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*William and Mary Goddard, Printers and Public Servants*

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were those of his farm and village. He died, aged seventy-seven years, in December 1817. Isaiah Thomas, who knew him in these later years, speaks of "his naïveté, and the pleasantness and facetiousness of his disposition," and asserts further that he was "a remarkably pleasant companion." One likes to think of him, after so much distress of mind and so many exertions of body, living unvexed and comfortable in his New England retreat.

In the various incidents which have been related here, particularly in connection with his career in Maryland, William Goddard is presented to us as a man who possessed the courage to stand up for his principles against that most subtle form of attack, the disapproval of one's neighbors. One cannot doubt the passion which underlay his pronouncements concerning the liberty of the press; one must admire the hardihood with which he gave himself to the vindication of General Lee's reputation; nor, when his utterances are read, the policy of his newspapers considered, his services in the establishment of the Post Office taken account of, may one doubt his devotion to the American cause in the Revolution. The Maryland Council of Safety, always ready to imprison or banish the enemies of that cause, twice took his side against those who had attacked him. The Maryland Assembly put his enemies to inglorious rout. In all of the official proceedings which exist there is no hint of an accusation of disloyalty against him, and his request of Congress that he be given a post of danger speaks for the quality of his devotion in a manner more audible than the loudest asseverations of loyalty.

In taking leave of Goddard, one comes back inevitably to a brief consideration of his position as the champion of the press. Of all the editors of his day, and Isaiah Thomas says that "Few could conduct a newspaper better than Goddard," there was none who held a view of the power, responsibility and privilege of the newspaper press nearer to the modern conception of these attributes than was maintained by William Goddard. The newspaper of today claims the right to present news and to discuss issues regardless of the opinion of its readers; in the ideal, it professes to arrive at truth by free discussion and by an examination of all the evidence. It is willing to suffer unpopularity that right shall prevail in the end. It was by the suffering of Goddard and others of his own and a later generation that this higher conception of the liberty of the press became an accepted tenet of modern civilization. Even though a certain class of newspapers consistently degrades this hard-won liberty, William Goddard must still be admitted to have interest for us as one of the proponents of a doctrine which on this account many deplore but the essential righteousness of which none is so bold as to question.