

**THE EYE OF THE
REVOLUTION: A
CHRONICLE OF THE
BREACH WITH ENGLAND**

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The Eve of the Revolution: A Chronicle of the Breach with England by Carl Becker

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CARL BECKER

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BY CARL BECKER



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PREFACE

IN this brief sketch I have chiefly endeavored to convey to the reader, not a record of what men did, but a sense of how they thought and felt about what they did. To give the quality and texture of the state of mind and feeling of an individual or class, to create for the reader the illusion (not *delusion*, O able Critic!) of the intellectual atmosphere of past times, I have as a matter of course introduced many quotations; but I have also ventured to resort frequently to the literary device (this, I know, gives the whole thing away) of telling the story by means of a rather free paraphrase of what some imagined spectator or participant might have thought or said about the matter in hand. If the critic says that the product of such methods is not history, I am willing to call it by any name that is better; the point of greatest relevance being the truth and effectiveness of the

illusion aimed at—the extent to which it reproduces the quality of the thought and feeling of those days, the extent to which it enables the reader to enter into such states of mind and feeling. The truth of such history (or whatever the critic wishes to call it) cannot of course be determined by a mere verification of references.

To one of my colleagues, who has read the entire manuscript, I am under obligations for many suggestions and corrections in matters of detail; and I would gladly mention his name if it could be supposed that an historian of established reputation would wish to be associated, even in any slight way, with an enterprise of questionable orthodoxy.

CARL BECKER.

ITHACA, NEW YORK,

January 6, 1918.

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THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

A PATRIOT OF 1763

His Majesty's reign . . . I predict will be happy and truly glorious. — *Benjamin Franklin.*

THE 29th of January, 1757, was a notable day in the life of Ben Franklin of Philadelphia, well known in the metropolis of America as printer and politician, and famous abroad as a scientist and Friend of the Human Race. It was on that day that the Assembly of Pennsylvania commissioned him as its agent to repair to London in support of its petition against the Proprietors of the Province, who were charged with having "obstinately persisted in manacling their deputies [the Governors of Pennsylvania] with instructions inconsistent not only with the privileges of the people, but with the service of the Crown." We