

**THE BARRINGTON-BERNARD
CORRESPONDENCE AND ILLUSTRATIVE
MATTER, 1760-1770, DRAWN
FROM THE "PAPERS OF SIR FRANCIS
BERNARD" (SOMETIME GOVERNOR OF
MASSACHUSETTS-BAY)**

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The Barrington-Bernard Correspondence and Illustrative Matter, 1760-1770, Drawn from The "Papers of Sir Francis Bernard" (Sometime Governor of Massachusetts-Bay) by William Wildman Barrington & Edward Channing & Archibald Cary Coolidge

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**WILLIAM WILDMAN BARRINGTON &
EDWARD CHANNING & ARCHIBALD CARY COOLIDGE**

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1760-1770

DRAWN FROM THE
"PAPERS OF SIR FRANCIS BERNARD"
(SOMETIME GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS-BAY)

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INTRODUCTION

THE letters printed in this volume are drawn from the collection of original documents and transcripts which Jared Sparks brought together in the course of his extended editorial career. For years he was Professor of American History in Harvard University and, for some time, was its President.¹ In 1866, after his death, his papers were deposited in the Library of the University and later were given to it by his son, William Sparks. President Sparks made several journeys to England and was shown every courtesy by the descendants of Lord Shelburne and other prominent men of the Revolutionary era and by the government itself. He had volumes of transcripts made for him, and every now and then purchased original manuscripts. Among the latter are thirteen volumes, separately bound, and entitled "The Papers of Sir Francis Bernard, Governor of New Jersey, and afterward Governor of Massachusetts." Of these thirteen volumes, eight comprise Bernard's original "Letter Books." The other five volumes are filled with letters received by him from his superiors and others in England, and also official papers, as commissions. Running through the whole set is a series of letters from Bernard to his wife's cousin-german, Lord Barrington, and the latter's replies. Their interest consists in the fact that they are friendly and confidential epistles and not official letters, although they were written by two of the most highly placed government officers in England and in America.

¹ See Herbert B. Adams' *Life and Writings of Jared Sparks, comprising selections from his Journals and Correspondence* (2 vols., Boston, 1893).

Lord Barrington was the son of John Shute, first Baron Barrington, of Newcastle in the county of Dublin and Viscount Barrington of Ardglass in the county of Down, both in Ireland. The father was one of those fortunate Englishmen, or Irishmen, of that time who unexpectedly inherited money. The first windfall came at the death of Mr. Francis Barrington, who had married John Shute's first cousin; the second was a bequest from John Wildman of Becket, in the English county of Berks, who was not related to him in any way. John Shute's eldest son was born in January, 1717, and was appropriately named William Wildman.¹ In 1734 he succeeded to the title of Viscount Barrington, and six years later entered the British House of Commons as member for Berwick. In 1745, being then twenty-eight years of age, he was appointed one of the Lords of the Admiralty. From that time to the day of his death he was in receipt of an income from the British treasury. In 1753, he was appointed Master of the Great Wardrobe. Two years later, in 1755, he was transferred to the War Office as Secretary at War. At that time, the holder of this office was practically the confidential clerk of the commander-in-chief. Barrington greatly extended its dignity and usefulness, and, by his firmness and kindly finesse, powerfully contributed to William Pitt's successful carrying on of the war with the Bourbon powers. In 1761, Newcastle caused Barrington to be appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, against the latter's wishes. In the administration of Lord Bute, he held the lucrative position of Treasurer of the Navy. In 1765, at the express wish of the king, Barrington again became Secretary at War. He held that post through all changes in administration until December, 1778, when he resigned. He was

¹ His brothers were Major General John Barrington, Samuel Barrington, Admiral of the White, and Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham.

given a pension of two thousand pounds a year, which he enjoyed together with the income of a sinecure office, until his death on February 1, 1793. For thirty-three years, from 1745 to 1778, this most successful of placemen fed at the public crib. Ministries might come and go: Henry Pelham, the Duke of Newcastle, the Duke of Devonshire, William Pitt, Lord Bute, George Grenville, the Marquess of Rockingham, the Duke of Grafton, and Lord North with their followers went in and out of office; but Lord Barrington, whose only principle was devotion to his royal patrons, held on.

So fortunate an office-secker as Lord Barrington was fiercely attacked by those who were not so successful as he. His letters show that he was no ordinary placeman, but one who had his own ideas as to the proprieties. His position was one of great difficulty during the American war, for he had no voice in determining the policy of the government or the plans of campaigns. From 1775 onwards, at least twice yearly he sought relief from a position that had become well-nigh intolerable after the appointment of Lord George Germain to the colonial secretaryship. On one occasion, he thus stated his thoughts to the king:—

“I have, . . . my own opinions, in respect to the disputes with America: I give them, such as they are, to Ministers in conversation or in writing; I am summoned to meetings, where I sometimes think it my duty to declare them openly, before perhaps twenty or thirty persons; and the next day, I am forced either to vote contrary to them, or to vote with an Opposition which I abhor. I know the use and necessity of practicability; but it may be carried too far. Your Majesty has condescended to be my patron; I will have no other: be pleased to determine for me, how as a man of honour, conscience, and feeling, I am to act.”¹

¹ Shute Barrington's *Political Life of William Wildman, Viscount Barrington*, 165.

Barrington disapproved of the American war, or, at any rate, of the way in which it was carried on. The following letters reflect the soundness of his judgment so well that they have been deemed worthy of reproduction in this place, although they were written after the close of Francis Bernard's term of office as Governor of Massachusetts Bay.

To the Earl of Dartmouth, November 12, 1774

"In the present state of the Colony of Massachusetts, I presume it is not an improbable supposition, that no magistrates will be found, who will assist with their authority in executing the laws made by the Parliament of Great Britain: while this situation continues, the riotous mobs, directed by the factious leaders of that country, must govern it; and they cannot be quelled, or even resisted by the army, which must therefore remain in a disgraceful inaction; enriching with its pay a delinquent Colony, and in continual hazard of insult and bloodshed.

"If the Massachusetts should be in this state, it will immediately become a question, what should be done with the seven regiments now there. I beg leave to submit to your Lordship, not as an advice, but as a matter to be considered by better heads than mine, whether they and their General, the Governor, should not be directed to leave a place, where at present they can do no good, and without intention, may do harm.

"If this measure should be adopted General Gage might be instructed, to remind the Colony that the Parliament has made laws, and the Government has sent him with a great number of troops, to deliver it from tyrannical anarchy under which it has long suffered; that he should have carried this good purpose into execution, if he had met with that support from the magistrates and better sort of people, which was naturally to be expected; but having found none, to inform them he must quit the Colony, leaving it in its present distracted state, until it shall become disposed to co-operate in helping itself to a better.

"It is unnecessary to trouble your Lordship now with my opinion, where the troops should be stationed after their removal from the Massachusetts; but there are places not far