

A Pertinent Question That Suggests Various Possibilities in the Formation and Development of the United States.

HAD Blucher come upon the field of Waterloo to the north instead of the south of the wood of Planchenoit," says a military critic. "Napoleon would undoubtedly have been victorious not only in that battle but in the whole campaign—which might have made France and Europe synonymous terms to-day." It may likewise be said that had Major André been ten minutes earlier, or John Paulding and his companions five minutes later on the Tarrytown road on that eventful day in 1780, the stream of our American life might now be flowing in vastly different channels. Suppose our school histories ran thus:

"In these negotiations for the surrender of West Point, the key to the whole rebel position, Major André had a narrow escape. As three rebel scouts, wandering near the British lines, were making their way through the woodland toward the Tarrytown road, one of them tripped upon a hidden root. As the party, after a few moments' delay, proceeded toward the road, a horseman dressed in citizen's clothes swept in a gallop along the highway.

"The hurrying speed excited the suspicions of the rebel scouts and a few ineffectual shots were fired at the flying figure. The horseman was Major André, hastening to consummate the surrender of West Point to his Majesty's forces. Had not the scouts been delayed by this timely accident his capture would have been inevitable. West Point would have remained in rebel hands, the royalist

armies might have suffered defeat, and our now prosperous and happy colonies, thus lost to the crown, would have returned to the wilderness."

Did history run thus; did we still remain colonies of Great Britain, with what other eyes would Americans look upon the Revolution and our heroes of the Revolution in this fourth generation after! The Great Metropolitan Journal would, on our National birthday, publish for an editorial leader something like the following:

TRAITORS' DAY!

This date, the Fourth of July, recalls the Great Rebellion hatched on that day in 1776, from the egg of treason over which a band of unprincipled conspirators had so long been brooding. While the history of those evil days is familiar to every child, it is well for us, on this recurring date, to think upon the dangers that then menaced these colonies of his Majesty King George III., that we may more clearly appreciate the blessings of freedom and peace we now enjoy under the beneficent rule of our present beloved ruler, King George V.

It is well, too, to recall how, but for the heroism and loyalty of Benedict, Lord Arnold, Duke of West Point, the first of that illustrious line that has since governed the Colony of New York, the traitors might have triumphed over our faithful armies. Internal dissensions of people and Parliament, together with the drain of the long French wars, had dis-

couraged the Government and encouraged the rebels to a point where the success of the latter seemed more than probable. Both in Britain and among the loyal and respectable colonies there prevailed the deepest gloom.

And it was then, in this darkest hour, that there emerged the figure of the great Arnold. One of the most ardent of rebels in the early stages of the rebellion, he now, in this time of travail for mother country and daughter colonies, prayed for light—and the light, heaven-sent, came to him. He saw, in the bitterness of his repentance, the blackness of his treason against his country and his God; yet he also saw that God had been merciful to him, and, as to Jael of old, had put into his hands the means of salvation and redemption of his name from infamy.

He commanded the rebel forces at West Point, the bond between their extended wings. It was the key, the very heart, of the rebel position. That once in British hands, the rebels were out in twain, and their defeat in detail merely a matter of short time.

Under the inspiration of God and repentant loyalty, Arnold gave up this stronghold to the royal troops. The end came soon. The rebels' armies were routed, the common soldiery of them hunted and shot down without quarter, as rebels should be, while the arch-traitors, who, for personal gain, had incited the simple-minded colonists to rebellion, were

captured, taken to London, tried and hanged for treason.

History can show no more pitifully shameful spectacle than the figure of the aged Benjamin Franklin, whose early life had been so filled with worth and usefulness, standing in the felon's dock at the Old Bailey, his white hairs bowed in dishonor, and his name attainted with treason, awaiting the sentence that would

swiftly rape him away before a sterner Judge.

Yet one even more shameful than Franklin! The traitor, Washington, the pet and protégé of the great Lord Fairfax, nurtured in his early manhood by the favors of nobility and the Crown, the wealthiest gentleman of his time in the colonies. He was sentenced to Tyburn and the hangman's noose like a common felon, but, on account of his gross betrayal of Gen. Braddock, he was denied burial.

That this rebel, while acting as guide for the unhappy Braddock in the ill-starred expedition to Fort Pitt in 1756, betrayed the British troops to the French and Indians, was proved upon his trial to the satisfaction of all who heard the evidence. There was only the word of a traitor against a cloud of witnesses produced by the Crown. Surely since the days of Herodotus, history has recorded no blacker infamy than Washington's, and it was magnanimous in Parliament in 1850 to permit those of the Washington name to sink it in oblivion and hide their shame under the inconspicuous name of Smith.

It is with pride we recall that the gratitude of King George III. was no less than the patriotism and loyalty of Arnold. His Majesty loaded him with wealth, landed estates, and titles of nobility. Since the day of that first great Duke of New York, an Arnold has always represented the throne in the colony.

One cannot contemplate but with a shudder the direful results that would have followed fast upon the success of the traitorous conspiracy of 1776. Left to themselves, without the upholding hand of the mother country, the thirteen colonies would swiftly have fallen into dissensions and internecine wars.

Thus naked to the world, they would have become an easy prey to the greed of the Powers of Europe, or, unable to sustain themselves against the savage, have sunk back to the wilderness. The Indian would have taken heart again and instead of nearly ten millions of free British subjects living in security even as far as our western boundary along the Mississippi River, the diminished population would now be huddled for safety in the towns along the Atlantic Coast, and where to-day stand peaceful farmsteads more than five hundred miles west of the Hudson, the trapper and the redman would still stalk each other through the gloomy forests.

More, the aborigines, thus emboldened, would have made far headway, and even New York City, instead of being the magnificent metropolis she is, with nearly a quarter of a million inhabitants, would nightly hear the war whoop of the painted savage and daily feel her defending palisades tremble beneath the blows of his thundering war club.

Nor has the winning and holding of this mighty American empire been costly to Great Britain. Since a hundred years ago the French became aggressive in their Province of Louisiana on the further bank of the Mississippi the Crown has never been compelled to maintain more than 150,000 troops along that river to guard our Western frontier, while to-day there is but a scant 100,000 needed there.

The petty battles continually taking place between our soldiers and the French garrisons beyond the river may be ascribed more to racial antipathy than any real cause for war between the two nations. For more than a century—saving some ineffectual attempts to repeat the tragic experiment of 1776, which have

been promptly put down—peace has reigned throughout the body of our Colonies and the British Ministry has found less than 200,000 soldiery ample to secure this state of quiet.

It is a happy coincidence that the Prince of Wales arrives in port to-day on the royal yacht, escorted by a half-score of battleships, and accompanied by many of the noblest peers of the realm. It but emphasizes the contrast between the happy present and the gloomy days that might now be brooding over this most unfortunate country had the rebellion of July 4, 1776, ended with success to traitor arms. All New York is in festal array and the entire populace will turn out to do homage to their future ruler. He brings greetings from his Majesty, which will be read before the royal ball to-night from the steps of the Governor's Palace in King George Square.

It is rumored that the Prince's object in visiting the colonies is to set aside a large portion of the Territories of Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky as a royal hunting preserve, this district having been found teeming with all manner of game. It is also rumored that large grants will be made many noblemen for the same purpose out of the abundant waste lands lying along the Ohio River between the village of Fort Pitt and the outposts at Louisville.

It is to be hoped that these reports will be verified; no better use could be made of the vast wilderness beyond the Alleghanies than that of affording hunting grounds to the royal family and the peerage, and thus inducing them to visit our shores more frequently—whereby they may learn at first hand the devotion of her colonial subjects to the mother country.