

necessary for their immediate use, taking from the committee an obligation to return the same, or the value of them, because these articles must be made good to the captors and the continent.

“As to the article of powder, that is of a very delicate nature; but to show his willingness to serve the good people of Beverly, it is his Excellency’s desire that you keep in your possession what powder you have found on board the prizes, making an immediate return of the quantity unto him. If it should so happen that the town and harbor is attacked by the enemy, the General consents that you lend the same unto the committee, at the same time taking their obligation, for reasons as before assigned for the shot. This is the most effectual way his Excellency can think of to answer the prayer of their petition, and this you will please to communicate unto them.

“I am sir, your most ob’t serv’t,

“STEPHEN MOYLAN, P. T. S.

“WILLIAM BARTLETT, Esq.”

In Jan. 1776, the town voted to hire twenty-four men to guard on the seacoast by night-watches, at West’s beach and near Benj. Smith’s house. Of these watches Benj. Smith and Azariah Woodberry were appointed captains, and £100 were provided to defray the expenses of guarding the town. At this time, Col. Glover, with the 14th regiment of the continental army, was stationed here, who maintained a watch at the fort.

The progress of events had now prepared the public mind for the declaration “that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES;” and in anticipation of such a measure, the town, at a meeting June 13, 1776, twenty-one days before it transpired, voted, that should the Continental Congress, for the safety of the colonies, declare them independent of Great Britain, they solemnly pledged “their lives and fortunes to sup-

port them in it." The General Court having recommended to the towns to consider the proposed articles of confederation and union among the states, the town, at a meeting Feb. 4, 1778, empowered and instructed its representative to act and do anything relative thereto, that in his judgment would be most for the public good. May 22d, the constitution of government devised by a convention of the State, having been laid before the town for its consideration, it was rejected by a vote of 22 to 3; and George Cabot, Rev. Joseph Willard and William Bartlett, were appointed a committee to draft instructions to the representative, expressing the reasons of dissent. It is an elaborate and interesting document, evincing a thorough acquaintance with the subject; and while it disclaims all disposition "to prevent good order, and encourage anarchy and opposition to equal government," it claims the right of opposing, "with a decent, but manly and zealous freedom," any form which they conscientiously think "does not tend to the public welfare."

In 1778, a requisition was made on the town to reinforce the army in Rhode Island; and the three captains of the militia companies, assisted by their subalterns, were authorized to obtain the quota on the best terms possible, "giving the preference to town inhabitants."

Paper money had at this period so much depreciated as to demand an effort for its improvement; and July 12, 1779, Geo. Cabot and Joseph Wood were appointed delegates to a convention to be held at Concord, for the purpose of "adopting such measures as shall be necessary to carry into effect, by common consent, the important object of appreciat-