (see Oxford, 2007).

58 Frigate was originally a general classification meaning any of several types of warships of different sizes and roles. In the 18th century, the was used for ships which were usually as long as a regular vessel, and were square-rigged on all three masts, but were faster and less armed, mostly used for patrolling and escort. According to the definition proposed by the British Admiralty, frigates were classified as warships rated with at least 28 guns. Such distinction implied underrating of ships with fewer than 28 guns, which were then classed as "post-ships." The etymological origin of the term "Frigate" is uncertain, although it means, according to its Greek provenience, 'unfenced, not decked' (see www.thedearsurprise.com).

59 A writ of habeas corpus implies a prisoner under arrest to be brought before a judge or into court, and it ensures that a prisoner can be released from unlawful state of arrest. The right of Habeas Corpus was definitely established in the *Bill of Rights*, after the English Revolution in 1688. The United States acquired the *habeas corpus* act from the English common law, with a substitution from issuing the writ directly from the king, to popular sovereignty: everyone had the right to issue the *Habeas Corpus* writ. The United States constitution admits the possibility to suspend such right, only if absolutely necessary, whenever, the public safety may require it (see Oxford, 1933).

Quando fummo a bordo per la prima volta, il capitano Symons ordinò che tutti i prigionieri e la gran parte dei marinai imbarcati si portassero sul ponte, e fece leggere, di modo che tutti sentissero, un certo regolamento di leggi o di norme per disciplinare la loro condotta: poi, con fare autoritario, comandò a tutti i prigionieri, e a me in particolare, di andarcene dal ponte, e di non tornarci più, perché quello, disse, era un posto riservato ai gentiluomini per camminare. Allora uscii, seguito da un ufficiale, che disse di mostrarmi il luogo a me riservato e mi portò giù nel gavone di poppa.[61] dicendomi:"questo è il vostro posto."

Prima di tutto questo avevo preso freddo per cui mi trovavo in un pessimo stato di salute, e non dissi molto all'ufficiale; ma rimasi lì quella notte, e mi resi conto di essere in una situazione infernale; il capitano di una nave da guerra era più assoluto di un monarca, giacché poteva controllare tutto il suo territorio con un solo sguardo, e pretendere obbedienza con il solo movimento di un dito. Mi sentii più sconfortato di quanto mi fossi mai sentito fino a quel momento; conclusi che ciò rientrava in uno schema disciplinare: infrangere arbitrariamente ciò che è regolamento comportava sanzioni di carattere legale e di ordine pubblico.

Nonostante tutto due giorni dopo mi rasai il viso, mi lavai come meglio potei e salii sul ponte: il capitano si rivolse a me estremamente adirato e disse, "Non vi ho forse ordinato di non venire sul ponte?" e io gli risposi che aveva detto anche che "era un posto dove camminano i gentiluomini:" che ero il colonnello Allen, ma che non gli ero stato presentato adeguatamente. Questi replicò, "Dio vi maledica,[62] signore, badate bene di non camminare sul mio stesso lato del ponte." Ciò mi incoraggiò, e dopo quest' [episodio] camminai sempre secondo i suoi ordini, tranne quando egli (in alcune occasioni) energicamente mi imponeva di andarmene, e allora io riprendevo a farlo, dicendogli che poteva anche comandare i suoi schiavi, ma che io ero un gentiluomo, e pertanto avevo il diritto di camminare sul ponte; tuttavia, quando mi

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60 The verb to 'rendezvous' is a Gallicism (see Webster, 1828).

61 In the original text, the author used the word 'tire,'a spelling no longer in use in current English for 'tier.'A cable tier is a part of a vessel where the cables are stowed; warships generally were provided of two places of such sort, which were generally located one in prow and the other in the stern of the ship (see Arch, 2000).

62 Since used as an exclamation, the word "God" is censured in "G-d", as a softer version for the the readers of the time.

ordinava espressamente di andarmene, obbedivo, non tanto per compiacere la sua autorità, ma quanto per fornire un esempio all'equipaggio della nave, che doveva obbedirgli- *Camminare sul lato sopravvento del ponte è, per consuetudine, la sola prerogativa del capitano di una nave da guerra, sebbene questi, a volte, cammini accompagnato dai suoi luogotenenti, quando non ci sono estranei in giro: quando l'ufficiale di un'altra compagnia viene a bordo, il capitano cammina sul lato sopravvento, mentre l'altro gentiluomo, sottovento.*[63]

Non fu che dopo un paio di notti che alloggiavo nel gavone di poppa, che feci la conoscenza del mastro d'armi;[64] il suo nome era Gillegan, un irlandese gentile e sensibile, che in modo amichevole mi propose di condividere con lui una piccola cuccetta[65] che era stata destinata per lui tra i due ponti ed era protetta da dei teli; il suo rango a bordo equivaleva a quello di un sergente di reggimento. Ero piuttosto felice per aver accettato la sua magnanimità, e vissi con lui amichevolmente, finché la fregata rimase ancorata nella baia di Capo Fear, nella Carolina del Nord, in America.

Non successe nulla di rilevante finché la flotta si trovava nella baia di Cork, (a parte una violenta tempesta che portò i più rudi marinai e lupi di mare a pregare). Presto girò voce che io ero a bordo della "Solebay" con alcuni prigionieri dall'America; a quel punto, i signori Clark e Hays, mercanti in compagnia di alcuni gentiluomini bendisposti, contribuirono generosamente a dare sollievo e aiuti ai prigionieri, trentaquattro di numero, e in situazione di necessità. Ad ognuno di loro fu donato un abito di stoffa completo, con tanto di giacca, o soprabito, e due camicie. Il vestito che ricevetti era di un tessuto sopraffino, abbastanza per farci due giacche e due paia di calzoni, poi otto buone camicie olandesi e delle

63 The entire section shows a switch in the font, and it can be considered as detached from the narrative. It could be argued that the choice of italics meant to highlight a different status: the passage is led by a didactic purpose, and it prescribes a natural law into navy. The usage of the present tense indicates an always valid information, and it should also be noted the choice of nautical technical terms such as "windward" and "leeward". The section can be read as a sort of footnote which has been included in the main text.

64 Originally, a Master-at-Arms was the military officer, responsible for hand to hand fight training, however, when the use of firearms became predominant, the officer started to be devoted to security and law enforcement on board, among the soldiery (see Oxford, 2007).

65 Archaic variation of the current expression 'Berth.' Both forms identically derive from the stem of the verb 'to bear'. by the term 'berth', the author meant a place allotted to a ship's crew for the storage of belongings, eating or sleeping (see Oxford, 2007).

provviste, con un buon numero di gambali di seta e lana, due paia di scarpe, e due cappelli di castoro, riccamente rifiniti in oro, che mi furono mandati dal signor James Bonweel. Per di più, i gentiluomini scozzesi ci regalarono una grande quantità di vini della miglior qualità, liquori invecchiati, Jenever,[66] pane e zucchero di canna, caffè, tè e cioccolato, con una grande quantità di carne marinata in aceto e alcuni grassi tacchini, insieme a molti altri articoli (per le mie provviste) che sarebbe troppo noioso elencare qui. Ai soldati regalarono due libbre di tè e sei di zucchero di canna. Ricevemmo questi articoli a bordo, (mentre il capitano e il suo primo ufficiale erano andati a riva) con il permesso del secondo ufficiale, un bel giovane distinto, che all'epoca aveva meno di vent'anni; il suo nome era Douglass, il figlio dell'ammiraglio Douglass (come fui poi informato).

Poiché tale munificenza fu tanto gradita quanto inaspettata, e aggiungerei necessaria, s'impresse nella mia mente un altissimo senso di gratitudine nei confronti dei miei benefattori; infatti, non fui solo rifornito di generi di prima necessità e alcuni generi di conforto, ma anche con delle relative magnificenze e sontuosità. Il signor Hays, uno dei già nominati benefattore, venne a bordo, e si comportò in modo squisito, dicendomi che sperava che i miei guai fossero ormai conclusi, giacché i gentiluomini di Cork avevano predisposto che le mie provviste per la traversata fossero eguali a quelle del capitano della “Solebay”; fece un'offerta di provvigioni con le quali soccorrere ed aiutare gli altri; ciononostante, sapevo che tutto questo [ci] sarebbe stato negato: e a degno coronamento, un'altra persona mi mandò cinquanta ghinee, ma non potei accettare di ricevere l'intera somma solo per me, poiché poteva sembrare un atto di avidità; pertanto ricevetti soltanto sette ghinee; sono ad ogni modo sicuro, non solo per questo sollecito atto di generosità, ma anche per l'ampia conoscenza di molti gentiluomini di quella nazione, che come popolo essi eccellano per liberalità e coraggio.

Due giorni dopo aver ricevuto i suddetti doni, salì a bordo il capitano Symonds, pieno di invidia nei confronti dei prigionieri, e giurò su tutto il creato che nessun maledetto ribelle americano avrebbe dovuto

66 Jenever was an old Dutch gin of consistent alcoholic degree with Juniper taste. It was invented in the XVI century

ricevere simili omaggi, tanto meno dai dannati ribelli irlandesi; cionondimeno, egli si portò via tutti i liquori di cui dissi (eccetto un po' di vino che fu nascosto, e un otre da due galloni di vecchio liquore che il tenente Douglass aveva messo da parte apposta per me). Agli occhi di quest'ultimo la confisca dei miei liquori apparve abominevole; parlò, pertanto, in mio favore finché il capitano si infuriò con lui: di conseguenza procedette alla requisizione di tutto il tè e lo zucchero che erano stati offerti al resto dei prigionieri,[67] disponendoli all'uso dell'equipaggio della nave. Non ci furono portati via gli abiti,[68] ma i soldati furono costretti a prestare servizio a bordo. Poco dopo, una barca si accostò alla nave, e il capitano Symonds domandò ad un gentiluomo che vi si trovava sopra (per quanto potei udire) che cosa volessero.[69] L'uomo rispose di essere stato mandato a consegnare al Colonnello Allen alcune provviste di tè, e (se ben ricordo) disse che erano state inviate da Dublino; ma il capitano lo insultò brutalmente, gli intimò di andarsene dalla nave, e che non avrebbe permesso la consegna di quelle scorte. Venni inoltre[70] informato che i gentiluomini di Cork avevano chiesto al capitano Symonds che mi fosse concesso di sbarcare in città, ed essi si sarebbero resi responsabili del mio ritorno sulla fregata ad un orario stabilito, ma [tutto] ciò fu loro negato.

Salpammo dall'Inghilterra l'8 di gennaio, e il 12 di febbraio dalla baia di Cork. Subito prima di prendere il mare, i prigionieri che erano con me furono divisi ed imbarcati su tre diverse navi da guerra. Ciò mi procurò un certo disagio, poiché essi erano tutti devoti alla causa della libertà, e si erano comportati con straordinario valore durante i vari momenti della prigionia; eppure, tutti coloro che furono mandati su altre navi, furono trattati molto meglio di coloro che rimasero con me, come si sarebbe visto in seguito.

Quando la flotta, formata da circa quarantacinque legni, inclusi cinque vascelli da guerra, salpò

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and originally sold as a medicine, although since the XVII century it was very appreciated as a liquor. (see www.thinkingbartender.com).

67 In the original version, the conjunction “and” is given through the sign “&.”

68 The spelling “Cloathing” is no longer in use in modern English. However, in the second edition of the book, the word is spelled like “Clothing,” which means that the such edition was already being subjected by the general normalization of written American English (see Webster, 1828).

69 It is very interesting to note how the indirect interrogative clause is followed by a question mark. Such example shows that, the not yet active normalization of English, back then, impacted, among other fields, punctuation as well.

70 See note 45. The same process is found in reverse order: In the Bell edition the word “Futhermore”is printed as it is modern English, while the same word is spelled as “Fathermore” in the Walpole edition, published almost 30 years

dalla baia, spinta da una buona brezza, il clima sembrava perfetto (seppur non sintomatico degli ingiusti e sanguinosi eventi che erano in serbo). Non avevamo navigato per molti giorni, quando scoppiò una potente tempesta che imperversò per quasi ventiquattro ore senza sosta: il vento soffiava con furia incessante, e nessuno poteva restare in coperta a meno di non essere legato saldamente, in quanto le onde spazzavano il ponte una sull'altra, e ogni anima a bordo temeva per la salvezza della nave, nonché per la propria vita[71]. Durante la tempesta si aprì una falla nella nave da guerra Thunder-Bomb, la quale fu trascinata, tempo dopo, da qualche parte sulle coste d'Inghilterra, e l'equipaggio fu salvo. Ci fu allora detto che ci trovavamo nel golfo di Biscaglia.[72] Dopo che la tempesta diminuì, potei chiaramente constatare come i prigionieri venissero trattati meglio per un considerevole periodo di tempo.

Finché non arrivammo all'isola di Madeira,[73] non accadde molto altro, a parte un certo trattamento più gentile da parte del dal capitano Symonds, in seguito ad una mia richiesta, cioè il favore che il suo sarto mi facesse un vestito con le stoffe che avevo ricevuto in Irlanda, e che lui generosamente mi concesse. Potei allora camminare sul ponte con un portamento decisamente più distinto; quando approdammo a Madeira diversi gentiluomini scesero a riva insieme al comandante; questi, mi parve di capire che sparsero la voce che io mi trovassi sulla fregata; dopo di che, ancora una volta trovai che la generosità irlandese era stata chiamata in causa; infatti, un gentiluomo di quella nazione mandò a bordo il suo maggiordomo, per informarsi se io avessi accettato alcune provviste da parte sua (vino in particolare). Misi a conoscenza di tutto questo il generoso tenente Douglass, il quale prontamente mi assicurò il favore, disponendo che gli articoli potessero essere portati a bordo mentre era lui capitano in capo, aggiungendo che sarebbe stato un

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later (see Webster, 1828).

71 The expression in brackets (alias) has been omitted in the translation and substituted with a more adequate linker for the fruition of Italian prose.

72 Part of northern Spain.

73 After the commercial treaty of Metheun (1703), between England and Portugal, the two countries were considered also as military allied. Such treaty represent the first official step of this relation, which culminated in the participation of Portugal in the anti-french league, commanded by the British crown, and constituted after the french Revolution. Paul Langford reports that throughout the XVIII century, the the alliance between Great Britain and Portugal was progressively strengthening, shifting from the condition of trade partners, to a military pact, as he argues:"Lisbon was host to a resident community of british businessmen, who played a larger part not merely in trade between the two countries, but also in Portugal's own trade with other partners […]. Not surprisingly the

piacere per lui compiacermi, nonostante le resistenze che aveva precedentemente incontrato. Quindi inviai il servitore del gentiluomo ad informarlo che io avevo un grande bisogno di un simile atto di generosità, e che desideravo che il giovane gentiluomo adempisse alla disposizione al meglio, cosa che fece; tuttavia, nel frattempo, il capitano Symonds e i suoi ufficiali tornarono a bordo, e ordinarono immediatamente che ci si preparasse a salpare; essendo intanto il vento favorevole, le vele furono spiegate, proprio quando vidi il giovane in arrivo con le suddette scorte.

Il lettore ricorderà senza dubbio le sette ghinee che avevo ricevuto nella baia di Cork: queste mi permisero di acquistare dal commissario di bordo[74] ciò che volevo, se il capitano non lo avesse proibito, e sebbene io gli avessi ripetutamente chiesto di poterlo fare; invece, mi rispose, quando ero malato, che, indipendentemente da quando sarei morto, non era in alcun modo disposto a salvare la vita a dei ribelli, ma che sperava che morissero tutti; a dir la verità questo era il linguaggio di gran parte dell'equipaggio. Feci le mie rimostranze sull'irragionevolezza di un simile trattamento, non solo al capitano, ma anche con altri gentiluomini presenti a bordo, obiettando che, nella misura in cui il governo britannico non procedeva contro di me in quanto condannato a morte, nemmeno loro erano tenuti a farlo, e che per nessun motivo essi erano deputati da alcun tipo di autorità, civile o militare ad agire così; infatti il governo inglese mi aveva prosciolto rimandandomi in America come prigioniero di guerra, e come tale essi dovevano trattarmi. Inoltre, se a seguito di maltrattamenti essi avessero messo in pericolo la mia vita, avrei proceduto alla stesura di un memoriale sulla loro cattiva condotta, nella misura in cui potessi, se vivo, redimere uno dei loro ufficiali. Ma il capitano rispose che non aveva bisogno di direttive da parte mia su come trattare un ribelle, che gli inglesi avrebbero conquistato i ribelli americani, impiccato il Congresso, e allo stesso modo i promotori della ribellione (me in particolare), e infine liberato i loro prigionieri; pertanto la mia vita non aveva alcun rilievo secondo le loro priorità. Come risposta, gli dissi che se fossero rimasti fino alla

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French came to consider Lisbon an English colony." (see Langford, pp. 176-177)

74 A purser was a ship officer, responsible for every issue related to the management of money on board (see Oxford, 2007).

conquista dell'America, prima di impiccarmi *sarei morto in età avanzata*,[75] e che desideravo, fino a che tale evento si realizzasse, che mi permettesse almeno di acquistare dal commissario di bordo, con i miei soldi, quegli articoli di cui avevo tanto bisogno; egli non me lo permise, e quando gli ricordai del civile e generoso trattamento che i loro prigionieri catturati in America avevano ricevuto, mi rispose che ciò non era dovuto alla loro bontà d'animo ma al loro timore; questo perché, disse, gli Americani si aspettano di essere sottomessi, e pertanto non osano abusare dei prigionieri. Tale infatti era stato il tono degli ufficiali inglesi, e non solo degli ufficiali, ma di tutto l'esercito britannico, finché il generale Burgoyne non fu catturato (oh, felice evento). Mi appellai a tutti i miei fratelli prigionieri che erano stati con gli inglesi nei reparti del sud, affinché confermassero ciò che avevo detto su quell'argomento. Il chirurgo della "Solebay," il cui nome era North, era un uomo davvero gentile e umano, e si prese meravigliosamente cura dei prigionieri che erano malati.

Il terzo giorno di maggio gettammo l'ancora nella baia di Capo Fear nella Carolina del Nord, come aveva fatto la nave di sir Peter Parker, armata di cinquanta cannoni, un po' più indietro del molo, poiché l'acqua non era abbastanza profonda da permettergli di entrare nel golfo: due navi da guerra ci raggiunsero con quattordici imbarcazioni a vela da trasporto e altre ancora, sicché gran parte della flotta fu riunita a Capo Fear per tre settimane. I soldati imbarcati sulle navi da trasporto erano malaticci, a causa della lunga traversata; oltre a ciò, il vaiolo se ne era portato via buona parte di essi. Sbarcarono sulla terra ferma, e allestirono un campo, furono tuttavia molestati da dei fucilieri, cosa che li indusse a spostarsi su di un'isola della baia; ma io non udii mai quelle molestie da parte dei fucilieri.

Un distaccamento di truppe regolari fu inviato alla foce del fiume Brunswick; non appena sbarcarono, furono subito presi di mira da quei cecchini e tornarono indietro il giorno dopo maledicendo i ribelli per il loro vile modo di combattere, e giurando che non avrebbero dato quartiere, in quanto li avevano visti, nascosti dietro gli alberi e appostati molto vicino. Uno del distaccamento disse che avevano

75 Section printed in italics, see note 41.

avuto una perdita; ma un negro[76] che era con loro e che sentì quanto dicevano, subito dopo mi rivelò che lui stesso aveva aiutato a seppellirne trenta. Sapere che i miei compatrioti davano battaglia mi sollevò; infatti non avevo mai sentito tante spacconate come presso la truppa del generale Clinton[77] (al comando in quel periodo) e sono portato a pensare che ci fossero quattromila uomini, anche se due terzi di essi non erano preparati a combattere. Sentii un buon numero di essi dire che gli alberi in America avrebbero ben retto l'impiccagione dei frutti di una tale campagna,[78] poiché non avrebbero dato quartiere: questo è ciò che in quei mesi io sentii dire in proposito, sia da parte di ufficiali che da soldati semplici. In quei momenti desideravo che i miei compatrioti sapessero bene quanto me, con che nemico crudele e sanguinario avessero a che fare; ad ogni modo, l'esperienza aveva già insegnato a questa gente cosa dovevano aspettarsi dalle mani dei britannici una volta in loro potere.

I prigionieri che erano stati imbarcati su altri vascelli nella baia di Cork furono raggruppati insieme e caricati a bordo della fregata "Mercury" -al comando di James Montague-, eccetto uno dei Canadesi, morto durante la traversata dall'Irlanda, e Peter Noble, il quale riuscì a scappare dalla nave da guerra "Spynx" proprio in questa baia, e che dopo una nuotata incredibile, riuscì a tornare a casa nella Nuova Inghilterra sano e salvo, e fece sapere dei maltrattamenti subiti dai suoi fratelli prigionieri. La "Mercury" salpò dal porto alla volta di Halifax verso il 20 di Maggio, mentre sir Peter Parker stava raggiungendo le forze di terra, al comando del generale Clinton, per prendere Charlestown, la capitale della Carolina del Sud; ma quando seppi della loro sconfitta ad Halifax ne fui indescrivibilmente soddisfatto.

In quel momento mi ritrovavo sottoposto ad un capitano [ben] peggiore di Symonds; infatti

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76 Despite the controversial social meaning of the word, I have decided to keep the translation of the word as close as possible to the text, in order to better depict the cultural context of the time. The correspondent word which I have provided was commonly in use (even in Italian literature) throughout the entire XIX century, surely charged with a racial connotation, but without any reference to the modern debate about politically correctness.

77 General Sir Henry Clinton (1730–1795) was a British army officer, best known for his service in North America during the Seven years' War, to which experience he was in charge as general during the American War of Independence. He arrived in Boston in 1775, soon after the break out of the Revolution, and was the British Commander-in-Chief in North America from 1778 until 1782 (see Peterson, 1848).

78 The natural metaphor is clear: the killed rebels are presented as a huge quantity, comparable in number with the fruit that one could find on a tree. In addition, it was a common habit, during the American Revolution to hang prisoners to the trees (the number of scaffold was insufficient); by consequence, tree had to be strong in order to bear the

Montague era pieno di pregiudizi contro chiunque e qualunque cosa che non portasse l'insegna della corona; ed essendo per natura poco acuto, il suo rancore era ancora più aspro degli altri, o per lo meno il suo intelletto gli impediva di essere toccato da buon senso, coraggio o arguzia, per cui invece il capitano Symonds era a tratti sensibile. Un certo capitano Francis Proctor si aggiunse al nostro gruppo di prigionieri quando fummo imbarcati per la prima volta su questa nave: il gentiluomo in questione aveva precedentemente prestato servizio presso l'esercito britannico. Il capitano, e in pratica tutti gli ufficiali della nave erano furenti nei suoi confronti, e lo misero ai ferri senza la benché minima motivazione, ed egli dovette sottostare a tale misera situazione per quasi tre mesi. Durante quel tragitto i prigionieri contrassero lo scorbuto,[79] chi più e chi meno, ma in generale molto gravemente. L'equipaggio della nave ne era molto preoccupato, da che dedussi che [il morbo] si stava propagando: molti della ciurma morirono durante la traversata. Io ero debole e fiacco per la lunga e terribile prigionia, ciononostante lo scorbuto quasi non mi toccò.

Al commissario di bordo fu di nuovo espressamente proibito dal capitano di farmi avere qualsiasi cosa dalla sua riserva; al che recai sul ponte, e chiesi con i modi più eleganti il permesso di acquistare alcuni generi di prima necessità dal commissario, cosa che mi fu negata; il capitano mi disse anche che sarei stato impiccato non appena giunto ad Halifax. Tentai di riflettere sulla questione insieme a lui, ma lo trovai refrattario ad ogni ragionamento; mi appellai perfino al suo onore sottolineando come il suo comportamento verso di me e i prigionieri in generale fosse offensivo dello stesso, ma non feci breccia sul suo orgoglio impenetrabile. Mi sforzai quindi ti toccare il suo lato umano, ma scoprii che non ne aveva; infatti, la sua propensione al bigottismo dedito alla sua sola fazione lo aveva irrigidito nell'opinione che nessuna umanità fosse dovuta ai non monarchici, ma che invece il cielo e la terra esistessero solo per

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metaphorical fruits of the revolution.

79 Scurvy was a very common illness among mariners: it was provoked by a poor diet and especially by a lack of vitamin C. Its effect implies physical deterioration, haemorrhage and ulcerous rash. The causes of the sickness were discovered by James Lind in the middle of XVIII century, but it was in 1795 that the English navy begun, previously suggested by Admiral Edward Vernon, to provide daily the mariners with fruit or lime juice. As the Narrative will show later, the conventional cure, back then, consisted in burying the sick up to the neck (see Arch, 2000).

compiacere il re e le sue creature; snocciolò alcune idee considerevolmente servili ed incomprensibili, appena intinte nel concetto di monarchia, ma rimase fermo nella sua determinazione di impiccarmi. In seguito proibì al suo medico di somministrare alcun tipo di aiuto ai prigionieri malati. Ogni notte venivo rinchiuso nel gavone di poppa, con il resto dei prigionieri e finché fummo in suo potere vivemmo da veri miserabili. Tuttavia io ricevetti atti di generosità da parecchi dei sottufficiali, che alleviarono sensibilmente la mia miseria; uno di loro si chiamava Putrass, non rammento i nomi degli altri; tuttavia dovevano mantenere segreti i loro favori, che consistevano a volte di alcuni bicchieri di buon vino, mentre altre volte di una (buona) bevuta di grog.

Una volta, durante la prima settimana di giugno, ci mettemmo alla fonda a Hook a largo di New York, dove non rimanemmo che tre giorni; durante quel tempo, vennero a bordo il governatore Tryon, il signor Kemp, il vecchio procuratore generale di New York e numerosi altri perfidi ed esaltati zappaterra lealisti. Tryon mi guardò con cipiglio severo mentre passeggiavo sul lato sottovento del ponte con i sottufficiali; lui e i suoi compagni stavano camminando sul lato sopravvento insieme al capitano e al tenente, ma non mi rivolsero mai la parola, sebbene sia molto probabile che egli stesse pensando alla vecchia disputa tra lui, la vecchia amministrazione di New York, e i Green Mountain Boys. Andarono con il capitano in cabina, e quel pomeriggio stesso tornarono a bordo del vascello ormeggiato in prossimità di Hook, dove in quel periodo si erano rifugiati per lo sconforto per la loro patria ferita. Ignoro cosa accadde tra gli ufficiali della nave e quei visitatori; ma una cosa so, cioè che da quel momento il mio trattamento da parte dei più alti ufficiali si fece più severo.

Verso la metà di Giugno giungemmo ad Halifax, dove tutti i membri dell'equipaggio che avevano preso lo scorbuto furono portati a terra, dove furono scavate strette trincee in cui essi vennero collocati e ricoperti parzialmente di terra. In effetti, ogni misura utile per sollevarli un po' fu presa: ai prigionieri invece non fu concessa alcuna cura, furono invece messi a bordo di una corvetta ormeggiata nella baia, vicino alla città di Halifax, circondata da numerose unità da battaglia con le loro lance, e con delle guardie che li

sorvegliavano costantemente, giorno e notte. A bordo della corvetta c'eravamo solo noi, a parte le guardie che occupavano il cassero; là eravamo colti da feroci morsi di fame; mi sembrava che non ci fosse concesso più di un terzo della normale razione giornaliera: eravamo tutti attanagliati da fame violenta e debolezza; dividevamo la nostra scarsa razione nel modo più equo possibile. Io condividevo lo stesso destino di tutti gli altri, e sebbene mi offrissero molto più di una giusta porzione, la rifiutavo, poiché secondo me, essendo quello un momento di grave sofferenza, era mio dovere condividerla equamente con gli altri, e dare esempio di virtù e fortezza d'animo alla nostra piccola nazione.[80]

Mandai lettere su lettere al capitano Montague, (il quale ancora ci aveva in consegna) e persino al suo luogotenente, di cui però non riesco a ricordare il nome, ma non ottenni alcuna risposta, men che meno un rimedio alla nostra sofferenza; alla sventura si aggiungeva il fatto che almeno una dozzina di prigionieri erano malati di scorbuto in stadio avanzato. Scrissi lettere personali ai dottori, per procurare, se possibile, qualche rimedio per i malati, ma tutto invano. Il capo dei medici ci passò accanto su di una barca, così vicino che i remi toccarono il naviglio su cui ci trovavamo, e io espressi le mie lagnanze con lui nel modo più cortese, ma egli nemmeno volse il capo, né mi rispose in alcun modo, sebbene io continuassi a parlargli finché non fu fuori portata. Il nostro caso si fece sempre più penoso. Ancora insistevo nello scrivere al capitano, fino a che non ordinò alle guardie, come mi raccontarono, di non portargli più altre lettere da parte mia.

Nel frattempo accadde un evento degno di essere raccontato: uno degli uomini in fin di vita per lo scorbuto giaceva su una fiancata della corvetta, e comprò due sacchetti di fragole da una canoa di indiani che passava lì a fianco, le divorò all'istante e quasi guarì. Il denaro che pagò per averle era tutto ciò che possedeva al mondo. Dopo quell'episodio, cercammo in ogni modo di procurare ancora di quella frutta, pensando che essa potesse avere i medesimi effetti sugli altri ammalati dello stesso morbo, ma non riuscimmo ad averne.

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80 The expression “Our little common-wealth” sounds quite ambiguous if referred to a little group of people. For this

Intanto venne segretamente a bordo della prigione galleggiante[81] un amico del dottore della "Mercury," e si presentò a me con una gran quantità di fiale di gocce molto forti, che si dimostrarono davvero efficaci contro lo scorbuto, anche se per curarlo si richiedevano verdura e alcuni altri alimenti; ma le gocce misero almeno un freno alla malattia: si trattò di una opportuna dimostrazione di umanità, (eppure il nome del medico mi sfugge) e sono convinto che fu il rimedio per salvare la vita di molti uomini.

Le guardie che erano state predisposte per noi, furono nel frattempo mosse da un sentimento di compassione; affidai ad una di esse una lettera di protesta diretta al governatore Arbuthnot, di Halifax, con il quale riuscì a comunicare, e che sortì l'effetto sperato; infatti, il governatore inviò a bordo della nave-prigione un ufficiale e un chirurgo, per verificare la fondatezza delle [ripetute] lagnanze. Il nome dell'ufficiale era Russel, aveva il grado di tenente, e mi trattò con modi gentili e cordiali, e andò in collera per il crudele e disumano trattamento riservato ai prigionieri; assieme al chirurgo stilò un rapporto sulla situazione per il governatore Arbuthnot, il quale, a seguito di un suo ordine, o per la sua influenza, ci fece trasferire, il giorno dopo, dalla corvetta-prigione, al carcere di Halifax, dove per la prima volta feci la conoscenza con l'oggi egregio James Lovel,[82] uno dei membri del Congresso per lo stato della Baia del Massachussets. I malati furono portati all'ospedale, mentre i Canadesi che erano in forze, furono impiegati al servizio della corona; ma quando i loro connazionali si ripresero dallo scorbuto e si unirono a loro, tutti disertarono il loro supporto al re, e di loro ad Halifax non se ne seppe più nulla, per lo meno finché il resto dei prigionieri rimase lì, fino a quasi metà ottobre. Eravamo rimasti a bordo della nave-prigione per quasi cinque settimane, e fummo fatti sbarcare ad Halifax verso metà agosto.-- Numerosi dei nostri Inglesi Americani [che erano stati fatti] prigionieri, una volta curati dallo scorbuto nell'ospedale, scapparono via, e dopo molto tempo, raggiunsero le loro vecchie case.

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reason I have chosen to translate it into an equally ambiguous word for an Italian reader.

81 Being the word "Sloop"a technical word, I have not been able to suggest any synonym, consequently, I have choose to change slightly the information about the prison-ship in order not to use the term repeatedly and redundantly.

82 James Lovell (1737-1814) was a patriot in the American Revolution. Little after the battle of Bunker Hill (June 17, 1775), the British military Governor, William Howe, commanded a roundup of suspect dissidents in Boston. James

Con me[83] *non avevo che tredici di coloro che furono portati in Canada, e che rimasero in prigione (con me) ad Halifax, i quali, aggiunti a coloro che erano stati incarcerati in precedenza, portavano il nostro numero a trentaquattro, tutti rinchiusi in una larga stanza, senza alcun riguardo al grado, all'educazione, o altro merito, dove rimanevamo dal tramonto all'alba; l'arredamento di quella spaziosa stanza consisteva principalmente di vasche escrementizie, e poiché molti di loro erano stati contagiati dal tifo*[84] *e da altre malattie, chiedemmo che i malati fossero trasferiti all'ospedale, ma ci fu negato. Protestammo contro l'ignobile pratica di essere imprigionati con i soldati semplici, essendo contraria alle leggi e agli usi di tutte le nazioni, oltre che particolarmente indisponente da parte loro, soprattutto considerando il trattamento degno di gentiluomini riservato agli ufficiali Inglesi in America; quindi, ci logorammo a furia di lamentarci e reclamare, ma tutto senza risultato; infatti il generale Massey, che comandava ad Halifax, era più inflessibile del diavolo in persona (una buona preparazione, questa, per il signor Lovel, membro del Congresso Continentale).*

Il tenente Russel (che ho già menzionato) venne a visitarmi in prigione, e mi assicurò di aver fatto del suo meglio per assicurarmi maggiore spazio a disposizione, garantito sulla fiducia.[85] *Al che un capitano inglese che era allora il sindaco della città manifestò compassione per i gentiluomini confinati in un luogo tanto sozzo e mi garantì che avrebbe usato la sua influenza per procurare loro un posto più largo; il suo nome era qualcosa come Ramsey.-*[86] *Tra i prigionieri ve n'erano cinque che reclamavano il diritto di rivendicare un accordoin nome della propria parola, cioè James Lovel,*

Lovell was involved in the sweep, and imprisoned in Halifax, where he met Colonel Ethan Allen (see Peterson, 2000).

83 The following passage is the second long section printed in italics, and the longest of the entire book (six columns). It includes Allen's stay into a prison, and his later removal to New York; unlike the previous cases, the reason for a font switch can hardly be imagined, since the section does not correspond to an episode in particular or to a well-defined period of time. One could easily state that, according to the current press style, such choice from the printer did not follow any prescriptive code.

84 The author refers to typhus: a number of epidemic infections, often spread in jails, caused by lice or fleas, and whose symptoms are headaches and a purple rash (see Oxford, 2007).

85 Verbal or unwritten promise. In military affaires, parole was a promise given by a prisoner of war upon his faith, when allowed to depart from custody, that he would return at the time appointed, and that he would not try to escape (see Webster, 1828).

l'egregio capitano Francis Proctor, un certo signor Howland, capitano di un vascello continentale da guerra, un tale signor Taylor, il suo secondo, ed infine io.

Dal punto di vista delle provvigioni, fummo serviti molto meglio che in ogni altro momento della mia prigionia; e poiché sia io che Lovel condividevamo la sventura di essere prigionieri, in così miserevoli circostanze, ero però lieto che fossimo insieme per supportarci reciprocamente, e anche per aiutare gli altri sfortunati prigionieri che erano con noi. La nostra prima attenzione era rivolta alla nostra sopravvivenza e quella della nostra piccola repubblica ferita; il resto del nostro tempo era dedicato alternativamente a politica e filosofia, giacché la pazienza era una esercizio necessario in una simile situazione infernale, ma risultava squallido e impraticabile.

Non avevo trascorso molti giorni in quel carcere, prima che una donna nobile e caritatevole, la signorina Blacden, mi procurasse ogni giorno di una lauta cena a base di carne fresca, con ortaggi, e qualche volta con una bottiglia di vino; nonostante tutto questo, non ero rinchiuso in quel posto neanche tre settimane prima che perdessi l'appetito anche per la pietanza più gustosa, a causa del tifo, come d'altronde accadde a buona parte dei prigionieri, in particolare a un certo sergente Moore, un uomo devoto e coraggioso: lo avevo visto molte volte resistere al nostromo della fregata "Solebay," quando quest'ultimo tentava di colpirlo, e ridergli in faccia con grande arroganza, trattandolo come un servo.

Un medico visitò i malati e fece del suo meglio (suppongo) per aiutarli senza un apparente secondo fine. Io mi indebolivo sempre più così come tutti gli altri. Alcuni non potevano nemmeno arrangiarsi. Alla fine ragionai tra me e me che la cipolla cruda mi avrebbe fatto bene: ne mangiai e ne sentii immediato beneficio, come successe agli altri in generale, in particolare il sergente Moore che quasi si riprese dall'aldilà; sebbene avessi sentito un po' di sollievo, trovai che la mano maligna della Gran Bretagna aveva colpo dopo colpo ridotto significativamente la mia costituzione fisica.

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86 In the second edition, the word is spelled in Ramsay.

L'esimio Lovel ed io utilizzavamo ogni argomentazione e supplica che potesse essere ben architettata, per ottenere un trattamento degno di gentiluomini, senza alcun risultato. Quindi, con l'assistenza del mio amico Lovel, scrissi al generale Massey la lettera più severa che potei: intendevo esporre il contenuto agli Inglesi come nazione e a lui come individuo, la loro vera natura. Ciò inalberò il mascalzone, poiché non poteva sopportare di vedere esplicitamente esposta la deformità della propria nazione con la chiarezza della lettera che gli avevo mandato. Egli a quel punto si infuriò e mostrò la lettera a diversi ufficiali Inglesi, specialmente al capitano Smith della fregata "Lark," il quale, invece di unirsi a lui nella disapprovazione della lettera, ne condivideva lo spirito; a quel punto il capitano Massey gli disse, state prendendo le parti di un ribelle contro di me? Il capitano Smith rispose che esprimeva solo la sua opinione e che tra loro c'era una diversità di punti di vista; di questo fui informato da un gentiluomo che lo aveva saputo a sua volta dal capitano Smith.

Pochi giorni dopo, ai prigionieri fu ordinato di recarsi a bordo di un vascello da guerra, diretto a New York; ma due di loro non erano in grado di salire a bordo, e furono lasciati ad Halifax; uno morì e l'altro guarì. Questo accadde verso il 12 di ottobre, e poco dopo esserci imbarcati il capitano mi fece convocare sul ponte; ci andai, senza sapere che si trattasse del capitano Smith o della sua nave, aspettandomi di ricevere quel solito atteggiamento inflessibile che mi era stato di norma riservato fino a quel momento, e mi preparai di conseguenza; ma quando arrivai sul ponte il capitano mi venne incontro con la mano tesa, mi diede il benvenuto sulla sua nave, mi invitò a cenare con lui quella sera, rassicurandomi che sarei stato trattato da gentiluomo, e che aveva dato ordini affinché io venissi trattato rispettosamente da tutto l'equipaggio della nave. Un simile cambiamento fu così inaspettato ed improvviso che mi vennero le lacrime agli occhi (cosa che tutte le cattiverie che avevo sopportato sino a quel momento non erano state in grado di provocare) e non fui inizialmente nemmeno in grado di parlare, ma presto mi ripresi ed espressi la mia gratitudine

per una cortesia tanto inattesa; gli feci capire che provavo un certo disagio dentro di me, considerando che le nostre situazioni erano tali, per cui era poco probabile che io avessi mai la possibilità di restituirgli la cortesia. Il capitano Smith rispose che non lo aveva fatto aspettandosi qualcosa in cambio, ma che mi aveva solo trattato come doveva essere trattato un galantuomo; disse che il nostro è un mondo incerto, e che un gentiluomo non poteva essere sicuro di nulla, se non di ciò che era in suo potere per aiutarne un altro. Poco dopo venni a sapere che si trattava dello stesso capitano Smith che (mi fu detto) aveva preso le mie parti contro il generale Massey; ma non me ne fece mai menzione ed io pensai che sarebbe stato maleducato da parte mia chiederglielo, così come di altri malintesi che potessero sorgere tra lui ed il generale a causa mia, poiché ero un prigioniero, e che stava a lui scegliere di parlarmene liberamente se lo avesse ritenuto; qualora non l'avesse fatto avrei avuto la conferma che sarebbe stato poco educato da parte mia sollevare la questione, nonostante io avessi una grande voglia di conversare con lui sull'argomento.

Cenai con il capitano, accettando il suo invito, e spesso anche con il tenente nell'armeria, ma generalmente mangiavo e bevevo, dove anche dormivo, con il mio amico Lovel e gli altri gentiluomini che erano prigionieri insieme a me.

Avevamo una cuccetta chiusa da tele tra i ponti, dove stavamo molto bene, sperando di essere riscattati.[87] *Per di più, i nostri amici di Halifax ebbero una fugace informazione sulla nostra partenza, e ci rifornirono di liquori molto vigorosi, e di articoli vari e provviste per il viaggio lungo la costa.*[88] *Il capitano Burk, anche lui fatto prigioniero, fu aggiunto alla nostra compagnia (aveva comandato una nave da guerra americana) e fu trattato con magnanimità dal capitano e dagli ufficiali della nave, proprio come me. A quel punto, eravamo in tutto trentacinque prigionieri a bordo, e mentre stavamo navigando lungo la costa, (se ricordo bene) a largo di Rhode Island, il*

87 The word is often used throughout the narrative in a military context: the meaning is the exchange of a prisoner of war (generally officers) to the enemy in return for one taken by the opposite party (see Oxford, 1933).

88 See note 45. The same process is found in reverse order: In the Bell edition the word “Coast”is printed as it is modern English, while the same word is spelled as “Cost” in the Walpole edition, published almost 30 years later

capitano Burk, insieme ad un sottufficiale della nave, (il cui nome non ricordo) venne nella nostra cabina a propormi di uccidere il capitano Smith e gli alti ufficiali della fregata e di prendere la nave; aggiunse anche che c'erano 35000 sterline d'oro a bordo. Il capitano Burk dichiarò anche che una gran parte dell'equipaggio della nave partecipava alla sedizione, spronò me ed il gentiluomo che era con me a ricorrere alla nostra influenza su soldati e prigionieri per portare il piano a compimento e portare la nave con tutto il suo oro in uno dei nostri porti.

A ciò risposi, che eravamo stati trattati troppo bene a bordo per assassinare gli ufficiali; che non avrei per nessun motivo risposto alla mia coscienza per un simile atto, e che, per l'appunto, non si sarebbe dovuto fare; mentre stavo ancora parlando, il buon Lovel confermò quello che avevo detto, quindi rimarcò l'ingratitudine di una simile azione; e che non si giustificava l'assassinio, e che per di più tutti i gentiluomini della cabina si opponevano al capitano Burk e al suo collega. Ma essi insistettero che la cospirazione sarebbe stata scoperta, e che sarebbe costata loro la vita, se il piano non fosse stato attuato. A quel punto mi opposi energicamente, e posi fine ad ogni ulteriore discussione sulla questione, e dissi loro che potevano contare sul mio onore, che avrei fedelmente protetto la vita del capitano Smith: se avessero tentato un'aggressione, io lo avrei protetto (desideravano invece che io rimanessi neutrale) e che lo stesso onore che proteggeva la vita del capitano Smith, avrebbe protetto le loro. I presenti decisero di non rivelare nulla della cospirazione, in modo tale che nessuno venisse messo a morte a seguito dei loro piani; allora il capitano Burk e il suo collega andarono a sedare la questione tra i loro adepti. Non potei fare a meno di ricordare ciò che il capitano Smith mi aveva detto, quando ero salito a bordo per la prima volta:"Il nostro è un mondo incerto, e un gentiluomo non poteva essere sicuro di nulla, se non di ciò che era in suo potere per aiutarne un altro."[89]

(see Webster, 1828).

89 The first edition of the narrative presents a frequent usage of dashes, according to the current writing style of the time. A trace of the early colonial period, such habit did not continue during the XIX century, as the Walpole edition (1807) shows.

Il capitano Smith e i suoi ufficiali si comportavano con la solita cortesia, e non seppi più nulla della cospirazione.

Quando giungemmo in prossimità di New York e gettammo l'ancora, eravamo ancora nell'ultima metà di ottobre, e rimanemmo là per parecchi giorni, quando il capitano Smith mi informò di avermi raccomandato all'ammiraglio Howe e al generale Sir William Howe[90] in quanto gentiluomo d'onore e grande lealtà, e che desiderava che io fossi trattato come tale. Al capitano Burk fu ordinato di recarsi a bordo di una nave-prigione nella baia. Io mi congedai dal capitano Smith, e fui mandato, insieme agli altri prigionieri, su una nave da trasporto, ormeggiata nella baia, comandata dal capitano Craig, il quale mi fece accomodare in cabina con lui e il suo luogotenente: mi sentii a mio agio e fui trattato molto bene sotto ogni punto di vista grazie alle raccomandazioni del capitano Smith.

Poche settimane dopo tutto questo, ebbi la gioia di separarmi dal mio amico Lovel, (per sua fortuna, in quanto il nemico continuava a trattarlo da soldato semplice; era un gentiluomo di merito, con un'educazione liberale, ma non aveva l'investitura militare e fu screditato per il suo risoluto attaccamento alla causa del suo paese). Fu scambiato con un certo Philip Skene, degli Inglesi. Io continuai a rimanere a bordo della stessa nave fino alla fine di novembre, quando feci la conoscenza di un capitano britannico (di cui però mi sfugge il nome).[91] Era quello che si può definire un tipo signorile e cordiale. Ricordo di una sua espressione gustando una bottiglia di vino, che suonava circa così:"Che ci sia nobiltà d'animo da assicurare una personale amicizia tra me e lei, anche se apparteniamo a schieramenti diversi, e che ci si possa un giorno affrontare sul campo." (Sono certo che era altrettanto leale quanto ogni altro ufficiale dell'esercito britannico). In un'altra occasione si offrì di scommettere una dozzina di bottiglie di vino, sul fatto che il forte

90 William Howe (1729–1814) was an officer of the british army, with the rank of Commander-in-Chief of british forces, against the american rebels during the American Revolution. He joined the redcoats in 1746 and fought in the Seven Years' War, and in several actions and sieges. In March 1775, soon after the battle of Lexington, Howe began his service in North America; he led the british forces in the battle of Bunker Hill and in the conquest of New York and Philadelphia (see Peterson, 1848).

91 mong the common rules of press of the time, one should note the practice of including punctuation at the end of a sentence in brackets, although it was not a mandatory and constantly reiterated rule.

Washington[92] sarebbe caduto in mano degli Inglesi nel giro di tre giorni. Accettai la posta (e l'avrei fatto anche avessi saputo che sarebbe andata proprio così) e tre giorni dopo udimmo di un prodigioso bombardamento, e che il giorno stesso il forte era stato sicuramente preso. Alcuni mesi dopo, (quando io ero libero sulla parola) egli mi si rivolse con il suo usuale spirito, e fece cenno alla scommessa. Riconobbi che l'avevo perduta, ma lui disse che non aveva intenzione di riscuoterla allora, giacché io ero un prigioniero, e che mi avrebbe colto un'altra volta, quando il loro esercito fosse arrivato fino a Bennington.[93] Risposi che era anche troppo generoso, dato che io avevo palesemente perso; ma aggiunsi che i Green Mountain Boys non avrebbero permesso loro di giungere fino a Bennington. Tutto ciò fu detto scherzosamente. Sarei stato lieto di vederlo dopo la sconfitta di Bennington, ma non fu così.

Era normale che una guardia sorvegliasse costantemente i prigionieri e che venisse spesso sostituita. Una di esse era composta da lealisti provenienti dal Connecticut, nelle vicinanze di Fairfield e Green Farms. Il nome del sergente era Hoit. Essi non smettevano di inveire contro il paese compiacendosi della loro lealtà al re, e si scagliavano aspramente contro "i codardi Yankee" (come amavano chiamarli) ma alla fine si contentavano dicendo che quando il paese fosse stato sopraffatto sarebbero stati ben ricompensati per la loro lealtà con le proprietà degli indipendentisti che sarebbero state confiscate. Dopo essere arrivato dall'Inghilterra alle coste americane, mi resi conto che quello era il consueto linguaggio dei lealisti. Ne avevo uditi molti raccontare di essere stati assoldati da generali inglesi con un'ampia ricompensa per tutte le loro perdite, delusioni e dispendi, direttamente con le proprietà lasciate dai ribelli. Quel modo di parlare mi insegnò come intervenire con i possedimenti dei lealisti, fino a dove la mia influenza poteva giungere. Si può dire che fosse un terno al lotto tra indipendentisti e lealisti: i primi dovevano inevitabilmente aver perso tutto come conseguenza della capacità dei Tories e dei loro buoni amici inglesi; e non c'è niente di più giusto che

92 Fort Washington was a rebel fortress located in the north of Manhattan. The name of the fort is related to the Battle of Fort Washington, which took place on November 16, 1776, and determined the loss of the position by the Americans, who were defeated by a combined army of British and Hessians, strong of 8,000 units. The offensive forces were led by General William Howe and the Hessian General Wilhelm von Knyphausen, at whom the fort was entitled after the the conquest (see Peterson, 1848).

93 Allen's native city, where the Green Mountain Boys militia was founded.

i lealisti corrano gli stessi rischi come effetto delle capacità dei Whigs: ma di questo se ne riparlerà nel seguito di questo racconto.

Negli ultimi giorni di novembre, i prigionieri furono sbarcati a New York, e a me fu garantita la libertà sulla parola, insieme agli altri ufficiali, ossia Proctor, Howland e Taylor. I soldati semplici furono alloggiati in sordide chiese a New York, con i prigionieri che erano stati presi a Forte Washington; la seconda notte il sergente Roger Moore (che era un uomo ardito ed intraprendente) trovò il modo di scappare insieme a tutti gli altri prigionieri che erano giunti con me, eccetto tre che furono presto scambiati. Pertanto, su trentuno prigionieri del gruppo che si trovava con me, due soli morirono in mano nemica e solo tre furono scambiati, uno dei quali morì poco dopo essere rientrato nelle nostre linee; tutti gli altri, un poco per volta, riuscirono a fuggire dal nemico.

Mi trovai quindi libero sulla parola, costretto entro i confini della città di New York, dove comunque ben presto scovai alcuni stratagemmi per vivere in modo conveniente al mio grado, anche se fui privato del denaro.-- Mi trovavo fisicamente allo stremo delle forze per una tanto barbara e lunga prigionia. Il nemico si arrese al fatto che fossi pazzo e completamente fuori controllo, ma la mia vitalità restava a tono (né io deliravo più di quand'ero giovane; tuttavia, le circostanze estreme in cui mi trovavo, a volte facevano apparire il mio comportamento da matto come un atto politico) e grazie ad una buona dieta e all'esercizio fisico, nel corso di sei mesi il mio sangue riacquistò vigore e i miei nervi recuperarono consistentemente la loro precedente forma, forza e valore.

Voglio di seguito[94] invitare il lettore a percorrere retrospettivamente il mio racconto e riconsiderare le dolorose manifestazioni di disumanità perpetrate dal generale Sir William Howe e dall'esercito ai suoi ordini nei confronti dei prigionieri presi a Long Island il 27 agosto del 1776; molti di essi furono uccisi in modo barbaro e privo di ogni umanità, dopo che avevano reso le armi; in particolare, un certo generale Odel (o Woodhul) della milizia, che fu tagliato a pezzi con delle sciabole (mentre era ancora vivo) per

94 The Noah Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language considered the adverb “Nextly” rare and

mano dei cavalleggeri,[95] e un certo capitano Fellows dell'esercito continentale che fu trapassato da parte a parte con una baionetta, che morì all'istante per la ferita.

Moltissimi altri furono appesi per il collo fino a morire; cinque al ramo di una quercia, e senza ragione alcuna (eccetto il fatto di stare combattendo in difesa dell'unica cosa che valesse la pena proteggere), e infatti tutti coloro che ebbero la sventura di cadere in mano loro a Forte Washington nel novembre successivo, ricevettero un trattamento poco più decente, giusto perché fu loro risparmiata la morte immediata, per venire tuttavia affamati fino a morire di stenti; infine, l'appellativo di ribelle, applicato a tutti gli sconfitti, senza riguardo per il grado, a tutti coloro che erano stati in servizio dell'esercito continentale, nel già menzionato 27 agosto, era considerato dal nemico, motivo sufficiente a giustificare qualunque crudeltà essi ritenessero di commettere inclusa la morte stessa; tuttavia è necessario passare oltre alcuni particolari che ingigantirebbero il racconto ben oltre il mio intento.

I soldati semplici che furono portati a New York, furono radunati all'interno di chiese, e circondati da guardie mercenarie dell'Assia, gente dalla lingua sconosciuta, che veniva mandata in America per nessun altro scopo se non crudeltà e la devastazione dagli efferati britannici che, poiché il loro linguaggio era comprensibile in questo paese servivano solo per tormentare ed insultare gli indifesi e gli oppressi. Ma era soprattutto il trionfo dei lealisti sugli altri e il loro diabolico piacere nel vederli morire a centinaia a rendermi insopportabile lo spettacolo: vedere i lealisti esultare sui corpi senza vita dei loro compatrioti ammazzati. Entrai nelle chiese e vidi tantissimi prigionieri agonizzanti per la fame e altri senza parole, prossimi alla morte, che mangiucchiavano trucioli; altri ancora che imploravano in nome di Dio qualcosa da mangiare, e tremavano allo stesso tempo per il freddo. Gemiti raccapriccianti giungevano alle mie orecchie, mentre la disperazione sembrava essere impressa nei loro volti. La lordura di quelle chiese, (a causa della dissenteria) era al di là di ogni descrizione. I pavimenti erano coperti di escrementi. Cercai attentamente di camminare in modo da evitarli ma mi fu impossibile. Le persone supplicavano in nome di Dio per uno spicciolo o per

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practically out of use yet in 1828, in the year of publication of the fore-said dictionary.

un pezzetto di pane. In una di queste chiese vidi sette cadaveri giacere tra gli escrementi dei loro stessi corpi.

Per il nemico era pratica comune portare via i corpi da questi luoghi malsani per con carretti, e quindi seppellirli alla bell'e meglio, e vidi intere bande di lealisti impegnati a deridere e lanciare insulti sui cadaveri, dicendo 'ecco un altro carico di dannati ribelli.' Avevo osservato gli scherzacci dei soldati inglesi, che pure apparivano meno meschini dei lealisti, nonché il loro vantarsi in quelle occasioni.

Le provviste fornite ai prigionieri non erano per nulla sufficienti al loro sostentamento: erano carenti in quantità e molto di più in qualità. Molto spesso i prigionieri mi mostravano bocconi del loro pane che io riconobbi certamente scadente, ripugnante ed immangiabile, ed ebbi l'audacia di affermare che (secondo me) era da scartare, e di pessimo tipo. (Nel corso della mia prigionia) avevo visto ed ero stato nutrito con pane avariato, e avevo notato come la qualità di un simile alimento fosse stata bandita persino dal nemico, anche se, effettivamente fra il loro ce ne fosse di più accettabile di quello.

La loro razione di carne (come mi dissero) era praticamente inconsistente, e della più spregevole qualità. Non ne ho mai vista, ma mi informarono che (pur così com'era) se la ingoiavano così come ce l'avevano in mano. Vidi alcuni di loro succhiare gli ossi, quasi ammutoliti; altri che ancora riuscivano a parlare, e ancora capaci di intendere, mi spronarono in un modo così forte e commovente, ad usare la mia autorevolezza in nome loro; poiché lei vede chiaramente (mi dicevano), che siamo destinati alla morte e all'annientamento; e dopo aver esaminato attentamente la loro condizione tanto misera, e dopo essere stato informato interamente dei fatti essenziali, mi persuasi che si trattava di un piano sistematico e premeditato[96] da parte del parlamento inglese per distruggere i giovani della nostra terra, al fine di scoraggiare il paese, e sottometterlo al loro dispotismo.[97] Ma mi convinsi anche del fatto che non potevo garantir loro alcun

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95 Military corps of light cavalry, so called because generally lightly armed, as opposed to the medieval heavy cavalry. In the 18th century their equipment consisted of long sables and carbines (see Sweat, 1936).

96 I would like to draw the reader's attention on the two words used by Allen. Read through modern eyes, those lexical choices seem to anticipate the modern concept and practice of genocide.

97 According to Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language*, the term implies absolute power, namely an authority unlimited and uncontrolled by men, constitution of laws, and depending alone on the will of the prince; In

servizio pratico, e che, con qualunque tipo di sforzo a quel fine, mi sarei messo in pericolo frequentando i luoghi più nauseanti e appestati che si potessero concepire. Mi astenni dal recarmi ancora in quelle chiese, ma conversavo sovente con quei prigionieri ai quali era permesso di uscire in cortile, e scoprii che il trattamento procedeva sistematicamente. Le guardie mi mandavano via con le baionette innestate. Un soldato dell'Assia (un giorno) mi inseguì per cinque o sei strade,[98] ma gambe in spalla riuscii a seminare quello zoticone. A volte invece, nonostante la loro rigidità, riuscivo ad ottenere qualche piccola conversazione.

Mi trovavo una volta nel cortile di una chiesa, ed essendo giunta parola fra coloro che stavano all'interno, molti prigionieri vennero da me con le consuete rimostranze, e tra di essi un giovane alto e dall'ossatura forte (mi disse di venire dalla Pennsylvania) che era ridotto ormai a uno scheletro; disse che era lieto di vedermi prima di morire, cosa che si era aspettato succedesse la notte prima, ma che stava un po' meglio; inoltre mi informò che lui ed il fratello erano stati spronati ad arruolarsi tra gli inglesi, ma che entrambi erano decisi piuttosto a morire; disse che suo fratello se n'era andato la notte precedente a causa di quella decisione, e che lui stesso si aspettava di seguirlo quanto prima; ma io feci allontanare un poco gli altri prigionieri, e gli dissi a bassa voce di arruolarsi; allora mi domandò se agli occhi di Dio ciò fosse giusto farlo. Gli assicurai che lo era, e che il suo dovere lo obbligava ad indebolire gli Inglesi arruolandosi, per poi disertare alla prima occasione; a quel punto mi rispose accorato che si sarebbe arruolato. Lo incaricai di non menzionare il mio nome come suo consigliere, altrimenti, nel caso in cui ciò fosse trapelato, io sarei stato immediatamente imprigionato.

A malapena si poteva sperare nell'integrità di quei prigionieri così sofferenti. A centinaia, ne sono certo, si consegnarono alla morte, piuttosto che servire gli Inglesi, dai quali (fui informato) ricevevano continue pressioni per farlo. Io restai sbalordito di fronte alla determinazione dei due fratelli; sembrava quasi che essi non potessero essere spinti a tali sforzi d'eroismo per ambizione, dato che non erano altro

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1779, in the middle of a liberal revolution such as the American Revolution, the choice of the term despotism

che semplici soldati; tale infatti dev'essere stato l'intimo anelito alla virtù, da sostenerli fino ad una morte eroica, e uno dei due ci andò dritto contro, proprio come avevano fatto a centinaia. Non posso affermare con certezza che esempi di pubbliche virtù non valgano a eccitare l'animo di sordidi e viziosi, né che, d'altro canto, possa la barbarie di Inglesi e mercenari[99] risvegliarli al senso del dovere verso le persone, ma che quelle cose produrranno i loro degni effetti sugli uomini di cuore e di coraggio.

Quasi tutti gli ufficiali liberi sulla parola si adoperavano con zelo, ove possibile, nel provvedere a dare sollievo alla sventurata truppa, e spesso si consultavano tra di loro sulla questione, ma senza risultato, soffrendo tutti di insufficienza di mezzi di sopravvivenza; né potevano gli ufficiali produrre alcuna soluzione, atta secondo loro a cambiare il destino dei soldati, o in qualche modo tale da tirarli fuori da quei sudici postacci per godere di un po' d'aria fresca. Alcuni proposero che tutti gli ufficiali andassero in processione dal generale Howe, e perorassero la causa dei soldati in fin di vita; ma la proposta non fu considerata per le seguenti motivazioni, ossia che il generale Howe doveva per forza essere ben informato e avere ottenuto un'esatta conoscenza delle condizioni dei prigionieri in ognuno dei loro disgraziati alloggi, e ciò, in secondo luogo, egli poteva avere certamente una conoscenza più accurata ed esatta di qualunque ufficiale libero sulla fiducia, in quanto a lui, ogni mattina, veniva fatto rapporto dai suoi ufficiali sulle condizioni dei carcerati, su chi era vivo, chi era morto nelle ultime ventiquattr'ore, e quindi sul tasso di mortalità, quotidianamente riferitogli assieme alle condizioni fisiche dei prigionieri. Inoltre se gli ufficiali fossero andati in processione dal generale Howe, secondo il piano originale, ciò avrebbe significato un grave affronto nei suoi confronti, che si sarebbe perfino potuto ritorcere loro contro. Non faceva infatti parte della loro condizione di pseudo-libertà, dare istruzioni al generale per quanto concerneva sua la condotta verso i prigionieri; un ammutinamento contro la sua autorità appariva come una rinuncia alla loro libertà sulla parola; o che più probabilmente, invece di parlare li avrebbe tutti condannati tutti nello stesso carcere dei

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suggests a strong political stance by the author against absolute monarchies.

98 Archaic form for “road” (see Webster, 1828).

99 “Heshland,” Meant for Hesse or Hessia, a German region (See Oxford, 2007).

soldati per i quali stavano lottando; infatti a quel tempo gli Inglesi, dal generale fino alla sentinella,[100] erano completamente certi, senza la possibilità di esitazione, di essere in grado di conquistare il paese. Così le consultazioni da parte degli ufficiali furono dissuase e smontate per il terrore che in quel periodo stava annidato nelle loro menti, di poter in qualche modo offendere il generale Howe; essi infatti lo consideravano un tale tiranno sanguinario che, giacché ne aveva il potere, non si sarebbe trattenuto dallo sterminare anche gli ufficiali al pari dei soldati semplici. Siccome il generale Howe conosceva perfettamente le condizioni delle truppe, si ritenne che ciò fosse esattamente quello che lui e il suo consiglio avevano ideato, e che siccome egli intendeva distruggerli, non ci sarebbe stata alcuna possibilità di dissuaderlo da ciò, in quanto gli ufficiali erano indifesi e sottoposti allo stesso destino, avessero commesso il minimo affronto; infatti angosciose inquietudini li coglievano in tali loro circostanze.

Nel frattempo la mortalità infuriava tra i prigionieri toccando una soglia intollerabile, che perfino gli scolaretti nelle strade ne avrebbero capito in qualche modo il disegno; per lo meno i prigionieri sapevano che sarebbero stati lasciati morire di fame. Alcune donne contribuirono alle loro necessità fino a che i loro figli quasi non morirono di fame, e chiunque dotato di un buon intelletto sapeva che essi erano destinati alla più terribile e crudele delle morti. Fu anche proposto di redigere un resoconto scritto sulle condizioni della truppa, firmato dagli ufficiali e che si dovesse proporlo in tali termini, proprio come se essi stessi temessero che al generale ciò fosse a sua volta stato imposto dai suoi stessi ufficiali, nelle loro relazioni giornaliere, sulle condizioni dei prigionieri; e che quindi, essendo gli ufficiali mossi da compassione, fossero costretti a rivelargli i fatti relativi ad essi, senza dubitare di trovare un rimedio rapido. Ma anche questa proposta fu a sua volta ampiamente respinta, e più o meno per le stesse ragioni del caso precedente; infatti, si suppose che l'indignazione del generale Howe avrebbe avuto ripercussioni sugli ufficiali, proprio come lo avrebbe indotto a far frustare i suoi stessi ufficiali; in tal modo, sarebbe stato lui ad essere incriminato al posto degli ufficiali che quotidianamente lo aggiornavano. Pertanto, l'auto-preservazione trattenne gli ufficiali sia dal

100 The word is printed according to the common spelling before the normalization caused by Noah Webster's

richiedere che dal rimostrare al generale Howe, tanto oralmente quanto per iscritto; soprattutto considerando che non si sarebbe raggiunto alcun obiettivo concreto a favore degli afflitti.

Preparai numerose tracce sulla questione, e ne sottoposi una ai colonnelli Magaw, Miles e Atlee, i quali mi dissero che avrebbero preso in considerazione la questione; poco tempo dopo feci loro una visita e alcuni gentiluomini mi informarono che i colonnelli avevano già scritto al generale in proposito, e pensai che quei gentiluomini avessero ritenuto opportuno scrivere senza di me, dal momento che esisteva una notevole e animata avversione tra gli Inglesi e il sottoscritto.

Nel frattempo un certo colonnello Hussecker, dell'esercito continentale (come egli stesso riportò) fu fatto prigioniero e portato a New York, dove rivelò che il paese si stava quasi interamente lasciando sottomettere all'autorità del sovrano, e che ci sarebbe stata poca o nessuna resistenza alla Gran Bretagna. Questo provocò inizialmente un certo turbamento tra gli ufficiali, ma in pochi giorni si ripresero, in quanto quel colonnello Hussecker, essendo tedesco, fu visto festeggiare insieme al generale De Heister, suo compatriota, e dalla sua condotta gli ufficiali ebbero il timore pensarono che si trattasse di una canaglia; per lo meno fu ritenuto tale dalla maggior parte degli ufficiali; cionondimeno la giornata fu infausta. Il nemico ci calpestò. La nostra piccola armata si stava ritirando in New Jersey, e a New York i nostri giovani venivano uccisi a centinaia; le truppe d'Inghilterra e Assia prevalsero per un breve periodo, quasi che fosse stato ordinato dal cielo di mostrare[101] ai posteri ciò che la Gran Bretagna avrebbe fatto, ne avesse avuto possibilità, come sarebbe stata la rovina generale dopo la loro totale conquista del paese, animando con ciò ogni uomo onesto affinché rimanesse in piedi in difesa della libertà, e avviare l'indipendenza degli Stati Uniti d'America per sempre. Ma quella scena non scoraggiò Washington: il grande eroe americano rimase impassibile. Sguainò la spada per la causa della libertà:[102] quel pensiero fu la sua forza e il suo sostegno nel giorno della sua umiliazione, quando si ritirò di fronte al nemico passando per il New Jersey fino in

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dictionary. Since the sound did not divert, printer did not consider the two forms different one from the other.

101 The verbal form “shew” as the past participle of an irregular verb is no longer in use. According to current English, the verb “to show” is regular, and consequently conjugated as “showed” in past participle. See note 38.

102 Despite the defeat, general George Washington is here presented as a hero, as founder myth for the feelings of the

Pennsylvania. Il loro trionfo non fece altro che accrescere la sua indignazione, e la pregnanza della causa del proprio paese che tanto gli stava a cuore, lo indusse a guadare il Delaware un'altra volta, e a prendersi ampia soddisfazione sui suoi inseguitori. Non appena ebbe aggirato i suoi arroganti nemici, apparve con un esercito malconcio, eppure le armate d'Assia caddero. Ciò insegnò all'America l'intrinseco valore della perseveranza, e i generosi figli della libertà irruppero verso lo stendardo della loro comune salvezza e difesa. Da quella volta il braccio della libertà in America prevalse.

L'agguato e la cattura dei mercenari d'Assia fece infuriare il nemico, che era ancora ben più numeroso delle truppe continentali: pertanto si raggrupparono, e marciarono da Princeton, per attaccare il generale Washington, che si trovava allora presso Trenton, ma che aveva tuttavia precedentemente lasciato un distaccamento del corpo d'armata principale a Princeton, per mantenere la posizione. Quello fu un momento impegnativo, poiché il nostro illustre generale (sebbene autore, in seguito, di una sorprendente vittoria) non fu in alcun modo in grado di contrastare le forze nemiche congiunte; ma la sua sagacia presto gli suggerì un espediente per compiere qualcosa che in quanto a forza, era per lui ancora impraticabile: egli, pertanto, intrattenne il nemico con una grande quantità di falò, e nottetempo condusse una marcia forzata inattesa dai nemici, che la mattina seguente piombò sulla loro retroguardia a Princeton, dove colpì e fece numerosi prigionieri. Poiché il grosso dell'esercito si rese conto troppo tardi che la retroguardia era stata attaccata, si affrettò a ripiegare a gran velocità, ma con loro umiliazione capirono di essere stati battuti in strategia e confusi dal generale Washington, che si era poi ritirato con il suo ridotto esercito verso Morristown, e che si trovava ormai fuori dalla loro portata. Questi continui successi,[103] uno di seguito all'altro, mortificarono incredibilmente il nemico ed ebbero un effetto straordinario sulle politiche americane, e furono senza alcun dubbio delle pietre miliari su cui si costruirono le grandi fondamenta dell'indipendenza; infatti, il paese non era mai stato prima d'ora tanto sconsolato come il mattino precedente al menzionato glorioso successo, che contribuì a dissipare le tenebrose nubi dell'oppressione e della schiavitù incombenti

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patriots.

sull'America, imponenti sulla rovina di queste e delle generazioni future; e per di più rischiarò e ridiede spirito ai suoi figli per raddoppiare i loro colpi contro un nemico arrogante, senza pietà, e (aggiungerei) perfido.

Inoltre, quella vittoria ebbe un potente effetto sul generale Howe e sul suo consiglio di guerra, ridestando in essi il senso della propria debolezza e convincendoli di essere tutt'altro che onniscienti e onnipotenti. In qualche misura, la loro caparbietà e malevola sete di morte calarono o furono frenate. Si ordinò che i prigionieri, che erano stati condannati alle morti più crudeli ed efferate, e che avevano superato quel periodo (benché la maggior parte fosse morta prima) venissero immediatamente fatti entrare nelle linee del generale Washington per essere scambiati, con il risultato che furono fatti uscire dalle loro luride e malsane prigioni, e mandati in tutta fretta dai loro amici a New York. Molti di essi caddero lungo le strade della città, mentre cercavano di dirigersi verso i vascelli nella baia, in quanto volevano imbarcarsi.--
Non posso dire con certezza quanti sopravvissero da raggiungere le loro linee, ma da una serie di notizie che ricevetti da molta gente che viveva da quelle parti del paese, appresi che i più morirono a seguito dei vili trattamenti ricevuto dal nemico. Alcuni testimoni di quelle scene di morte (in particolare per quanto riguarda ciò che successe dopo lo scambio) ritenevano che fu in parte dovuto ad un lento avvelenamento; ma riferii ciò ai dottori che li seguivano, i quali sono di certo giudici migliori.

In base ai calcoli più accurati che potei fare, in base alla mia conoscenza personale, e alle numerose prove che raccolsi a sostegno dei fatti, appresi che dei prigionieri portati a Long Island, Forte Washington, e alcuni altri posti, in tempi e luoghi differenti, circa duemila perirono a New York per fame, freddo e malattie (provocate dallo sporco delle loro celle), e un buon numero durante il loro passaggio alle linee continentali; la gran parte dei rimanenti che avevano raggiunto i propri cari, avendo riportato ferite mortali, non poterono riprendersi nemmeno con l'assistenza di medici e amici; ma, come i loro compagni di prigione, furono vittime dell'implacabile e scientifica barbarie degli Inglesi. Mi costò più di quanto le mie

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103 Prototype of guerrilla strategy.

condizioni ammettevano, l'informarmi non solo sui singoli episodi, ma sugli obiettivi e sui piani del generale Howe e del suo consiglio; dedussi questi ultimi dai primi per offrirli al giudizio del pubblico.

Finalmente, i già menzionati successi delle armate americane ebbero un effetto felice sugli ufficiali continentali che erano liberi sulla fiducia a New York: un buon numero di noi si riunì (seppur segretamente) e con grandi coppe e boccali, bevemmo alla salute del generale Washington, non dimentichi però del Congresso e dei nostri nobili amici sul continente e quasi ci dimenticammo di essere prigionieri.

Alcuni giorni dopo quelle distrazioni, un ufficiale inglese di un certo rango e importanza nel suo esercito (di cui per certe ragioni non farò il nome in questo racconto, sebbene io l'abbia fatto ad alcuni amici stretti e confidenti) mi fece chiamare al suo alloggio e mi disse, "Che la lealtà (sebbene verso una causa errata) mi aveva nonostante tutto raccomandato al generale William Howe,[104] il quale aveva intenzione di nominarmi colonnello di un reggimento di coscritti (ovvero di lealisti) al servizio della corona, e mi propose di seguirlo in Inghilterra insieme ad alcuni altri ufficiali che si sarebbero imbarcati per quella destinazione nel giro di pochi giorni, e dove sarebbero stati presentati a Lord G. Germain[105] e forse anche al re; che prima dovevo vestirmi in modo consono a un tale incontro, e che dovessi essere pagato, invece che in brandelli di carta,[106] con vere ghinee; dopodiché mi sarei dovuto imbarcare con il generale Burgoyne, e assistere alla riconquista del paese, che sarebbe indiscutibilmente stato preso, e una volta fatto questo, avrei avuto un ampio pezzo di terra, o nei Grants del New Hampshire, o in Connecticut; ciò non sarebbe stato strano, giacché tutto il paese si sarebbe arreso alla corona." Io replicai, "Che se avevo conquistato la stima del generale Howe per la mia lealtà, non sarei stato disponibile a perdere la buona opinione del generale a causa della mia infedeltà; inoltre vedevo quell'offerta di terreni molto simile a quella che il demonio fece a Gesù[107] Cristo, di concedergli tutti i regni del creato, se si fosse prostrato ad adorarlo; mentre, allo stesso tempo l'anima dannata non possedeva neanche un piede di terra. Questo

104 I have chosen to omit the word "Sir" in my translation, since the presence of both titles, "general" and "sir" would make the Italian version rather redundant.

105 The spelling is different from the second edition, where the name is printed as "Germaine."

106 In the 18th century, paper made partly or wholly from rags, not from wood (see www.merriam-webster.com).

chiuse la conversazione e il gentiluomo mi voltò le spalle con espressione di disgusto, dicendomi che ero un bigotto; a quel punto mi ritirai nei miei alloggi.

Verso gli ultimi giorni di novembre fui ammesso a New York sulla parola insieme a molti altri ufficiali americani, e il 22 gennaio del 1777 fui condotto con loro dal commissario britannico dei prigionieri a ricevere quartiere nella parte più occidentale di Long Island, dove il nostro accordo continuò. Durante la mia prigionia in quel luogo non successe niente di rilevante. Ottenni ogni genere di sussistenza che desideravo, e ciò contribuì a migliorare le mie condizioni fisiche, le quali erano state gravemente debilitate dalla durezza di una prigionia disumana. Iniziavo a quel punto a sentirmi tranquillo, attendendomi uno scambio, o di continuare ad essere trattato onorevolmente; ma ahimè! Presto le mie visionarie aspettative svanirono. La notizia della conquista di Ticonderoga da parte del generale Burgoyne, e l'avanzata del suo esercito nel paese, fecero nuovamente sentire agli arroganti Inglesi la loro importanza, nonché la loro implacabile sete di crudeltà.[108]

A New York i soldati semplici e alcuni ufficiali ne percepirono la crudeltà, Burgoyne era il loro semidio in un certo senso; lo adoravano: in lui i lealisti riponevano le loro certezze, "e dimenticavano il Signore loro Dio," e servivano Howe, Burgoyne, e Knyphausen,*[109] "E la loro stessa mente si sviliva, e i loro sciocchi cuori furono oscurati, professando di essere grandi politici," confidando su invasori stranieri senza pietà, e cercando insieme a loro la devastazione, lo spargimento di sangue e la distruzione del loro paese, "divennero pazzi" ad aspettarsi di condividere con essi il dividendo delle proprietà confiscate ai loro vicini e compatrioti, che combattevano per l'intero paese, per la sua religione e le sue libertà;-- "Perciò Dio concesse loro di prendere le decisioni importanti, di credere alle menzogne, e che tutti loro sarebbero potuti essere dannati."

Con il pretesto di una pietosa, scaltra e perfida messinscena, (di aver infranto la mia parola), Il 25

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107 Unlike the previous form of the word "Jesus"(see footnote 59), here the spelling reflects the current regulation.

108 The passage sounds quite rhetoric: the author builds up a perfect synaesthesia by combining the words "to feed" and "insatiable", generally associated to the dimension of food, to the term "thirst", as a reference of water.

109 The original text presents a footnote written by the author, and which was maintained also in the following editions.

di agosto venni arrestato e fatto uscire da una taverna dove stavo con più di una dozzina di altri ufficiali, e proprio lì, a quegli ufficiali ed a me era stato detto che saremmo stati trattati ragionevolmente, quindi fummo messi sotto stretta vigilanza e portati a New York dove io mi aspettavo di difendermi di fronte all'ufficiale in capo; ma a dispetto delle mie aspettative, e senza la ben che minima aspettativa di giustizia o di un processo, fui nuovamente circondato da guardie con le baionette innestate e condotto in una cella isolata della prigione, proprio sopra i sotterranei, e mi fu negato qualsiasi tipo di sostentamento, né dietro acquisto, né tanto meno dietro concessione. Il secondo giorno offrii una ghinea in cambio di un pasto, ma mi fu rifiutato, e il terzo giorno offrii otto dollari spagnoli zigrinati[110] per lo stesso favore, ma mi fu nuovamente negato e tutto quello che potei cavar fuori dalla bocca del sergente fu che per Dio avrebbe obbedito ai suoi ordini. In quel momento compresi di trovarmi nuovamente nei guai. In quella situazione incontrai un certo capitano Edward Travis (che si trovava nella cella al di sotto della mia) che veniva dalla Virginia. E il modo fu singolare: ne feci la conoscenza tramite un foro che era stato praticato con un temperino, sul pavimento della mia cella, comunicante con la segreta; si trattava di una piccola fessura, dalla quale non potevo distinguere che una minima parte del suo viso, non appena si accostò all'apertura; ma dopo averlo scoperto, data la situazione in cui entrambi ci trovavamo, non avrei potuto riconoscerlo, (cosa che si verificò dopo una successiva conoscenza). Potevo tuttavia conversare con lui, e presto mi resi conto che era un gentiluomo di animo nobile, che aveva un gran senso dell'onore, e che si sentiva tanto grande come se si fosse trovato in un palazzo, e serbava un grande odio verso gli Inglesi. Insomma, ero incantato dallo spirito di quell'uomo; era stato in quel sotterraneo per quasi quattro mesi, con assassini, ladri, e ogni tipo di farabutto, e tutto per l'unico reato di fedeltà al paese; ma il suo animo era al di sopra di ogni scoramento, e la sua mente inconquistabile. Mi impegnai a rendergli ogni servizio che fosse in mio potere, e poche

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The note recites:"Knyphausen, a Hessian general," and it is marked by an asterisk.

110 The Spanish dollar or, eight-real coin (in spanish, *real de ocho*), also known as piece-of-eight is a silver coin, of approximately 38 mm diameter. From 1497 it became the current coin within the Spanish Empire, and it was commonly used in many countries as an international common currency: as the author's mention clearly remarks, it was legal in the United States until 1857 and it was the base on which the United States dollar was based (see Sweat, 1936).

settimane dopo, con una petizione di tutti gli ufficiali nella prigione, resi possibile la sua scarcerazione[111] da quel ricovero per demoni, per mandarlo agli appartamenti di coloro che avevano firmato la petizione.

Al tramonto del terzo giorno capitò che mi presentarono un pezzo di maiale bollito, delle gallette, che a quanto il sergente mi diede a capire, era ciò che mi veniva concesso e che mangiai in un boccone; tuttavia in genere cercavo di soddisfare il mio appetito gradualmente. nel giro di pochi giorni fui fatto uscire da quell'alloggio e condotto al piano superiore, dove si trovavano più di venti ufficiali tra continentali e miliziani, che erano stati presi e imprigionati lì, oltre a qualche gentiluomo che era stato trascinato in quella lurida dimora direttamente da casa propria ad opera dei lealisti. Molte di quelle persone morirono là dentro, chi prima, e chi dopo che ci fui messo io.

Le vicissitudini legate solo al carcere, (dovessi[112] entrare nei dettagli) andrebbero a riempire un volume ben più massiccio dell'intero mio racconto: si tenga tuttavia conto solo degli episodi più straordinari.

Il capitano Vandyke resistette con una forza d'animo non comune, quasi venti mesi di confino in quel posto, durante i quali si dimostrò molto caritatevole verso gli altri che erano incarcerati insieme a lui. L'accusa contro di lui, cioè la causa della sua prigionia, era incredibile: fu accusato di aver incendiato la città di New York (in quel periodo la parte occidentale della città era stata bruciata) quando era cosa nota che fosse andato dietro le sbarre una settimana prima che scoppiasse l'incendio; allo stesso modo si rivelarono inconsistenti tutte le accuse pretestuose mosse contro la maggior parte dei reclusi; fa eccezione il caso di due ufficiali della milizia che furono catturati durante un tentativo di fuga mentre erano liberi sulla fiducia; e forse anche altri esempi che potrebbero giustificare una tale reclusione.

Il signor William Miller, un membro del comitato,[113] proveniente dalla contea di West Chester, nello stato di New York, fu preso direttamente dal suo letto nel cuore della notte dai suoi vicini lealisti e fu lasciato senza cibo per tre giorni in una stanza di quella stessa galera; per di più, durante la stagione fredda

111 The word “Dismission” is no longer in use in current English (see Oxford, 1933).

112 Verbal dissonance: the verbal form “Was” is substituted by “Were” in the second edition.

113 A reference to either the Committees of Correspondence or the Committees of Inspection, that is to say, extralegal associations of patriots, that tried to organize resistance to the British during the American Revolution (see Arch,

dell'anno, gli fu negato di riscaldasi col fuoco, perciò per difendersi dal gelo camminava giorno e notte, e quando si lamentò per una tanto riprovevole condotta, l'attributo di ribelle o membro del comitato fu ritenuto dal nemico giustificazione sufficiente per qualsiasi disumanità che essi potessero inventare o infliggere. Era un uomo dotato naturalmente di buona intelligenza, uno stretto e sincero amico delle libertà dell'America, e resistette a una crudele prigionia di quattordici mesi con quella magnanimità che porta onore a sé stessi e alla nazione.

Il maggiore Levi Wells e il capitano Ozias Bissel furono arrestati presso Long Island nonostante il loro accordo sulla parola, e portati dalle guardie in prigione, con a carico fallaci accuse come nel precedente esempio, e vi rimasero fino al loro scambio quasi cinque mesi dopo. La loro fedeltà ed il loro zelante attaccamento alla causa del loro paese spiccavano più che mai, e queste costituivano senza dubbio il vero motivo della loro prigionia.

Il maggiore Brinton Payne, il capitano Flahaven, e il capitano Randolph si distinsero in più di un'occasione per il loro coraggio, e soprattutto nelle diverse azioni in cui furono catturati. Quel valore fu l'unica motivazione fornita loro e per la quale sopportarono circa un anno di reclusione, tutti nello stesso sudicio carcere.

Poche settimane dopo la mia incarcerazione, il maggiore Otho Holland Williams (oggi un colonnello dell'esercito continentale) fu condotto in quel luogo da Long Island, dove era in parola, sulla base delle perfide accuse menzognere. Nel suo carattere si combinavano il gentiluomo, l'ufficiale, il soldato e l'amico; percorreva la prigione con un'aria di grande disprezzo; diceva, “E' questo il trattamento che dei gentiluomini dell'esercito continentale si devono aspettare da quei mascalzoni di Inglesi quando si trovano in loro potere? Il cielo ce ne scampi!” Rimase là dentro per cinque mesi e poi fu scambiato con un maggiore britannico.

L'egregio John Fell; (oggi un membro del Congresso per lo stato del New Jersey) fu catturato nella

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2000).

sua casa da una banda di scellerati lealisti, e per ordine di un generale inglese, fu mandato nel carcere dove rimase per quasi un anno. Il lezzo della prigione, davvero ripugnante e fetido, provocava una raucedine nei polmoni che si provò essere fatale per molti reclusi lì dentro, e ridusse il gentiluomo in questione sul punto di morte; gli amici che gli erano vicini, infatti, disperavano per lui ed egli stesso concluse che stava per morire. Non potevo sopportare il pensiero che un tanto nobile amico dell'America venisse derubato della vita in un modo tanto perfido, volgare ed oltraggioso, e che la sua famiglia e i suoi amici fossero a loro volta privati di una tanto grande e desiderabile benedizione, come la sua dedizione, il suo impegno ed il suo esempio potevano provare. Pertanto scrissi una lettera al generale Robertson (che comandava in città) guidato dai più ragionevoli sentimenti di umanità che indirizzavano la mia penna nel descrivere l'afflizione della morte in così vivide tinte, piegai perfino l'ostinazione di un generale inglese a firmare un ordine di scarcerazione per l'oggi onorevole John Fell, tanto da portarlo dalla prigione a degli alloggi personali in città; a conseguenza di ciò, la sua salute migliorò lentamente. Esiste una circostanza che intervenne, riguardante quella lettera, che è degna di essere narrata.

Prima di inviarla, la mostrai al gentiluomo sul cui conto già si è scritto, per avere la sua approvazione, ma egli mi proibì categoricamente e senza mezzi termini di mandarla; la sua motivazione era, "che grazie a rapporti giornalieri, il nemico conosceva bene le condizioni di tutti i prigionieri, e le mie in particolare. Essi sapevano bene che dopo sì tanto tempo, ero prossimo alla fine, e stabilirono che così doveva andare, proprio come era successo nel caso di molti altri; a quel punto chiedere un favore avrebbe permesso al nemico di trionfare su di me nei miei ultimi momenti e pertanto io non dovevo chiedere loro favori ma rassegnarmi all'imminente destino". Tuttavia, mandai la lettera senza che ne sapesse nulla, e confesso di essermi aspettato poco da essa, ma non potei comunque sentirmi tranquillo finché non l'ebbi spedita. Potrebbe essere importante far presente, che quel gentiluomo era inglese di nascita, e dall'inizio della rivoluzione,[114] aveva saldamente abbracciato e tenuto stretta la causa della libertà.

114 The term is meant as an entire change in the constitution of the government, and it can be considered an

Durante quella rivoluzione, gli Inglesi avevano così perfezionato il loro sistema carcerario, incluse le più recenti prigioni, che una definizione sintetica sarà sufficiente a comprenderne facilmente il tenore. Si sarebbe potuto propriamente chiamarla l'inquisizione britannica, e predisponeva i piani e mezzi d'oppressione inglesi, sopprimendo lo spirito della libertà; essa costituiva anche un ricettacolo di criminali e dei più infami rifiuti del loro stesso esercito, e in quelle prigioni molti cittadini e gentiluomini dell'esercito americano furono rinchiusi indistintamente assieme con ogni sorta di malfattori; tuttavia, erano suddivisi in celle diverse e sottoposti ad altrettanti spostamenti quando le circostanze richiedevano, ma ciò dipendeva dall'iniziativa di un sergente abietto che era a capo della prigione, ossia la facoltà di portarli via dalla loro stanza e di metterli tutti in cella, come piuttosto sovente capitava. A tal fine, per due volte fui portato di sotto da una schiera di soldati armati di baionette e dal sergente che brandiva una spada, e una volta giunto alla porta dei sotterranei riuscii a blandire la vanità del sergente, il cui nome era Keef, in modo da favorire il mio ritorno tra i compagni. Ma alcuni tra quei risoluti gentiluomini, non potevano tollerare la sua insolenza ed erano decisi a tenerlo a distanza, e a non compiacere né dispiacere il fellone, ma nessuno poteva evitare i suoi abusi; ad ogni modo, le maniere gentili erano le migliori; egli non esitava a chiamarci dannati ribelli, rivolgendosi a noi con il più rozzo dei linguaggi. I capitani Flahaven, Randolph e Mercer, erano i bersagli prediletti dei suoi abusi più frequenti e arroganti, ed erano spesso portati giù nei sotterranei, dove egli protraeva la sua soddisfazione. Il capitano Flahaven prese freddo nel carcere e il suo stato di salute si aggravava, ma uno scambio lo liberò ed con tutta probabilità gli salvò la vita.

Era davvero mortificante dover sopportare le insolenze di una canaglia tanto prepotente, maleducato e vizioso. Decidemmo di fare delle rimostranze al comandante della città contro di lui, ma non ottenemmo alcun risultato, in quanto i suoi superiori erano senza dubbio ben lieti dei suoi ingiuriosi comportamenti verso i gentiluomini che si trovavano in suo potere, e lamentarsi della sua condotta diabolica

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antecedent to the other revolutions that would follow. Although, before 1776, the term revolution was to be applied only to the revolution in England, in 1688, and which was produced by the abdication of king James II, the establishment of the house of Orange on the throne, and the restoration of the constitution to its previous form. The connotation of a *revolution* as a process that affects government and constitution would characterize indeed

serviva solo a rafforzarne l'autorità, e proprio per quel motivo non esposi mai le mie proteste in merito, ma lo blandivo perché sapevo che non era altro che un burattino[115] nelle mani degli ufficiali britannici, e che se ci avesse trattato bene avrebbe immediatamente perso la fiducia di cui godeva, e un uomo più meschino avrebbe potuto succedergli nell'incarico; ma non c'era bisogno di nessuna sostituzione in quanto Cunningham, il maresciallo del carcere, e Keef, il suo sottoposto, erano due delle canaglie di cui l'esercito poteva vantarsi maggiormente, eccezion fatta per un tale Joshua Loring, un infame lealista che era il loro commissario dei prigionieri; eppure nessuno di questi si poteva considerare un criminale alla pari del generale William Howe e dei suoi gregari, che ordinavano e dirigevano le uccisioni e le crudeltà che poi i suddetti uomini perpetravano.

Quel Loring è un mostro!-- Non esiste essere umano come lui. Egli esibisce un'espressione sorridente, a prima vista pare indossare una maschera d'umanità ma è stato fisicamente capace dei più efferati atti di malvagità (che furono ideati da un derelitto consiglio inglese, coperto dall'autorità di Howe) uccidendo a sangue freddo più o meno duemila prigionieri inermi, nei modi più disumani, infami e vergognosi (a New York). Si tratta del più malvagio, codardo, falso e violento essere mai creato da Dio, e legioni di demoni, con tutti i loro tremendi orrori, sono impazienti di riceverlo assieme ad Howe, con tutti i loro detestabili complici, nelle più atroci agonie dei più terribili gironi infernali.

Il 6 giungo 1777, il generale St. Clair e l'esercito ai suoi ordini evacuarono Ticonderoga e si ritirarono con il corpo d'armata principale a Castleton, passando per Hubberdton, che si trovava a circa sei miglia di distanza, quando la retroguardia, guidata dal colonnello Seth Warner, venne attaccata a Hubberdton da un reggimento nemico di circa duemila uomini, comandato dal generale Fraser. L'armata agli ordini di Warner consisteva del suo e di altri due reggimenti, ossia quello dei generali Francis e Hale e di qualche soldato disperso ed indebolito. Il numero totale, secondo gli informatori, si aggirava sul migliaio;

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the history of Poland, America and France (see Webster, 1828).

115 The phrase “a Cat's paw” derives from the translation of Jean La Fontaine's fable, The Monkey and the Cat (le singe et le chat), published in 1679 the collection *Fables Choisies*, and it is generally referred to somebody who is used unwittingly or unwillingly by someone else in order to achieve the other person's intention (see Matthws,

in parte erano Green Mountain Boys; di tutti ne furono impiegati nell'azione circa settecento. Il nemico avanzava sprezzante e le due unità si fronteggiarono nel raggio di cinquanta metri l'una dall'altra. Il colonnello Warner aveva schierato il proprio reggimento e, assieme a quello di Francis, non attese il nemico ma aprì violentemente il fuoco da tutta la sua linea; ad esso risposero con grande coraggio. Quella fase si dimostrò pericolosa per entrambi gli schieramenti, che non erano pronti a passare a miglior vita; ma il colonnello Hale, avendo fiutato il pericolo, non mandò mai il proprio reggimento alla carica, e lasciò che fossero Warner e Francis a resisterne i colpi, e fuggì, ma si imbatté fortunosamente in un considerevole numero di nemici, e per sua eterna vergogna, fu circondato e fatto prigioniero.

La[116] battaglia fu molto sanguinosa.- Il colonnello Francis cadde, ma il colonnello Warner, gli ufficiali e la truppa sotto il suo comando si comportarono con grande forza di volontà. Il nemico fu diviso e cedette sia sulla destra che sulla sinistra, ma si ricostituì nuovamente e riorganizzò il suo attacco; nel frattempo i granatieri britannici,[117] posti al centro delle linee nemiche, mantennero la posizione e alla fine la difesero con un assalto alla baionetta di fronte al quale Warner si ritirò con estrema riluttanza. Le nostre perdite ammontarono a trenta morti, mentre quelle del nemico a trecento, tra i quali il maggiore Grant. Appresi delle perdite nemiche per bocca dei suoi ufficiali mentre ero ancora loro prigioniero. Li udii inoltre lamentarsi del fatto che i Green Mountain Boys avessero preso parte al combattimento.

Il successivo spostamento di qualche rilevanza del nemico, fu l'occupazione di Bennington (con il piano di distruggerla e sottometterne i montanari, verso cui nutrivano un grande astio) con l'ausilio di millecinquecento uomini scelti, inclusi dei lealisti, con grandi aspettative di successo; dopo aver scelto un terreno compatto, lo fortificarono e lo armarono con due pezzi di artiglieria. Ma

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1951).

116 The section, printed in italics, is an isolated part of the narrative which entirely corresponds to the battle scene.

117 In the middle of 17th century grenadiers were specialized soldiers, whose duty was to throw grenades and sometimes preferred for assault actions. The distinctive trait of grenadiers was their physical constitution: only the strongest and the largest men were chosen for the corps of grenadiers. By the time in which Ethan Allen wrote, the use of grenades was no longer relevant, but grenadiers were still chosen for being the most physically powerful

il governo del giovane stato del Vermont, essendo da tempo vigile su un tale tentativo da parte del nemico aveva preventivamente radunato un buon numero di coraggiosi patrioti dallo stato del New Hampshire, i quali, insieme a una milizia della parte settentrionale della contea di Berkshire, lo stato del Massachussets, e i Green Mountain Boys, formarono un corpo di desperados[118] *per un numero quasi pari al nemico, agli ordini dell'intrepido generale Stark.*[119]

Il colonnello Herrick, alla testa dei Green Mountain Rangers, era il comandante in seconda e aveva un'ottima conoscenza del terreno che il nemico aveva fortificato, e propose di attaccarlo da ogni lato contemporaneamente. Tale piano fu sposato dal generale e dal suo consiglio di guerra, e quella piccola brigata miliziana di indisciplinati eroi, con le loro lunghe carabine[120] *(la migliore arma per gli uomini liberi), senza alcun cannone o baionetta, fu guidata, il 16 agosto (con grande stupore del mondo e a dispetto di ogni disciplina), all'attacco dai suoi audaci comandanti proprio di fronte al terribile fuoco nemico, e avanzarono con tutta la linea in meno di un quarto d'ora dopo l'attacco. Prima che la battaglia diventasse generale, s'impossessarono dei cannoni, uccisero o fecero prigionieri oltre due terzi del numero dei nemici, rendendo immortale il generale Stark e Bennington famosa per l'eternità.*

Tra i caduti del nemico furono trovati il colonnello Baum, loro comandante, un certo colonnello Pfester, che era alla testa di un'infame banda di lealisti, e buona parte di questi ultimi; inoltre, tra i prigionieri c'era il maggiore Melbome, loro comandante in seconda, un certo numero di ufficiali d'Assia e Inglesi, chirurghi, eccetera, e più di un centinaio della già menzionata truppa di Pfester. Una volta radunati insieme, i

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soldiers and the most apt to lead assaults on the battlefield (see www.universe-weapon.com).

118 According to the Noah Webster's dictionary, to the generally recognized negative connotation of the expression, translatable as “A desperate fellow, a furious man, a madman,” a positive meaning should be added, and it fits indeed the present text:“A person urged by furious passions; one fearless, or regardless of safety.”

119 John Stark (1728–1822) was a New Hampshire native major general in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, and became famous as the "Hero of Bennington" for his exemplary conduct at the Battle of Bennington in 1777. He had previously served the English crown during the Seven-Years' War, fighting in North America, but from the Battle of Bunker Hill, he joined the American Independence cause. Apart from the battle of Bennington, Stark's action contributed also to the surrender of general Burgoyne's troops after the defeat in Saratoga, by cutting off the British from any supply (see Peterson, 1848).

120 The carbine was a gun, generally smaller and lighter than a regular musket, with the same size of munitions, but

prigionieri furono portati alla chiesa del paese da un formidabile corpo di guardia, e il generale Stark, non immaginando alcun pericolo in agguato, fece rompere le righe alla milizia affinché gli uomini si riposassero e ristorassero; fu in quella situazione che fu improvvisamente attaccato da un rinforzo del nemico di 1100 uomini, comandati dal governatore Skene, con due pezzi d'artiglieria sul campo di battaglia: essi avanzarono in ordine regolare e mantennero un fuoco incessante e sostenuto, specialmente dall'artiglieria sul campo, e mentre la rimanente milizia indietreggiava lentamente davanti a loro, dando battaglia centimetro su centimetro del campo, si udiva il nemico aizzarli, urlando fermate gli Yankees.

Nel frattempo il colonnello Warner, con circa centotrenta uomini del suo reggimento (che non erano stati impiegati nella prima fase) arrivò e attaccò il nemico con grande furia (essendo determinati a vendicarsi ampiamente dello scontro di Hubberdton) bloccandone l'avanzata, e poco dopo il generale Stark e il colonnello Herrick si unirono con gli sparpagliati soldati della milizia, e la battaglia divenne campale; nel giro di pochi minuti i nemici dovettero abbandonare i loro cannoni, rompendo le righe da più parti e fuggirono, e per la seconda volta fu la milizia a proferire grida di vittoria. Le perdite nemiche, tra morti e catturati, a seguito di entrambe le azioni, ammontava a più di milleduecento uomini mentre le nostre non superarono i cinquanta uomini.

"Il colpo inferto ai nemici fu duro, ma l'orgoglio non permise loro di esitare nel dire di poter distruggere il paese, e come esemplare della loro arroganza vorrei inserire la P R O C L A M A Z I O N E[121] proferita dal generale Burgoyne.

"L'egregio[122] John Burgoyne; luogotenente generale delle armate di sua maestà in America,

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whose dimension made them easier to handle and particularly apt for high-mobility soldiers or cavalry (see Oxford, 2007).

121 Without any prescriptive rule about the style, the first edition of the narrative proposes the word "proclamation" in italics and with each letter separated from the others by a space. The present case shows another visual mechanism adopted in order to highlight a certain section of the text; however, in the very case, the switch of style stands as the title of a section, rather than the result of emphasis.

122 General Burgoyne's proclamation could stand as a separate part of the narrative, but the author, or possibly the bookseller, decided not to print the general's speech in italics, in order not to highlight those words as it was done for other sections (partaking the American cause) of the book. The speech is introduced by inverted comas, whose use is restricted only to the beginning of every paragraph, and the font remains regular. The immediate effect consists in a speech given by a British general, which does not stands out as an American proclamation would do.

colonnello del reggimento dei Dragoni[123] della regina, governatore di Forte William nel nord della Gran Bretagna, rappresentante dei Comuni nel Parlamento Inglese, nonché comandante dell'esercito e della flotta impiegati nelle spedizioni dal Canada, eccetera.[124]

"Le forze che mi sono state affidate, con le numerose altre armate e flotte che sono già state schierate in ogni parte d'America sono state addestrate per agire in concerto, e sulla base di un principio comune, il potere, la giustizia, e se correttamente cercata, la grazia del re.

"La causa, per la quale le armate inglesi sono quindi impiegate, riguarda i più importanti interessi del cuore umano; e i militari servitori della corona, chiamati alle armi per la prima volta al solo scopo di restaurare i diritti della costituzione, ora combinano l'amore per la loro nazione e il dovere verso il loro sovrano, con l'altra grande forma di incitamento che si genera da una giusta coscienza dei diritti basilari del genere umano. Agli occhi ed agli orecchi di un pubblico equilibrato, e ai cuori delle migliaia di sofferenti nelle province, vada un malinconico appello, che la presente ribellione contro natura non diventi la base per un più completo sistema di tirannia giacché mai neppure Dio nel suo dispiacere, dovette sopportare, per un certo periodo, di essere tormentato da una generazione tanto cocciuta e ostinata.

"Incarcerazione arbitraria, confisca delle proprietà, persecuzione e tortura, cose mai perpetrate nemmeno dall'inquisizione della chiesa papista,[125] sono alcune delle tangibili mostruosità che vi si affermano. Queste sono inflitte da assemblee e comitati che osano professarsi amici della libertà, sulle più normali questioni, senza distinzione di età o sesso, ma per il solo crimine, spesso per il solo sospetto, di aver aderito anche solo in linea di principio al governo sotto al quale erano nati, e al quale, per ogni vincolo umano e divino, essi devono fedeltà. A dare completezza a tale condotta sconvolgente, si aggiunga alla diffusa prostituzione del buon senso, anche la profanazione religiosa; la coscienza degli uomini è tutt'altro

123 Cavalry regiment of the British army, so called, according to one argumentation, because the soldiers of such regiment originally had a dragon on their standard. Other etymological research suggest that the expression was coined because the dragoons were a military corp armed with a short carbine called dragon (see Sweat, 1936).

124 The triple repetition of the sign "&c" here is to be meant as "Etcetera".

125 The word "Romish" implies a negative connotation for the catholic religion, consequently I have chosen to translate it to Italian in its most pejorative synonym.

che solida; molti non solo sono forzati a prendere le armi, ma anche a giurare la propria sottomissione agli usurpatori che essi aborrono.

“Animato dalle suddette considerazioni, alla testa delle migliori truppe per salute, disciplina, e valore, determinato a colpire dove necessario, e ansioso di risparmiare ove possibile, io, davanti a questi presenti esorto tutti, in ogni luogo che l'avanzata di quest'esercito raggiunga, e con l'aiuto di Dio io li estenderò,- a mantenere tale condotta a giustificazione della mia volontà di proteggere le loro terre, abitazioni e famiglie. L'intenzione di codesto discorso è di difendere la sicurezza, e non la depredazione del paese.

“A tutti coloro il cui spirito e coscienza li inducano a prendere le gloriose parti della redenzione dei propri compatrioti dalle prigioni, e la restaurazione dei benefici di un governo legale, io offro incoraggiamento ed impiego; e per quanto riguarda la correttezza delle loro congregazioni, io troverò i mezzi per assisterli nelle loro imprese. Sono desideroso di proteggere le persone tranquille, quelle laboriose, gli infermi e persino i timidi, assicurando loro di poter restare sereni nelle loro case, che non vengano rapinati del loro bestiame, né che il loro grano venga nascosto o distrutto; che non vengano loro distrutti ponti o strade, né che in qualunque altro modo, direttamente o indirettamente, si sforzino di ostruire le operazioni delle truppe reali, o rifornire o aiutare quelle del nemico.

“Ogni tipo di provviste portate al mio campo, sarà ripagato ad un prezzo equo e in solida moneta.

“In nome della coscienza cristiana, della clemenza del mio reale condottiero, e dell'onore militare, mi sono soffermato su quest'invito e sperando che faccia presa e sia persuasivo: che la gente non sia portata a trascurarlo, come conseguenza della loro lontananza dall'attuale situazione del mio campo.-- Non ho che da dare l'ordine alle forze indiane sotto i miei comandi, e ammontano a migliaia, di perseguitare gli incalliti nemici della Gran Bretagna e dell'America; li pongo sullo stesso piano, ovunque essi si celino.

“Se nonostante questi sforzi e sincere volontà a perseguire i nostri obiettivi, la follia[126] dell'ostilità

126 As in many other cases, the text presents words whose pronunciation is nowadays preserved in modern English,

dovesse perdurare, credo di dover essere assolto agli occhi di Dio e degli uomini, nel denunciare e nel portare a termine la vendetta dello stato contro degli ostinati reietti.- I messaggeri della giustizia e della collera divina li attendono sul campo di battaglia; sbarreranno loro la via del ritorno devastazione, carestia, ed ogni ulteriore orrore che la riluttante ma indispensabile esecuzione dei doveri militari possa produrre.

"Campo nei pressi di Ticonderoga, 4 luglio 1777.[127] *J. Burgoyne.*

"Per ordine di sua eccellenza il luogotenente generale,

Robt. Kingston, segretario."

Il generale Burgoyne era considerato ancora un eroe, e le severità nei confronti dei prigionieri furono in buona misura intensificate o diminuite a seconda delle aspettative di conquista. La sua stentorea proclamazione era sulla bocca di tutta la truppa, specialmente dei lealisti, e grazie ad essa la loro fede fu ampiamente rinsaldata.

Io ed i miei compatrioti, in generale, non avevamo idea della tirannica presunzione e dell'arrogante, malevolo, e insolente comportamento del nemico in quel periodo; perciò non potevamo comprendere gli intollerabili flagelli dai quali il paese si era liberato grazie allo spirito e al coraggio di tutti.

La caduta del generale Burgoyne,128 e la resa del suo esercito, fecero svanire le aspirazioni e le aspettative del nemico e sconfissero lo spirito autoritario di un'opulenta, tenace e arrogante nazione, facendo mangiare la polvere agli angosciati lealisti ed esaltando il valore dei figli liberi dell'America, innalzando la loro fama fino alle stelle, e rendendo immortale il generale Gates con l'alloro eterno.129

Non appena l'eco di questo incredibile ed interessante evento giunse alla sua cristianissima maestà,

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but whose spelling was not determined by universally shared rules, as it will happen from 1828. The original book includes words like Phrensy, which corresponds to the current "frenzy" (see Webster, 1828).

127 The date of the general's proclamation is a complement to the symbolic charge of the speech: it was indeed pronounced the 4th of July, 1777, that is to say one exact year after the American declaration of Independence, the most significant day for the rebels, both as patriots, and from the point of view of their legitimation as a nation.

128 The 17th of october 1777, the defeat of Saratoga determined the capitulation of general Burgoyne to General Horatio Gates (see Peterson, 1848).

129 Horatio Lloyd Gates (1728–1806) was a soldier in the British army during the Seven Years' War, in North America, and became widely famous for his serving the rebel cause during the American Revolution. His bipolar historical aura combines on the one hand, the credit that he took for his victory in the Battles of Saratoga, and which forced general Burgoyne to surrender, while on the other hand, the blame that he earned for the defeat in the Battle of

che in Europa brilla di un lustro superiore quanto a bontà, politica e forza militare, l'illustre sovrano fu auspicabilmente indotto dal cielo a promuovere i reciproci interesse e convenienza con l'antico regno di Francia, e inoltre ritenne che i nuovi e nascenti stati americani, superando una tappa decisiva diventassero gli Stati Uniti d'America, e che dovessero essere liberi ed indipendenti.

Smetti di vantarti, o vecchia Inghilterra! Non considerati più di un'isola! E [considera] che il tuo potere è stato amato più a lungo dell'esercizio stesso della tua umanità. Ordina ai tuoi battaglioni sparpagliati e sconfitti di ritirarsi dall'America, il palcoscenico delle tue crudeltà. Tornatene a casa e pentiti nel saio e nella polvere per i tuoi gravissimi crimini. Il pianto di genitori, vedove, e orfani arriva fino in Cielo e tu vieni aborrita da tutti gli amici d'America. Vattene, porta via tutti i tuoi amici lealisti, e bevi abbondantemente dalla coppa dell'umiliazione. Fa' la pace con i principi della casa dei Borboni,[130] in quanto non sei in condizione di intraprendere una campagna militare contro di essi. I tuoi veterani sono caduti in America, e la tua gloria è tramontata. Chetati e paga i tuoi debiti, soprattutto per l'assunzione dei mercenari d'Assia. Non vi è altra maniera per te per riottenere credito se non attraverso le riforme e la pura onestà che hai tanto disprezzato; infatti il tuo potere non è più in grado di sostenere la tua vanità. Ho avuto l'opportunità di constatarne in abbondanza, sentirne i topici effetti, e apprendere lezioni di buon senso e condotta civile, mentre portavo i tuoi pesanti ferri e sopportavo i tuoi amari vituperi e le tue offese. Possiedo un briciolo di filosofia e comprendo la natura umana nei suoi vari aspetti; sono perfettamente a conoscenza dei tuoi crimini nazionali, e ti assicuro che non solo essi rivendicano una vendetta divina, ma animano gli uomini a sollevarsi contro di te. Virtù, accortezza e politica, nel senso nazionale del termine sono sempre collegate al potere, o in altre parole, il potere ne è figlio, e poiché tale potere non è diretto da virtù, accortezza e politica, alla fine non mancherà mai autodistruggersi, proprio come ha fatto il tuo. Questa è la natura delle cose, e sarebbe ingiusta se fosse altrimenti; infatti, se non fosse così, vanità,

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Camden, in 1780, while he was trying to delay the army of general Cornwallis, who was chasing George Washington (see Peterson, 1848).

130 The author suggests the beginning of a new phase of peace treaties with the stock of the Bourbons, namely with the French crown, embodied by king Louis XVI.

ingiustizia e oppressione regnerebbero sovrane per sempre. So che hai, tra le tue file, individui che ancora conservano la propria virtù, e di conseguenza il proprio valore e la propria umanità. Provo molta pietà per essi, in quanto devono pagare in qualche maniera per le sventure in cui la nazione e immersa fino al collo; ma come nazione io ti odio e disprezzo.

Io sono francofilo--131 glorifico Luigi XVI, il potente e generoso alleato di questi stati; mi sento strettamente legato ad una nazione tanto intraprendente, colta, educata e cortese, e attiva nel commercio, e sono certo di esprimere gli stessi sentimenti e speranze di tutti coloro che sostengono la rivoluzione in corso. Ho personalmente iniziato a studiare la lingua francese, e la raccomando a tutti i miei compatrioti prima ancora dell'ebraico, del greco e del latino, (necessarie, ma solo una di esse deve essere appresa) perché in futuro lo scambio e il commercio di questi stati dovrà inevitabilmente spostare i suoi canali dall'Inghilterra alla Francia, alla Spagna e al Portogallo; e non per nulla, gli statisti, i politici e i mercanti dovranno diventare avvezzi con questi vari idiomi, in particolare con il francese, che è il più in voga nella maggior parte dell'Europa. In effetti, non c'è niente di più utile per illuminare, raffinare, ed arricchire questi stati, come questa rivoluzione, così come proteggerne la libertà. Gli uomini sono per natura troppo nazionalisti, al punto da essere bigotti; e lo scambio commerciale con le nazioni straniere ha la notevole e straordinaria vocazione a migliorare le persone e di cancellare le superstizioni dalla mente, insegnando loro che la natura umana, la politica e gli interessi sono gli stessi in tutti i paesi, e ogni volta che essi barattano le comodità per interesse e per la felicità di ogni nazione possono scambiarsi reciprocamente quella parte di abitudini e maniere, per poterne beneficiare, imparando ad estendere la carità e le buone intenzioni a tutto il mondo degli uomini.

Io fui confinato nella prigione di New York dal 26 agosto e vi rimasi fino al 3 maggio 1778, quando fui fatto uscire, scortato dalle guardie, e condotto su una corvetta nella baia di New York, nella quale fui

131 Such short and instantaneous statement can be read as much more than a condemnation of Great Britain: it is an ideological, political and cultural base for the following debate which would affect the entire American political scenario: the debate between francophilia and anglophilia, which would also define some founding traits of the young republic, and which would set some of the causes of the American Civil War, almost one century later.

custodito a Staten Island, negli alloggi del generale Campbell, e dove mi fu permesso di mangiare e bere con il generale e molti altri ufficiali britannici, e per due giorni fui trattato in modo educato. Una sera, mentre stavo bevendo del vino con loro, osservai di essere passato dalla gattabuia dei criminali alla compagnia di gentiluomini, aggiungendo che io ero sempre lo stesso uomo, ma che dovevo dare credito agli Inglesi, (parlando al generale) di due giorni di buon trattamento.

Il giorno dopo il colonnello Archibald Campbell, (con il quale io fui scambiato) venne da noi, (condotto dal signor Boudinot, l'allora commissario americano dei prigionieri) e mi salutò con dei modi squisiti, dicendomi che mai nella sua vita era stato così lieto di vedere un gentiluomo, ed io gli risposi che ero ugualmente lieto di vedere lui, e speravo che il motivo fosse il medesimo. Gli ufficiali presenti risero di gusto, e pensarono che la ragione della nostra contentezza fosse l'agognata libertà; quindi prendemmo un bicchiere di vino insieme, e poi fui accompagnato dal generale Campbell, il colonnello Campbell, il signor Boudinot, e alcuni ufficiali britannici, alla barca che era pronta per salpare alla volta di Elizabethtown. Nel frattempo li intrattenni con una lista delle crudeltà perpetrate ai nostri prigionieri, e li assicurai che avrei usato la mia influenza, affinché in futuro i loro prigionieri fossero trattati allo stesso modo con cui venivano trattati i nostri, e che ritenevo che nei casi estremi fosse giusto che tale esempio venisse applicato ai loro stessi prigionieri; dopodiché ci scambiammo le formalità di commiato e partimmo. Navigai fino al già menzionato punto, e traboccante di gioia, approdai sulla terra della libertà, ricevendo acclamazioni di persone riconoscenti non appena misi piede nella regione.

Ben presto mi trovai in compagnia del colonnello Shelden (dei cavalleggeri), che con modi gentili e molto obbligati mi scortò fino al quartier generale, Valley Forge, dove il generale Washington mi ricevette cortesemente e con particolari segni della sua approvazione e stima, e dove fui presentato alla maggior parte dei generali e a molti degli ufficiali di rango maggiore dell'esercito, i quali mi trattarono con rispetto. Dopo aver offerto al generale Washington i miei ulteriori servigi in nome del mio paese non appena la mia salute (che era davvero molto indebolita), lo avrebbe permesso, e dopo che aver ottenuto la sua licenza

per tornare a casa, presi congedo da Sua Eccellenza e partii da Valley Forge assieme al generale Gates e al suo seguito con destinazione Fish Kill, dove arrivammo verso la fine di maggio. Durante il tragitto il generale fu lieto di trattarmi con la confidenza di un compagno e la generosità di un lord, ed io lo resi partecipe di alcuni impressionanti avvenimenti che mi erano capitati nel corso della prigionia.

Alla fine mi congedai dal mio nobile generale e dai gentiluomini della sua scorta e partii per Bennington, la capitale dei Green Mountain Boys, dove arrivai la sera dell'ultimo giorno di maggio, sorprendendo tutti; infatti per loro ero come una rosa spuntata dal mondo dei morti, e a quel punto tutti impazzimmo di gioia. Tre cannoni spararono quella sera, e il mattino dopo il colonnello Herrick, per darmi il benvenuto a Bennington, il luogo della mia dimora, diede ordine che altri quattordici facessero fuoco, tredici per gli Stati Uniti, e uno per il giovane Vermont.[132]

Una volta conclusa la cerimonia andammo a brindare e i volti di tutti risplendettero di la felicità rurale addolcita dall'amicizia, quindi concludemmo quella serata con dei leali brindisi ai nascenti Stati Uniti, con lo stesso leale spirito con il quale io ora concludo il mio racconto.

F I N E

132 The action contains a double political reading: on the one hand, a celebration for the victory against the English for the independence of the United States; but on the other hand, the 14th cannon shot represents a legitimation within the legitimation, for the territory of Vermont (not yet state) whose battle had begun before the break out of the American Revolution. The anecdote is related in the very last page of the Bell edition, like a sort of “last word” by Allen on the issue of the New Hampshire Grants (see Arch, 2000).

APPENDICE

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ETHAN ALLEN'S CAPTIVITY,

From the Time of his being taken by the British, near Montreal, on the 25th Day of September, in the Year 1775, to the Time of his Exchange, on the 6th Day of May, 1778:

CONTAINING,

HIS VOYAGES AND TRAVELS,

the most remarkable Occurrences respecting himself and many other Continental Prisoners of different Ranks and Characters, which fell under his Observation, in the Course of the same; particularly the Destruction of the Prisoners at New York, by General Sir William Howe, in the Years 1776 and 1777.

Interspersed with some POLITICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Written by himself, and now published for the Information of the Curious in all Nations.—*Price Ten Paper Dollars.*

When God from Chaos gave this World TO BE,
Man then he form'd, and form'd him TO BE FREE.
American Independence, a Poem, by FRENEAU.

PHILADELPHA:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY ROBERT BELL, IN THIRD STREET.
M. DCC. LXXIX.

INTRODUCTION.

INDUCED by a sense of duty to my country, and by the application of many of my worthy friends, some of whom are of the first characters, I have concluded to publish the following narrative of the extraordinary scenes of my captivity, and the discoveries which I made in the course of the same, of the cruel and relentless disposition and behaviour of the enemy, towards the prisoners in their power; from which the state politician, and every gradation of character among the people, to the worthy tiller of the soil, may deduce such inferences as they shall think proper to carry into practice. Some men are appointed into office, in these states, who read the history of the cruelties of this war with the same careless indifferency, as they do the page [illegible] Roman history; nay, some [illegible] preferred to places of trust and profit by the tory influence. The instances are (I hope) but rare; and it stands all freemen in hand, to prevent their further influence, which, of all other things, would be the most baneful to the liberties and happiness of this country; and so far as such influence takes place, robs us of the victory we have obtained, at the expence of so much blood and treasure.

I should have exhibited to the public a history of the facts herein contained, soon after my exchange, had not the urgency of my private affairs, together with more urgent public business, demanded my attention, 'till a few week before the date hereof. The reader will readily discern, that a narative of this sort could not have ben wrote when I was a prisoner: My trunk and writings were often serched, under various pretences; so that I never wrote a syllable, or made even a rough minute, wheron I might predicate this narration, but trusted solely to my memory for the whole. I have, however, taken the greatest care and pains to recollect the facts, and arrange them; but as they touch a variety of characters and opposite interests, I am sensible that all will not be pleased with the relation of them: Be this as it will, I have made truth my invariable guide, and stake my honour on the truth of the [illegible] I have been very generous [illegible] British, in giving them full ample credit for all their [illegible] usage of any considerable consequence, which I met with among them, during my captivity; which was easily done, as I met with but little, in comparison of the bad, which, by reason of the great plurality of it, could not be contained in so concise a narrative; so that I am certain, that I have more fully enumerated the favours which I received, than the abuses I suffered. The critic will be pleased to excuse any inaccuracies in the performance itself, as the author has unfortunately missed of a liberal education.

Bennington, March 25th, 1779.

ETHAN ALLEN.

EVER since I arrived to a state of manhood, and acquainted myself with the general history of mankind, I have felt a sincere passion for liberty. The history of nations doomed to perpetual slavery, in consequence of yielding up to tyrants their natural-born liberties, I read with a sort of philosophical horror; so that the first systematical and bloody attempt at Lexington, to enslave America, thoroughly electrified my mind, and fully determined me to take part with my country: And while I was wishing for an opportunity to signalize myself in its behalf, directions were privately sent to me from the then colony (now state) of Connecticut, to raise the Green Mountain Boys; (and if possible) with them to surprize and take the fortress Ticonderoga. This enterprize I chearfully undertook; and, after first guarding all the several passes that led thither, to cut off all intelligence between the garrison and the country, made a forced march from Bennington, and arrived at the lake opposite to Ticonderoga, on the evening of the ninth day of May, 1775, with two hundred and thirty valiant Green Mountain Boys; and it was with the utmost difficulty that I procured boats to cross the lake: However, I landed eighty three men near the garrison, and sent the boats back for the rear guard commanded by col. Seth Warner; but the day began to dawn, and I found myself under a necessity to attack the fort, before the manner following: "Friends "and fellow-soldiers, you have, "for a number of years past, been "a scourge and terror to arbitrary "power. Your valour has been "famed abroad, and acknowledg-"ed, as appears by the advice "and orders to me (from the Ge-"neral Assembly of Connecticut) "to surprize and take the garrison "now before us. I now propose "to advance before you, and in "person conduct you through the "wicket-gate; for we must this "morning either quit our preten-"sions to valour, or possess our-"selves of this fortress in a few "minutes; and, in as much as it "is a desperate attempt, (which "none but the bravest of men "dare undertake) I do not urge "it on any contrary to his will. "You that will undertake volun-"tarily, poise your firelocks."

The men being (at this time) drawn up in three ranks, each poised his firelock. I ordered them to face to the right; and, at the head of the center-file, marched them immediately to the wicket-gate aforesaid, where I found a centry posted, who instantly snapped his fusee at me: I run immediately toward him, and he retreated through the covered way into the parade within the garrison, gave a halloo, and ran under a bomb-proof. My party who followed me into the fort, I formed on the parade, in such manner as to face the two barracks which faced each other. The garrison

and slightly wounded him: My first thought was to kill him with my sword; but, in an instant, altered the design and fury of the blow to a slight cut on the side of the head; upon which he dropped his gun, and asked quarter, which I readily granted him, and demanded of him the place where the commanding officer kept; he shewed me a pair of stairs in the front of a barrack, on the west part of the garrison, which led up to a second story in said barrack, to which I immediately repaired, and ordered the commander (captain Delaplace) to come forth instantly, or I would sacrifice the whole garrison; at which the captain came immediately to the door with his breeches in his hand, when I ordered him to deliver to me the fort instantly, who asked me by what authority I demanded it: I answered him, "In the name of the "great Jehovah, and the Continental Congress." (The authority of the Congress being very little known at that time) he began to speak again; but I interrupted him, and with my drawn sword over his head, again demanded an immediate surrender of the garrison; to which he then complied, and ordered his men to be forthwith paraded without arms, as he had given up the garrison: In the mean time some of my officers had given orders, and in consequence thereof, sundry of the barrack doors were beat down, and about one third of the garrison imprisoned, which consisted of

This surprize was carried into execution in the gray of the morning of the 10th day of May, 1775. The sun seemed to rise that morning with a superior lustre; and Ticonderoga and its dependencies smiled on its conquerors, who tossed about the flowing bowl, and wished success to Congress and the liberty and freedom of America. Happy it was for me, (at that time) that the then future pages of the Book of Fate, which afterwards unfolded a miserable scene of two years and eight months imprisonment, was hid from my view: But to return to my narration; col. Warner, with the rear guard, crossed the lake, and joined me early in the morning, whom I sent off, without loss of time, with about one hundred men, to take possession of Crown Point, which was garrisoned with a sergeant and twelve men; which he took possession of the same day, as also upwards of one hundred pieces of cannon. But one thing now remained to be done, to make ourselves complete masters of lake Champlain: This was to possess ourselves of a sloop of war, which was then laying at St. John's; to effect which, it was agreed in a council of war, to arm and man out a certain schooner, which lay at South Bay, and that captain (now general) Arnold should command her, and that I should command the batteaux. The necessary preparations being made, we set sail from Ticonderoga, in quest of the sloop, which was much larger

He alſo made priſoners of a ſergeant and twelve men, who were garriſoned at that place. It is worthy remark, that as ſoon as general Arnold had ſecured the priſoners on board, and had made preparation for ſailing, the wind, which but a few hours before was freſh in the ſouth, and well ſerved to carry us to St. John's, now ſhifted, and came freſh from the north; and in about one hour's time, general Arnold ſailed with the prize and ſchooner for Ticonderoga: When I met him with my party, within a few miles of St. John's, he ſaluted me with a diſcharge of cannon, which I returned with a volley of ſmall arms: This being repeated three times, I went on board the ſloop with my party, where ſeveral loyal Congreſs healths were drank. We were now maſters of lake Champlain, and the garriſons depending thereon. This ſucceſs I viewed of conſequence in the ſcale of American politics; for if a ſettlement between the then colonies and Great Britain, had ſoon taken place, it would have been eaſy to have reſtored theſe acquiſitions; but viewing the then future conſequences of a cruel war, (as it has really proved to be) and the command of that lake, garriſons, artillery, &c. muſt be viewed to be of ſignal importance to the American cauſe, and it is marvellous to me, that we ever loſt the command of it. Nothing but the taking a Burgoyne, with a whole Britiſh union and confederacy with the United States of America. Such an event would put it out of the power of the weſtern tribes of Indians to carry on a war with us, and be a ſolid and durable bar againſt any further inhuman barbarities committed on our frontier inhabitants, by cruel and bloodthirſty ſavages; for it is impoſſible for them to carry on a war, except they are ſupported by the trade and commerce of ſome civilized nation; which to them would be impracticable, did Canada compoſe a part of the American empire.

Early in the fall of the year, the little army, under the command of the generals Schuyler and Montgomery, were ordered to advance into Canada. I was at Ticonderoga, when this order arrived; and the general, with moſt of the field officers, requeſted me to attend them in the expedition; and tho' at that time, I had no commiſſion from Congreſs, yet they engaged me, that I ſhould be conſidered as an officer the ſame as tho' I had a commiſſion; and ſhould, as occaſion might require, command certain detachments of the army — This I conſidered as an honourable offer, and did not heſitate to comply with it, and advanced with the army to the iſle Auix Noix; from whence I was ordered (by the general) to go in company with major Brown, and certain interpreters, through the woods into Canada, with letters to the Canadians, and to let them know, that

Noix the fore part of September, when general Schuyler returned to Albany; and in consequence the command devolved upon general Montgomery, whom I assisted in laying a line of circumvallation round the fortress St. John's: After which I was ordered by the general, to make a second tour into Canada, upon nearly the same design as before; and withal to observe the disposition, designs and movements of the inhabitants of the country: This reconnoitre I undertook with reluctance, chusing rather to assist at the siege of St. John's, which was then closely invested; but my esteem for the general's person, and opinion of him as a politician and brave officer, induced me to proceed.

I passed through all the parishes on the river Sorrel, to a parish at the mouth of the same, which is called by the same name, preaching politics; and went from thence across the Sorrel to the river St. Lawrence, and up the river through the parishes to Longale, and so far met with good success as an itinerant. In this round, my guard was Canadians, (my interpreter and some few attendants excepted.) On the morning of the 24th day of September, I set out with my guard of about eighty men, from Longale, to go to Lapraier; from whence I determined to go to general Montgomery's camp; but had not advanced two miles before I met with major Brown, (who has since been advanced to the rank of a colonel) who desired me to halt, ates, where col. Brown proposed, that "Provided I would return to Longale, and procure some canoes, so as to cross the river St. Lawrence a little north of Montreal, he would cross it a little to the south of the town, with near two hundred men, as he had boats sufficient; and that we would make ourselves masters of Montreal."—This plan was readily approved by me and those in council; and in consequence of which I returned to Longale, collected a few canoes, and added about thirty English Americans to my party, and crossed the river in the night of the 24th, agreeable to the before proposed plan. My whole party, at this time, consisted of about one hundred and ten men, near eighty of whom were Canadians. We were the most of the night crossing the river, as we had so few canoes that they had to pass and re-pass three times, to carry my party across. Soon after day-break, I set a guard between me and the town, with special orders to let no person whatever pass or re-pass them, and another guard on the other end of the road, with like directions; in the mean time, I reconnoitred the best ground to make a defence, expecting colonel Brown's party was landed on the other side of the town, he having (the day before) agreed to give three huzzas with his men early in the morning, which signal I was to return, that we might each know that both parties were landed; but the sun, by this time, being near two hours

of my troops croſs at one time, the other two third. would of courſe fall into their hands. This I could not reconcile to my own feelings as a man, much leſs as an officer: I therefore concluded to maintain the ground, (if poſſible) and all to fare alike. In conſequence of this reſolution, I diſpatched two meſſengers, one to Lapraire, (to col. Brown) and the other to Laſumption, (a French ſettlement) to Mr. Walker, who was in our intereſt, requeſting their ſpeedy aſſiſtance; giving them at the ſame time, to underſtand my critical ſituation: In the mean time, ſundry perſons came to my guards, pretending to be friends, but were by them taken priſoners, and brought to me.—These I ordered to confinement, 'till their friendſhip could be further confirmed; for I was jealous they were ſpies, as they proved to be afterwards: One of the principal of them making his eſcape, expoſed the weakneſs of my party, which was the final cauſe of my misfortune; for I have been ſince informed that Mr. Walker, agreeable to my deſire, exerted himſelf, and had raiſed a conſiderable number of men for my aſſiſtance, which brought him into difficulty afterwards; but upon hearing of my misfortune, diſbanded them again.

The town of Montreal was in a great tumult. Gen. Carlton and the royal party made every preparation to go on board their veſſels of force, (as I was afterwards informed) but the ſpy eſcaping from my, as they ſallied out of the town, I perceived it would be a day of trouble, if not of rebuke; but I had no chance to flee, as Montreal was ſituated on an iſland, and the river St. Lawrence cut off my communication to gen. Montgomery's camp. I encouraged my ſoldiery to bravely defend themſelves, that we ſhould ſoon have help, and that we ſhould be able to keep the ground, if no more. This, and much more I affirmed with the greateſt ſeeming aſſurance, and which in reality I thought to be in ſome degree probable.

The enemy conſiſted of not more than forty regular troops, together with a mixed multitude, chiefly Canadians, with a number of Engliſh who lived in the town, and ſome Indians; in all to the number of near five hundred.

The reader will notice that moſt of my party were Canadians; indeed it was a motley parcel of ſoldiery which compoſed both parties. However, the enemy began the attack from wood-piles, ditches, buildings, and ſuch like places, at a conſiderable diſtance, and I returned the fire from a ſituation more than equally advantageous. The attack began between two and three of the clock in the afternoon, juſt before which I ordered a volunteer, by the name of Richard Young, with a detachment of nine men as a flank guard, which, under the cover of the bank of the river, could not only annoy the enemy, but at the ſame time, ſerve

ground, (provided it should be continued 'till night:) But near half the body of the enemy began to flank round to my right; upon which I ordered a volunteer, by the name of John Dugan, who had lived many years in Canada, and understood the French language, to detach about fifty of the Canadians, and post himself at an advantageous ditch, which was on my right, to prevent my being surrounded: He advanced with the detachment, but instead of occupying the post, made his escape, as did likewise Mr. Young upon the left, with their detachments. I soon perceived that the enemy was in possession of the ground, which Dugan should have occupied. At this time I had but about forty five men with me; some of whom were wounded: The enemy kept closing round me, nor was i in my power to prevent it; by which means, my situation which was advantageous in the first part of the attack, ceased to be so in the last; and being almost entirely surrounded with such vast unequal numbers, I ordered a retreat, but found that those of the enemy, who were of the country, and their Indians, could run as fast as my men, tho' the regulars could not: Thus I retreated near a mile, and some of the enemy, with the savages, kept flanking me, and others crowded hard in the rear: In fine I expected in a very short time, to try the world of spirits; for I was apprehensive that no quarter would be given to me, and turned the latter, and joined him, as running had put us both out of breath; for I conclude we were not frighted: I then saluted him with my tongue in a harsh manner, and told him that inasmuch as his numbers were so far superior to mine, I would surrender, provided I could be treated with honour, and be assured of good quarter for myself and the men who were with me; and he answered I should; another officer coming up directly after, confirmed the treaty; upon which I agreed to surrender with my party, which then consisted of thirty one effective men, and seven wounded. I ordered them to ground their arms, which they did.

The officer I capitulated with, then directed me and my party to advance towards him, which was done; I handed him my sword, and in half a minute after a savage, part of whose head was shaved, being almost naked and painted, with feathers intermixed with the hair of the other side of his head, came running to me with an incredible swiftness; he seemed to advance with more than mortal speed; (as he approached near me, his hellish visage was beyond all description; snakes eyes appear innocent in comparison of his; his features extorted; malice, death, murder, and the wrath of devils and damned spirts are the emblems of his countenance) and in less than twelve feet of me, presented his firelock; at the instant of his present, I twitched the officer to whom I gave my sword, be-

ence; but in less than half a minute, I was attacked by just such another imp of hell: Then I made the officer fly around with incredible velocity, for a few seconds of time, when I perceived a Canadian (who had lost one eye, as appeared afterwards) taking my part against the savages; and in an instant an Irishman came to my assistance with a fixed bayonet, and drove away the fiends, swearing by Jesus he would kill them. This tragic scene composed my mind. The escaping from so awful a death, made even imprisonment happy; the more so as my conquerors on the field treated me with great civility and politeness.

The regular officers said that they were very happy to see col. Allen: I answered them, that I should rather chose to have seen them at gen. Montgomery's camp. The gentlemen replied, that they gave full credit to what I said. and as I walked to the town, which was (as I should guess) more than two miles, a British officer walked at my right hand, and one of the French noblesse at my left; the latter of which in the action, had his eyebrow carried away by a glancing shot, but was nevertheless very merry and facetious, and no abuse was offered me 'till I came to the barrack-yard at Montreal, where I met general Prescott, who asked me my name, which I told him: He then asked me, whether I was that col Allen, who took Ticonderoga. I told him I was the very man: Then he shook his cane over my head, calling me a d[illegible] was the beetle of mortality for him, if he presumed to strike; upon which capt. M'Cloud of the British, pulled him by the skirt, and whispered to him (as he afterwards told me) to this import; that it was inconsistent with his honour to strike a prisoner. He then ordered a sergeant's command with fixed bayonets to come forward, and kill thirteen Canadians, which were includes in the treaty aforesaid.

It cut me to the heart to see the Canadians in so hard a case, in consequence of their having been true to me, they were wringing their hands, saying their prayers, (as I concluded) and expected immediate death. I therefore stepped between the executioners and the Canadians, opened my cloaths, and told gen. Prescott to thrust his bayonets into my breast, for I was the sole cause of the Canadians taking up arms.

The guard in the mean time, rolling their eye-balls from the general to me, as though impatiently waiting his dread commands to sheath their bayonets in my heart; I could however plainly discern, that he was in a suspence and quandary about the matter: This gave me additional hopes of succeeding; for my design was not to die, but to save the Canadians by a finesse. The general stood a minute, when he made me the following reply: "I will not execute you now; but you shall grace a halter at Tyburn, God damn ye."

I remember I disdained his mentioning such a place: I was notwithstanding a little inwardly pleased with the [illegible]

reader will find in the course of this history. Gen. Prescott then ordered one of his officers to take me on board the Gaspee schooner of war, and confine me, hands and feet, in irons, which was done the same afternoon I was taken.

The action continued an hour and three quarters by the watch, and I know not to this day how many of my men were killed, though I am certain there were but few; if I remember right, seven were wounded; one of them, William Stewart by name, was wounded by a savage with a tomahawk, after he was taken prisoner and disarmed, but was rescued by some of the generous enemy; and so far recovered his wounds, that he afterwards went with the other prisoners to England.

Of the enemy were killed a major Carden, who had been wounded in eleven different battles, & an eminent merchant Patterson of Montreal, and some others, but I never knew their whole loss, as their accounts were different. I am apprehensive that it is rare, that so much ammunition was expended, and so little execution done by it; though such of my party as stood the ground, behaved with great fortitude, much exceeding that of the enemy, but were not the best of marksmen, and I am apprehensive, were all killed or taken; the wounded were put into the hospital at Montreal, and those that were not, were put on board of different vessels in the river, and shackled together by pairs, viz. two men fastened together by one hand cuff, being closely fixed to one wrist of each of

imagine) would weigh thirty pounds; the bar was eight feet long, and very substantial; the shackles which encompassed my ancles, were very tight. I was told by the officer who put them on, that it was the king's plate, and I heard other of their officers say, that it would weigh forty weight. The irons were so close upon my ancles, that I could not lie down in any other manner than on my back. I was put into the lowest and most wretched part of the vessel, where I got the favour of a chest to set on; the same answered for my bed at night, and having procured some little blocks of the guard (who day and night, with fixed bayonets watched over me) to lay under each end of the large bar of my leg irons to preserve my ancles from galling while I set on the chest, or lay back on the same, though most of the time night and day, I set on it; but at length having a desire to lie down on my side, which the closeness of the irons forbid, desired the captain to loosen them for that purpose, but was denied the favour: The captain's name was Royal, who did not seem to be an ill natured man; but often times said, that his express orders were to treat me with such severity which was disagreeable to his own feelings; nor did he ever insult me though many others, who came on board, did. One of the officers, by the name of Bradley, was very generous to me; he would often send me victuals from his own table; nor did a day fail, but that he sent me a good drink of grog.

The reader is now invited back to

which I had met with from him, and demanded gentleman like usage, but received no answer from him. I soon after wrote to gen. Carlton, which met the same success. In the mean while many of those who were permitted to see me, were very insulting.

I was confined in the manner I have related, on board the Gaspee schooner, about six weeks; during which time I was obliged to throw out plenty of extravagant language which answered certain purposes, (at that time) better than to grace a history.

To give an instance upon being insulted, in a fit of anger I twisted off a nail with my teeth, which I took to be a ten-penny nail; it went through the mortise of the bar of my hand-cuff, and at the same time I swaggered over those who abused me; particularly a doctor Dace, who told me that I was outlawed by New York, and deserved death for several years past; was at last fully ripened for the halter, and in a fair way to obtain it: When I challenged him, he excused himself in consequence, as he said, of my being a criminal; but I flung such a flood of language at him, that it shocked him and the spectators, for my anger was very great. I heard one say, damn him, can he eat iron? After that a small padlock was fixed to the hand-cuff, instead of the nail; and as they were mean-spirited in their treatment to me, so it appeared to me, British, who treated me in a very generous and obliging manner, and according to my rank; in about twenty four hours I bid him farewel with regret; but my good fortune still continued: The name of the captain of the vessel I was put on board, was Little John; who, with his officers, behaved in a polite, generous, and friendly manner. I lived with them in the cabbin, and fared on the best; my irons being taken off, contrary to the order he had received from the commanding officer; but capt. Little John swore, that a brave man should not be used as a rascal, on board his ship.

Thus I found myself in possession of happiness once more, and the evils I had lately suffered, gave me an uncommon relish for it.

Capt. Little John used to go to Quebec almost every day, in order to pay his respects to certain gentlemen and ladies; being there on a certain day, he happened to meet with some disagreeable treatment (as he imagined) from a lieutenant of a man of war, and one word brought on another, 'till the lieutenant challenged him to a duel on the plains of Abraham. Capt. Little John was a gentleman, who entertained a high sense of honour, and could do no less than accept the challenge.

At nine o'clock the next morning they were to fight. The captain returned in the evening, and acquainted his lieutenant and me with the affair: His lieutenant

perfidy and pretence, I would be glad to testify my gratitude to him, by acting the part of a faithful second, on which he gave me his hand, and said that he wanted no better man. Says he, I am a king's officer, and you a prisoner under my care; you must therefore go with me to the place appointed, in disguise, and added further: "You must engage to "me, upon the honour of a gen-"tleman, that whether I die or "live, or whatever happens, (pro-"vided you live) that you will "return to my lieutenant on board "this ship" All this I solemnly engaged him. The combatants were to discharge each a pocket-pistol, and then to fall on with their iron-hilted muckle-whangers; and one of that sort was all tied for me; but some British officers, who interposed early in the morning, settled the controversy without fighting.

Now having enjoyed eight or nine days happiness, from the polite and generous treatment of capt. Little John and his officers, I was obliged to bid them farewel, parting with them in as friendly a manner, as we had lived together, which, to the best of my memory, was the eleventh of November: When a detachment of gen. Arnold's little army appeared on point Levy, opposite Quebec, (who had performed an extraordinary march through a wilderness country, with design to have surprized the capital of Canada) I was then taken on board a vessel called the who was probably excited in the exercise of his malevolence, by a junto of tories, who sailed with him to England; among whom were col. Guy Johnson, col Closs, and their attendants and associates, to the number of about thirty.

All the ship's crew (col Closs, in his personal behaviour, excepted) behaved towards the prisoners with that spirit of bitterness, which is the peculiar characteristic of tories, when they have the friends of America in their power, measuring their loyalty to the English king by the barbarity, fraud, and deceit which they exercise towards the whigs.

A small place in the vessel, enclosed with white-oak plank, was assigned for the prisoners, and for me among the rest I should imagine that it was not more than twenty feet one way, and twenty two the other: Into this place we were all, to the number of thirty four, thrust and hand cuffed, (two prisoners more being added to our number) and were provided with two excrement tubs; in this circumference we were obliged to eat and perform the office of evacuation, during the voyage to England; and were insulted by every black guard sailor and tory on board, in the cruellest manner but what is the most surprizing is that not one of us died in the passage. When I was first ordered to go into the filthy enclosure, through a small sort of door, I positively refused, and endeavoured to reason the before named brook Wat

manded me to go immediately in among the rest: He further added that the place was good enough for a rebel; that it was impertinent for a capital offender to talk of honour or humanity; that any thing short of a halter, was too good for me; and that, that would be my portion soon after I landed in England; for which purpose only I was sent thither. About the same time a lieutenant among the tories, insulted me in a grievous manner, saying, that I ought to have been executed for my rebellion against New York, and spit in my face; upon which (tho' I was hand-cuffed) I sprang at him with both hands, and knocked him partly down, but he scrambled along into the cabbin, and I after him; there he got under the protection of some men with fixed bayonets, who were ordered to make ready to drive me into the place afore mentioned. I challenged him to fight, notwithstanding the impediments that were on my hands, and had the exalted pleasure to see the rascal tremble for fear; his name I have forgot, but Watson ordered his guard to get me into the place with the other prisoners, dead or alive; and I had almost as leave die as do it, standing it out till they environed me round with bayonets; and brutish, prejudiced, abandoned wretches they were, from whom I could expect nothing but death or wounds: However I told them, that they were good honest fellows; that I could not blame them; that

well as to treat Watson with contempt; but still I found that they were determined to force me into the wretched circumstances, which their prejudiced, and depraved minds had prepared for me: Therefore rather than die, I submitted to their indignities, being drove with bayonets into the filthy dungeon, with the other prisoners, where we were denied fresh water, except a small allowance which was very inadequate to our wants; and in consequence of the stench of the place, each of us was soon followed with a diarrhœa and fever, which occasioned an intolerable thirst. When we asked for water, we were most commonly (instead of obtaining it) insulted and derided; and to add to all the horrors of the place, it was so dark that we could not see each other, and were overspread with body-lice. We had (notwithstanding these severities) full allowance of salt provisions, and a gill of rum per day; the latter of which was of the utmost service to us, and (probably) was the means of saving several of our lives. About forty days we existed in this manner, when the land's end of England was discovered from the mast head; soon after which the prisoners were taken from their gloomy abode, being permitted to see the light of the sun, and breath fresh air, which to us was very refreshing. The day following we landed at Falmouth.

A few days before I was taken prisoner, I shifted my clothes, by

worsted cap: This was all the cloathing I had, in which I made my appearance in England.

When the prisoners were landed, multitudes of the citizens of Falmouth (excited by curiosity) crowded together to see us, which was equally gratifying to us. I saw numbers of people on the tops of houses, and the rising adjacent grounds were covered with them of both sexes: The throng was so great, that the king's officers were obliged to draw their swords, and force a passage to Pendennis castle which was near a mile from the town, where we were closely confined, in consequence of orders from gen. Carlton, who then commanded in Canada.

The rascally Brook Watson then set out for London in great haste, expecting the reward of his zeal; but the ministry received him (as I have been since informed) rather coolly; for the minority in parliament took advantage, arguing that the opposition of America to Great Britain, was not a rebellion: If it is, (say they) why do you not execute col. Allen, according to law? but the majority argued, that I ought to be executed, and that the opposition was really a rebellion, but that policy obliged them not to do it, inasmuch as the Congress had then most prisoners in their power; so that my being sent to England, for the purpose of being executed, and necessity restraining them, was rather a foil on their laws and au-

Consequently the reader will readily conceive I was anxious about my preservation, (knowing that I was in the power of a haughty and cruel nation, considered as such.) Therefore the first proposition which I determined in my own mind was, that humanity and moral suasion would not be consulted in the determining of my fate: And those that daily came in great numbers, out of curiosity to see me, both gentle and simple, united in this, that I would be hanged. A gentleman from America, by the name of Temple, (and who was friendly to me) just whispered me in the ear, and told me, that bets were laid in London, that I would be executed; he likewise privately gave me a guinea, but durst say but little to me.

However, agreeable to my first negative proposition, that moral virtue would not influence my destiny, I had recourse to stratagem, which I was in hopes would move in the circle of their policy. I requested of the commander of the castle the privilege of writing to Congress, who, after consulting with an officer that lived in town, of a superior rank, permitted me to write I wrote, in the fore part of the letter, a short narrative of my ill treatment; but withal let them know, that tho' I was treated as a criminal in England, and continued in irons, together with those taken with me, yet it was in consequence of the orders

me, and the prisoners with me, and govern themselves accordingly, with a particular request, that if retaliation should be found necessary, that it might be exercised not according to the smallness of my character in America, but in proportion to the importance of the cause for which I suffered.— This is, according to my present recollection, the substance of the letter subscribed *To the illustrious Continental Congress.* This letter was wrote with a view that it should be sent to the ministry at London, rather than to Congress, with a design to intimidate the haughty English government, and screen my neck from the halter.

The next day the officer (from whom I obtained licence to write) came to see me, and frowned on me on account of the impudence of the letter, (as he phrased it) and further added, "Do you think that we are fools in England, and would send your letter to Congress, with instructions to retaliate on our own people I have sent your letter to lord North."— This gave me inward satisfaction, (though I carefully concealed it with a pretended resentment) for I found I had come Yankee over him, and that the letter had gone to the identical person I designed it for. Nor do I know (to this day) but that it had the desired effect, though I have not heard any thing of the letter since

My personal treatment by lieut. Hamilton, who commanded the cattle, was very generous. He tion in public support between me and the privates; we all lodged on a sort of Dutch bunks, in one common apartment, and were allowed straw. The privates were well supplied with fresh provision, and (with me) took effectual measures to rid ourselves of lice.

I could not but feel inwardly extreme anxious for my fate.—— This I however concealed from the prisoners, as well as from the enemy, who were perpetually shaking the halter at me. I nevertheless treated them with scorn and contempt; and having sent my letter to the ministry, could conceive of nothing more in my power but to keep up my spirits, behave in a daring soldier-like manner, that I might exhibit a good sample of American fortitude. Such a conduct (I judged) would have a more probable tendency to my preservation than concession and timidity. This, therefore, was my deportment, and I had lastly determined, (in my own mind) that if a cruel death must inevitably be my portion, I would face it undaunted, and tho' I greatly rejoice that I have returned to my country and friends, and to see the power and pride of Great Britain humbled; yet I am confident I could (then) die without the least appearance of dismay.

I now clearly recollect that my mind was so resolved, that I would not have trembled or shewn the least fear, as I was sensible it could not alter my fate, nor do more than reproach my memory

and lamenting over them, but not able to help them, which was in reality not different in the consequence of it from such a death as I was apprehensive of: And as death was the natural consequence of animal life, to which the laws of nature subject mankind, to be timorous and uneasy as to the event or manner of it, was inconsistent with the character of a philosopher or soldier. The cause I was engaged in, I ever viewed worthy hazarding my life for, nor was I (at the most critical moments of trouble) sorry that I engaged in it; and as to the world of spirits, though I knew nothing of the mode or manner of it, expected nevertheless, when I should arrive at such a world, that I should be as well treated as other gentlemen of my merit.

Among the great numbers of people, who came to the castle to see the prisoners, some gentlemen told me, that they had come fifty miles on purpose to see me, and desired to ask me a number of questions, and to make free with me in conversation. I gave for answer, that I chose freedom in every sense of the word: Then one of them asked me, what my occupation in life had been? I answered him, that in my younger days I had studied divinity, but was a conjurer by profession. He replied, that I conjured wrong at the time that I was taken; and I was obliged to own, that I mistook a figure at that time, but that I had conjured them out of Ticonderoga

castle, or rather parade, where numbers of gentlemen and ladies were ready to see and hear me. I often entertained such audiences with harangues on the impracticability of Great Britain's conquering the (then) colonies of America. At one of these times I asked a gentleman for a bowl of punch, and he ordered his servant to bring it, which he did, and offered it to me, but I refused to take it from the hand of his servant; he then gave it to me with his own hand, refusing to drink with me in consequence of my being a state criminal: However I took the punch and drank it all down at one draught, and handed the gentleman the bowl: This made the spectators as well as myself merry. I expatiated on American freedom. This gained the resentment of a young beardless gentleman of the company, who gave himself very great airs, and replied, that he "knew the Americans very well, "and was certain that they could "not bear the smell of powder." I replied, that I accepted it as a challenge, and was ready to convince him on the spot, that an American could bear the smell of powder; at which he answered, that he should not put himself on a par with me. I then demanded of him to treat the character of the Americans with due respect: He answered that I was an Irishman, but I assured him, that I was a *full blooded Yankee*, and in fine bantered him so much, that he left me in possession of the ground

hriſtianity; and they ſeemed to e ſurprized, that I ſhould be acquainted with ſuch topics, or that ſhould underſtand a ſyllogiſm or gular mode of argumentation. am apprehenſive my Canadian reſs contributed not a little to the rprize, and excitement of curiſity: To ſee a gentleman in England, regularly dreſſed and well haved, would be no ſight at all; ut ſuch a rebel, as they were leaſed to call me, it is probable as never before ſeen in England.

The priſoners were landed at almouth a few days before Chriſtmas, and ordered on board of the ole'y frigate, captain Symonds, he eighth day of January, 1776, hen our hand-irons were taken ff. This remove was in conſequence (as I have been ſince informed) of a writ of habeas corpus, which had been procured by ome gentlemen in England, in rder to obtain me my liberty.

The Sailbay with ſundry other hen of war, and about forty ranſports, rendezvouſed at the ove of Cork in Ireland, to take in roviſion and water.

When we were firſt brought on oard, captain Symonds ordered ll the priſoners, and moſt of the ands on board, to go on the eck, and cauſed to be read in heir hearing, a certain code of aws, or rules for the regulation nd ordering of their behaviour; nd then in a ſovereign manner, rdered the priſoners, me in particular, off the deck, and never to ome on it again: for ſaid he is your place.

Prior to this I had taken cold, by which I was in an ill ſtate of health, and did not ſay much to the officer; but ſtayed there that night, conſulted my policy, and found I was in an evil caſe; that a captain of a man of war was more arbitrary than a king, as he could view his territory with a look of his eye, and a movement of his finger commanded obedience. I felt myſelf more deſponding than I had done at any time before; for I concluded it to be a governmental ſcheme, to do that clandeſtinely, which policy forbid to be done under ſanction of public juſtice and law.

However, two days after I ſhaved and cleanſed myſelf as well as I could, and went on deck: The captain ſpoke to me in a great rage, and ſaid, "Did I not order you not to come on deck?" I anſwered him, that at the ſame time he ſaid, "That it was the place for gentlemen to walk:" That I was colonel Allen, but had not been properly introduced to him. He replied, "G—d damn you, Sir, be careful not to walk the ſame ſide of the deck that I do." This gave me encouragement, and ever after that, I walked in the manner he had directed, except when he (at certain times afterwards) ordered me off in a paſſion, and then would directly afterwards go on again, telling him to command his ſlaves, that I was a gentleman, and had a right to walk the deck; yet when he ex-

prerogative of the captain of the man of war, though he oftentimes, nay commonly walks with his lieutenants, when no strangers are by: When a captain from some other man of war, comes on board, the captains walk to the windward side, and the other gentlemen to the leeward.

It was but a few nights I lodged in the cable-tire, before I gained an acquaintance with the master of arms; his name was Gillegan, an Irishman, who was a generous and well-disposed man, and in a friendly manner, made me a proffer of living with him in a little birth, which was allotted him between decks, and enclosed with canvas; his preferment on board was about equal to that of a sergeant in a regiment. I was comparatively happy in the acceptance of his clemency, and lived with him in friendship, 'till the frigate anchored in the harbour of cape Fear, North Carolina, in America.

Nothing of material consequence happened 'till the fleet rendezvoused at the cove of Cork, (except a violent storm which brought old hardy sailors to their prayers) It was soon rumoured in Cork that I was on board the Solebay, with a number of prisoners from America; upon which Messrs. Clark and Hays, merchants in company, and a number of other benevolently disposed gentlemen, contributed largely to the relief and support of the prisoners, who were thirty-four in number, and in very needy circumstances. A suit of cloaths throughout, eight fine Holland shirts and stocks ready made, with a number of pairs of silk and worsted hose, two pair of shoes, two beaver hats, one of which was sent me richly laced with gold, by Mr. James Boswell. The Irish gentlemen furthermore made a large gratuity of wines of the best sort, old spirits, Geneva, loaf and brown sugar, coffee, tea and chocolate, with a large round of pickled beef, and a number of fat turkies, with many other articles (for my seastores) too tedious to mention here. To the privates they bestowed to each man two pounds of tea, and six pounds of brown sugar. These articles were received on board, (at a time when the captain and first lieutenant were gone on shore) by permission of the second lieutenant, a handsome young gentleman, who was then under twenty years of age; his name was Douglass, the son of admiral Douglass, (as I was informed)

As this munificence was so unexpected and plentiful, I may add needful, it impressed on my mind the highest sense of gratitude towards my benefactors; for I was not only supplied with the necessaries and conveniences of life, but with the grandeurs and superfluities of it. Mr. Hays, one of the donators before mentioned, came on board, and behaved in the most obliging manner, telling me, that he hoped my troubles were past, for that the gentlemen of Cork determined to make my

rſon fifty guineas, but I could ot reconcile the receiving the hole to my own feelings, as it ight have the appearance of avace; and therefore received but ven guinea only; and am confient not only from the exerciſe of e preſent well-timed generoſity, at from a large acquaintance ith gentlemen of this nation, at as a people they excel in liberality and bravery.

Two days after the receipt of e aforeſaid donations, captain ymonds came on board, full of avy towards the priſoners, and vore by all that is good, that the amned American rebels ſhould not e treated at this rate, by the damnd rebels of Ireland; he therefore ook away all my liquors beforementioned, (except ſome of the ine which was ſecreted, and a wo gallon jug of old ſpirits which vas reſerved for me, per favour of eutenant Douglaſs) The taking ny liquors was abominable in his ght; he therefore ſpoke in my ehalf, 'till the captain was angry vith him: And in conſequence, roceeded & took away all the tea nd ſugar, which had been given to he other priſoners, and confiſcated t to the uſe of the ſhip's crew. Our cloathing was not taken away, but the privates were forced o do duty on board. Soon after his there came a boat to the ſide of the ſhip, and captain Symonds aſked a gentleman that was in it, (in my hearing) what his buſineſs was? who anſwered that he was ſent to deliver ſome ſea-ſtores to the gentlemen in Cork requeſted of captain Symonds, that I might be allowed to come into the city, and that they would be reſponſible I ſhould return to the frigate at a given time, which was denied them.

We ſailed from England the 8th day of January, and from the cove of cork the 12th day of February. Juſt before we ſailed, the priſoners with me were divided, and put on board three different ſhips of war. This gave me ſome uneaſineſs, for they were to a man zealous in the cauſe of liberty, and behaved with a becoming fortitude in the various ſcenes of their captivity; but thoſe who were diſtributed on board other ſhips of war, were much better uſed than thoſe that tarried with me, as appeared afterwards.

When the fleet conſiſting of about forty five ſail, including five men of war, ſailed from the cove with a freſh breeze, the appearance was beautiful, (abſtracted from the unjuſt and bloody deſigns they had in view) We had not ſailed many days, before a mighty ſtorm aroſe, which laſted near twenty-four hours without intermiſſion: The wind blew with relentleſs fury, and no man could remain on deck, except he was laſhed faſt, for the waves rolled over the deck by turns, with a forceable rapidity, and every ſoul on board was anxious for the preſervation of the ſhip, (alias) their lives. In this ſtorm the Thunder-bomb man of war ſprang a leak, and was after-

ſeem that the prisoners were better uſed for ſome conſiderable time.

Nothing of conſequence happened after this, 'till we had ſailed to the iſland of Madeira, except a certain favour which I received of captain Symonds, in conſequence of an application I made to him, for the privilege of his tailor to make me a ſuit of cloaths of the cloth beſtowed on me in Ireland, which he generouſly granted. I could then walk the deck with a ſeeming better grace. When we had reached Madeira, and anchored, ſundry gentlemen with the captain went on ſhore, who I conclude gave the rumour that I was in the frigate; upon which I ſoon after found Iriſh generoſity was again excited; for a gentleman of this nation ſent his clerk on board, to know of me if I would accept a ſea-ſtore from him, (particularly of wine.) This matter I made known to the generous lieutenant Douglaſs, who readily granted me the favour, provided the articles could be brought on board, during the time of his command; adding that it would be a pleaſure to him to ſerve me, notwithſtanding the oppoſition he met with before: So I directed the gentleman's clerk to inform him, that I was greatly in need of ſo ſignal a charity, and deſired the young gentleman to make the utmoſt diſpatch, which he did; but in the mean time, capt. Symonds and his officers came on board, and immediately made ready for ſailing; the wind at the ſame time

me to purchaſe of the purſer what I wanted, had not the captain ſtrictly forbid it, though I made ſundry appl cations to him for that purpoſe; but his anſwer to me, when I was ſick, was, that it was no matter how ſoon I was dead, and that he was no ways anxious to preſerve the lives of rebels, but wiſhed them all dead; and indeed this was the language of moſt of the ſhip's crew. I expoſtulated not only with the captain, but with other gentlemen on board, on the unreaſonableneſs of ſuch uſage; inferring, that inaſmuch as the government in England did not proceed againſt me as a capital offender, they ſhould not; for that they were by no means impowered by any authority, either civil or military, to do ſo; for the engliſh government had acquitted me by ſending me back a priſoner of war to America, and tha they ſhould treat me as ſuch. I further drawed an inference of impolicy on them, provided they ſhould, by hard uſage, deſtroy my life; inaſmuch as I might, if living, redeem one of their officers; but the captain replied, that he needed no directions of mine how to treat a rebel; that the Britiſh would conquer the American rebels, hang the Congreſs, and ſuch as promoted the rebellion, (me in particular) and retake their own priſoners; ſo that my life was of no conſequence in the ſcale of their policy. I gave him for anſwer, that if they ſlayed 'till they conquered America, before they hanged me, *I ſhould di*

and civil usage that their prisoners in captivity in America met with, he said that it was not owing to their goodness, but to their timidity; for said he, they expect to be conquered, and therefore dare not misuse our prisoners, and in fact this was the language of the British officers 'till general Burgoyne was taken, (happy event) and not only of the officers, but of the whole British army. I appeal to all my brother-prisoners, that have been with the British in the southern department, for a confirmation of what I have advanced on this subject. The surgeon of the Soleway, whose name is North, was a very humane and obliging man, and took the best care of the prisoners who were sick.

The third day of May we cast anchor in the harbour of cape Fear in North Carolina, as did Sir Peter Parker's ship of fifty guns a little back of the bar, for there was not depth of water for him to come into the harbour: These two men of war and fourteen sail of transports and others, came after, so that most of the fleet rendezvoused at cape Fear, for three weeks. The soldiers on board the transports were sickly, in consequence of so long a passage; add to this, the small pox carried off many of them: They landed on the main, and formed a camp; but the riflemen annoyed them, and caused them to move to an island in the harbour; but such cursing of riflemen I never heard.

A detachment of regulars was no quarter, for they took light at them, and were behind timber, skulking about. One of the detachment said they lost one man; but a negro man who was with them, and heard what was said, soon after told me that he helped to bury thirty one of them: This did me some good to find my countrymen giving them battle; for I never heard such swaggering as among general Clinton's little army, (who commanded at that time) and I am apt to think there were four thousand men, though not two thirds of them fit for duty. I heard numbers of them say, that the trees in America should hang well with fruit that campaign, for they would give no quarter: This was in the mouths of most whom I heard speak on the subject, officer as well as soldier. I wished at that time my countrymen knew as well as I did, what a murdering and cruel enemy they had to deal with; but experience has since taught this country, what they are to expect at the hands of Britons when in their power.

The prisoners who had been sent on board different men of war at the cove of Cork, were collected together, and the whole of them put on board the Mercury frigate, captain James Montague, except one of the Canadians, who died on the passage from Ireland, and Peter Noble, who made his escape from the Sphynx man of war in this harbour, and by extraordinary swimming, got safe home to New England, & gave intelligence of

ton, for the reduction of Charlestown, the capital of South Carolina, and when I heard of his defeat in Halifax, it gave me inexpressible satisfaction.

I now found myself under a worse captain than Symonds; for Montague was loaded with prejudices against every body, and every thing that was not stamped with royalty; and being by nature underwitted, his wrath was heavier than the others, or at least his mind was in no instance liable to be diverted by good sense, humour or bravery, of which Symonds was by turns susceptible. A captain Francis Proctor was added to our number of prisoners when we were first put on board this ship: This gentleman had formerly belonged to the English service. The captain, and in fine all the gentlemen of the ship, were very much incensed against him, and put him in irons without the least provocation, and he was continued in this miserable situation about three months. In this passage the prisoners were infected with the scurvy, some more and some less, but most of them severely. The ship's crew was to a great degree troubled with it, and I concluded that it was catching: Several of the crew died of it on their passage. I was weak and feeble in consequence of so long and cruel a captivity, yet had but little of the scurvy.

The purser was again expressly forbid by the captain to let me have any thing out of his store, soon as I arrived at Halifax. tried to reason the matter wit him, but found him proof againt reason; I also held up his honou to view, and his behaviour to m and the prisoners in general, a being derogatory to it, but foun his honour impenetrable. I the endeavoured to touch his humani ty, but found he had none; fo his prepossession of bigotry to hi own party, had confirmed him i an opinion, that no humanity wa due to unroyalists, but seemed t think that heaven and earth wer made merely to gratify the kin and his creatures; he uttered con siderable unintelligible and gro velling ideas, a little tinctur with monarchy, but stood well t his text of hanging me. He after wards forbid his surgeon to admi nister any help to the sick prison ers. I was every night shut dow in the cable-tire, with the rest o the prisoners, and we all lived mi serable while under his power But I received some generosit from several of the midshipmen who in degree alleviated my mise ry; one of their names was Pu trass, the names of the others I d not recollect; but they were obli ged to be private in the bestow ment of their favour, which wa sometimes good wine bitters, an at others a generous drink of grog

Sometime in the first week o June, we came to anchor at th Hook off New-York, where w remained but three days; in whic time governor Tryon, Mr. Kemp the old attorney general of New

midſhipmen; and he and his companions were walking with the captain and lieutenant on the windward ſide of the ſame, but never ſpoke to me, though it is altogether probable that he thought of the old quarrel between him, the old government of New York, and the Green Mountain Boys: Then they went with the captain into the cabbin, and the ſame afternoon returned on board a veſſel which lay near the Hook, where at that time they took ſanctuary from the reſentment of their injured country. What paſſed between the officers of the ſhip and theſe viſitors I know not; but this I know, that my treatment from the principal officers was more ſevere afterwards.

We arrived at Halifax not far from the middle of June, where the ſhip's crew which was infeſted with the ſcurvy, were taken on ſhore, and ſhallow trenches dug, into which they were put, and partly covered with earth. Indeed every proper meaſure was taken for their relief: The priſoners were not permitted any ſort of medicine, but were put on board a ſloop which lay in the harbour, near the town of Halifax, ſurrounded with ſeveral men of war and their tenders, and a guard conſtantly ſet over them, night and day. The ſloop we had wholly to ourſelves, except the guard who occupied the forecaſtle; here we were cruelly pinched with hunger; it ſeemed to me that we had not more than one third of than an even ſhare, I refuſed to accept it, as it was a time of ſubſtantial diſtreſs, which in my opinion I ought to partake equally with the reſt, and ſet an example of virtue and fortitude to our little common-wealth.

I ſent letter after letter to capt. Montague, (who ſtill had the care of us) and alſo to his lieutenant, whoſe name I cannot call to mind, but could obtain no anſwer, much leſs a redreſs of grievances; and to add to the calamity, near a dozen of the priſoners were dangerouſly ill of the ſcurvy. I wrote private letters to the doctors, to procure, if poſſible, ſome remedy for the ſick, but all in vain. The chief phyſician came by in a boat ſo cloſe that the oars touched the ſloop we were in, and I uttered my complaint in the genteeleſt manner to him, but he never ſo much as turned his head, or made me any anſwer, though I continued ſpeaking 'till he got out of hearing. Our caſe then became very deplorable. Still I kept writing to the captain, 'till he ordered the guards, as they told me, not to bring any more letters from me to him.

In the mean time an event happened worth relating: One of the men almoſt dead of the ſcurvy, lay by the ſide of the ſloop, and a canoe of Indians coming by, he purchaſed two quarts of ſtrawberries, and eat them at once, and it almoſt cured him. The money he gave for them, was all he had in the world. After that we tried

board the prison-sloop, and presented me with a large vial of smart drops, which proved to be good for the scurvy, though vegetables and some other ingredients were requisite for a cure; but the drops gave at least a check to the disease: This was a well-timed exertion of humanity, (but the doctor's name has slipped my mind) and in my opinion was the means of saving the lives of several men

The guard which was set over us, was by this time touched with the feelings of compassion; and I finally trusted one of them with a letter of complaint to governor Arbuthnot of Halifax, which he found means to communicate, and which had the desired effect; for the governor sent an officer and surgeon on board the prison-ship, to know the truth of the complaint. The officer's name was Russel, who held the rank of lieutenant, and treated me in a friendly and polite manner, and was really angry at the cruel and unmanly usage the prisoners met with; and with the surgeon made a true report of matters to governor Arbuthnot, who either by his order or influence, took us next day from the prison-ship to Halifax gaol, where I first became acquainted with the now honourable James Lovel, Esquire, one of the members of Congress for the state of Massachuset's Bay. The sick were taken to the hospital, and the Canadians who were effective, continued there, which was 'till near the middle of October. We were on board the prison-sloop about five weeks, and were landed at Halifax near the middle of August.—Several of our English American prisoners, who were cured of the scurvy at the hospital, made their escape from thence, and after a long time reached their old habitations.

I had now but thirteen with me of those that were taken in Canada, and remained in gaol (with me) in Halifax, who in addition to those that were imprisoned before, made our number about thirty four, who were all locked up in one common large room, without regard to rank, education, or any other accomplishment, where we continued from the setting to the rising sun; and as sundry of them were infected with the gaol and other distempers, the furniture of this spacious room consisted most principally of excrement-tubs. We petitioned for a removal of the sick into the hospitals, but were denied. We remonstrated against the ungenerous usage of being confined with the privates, as being contrary to the laws and customs of nations, and particularly ungrateful in them, in consequence of the gentleman like usage which the British imprisoned officers met with in America; and thus we wearied ourselves, petitioning and remonstrating but to no purpose at all; for general Massey who commanded at Halifax, was as inflexible as the devil himself, (a fine preparative this for

mentioned before) came to visit me in prison, and assured me that he had done his utmost to procure my parole for enlargement; at which a British captain, who was the town-major, expressed compassion for the gentlemen confined in the filthy place, and assured me that he had used his influence to procure their enlargement; his name was near like Ramsey.— Among the prisoners there were five in number, who had a legal claim to a parole, viz James Lovel, Esq. capt Francis Proctor, a Mr. Houland master of a continental armed vessel, a Mr. Taylor, his mate, and myself.

As to the article of provision, we were well served much better than in any part of my captivity; and since it was Mr Lovel's misfortune and mine to be prisoners, and in so wretched circumstances, I was happy that we were together, as a mutual support and comfort to each other, and to the unfortunate prisoners with us. Our first attention was the preservation of ourselves and injured little republic; the rest of our time we devoted interchangeably to politics and philosophy, as patience was a needful exercise in so evil a situation, but contentment mean and impracticable.

I had not been in this gaol many days, before a worthy and charitable woman, Mrs Blacden by name, supplied me with a good dinner of fresh meats every day, with garden fruit, and sometimes with a bottle of wine; notwithstanding which I had not been more than three weeks in this place, before I lost all appetite to the most delicious food by the gaol distemper, as sundry of the prisoners, particularly a sergeant Moore, a man of courage and fidelity: I have several times seen him hold the boatswain of the Scarborough frigate, when he attempted to strike him, and laughed him out of conceit of using him as a slave.

A doctor visited the sick, and did the best (as I supposed) he could for them, to no apparent purpose. I grew weaker and weaker, as did the rest. Several of them could not help themselves. At last I reasoned in my own mind, that raw onion would be good: I made use of it, and found immediate relief by it, as did the sick in general, particularly sergeant Moore, who it recovered almost from the shades; though I had met with a little revival, still I found the malignant hand of Britain had greatly reduced my constitution with stroke upon stroke. Esquire Lovel and myself used every argument and entreaty that could be well conceived of, in order to obtain gentleman like usage, to no purpose. I then wrote general Massey as severe a letter as I possibly could, with my friend Lovel's assistance: The contents of it was to give the British, as a nation, and him as an individual, their true character. This roused the rascal, for he could not bear to see his and the nation's deformity in that transparent letter, which I sent him; he therefore put himself in a great rage about it, and shewed the letter to a number of British officers, particularly to capt. Smith of the Lark frigate, who instead of joining with him in disapprobation, commended the spirit of it; upon which general Massey said to him, do you take the part of a rebel against me? Captain Smith answered, that he rather spoke his sentiments, and there was a dissention in an opinion between them. Some officers took the part of the general, and others of the captain: This I was informed of by a gentleman who had it from captain Smith.

In a few days after this the prisoners were ordered to go on board of a man of war, which was bound for New York; but two of them were not able to go on board, and were left at Halifax; one died, and the other recovered. This was about the 12th of October, and soon after we had got on board, the captain sent for me in particular to come on the quarter deck: I went, not knowing that it was captain Smith, or his ship at that time, and expected to meet the same rigorous usage I had commonly met with, and prepared my mind accordingly; but when I came on deck, the captain met me with his hand, welcomed me to his ship, invited me to dine with him that day, and assured me that I should be treated as a gentleman, and that he had given orders, that I should be treated with respect by the ship's crew. This was so unexpected and sudden a transition, that it drew tears from my eyes, (which all the ill usage I had before met with, was not able to produce) nor could I at first hardly speak, but soon recovered myself, and expressed my gratitude for so unexpected a favour; and let him know, that I felt anxiety of mind in reflecting that his situation and mine was such, that it was not probable that it would ever be in my power to return the favour. Capt. Smith replied, that he had no reward in view, but only treated me as a gentleman ought to be treated; he said this is a mutable world, and one gentleman never knows but that it may be in his power to help another. Soon after I found this to be the same capt. Smith, who (I was told) took my part against general Massey; but he never mentioned any thing of it to me, and I thought it impolite in me to interrogate him, as to any disputes which might have arisen between him and the general, on my account, as I was a prisoner, and that it was at his option to make free with me on that subject, if he pleased; and if he did not, I might take it for granted that it would be unpleasing for me to query about it, though I had a strong propensity to converse with him on that subject.

I dined with the captain agreeable to his invitation, and oftentimes with the lieutenants in the gun room, but in general eat and drank with my friend Lovel, and the other gentlemen, who were prisoners with me, where I also slept.

We had a little birth enclosed with canvas, between decks, where we enjoyed ourselves very well, in hopes of an exchange; besides our friends at Halifax had a little notice of our departure, and supplied us with spirituous liquor, and many articles of provision for the coast. Captain Burk having been taken prisoner, was added to our company (he had commanded an American armed vessel) and was generously treated by the captain, and all the officers of the ship, as well as myself. We now had in all near thirty prisoners on board, and as we were sailing along the coast, (if I recollect right) off Rhode Island, captain Burk with an under officer of the ship, (whose name I do not recollect) came to our little birth, proposed to kill captain Smith and the principal officers of the frigate, and take it; asserting that there was thirty five thousand pounds sterling in the same. Capt. Burk likewise averred, that a strong party out of the ship's crew, was in the conspiracy, and urged me and the gentleman that was with me, to use our influence with the private prisoners, to execute the design, and take the ship with the cash into one of our own ports.

Upon

Upon which I replied, that we had been too well used on board to murder the officers; that I could by no means reconcile it to my conscience, and that in fact it should not be done; and while I was yet speaking, my friend Lovel confirmed what I had said and further pointed out the ingratitudes of such an act; that it did not fall short of murder, and in fine all the gentlemen in the birth, opposed capt Burk and his colleague: But they strenuously urged that the conspiracy would be found out, and that it would cost them their lives, provided they did not execute their design. I then interposed positively, and put an end to further arguments on the subject, and told them that they might depend upon it upon my honour, that I would faithfully guard captain Smith's life: if they attempted the assault, I would assist him (for they desired me to remain neuter) and that the same honour, that guarded captain Smith's life, would also guard theirs. and it was agreed by those present not to reveal the conspiracy, to the intent that no man should be put to death, in consequence of what had been projected; and captain Burk and his colleague went to stifle the matter among their associates. I could not help calling to mind what captain Smith said to me, when I first came on board: "This is a mutable "world, and one gentleman ne-"ver knows but that it may be in "his power to help another."— *Captain Smith and his officers still behaved with their usual courtesy, and I never heard any more of the conspiracy.*

We arrived before New York, and cast anchor the latter part of October, where we remained several days, and where capt. Smith informed me, that he had recommended me to admiral Howe and general Sir William Howe, as a gentleman of honour and veracity, and desired that I might be treated as such. Captain Burk was then ordered on board a prison-ship in the harbour. I took my leave of capt. Smith, and with the other prisoners was sent on board a transport-ship, which lay in the harbour, commanded by capt. Craig, who took me into the cabbin with him and his lieutenant: I fared as they did, and was in every respect well treated in consequence of directions from captain Smith.

In a few weeks after this I had the happiness to part with my friend Lovel, (for his sake, who the enemy affected to treat as a private; he was a gentleman of merit, and liberally educated, but had no commission; they maligned him on account of his unshaken attachment to the cause of his country) He was exchanged for a governor Philip Skene of the British. I was continued on board this ship 'till the latter part of November, where I contracted an acquaintance with a captain of the British, (his name has slipped my memory.) He was what we may call a genteel, hearty fellow. I remember an expression of his over a bottle of wine, to this import: "That there is greatness of soul "for personal friendship to subsist "between you and me, as we are "upon opposite sides, and may at "another day be obliged to face "each other in the field." (I am confident that he was as faithful as any officer in the British army.) At another sitting he offered to bet a dozen of wine, that fort Washington would be in the hands of the British in three days. I stood the bet, (and would had I known that

ade, and that day the fort was taken sure enough. Some months after, (when I was on parole) he called upon me with his usual humour, and mentioned the bet. I acknowledged I had lost it, but he said he did not mean to take it then, as I was a prisoner; that he would another day call on me, when their army came to Bennington. I replied that he was quite too generous, as I had fairly lost it; besides the Green Mountain Boys would not suffer them to come to Bennington. This was all in good humour. I should have been glad to have seen him after the defeat at Bennington, but did not.

It was customary for a guard to attend the prisoners, which was often changed. One was composed of tories from Connecticut, in the vicinity of Fairfield and Green Farms. The sergeant's name was Hoit. They were very full of their invectives against the country, swaggered of their loyalty to their king, and exclaimed bitterly against the "cowardly Yankies," (as they were pleased to call them) but finally contented themselves with saying, that when the country was overcome, they should be well rewarded for their loyalty, out of the estates of the whigs, which would be confiscated. This I found to be the general language of tories, after I arrived from England on the American coast. I heard sundry of them relate, that the British generals had engaged the

it is really a game of hazard between whig and tory: The whig must inevitably have lost all, in consequence of the abilities of the tories, and their good friends the British; and it is no more that right the tories should run the same risque, in consequence of the abilities of the whigs: But of this more will be observed in the sequel of this narrative.

Some of the last days of November, the prisoners were landed at New York, and I was admitted to parole with the other officers, viz. Proctor, Howland, and Taylor. The privates were put into the filthy churches in New York, with the distressed prisoners that were taken at fort Washington; and the second night sergeant Roger Moore (who was bold and enterprizing) found means to make his escape with every of the remaining prisoners that were taken with me except three who were soon after exchanged: So that out of thirty-one prisoners, who went with me the round exhibited in these sheets two only died with the enemy, and three only exchanged; one of whom died after he came within our lines; all the rest at different times, made their escape from the enemy.

I now found myself on parole and restricted to the limits of the city of New-York, where I soon projected means to live in some measure agreeable to my rank though I was destitute of cash — My constitution was almost worn

certain times, rendered it political to act in some measure the madman) and in consequence of a regular diet and exercise, my blood recruited, and my nerves in great measure recovered their former tone, strength and usefulness, in the course of six months.

I nextly invite the reader to a retrospective sight and consideration of the doleful scene of inhumanity exercised by general Sir William Howe, and the army under his command, towards the prisoners taken on Long Island, on the twenty seventh day of August, 1776; sundry of whom were in an inhuman and barbarous manner, murdered after they had surrendered their arms; particularly a gen. Odel, (or Woodhul) of the militia, who was hacked to pieces with cutlasses (when alive) by the light horsemen, and a captain Fellows, of the continental army, who was thrust through with a bayonet, of which wound he died instantly.

Sundry others were hanged up by the neck 'till they were dead; Eve on the limb of a white oak tree, and without any reason assigned, (except that they were nobling in defence of the only blessing worth preserving:) And indeed those who had the misfortune to fall into their hands at fort Washington, in the month of November following, met with but very little better usage, except that they were reserved from immediate death to famish and die with hunger, in fine the most cruelties they were pleased to inflict, death itself not excepted; but to pass over particulars which would swell my narrative far beyond my design.

The private soldiers who were brought to New-York, were crowded into churches, and environed with slavish Hessian guards, a people of a strange language, who were sent to America for no other design but cruelty and desolation; and at others, by merciless Britons, whose mode of communicating ideas being intelligible in this country, served only to tantalize and insult the helpless and perishing; but above all the hellish delight and triumph of the tories over them, as they were dying by hundreds: This was too much for me to bear as a spectator; for I saw the tories exulting over the dead bodies of their murdered countrymen. I have gone into the churches, and seen sundry of the prisoners in the agonies of death, in consequence of very hunger, and others speechless and near death, biting pieces of chips; others pleading for God's sake, for something to eat, and at the same shivering with the cold. Hollow groans saluted my ears, and despair seemed to be imprinted on every of their countenances. The filth in these churches (in consequence of the fluxe) was almost beyond description. The floors were covered with excrement. I have carefully sought to direct my steps so as to avoid it, but could not. Thus would hog for (God's

It was a common practice with the enemy, to convey the dead from these filthy places, in carts, to be slightly buried, and I have seen whole gangs of tories making derision, and exulting over the dead, saying there goes another load of damned rebels. I have observed the British soldiers to be full of their blackguard jokes, and vaunting on these occasions, but they appeared to me less malignant than tories.

The provision dealt out to the prisoners was by no means sufficient for the support of life: it was deficient in quantity, and much more so in quality. The prisoners often presented me with a sample of their bread, which I certify was damaged to that degree, that it was loathsome and unfit to be eaten, and I am bold to aver it, (as my opinion) that it had been condemned, and was of the very worst sort. I have seen and been fed upon damaged bread, (in the course of my captivity) and observed the quality of such bread as has been condemned by the enemy, among which was very little so effectually spoiled as what was dealt out to these prisoners —— Their allowance of meat (as they told me) was quite trifling, and of the basest sort. I never saw any of it, but was informed (and as it was) it was swallowed almost as quick as they got hold of it. I saw some of them sucking bones after they were speechless; others who could yet speak, and had the use of their reason, urged me in the truly deplorable condition, and had become more fully apprised of the essential facts, I was persuaded that it was a premeditated and systematical plan of the British council, to destroy the youths of our land, with a view thereby to deter the country, and make it submit to their despotism; but that I could not do them any material service, and that by any public attempt for that purpose, I might endanger myself by frequenting places the most nauseous and contagious that could be conceived of. I refrained going into the churches, but frequently converted with such of the prisoners as were admitted to come out into the yard, and found that the systematical usage still continued. The guard would often drive me away with their fixed bayonets. A Hessian (one day) followed me five or six rods, but by making use of my legs, got rid of the lubber. Sometimes I could obtain a little conversation, notwithstanding their severities.

I was in one of the church yards, and it was rumoured among those in the church, and sundry of the prisoners came with their usual complaints to me, and among the rest a large boned tall young man, (as he told me from Pennsylvania) who was reduced to a mere skeleton; said he was glad to see me, before he died, which he had expected to have done last night, but was a little revived; he furthermore informed me, that he and his brother had been urged to enlist into the British, but had both

a few voice to lift; he then asked, whether it was right in the sight of God? I assured him that it was, and that duty to himself obliged him to deceive the British by enlisting, and deserting the first opportunity; upon which he answered with transport, that he would list. I charged him not to mention my name as his adviser, lest it should get air, and I should be closely confined, in consequence of it.

The integrity of these suffering prisoners is hardly credible. Many hundreds, I am confident, submitted to death, rather than enlist into the British service, which (I am informed) they most generally were pressed to do. I was astonished at the resolution of the two brothers particularly; it seems that they could not be stimulated to such exertions of heroism from ambition, as they were but obscure soldiers; strong indeed must the internal principle of virtue be, which supported them to brave death, and one of them went thro' the operation, as did many hundred others. I readily grant that instances of public virtue are no excitement to the sordid and vicious, nor on the other hand, will all the barbarity of Britain and Hesthland awaken them to a sense of their duty to the public; but these things will have their proper effect on the generous and brave.

The officers on parole were most of them zealous, if possible, to afford the miserable soldiery relief, and often consulted with one another of those filthy places to the privilege of fresh air. Some projected that all the officers should go in procession to general Howe, and plead the cause of the perishing soldiers; but this proposal was negatived for the following reasons, viz because that general Howe must needs be well acquainted and have a thorough knowledge of the state and condition of the prisoners in every of their wretched apartments, and that much more particular and exact than any officer on parole could be supposed to have, as the general had a return of the circumstances of the prisoners, by his own officers every morning, of the number which were alive, as also the number which died every twenty four hours, and consequently the bill of mortality, as collected from the daily returns, lay before him with all the material situations and circumstances of the prisoners; and provided the officers should go in procession to general Howe, according to the projection, it would give him the greatest affront, and that he would either retort upon them; that it was no part of their parole to instruct him in his conduct to prisoners; that they were mutinying against his authority, and by affronting him, had forfeited their parole; or that more probably, instead of saying one word to them, would order them all into as wretched a confinement as the soldiers whom they sought to relieve; for at that time, the

founded and broken to pieces, in consequence of the dread, which at that time lay on their minds, of offending general Howe; for they conceived so murderous a tyrant would not be too good to destroy even the officers, on the least pretence of an affront, as they were equally in his power with the soldiers; and as general Howe perfectly understood the condition of the private soldiers, it was argued that it was exactly such as he and his council had devised, and as he meant to destroy them, it would be to no purpose for them to try to dissuade him from it, as they were helpless and liable to the same fate, on giving the least affront; indeed anxious apprehensions disturbed them in their then circumstances.

Mean time mortality raged to such an intolerable degree among the prisoners, that the very school boys in the streets knew the mental design of it in some measure; at least they knew that they were starved to death. Some poor women contributed to their necessity, 'till their children were almost starved, and all persons of common understanding knew that they were devoted to the cruellest and worst of deaths. It was also proposed by some to make a written representation of the condition of the soldiery, and the officers to sign it; and that it should be couched in such terms, as though they were apprehensive that the general was imposed upon by his officers, in their daily returns to him of the with a speedy redress; but this proposal was most generally negatived also, and for much the same reason offered in the other case; for it was conjectured that general Howe's indignation would be moved against such officers as should attempt to whip him over his officers backs; that he would discern that himself was really struck at, and not the officers who made the daily returns; and therefore self-preservation deterred the officers from either petitioning or remonstrating to general Howe, either verbally or in writing; as also the consideration that no valuable purpose to the distressed would be obtained.

I made several rough drafts on the subject, one of which I exhibited to the colonels Magaw, Miles and Atlee, and they said that they would consider the matter; soon after I called on them, and some of the gentlemen informed me, that they had wrote to the general on the subject, and I concluded, that the gentlemen thought it best that they should write without me, as there was such spirited aversion subsisting between the British and me.

In the mean time a col. Hussecker, of the continental army, (as he then reported) was taken prisoner, and brought to New-York, who gave out that the country was most universally submitting to the English king's authority, and that there would be little or no more opposition to Great Britain. This at first gave the offi-

ncnſive, that he was a knave; at eaſt he was eſteemed ſo by moſt of he officers; it was nevertheleſs a day of trouble. The enemy blaſphemed. Our little army was retreating in New Jerſey, and our young men murdered by hundreds n New York: The army of Britain and Heſhland prevailed for a ittle ſeaſon, as though it was ordered by Heaven to ſhew to the ateſt poſterity, what the Britiſh would have done, if they could, and what the general calamity muſt have been, in conſequence of their conquering the country, and o excite every honeſt man to ſtand forth in the defence of liberty, and o eſtabliſh the independency of the United States of America for ever: But this ſcene of adverſe fortune did not diſcourage a Waſhington: The illuſtrious American hero remained immovable. In liberty's cauſe he took up his ſword: This reflection was his ſupport and conſolation in the day of his humiliation, when he retreated before the enemy, through New Jerſey into Pennſylvania. Their triumph only rouſed his indignation, and the important cauſe of his country, which lay near his heart, moved him to croſs the Delaware again, and take ample ſatisfaction on his purſuers. No ſooner had he circumvallated his haughty foes and appeared in *terrible array*, but the hoſt of Heſhland fell. This taught America the intrinſic worth of perſeverance, and the generous ſons of freedom flew to the ſtandard of their common ſafeguard and

therefore collected, and marched from Princeton, to attack general Waſhington, who was then at Trenton, having previouſly left a detachment from their main body at Princeton, for the ſupport of that place. This was a trying time, for our worthy general (tho' in poſſeſſion of a late moſt aſtoniſhing victory) was by no means able to withſtand the collective force of the enemy; but his ſagacity ſoon ſuggeſted a ſtratagem to effect that which by force to him was at that time impracticable: He therefore amuſed the enemy with a number of fires, and in the night made a forced march, undiſcovered by them, and next morning fell in with their rear guard at Princeton, and killed and took moſt of them priſoners. The main body too late perceiving their rear was attacked, hurried back with all ſpeed, but to their mortification found they were out generalled, and baffled by general Waſhington, who was retired with his little army towards Morriſtown, and was out of their power. Theſe repeated ſucceſſes, one on the back of the other, chagrined the enemy prodigiouſly, and had an amazing operation in the ſcale of American politics, and undoubtedly was one of the corner-ſtones, on which the fair ſtructure of independency has been fabricated; for the country at no one time has ever been ſo much diſpirited as juſt before the morning of this glorious ſucceſs, which in part diſpelled

add) perfidious enemy.

Furthermore this ſucceſs had a mighty effect on general Howe and his council, and rouſed them to a ſenſe of their own weakneſs, and convinced them that they were neither omniſcient or omnipotent. Their obduracy and death-deſigning malevolence in ſome meaſure, abated or was ſuſpended. The priſoners who were condemned to the moſt wretched and cruelleſt of deaths, and who ſurvived to this period, (though moſt of them died before) were immediately ordered to be ſent within general Waſhington's lines for an exchange, and in conſequence of it, were taken out of their filthy and poiſonous places of confinement, and ſent out of New York to their friends in haſte; ſeveral of them fell dead in the ſtreets of New-York, as they attempted to walk to the veſſels in the harbour, for their intended embarkation.—— What numbers lived to reach the lines I cannot aſcertain, but from concurrent repreſentations which I have ſince received from numbers of people who lived in and adjacent to ſuch parts of the country, where they were received from the enemy, I apprehend that moſt of them died in conſequence of the vile uſage of the enemy. Some who were eye-witneſſes of that ſcene of mortality, (more eſpecially in that part which continued after the exchange took place) are of opinion, that it was partly in conſequence of a ſlow poiſon; but

of the facts, I learn that of th priſoners taken on Long Illand fort Waſhington, and ſome fe others, at different times an places, about two thouſand pe riſhed with hunger, cold and ſick neſs, (occaſioned by the filth their priſons) at New York, and number more on their paſſage t the continental lines; moſt of th reſidue who reached their friend having received their death wound could not be reſtored by the aſſiſ ance of phyſicians and friends but like their brother-priſoner fell a ſacrifice to the relentleſs an ſcientific barbarity of Britain. took as much pains as my circum ſtances would admit of, to inform myſelf not only of matters of fact but likewiſe of the very deſign an aims of general Howe and h council: The latter of which predicated on the former, an ſubmit it to the candid public.

And laſtly the aforeſaid ſucce of the American arms, had a hap py effect on the continental offi cers, who were on parole at New York: A number of us aſſembled (but not in a public manner) an with full bowls and glaſſes, dran general Waſhington's health, an were not unmindful of Congre and our worthy friends on th continent, and almoſt forgot tha we were priſoners.

A few days after this recreation a Britiſh officer of rank and im portance in their army, (whose name I ſhall not mention in thi narrative, for certain reaſons, the

regiment of new levies, (alias tories) in the British service, and proposed that I should go with him, and some other officers, to England, who would embark for that purpose in a few days, and there be introduced to lord. G. Germain, and probably to the king; and that previously I should be cloathed equal to such an introduction, and instead of paper rags, be paid in hard guineas; after this should embark with general Burgoyne, and assist in the reduction of the country, which infallibly would be conquered, and when that should be done, I should have a large tract of land, whether on the New Hampshire Grants, or in Connecticut; it would make no odds, as the country would be forfeited to the crown." I then replied, "That if by faithfulness I had recommended myself to gen. Howe, I should be loth, by unfaithfulness, to lose the general's good opinion; besides, that I viewed the offer of land to be similar to that which the devil offered Jesus Christ, "To give him all the kingdoms of the world, if he would fall down and worship him;" when at the same time that the damned soul had not one foot of land upon earth." This closed the conversation, and the gentleman turned from me with an air of dislike, saying, that I was a bigot; upon which I retired to my lodgings.

Near the last of November I was admitted to parole in New York, with many other officers. This parole continued. During my imprisonment there, no occurrences worth observation happened. I obtained the means of living as well as I desired, which in great measure repaired my constitution, which had been greatly injured by the severities of an inhuman captivity. I now began to feel myself composed, expecting either an exchange or continuance in good and honourable treatment; but alas! my visionary expectations soon vanished. The news of the conquest of Ticonderoga by gen. Burgoyne, and the advance of his army into the country, made the haughty Britons again to feel their importance, and with that their insatiable thirst for cruelty.

The private prisoners at New-York, and some of the officers on parole, felt the severity of it.—Burgoyne was their toast and demi god: To him they paid adoration: In him the tories placed their confidence, "and forgot the Lord their God," and served Howe, Burgoyne, and Knyphausen, * "and became vile in their own "imaginations, and their foolish "hearts were darkened, profess-"ing" to be great politicians, and relying on foreign and merciless invaders, and with them seeking the ruin, bloodshed and destruction of their country, "became fools," expecting with them to share a dividend in the confiscated estates of their neighbours and countrymen, who fought for the whole country, and the reli-

I was apprehended, and under pretext of artful, mean and pitiful pretences, (that I had infringed on my parole) taken from a tavern, where there were more than a dozen officers present, and in the very place where those officers and myself were directed to be quartered, put under a strong guard, and taken to New York, where I expected to make my defence before the commanding officer; but contrary to my expectations, and without the least solid pretence of justice or a trial, was again encircled with a strong guard with fixed bayonets, and conducted to the provost-gaol in a lonely apartment, next above the dungeon, and was denied all manner of subsistence either by purchase or allowance. The second day I offered a guinea for a meal of victuals, but was denied it, and the third day I offered eight Spanish milled dollars for a like favour, but was again denied, and all that I could get out of the sergeant's mouth, was, that by God he would obey his orders. I now perceived myself to be again in substantial trouble. In this condition I formed an oblique acquaintance with a captain Edward Travis, of Virginia, (who was in the dungeon below me) through a little hole which was cut with a pen-knife, through the floor of my apartment which communicated with the dungeon; it was a small crevice, through which I could discern but a very small part of his face at

with him, and soon perceived him to be a gentleman of high spirits, who had a high sense of honour, and felt as big as though he had been in a palace, and had treasures of wrath in store against the British. In fine I was charmed with the spirit of the man; he had been near or quite four months in that dungeon, with murderers, thieves, and every species of criminals, and all for the sole crime of unshaken fidelity to his country; but his spirits were above dejection, and his mind unconquerable. I engaged to do him every service in my power, and in a few weeks afterwards, with the united petitions of the officers in the provost, procured his dismission from the dark mansion of fiends to the apartments of his petitioners.

And it came to pass on the third day, at the going down of the sun, that I was presented with a piece of boiled pork, and some biscuit, which the sergeant gave me to understand, was my allowance, and I fed sweetly on the same; but I indulged my appetite by degrees, and in a few days more, was taken from that apartment, and conducted to the next loft or story, where there were above twenty continental and some militia officers, who had been taken and imprisoned there, besides some private gentlemen who had been dragged from their own homes to that filthy place, by tories. Several of every of the denominations mentioned died there, some before, and others after I

Shall therefore only notice such of the occurrences which are most extraordinary.

Capt. Vandyke bore with uncommon fortitude near twenty months confinement in this place, and in the mean time was very serviceable to others who were confined with him. The allegation against him, as the cause of his confinement, was very extraordinary: He was accused of setting fire to the city of New York, (at the time the west part of it was consumed) when it was a known fact, that he had been in the provost a week before the fire bicke out; and in like manner, frivolous were the ostensible accusations against most of those who were there confined; the case of two militia officers excepted, who were taken in their attempting to escape from their parole; and probably there may be some other instances which might justify such a confinement.

Mr. William Miller, a committee-man, from West Chester county, and state of New York, was taken from his bed in the dead of night, by his tory neighbours, and was starved for three days and nights in a department of the same gaol; add to this the denial of fire, and that in a cold season of the year, in which time he walked day and night, to defend himself against the frost, and when he complained of such a reprehensible conduct, the word rebel or committee-man was deemed by the [illegible] sufficient atonement for

ment with that magnanimity of soul, which reflects honour on himself and country.

Major Levi Wells and captain Ozias Bissel were apprehended and taken under guard from their parole on Long Island, to the provost, on as fallacious pretences as the former, and were there continued 'till their exchange took place, which was near five months. Their fidelity and zealous attachment to their country's cause, which was more than commonly conspicuous, was undoubtedly the real cause of their confinement.

Major Brinton Payne, captain Flahaven, and captain Randolph, who had at different times distinguished themselves by their bravery, especially at the several actions in which they were taken, was all the provocation they gave, for which they suffered about a years confinement each in the same filthy gaol.

A few weeks after my confinement, on the like fallacious and wicked pretences, was brought to the same place, from his parole on Long Island, major Otho Holland Williams, (now a full colonel in the continental army.) In his character are united the gentleman, officer, soldier and friend; he walked through the prison with an air of great disdain; said he, "Is this the treatment which gentlemen of the continental army are to expect from the rascally British, when in their power? Heavens forbid it!" He was continued there about five months, and then

general, was ſent to the provoſt, where he was continued near one year. The ſtench of the gaol, which was very loathſome and unhealthy, occaſioned a hoarſeneſs of the lungs, which proved fatal to many who were there confined, and reduced this gentleman near to the point of death; he was indeed given over by his friends who were about him, and himſelf concluded that he muſt die. I could not endure the thought that ſo worthy a friend to America ſhould have his life ſtole from him in ſuch a mean, baſe, and ſcandalous a manner, and that his family and friends ſhould be bereaved of ſo great and deſirable a bleſſing, as his further care, uſefulneſs and examples, might prove to them. I therefore wrote a letter to gen. Robertſon, (who commanded in town) and being touched with the moſt ſenſible feelings of humanity which dictated my pen to paint dying diſtreſs in ſuch lively colours that it wrought conviction even on the obduracy of a Britiſh general, and produced his order to remove the now honourable John Fell, Eſq; out of gaol, to private lodgings in town; in conſequence of which he ſlowly recovered his health. There is ſo extraordinary a circumſtance which intervened, concerning this letter, that it is worth noticing.

Previous to the ſending it, I exhibited the ſame to the gentleman on whoſe behalf it was wrote, for his approbation, and he forbid me to ſend it in the moſt poſitive

" end for a conſiderable time
" and they very well knew it, an
" likewiſe determined it ſhould b
" accompliſhed, as they had ſ
" ved many others; that to aſk
" favour, would give the merci
" leſs enemy occaſion to triump
" over me in my laſt moments
" and therefore I will aſk no fa
" vours from them, but reſig
" myſelf to my ſuppoſed fate."
But the letter I ſent without hi knowledge, and I confeſs I ha but little expectations from it, ye could not be eaſy 'till I had ſen it. It may be worth a remark that this gentleman was an Eng liſhman born, and from the be ginning of the revolution, has in variably aſſerted, and maintaine the cauſe of liberty.

The Britiſh have made ſo ex tenſive an improvement of th provoſt during the preſent revolu tion 'till of late, that a very ſho definition will be ſufficient for th dulleſt apprehenſions. It may b with propriety called the Britiſ inquiſition, and calculated to ſup port their oppreſſive meaſures an deſigns, by ſuppreſſing the ſpir of liberty; as alſo a place to con fine the criminals, and moſt infa mous wretches of their own army where many gentlemen of the A merican army, and citizens there of, were promiſcuouſly confinec with every ſpecies of criminals but they divided into different a partments, and kept at as great remove as circumſtances permi ted, but it was nevertheleſs at th option of a villainous ſergeant wh

and the ſergeant brandiſhing his ſword at the ſame time, and having been brought to the door of the dungeon, I there flattered the vanity of the ſergeant, whoſe name was Keef, by which means I procured the ſurprizng favour to return to my companions; but ſome of the high mettled young gentlemen could not bear his inſolence, and determined to keep at a diſtance, and neither pleaſe or diſpleaſe the villain, but none could keep clear of his abuſe; however, mild meaſures were the beſt; he did not heſitate to call us damned Rebels, and uſe us with the coarſeſt language. The captains Flahaven, Randolph and Mercer, were the objects of his moſt flagrant and repeated abuſes, who were many times taken to the dungeon, and there continued at his pleaſure. Captain Flahaven took cold in the dungeon, and was in a declining ſtate of health, but an exchange delivered him, and in all probability ſaved his life.

It was very mortifying to bear with the inſolence of ſuch a vicious and ill-bred imperious raſcal. Remonſtrances againſt him were preferred to the commander of the town, but no relief could be obtained, for his ſuperiors were undoubtedly well pleaſed with his abuſive conduct to the gentlemen, under the ſeverities of his power, and remonſtrating againſt his infernal conduct, only ſerved to confirm him in authority, and for this reaſon I never made any re-

that truſt, and a worſe man appointed to ſucceed him; but there was no need of making any new appointment, for Cunningham, their provoſt marſhal, and Keef, his deputy, were as great raſcals as their army could boaſt of, except one Joſhua Loring, an infamous tory, who was their commiſſary of priſoners, nor can any of theſe be ſuppoſed to be equally criminal with general Sir William Howe and his aſſociates, who preſcribed and directed the murders and cruelties, which were by them perpetrated.

This Loring is a monſter!—— There is not his like in human ſhape. He exhibits a ſmiling countenance, and on a ſuperficial acquaintance, ſeems to wear a phiz of humanity, but has been inſtrumentally capable of the moſt conſummate acts of wickedneſs, (which were firſtly projected by an abandoned Britiſh council, cloathed with the authority of a Howe) murdering premeditately (in cool blood) near or quite two thouſand helpleſs priſoners, and that in the moſt clandeſtine, mean and ſhameful manner, (at New York.) He is the moſt mean-ſpirited, cowardly, deceitful, and deſtructive animal in God's creation below, and legions of infernal devils, with all their tremendous horrors, are impatiently ready to receive Howe and him, with all their deteſtable accomplices, into the moſt exquiſite agonies of the hotteſt region of hell-fire.

The ſixth day of July, 1776

guard commanded by colonel Seth Warner, was attacked at Hubberdton by a body of the enemy of about two thousand commanded by gen. Fraser. Warner's command consisted of his own and two other regiments, viz. Francis's, and Hale's, and some scattering and enfeebled soldiers. His whole number, according to information, was near or quite one thousand; part of which were Green Mountain Boys; about seven hundred out of the whole he brought into action. The enemy advanced boldly, and the two bodies formed within about sixty yards of each other. Col. Warner having formed his own regiment, and that of col. Francis's, did not wait for the enemy, but gave them a heavy fire from his whole line, and they returned it with great bravery. It was by this time dangerous for those of both parties, who were not prepared for the world to come; but col. Hale being apprised of the danger, never brought his regiment to the charge, but left Warner and Francis to stand the blowing of it, and fled, but luckily fell in with an inconsiderable number of the enemy, and to his eternal shame, surrendered himself a prisoner.

The conflict was very bloody.—Colonel Francis fell in the same, but colonel Warner, and the officers under his command as also the soldiery, behaved with great resolution. The enemy broke, and gave way on the right and left, but formed again, and renewed the attack; in the mean

men killed, and that of the enemy a mounted to three hundred men killed including a major Grant. The ene my's loss I learnt from the confessio of their own officers, when a pri soner with them. I heard them like wise complain, that the Gree Mountain Boys took sight.

The next movement of the enemy of any material consequence, wa their investing Bennington, (with design to demolish it, and subject it Mountaineers, to whom they had great aversion) with fifteen hundre chosen men, including tories, wit the highest expectation of success, an having chosen an eminence of stron ground, fortified it with slight brea works, and two pieces of cannon; bu the government of the young state o Vermont, being previously jealous o such an attempt of the enemy, and i due time had procured a number o brave militia from the governmen of the state of New Hampshire, wh together with the militia of the nort part of Berkshire county, and state o Massachuset's, and the Green Mou tain Boys, constituted a body of de peradoes, under the command of th intrepid general Stark, who in num ber were about equal to the enemy

Colonel Herrick, who commande the Green Mountain Rangers, an who was second in command, bein thoroughly acquainted with th ground where the enemy had fortif ed, proposed to attack them in the works upon all parts, at the sam time. This plan being adopted b the general and his council of wa the little militia brigade of undisci plined heroes, with their long brown

ent of the world, and bur-
of discipline) carried every
their lines in less than one
of an hour after the attack
general, took their cannon,
nd captivated more than two
of their number, which im
zed general Stark, and made
gton famous to posterity.

ong the enemy's slain was col. Baum, their command- col. Pfester, who headed an ous gang of tories, and a part of his command; and the prisoners was major me, their second in com- a number of British and n officers, surgeons, &c. and than one hundred of the a- entioned Pfester's command. prisoners being collected to-, were sent to the meeting- in the town, by a strong, and general Stark not ima- g any present danger, the a scattered from him to rest efresh themselves; in this si- n he was on a sudden attack- a reinforcement of eleven ed of the enemy, command- a governor Skene, with two pieces: They advanced in ar order, and kept up an in- t fire, especially from their pieces, and the remaining a retreating slowly before, disputed the ground inch by The enemy were heard to to them, saying stop Yan-

the mean time col. Warner, about one hundred and thirty

after gen. Stark and col. Herrick brought on more of the scattered militia, and the action became general; in a few minutes the enemy were forced from their cannon, gave way on all parts and fled, and the shouts of victory were a second time proclaimed in favour of the militia. The enemy's loss in killed and prisoners, in these two actions, amounted to more than twelve hundred men, and our loss did not exceed fifty men.

This was a bitter stroke to the enemy, but their pride would not permit them to hesitate but that they could vanquish the country, and as a specimen of their arrogancy, I shall insert gen. Burgoyne's

PROCLAMATION.

" By *John Burgoyne*, Esq; lieutenant general of his majesty's armies in America, colonel of the queen's regiment of light dragoons, governor of fort William in North Britain, one of the representatives of the commons of Great Britain in parliament, and commanding an army and fleet employed on an expedition from Canada, &c &c. &c.

" THE forces entrusted to my command are designed to act in concert, and upon a common principle, with the numerous armies and fleets which already display in every quarter of America, the power, the justice, and when properly sought, the mercy of the king.

" The cause in which the Bri-

now combine with love of their country, and duty to their sovereign, the other extensive incitements which spring from a due sense of the general privileges of mankind. To the eyes and ears of the temperate part of the public, and to the breasts of suffering thousands in the provinces, be the melancholy appeal, whether the present unnatural rebellion has not been made a foundation for the compleatest system of tyranny that ever God in his displeasure, suffered for a time to be exercised over a froward and stubborn generation.

"Arbitrary imprisonment, confiscation of property, persecution and torture, unprecedented in the inquisitions of the Romish church, are among the palpable enormities that verify the affirmative. These are inflicted by assemblies and committees, who dare to profess themselves friends to liberty, upon the most quiet subjects, without distinction of age or sex, for the sole crime, often for the sole suspicion, of having adhered in principle to the government under which they were born, and to which by every tie, divine and human, they owe allegiance. To consummate these shocking proceedings, the profanation of religion is added to the most profligate prostitution of common reason; the consciences of men are set at nought; and multitudes are compelled not only to bear arms, but also to swear subjection to an usurpation they abhor.

sons, in all places where the p
gress of this army may point
and by the blessing of God I
extend it far,—to maintain suc
conduct as may justify me in p
tecting their lands, habitatio
and families. The intention
this address is to hold forth secu
ty, not depredation to the count

"To those whom spirit
principle may induce to part
the glorious task of redeem
their countrymen from dungeo
and re-establishing the blessings
legal government, I offer enc
ragement and employment; a
upon the first intelligence of th
associations, I will find means
assist their undertakings. The
mestic, the industrious, the infi
and even the timid inhabitants
am desirous to protect, provi
they remain quietly at th
houses; that they do not su
their cattle to be removed,
their corn or forage to be secre
or destroyed; that they do
break up their bridges or roa
nor by any other act, directly
indirectly, endeavour to obstr
the operations of the king's troo
or supply or assist those of
enemy.

"Every species of provisi
brought to my camp, will be pa
for at an equitable rate, and
solid coin.

"In consciousness of christia
ty, my royal master's clemenc
and the honour of soldiership,
have dwelt upon this invitatio
and wished for more persuasi

camp.—I have but to give ſtretch to the Indian forces under my direction, and they amount to thouſands, to overtake the hardened enemies of Great Britain and America; I conſider them the ſame wherever they may lurk.

"If notwithſtanding theſe endeavours, and ſincere inclinations to effect them, the phrenſy of hoſtility ſhould remain, I truſt I ſhall ſtand acquitted in the eyes of God and men, in denouncing and executing the vengeance of the ſtate againſt the wilful outcaſts.—The meſſengers of juſtice and of wrath await them in the field; and devaſtation, famine, and every concomitant horror that a reluctant but indiſpenſable proſecution of military duty muſt occaſion, will bar the way to their return.

"Camp near Ticonderoga, 4th July, 1777. *J. Burgoyne.*

"By order of his excellency the lieutenant general,

Robt. Kingston, ſecretary."

General Burgoyne was ſtill the toaſt, and the ſeverities towards the priſoners were in great meaſure increaſed or diminiſhed, in proportion to the expectation of conqueſt. His very oſtentatious proclamation was in the hand and mouth of moſt of the ſoldiery, eſpecially the tories, and from it, their faith was raiſed to aſſurance.

I wiſh my countrymen in general could but have an idea of the aſſuming tyranny, and haughty, malevolent, and inſolent behaviour of the enemy at that time; and from thence diſcern the intolerable calamities which this country have extricated themſelves from by their public ſpiritedneſs and bravery.

The downfall of general Burgoyne, and ſurrender of his army, daſhed the aſpiring hopes and expectations of the enemy, and brought low the imperious ſpirit of an opulent, puiſſant and haughty nation, and made the tories bite the ground with anguiſh, exalted the valour of the free-born ſons of America, and raiſed their fame and that of their brave commanders to the clouds, and immortalized general Gates with laurels of eternal duration.

No ſooner had the knowledge of this intereſting and mighty event reached his Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty, who in Europe ſhines with a ſuperior luſtre in goodneſs, policy and arms, but the illuſtrious potentate, auſpiciouſly influenced by Heaven to promote the reciprocal intereſt and happineſs of the ancient kingdom of France, and the new and riſing ſtates of America, paſſed the great and deciſive decree, that the United States of America, ſhould be free and independent.

Vaunt no more Old England! conſider you are but an iſland! and that your power has been continued longer than the exerciſe of your humanity. Order your broken and vanquiſhed battalions to retire from America, the ſcene of your cruelties. Go home and repent in duſt and ſackcloth for your aggravated crimes. The cries of bereaved parents, widows, and orphans, reach the Heavens, and you are abominated by every friend to America. Take your friends the tories with you, and be gone, and drink deep of the cup of humiliation. Make peace with the princes of the houſe of Bourbon, for you are in no condition to wage war with them; Your veteran ſoldiers are fallen in America, and your glory is departed. Be quiet

and

and pay your debts, especially for the hire of the Hessians. There is no other way for you to get into credit again but by reformation and plain honesty, which you have despised; for your power is by no means sufficient to support your vanity. I have had opportunity to see a great deal of it, and felt its severe effects, and learned lessons of wisdom and policy, when I wore your heavy irons, and bore your bitter revilings and reproaches. I have something of a smattering of philosophy, and understand human nature in all its stages tolerably well; am thoroughly acquainted with your national crimes and assure you that they not only cry aloud for Heaven's vengeance, but excite mankind to rise up against you. Virtue, wisdom and policy, are in a national sense always connected with power, or in other words, power is their offspring, and such power as is not directed by virtue, wisdom, and policy, never fails finally to destroy itself as yours has done.— It is so in the nature of things, and unfit that it should be otherwise; for if it was not so, vanity, injustice, and oppression, might reign triumphant for ever. I know you have individuals, who still retain their virtue, and consequently their honour and humanity. Those I really pity, as they must more or less suffer in the calamity, in which the nation is plunged headlong; but as a nation I hate and despise you.

My affections are frenchified — I glory in Louis the sixteenth, the generous and powerful ally of these states; am fond of a connection with so enterprizing, learned, polite, courteous, and commercial a nation, and am sure that I express the sentiments and feelings of all the friends to the present revolution. I begin to learn the French tongue, and recommend it to my countrymen before Hebrew, Greek or Latin, (provided but one of them only are to be attended to) for the trade and commerce of these states in future must inevitably shift its channel from England to France, Spain, and Portugal; and therefore the statesman, politician and merchant, need be acquainted with their several languages, particularly the French, which is much in vogue in most parts of Europe. Nothing could have served to effectually to illuminate, polish, and enrich these states as the present revolution, as well as preserve their liberty —— Mankind are naturally too national, even to the degree of bigotry; and commercial intercourse with foreign nations has a great and necessary tendency, to improve mankind, and erase the superstition of the mind by acquainting them that human nature, policy and interest, are the same in all nations, and at the same time they are bartering commodities for the conveniences and happiness of each nation, they may reciprocally exchange such part of their customs and manners as may be beneficial, and learn to extend charity and good-will to the whole world of mankind.

I was confined in the provost-gaol at New York the twenty sixth day of August, and continued there to the third day of May, 1778, when I was taken out under guard, and conducted to a sloop in the harbour at New York, in which I was guarded to Staten-Island, to general Campbell's quarters, where I was admitted to

eat and drink with the general, and several other of the British field officers, and treated for two days in a polite manner. As I was drinking wine with them one evening, I made an observation on my transition from the provost criminals to the company of gentlemen, adding that I was the same man still, and should give the British credit by him, (speaking to the general) for two days good usage.

The next day colonel Archibald Campbell (who was exchanged for m.) came to this place, (conducted by Mr. Boudinot, the then American commissary of prisoners) and saluted me in a handsome manner, saying that he never was more glad to see any gentleman in his life, and I gave him to understand that I was equally glad to see him, and was apprehensive that it was from the same motive. The gentlemen present laughed at the fancy, and conjectured that sweet liberty was the foundation of our gladness; so we took a glass of wine together, and then I was accompanied by general Campbell, colonel Campbell, Mr. Boudinot, and a number of British officers, to the boat, which was ready to sail to Elizabethtown-point. Mean while I entertained them with a rehearsal of the cruelties exercised towards our prisoners; and assured them that I should use my influence, that their prisoners should be treated in future in the same manner, as they should in future treat ours; that I thought it was right in such extreme cases, that their example should be applied to their own prisoners; then exchanged the decent ceremonies of compliment, and parted: I sailed to the point aforesaid, and in a transport of joy, landed on liberty ground, and as I advanced into the country, received the acclamations of a grateful people

I soon fell into company with col Shelden, (of the light horse) who in a polite and obliging manner, accompanied me to head-quarters, Valley Forge, where I was courteously received by gen. Washington, with peculiar marks of his approbation and esteem, and was introduced to most of the generals and many of the principal officers of the army, who treated me with respect, and after having offered general Washington my further service, in behalf of my country, as soon as my health (which was very much impaired) would admit, and obtained his licence to return home, I took my leave of his excellency, and set out from Valley Forge with gen. Gates and his suite for Fish Kill, where we arrived the latter end of May. In this tour the general was pleased to treat me with the familiarity of a companion, and generosity of a lord, and to him I made known some striking circumstances which occurred in the course of my captivity

I then bid farewel to my noble general and the gentlemen of his retinue, and set out for Bennington, the capital of the Green Mountain Boys, where I arrived the evening of the last day of May to their great surprize; for I was to them as one risen from the dead, and now both their joy and mine was complete. Three cannon were fired that evening, and next morning colonel Herrick gave orders, and fourteen more were discharged, welcoming me to Bennington, my usual place of abode;

thirteen

After this ceremony was ended we moved the flowing bowl, and rural felicity, sweetened with the rising States of America, concluded that evening, and with the same loyal spirit, I now conclude my narrative.

F I N I S.

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