59∙ The necessity of another Congress was universally felt. On the suggestion of Virginia and the call of Massachusetts, it met at Philadelphia (September 5, 1774). All the colonies but Georgia were represented; and Georgia was so certainly in sympathy with the meet­ing that this is commonly known as the First Continental Congress, the first really national body in American history. Its action was still mainly deliberative. It adopted addresses to the king, and to the people of the colonies, of Quebec, and of Great Britain, and passed a declaration of colonial rights, summing up the various Acts of Parliament which were held to be in violation of these rights. But its tone was changed, though its lan­guage was still studiously controlled and dignified. It was significant that, for the first time, the two Houses of parliament were ignored in the matter of petitioning : it was at last seen to be an awkward concession even to memorialize parliament. The tone of a sovereign about to take his seat is perceptible in the letter of Congress to the colonies which had not yet sent delegates. And at least two steps were taken which, if not an assumption of sovereign powers, were evidently on the road to it. The first was the preparation of Articles of Association, to be signed by the people everywhere, and to be enforced by committees of safety chosen by the people of cities and towns. These articles bound the signers to stop the importation of all goods from, and the exportation of all goods to, Great Britain and Ireland, the use of such goods, and the slave trade. The manner of the enforce­ment of the articles was evidently an incipient suspension of all authority proceeding from the mother country and the substitution of a general popular authority for it. The other step was a resolution, adopted October 8, as follows:—“That this Congress approve the opposition of the inhabitants of the Massachusetts Bay to the execution of the late Acts of Parliament ; and, if the same shall be attempted to be carried into execution *by force*, in such case all America ought to support them in their opposi­tion.” This was simply an ultimatum : in the opinion of Congress, the ministry could take no further step except that of attempting to enforce its Acts, and the colonies would resist such an attempt as an act of war. Before the next Congress met the conditions had been fulfilled. The agents of the ministry had applied force ; Massachu­setts had resisted by force ; and the new Congress found itself the representative of a nation at war, still acknowledg­ing the king, but resisting the operations of his armies. Having summoned a new Congress to meet at Philadelphia on the 10th of May following, and having cleared the way for its action, the First Continental Congress adjourned.

6o. It is an unpleasant task to record the successive steps by which two peoples, so exactly similar to one another in every characteristic, so far removed from one another, and so ignorant of one another’s feelings, advanced alternately to a point where open collision was inevitable. From the standpoint of “ no taxation without representa­tion,” which Pitt and his school of Whigs had approved, the colonists had now been driven by the suicidal logic of their opponents to the far more consistent position of “ no legislation without representation,” which the Pitt school had never been willing to grant, and which was radically inconsistent with the British “ imperial ” theory. Either the previous legislation of parliament was to remain a dead letter, or it must be executed by force ; and that meant war. Massachusetts was already on the brink of that event. Gage, the new governor, had refused to meet the assembly ; he had fortified himself in Boston, and was sending out spies as if into hostile territory. All regular government was suspended or remanded to the towns ; and the people were organized into “ minute men,” pledged to move at a minute’s notice. The first hostile movement of Gage would be the signal for the struggle. War, in fact, had come to be a possibility in the thoughts of every one. The new governor of Canada, Carleton, was sent out with instructions to levy the people and Indians of that province, in order that they might be marched against rebels in any province of North America. Governor Tryon’s defeat of the insurgent people of North Carolina at the Alemance (§ 54) furnished a tempting precedent to Governor Gage in Massachusetts. There was strong pressure upon him to induce him to follow it. The king’s speech at the opening of parliament (November 29, 1774) spoke of the prevalent “resistance and disobedience to the law” in Massachusetts ; the ministry urged Gage to arrest the colonial leaders, even though hostilities should follow ; the two Houses of Parliament presented a joint address to the king, declaring Massachusetts to be in rebellion, and offering all the resources of the empire to suppress the rebellion ; and the king, in reply, announced his intention of acting as parliament wished.

1. The inevitable collision was narrowly escaped in February 1775. Gage sent a water expedition to Salem to search for powder ; but the day was Sunday, and a conflict was prevented by the ministers. Another expe­dition (April 19) was more momentous. It set out for Concord, a little village some 20 miles from Boston, to seize a stock of powder which was reported to be gathered there. At daybreak the troops marched into the village of Lexington, on their road. They found some minute men who had been hastily summoned, for intelligence had been sent out from Boston that the expedition was coming. There was a hurried order from an officer that the militia should disperse, then a volley from his men and a few answering shots, and the first blood of the American revolution had been shed. The troops went on to Concord and destroyed the stores there. But by this time the whole country was up. Messengers were riding in every direction, arousing the minute men ; and their mustering made the return to Boston more dangerous than the advance had been. When the troops began their return march the continuous fire from fences, trees, and barns along the route soon converted the retreat into a rout. The opportune arrival of a rescuing party from Boston saved the whole force from surrender, but the pursuit was kept up until the expedition took refuge under the guns of the war-vessels at the water-side. The next morning the isthmus which connected the town of Boston with the mainland was blockaded ; the siege of Boston was formed ; and the revolution had begun.
2. The news of Lexington and Concord fights set the continent in a flame, but every feature of the outburst showed the still thoroughly English characteristics of the people. For nine long years they had been schooling themselves to patience ; and, as their impatience became more difficult to control, it was shown most strongly in their increasingly scrupulous care to insist upon the letter of the law. Even in the first open conflict the colonists were careful to base their case on their legal right to use “the king’s highway”; and Congress carefully collected and published depositions going to show that the troops had violated this right and had fired first. There was every­thing in the affairs of Lexington and Concord to arouse an intense popular excitement : the mustering of undiscip­lined farmers against regular troops, the stern sense of duty which moved it, the presence and encouragement of the ministers, the sudden desolation of homes which had never known war before, were things which stirred every pulse in the colonies when they were told. But there was no need of waiting for such stories. When the dam burst, the force which had been stored up for nine years took