

CHAPTER IX.

SACRIFICES MADE FOR INDEPENDENCE. CONVENTION FOR STATE CONSTITUTION. REPRESENTATIVES. CONVENTION TO ADOPT CONSTITUTION OF UNITED STATES. DIFFERENT OPINIONS. VOTE OF THE TOWN AGAINST IT. NOTICE OF HON. JONATHAN BLANCHARD,—OF JUDGE JONATHAN LOVEWELL.

WE CAN form but a faint idea of the sacrifices which were made for independence. Beside perilling life in battle and submitting to privations of every description, so large a proportion of the able-bodied population were in the army that the fields were often left untilled. Yet they gave both time and treasure to their country, without measure and without a murmur. "Our efforts are great," Mr. Adams said in 1780, "and we give this campaign more than half our property to defend the other. He who stays at home can not earn enough to pay him who takes the field."* The amount annually expended by the town during the war was several thousand dollars;—a heavy burden upon a population numbering in 1775 only 705. Yet this small number had diminished in 1783 to 578, showing a decrease of 127, or 18 per cent.; a fact which proves better than pages of description the amount of the exertions which were put forth and the sacrifices which were made, and the consequent paralysis of the energies and prosperity of the community.

In 1781 another convention was holden at Concord for the purpose of forming a state constitution, and Jonathan Lovewell, Esq., was chosen a delegate. But the same jealousy continued to exist as heretofore and the new constitution, which was our present one with slight modifications, was rejected by the town "unanimously." In December, 1782, Jonathan Blanchard, Esq., was chosen representative, and it was again voted "not to receive the Bill of Rights and Plan of Government" as adopted, and the town chose Capt. Benjamin French, Joseph Whiting, Jonathan Lovewell, Esq., and Col. Noah Lovewell, a committee to state the reasons of rejection.

March, 1784, Capt. Benjamin French was chosen representative.

March 6, 1786, Col. Noah Lovewell was chosen representative, and the town voted that "the selectmen with Jona. Blanchard, Esqr., Jonathan Lovewell, Esqr., Mr. Joseph Whiting and Deacon William Hunt be a committee to give instructions to the Representatives." In 1787 the same proceedings were renewed.

January 10, 1788, Deacon William Hunt was chosen a delegate to the convention, which met at Exeter in February of the same year, to consider of and adopt the constitution of the United States, which had recently been formed and sent out for the approval of the people. Throughout the country as well as in the convention which formed it, there was a great diversity of opinion respecting it and much opposition. It contained no bill of rights as it now does; as its opposers thought no limitation of powers. The states had long been sovereign and independent democracies and hesitated to give up any of their rights. The confederation had been inefficient from the want of central authority.

Thus while some believed that the constitution vested too much power in the General Government, which would eventually swallow up the several states, others feared that it possessed too little power to protect itself from the encroachments of the states; and would soon share the fate of the old confederacy. There was danger on both sides; on the one side *anarchy*—on the other *usurpation*. It was an untried experiment and every little community was divided. It was discussed in town meeting and the town voted "not to accept said Constitution," and chose a committee of *nine* to give their delegates instruction to oppose its adoption by the convention. This committee reported a list of objections, which were adopted by the town and forwarded to the convention. The Constitution, however, was adopted. It was a medium and a compromise, between the doubts of conflicting parties and the fears of both have happily proved vain.

July 16, 1788, died Hon. Jonathan Blanchard, aged 50 years. He was the son of Col. Joseph Blanchard, and was born September 18, 1738. He had not the advantage of a collegiate education, but was early initiated by his father into the active business of life. After the death of his father,

*Mrs. Adams's Letters, 152.

which occurred in his 20th year, he was called upon to fill his place as proprietors' clerk and surveyor and was soon deeply engaged in the management of town affairs and other public business.

When the events which preceded the revolution occurred, the people of New Hampshire were among the first to resist the usurpations of the Crown. When in 1685 Cranfield forbade the ministers to preach unless they would administer the communion to all who requested it in the Episcopal form, they refused obedience, denounced him from the pulpit and went to prison rather than yield. When the governor at a later day, levied a tax upon the lands of the people for his private advantage, the women resisted the collection and drove his officers from their houses with water, scalding hot. The "broad R," cut by some "prowling official," upon their choicest trees, thus devoting them to the Royal Navy without redress or compensation was a continued eye-sore.

Early in 1775 the legislature of New Hampshire, first of all the states and evidently anticipating independence, sent a request to the Continental Congress, which met at Philadelphia, May 10, 1775, to advise them as to the organization of an independent government. Agreeably to their recommendation, given with much hesitation,* a convention met at Exeter and adopted a constitution, bearing date January 5, 1776. It was the earliest adopted by any colony, and was violently opposed by the more timid as a virtual declaration of independence.† It provided, as has before been mentioned, for a house of delegates and a council of *twelve* to be elected annually by the people and which were similar to our senate and house of representatives. No provision was made for a governor and the whole executive as well as legislative authority was placed in these two bodies. Of this council, Jonathan Blanchard was chosen a member in 1776, and continued such for *three years*. No better testimony to his worth could be given than the bestowal of such an office at such a period.

In October, 1776, General Blanchard was sent by the legislature to recruit our regiments, which had been wasted by sickness, suffering and defeat at Ticonderoga. In 1777 he was appointed attorney general of the state, in conjunction with Col. Nathaniel Peabody and is said "to have discharged his duties in a manner satisfactory to the Government and advantageous to the people."‡ January 6, 1778, he was appointed a member of the "*Committee of Safety*" for the state, an office of unlimited responsibility and power and which he held for a long period.§

He was a delegate from this state in conjunction with Colonel Peabody, to the convention which met at New Haven, January, 1778, "to regulate prices," enforce the recommendations of Congress and relieve the distress of the people; and he prepared a report to our legislature accordingly.|| In 1784, soon after the adoption of our state constitution, General Blanchard was appointed *Judge of Probate* for the County of Hillsborough, an office which he held nearly or quite up to the time of his death.

In 1787, during the confederation of the states, he was elected a delegate from the state to the Continental Congress. They were chosen *annually*, and whether he was again elected and died in office is uncertain.** Soon after the death of his father he was appointed agent by the Masonian proprietors to manage and dispose of all the unsettled lands within the state of New Hampshire. The territory of this state had been granted originally to Robert Mason, but after many years, finding that it yielded very little income and caused him much trouble he disposed of the land as far as it remained in his possession to a company of individuals who were called the Masonian proprietors. As their agent, General Blanchard conveyed most of the lands within the state, and this circumstance caused that many of the original proprietors of a very large number of towns resided here, and from this town were drawn many of their first settlers.

General Blanchard died in this town and is buried in the Old South burying ground. He married Rebecca Farwell, who died August 20, 1811, and left *five* children, one only of whom is now living. [1843].

In 1790, the population of the town was 632.

*Mrs. Adams's Letters, 85. †Gordon's History, 150.

†1 Belknap.

‡3 Farmer's and Moore's Hist. Coll., 5.

§2 N. H. Hist. Coll., 39.

||3 Farmer's and Moore's Hist. Coll., 5.

**1 Belknap, 416.

In 1792 died Jonathan Lovewell, Esq., aged 79. He was a brother of Captain Lovewell, "The Indian Fighter," and of Col. Zaccheus Lovewell, and was born in this town, May 14, 1713. Early in life he took an active part in town affairs, and became one of the proprietors of "common lands" in the township of Dunstable. For many years he was proprietors' clerk, and a magistrate under the crown. About the year 1746, under the preaching of Rev. Mr. Kirk, he became a convert to the doctrine of the "New Lights," as the followers of Whitefield were then called, and soon after became a preacher. This probably, however, was of short duration, as he never left town, and in 1755, he was commissary of the New Hampshire regiment, sent out against Crown Point, under the command of Col. Joseph Blanchard. A gun taken from the French during that campaign, and brought home by him, is still in possession of the family.

In the earliest stages of the Revolution, Mr. Lovewell was an ardent and efficient friend of liberty. In April, 1774, he was chosen agent of the town to petition the general court for leave to send a representative, a privilege which they had not hitherto enjoyed. In September, 1776, he was chosen a delegate to represent the town in the convention holden at Exeter, for the purpose of sending a delegate to the first continental congress, to be holden soon after at Philadelphia. These were the first steps towards independence.

January 9, 1775, Mr. Lovewell was chosen a member of the "Committee of Inspection" for the town, to see that none of the inhabitants purchased or used British goods. February, 1776, he was chosen a member of the "*Committee of Safety*" for that town, a situation of no little trust, and continued a member of almost every such revolutionary committee during the war. These committees were of the highest utility in diffusing information, and in exciting and concentrating the efforts of the patriotic, and demanded men of great energy and decision. June 20, 1777, he was chosen a member of the "*Committee of Safety*" for the state, and served in that capacity until January 5, 1779, about which period the necessity for the exercise of their functions in a great measure ceased.

April, 1778, he was chosen a member of the committee to "*assist*" the delegates from this town in the convention for framing a constitution for the state. In 1781, he was chosen a member of the committee which formed our present State Constitution. After its adoption he was appointed a Judge of the court of common pleas for this County, which office he held for several years. He lived and died unmarried.