

MORE ON RHODE ISLAND

Scarcely had the retreating troops of General Gage reached Boston from Concord and Lexington when the nearest Rhode Island towns had sent recruits to their Massachusetts brethren in arms; and the Legislature soon after voted fifteen hundred men to be sent to the scene of danger. The people of Newport removed forty pieces of artillery from the royal fort to a place of security, where they might be ready for the defence and not the destruction of patriots.

When the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed at Newport, East Greenwich and Providence, it called forth the most enthusiastic outbursts of delight, and shouts for "Liberty o'er and o'er the globe." ^{Note} A British historian says: "The Rhode Islanders were such ardent patriots that after the capture of the island of Rhode Island by Sir Peter Parker, it required a great body of men to be kept there, in perfect idleness, for three years, to retain them in subjection." Governor Green, in a dispatch to Washington, in 1781, says: "Sometimes every fencible man in the State, sometimes a third, and at other times a fourth part, was called out upon duty,"^{Note} But the little State that had declared its independence while other Colonies were hesitating, and thirty-two days|| before the brave and patriotic Virginians had renounced allegiance to the English king, never halted for a moment in her courageous efforts. Her sons, with the blood of Roger Williams and his valiant friends in their veins, showed their American brethren that liberty was the sovereign of their hearts.

* Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, VI., p. 304.

t Bancroft's History of the United States, V., 218.

I Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence,

Philadelphia, 1831, I., 374; Arnold's History of Rhode Island, X. Y., 1860, II., 374.

* Bancroft's History of the United States, IX., 36.

t History of England by Hume, Smollett and Farr, III., 99.

t Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, YL,
290.

II Howison's History of Virginia, II., 133.