The outbreak of the American Revolution confronted Tench Coxe, then barely twenty years of age, with the most difficult problem of his long life—whether to side with his countrymen or to remain loyal to the monarchy which in decades past hadlavishly bestowed lands, including most of West Jersey and a vast western estate, on his forebears. At the outset of the imperial crisis, Coxe supported the American cause. Like Joseph Galloway, John Dickinson, Andrew Allen and a goodly number of his close relatives, Tench favored a policy of remonstrance and petition, protest up to but not including the use of force. His was the middle ground which, as he failed to realize, is so often untenable in an era of revolutionary upheaval.

This fact was brought home to him by the battle on Lexington Green, by the organization of a Continental Army, and, above all, by the Declaration of Independence. This he could not accept—home rule within the Empire, yes; separation from Great Britain, no. For a few months after the famous Declaration he held his tongue and continued in business. Then, a sudden intensification of patriot ardor in Philadelphia led to a witch hunt which forced many Tories, silent and avowed, to flee the city. On December 2, 1776, Coxe joined the exodus, driven away, he recalled years later, "by the violence and threats of a body of armed men to the British army." He went first to New Jersey and, after only a brief stay, to British-occupied New York City, where he spent the next eight or nine months at the house of Edward Goold, a long-time family friend and a member of the prominent merchant firm of Ludlow & Goold. During these months of involuntary leisure, Coxe eagerly awaited a victory of the Redcoats which would open the way for British occupation of his native city and his return home. He did not have long to wait.

1 *Federal Gazette*, Nov. 22, 1788.
On the morning of September 26 some 3,000 British troops commanded by Lord Cornwallis marched into Philadelphia accompanied by a number of the city's prominent Tory exiles, among them Joseph Galloway, Andrew Allen, William Allen and Tench Coxe. Whether or not (as later charged) "with a British officer locked in his arm," Coxe entered a quiet and sparsely populated city, its stores left empty by departing Whig merchants, its population consisting largely of women, children, and Quaker pacifists. "Philadelphia is rather a lovely city of considerable size . . . and . . . the public squares are beautiful . . . the City is very charmingly situated in level fertile country," a Hessian commander wrote on the day of the occupation. To Coxe, happy to be "safely home after so many fatigues and perils," it doubtless appeared even more beautiful than to its invaders, his return a symbolic vindication of the wisdom of his commitment to the English.

The half-deserted city which the British occupied on September 26 was quickly transformed. Other Tory exiles returned, English and Scotch merchants arrived aboard British transports, business resumed, and Philadelphia became again the busy commercial hub and lively social center with which Coxe was familiar. The presence of British nobles and British officers dazzled the local Tories; the circulation of British gold appeased the neutrals; and the superior power of the British army silenced the secret patriots. The winter social season of 1777–1778 was one of the liveliest in memory, so convivial, indeed, that Benjamin Franklin was led to deny that Howe had taken Philadelphia by commenting that Philadelphia had taken Howe. More likely, the General and his staff beguiled the city's elite who recklessly abandoned themselves to a season of gaiety, attempting to blot from consciousness the dim realization that the glittering new social order might not last. For the moment,

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3 *Aurora,* Aug. 23, 1804.
5 Colburn Barrell to Tench Coxe (TC), Nov. 8, 1777, quoting TC to Barrell, Oct. 22, 1777. All manuscripts cited are in the Tench Coxe Papers at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
"Assemblies, Concerts, Comedies, Clubs and the like," made them, like the Hessian officer who so commented in January, 1778, "forget there is any war, save that it is a capital joke." In short, weekly balls at the City Tavern, performances by British officers of farces, comedies, and tragedies at the Southwark Theater on South Street, official receptions, public spectacles, and private parties (many of which Coxe doubtless attended) overshadowed a war whose outcome was by no means certain.

A week after Howe's triumphant conquest of Philadelphia, the Americans challenged him at Germantown, a few miles outside the city where most of the British troops were quartered. Washington's audacity was no match for British numerical superiority, and in the confused battle that ensued Washington lost a thousand men, twice as many as his adversary. Repulsed but undaunted, Washington continued to harass Howe's forces as they sought to clear the Delaware for the British fleet, commanded by Lord Howe the British general's brother who impatiently waited to sail up the Bay and join forces with the army in Philadelphia. American resistance proved futile, however, and by December the British were in secure control of the Delaware forts. Cast down by the defeats of Brandywine and Germantown, Washington now went into winter quarters on a bleak plateau at Valley Forge, scarcely twenty miles from Philadelphia, where it was assignment enough merely to keep his wretched, starving, and freezing army intact. Howe, snug and secure in Philadelphia, did not even bother to attack. But to those Philadelphia Tories not blinded by self-interest, the seemingly impregnable British position in Philadelphia was offset by the most important American victory of the war—the stunning defeat inflicted on the British at Saratoga, where, on October 17, 1777, General Burgoyne, deprived of the support of an auxiliary force under Lieutenant Colonel Barry St. Leger and anticipated aid from New York City, surrendered his entire army, some 5,000 strong, to General Horatio Gates. That Coxe's own correspondence contains

7 "Extracts from the Letter-Book of Captain Johann Heinrichs of the Hessian Jäger Corps, 1778-1780," *PMHB*, XXII (1898), 139.
only laconic comments on what must have been to him a disquieting development was owing to his agreement with the viewpoint expressed in a letter from his friend Goold: “I shall make no reflections upon this melancholy affair,” the New Yorker said. “I expect our Turn will come next.”

The dispatch with which Coxe and Goold took advantage of the opening of the Philadelphia market suggests how eager they were to store up profits during the British occupation. As Coxe put it: “If we must suffer misfortunes, we ought to drain all the good from them possible.” During his months of idleness in New York he had discussed with Goold his plans to resume business in Philadelphia, and the two had agreed on an informal partnership, including “a recommendation of each other to our respective friends.” In a gesture that revealed both his respect for the reputation Coxe & Furman (the now defunct merchant firm of Tench’s father, William Coxe) still enjoyed in the Caribbean and his fondness for Tench, Goold persuaded his partner, Gerard Beekman, to recommend himself and Coxe “mutually throughout all the islands,” avering that “it was equally the same whether the cargoes were shipped to one or the other.” Once his friend was safely back in Philadelphia, Goold seized the first opportunity to ship goods the two had purchased jointly the previous summer. “I hope you have got our things,” he wrote on October 26. “If Philadelphia is to be headquarters I think they will be safest there. . . . Turn them into Cash as soon as possible and remit the net proceeds in good Bills. . . .”

Coxe, having already “embarked in Business” on his own account, “it not being proper to use as heretofore the names of our

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11 Edward Goold to TC, Oct. 26, 1777.
12 TC to Goold, Mar. 1, 1778.
13 TC to Goold, Mar. 17, 1778.
14 Goold to TC, May 6, 1778.
15 The first ships from New York carrying supplies and provisions arrived in Philadelphia about four weeks after the British occupation. Mishoff, “Business in Philadelphia . . . ,” PMHB, LXI (1937), 167. By Nov. 11, 1777, young Robert Morton reported that “2 brigs and 2 sloops came from the fleet with the provisions for the Army and went up Schuylkill.” “Diary of Robert Morton,” PMHB, I (1877), 27.
16 Goold to TC, Oct. 26, 1777.
17 The first letter in Coxe’s revised business letter book was Oct. 6, 1777.
late W[illiam] C[oxe] & M. Furman," ran an advertisement immediately, offering for sale the merchandise shipped by Goold: "Tench Coxe has for sale at the house of Mrs. Ford in Walnut Street, next door to the corner of Second Street," read an ad of October 25, "cotton counterpanes . . . pearl necklaces . . . brocades, satin . . . silk-knee garters . . ." and a "few boxes of Keyser's pills" for venereal disorders, rheumatism, asthma, dropsy, and apoplexy. During subsequent weeks, Goold not only shipped additional consignments but persuaded many other prosperous New York merchants—among them, Stephen Skinner, Richard Yates, Robert Watts, Daniel Ludlow, Gerard Beekman, Isaac Low and Abraham Cuyler—to make Coxe their agent. No other merchant in Philadelphia enjoyed such profitable connections, and to the extent that trade with New York flourished so too would Coxe. Since he sold on a commission basis—usually receiving five per cent on all goods sold—his profits were exactly proportional to the size and value of the cargoes consigned him. And his New York associates, gratifyingly for him, were in a position to ship largely. In early November, for instance, Goold procured for him "a very large consignment from Mr. Isaac Low and Mr. Abraham Cuyler to the Amount of . . . near £3,000." By the same conveyance Coxe also received a rich cargo from Colburn Barrell, to whom he needed no introduction from Goold. A Bostonian who had affirmed his allegiance to the Crown by sailing for England at the onset of the Revolution, Barrell soon returned home, establishing himself as a merchant in New York City where, in 1777, he and Coxe became close friends. They also made plans for an informal business association once British arms should clear the way for Coxe's return to Philadelphia. Upon hearing that his friend was "got safely home," Barrell promptly prepared to send "as good an assortment as I can make out, which I believe will be from two to four thousand." This was only the beginning. Over

18 TC to William Ballyn, Mar. 14, 1778. Coxe was extremely cautious about involving his father or Moore Furman, even by name, in any of his business transactions. To Isaac Hartman he explained that "it might be dangerous to my father & Mr. Furman to have their names appearing in any Business done in this Town, while Gen'l Howe's Army is here. . . ."

19 The Pennsylvania Evening Post, where the ad was repeated on subsequent days.

20 Goold to TC, Nov. 10, 1777.

21 Barrell to TC, Nov. 8, 1777.
the next seven months, he consigned Coxe numerous and valuable cargoes, and as their profits mutually grew so did their affection, if the tone of their letters is a reliable gauge. But the bands of gold which united them in friendship were fragile, readily snapping with the departure of British troops from Philadelphia in June, 1778.

To Coxe, the smooth and successful resumption of trade was as pleasing for what it promised as for what it immediately secured him. His first consignments were received by the third week in October, a month or so before the American abandonment, on November 20, of the last of their Delaware River forts. Five days later, Philadelphia's Tory newspaper reported that "the Delaware River never had near the number of ships in it as are at present, there being supposed to be upwards of four hundred," and that a large number of "well-laden" merchant vessels were daily expected from the West Indies and New York. Goold had seen to it that some of the latter were assigned to Coxe—"a considerable cargo of dry goods" and other merchandise worth "upward of £5000 Stg" aboard the ship Richlie; assorted provisions from Skinner & Yates—loaf sugar, coffee, lemons, rice, porter, and wine aboard their armed schooner Reed; as well as consignments from other New York merchants, including Barrell, who shipped among other goods aboard his brig Bella "100 pipes choicest madeira." Some days later, Coxe expressed his gratitude to Barrell and "my other good friends in New York from whose consignments, and some speculations of my own I find I am likely to have a very comfortable Assortment of Dry & wet goods, well adapted to the present demands here." And the

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22 Oberholtzer, I, 267. Although the voyage was hazardous, vessels had arrived via the Delaware during the weeks before the fall of the last of the Patriot river forts, among them vessels carrying goods, as described above, consigned to Coxe. With the abandonment of the American forts, the British fleet began to arrive. On November 24, Robert Morton noted that "Twenty or thirty sail of vessels came up this morning from the fleet"; on succeeding days additional ships arrived, especially from November 27-30, when the fleet was "coming up in great numbers." "Diary of Robert Morton," PMHB, I (1877), 31.

23 The Pennsylvania Evening Post, Nov. 25, 1777.

24 Goold to TC, Nov. 15, 1777; Barrell to TC, Dec. 13, 1777; TC to Skinner & Yates, Dec. 20, 1777. Both the Bella and the Richlie sailed regularly from New York to Philadelphia carrying cargoes consigned to Coxe. Like other vessels belonging to New York merchants, they usually sailed with the British fleet. See TC to Barrell, March, 1778. Custom house clearances were announced in The Pennsylvania Evening Post. See, for example, the issue of Dec. 20, 1777.

25 TC to Barrell, Dec. 15, 1777.
demand, owing to the needs both of the British Army and Philadelphia’s steadily growing population, was brisk, producing soaring prices and speculative wind-falls.

Despite his awareness that the onset of winter meant that “our Navigation must stop before long,” Coxe began looking for larger quarters and in mid-December moved to a new store, “one of the best” in Philadelphia, “it being within call of the Coffee House.”

To a more cautious businessman, expansion of any kind might have appeared ill-advised, for the trade between New York and Philadelphia was subject not only to the vagaries of winter weather but to the control of British officials. That regulation might go so far as outright prohibition had been demonstrated only a week earlier. The avidity with which New York merchants took advantage of higher prices in Philadelphia (“Some people will burn their fingers, thro their rage for shipping hither,” Coxe commented) prompted General Howe to take swift action to obviate both possible shortages in New York and an overstocked market in Philadelphia. On December 5 he issued orders that “no more vessels than those already cleared should be permitted to go to Philadelphia.”

Coxe’s confidence in the continued expansion of his business activities was not altogether misguided, however. Just as British officials could regulate and even prohibit trade so they also could lighten restrictions or lift bans. Much depended on one’s influence with British officialdom, and few merchants were in a better position to secure favors than he.

Coxe’s emphatic affirmation, many years later, that “I never was in any employment whatever under Great Britain or her Governors, Generals, Admirals,” was indisputably correct, and he scarcely can

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26 TC to Skinner & Yates, Dec. 20, 1777.
27 TC to Watts & Kearney, Dec. 20, 1777.
28 TC to Barrell, Dec. 15, 1777.
29 Ibid. The store was rented from the administrator of the estate of Colburn Barrell’s brother, who had lived in Philadelphia. Ibid. It was on Front Street, “the third door above Market-Street.” The Pennsylvania Evening Post, Dec. 20, 1777.
30 TC to Goold, Dec. 19, 1777.
31 Goold to TC, Dec. 6, 1777. “The intention,” Goold explained, “is to prevent our provisions being all sent off which were going fast.”
32 Aurora, Oct. 8, 1800. William Duane of the Aurora also charged some years later that Coxe “took an oath of allegiance to the British,” an allegation which Coxe denied. Aurora, Aug. 24, 1804.
be blamed for failing to add the proverbial "but." Yet he was (as his own correspondence clearly reveals, despite the many statements on the subject he subsequently excised) on close terms with high-ranking British officials whose cooperation he solicited and on whose patronage and support his prosperity was based.

Trade with New York City and the West Indies, the mainstays of his business, could not be conducted at all, much less thrive, save by the permission of the commanding general or his subordinates. With British soldiers quartered over his own store, Coxe scarcely could have been unaware either of the extent of British power or the advantages of a cordial relationship with influential officials. His assiduous cultivation of them, moreover, was totally in character, revealing a trait which time was to enhance. Nor was his success lost on his New York correspondents. Soliciting his agent's help in recovering some £200 imprudently advanced to a British army officer, Edward Goold reflected their viewpoint when he alluded to the confidence reposed in Coxe by the commanding general.

Concessions to favored merchants were merely an incidental aspect of the regulation of the commerce of British-occupied America. Such control was rather dictated by the exigencies of the war effort as a whole; the prosperity or failure of merchants, Tory or English, was subordinate to the needs of an army of occupation. Regulation was accordingly strict. By the terms of a proclamation issued by

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33 Joseph Sherwell to TC, May 15, 1779.
34 From Goold, Feb. 7, 1778. Not that Coxe's New York associates were laggardly in successfully cultivating British officials. Goold himself was gratified by the "genteel" behavior of "Mr. Elliot," superintendent general in New York, who, he informed Coxe "is a good man and a good friend to me." Goold to TC, Nov. 10, 1777; May 29, 1778. He was equally proud of his relationship with "Mr. Gordon," the paymaster general, who, he boasted, "will readily do anything . . . to serve me." Goold to TC, Feb. 7, 1778. For his part, Barrell could report that "I am on very good terms with the Ordinance office here & Commissary Grant [of the artillery] is very obliging to me." Barrell to TC, April 22, 1778.
35 In 1778, as he would in the 1790's, Coxe curried the favor not only of major officials but minor ones as well. A representative letter reads: "During Capt Waddy's stay here he called upon me for some small assistance in the Cash way, with which I did myself the pleasure of supplying him." TC to John Ferrers, Jan. 20, 1778.
36 Theoretically the water-borne trade of Philadelphia, as well as that of New York, remained subject to the various acts of Parliament passed before the war and to the Prohibitory Act of November, 1775, which became effective on Jan. 1, 1776. Passed in retaliation for an act of the Continental Congress which forbade American trade with Great Britain and her colonies, the Prohibitory Act forbade all American trade until peace should be re-
Howe on December 4, 1777, all merchants’ ships were required to make entry of vessels and submit accurate manifests of their cargoes. Any goods not so declared, or landed without a license, were subject to seizure and forfeiture. Even after acquiring the requisite licenses, importers of rum, spirits, molasses and salt were subject to close surveillance and regulation. These products were to be stored in the owner’s or importer’s warehouses available for inspection by British officials and sold only with their permission. Similar regulations were imposed on vessels leaving Philadelphia; ship masters were required, under penalty of forfeiture of goods and imprisonment, to submit sworn manifests “specifying the quantity and quality of the goods, and by whom shipped, together with the permission granted for the loading of the vessel.” Nor could vessels in ballast depart without permission. Initially, ships in the royal service were specifically excepted from these restrictions, but within days it became apparent that British naval officers, in collusion with New York and Philadelphia merchants, were evading the law. Accord-
ingly, a proclamation of December 18 ordered that vessels in His Majesty's service be subject to the same regulations as were previously imposed on merchant ships.\textsuperscript{39} Such regulations applied, of course, to all shipping, domestic and foreign, out of Philadelphia,\textsuperscript{40} but the West Indian trade—the prop on which the fortunes of American merchants so long had stood—was subjected, some four months after the British occupation, to even more rigorous control. Before March, 1778, all ships from the British islands were required to have licenses from their governors, a requirement that did not severely curtail trade with the mainland colonies. In that month, however, the governors were instructed not to grant licenses to merchant ships sailing to Philadelphia and New York. Henceforth, permissions for importation were, in Coxe's words, "procurable" only from "the General or Admiral" who required that "the ships be well-armed, the owners well known."\textsuperscript{41}

For New York and Philadelphia merchants who chose to remain safely within the law such regulation was particularly burdensome. For one thing, the necessity of returning their ships from one city to the other in ballast cut deeply into profits. Far preferable was the traditional practice of transporting a cargo from New York to Philadelphia, taking on there another cargo for the West Indies where, in turn, goods would be put aboard for the return trip to New York. Such profitable three-legged voyages still were possible,

\textsuperscript{39} The Pennsylvania Evening Post, Dec. 20, 1777. In mid-January, 1778, British authorities imposed still stricter rules on the activities of merchants. A proclamation issued by Joseph Galloway, Superintendent General, on January 17 forbade the sale of any goods by public vendue save by license from the city police and under strict regulations, including payment of a fee to be appropriated "for the public uses of the city of Philadelphia and its environs." \textit{Ibid.}, Jan. 17, 1778.

\textsuperscript{40} Trade with all ports not held by the British was, of course, also prohibited. \textit{Pennsylvania Ledger}, Apr. 15, 1778.

\textsuperscript{41} TC to Goold, Feb. 7, 1778. This, as Coxe said, was Howe's intention. He delayed issuing the requisite orders for at least a month, however. On this point Coxe's letters so confuse rumor with fact that it is not possible to determine the precise date of the regulation which was imposed not by a public proclamation but on orders from the commanding general to Superintendent General Joseph Galloway. It definitely was in effect before the end of March, at which time Howe's orders were reinforced by a circular letter from the British Ministry to the governors of the West Indian islands. See TC to Barrell, Mar. 6, 1778; to Thompson, Apr. 1, 1778. Howe's motive in imposing stricter regulation, so a highly-placed British officer told Coxe, was owing to the fact that "the Enemy receive large supplies by taking Vessels unarmed or whose Masters make no defence." TC to Richard Yates, Mar. 7, 1778.
but to accomplish them one must enjoy the confidence of highly-placed British officials, preferably the commanding general himself. It was here that Coxe’s services proved invaluable to his New York correspondents. As early as December 8, 1777, for example, Richard Yates consigned Coxe a cargo aboard his “armed schooner Reed,” requesting him to secure a permit “either from Lord or General Howe” to send the ship to Granada for a cargo to be shipped to New York. It being a point of the last consequence,” Coxe reported, “I waited on Captain McKenzie,” secretary to Lord Howe: “He informed me that Capt. Hammond was the Admiral’s chief Agent here and that he would make it a point to do anything with him to obtain the necessary permit . . . I . . . shall leave nothing neglected which may tend to the accomplishment of this important point. . . .” Nor did he. Five days later he had “the very great pleasure” of informing Yates that “I have this Inst. a note from Head Quarters” granting the Reed a license “to go to Granada.” As if to prove that one good turn from Hammond deserved another, Coxe at the same time was soliciting the Captain’s aid in securing compensation for Abraham Cuyler whose vessel “the Snow Sir William Johnson” was lost near Cape Henlopen, en route from New York to Philadelphia with a consignment for Coxe. “I will endeavor to make it appear that the Snow was plundered and destroyed . . . which must really have been the case,” Cuyler’s efficient agent reported. He was successful. By order of Captain Hammond, who willingly came to Coxe’s aid, the commander of his majesty’s ship Lizard gave the requisite certificate.

Not every Philadelphia merchant, however exalted his social position, had ready access to the close advisers of both the commanding general and Admiral Howe, to men like McKenzie and Hammond.
nor, like Coxe, to Commissary General Daniel Wier and other officers with lucrative contracts to award. The major reason for his preferred position is suggested by the impressive roster of Coxe’s family connections who held prominent positions during the British occupation. Clearly the most influential was Joseph Galloway, the most powerful civilian official in Philadelphia. Although their kinship was distant, standards of a society which continued to count as relatives cousins three or four times removed dictated that it be acknowledged and, in view of the authority invested in Galloway by Lord Howe, it could not fail to be important. Howe’s confidence in the former advocate of American rights was singular, whatever its basis. Perhaps Sir William warmly appreciated one whose ideas on reconciliation were similar to his own; perhaps he was convinced of the Philadelphian’s ability; perhaps he perceived that to compensate for his own slack administration he needed the services of a more efficient and sterner man. In any event, on December 4, 1777, the commanding general issued two proclamations granting Galloway virtually the full extent of authority it was within his power to confer. The first designated him Superintendent General of police and invested him with powers as sweeping as the authority of government itself—“the suppression of vice and licentiousness, preservation of the peace . . . the regulation of the markets and ferries” and supervisor of “other matters in which the economy, peace, and good order of the City of Philadelphia and its environs are concerned.” As if such authority were not enough for one man, even under a military regime, Howe issued a second proclamation on the same day appointing Galloway “Superintendent of all imports and exports to and from Philadelphia,” and conferring powers so broad that the Superintendent exercised virtually absolute control of the

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47 Coxe and Weir were on intimate terms. See TC to Barrell, May 10, 1778.
48 Jane Galloway Shippen, Coxe’s aunt, was Galloway’s niece.
49 The Pennsylvania Evening Post, Dec. 4, 1777.
city's commerce. To a merchant as dependent on water-borne trade as was Coxe, official favors, easily within the power of his distant relative to grant, might make the difference between flush profits and economic disaster. In short, he scarcely needed to be told, as Colburn Barrell, in an oblique reference to Galloway, reminded him that "you have acquaintance, influence, and credit with the public officers ... who can recommend you to the Captains & ca. by which means [measures] of great importance may be set on foot."

Galloway was only the most prominent of Coxe's many relatives and acquaintances who occupied important offices or enjoyed the confidence of the Howe brothers. His friend, David Franks, was "agent for the contractors for vitualling His Majesty's troops at Philadelphia," and also, for a time, Commissary of Prisoners. Andrew Allen, Tench's brother-in-law who had returned to Philadelphia with the British Army, was on intimate terms with its commander who had expressed his mutual esteem by appointing Allen some months before the occupation lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania during Governor John Penn's exile. Though in seclusion at his rural retreat in Northampton County, James Allen, Andrew's brother, occasionally returned to his native city where he "met with great civility from many military Gentlemen, & dined with Sr. William Howe ... an affable, easy, humane gentleman." Coxe's brother-in-law George McCall was married to the daughter of Daniel Chamier, British commissary general in North America. Having successfully raised the West Jersey volunteers for Royal Service, Daniel Coxe, Tench's uncle, came to British-occupied Phila-

50 Ibid. Two "wardens of the port ... to whom all persons were to pay due obedience" assisted Galloway as did an "Inspector of Prohibited goods." TC to Skinner & Yates, Dec. 20, 1777; to Thomas Attwood, Mar. 3, 1778.
51 Barrell to TC, Apr. 9, 1778. Italics in original.
52 Daniel Chamier to David Franks, Feb. 8, 1776. David's brother, Moses Franks of London, had entered into a contract (along with Arnold Nesbitt and Adam Drummond) to supply the British army with provisions. See Edward E. Curtis, The Organization of the British Army in the American Revolution (New Haven, 1926), 173-175, where the contract is printed.
54 "Diary of James Allen," PMHB, IX (1885), 434.
55 TC to Goold, Mar. 17, 1778. McCall "goes to New York," Coxe wrote, "at the particular request of Mr. Chamier whose daughter he married, & who means to put him in office there...."
delphia where Howe promptly appointed him “one of the magistrates to Govern the civil affairs within the lines.”

Even such powerful connections could not prevent the sharp decline Coxe's commissions underwent in January, 1778. Both nature and man were responsible: the former for the “uncommonly severe winter” which, early in January, “froze the Schuylkill over solidly and the Delaware from the banks nearly to the middle;” the latter for General Howe's decision to forestall severe shortages of goods by imposing an embargo on all shipping in the city's port. According to “positive instructions” issued on December 23 to Galloway, no goods whatever were to be shipped to Great Britain, Ireland, or the West Indies, and no goods to any part of the American continent occupied by the King's troops “but by a special permit to be obtained from the General himself.” Howe was not particularly lavish with permits, and for a time it appeared, as Coxe remarked, that “the Embargo and the Ice together might have stop'd the Navigation.” That the embargo did not was owing to the ingenuity of Coxe's New York consignors, notably Goold. Royal transports and the British packet still sailed, weather permitting, between New York and Philadelphia and Goold had discovered, even before the embargo, that clandestine shipments might easily be arranged through compliant officials. Thus, in mid-November, he persuaded Captain Waddy of His Majesty's ship *Adventure* to secret in the latter's cabin some chests of tea, a scarce and expensive commodity in Philadelphia. Informing Coxe that the Captain would find a way

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56 TC to William Ballyn, Mar. 14, 1778.
57 Goold to TC, Mar. 13, 1778.
59 TC to Goold, Dec. 19, 1777; to Wigram, Jan. 24, 1778; to Gerard G. Beekman, Dec. 23, 1777.
60 TC to Wigram, Jan. 24, 1778. The embargo upset conditional contracts Coxe had made for goods to be sent to these places, especially a tentative purchase agreement for tobacco and staves to be shipped to England. TC to Wigram, Mar. 23, 1778. Other merchants too, Coxe lamented to Wigram, “have involved themselves in difficulties by vesting considerable sums in Articles which cannot be shipt.” *Ibid.*
61 TC to Terrill & Kearney, Jan. 23, 1778.
62 Coxe's trade during the winter months of 1778, however, was not exclusively confined to New York. Late in January, for example, he reported to Goold that “I have got a freight for the Richtie amounting [to] about £800 Stg from the Bay of Hond[urals] to London.” TC to Goold, Jan. 21, 1778.
of evading diligent customs officers, Goold cautioned his agent not to mention the shipment "where it might prejudice him." What was so promisingly commenced in November continued during succeeding months: in February Goold sent "sundry goods . . . which through the interest of Mr. Dashwood I have got by the packet—the captain knows nothing more than that it is a box of value. . . . Keep your own counsell." A month or so later, Isaac Low sent Coxe "a trunk of goods by one of the transports" which he was "in some apprehension for, lest it should be seized." Goold had no such apprehensions about "my things" shipped at the same time "by the packet," which he was certain would "run no risk from the manner they were taken on board."

Friendly British officials not only cooperated with Tory merchants in shipping and entering contraband goods but, according to Coxe, themselves engaged in illegal profiteering. "The commissaries," he told his London banker, "I really believe shipt cargoes on their own account, under the appearance of Government business." They were, he might have added, set a fine example by their superior, Daniel Chamier, the commissary general, who made handsome profits in illegal trade. Nor were the commissaries unique. They were joined, according to the definitive study of British supply services during the Revolution, by quartermaster generals and other British officers, many of whom "came home with more gold in their pockets than they had when they went out or than their slender salaries in America would warrant."

For Tory merchants, trade, legal or illegal, suffered handicaps other than British regulations and seizures. One problem was securing an adequate medium of exchange, a difficulty that had beset Americans for well over a century. To a commission merchant like

63 Goold to TC, Nov. 15, 1777.
64 Goold to TC, Feb. 15, 1777.
65 Goold to TC, Mar. 25, 1779. Such apprehensions were obviously justified. "The transports," Coxe wrote a week later, "have brought around some goods which have been seized in many instances wherever they could find them." TC to Goold, Mar. 13, 1778. See also TC to Skinner & Yates, Mar. 23-25, 1778.
66 TC to Goold, Mar. 13, 1778.
67 TC to Wigram, Mar. 23, 1778.
68 Curtis, 100.
69 Ibid., 145-146.
Coxe the issue was crucial, for the confidence reposed in him by his correspondents measurably depended on his success in securing acceptable modes of remitting the large balances in their favor. The most controversial currency media was Pennsylvania's colonial paper money, whose continued circulation and acceptance seemed to many, merchants and consumers alike, the best solution to the acute shortage of specie. But not even the united effort of the city's more responsible businessmen was sufficient to arrest its constant depreciation.70 "On our arrival," Coxe observed, "our paper money passed equal with gold and silver," but by mid-December, as another Philadelphian noted, it was "entirely dropt, and not passable."71 Nor were other varieties of money in circulation of certain value. "One of the most difficult points to manage here is our cash," Coxe complained, "of which we have some of almost every Species under heaven,"72 including Spanish pistoles and "the old light Gold."73 Coxe managed it by making remittances in "public bills" or bills of exchange drawn by British officials. The most desirable of these were paymaster's bills, but commissary bills as well as those drawn by officials of the Royal hospital, naval officials, the commissary of prisoners and others were acceptable.74 Coxe explained his procedure: I take "the utmost pains to rest my Cash as soon as received in good Bills. . . . From D. Franks & other good residents here, I get bills and pay them at my leisure in all kinds of money,"75 remitting the

70 Coxe was among those merchants who sought to arrest its decline by signing an agreement to accept it at par with specie. See J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia, 1884), I, 366; Mishoff, "Business in Philadelphia," PMHB, LXI (1937), 176; "Diary of Robert Morton," PMHB, I (1877), 12. Because not all merchants agreed to do so and because of the problem of foreign exchange, the attempt failed. By December, 1777, Coxe along with other merchants who had signed the agreement reluctantly concluded that to continue to adhere to it would be to court bankruptcy and so refused any longer to accept the paper money save under necessity and even then, at a high discount.

72 TC to Barrell, Mar. 23, 1778.
73 TC to Isaac Low & Abraham Cuyler, Jan. 24, 1778. Other money in circulation included the Spanish milled dollars and the real, Portuguese half-johannes and moidores, and the New York pound (worth about half the pound sterling).
74 Barrell to TC, Nov. 28, 1777; TC to Welles & Grovenor, Dec. 1777; TC to Cuyler, May 7, 1778; TC to Barrell, May 10, 1778.
75 TC to Low & Cuyler, Jan. 24, 1778. Coxe was forced to pay for bills in "all kinds of money" because of General Howe's remissness in regulating the exchange value of English
public bills, in turn, either directly to his New York correspondents or to their London bankers.\textsuperscript{76}

The former were gratified, both by Coxe's successful sales and the manner of his payments. "I wish every one of your correspondents were as well pleased with you as I am, & I have the pleasure to tell you the generality of them are very well satisfied," Goold wrote on March 25.\textsuperscript{77} They should have been. The "prevalence of the partiality"\textsuperscript{78} in favor of Coxe made him the ideal agent, binding to him by hoops of gold those New York merchants whose pockets he was lining. Nevertheless, Tory merchants, Coxe included, continually deplored, "this vicious rebellion" which occasioned such burdensome restrictions on trade. Peace, whether the result of a British or an American victory, would, in their view, bring stable trading conditions and surer, if smaller, profits.\textsuperscript{79} Indeed, the swiftness and willingness with which many of them—Goold, Thomas Attwood, Richard Yates, Daniel Ludlow—later switched to the American side suggests that their first loyalty may, all along, have been to the pocketbook rather than to the King. As one of Coxe's business partners remarked with unconscious mockery, "War or Peace, all serves the purpose of some."\textsuperscript{80} In their defense, on the other hand, it should be observed that they doubtless sincerely subscribed to Adam Smith's comment that he had "never known much good done by those who effected to trade for the public good. It is an affectation, and foreign money. Coxe complained to Barrell on March 23 that "a proclamation was hourly expected to be issued from the General's Office, fixing Guineas . . . & excluding cob'd pistoles, doubloons, french Guineas & much other foreign coin, of which a good deal was passing among Us. Tho I am well assured this proclamation was written out, it never was published, as that all these kinds of moneys continued to be rec'd by one half the merchants. Finding that it would affect my Sales if I refused these Coins, I continued to take them making it a rule to lay out every farthing of them as fast as rec'd in good Bills—as long as this could be done with't giving a premium on Exchange."

\textsuperscript{76} TC to Goold, Jan. 21, 1778; Barrell to TC, Nov. 28, 1777. Coxe's own profits were, for the most part, sent in the form of bills of exchange drawn by British officials to Wigram in London for safe keeping. See TC to Goold, June 13, 1778.

\textsuperscript{77} Goold to TC, Mar. 25, 1778.

\textsuperscript{78} Barrell to TC, Apr. 9, 1778. The phrase, quoted by Barrell, was Coxe's.

\textsuperscript{79} Barrell to TC, Nov. 28, 1777.

\textsuperscript{80} Goold to TC, Apr. 2, 1783.
indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need be employed in dissuading them from it."  

Tory merchants, the cream of British officialdom, as well as many of Coxe's socially prominent relatives and friends—Allens, Chews, Francises, Shippens, Frankses, among them—doubtless attended Tench's wedding on January 14, 1778, making it one of the highlights of the city's social season. The bride was Catherine McCall, daughter of Samuel McCall, Philadelphia merchant, and Anne Searle, both of whom were deceased. Like Coxe, she was a member in good standing of the tightly knit Philadelphia elite—her sister, for instance, was married to Thomas Willing. Tench's own happiness, however, must have been tinctured by anxiety about her health, which was perhaps affected by tuberculosis. But, for the moment, he doubtless shared the view of a relation that "every thing is gay, & happy & it is likely to prove a frolicking winter."

A happy marriage and a flourishing business led him to close his eyes both to the implications of his wife's illness and the possibility not only of Britain's abandonment of Philadelphia but her eventual defeat by the Americans. To a less complacent man the latter possibility clearly would have been rendered the more likely by news of the Franco-American treaties of February, 1778, an "unnatural alliance" which joined "French Royalty and American Liberty," and which bolstered the latter by providing the military assistance essential to its success. Not that this was the design of the French king, who rather sought revenge for his nation's defeat by England

81 Adam Smith, An Inquiry into ... the Wealth of Nations (New York, 1937), 423.
82 Coxe's aunt, Mrs. Sarah Francis (widow of Turbett Francis), was in Philadelphia during the occupation. TC to James Meyrick, Jan. 27, 1778.
83 TC to Thomas Attwood, Mar. 3, 1778.
85 Margaret L. Brown, "Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham of Philadelphia," PMHB, LXI (1937), 287.
86 "Mr. McCall tells me Mrs. Coxe has frequent returns of her old disorder," Goold wrote on Apr. 2, 1778. "Had you not better let her try Long Island during the hot months."
87 "Diary of James Allen," PMHB, IX (1885), 432. Coxe apparently suspended business for some weeks before and after his wedding. There are no entries in his letter book between Dec. 23, 1777, and Jan. 20, 1778.
in the Seven Years War, less than two decades earlier. The revolt of England’s colonies offered an opportunity to humble a powerful rival and to redress the balance of power in favor of France. Following the news of Burgoyne’s surrender at Saratoga, the Comte de Vergennes, Louis XVI’s foreign minister, moved cautiously toward open intervention on the side of the Americans, whom France had been secretly aiding since the war began. The final decision to do so was prompted by the well-based fear that England, having suffered a major defeat, would now seek to reunite the Empire by granting the Americans liberal concessions. On February 6, 1778, France and America signed treaties of commerce and alliance, pledging themselves to fight together until Britain recognized American independence. Although Vergennes’ motive, as was said, may have been to abort reconciliation of England and her rebellious colonies while promoting French monopolization of the latter’s trade, the generous terms of the alliance remain even today a rare exception to the history of western diplomacy. In exchange for the aid of France’s mighty army and navy, the Americans were required only to promise to defend the West Indian possessions of her new ally. Coxe did not record his reaction to what, in retrospect, was surely the single most important and decisive event of the war. But the irony of an alliance between Washington’s depleted, ragged, and hungry army and the military forces of a great world power scarcely could have escaped his notice.

More promising to him, however, was the conciliatory bill passed by Parliament on February 17, eleven days after the conclusion of the French alliance. Introduced by Lord North some three months earlier, this measure authorized the appointment of a peace commission empowered to renounce parliamentary taxation of the Americans, as well as the right to station military forces in the colonies without their consent, and all acts of Parliament to which the Continental Congress objected. For all this, in turn, the colonies had only to acknowledge the sovereignty of the King. To Coxe, such “ample terms” not only conceded all the Americans could expect or even wish but were a gratifying vindication of his own wisdom. “I am particularly happy on the Country’s acct and on my own, because it shews that I had some Reason for the hope I entertained, that this would be the footing” on which “England would
put this Country,” he wrote to a friend in St. Croix. “I now look for a speedy & happy peace, in which America will have a fixt constitution, not to be infringed by either side.”

His misplaced optimism was doubtless wishful thinking, dictated by his unhappiness with “the Melancholy Continuance of this ruinous war” and a longing for an answer to his prayer: “May heaven in its Mercy give us a Speedy end to it.”

In any event, he refused to believe that the Americans would spurn such generous concessions, a refusal that was positively obtuse in view of the joy with which the patriots greeted news of the French alliance and their deep distrust of British sincerity. Even the English envoys themselves realized upon their arrival in Philadelphia early in June (as perhaps Coxe also may have done by that time) the futility of concessions short of independence.

But at least Coxe was consistent—in the spring of 1778 as in 1775–1776 his deepest wish was for peace and autonomy within the British Empire.

That expectation governed the conduct of his substantial share of Philadelphia’s wartime trade during the spring of 1778. Coxe’s comment that “my sales have been as good as any merchant in this place” is supported by the large payments he made either to his customers or to his agents.

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89 TC to Isaac Hartman, Apr. 26, 1778. News of the conciliatory act reached Philadelphia in mid-April. Not until that time did the envoys appointed under that act sail for America.

90 This is the more evident in view of Coxe’s own contradiction of the optimistic view he characteristically expressed. In a letter of April 19, he wrote: “I am clear in my own judgement that the Congress . . . will reject these ample propositions being incompatible with their [about four words crossed out of MS] of independency.” But he added that he would take “no important step till I see the issue.” TC to Summers & Cliburn, Apr. 19, 1778.

91 TC to Barrell, Dec. 20, 1777.

92 The British emissaries—the Earl of Carlisle, William Eden, George Johnstone—left England on April 16. They were accompanied by Sir John Temple and John Berkenhart, who as special agents were instructed to flatter and if necessary bribe the Americans into acceptance. The Carlisle Commission arrived in Philadelphia on June 6, 1778. A month before, the Continental Congress, sitting at York, Pa., had ratified the Franco-American treaties unanimously and whatever slim chance of success the emissaries might have had was gone. Instead of a warm reception from the Americans, they were greeted by the depressing sight of British preparations to evacuate Philadelphia. How could they threaten the Congress with an attack by Redcoats who were retreating to New York? They thus scarcely could have been surprised when the Americans, on June 17, announced that they would not negotiate with Carlisle and his colleagues unless American independence were recognized and British military forces withdrawn. The members of the Commission thereupon departed for New York, where they continued their futile efforts until the following winter.

93 TC to Watts & Kearney, Mar. 1, 1778.
New York correspondents or to their London bankers. Early in March, for example, he remitted “£4,500 & upward” to the accounts of several New Yorkers by two homebound British fleets, as well as a “handsome remittance” of more than £3,500 to Colburn Barrell. Continuing consignments from New York and elsewhere over succeeding weeks netted Coxe even more substantial profits. “I have had several West India & dry goods Consignments of very Capital Value, & have made some few Speculations which have not turned out amiss,” he boasted in mid-March. By this time he was eager to enlarge his trading activities, even in the face of its almost total dependence on an army of occupation which, according to rumors already circulating, might soon leave.

He perhaps hoped that if the Americans regained control of Philadelphia his Toryism would be forgiven as merely a youthful indiscretion and that he would be allowed to carry on business as usual; perhaps he genuinely believed that an amicable settlement of the war, including a general amnesty, would take place; perhaps he was among those a cynical British officer had in mind when he remarked “that the inhabitants of Philadelphia ‘are very stout-hearted—for money!’”; more likely, he was merely bowing to parental pressure. In any event, on March 19, 1778, he sent out a circular letter, offering the former clients of Coxe, Furman & Coxe his own services in conducting their business affairs in America during “this confused time,” as well as after “this unhappy contest is settled.” Its purpose, so he told Goold, was “to secure all the old friends of our house & give them an opportunity of introducing me to New Ones.” The true motive behind the circular was revealed in its statement of assurance that if Tench Coxe should discontinue his mercantile

94 TC to Benjamin Yard, Mar. 14, 1778.
95 Quoted in Mishoff, “Business in Philadelphia...,” PMHB, LXI (1937), 177.
96 Mar. 19, 1778. As to the future, Coxe observed that “when peace shall be restored to this country I shall still be happy in paying them every attention, either in Conjunction with my former Copartners or by myself.” His circular letter concluded with this recommendation of his friend Goold: “As the course of your mercantile affairs may make a friend of Character & Abilities in Business necessary in other parts, I will make use of the freedom of mentioning Edward Goold Esquire of New York as a Gentleman from whom you may expect every Justice & security in Business.”
97 TC to Goold, Mar. 17, 1778. Coxe’s ambition did not outrun his prudence, however. “From the political sentiments of some of our St. Croix friends,” he confided, “I do not think it will be quite proper to send one to any of them yet.”
activities then the old firm of Coxe & Furman or its successor—Coxe, Furman & Coxe—would resume business. With Tench a Tory, William Coxe, Sr., a neutral, and Moore Furman an active patriot, the former partners apparently were playing a clever game of heads I win, tails you lose. The rules were perhaps prescribed by the firm's senior partner, William Coxe. "My father," Tench wrote a St. Croix friend, "is desirous of making a final settlement of all our late Concerns that we may be ready either to begin together or separately as may be hereafter agreed on among Us." To Tench himself, as to most young men of twenty, present prospects were more important than plans for the future.

During the weeks immediately following, his optimism appeared justified. "The number of Inhabitants, Refugees, and Military being great," he explained, the opportunities afforded by the Philadelphia market were virtually limitless. Coxe, as before, was in a position to meet the demand. His various correspondents "having shipt largely to this port," he observed on March 25, "I have had my hands extremely full;" a month later, he estimated that he had received over recent weeks "consignments from New York,

98 TC to Benjamin Yard, Mar. 14, 1778.
99 TC to Terrill & Kearney, Apr. 10, 1778. The population of the city increased from around 22,000 or 24,000 at the time of the British occupation to approximately 60,000 by the spring of 1778. Mishoff, "Business in Philadelphia . . . ," PMHB, LXI (1937), 170.
100 "A cargo from Ireland in the provision way would certainly yield a very great profit at this Market," Coxe wrote. "There are no quantities of Beef, pork, Butter, or Tongues in my hand here, and the price of our fresh provisions is so high from the amazing number of Inhabitants, that there can be no doubt of a pretty ready sale. . . ." TC to Isaac Low, Apr. 1, 1778.

Coxe was not certain that the state of the Philadelphia market would remain so favorable and cautioned his correspondents to exercise prudence in consigning goods to him. "It seems to me very probable," he explained to Barrell on Mar. 23, 1778, that "if the Rage for shipping hither should be as great as it was last fall that many kinds of goods will be as dull here as with you & some of them as low. We have at present a very considerable quantity of goods in Town, & our quantities will be made as great as yours by two or three such fleets as came in Nov. & Dec'r. This being the case it appears to me that your best plan will be as I have constantly advised to keep as tolerable an assortment in both places, as your Invoice will admit of and make the best of your Cargo at both Markets. I would not advise you to let the present price or demand for any Article here, tempt you to send more than \( \frac{1}{2} \) or \( \frac{3}{4} \) of what you may have of it, provided you have a tolerable sale for it [in] New York."

101 TC to Pennington & Biggs, Mar. 25, 1778. Barrell continued to assign large shipments to Coxe. On April 9, the latter acknowledged a consignment of "fashionable suits, coats, and breeches." Two days later the brig Bella arrived in Philadelphia with another consignment. TC to Barrell, Apr. 12, 1778.
Maderia, Britain, & the West Indies to the amount of £30,000.”

A ready market for such large shipments of goods may have been assured, but fluctuating prices rendered profits somewhat more chancy. To such merchants as were lucky they also offered the possibility of speculative windfalls. Coxe was among the lucky ones, though, it should be added, that chance was hedged by his knowledge of the market. This was the case in his speculations (often undertaken in partnership with Goold and James Thompson) in tobacco whose profitability he attributed to his ability to judge the quality of that staple. Since other merchants were less skillful, the “few that do understand it have in their power to make too much Advantage of their knowledge.” The success of other speculations hinged on advance or “inside” information, as when Coxe hinted to a West Indian correspondent that a profitable shipment of staves from Philadelphia might be made “if it were practicable to know of the ports being opened some little time before it takes place.” The surest way of all to assure success was to control one’s source of supply, a possibility Coxe explored in mid-April when he was

102 TC to Isaac Hartman, Apr. 26, 1778. In April Coxe sold merchandise valued at £2,100 for Barrell alone. TC to Barrell, May 20, 1778.

The cargoes consigned Coxe included virtually every type of article for which there was a demand by either the army or the city’s civilian population. They included, at one time or another, such items as woolens, linens, haberdashery, satin, silks, blankets, buttons, teas, provisions of all kinds, looking glasses, medicine, wines and spirits. On some goods, foreign linens, drillings, dowglasses, for instance, his profits were enhanced by drawbacks.

103 The prices at which Coxe sold were largely dependent on the quantity and nature of shipments from England which by the spring of 1778 were arriving “in abundance.” TC to Low, Mar. 29, 1778.

104 Given the fluctuating value of money (including the depreciation of paper currency) and the uncertainty of the supply of goods, commodity prices sharply rose and fell, making speculation inevitable. See Mishoff, “Business in Philadelphia . . .,” PMHB, LXI (1937), 166.

105 See Goold to TC, Mar. 13, 1778; TC to James Thompson, March, and Apr. 1, 1778. Since the Americans controlled the tobacco producing states, that commodity was not easy to procure. One method was suggested by Goold: “I am told the best Tobacco with you has been purchased at 50/per Ct. by a Mr. Faran from this place. What think you of Speculating in about 10 or 12 Hhds. If very good it might be got off among some Privateers. These things are done here. If you approve of it I have no objection to be half Concerned in that Quantity.” Goold to TC, Apr. 11, 1778.

106 TC to Low, Apr. 1, 1778.

107 Ibid. “Staves of different kinds are not scarce here,” Coxe explained, “and as many people are much disappointed about shipping some quantities of them, they also I am of opinion might be tempted to sell low. The difficulty with us, as with them is the shipping them off.”
asked by two New York merchants "about a concern in a privateer." His most grandiose speculative projects were planned in cooperation with Colburn Barrell who, in reply to Coxe's suggestion of a joint venture, replied: "I fear I have no capacity for it but what think you of sending some proper person in whose integrity and capacity you can put the firmest reliance to St. Augustine with a commission to speculate in Prizes and prize goods. . . . He might purchase a prize with a rich cargo & bring it to Philadelphia or New York. . . . I am but hinting . . . but something capital may be done —if you engage, I crave the favour of being concerned." Coxe, who in any event preferred employing his capital in Philadelphia "in little occasional strokes," decided, as Barrell thought he might, that this scheme was "chimerical." That he prospered more than most other speculators was doubtless owing to his ability to consign such grand designs to the realm of fantasy. Even so, he occasionally suffered reverses; given the hazards of transportation it could not have been otherwise. The most severe loss was the capture of the Reed, owned by Skinner & Yates of New York but addressed to their Philadelphia agent, by American privateers on the schooner's return voyage from the West Indies "upon a special permission obtained from the commander in chief" by Coxe who anticipated a "handsome commission" through the sale of her cargo of sugar, limes,

108 TC to Summers & Cliburn, Apr. 19, 1778. Coxe wrote: "You will agree with me that it will be best to defer doing anything of that kind. . . . The fitting of a privateer is expensive, and it would be mortifying to have a vessel thus fitted rendered useless. I doubt not that some lawful Voyages or other commercial plans may be executed in the course of this summer, in which it would give me pleasure to be concerned with you & our good friend Mr. Goold." Ibid. The fitting out of privateers had only recently been permitted. In March, 1777, Parliament had authorized the Lords of the Admiralty "to grant letters of marque to private ships to make reprisals against ships of the rebellious colonies." Barck, 131.

One of the most profitable of Coxe's activities was the sale of ships for his correspondents. In January, 1778, for example, Richard Yates requested him to dispose of the former's Mariners, a "sound" brig that "carries about 240 Tons." Unable to sell the brig at the price Yates wanted, Coxe reported that "The only thing that I am of opinion can be done with her is to get her again into the Service of the Government." Yates to TC, Jan. 5, 1778; TC to Yates, Mar. 17, 1778.

109 Barrell to TC, Apr. 9, 1778; TC to Barrell, May 10, 1778.

110 TC to Lindsay, Apr. 11, 1778.

111 TC to Yates, Mar. 7, 1778; to Skinner & Yates, Mar. 23-25, Apr. 14, 1778; Yates to TC, Mar. 17, 25, 1778. TC described the capture to Skinner & Yates in a letter of Mar. 23-25, 1778: "I am extremely Sorry indeed to be able to inform you positively that the Reed is gone. A Gentleman of the name of Dubois, who is acquainted with Mr. Yates says he saw
cocoa, and coffee, worth on the Philadelphia market about £4,000. Aware that the risks of trade must be accepted if its emoluments were to be enjoyed, Coxe was not particularly downcast. "I am sorry for it," he told Goold, "but must think myself well off with my present fortune. Very few indeed of my fellow citizens have been as much favored."

He was indeed favored, not only in fortune but by those whose patronage made it possible. In the spring of 1778, as during previous months, British trade regulations were not so stringent as to obviate large profits for such merchants as enjoyed the confidence of port officers and contractors or who were familiar with the law's loopholes. The trade with the British West Indies is a case in point. Shipments to and from the former, as was mentioned previously, were rigorously regulated, and in March Coxe learned from his friend Commodore Hammond that General Howe "is determined to knock up all speculations from that way." In passing on this information to a New York correspondent, Coxe explained a significant exception: "He wishes to see the Army, Navy & inhabitants supplied nevertheless, & intends to grant special licences for that purpose to persons in whom he can confide. . . ." The result was that the few merchants who, like Coxe, had ready access to the commanding general's deputies enjoyed a virtual monopoly. So long as they received some permissions, the precise number granted was of no great consequence; if only a few licenses were issued, as Coxe explained, "the quantities imported will be small . . . ," and "there will be no difficulty in making the prices anything that the holders of the Commodities may choose." Not only was Coxe awarded a goodly num-

112 TC to Goold, Mar. 31, 1778.
113 TC to Low, March, 1778. The frequency with which Coxe in letters describing the West Indian trade used the terms "confide" and "confidential men" suggests the importance that he attached to his own favored position with the General and his aides.
114 TC to Low, March, 1778.
ber of the special licenses issued\textsuperscript{115} but he willingly offered "my little influence" to obtain them for some of his New York correspondents.\textsuperscript{116} For royal favorites like Coxe, moreover, the risks of such trading ventures were sometimes minimal, for they were, in effect, quasi-public projects. Not only did the British government provide ships but it afforded armed protection. For example, the schooner \textit{Lovely Nancy}, in which Coxe owned a one-third interest, sailed early in April for the Bahama Islands, "with a permission from Sir William Howe for ye purpose of importing provisions & refreshments," protected by a convoy consisting of an "armed schooner" and "a Stout armed ship" and "provided herself with four Swivels, powder Ball & men sufficient."\textsuperscript{117}

In Coxe's case, such successful transactions seemed only to sharpen the acquisitive instinct; the emoluments of government-sponsored ventures might be supplemented by profits from illegal trade.\textsuperscript{118} The precise extent of his participation in the clandestine operations that were carried on during the British occupation—just as they previously had been during British rule—cannot be known, if only because they necessarily were kept as secret as possible. But Coxe's correspondence reveals enough concrete examples of his participation to suggest that it was not exceptional, though perhaps it may not have been extensive. The most conspicuous incident occurred toward the end of April. From Alexander Kennedy & Co., a partnership of St. Croix merchants, Coxe received a consignment aboard the sloop \textit{Lord Howe} by way of the British island of Tortola.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{115} TC to Barrell, Mar. 23, 1778; Samuel Herv & Co. (St. Christopher) to TC, Feb. 19, 1778; TC to Goold, Apr. 11, 1778; TC to Thompson, March, 1778.

\textsuperscript{116} TC to Skinner & Yates, Apr. 4, 1778. A number of permissions "have been given lately to people who have suffered in the cause," Coxe explained, "and who have had some interest." See also Goold to TC, Mar. 25, Apr. 24, 1778; TC to Barrell, Stoughton & Davis, Apr. 12, 1778.

\textsuperscript{117} TC to Wigram, Apr. 7, 1778. Coxe's own interest in the schooner was further protected by insurance which he secured from Wigram, his London correspondent.

\textsuperscript{118} The same was true of his close business associate Goold, who handled contraband goods smuggled into New York City. Goold to TC, Mar. 25, 1778.

\textsuperscript{119} The vessel's custom house and other papers stated that she was destined for Halifax and the Captain carried a number of letters addressed to Coxe. This subterfuge was employed to guard against a mishap in Philadelphia. Should British officials there challenge the master, he could pull out the letters to Coxe stating that he had only put into that port on his way to Halifax. See TC to Tennant, Ross, Kennedy & Morrice, Apr. 30, 1778.
In addition to a quantity of sugar, the cargo included articles (mus-kets, rum, and gin, among other items) whose importation, save under the strictest regulations, was forbidden. Since he preferred not to handle some of the contraband goods (especially the guns) which his associates had included in the cargo, Coxe was annoyed and apprehensive.\(^{120}\) "The severity of the new regulations here, together with the vigilance of the officers, & [a] Great number of King's ships . . . renders the landing of any prohibited articles extremely difficult," he wrote his temporary partners, cautioning them not "to hazard a cargo of this nature" again. But either loyalty to his associates or his own avarice outran discretion, and he assured them "you will learn from Capt. Price," the master of the vessel, "that these things are managed in some Instances. . . . It will be most prudent to defer the sale till the Vessel is gone, as the discovery . . . might lead to dangerous enquiries."\(^{121}\) Once having yielded, Coxe recklessly abandoned himself to yet grander projects,\(^{122}\) proposing to Kennedy & Co. that he use his influence to secure "permission to import from St. Croix "a cargo of Rum, Sugars, Geneva" and other products "as provisions & refreshments for his Majesty's Army, Navy & loyal inhabitants." He would attempt to persuade influential customs officials, Coxe said, "that as the court of Denmark is in perfect unity with the King . . . the objections of its being a foreign Island will be overlooked." What could not be done legally, however, might be done clandestinely, and should his influence prove of no avail he was ready with an alternative plan: Send a cargo, "regularly cleared" from an English island, to Philadelphia, but let the vessel's custom house and other papers "shew that she was bound for Halifax." If Coxe could not manage an entry in Philadelphia, he was confident he could arrange for the ship to proceed to Halifax or

\(^{120}\) He could not have been surprised, however, for Goold had warned him of Kennedy's efforts to ship and land contraband goods. Goold to TC, Mar. 25, 1778.

\(^{121}\) TC to Tennant, Ross, Kennedy & Morrice, Apr. 30, 1778.

\(^{122}\) Coxe's acquiescence and his proposal of a similar project appear particularly reckless in view of his cautiousness when Goold first mentioned Kennedy's plans. "I am at a loss to guess who Mr. Kennedy is & wish you had let me into his character," he wrote. Afraid that "his Vessel coming in . . . will get both herself and me into a difficult Situation," Coxe affirmed that "I do not wish to do any business where Oaths must be trifled with, or which will make me liable to the general suspicion. However I will do all for him that in honor & Conscience I can. But will not act against either of them for any man breathing be his Connexion ever so valuable. . . ." TC to Goold, Mar. 31, 1778.
"for England with the first Convoy."123 Such shrewd, if illegal, projects were abandoned almost as soon as they were hatched. Not only did the commanding general firmly refuse a permit for the St. Croix voyage but Coxe was compelled to order the captain of the Lord Howe to pull up anchor with all possible speed and "to direct him to proceed without loss of time on account of the information which had been most cruelly lodged against the sloop for importing Arms."124 The worst was yet to come. A day later, on a Sunday evening, Galloway "ordered the arms seized . . . in my store; my clerk sleeps there, and [I] being out at the time he had the key; this being mentioned Mr. G. directed his Deputy to Break open the door. . . ."125 Coxe's indignation was mirrored in the reaction of his alter ego, Goold: "Some people in office with you are more severe than is really necessary. . . . Why this severity? I am as much prejudiced against smuggling as any Man can be—but—I cannot at present look upon this thing in that light."126

123 TC to Tennant, Ross, Kennedy & Morrice, Apr. 30, 1778. Although such shipments were contrary to acts of Parliament, Coxe also "pressed" English officials for permission to send out on the return voyage of the Lord Howe "a parcel of lumber which I have now in store." When Galloway, the Superintendent General, refused to grant him the indulgence, Coxe turned to his friend O'Beirne, presumably an influential customs house officer, to "do the needful." Not only was O'Beirne unable to do so, but he also failed to secure the permission Coxe had requested for the St. Croix voyage. On May 2, Coxe wrote his correspondent: "Mr. O'Beirne has just called upon me, and acquainted me that the Admiral & General say they have no power to permit the exportation of lumber to the West Indies or indeed any other goods. . . . They do not choose to give a license to import from St. Croix, on account of its being a foreign Island. . . . As to a permission to bring in goods from Tortola, they say it is unnecessary, as the Governors have power to grant this for every thing but spirits of every quality & Molasses. If your Governor should not give you permission, they said that you should have a free entry here. . . . But that you must be regularly cleared, & bring up no Rum or Molasses." TC to Tennant, Ross, Kennedy & Morrice, May 2, 1778.

124 TC to James Bruely, May 3, 1778. Coxe's explanation of the affairs appears disingenuous (or maybe he merely had overestimated the immunity conveyed by his close relationship with British officials). "You may remember," he wrote Bruely, "that the owners were desirous of procuring a letter of Marque for this Vessel, & in order to her being completely fitted for that purpose, had put on board of her 40 or 50 stands of arms. Finding that this Paper could not be obtained, I ordered the Musquets on shore, & considering them as supernumerary implements of the Vessel did not think of entering them at the Custom House any more than if they had been a Couple of spare Sails. . . . I offered them for Sale at the King's Armory before I would suffer anybody else to purchase them, thinking government was entitled to the preference. They did not want them, and I then proposed selling them to any transport that might have Occasion for them. . . ."

125 TC to Skinner, Yates & Van Dam, May 5, 1778.

126 Goold to TC, May 6, 1778.
Coxe attributed such setbacks to Lord Howe's withdrawal of his favor, a withdrawal reflected in the sudden coolness of subordinates, like Galloway, previously so obliging. It was not only Coxe upon whom the commanding general suddenly ceased to smile, however, but upon other formerly favored merchants. This was owing, as Coxe correctly perceived, to Howe's replacement by Sir Henry Clinton, whose arrival in Philadelphia was expected momentarily, and to the former's firm resolve not "to do anything but absolutely necessary business." What Coxe did not know was that the new commanding general was bringing with him the King's orders to abandon Philadelphia. Having concluded that the former American capital did not have the military importance attributed to it by Howe, and uncertain of where France would throw her weight, the British high command decided to play it safe by ordering Clinton to withdraw to New York, there to plan a major campaign in the South. From the beginning of the British occupation Coxe's business associates in New York had been apprehensive about its permanence. As early as November, for instance, Goold had reminded his partner that "wherever Head Quarters is" their goods would be "safest," and cautioned him that "if you have any reason to apprehend that the army will quit your place then send them here as soon as you can." During succeeding months, Goold and other New York merchants continued to admonish their Philadelphia agent to be prepared for the city's evacuation. But Coxe was confident that their fears were groundless. "I find that many of my friends at New York are apprehensive that the Army thinks of removing from this place," he wrote on March 25. "There is not the

127 TC to Tennant, Ross, Kennedy & Morrice, May 2, 1778.
128 On March 7 Lord Germain appointed Clinton to replace Howe, leaving it to the new commander's discretion whether to hold or abandon Philadelphia. Some two weeks later, however, Clinton was instructed by the King to evacuate Philadelphia.
129 Goold to TC, Nov. 5, 1777.
130 See, for example, Barrell to TC, Feb. 14, 1778, and Goold to TC, Feb. 15, 1778. Goold was so certain of eventual British evacuation of Philadelphia that he not only urged Coxe so to arrange his business affairs as to be prepared for that event but insisted that he be ready to flee the city himself. In reply to Goold's invitation, extended early in March, that should Philadelphia be evacuated Tench and his wife would be welcome guests at the Goold's New York home, Coxe insisted that such arrangements were needless. TC to Goold, Mar. 8, 1778.
least reason for their concern." He could not have known, of course, that the British Ministry already had ordered the city's evacuation. He assuredly was justified in believing that "it is impossible for General Washington to do anything," and he understandably was preoccupied by the condition of his wife, who during the last week of April became critically ill, so ill indeed that he "once thought her lost." Nevertheless, only a determination to suspend belief could have led him to ignore the possibility. Even after Sir Henry Clinton's arrival in Philadelphia on May 8, Coxe, refusing to credit rumors that the new commander planned to leave the city, remained certain that the British were in Philadelphia for a long stay.

On May 18, General Howe's staff officers honored the retiring commander by inviting some 750 guests to a fête which climaxed a season of lavish entertainment. Designated the "meschianza," it opened at four o'clock on a bright and sunny afternoon with a "grand regata" along the Delaware. English officers and their wives, along with their more socially prominent Philadelphia sympathizers, were transported in brightly decorated boats, gaily responding to the cheers of the thousands who lined the docks. Disembarking at Walnut Street wharf, the guests walked between columns of grenadiers standing rigidly at attention to the elegant Wharton mansion in the center of whose "great lawn, which extended down to the Delaware" a triumphal arch had been erected. Here there was a "tilt or tournament," sprightly band music, a grand ball, rockets and fireworks, all climaxed by a midnight banquet in an elegant saloon where tables "were loaded with 1,040 plates, dishes, etc." and served by a host of servants who "satisfied every desire before one could express it." There were many toasts, "no lack of huzzas, and the dance, resumed after the banquet, lasted until six o'clock in the evening."
morning.” The guest list included a good number of Coxe’s relatives and friends—the Chews, the Redmans, the Bonds, the Sippens, the Frankes—and perhaps Tench himself.

Although blithely unaware that the extravaganza symbolized the end of an era, Coxe was disturbed by the “confused state of affairs” occasioned by the change of command. By the second week of May official permissions for the clearance of ships, without which trade ground to a halt, were as scarce as they had been plentiful only a few weeks earlier. Philadelphia’s harbor was crowded with idle ships which could neither be loaded nor sold. The revival of trade depended on Sir Henry Clinton, the new commanding general, who having arrived on May 8 was, as Coxe commented, so “totally engaged in receiving the returns and making the new arrangements” that the prospect appeared poor. Nor was the frosty reception Coxe suddenly met from British officials encouraging. Not that his relationship with them over previous months had been uniformly cordial. Certain buildings belonging to his friend John Coxe, and

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136 The quotations are from “Letters of Major Baurmeister,” PMHB, LX (1936), 179–180. See also Royal Pennsylvania Gazette, May 26, 1778. An excellent account is in Oberholtzer, I, 275.

137 The list is taken from Oberholtzer, I, 275–276.

138 Commenting on his inability to sell their brig Bella, Coxe wrote Barrell, Stoughton & Davis on May 9, 1778, that “so great a number of vessels of all kinds are for sale, that it is not possible to do anything with the Brig . . . ,” despite the fact that “her guns are good and extremely valuable.” He could only recommend that “if privateer commissions should be granted in America she would do well for that business.”

139 The more so in view of an embargo which was imposed on May 9, 1778. TC to Goold, May 9, 1778; TC to Barrell, May 10, 1778. “Our business is on the same uncertain footing as with you,” Coxe complained to Goold on May 9. “Four West India men have been entered here & a fifth under the same circumstance was seized. . . . These are strange doings.” TC to Goold, May 9, 1778. Early the following week he informed Barrell that no ships were allowed to sail, a ban for which he could not “well guess the Reason.” TC to Barrell, Stoughton & Davis, May 12, 1778.

140 Commenting on the baffling uncooperativeness of Galloway and his subordinates Coxe plaintively remarked to Goold that “you are very happy in having as good a man as Mr. Elliot for your Superintendent General.” TC to Goold, May 9, 1778. In a similar vein Coxe complained to Barrell and associates that although Admiral Howe had “preferred” Coxe’s memorial praying permission for Barrell’s brig to sail with the British fleet “then preparing,” Tench could “hear nothing of its being handed to headquarters. The General’s secretary informed me that it had never been sent to that office.” TC to Barrell, Stoughton & Davis, May 9, 1778.
entrusted to Tench’s care, had been taken over in the face of his angry protest for use as an armory;\textsuperscript{141} other property belonging to John Coxe was subject to vandalism and thievery by British soldiers\textsuperscript{142} against which Tench’s remonstrances were of no avail; moreover, soon after John Coxe’s departure for England in December, 1777,\textsuperscript{143} the Barrack Master of the city, Captain Paine, demanded that Tench turn over the key to his friend’s residence. Not only that, Paine also “plagued” Coxe “in my personal affairs” and, in general, “has behaved in ye most un-Genteel Manner to many of ye citizens with some of whom he was intimate before his Escalation” to Barracks Master, “among others, Billy Allen & myself.”\textsuperscript{144} Now, in May, what had been atypical, if bothersome, high-handedness became, so Coxe believed, systematic harassment. The behavior of Joseph Galloway he viewed as “uncommonly malevolent,” particularly the incident already described in which the Superintendent General, searching for contraband goods, ordered his deputies to break open the door of Coxe’s warehouse. “A step so indecent & cruel you may be sure gave me no little shock,” Coxe angrily reported. “If I ever forget, it must be because my senses & feelings are impaired by Time & I hope to remember it in the day when I can punish him for it without any fear of his Patron.”\textsuperscript{145} Although not going to the extreme of search and seizure, other British officials were also (and to Coxe inexplicably) uncooperative.\textsuperscript{146} But he could at least console himself that a few influential British officers continued to promote his interests. One steadfast ally was Commodore Hammond who interceded with both Admiral and General Howe in an effort to secure Coxe a license to import a cargo from Madeira.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{141} TC to Goold, June 16, 1778. The buildings were taken over by a Major Farmington of the Artillery who used them as an armory until the British evacuation of the City.
\textsuperscript{142} TC to John Coxe, Mar. 18, 1778.
\textsuperscript{143} TC to John Dennie, Dec. 17, 1777.
\textsuperscript{144} TC to John Coxe, May 21, 1778.
\textsuperscript{145} TC to Bruel, May 2, 1778.
\textsuperscript{146} TC to Skinner, Yates & Van Dam, May 5, 1778. The contraband for which Galloway was searching consisted of the arms Coxe had received aboard the Lord Howe, whose cargo had been consigned to Coxe by a group of St. Croix merchants.
\textsuperscript{147} TC to Thompson, May 17, 1778.
\textsuperscript{148} TC to Barrell, Stoughton & Davis, May 9, 1778.
Another was Daniel Wier, the Commissary General, who, Coxe wrote on May 21, was exercising “all the influence” he could exert to win approval of his solicitation of “permission to export a quantity of goods as agent for the contractors.”

Such efforts were exercises in futility, for the British commanders, as both the Commodore and the Commissary General doubtless knew, surely would not issue licenses to supply a city they planned to turn over to the enemy. Coxe, however, mistook the stirring of military activity of the British, preparatory to leaving Philadelphia, as preparations for a campaign to crush the American army. The British were preparing to take the offensive, he wrote on May 22, and “are throwing out everything that can induce the people out of the lines to believe they are going to evacuate ye City. Their view is probably to bring General Washington as near ye city as possible & so push into his rear & force him to a General Action.”

Within a few days the illusion was shattered, the blow the more stunning because so unexpected. By early June, orders came from Headquarters instructing the city’s merchants to ship out all goods on hand. Coxe was not entirely unprepared. The repeated warnings of his New York associates had been a constant reminder that should Philadelphia be evacuated speedy action must be taken to assure the safety of their goods, a step he quickly proceeded to follow. He also hurried about in a frantic effort to collect outstanding debts (amounting to at least £9,000 as of May 24) and to dispose of goods on hand, whether by sale or immediate shipment to New York. For the latter expedient, Coxe, at the insistence of his New York correspondents, had made plans months before. Reassuring Goold on March 31 that “I ought to omit nothing which will conduce to the safety and interest of my friends,” he reported that he had two vessels in readiness to transport the property of his consignors back to New York. On May 28, two idle vessels belonging to his

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149 TC to Summers & Cliburn, May 21, 1778.
150 It began as early as May 21 when the British began “loading the heavy baggage, all the heavy artillery, and the greater part of the train on board the Ships.” “Letters of Major Baurmeister,” PMHB, LX (1936), 175.
151 TC to Wigram, May 22, 1778.
152 TC to Barrell, June 8, 1778.
153 TC to Aduljo & Maitland, Sept. 24, 1784.
154 TC to Goold, Mar. 31, 1778. Some twenty years later a copy of this letter was acquired in some way by the editor of the Gazette of the United States as documentary proof of Coxe’s
New York friends (though not the same as those to which Coxe had referred two months earlier) were anchored in Philadelphia harbor—the brig *Bella*, property of Colburn Barrell, and the brig *Expedition*, owned by Yates & Skinner. Hastily, not even taking time to prepare bills of lading or separate invoices, Coxe, with the assistance of his four clerks, had them loaded with all the goods in his well-stocked warehouse. Within five days, a scene "the most confused I ever was in," the job was done and on June 4, 1778, from his store facing the river Coxe could see the two brigs, sails billowing, as they dropped down the river, carrying away the rich cargo. Though gratified by his success, Coxe was exhausted. "O God My dear friend," he confided to Goold, "what with hurry, Business & Anxiety, I am almost jaded to Death. Such another week as the last would have put an End to my Existence. To increase my Distress Mrs. Coxe is extremely ill."

During the following days, as the British completed preparations for evacuating the city, apprehension about his wife's health rose steadily. He stifled it as best he could in order to concentrate his attention and energy on what, for the moment, was "the most important point," collecting the large sums of money owing to his correspondents and himself. Since many of his creditors were hastily packing up for departure with the British from a city which, in the Toryism during the Revolution. *Gazette of the United States*, Oct. 5, 1799. A week or so before his letter to Goold, Coxe similarly had assured Barrell that he had "two Vessels here at my command, whose sole employment should be carrying the effects of my friends & myself." TC to Barrell, Mar. 23, 1778.

155 TC to Aduljo & Maitland, Sept. 24, 1785.
156 TC to Barrell, June 8, 1778. See also TC to Goold, June 4, 1778. They were loaded under the watchful eye of British officials who were overseeing the order to Philadelphia merchants to reship all their goods. *Ibid.*
157 TC to Yates, June 3, 1778.
158 Aboard the *Bella* were goods belonging to Colborn Barrell, Benjamin Davis, John Houghton, Edward Goold, Isaac Low, Abraham C. Cuyler, Beekman, Son & Goold, Gerard and George Beekman, Thomas B. Attwood, Hamilton Young, Alexander Kennedy & Co., Christopher Miller, Philip Kearney and Robert Watts; aboard the *Expedition* was a shipment of wine belonging to Skinner & Yates.
160 TC to Goold, June 3, 1778.
160 Sometime in May, Coxe apparently sent her to his father's retreat at Sunbury. How long she remained there is not revealed in his correspondence.
161 TC to Barrell, June 3, 1778.
words of a Hessian officer, resembled "a fair during the last week of business," it was apparent that what he did not immediately garner might be lost irretrievably. Although forced in some instances to take goods in payment, he generally insisted on taking "securities from all persons that owe me here, except really good men, payable in bills of Exe in London," preferably paymaster's bills. Simultaneously, he was attempting to sell such goods as had not been shipped to New York on June 4, a task made the more difficult because of "a great glut on the market." Nevertheless, during the week or so preceding the evacuation, he sold "sundry merchandize" belonging to Abraham Cuyler for the sum of £2,600, and such goods of Barrell's as remained in his hands for about £8,000. In view of the estimated indebtedness of some £10,000 sterling with which the British evacuation left other merchants saddled, Coxe was remarkably successful in collecting the money outstanding on his books.

Nevertheless, it was, as Coxe repeatedly said, a time of "distress and trial," the more poignant because of his wife's illness. "Mrs. Coxe continues extremely ill," he lamented. "Heaven only knows what will be the Event—I dare not begin to fear for her." To add to his burden, the departing British Army treated him no more kindly than had the patriot vigilantes some eighteen months earlier —muskets stored in his warehouse were seized on orders of the commander in chief; lumber on hand was confiscated for the use of the

162 "Letters of Major Baurmeister," PMHB, LX (1936), 175.
163 TC to Barrell, June 3, 1778.
164 TC to Barrell, Goold & Attwood, June 16, 1778.
165 TC to John Coxe, June 10, 1778.
166 TC to Thomas Attwood, June 3, 1778.
168 TC to Barrell, June 17, 1778.
169 Pennsylvania Packet, July 18, 1778.
170 Some merchants hurriedly left Philadelphia, however, without settling their accounts with Coxe, among them Samuel Kerr, formerly of Virginia, Henry Johns, "a tolerably honest man" who carried away "goods to a good amount," James Stuart, who was "wealthy and well able to pay," and Michael Jacobs, who "has behaved in a very dishonest way." TC to Barrell, Goold & Attwood, June 16, 1778.
171 TC to Barrell, June 17, 1778; to Goold and others, June 17, 1778; to Skinner, Yates & Van Dam, June 16, 1778.
172 TC to Goold, June 4, 1778.
173 John Smith to TC, May 22, 1778.
British armory, a departing British officer stole valuable furniture from John Coxe's house on Front Street of which Tench was custodian. "The British Army here have used me in such a way that I must not trust myself to speak of their conduct," he angrily complained on June 10. The worst was yet to come. On the eve of the evacuation, British soldiers quartered above Coxe's store broke open a first-story window, wrecked and plundered the store, making off with a hundred cases of gin, among other things.

By this time it was clear that whatever his wishes Coxe could not join the 3,000-odd fellow-Loyalists (including his brother-in-law, Andrew Allen) who were preparing to leave the city with the King's troops. His wife was obviously too ill to withstand the trip to New York and his devotion to her far outweighed fears for his personal safety.

The evacuation began on June 17 when British troops, heavily encumbered by provisions and equipment, moved across the river into New Jersey, and Royal transports, carrying heavy guns, auxiliary troops, and a large retinue of Tories, sailed out of the harbor. Just after dawn on the 18th the rear guard departed, encountering on their way an American patrol entering the city. Some shots were exchanged, but the Redcoats marched on, leaving behind them a city in ruins—houses wrecked, "trees destroyed . . . churches and public buildings defiled . . . Camp litter and filth everywhere; fences broken; . . . gardens and orchards trampled up and ruined." It

174 TC to Mrs. Wood, June, 1778.
175 TC to John Coxe, June 10, 1778. The officer was "Capt. Bulkely, now of the 43d," who "lived in a house of mine" and to whom Tench "lent" furniture belonging to John Coxe. Upon learning of the theft, Tench pursued the captain who relinquished some of the furniture but "still secreted more." Coxe complained to General Clinton's aide-de-camp, Lord Rawdon, who would have made Bulkely pay had not the Captain "got away in his vessel too soon." TC to Goold, June 16, 1778.
176 TC to John Coxe, June 10, 1778.
177 Joseph Sherwell to TC, May 15, 1779.
178 Andrew Allen has "gone with the British Army to New York," his brother James said, "from whence he intends going to England." "Diary of James Allen," PMHB, IX (1885), 440.
179 Even if his wife had not been critically ill he presumably would have remained in Philadelphia for what he elliptically described as "other reasons." TC to Yates, June 3, 1778; to John Coxe, June 10, 1778.
180 "Letters of Major Baurmeister," PMHB, LX (1936), 181. For a brief account of the evacuation see The Pennsylvania Evening Post, June 20, 1778.
181 Oberholtzer, I, 281. An investigation by the Pennsylvania Assembly estimated that the damage to property in and around the city was almost £200,000. Ibid.
was the most desolate day of Coxe’s life. His world was in shambles, his wife slowly dying, his well-calculated plans destroyed, his property, repute, and safety in jeopardy. His last letter before the British left mirrored his despair: “And now my dearest best Friend,” he wrote to Goold, “I am to bid a long adieu. I ask Mrs. Goold to receive my tender love. . . . Shall I ever sufficiently thank you for your innumerable unparalleled acts of Kindness, Friendship & Generosity towards me. This American World will not afford you happiness sufficient for ye goodness of your excellent heart. . . . I bid you a long & tender farewell earnestly beseeching the God of all mercies to preserve protect & defend you. . . . Kiss your dear little Children for me.”

Whatever his fears and perhaps his plans for departing “this American World,” such melodramatic phrases accurately portrayed his belief that his happiness and security were now at an end. “Farewell” he hastily scrawled in his letter book as he closed it on the evening of June 17th, and, then, in large letters merely “Fare!”

On the morning following the evacuation, Major General Benedict Arnold, accompanied by “Col. Jackson’s Massachusetts regiment,” took possession of Philadelphia. The American commander, who was invested by Washington with authority to establish military law in the city and to prevent the removal or sale of any goods in possession of the inhabitants until it could be determined “any or what thereof may belong to the king of Great Britain, or any of his subjects” promptly directed that all persons having certain goods in excess of the needs of their own families make an immediate “return of the same to the town major” by noon on June 20.

Whatever his personal plight, Coxe could take satisfaction in having shipped off and sold the sizeable quantity of goods belonging to his Tory correspondents. He also could take some comfort in the knowledge that, just as influential friends and relatives had smoothed the road to his business success during the British occupation, so now highly-placed Whig acquaintances and connections might rescue him from the lash of patriot retaliation. The assistance of his cousin Colonel Tench Tilghman, who as Washington’s aide-de-camp had

182 TC to Goold, June 17, 1778.
183 The Pennsylvania Evening Post, June 20, 1778.
184 Ibid. Washington issued the latter instruction in pursuance of a resolution of the Continental Congress, dated June 4, 1778.
185 Ibid.
earned the unqualified confidence of the General, was already assured, Tilghman having agreed to forward letters addressed to Coxe by Edward Goold in New York;\(^{186}\) the strong support of his close friend David S. Franks, aide-de-camp to General Arnold was certain. As Tench sadly realized, however, the threat to his security and property came not from the American army but from the Pennsylvania civil authorities.

On May 21, 1778, Coxe’s name had appeared on a “Proclamation of Attainder” issued by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania “against certain persons adjudged guilty of High Treason.”\(^{187}\) Two days later,\(^{188}\) acting quickly to forestall conviction, he had taken the oath of allegiance prescribed by an act of the Pennsylvania legislature enacted in June of the previous year.\(^{189}\) Whether such a simple act of repentance revealed an absence of commitment to either side, a flexible conscience, or a desperate effort to salvage his fortune, and perhaps his neck, cannot be known. But if Coxe believed that this alone would avert his conviction he was being uncharacteristically fanciful. Something more than an oath was needed, as the fate of other prominent Tories attested. Joseph Galloway, members of the Allen family, David Sproat, and Samuel Kirk, business associates during the occupation, among other acquaintances and relatives, also were attainted of treason and their property subsequently confiscated.\(^{190}\) A symbolic reminder of the threat he faced was the

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186 TC to Goold, June 17, 1778.
187 Pennsylvania Archives, Fourth Series, III, 676. The proclamation was printed in the Pennsylvania Packet on June 3, 1778.
188 Although the manner in which he either secured a pass or arranged to travel outside British lines without one is not clear, Coxe presumably left Philadelphia on May 22 to seek out a Pennsylvania notary before whom he could take an oath of allegiance to the United States (see the note below). This may account for a five-day gap—May 22-28, 1778—in his letter book.
189 Coxe preserved a copy of the oath in his papers. It read as follows: “I HEREBY CERTIFY, THAT [Tench] Cox of the City of Philadelpa. Merchant [hath] voluntarily taken and subscribed the OATH [of allegiance] and Fidelity, as directed by an ACT [of Gen]eral Assembly of Pennsylvania, passed the 13th [day of] June, A.D. 1777. Witness my hand [and seal the] 23 day of May A.D. 1778. ([§]) John Knowles” (brackets indicate missing words due to damage to the MS). There is another copy of this document in the HSP from which the bracketed material is taken.
190 See Lorenzo Sabine, Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution (Boston, 1864), I, 158, 453-457; II, 324-325, 541. Coxe’s friend, David Franks, to give one more example, was arrested in 1778 for having provided the British with information. Ibid., I, 444.
civilian tenant of Joseph Galloway's splendid mansion at the corner of 6th and Market Streets, George Bryan, Acting-President of the State's Supreme Executive Council. Even more ominous was the popular wrath which soon erupted against those who had collaborated in the alleged barbarities of the British invaders, a situation which to Coxe must have been a chilling reminder of his experience in November, 1776, when angry patriots drove him from the city. Now, again, Tories were being mobbed and some even executed (though, interestingly enough, they were craftsmen and artisans, rather than well-to-do merchants).\(^{191}\) "The consternation occasioned" by the British evacuation, one of Coxe's relatives and associates commented, "was terrible, as every man obnoxious to the American rulers was offered up a Victim to their resentment."\(^{192}\) The popular mood was mirrored by a writer in *The Pennsylvania Evening Post* who asked if those "villanous [sic] paricides who have aided, abetted, and comforted our most unnatural foes in the commission of every murder, theft, and rapine" should be left "in peace and safety, to enjoy ... the blessings of that freedom for which we have been contending at the price of everything that is dear?" Reject the "death-bed repentances" of the Tories, it was urged, remembering that "even the ark of the Lord should be no sanctuary for crimes so heinous."\(^{193}\)

These were weeks of frustration, humiliation, and anguish. The proclamation of attainder and treason was distressing enough; anxiety over his wife's fatal illness would have been painful at any time. Combined, they rendered this a period of unrelieved despair, and perhaps of regret. His seemingly inexorable fate, however, was averted not by repentance but by the influence of his father, William Coxe, Sr. Assurances "from my father soon put the danger of personal confinement or injury out of the question," he wrote to his cousin William Tilghman in mid-July.\(^{194}\) The danger presumably

\(^{191}\) Two old men, Abraham Carlisle and John Roberts, one a carpenter, the other a miller, were accused of collaboration and "of harsh treatment of Whigs." They "were convicted, sentenced to death and hanged on the commons." Oberholtzer, I, 283.

\(^{192}\) "Diary of James Allen," *PMHB*, IX (1885), 438.

\(^{193}\) *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, July 18, 1778.

\(^{194}\) July 13, 1778. According to Tench this statement was made to his wife, but Tench himself obviously received the same assurances.
was removed by one or several of William Coxe's influential friends or relatives\textsuperscript{196} who had farsightedly embraced the American cause and could command the ear of Pennsylvania's Chief Justice, Thomas McKean,\textsuperscript{196} who along with Congress and the State government had returned to Philadelphia. "The chief justice has been sitting at the city court-house for several days past, the \textit{Evening Post} announced on July 9, in order "to hear the charges against Tories accused of joining & assisting the British Army."\textsuperscript{197} On one of those hot days Coxe appeared before him. "His behaviour," Tench reported to William Tilghman, "was much more friendly than I could have expected & genteel." Although Coxe was required to give bond for his impending trial, he came away from the conference convinced that "no proofs" would "be laid" against himself or other prominent Loyalists before the Grand Jury, and that "we shall in general be dismissed."\textsuperscript{198} Such confidence could only have been based on McKean's assurances. One of Coxe's partisan critics, writing some twenty years later, declared that, though "proscribed . . . as a traitor," Coxe escaped severe punishment "only from compassion to his youth and the worth of some of his relatives."\textsuperscript{199} The "man who saved him, whose influence protected him," another political enemy correctly pointed out, was McKean.\textsuperscript{200} Certainly his conversation with the Chief Justice transformed Coxe. Momentarily forgotten were the preceding harrowing days, gone the despair of the man who had scribbled "Farewell" in his letter book. "I should prefer," he complacently wrote his cousin, "a general dismissal of the charges rather than an act of oblivion because I see no necessity for an oblivion of a man's conduct whose intentions at least were not criminal and who can only be rendered offensive by an ex post facto law."\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{195}Coxe was pleasurably shocked by the attention paid him by influential patriots who were family friends. As he commented to Tilghman, "I have received many extraordinary visits considering all circumstances." TC to Tilghman, July 13, 1778.

\textsuperscript{196}McKean, who had been appointed Chief Justice of Pennsylvania on July 28, 1777, was distantly related to Coxe by marriage.

\textsuperscript{197}\textit{The Pennsylvania Evening Post}, July 9, 1778.

\textsuperscript{198}TC to Tilghman, July 13, 1799.

\textsuperscript{199}\textit{Gazette of the United States}, Sept. 4, 1799.

\textsuperscript{200}\textit{Aurora}, Aug. 29, 1804.

\textsuperscript{201}TC to Tilghman, July 13, 1799.
Soon after his interview with the Chief Justice, Coxe escaped the heat of the city and the "filth, stench and flies" which, according to one observer, were "scarcely credible," by renting "a little retirement . . . for the summer at the Falls of Schuylkill." The change would not only make his wife more comfortable but, he ardently wished, perhaps restore her health. This, he soon painfully learned, neither climate nor medicine could do. Some two weeks later, on July 22, she died. Coxe was again cast into deep gloom. Two months of anguish ensued, relieved only by the dismissal "by proclamation" of the charge of high treason. Coxe explained, many years later, that "he submitted himself to legal investigation, and was informed that there were enough of witnesses in his favor, but none against him." Youth has its own amazing resilience and before long, following a visit with his parents some time in September, Coxe, displaying once again his characteristic optimism, was ready to resume mercantile business. It was now his job to pick and choose from his past in order to master his future. "I am (if permitted)" he wrote, "likely to become a good American."

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203 TC to Tilghman, July 13, 1778.
205 Pennsylvania Archives, Fourth Series, III, 938; ibid., Sixth Series, XIII, 475.
206 Aurora, Aug. 25, 1804. The absence of adverse witnesses was explained by a writer in The Pennsylvania Evening Post on July 18, 1778, who commented that many Philadelphia Whigs were indebted to some of the accused Tories, men of former "office and power," for previous favors. Moreover, "those Whigs who left the City, could not possibly be acquainted with facts but by information," and were reluctant to offer hearsay evidence acquired from an "informer," a species of person who "heretofore has been held in high obloquy and reproach."
207 TC to Goold, Oct. 20, 1778.
208 TC to John Coxe, June 10, 1778.