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FOUR TRACTS:  
REFLECTIONS  
UPON THE  
PRESENT STATE OF ENGLAND,  
AND THE  
INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICA.

REFLECTIONS  
UPON THE  
PEACE, THE EAST-INDIA BILL,  
AND THE  
PRESENT CRISIS.

A DIALOGUE  
BETWEEN A  
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE AND A FARMER.

FRAGMENT  
OF AN  
ORIGINAL LETTER  
ON THE  
SLAVERY OF THE NEGROES.

By THOMAS DAY, Esq.

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# REFLECTIONS

UPON THE

PRESENT STATE OF ENGLAND,

AND THE

INDEPENDENCE of AMERICA.

By THOMAS DAY, Esq;

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Vedranfi sanguinose battaglie; inauditi affedii; fpaventevoli facchi, incendii, e rovine; fuccelli maritimi, che d'atrocità non cederano ai terrestri; e non meno atrocemente poi trasportate l'armi da vicini mari d'Europa ne' piu remoti dell' Indie. Ufcirà frà l'armi qualche volta ancora il negozio; e frà l'infano strepito della guerra, il defiderio natural della pace. Contuttocio prevaleranno poi fempre le rovine, le morti, e le stragi per ogni canto. *Bentivoglio della guerra di Fiandra.*

Our late delusions have much exceeded any thing known in history, not even excepting those of the crusades. For, I suppose, there is no mathematical, still less an arithmetical demonstration, that the road to the Holy Land, was not the road to Paradise, as there is, that the endless encrease of national debts is the direct road to national ruin — So egregious indeed has been our folly, that we have even lost all title to compassion, in the numberless calamities that are waiting us.

*Hume's History of England, Vol. 5. p. 475.*

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# R E F L E C T I O N S

O N T H E

P R E S E N T S T A T E o f E N G L A N D , &c.

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**E** N G L A N D is now placed in the most critical situation she has ever experienced, since she has possessed that degree of power and pre-eminence which she has held for near a century, amongst the neighbouring nations. Advanced by a variety of causes to that dangerous superiority which never fails to excite the jealousy of every other people, that is placed within the sphere of its attraction, she has not been sufficiently attentive to prevent, by her moderation, that degree of envy which never fails to attend on greatness. Added to this, she has mistaken the very interests of her own ambition ; and, instead of maintaining in perfect vigour those re-

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sources

sources which would have over-awed the jealousy she excited, she has foolishly lavished them in the most wild, unprofitable manner that ever disgraced a nation. The Colonies, whose importance we now too late acknowledge, appear to have been the immediate causes of her greatness. A country prolific in all the articles either of necessity or luxury; a climate varying through every degree of heat and cold; an immense ocean every where furnished with ports, and inviting the inhabitants to industry and commerce; together with that extent of fertile soil which seemed to allow the human species liberty to expand for ages yet to come; were such advantages as no period of recorded time has ever seen attached to any other people in the universe. When we add to this, an identity of manners, language, prejudices, religion, nay, of interest itself, it must be confessed that we have no reason to expect a similar phenomenon, unless Providence, by the agency of its most powerful instruments of destruction, should confound the pride of man, and lay the world which we inhabit waste, that the human species might begin their course anew.

But what Nature, which has so widely separated the two countries, had failed to do, what the united force of all the Powers of Europe could not have effected, the wild ambition of one part of this nation, assisted by the vanity, blindness, and supineness of the rest, has now

perpetrated: America is now divided from the Parent-Country, and leaves us nothing but the melancholy consolation of reflecting at leisure on what we have lost, or forming schemes which may at best be visionary; and should we fail in wisely managing, the last stake may be fatal.

I will not consume time to enumerate the complicated blessings we have lost, or to execrate the selfish and detestable policy, which, grasping at a toy, has thrown away the noblest empire in the universe. I will confine myself to a single point, in the immense chaos of matter which rises before me, and endeavour plainly and distinctly to state the facts which are most necessary to be understood, and reasoned from, in our present situation.

England is confessedly in the most critical situation she has ever experienced. With ruined resources; her commerce almost annihilated; her best blood lavished on the detestable schemes of private ambition; her colonies exasperated by persecutions and cruelties too shocking to be enumerated, and actually emancipated by successful resistance from her dominion\*; her agriculture,

\* “ Our colonies, while they have English blood in their veins, and have relations in England, and while they can get by trading with us, the stronger and greater they grow, the more this crown and kingdom will get by them; and  
nothing



ture, the prop of every society, impaired ; and her debts encreased almost beyond the possibility of further endurance ; she stands singly forth upon the great theatre of the world, unsupported, unassisted, to contend with three powerful nations, almost as much for existence as for command and glory. The rest of Europe keeps aloof, attentive to the mighty contest, and watching every opportunity to promote its respective interests, by the common mischiefs of the combatants. Nor is this all : every nation has in turn frowned upon the

nothing but such an arbitrary power as shall make them desperate, can bring them to rebel." DAVENANT, vol. 2. p. 10.

" And as care should be taken to keep them obedient to the laws of England, and dependent upon their mother-country, so those conditions, privileges, terms, and charters, should be kept sacred and inviolate, by which they were first encouraged, at their great expence, and with the hazard of their lives, to discover, cultivate, and plant remote places, where in truth they labour as well for us as for themselves, for here at last their treasure centers." Ibid. p. 32.

" Without doubt it is advisable that no little emulations or private interests of neighbours, governors, nor that the petitions of hungry courtiers at home, should prevail to discourage those particular colonies, who, in a few years, have raised themselves by their own charge, prudence, and industry, to the wealth and greatness they are now arrived at, without expence to the crown : upon which account any innovations, or breach of their original charters (besides that it seems a breach of the public faith) may peradventure not tend to the King's profit." Ibid. p. 34.

British

British advances, and shewed itself inimical to the cause in which we are engaged ; nor can I entertain a single doubt, that had it been necessary to the purposes of the American independence, every other people would have successively come forward, and contended with us for the prize. Nature, or Providence, which directs the passions of nations, like those of individuals, to the advancement of their own interests, has, in this case, proposed two of the most alluring objects which can act upon human avarice or ambition ; the abasement of an haughty rival, and the hopes of that immense spoil which the emancipation of America prepares for Europe at large. These dispositions of our neighbours must have been evident, from the very first, to every man who cast the most superficial view upon the state of things, or had the slightest acquaintance with history. The rulers of this country alone appear to have been unacquainted with those truths, which were revealed even to babes and sucklings : they seem to have imagined that France and Spain had forgotten their ancient hatred, their recent wounds ; that Holland was become inattentive to her own commercial interests ; that every other nation would only see things through the medium of the British Ministry ; that every human passion must be hushed, every human interest suspended, while they were permitted to direct the tempests they had raised to the objects of their caprice or hatred.

hatred. I need not here observe how grossly, how fatally they have been disappointed. The final emancipation of America, the degradation of our naval honour, the loss of almost all our European and Western possessions, is the moderate price which this nation has already paid for the implicit confidence which the Sovereign has reposed in his faithful and experienced servants. Let us now enquire what are the measures most likely to procure our safety, amidst these complicated distresses.

The original cause of dispute between England and her Colonies, arose from the claim of the British Parliament to levy taxes upon the Americans, exerted in a trifling duty upon tea, imposed in the year 1767. But when, after the violence of the people of Boston, committed upon the teas of the East-India Company in 1773, several acts had passed the British Parliament, each encreasing in severity, which annulled their government, abolished their Houses of Assembly, deprived them of trial by jury, resigned their lives and property for every and for no offence into the hands of Governors nominated by the Crown; and, last of all, absolutely prohibited all commerce between the two nations, and permitted every act of hostility to be exercised upon them; the original cause of opposition was swallowed up in the immediate necessity of yielding to unconditional submission, or of boldly repelling



pelling force by force. In consequence, therefore, of these precipitate and violent acts of the English Legislature, which seemed to have no other end than the extirpation of all liberty in America, joined with the mighty preparations made in this country to enforce them, the American Congress made a bold appeal to the first principles of human society, declared themselves independent of a country which had destined them to slavery and destruction, and invited the rest of Europe to their alliance and assistance. It is evident, that from this moment the original grounds of the quarrel were changed, and the Americans no longer fought to resist, as subjects, the claim of taxation in the British Parliament, but to defend themselves, as independent nations, from the attacks of an hostile people, that exerted all its force to reduce them to unconditional servitude. On the contrary, the avowed end and object of the war on the side of England was the reduction of so many independent States to its own dominion. The war which was afterwards begun with France has confessedly the same object ; since it was not in consequence of any national dispute with that country, but because it supported the freedom and independence of the American States, that England thought it necessary to begin hostilities ; and the treaty of alliance which was signed between the French Government and the Congress, on the 6th of January,

1778, expressly states in the second article, that  
 “ the essential and direct end of the present *de-*  
 “ *fensive* alliance is, to maintain effectually the  
 “ liberty, sovereignty, and independence, abso-  
 “ lute and unlimited, of the said United States,  
 “ as well in matters of government as of com-  
 “ merce.”

Hence it is plain, that the war which Great-Britain has carried on with the Americans was at the beginning, and has been at every instant of its duration, till the last vote of the House of Commons, strictly speaking, an offensive war ; that this offensive war has, in its consequences, embroiled us with France, Spain, and Holland, and still subsists at this moment ; since, however respectable may be the opinion of so uncorrupt an House, it will not, I imagine, be pretended, that it bears the authority of a law, in any other case, than that of *disqualifying* the people from chusing their own *representatives*.

After having given these explanations, in order to produce more clearly my ideas upon the subject, I shall reduce the question to a single alternative : Has Great-Britain absolutely resigned her late ambitious views of conquest, or is she still determined to prosecute the war, till it finally terminate in either her own destruction, or in that of the American States ? In the first case, it will be a consideration well deserving the attention not only of the Government, but of the people

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at large, by what means she may, with the greatest celerity and honour, extricate herself from the fatal labyrinth in which she is involved : in the second, it will *only* be necessary to add thirty millions more to the supplies already voted, to raise sixty or an hundred thousand additional troops ; in order not only to replace those we have lost by sickness, by captivity, by combats, and by desertion, but to enable our Generals to act offensively, with better omens than they have hitherto done. Should we take such vigorous measures as these, notwithstanding the immense difference of the contest, where the overflowing of our gaols, the starving remnants of our manufacturers, and wretched German peasants, reluctantly contend with the best disciplined and most warlike troops, assisted, as often as necessary, by the most numerous militia in the world, and this in their own country, where every thing is equally advantageous to them, and hostile to us ; notwithstanding these immense disadvantages, I should think we might fairly hope, by the end of another campaign, for this is already lost, to be in possession of another post ; at least, if we add to the spirited exertions I have already mentioned, a fleet of forty sail of the line, to prevent the French from pouring in their forces, and turning the balance in a critical moment.

But if these ideas are now reputed chimerical, and the experiment of a farther offensive war be



rejected with abhorrence, not only by all discerning minds, but by our present Government, supported by a large majority of the people, I apprehend it will be necessary to enquire, what will prove the most effectual and speedy means of producing that peace, which is now become so necessary to our situation.

Those that have done me the honour to read this crude essay with attention, will here, I imagine, anticipate the obvious answer which presents itself. For if the original and continued cause of war has been the attempt of Great-Britain to subjugate the Independent States of America to her dominion; if farther, Great-Britain, contented with the losses she has sustained, finds herself in no condition to prosecute the claim, and is resolved to desist from an offensive war in America; it will necessarily follow, that the first thing to be done is solemnly to desist from the claim; and, in desisting, to acknowledge the Independence of America. By this one act, England removes every cause of animosity from between herself and the American States. By this one act she places herself upon the broad foundation of equity and reason; frees herself from the necessity of garrisoning posts and cities which she cannot hold; is more collected for the defence of herself and her own undoubted rights; and ceases to appear to  
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the rest of Europe in the formidable light of an insolent, unjust, and rapacious conqueror.

It may be here observed, that should we take these steps; should we even abandon New-York and Charlestown, which I should certainly think expedient to be done; the Americans are so involved by the 8th article of the Treaty of Alliance, that they can make no separate peace without the permission of the French. I answer, that I think all ideas of peace which are not equitable and general, and which do not extend to all the nations with whom we are at variance, are more calculated to please a party, or serve a Minister, than to extricate the English people from their present complicated distresses.

Since the beginning of the present fatal contest, placed as I am at a distance from the little interests and paltry ambition which dazzle so many eyes, and turn them aside from the real pursuit of their country's welfare, I have remarked with wonder, the gross falsities and impostures which have so often been current in this metropolis; and I must own, that I have sometimes been led to suspect, that Heaven, in bereaving this country of her former glory, was kindly preparing its inhabitants for the stroke, by depriving them of their senses. For to what causes short of infatuation, can we attribute the various opinions which have prevailed at different periods of this disastrous contest, that the Americans

would never look the British soldiery in the face ; that a few regiments would complete the reduction of that immense continent ; that a majority of the Americans were attached to the British government ; that the exchanging Philadelphia for Charlestown was the subjugation of America ; that Lord Cornwallis with an army of about ten thousand men could penetrate and subdue all the Southern provinces ; that the French would never assist the Americans ; and that all the nations of Europe would tamely suffer our maritime tyranny, and the piracies of our privateers ? To these might be added, were it necessary to swell the catalogue, many sentiments and observations of Lords and great men of distinguished abilities and importance ; such as the opinion of a great Law-lord, that the war in America was a defensive war ; the humane declaration of a late American Secretary, that the Americans should be decimated with *more* than Roman severity ; and his assertion, that though the Americans had neither money or credit, the English Government could raise troops amongst them cheaper than the Congress. To these might be added, the observation of a noble Lord, about six weeks before the surrender at York-town, who, speaking of the Americans, said, with an air of triumph, “ *Ils sont au desespoir* ; and we are just going to establish the civil government ; ” of another, who after that surrender affirmed, “ that none but  
British



British fools would be frightened at the loss of a few thousand troops ;” and the opinion of the greatest financier this country has ever seen, “ that it was necessary to maintain posts in America, for the sake of *commerce*.”

However extravagant these opinions and assertions, when thus crowded together, must appear, I believe there is no man moderately versed in the politics of this nation, during the last ten years, who has not seen them adopted as the principles of our public conduct, or avowed by some of the most distinguished characters in the nation, as necessary to be adopted ; nor should I repeat them, in the midst of so important a disquisition, if I did not dread that some new delusion might arise, deprive us of all our present hopes, and plunge us in deeper misery than we have yet experienced. The prejudice which, I must confess, I more particularly dread at present is, that the Americans may be induced to accept of peace, without our acknowledging their independence, and without our comprehending their allies. Whence this opinion should originate, unless from the selfish designs of some men to consult their own avarice or ambition, at the hazard of plunging this country a-new into all the horrors of an inveterate civil war, and from the general inattention of this people to procure genuine information, I own I cannot comprehend. But to those who have only embraced these dangerous opinions, because they are not used to reflect

fleet for themselves, I would propose the following considerations: Did not the Americans, when placed out of the English protection by the act which prohibited all commerce with them as subjects, and permitted every species of hostility to be exercised upon them as enemies, solemnly declare themselves Independent States, by a vote of Congress, dated July 4, 1776? Were all the subsequent successes of the British arms, when Sir William Howe, with an armament capable of carrying terror with it into the most powerful European nation, had landed upon Long Island, defeated all opposition, and seemed to be triumphantly proceeding through the country, capable of determining that body to rescind their vote? Nay, when it was the opinion not only of the majority of the English, but even of the greater part of Europe, that they must fall a prey to the immense exertions which were made against them, did a single State swerve from the general confederacy, or abjure the independence which they had declared?

If such was the inflexible resolution shewn by the Congress and the American States, when the progress of the British arms on every side seemed to have prevented all future resistance, and to have left them no other alternative than death or servitude; when not an European nation had acknowledged their independence, or seemed inclined to share their dangers, by encountering  
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the vengeance of their mighty foe; their resolution and perseverance have not appeared less uniform in that change of fortune which succeeded.

In the Autumn of the year 1777, the brave and unfortunate General Burgoyne surrendered to the American militia at Saratoga, exhibiting a fatal example of the uncertainty of military glories, and the vanity of popular prejudices. About the same time the decided intentions of the French to support the independence of America became apparent: and the abatement of the lofty pretensions of the British Ministry to unconditional submission, produced the famous Conciliatory Bill, which passed March 2, 1778. Those who remember the frantic exultations of a considerable party of this nation at the successes which had attended General Howe in the Autumn of the year 1776, or considered the silent contempt with which the American Petitions had been received at a still earlier period, could not but deplore the fallen state of their country, which, in a space of little more than two years, had exhibited every degree of insolent despotism and abject meanness. When the Americans had called upon the British nation by every tie of friendship, interest, and consanguinity, to prevent the wild waste of blood and happiness which was to ensue; when they stated their complaints with moderation,

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or petitioned with temper for redress, it was deemed unworthy the dignity of the British Parliament to hear their reasons, consider their intreaties, or even to return an answer. The pretended representatives of a nation which dares to claim freedom as its right, publickly refused to three millions of men the licence to state their grievances, or implore redress: and the professors of a religion promulgated by the lowest orders of men, which breathes an universal spirit of peace and equality, and ordains, that he that is highest shall minister to his brethren even in the most servile offices of life, dared to treat their fellow-creatures as if they neither owned a common nature or Creator with themselves. In the same spirit were the commissions framed which accompanied those surer agents of peace, as it was then imagined, the military force. The commissions granted to General Howe gave him no other power than that of pardoning all treasons and misprisions of treason, upon proper submission made to him by the Americans. This amazing condescension towards men who contended that they were only supporting their own just rights, and who believed, that they had only taken up arms to avoid the last conditions of shame and servitude, was attended with all the effect that its contrivers probably intended,—fresh indignation and hatred on the part of the Americans, who determined rather  
to



to perish in one general wreck, than meanly solicit pardon, where they owned no fault, and had themselves complained of injury. Yet notwithstanding those lofty vaunts and arrogance of the British Ministry and Parliament; notwithstanding the repeated victories which had attended our arms, and the utter ruin and despair of the republican party in America, which was propagated and asserted in every corner of this island, we find the second set of Commissioners, on the 9th of June, 1778, offering such terms to the rebellious colonies, as were not only infinitely beyond their own desires in 1775, but such as scarcely left to this country the shadow of authority over her revolted children. It may deserve the consideration of those gentlemen, who seem to imagine, that the Americans are to be drawn from their declared independence, from their solemn alliances, from their purposes avowed to Europe and all the world, by the first gracious overtures of a new Administration, to consider what was the declaration of the American Congress, dated April 22, 1778, upon the subject of this very commission. They declared, "That any man, or body of men, who should presume to make any separate or partial convention or agreement with Commissioners under the Crown of Great-Britain; should be considered and treated as enemies to the United States. That the United States could not with propriety hold any conference

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ference or treaty with any Commissioners on the part of Great Britain, unless they should, as a preliminary thereto, either withdraw their fleets and armies, or, in positive and express terms, acknowledge the independence of the said States." The answer of the Congress was exactly conformable to this declaration, and the whole negotiation ended in the continuance of the war, and the abandoning of Philadelphia, as a preliminary to the total subjugation of America.

If such has been the inflexible spirit of America, during every period both of adverse and prosperous fortune, I would wish to know upon what those gentlemen found their opinions, who seem to imagine that the Americans will now treat with England on terms short of independence? —Have our arms been attended with such decisive successes as may inspire this confidence? Have so many nations acceded to our alliance, as may inspire them with doubt and terror? Is it the formidable state of our navy, our finances, or the internal proofs of virtue and consummate abilities which we have displayed to Europe, that support this opinion? Or is it our brilliant successes against the *perfidious* Dutch, a new enemy flung into the preponderating scale, and that master-piece of British valour and policy, the capture of St. Eustatius?

I am the more interested in bringing forward facts like these to the public attention, because

I have

I have repeatedly seen the moment of peace and reconciliation flung away, by refusing those concessions which would have purchased them. Had we condescended, in 1775, to consider the American petitions, and grant redress ; had we, in 1776, instead of pardoning, in the true spirit of a lawyer, reason and misprision of treason, offered them security for the contested points, there can be little doubt that the war would have been either prevented, or speedily concluded. Let the British nation beware how, for the third time, they lose the moment of security which is placed within their power, light up the flame of civil war anew, and expose themselves to suffer, in turn, the evils they have been so long inflicting. Let them remember, that Carthage, the great archetype of England, once covered the seas with fleets, and astonished the world with the rapid augmentation of her opulence and greatness ; that she too aimed at distant conquests and dominions, while Hannibal was desolating the fruitful plains of Italy, and thundering at the gates of Rome ; but let them also remember, that when the tide of fortune changed, Hannibal was recalled for the defence of Africa, and a single battle decided the fate of Carthage.

As to those who yet flatter themselves that it is in the power of this nation, either to grant or to withhold the independence of America, I must intreat them to consider what it is which

constitutes the independence of any country. — Is it not the firm undeviating will of the individuals who compose it not to submit to foreign domination, accompanied with the actual exercise of sovereignty, and the power of defending themselves from all external violence? In all these respects, is not America as actually independent as any nation of Europe, as independent as Great-Britain herself, would she, for an instant, lay aside her habitual arrogance, and consider her own internal situation? For upon what shall we establish our superior claim? Is it upon a short continuance of inauspicious peace, during which the nation has seen almost every post of trust and power filled up by men whom she hated or suspected; the sacred rights of popular election invaded; the streams of justice itself sometimes tainted, sometimes restrained; and every petition of the people treated with undisguised contempt? Is it upon a seven years civil war, into which the most respectable, perhaps the major part of this nation has been reluctantly dragged, and forced to contribute to its continuance by expences almost ruinous to the very existence of private property, like malefactors that are condemned to carry the instruments of their own execution? Is it upon the patience with which this people has born the destructive burthens of the present war, the wild waste of public property,

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and



and the refusal of that moderate redress which Asiatic tyrants would scarcely have refused to Asiatic slaves? — Or is it, lastly, upon that vote of an *uncorrupted* House of Commons, which establishes the existence of public abuses in these memorable words: “ that the influence of the  
“ Crown has been increased, is increasing, and  
“ ought to be diminished.”

Should any honest minds be offended at the boldness which I use, I must beg them to consider that I do not mention a single circumstance, which has not repeatedly been asserted, and reasoned from as fact, by most of the gentlemen who now compose our Administration; and I am not willing to lose that happy moment, which may, perhaps, never return, when I find my own sentiments in perfect unison with those of the established government. If farther apology than this should be deemed necessary, I must reply, that we have been too long intoxicated with the fumes of our ambition and importance, too little accustomed to consider our present situation.——Too long a series of revolving years has seen us the slaves of imposture and delusion, the prey of idle credulity, and the implicit victims of every interested fiction.——Every species of parliamentary and public information has been so studiously withheld, that I much doubt if a single fact has  
ever

ever been offered to the people, since the commencement of the present war, upon which we can entirely depend. In the mean time, the good people of this country, that country whither the rest of Europe was accustomed to send their philosophers, as ancient Greece to Egypt, in order to study morals and legislation, seems contented with the conviction of its own established greatness, to have considered with indifference every circumstance upon which that greatness must depend. Did a new dancer arrive from the Opera de Paris, who straddled wider, or capered higher than his associates, you might behold the genuine and undissembled eagerness with which the British nobles and senators considered the event. His agility, his shape, his antic-postures, his grimaces, nay, the very ribbands which he wore, and the colour of his breeches, were scrutinized with all the anxiety of interest and investigation, during successive months. But did an immense continent revolt? was a naval battle lost, although its loss might shake the very foundation of our naval and commercial greatness? was a British army captured, or an island lost? it was just whispered upon the Exchange, repeated at a city dinner, jested upon by a court Lord, and then consigned to eternal oblivion\*.

But

\* Egypt, under the glorious reigns of the Ptolomies, was,  
like

But it is now time for the English nation to rouse from that delirium in which it has dreamed of conquest and dominion, in the midst of luxuries and pleasures which not only incapacitate it to command others, but even to preserve its own liberty. If my countrymen wisely bound their ambition with being the first dancing and fiddling nation in Europe, it is necessary to resign those schemes of power and conquest, which would only serve to draw their attention from these objects: but if some remains of antient pride, and the memory of past glories, should rush upon their minds, and stimulate them to new exertions, they cannot too soon or too attentively consider their present situation, lest those exertions, like all the rest, should be ineffectual, and only exhaust the faster their few remaining resources. Nations, like individuals, can only hope to succeed, while they proportion their enterprizes to their force, and wisely aim at possibilities. That people will never be deserted by fortune, which is not wanting in itself, and which endeavours with fortitude and wisdom to atone for former rashness; but violent and injudicious efforts,

like modern Britain, distinguished by its love of dancers, fiddlers, and eunuchs. When the affairs of that country had come desperate, and Augustus was advancing with rapid marches to the capital, the sovereign and court were employed in pantomimes, feasts, parties of the chase, and jesting upon their own losses.

however

however they may flatter the public pride, will never alleviate the public distresses ; they are less the symptoms of health than the agitations of convulsion, which do not portend recovery, but approaching dissolution.

I cannot therefore too strongly inculcate upon my countrymen, the necessity of mixing with that fortitude which is so requisite in their present circumstances, some portion of that good sense for which they were once deservedly famous.— This, I cannot help believing, will evince, if properly exerted, the necessity of chusing one of the alternatives which I have mentioned ; either that of prosecuting the war against the Americans to subdue them by force, or of granting their independence, and general terms of peace to all the nations we have irritated. Let the inhabitants of this metropolis, that fertile soil, where every seed of prejudice and absurdity is generally found to germinate with the rankest vegetation, recal for an instant, their own sensations in respect to the rioters of 1780. The outrages of those unhappy men were partial, and affected but a small number of individuals ; yet let them recollect the general consternation and horror which were produced in almost every mind, and which seemed, for some considerable time, to have extinguished even national humanity. The streets heaped with the dead and dying, during the military fury which raged for some days uncontrouled ; and the yet  
more



more awful spectacles of promiscuous and implacable justice, served only to gratify the stern resentment of the mildest people in Europe, and to fill them with silent satisfaction. The very eyes of the softer sex, accustomed to weep for every trivial, for every fictitious woe, seemed to refuse a tear for the numberless miseries that surrounded them; so vast, so many are the sacrifices which the jealousy of invaded property demands for the slightest offence. This recollection, I should think, might teach my countrymen to guess at some part of the sensations which must rankle in the bosoms of the Americans. They have seen their property laid waste, their towns and cities consumed, their country desolated with all the fury that marks the last excesses of war, inflamed by civil hatred; every insult has been offered to their women, every degree of scorn and inhumanity to those who were taken prisoners, and every species of barbarity to those who resisted: even the savage tribes, whose manners are sometimes quoted to express a degree of atrocious cruelty beyond the conception of polished nations, were not judged unworthy of the alliance of singing, fiddling, Frenchified Britain; or agents improper to be employed in her domestic quarrels. But it has pleased that Providence, to whom the solemn appeal of both countries has long been made, to repress the arrogance of this country, blast her ambitious designs, and bid her vengeance and her

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insults recoil upon her own devoted head; and now, disgraced and baffled, with smothered rage and unavailing pride, we reluctantly prepare for peace. But are we yet to learn that the Americans are men; men that can feel, as deeply as ourselves, the sense of injury and injustice; men that possess reason and passions in common with ourselves, and haughty minds, stimulated at once by vengeance and elevated by success?—If so, what is there to justify the fond and foolish prejudice which leads us to imagine they will, at the first invitation, abandon in our favour all the alliances they have contracted, entail perpetual infamy upon their rising name, and stain with the imputation of levity and falsehood, all the trophies they have raised? Is it the old prejudice, that almost a fourth of the whole earth requires the assistance of a small damp island, placed at the distance of many thousand miles, in order to enable it to subsist? Are we yet to learn that America possesses every variety of product which this country could ever boast; all that the warmer suns of Spain and Italy can ripen, with thousand others denied to the industry of Europe? Or do we believe that the choice and excellence of our manufactures will make them again accept our empire? This reason, though better founded than the last, will be found equally vain; for a more urgent necessity presses us to sell than them to buy, and every nation in Europe is preparing to extract

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her own advantage from our mistakes ; every port is opening to their ships, and every state soliciting their commercial alliance. Or, perhaps it may be the blessings of our envied and admired constitution that may soften their stubborn souls ; and they may pant for the splendour of a civil list ; for the œconomy with which our finances are managed ; for the blessings of bishops and hereditary nobles ; for the intricate magnificence of our Gothic tenures ; for a clergy to decimate their agriculture, without performing in person a single duty of their office ; for a navigation act to improve their commerce ; and for the mysteries of a virtual representation to secure their freedom.

Let us for once be candid, and acknowledge that we have nothing, in our present situation, to allure the Americans to a participation ; that men, who have laboured through seven bloody years to establish their right to freedom, will hardly throw away, without a motive, the harvest of their toils, and submit to wear the yoke which they had broken to pieces. Let us allow that Providence, wherever it has given a fertile soil and temperate climate, has intended the human species should exist and encrease, without asking the privilege from equals, who are separated from them by the whole habitable earth, or half the extent of ocean. Let us allow that men that possess reason, industry and experience, and that have emanci-

pated themselves from the chains and prejudices of Europe, may provide for their own internal policy and external defence, without the assistance of English lawyers or an English House of Commons.

Nor, could the shadow of a connection, the chimera of a political union, be admitted by the keen-sighted, jealous Americans, can I conceive at present any other effects which would arise from it, but new wars, new mischiefs, and new declarations of independence. Upon what terms, I ask, is it to exist? Is it to be a mere vague, unmeaning, undefinable acknowledgment of dependence, while their provincial governments retain all the attributes of perfect and unlimited sovereignty? Is such a paltry subterfuge worthy to be proposed by us, or granted by them? Would it not add ridicule to our disgrace, as if our pride was capable of being soothed with so paltry a concession; as if we chose to derive our titles from what we had lost, and like some of our own noble spendthrifts, to be only pointed out by the estates we had alienated and squandered?

But we must, I fear, pay an higher compliment to the great politicians amongst us, who are contending for such a scheme. They must certainly have a wider reach, and intend to secure something like a constitutional subordination in America, even though they give up the exploded principles of taxation, and permit the infringement

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ment of the Act of Navigation. But are we so little acquainted with human nature, as not to see that this would answer no other purpose, than that of keeping alive a continual distrust in the Americans, a continual jealousy of intended encroachment, and would eternally prevent the ancient wounds from closing? From the present Administration I can, indeed, fear nothing, because there is scarcely a man amongst them, that is not personally pledged to the people for the integrity of his intentions, and for the redress of public grievances. But is their continuance eternal? Have we not seen premature political death cut off as promising administrations, even in the bloom of sportive infancy\*. Alas! who does not know the thousand unforeseen contingencies that may deprive us of the fruits of their labours, and change the present mild, pacific, unoffending spirit of our councils, into gall and rancour? But how is this subordination to be secured? Is it to be guaranteed by Congress, or is it to be maintained by those *red-coated* citizens, who enforce the execution of civil laws, under the denomination of a military force? In the one case, I fear, lest the dependence should be merely nominal, although it produce most of the inconveniences of a real one; in the other, I dread, lest

\* This was written during the short period of the Rockingham Administration.

the Americans should object to resigning every thing into the hands of military guardians, without overawing them by a superior number of their own militia. In that case, where will be their efficacy? Or were they nearly balanced, who will insure the continuation of even a month's agreement between high-minded men accustomed to decide every thing by the sword, and inspired with all the animosities which the present contest has breathed into their souls? Should feuds arise, should blood be shed, will their respective nations be unconcerned spectators of the fray? And then the offices of state, are they to be filled up by Congress, by the people of every state, or by the British Minister? Will the Americans acquiesce in such nominations? Will they suspect no frauds, no influence, no interference of the Treasury, no attempts upon their *Roman* virtue? Or, should they suspect such practices, however innocent, will haughty souls like theirs tamely acquiesce in suffering British gold to win its way, where British steel has failed? Will they not return with tenfold fury to their beloved independence, and will not every circumstance I have mentioned be sufficient to dissolve the feeble connection, or kindle the ill-extinguished flames anew?

But I am reasoning about events which are so little likely to happen, that they scarcely deserve a moment's consideration; and the two principal divisions

divisions of politicians in this country, cannot, without the last inconsistency, admit their probability for an instant. Those who have always asserted, that the Americans have long desired independence, even prior to these unfortunate disputes, can hardly imagine that they will give up the darling object of their intrigues, the very first moment they have obtained it; and those who believe the assertions of the Americans themselves, and the evidence of events, that every step they have taken in this affair has been suggested and necessitated by the persecutions of this country, will not believe that they will, on a sudden, acquire so much confidence in us, or retain as little in themselves. It is now time for the English to lay aside their foolish contempt of men, who being descended from their own nation, boast an equal share of all the qualities which have ever distinguished it, and to believe that the Americans no more want ability in their councils, than valour in the field. Let us not then imagine them so grossly ignorant of their own situation and of ours, as to grant to negotiations what they have refused to arms. Let us not then imagine them either so devoid of reason or of honour, or so ignorant of their own essential interests, as to enter into any treaty with us, which would cover them with the imputation of perfidy, and deprive them of the friendship and assistance of the other nations of Europe. Were it even possible

possible that the great body of the people of America, for there is no virtual representation there, should overlook the necessary consequences of such a measure, let us have a better opinion of the abilities and of the ambition of their leaders, than to imagine that they would suffer them to accede to such proposals, without opening their eyes to all its possible effects. We did not find them so easy to be deceived, or wrought upon, when the conciliatory propositions of 1778 were sent over; and we must have a very peculiar view of human nature, if we imagine that success is likely to render the mind more tractable and humble. Have we ever experienced these effects ourselves?

Let me now be permitted to enquire what are the advantages likely to ensue from a generous avowal of the independence of America. The first advantage which I think will arise from it, is that of changing the entire nature of the contest, and placing Great Britain in a less odious point of view to all the neighbouring nations.

When we take a retrospective view of modern history, we shall find that almost every people of Europe has, at some period of their existence, been seized with the delirium of extending their power by conquest; and of these bold disturbers of human peace, that there is scarcely one that has not expiated its rash exertions, by ages of inactivity and weakness. Venice, Portugal, and Swe-



Sweden, have just astonished the world, like short-lived meteors, by their transitory greatness : Spain and France have scattered terror and dismay, with the more continued blaze of comets ; but both the former and the latter have resigned their place to England, who, unterrified by past experience, rushed forward in the same mad career, and advanced rapidly to her decline. Europe, that had so often seen her the patroness of liberty, and the generous foe to tyrants, beheld her infatuation with mingled grief and pity, till roused by the strong impulse of interest, or irritated by injuries, the different nations that compose it have either engaged in the contest, or prepared themselves to repel the violence they dreaded, with equal violence. But this jealousy of England, like the causes that have occasioned it, is transitory, and easy to be removed. The natural envy that attends a powerful and conquering nation, a want of moderation in the exercise of that superiority, and the immense spoils which the emancipation of America from all commercial restraints promises to the different kingdoms of Europe, have been the causes that have indisposed them against their ancient friend and ally. It may have been their interest, it may have been their passion, to clip the wings of her inordinate ambition, and to increase their own naval importance, by lowering her's. But the hour of Britain's insolence is past, the measure of her disgrace is full, and it can neither be their interest

or their passion that she should be reduced beyond a certain point ; still less can it be their aim and object to support the maritime greatness of France and Spain, those ancient and inveterate enemies to the common liberties of Europe.

Let England, therefore, give up the only object which the rest of Europe demands ; an object she may yield with magnanimity, but cannot withhold ; and from that instant she will be enabled to make an honourable peace ; or, if compelled to carry on the war, the principles and fortune of it will be changed. France has hitherto had the address to cover her ambitious views with the specious semblance of moderation ; she has ceased to be the common invader of all her neighbours, and the disturber of the general peace ; she is become the patroness of universal liberty, the guardian of public rights, and the disinterested championess of the distressed \*. England, on the contrary, from the unfortunate principles of the war in which she is engaged, and from the headlong spirit of revenge with which she has prosecuted it, has lost the advantage of the ground, and presented herself to the eyes of Europe too

\* It is something singular that the same nation, which now holds Corsica by right of conquest, should feel herself so interested in the liberties of America. Henceforth no revolution will be pronounced impossible, since the same period has shewn England oppressing and France supporting the rights of nature and humanity.

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much in the light of a proud, imperious conqueror. So long as she suffers the contest to be carried on upon its present principles, that disadvantage will remain; and her crafty rival may bereave her of all her most valuable possessions, with the appearance of desiring peace, and only acting upon the defensive. But let England once desist from those ambitious schemes of subjugating the Colonies, which have already cost her so much; and offering them the contested points, offer to her other enemies an equitable peace; and France, who is the principal of her enemies, will either be compelled to accept it, or to lose her present situation. Not all the artifices she can then use, not all her policy, will then prevent her from appearing the aggressor; and she will excite so much the more jealousy and suspicion, as her present dissimulation is deeper, and her ambition more carefully concealed.

If we now consider the confederacy which is formed against us, we shall find it composed of the most discordant and heterogeneous elements. All the States that constitute it, vary as much in their respective interests, as they do in language, manners, prejudices, and government. America, with a wish, of which perhaps she is scarcely sensible, to be reconciled to the parent-state, provided England will treat her like a child that is arrived at maturity, and acknowledge her independence, is obliged to treat a nation, of whose designs she is secretly

suspicious, with confidence and respect. France, on the contrary, whose darling object is to weaken the naval power of England, till it become inferior to her own, is supporting a rising empire, of which she either is, or shortly will be jealous. Holland, irritated by the injuries and provocations she has received, by the invasion of her commerce, the capture of her settlements, and the intrigues which she suspects this country to have carried on against her liberty, is waging a war of defence, of indignation, and of revenge. Spain, who had originally but little inducement to intermeddle, is probably bribed with the hopes of recovering Jamaica and Gibraltar; and without farther consideration, interest, or passion, is combating to aggrandize an ally, against whom she entertains a secret and hereditary hatred.—If the view, which I have here presented, of the interest and designs of the several nations with whom we are involved be just, it must appear probable, that the obstinacy of England in prosecuting a war to subjugate the colonies, and her impatience of every obstacle, have proved the strongest bonds of confederacy to her enemies. The æra, therefore, of her desisting from this destructive claim, whose fatal consequences she has sufficiently experienced, will be the commencement of discord and distrust, amongst allies, whom accidental not permanent interests have united. France herself, should she be guided by enlightened and extensive views of her own interest, may be contented with the honour and  
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advantages she has gained, and wisely fear a reverse. She may perhaps perceive, that the project of destroying the public credit, and exhausting the resources of England, may, by a continuance of the war, recoil upon her own head ; and these considerations may make her as willing to accept, as we are to offer terms of peace. As to Holland, although the present impulse of passion and the desire of revenge may momentarily transport her from her natural peaceable bias, there is little doubt but she will be softened, when she perceives a real and important change in the councils of this country ; and that she will soon sicken of a war, where all the advantages will naturally center in her more powerful allies, and where victory, no less than defeat, may be prejudicial to her commercial interests. As to Spain, as no particular interests or passions have led her into the war, so we may, not unnaturally, imagine that she will be glad to free herself from the dangers and expences which attend it, by seizing the first opportunity of an honourable peace ; more especially if any unexpected misfortune should intervene, to abate the pride which unwonted successes may have raised.

As to the other nations of Europe, I cannot retain a doubt, that they would then find it as politic to reduce the insolence of France, as they now have that of England, and that allies would not be wanting in so just a cause, if necessary.

Nor

Nor would the advantage be less conspicuous, as to every purpose of internal defence. For every difference of opinion must then be silent, every murmur of discontent and opposition hushed, when the immediate question related only to the common safety of the country. What individual, that bore the name of Englishman, would not feel himself roused to every noble exertion? Who would refuse to contribute his property in any required portion, when he was certain it would be applied to national defence, not to the wild purposes of enslaving others, bribing the pretended representatives of his country, or to sustain the luxury of proud unfeeling oppressors?—Who would even withhold his blood, if that blood was necessary to defend his own just rights, and save his country's honor and independence from destruction? Thus, and thus only, would the resources of England be found really inexhaustible; when every scheme of selfish ambition was given up, when principles of justice were substituted to the low intrigues and frauds that have long disgraced her councils, and when the Ministers of the Sovereign were at length become the friends and patrons of the public liberties.

A very considerable portion of this nation has been long in avowed opposition to public measures; because they believed those measures, with whatever success attended, adverse to the interests and liberties of their country. These men have  
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been reviled with every odious epithet which slander, falsehood, and malice could invent \* : they have been represented as serpents that were fostered in their country's bosom, while they were watching every opportunity to sting her to the heart. I believe that most of these gentlemen have treated such insinuations with the same contempt that I have felt myself. But it is incumbent on all that have avowed these principles of opposition, to embrace the first opportunity of proving, that they are animated with as warm a zeal for their

\* “ Those who most deserve our resentment are unhappily  
 “ at less distance. The Americans, when the Stamp Act  
 “ was first proposed, undoubtedly disliked it, as every nation  
 “ dislikes an impost; but they had no thought of resisting  
 “ it, till they were encouraged and incited by European in-  
 “ telligence from men whom they thought their friends,  
 “ but who were friends only to themselves.

“ On the original contrivers of mischief let an insulted  
 “ nation pour out its vengeance. With whatever design they  
 “ have enflamed this pernicious contest, they are themselves  
 “ equally detestable.” Taxation no Tyranny, p. 86.

In assenting to the latter part of this quotation, I believe every Englishman will concur; but perhaps it may now admit a doubt, if any sacrifices are to be offered up to an insulted nation, from which party they should be chosen; whether from that which has uniformly opposed an unjust and ruinous civil war, even with the hazard of personal safety; or from that which by every art of fraud and misrepresentation, by refusing to listen to every species of information, by withholding all genuine intelligence, and taking advantage of the too irritable passions of a deluded people, has produced the present weight of national calamity. If those who dissuade violent measures are to be answerable for consequences which they most abhor, the imputation of cruelty and persecution should be transferred from the bloodiest of the Roman emperors to Christ, the Apostles, and the Martyrs.

country's

country's welfare, and dare as nobly in her just defence, as those whose vaunts and menaces have been heard the loudest. It is also incumbent upon them to evince, that their attachment to America has been the attachment of virtuous citizens, who think the real interest of their country can never be promoted by execrable and selfish schemes of enslaving others, not a guilty preference of America to England. Nor can I doubt, though little inclined to pledge myself for the conduct of others, that should the Americans once abandon the just grounds of self-defence, and, after having been offered the long contested independence, and terms of peace which they may accept consistently with their treaties, league with the enemies of Britain for her farther humiliation, that from that instant their warmest friends would become their most inveterate enemies.

Something remains to be said of the Americans themselves; and as far as human reason may pretend to foresee the future, these are the consequences which I should think might be expected to arise from an acknowledgment of their independence. Persecuted as they have been by the arms of Britain, struggling at once for liberty and existence, it is no wonder, if every former sentiment has been suspended, and if affection has yielded its place to bitterness and rancour. Still less can we be surprized, if they have found a friend in every enemy to Britain, and have  
gladly



gladly entered into every alliance that supported them against her vindictive claims. Those, who at the same time that they justified the Americans in the first periods of their resistance to Britain, have blamed them for their declaration of independence, and their treaties with France, seem to possess but little acquaintance with human nature; or even with the necessary consequences of their own principles. If such things exist as human rights, which ought to be the basis of every society, and which, when once invaded, leave mankind at large to consult their own preservation, by following the dictates of reason and experience; it must be granted, that the American independence was not only justifiable, but unavoidable. How could men that had been deliberately placed out of the protection of this country, and devoted to destruction, consider themselves as owing any thing to their destroyer? Or how could that destroyer be considered as the proper guardian of the very rights which she had invaded, after they had been snatched from her oppression by the bloody operations of the sword? Britain might, indeed, talk of benefits, consanguinity, and gratitude, at the very instant that she was spreading havock and devastation; and attempt to persuade the Americans that these were only symptoms of her maternal care, and her zeal for constitutional liberty. But not all the sophistry of her ablest advocates, the distinctions of her lawyers, or the pious hypocrisy

of her churchmen, can be expected to silence the feelings of our nature, or convert the excesses of irritated pride into the effusions of tenderness and affection. Those that believe tyranny to be the favourite attribute of Divinity, and that Providence had no other end in creating the innumerable millions which people the earth, than to soothe the pride, or employ the vacant moments of its lazy and besotted vicegerents, may be startled at every exertion of human liberty; but those, that in the human species behold an animal endowed, indeed, with nobler faculties, and destined ultimately to an higher end, but agitated and impelled by the same passions which govern every other kind, will laugh at the opinion, that there are individuals only born for the service of others, or nations that are not to exist without the permission of their equals. When they are gravely told, that the Americans must not make laws for their own government, because they are originally descended from the English, they will ask, if the courser that bounds along the mountains of Chili, must not graze the herbage, or taste the spring, without the formal permission of his Andalusian brethren? Or whether the patient ox, that slowly breaks the fallows of our western hills, may claim a right to dispose of the immense savannahs of America? They will ask, if there is any law of Heaven, or Nature, more certain, more universal, more obligatory,

gatory, than that of self-preservation ; and whether Great Britain, when she obliged the Americans to draw the sword for their own defence, did not herself wave every other claim, and dissolve every other compact ?—If, therefore, the Americans were right in the first moments of their resistance, it will follow, that they were right in every subsequent one ; since the same imminent necessity continually impended ; since gratitude and persecution, government and hostility, are incompatible terms ; and since universal experience has demonstrated, that no human passion is so little to be trusted as disappointed ambition. That necessity, therefore, which made them first take up arms, produced their independence, and their alliance with France ; and that independence must incline them to league with every nation that is inimical to Britain, so long as Britain retains the power and the inclination to annoy them. The basis, therefore, of this alliance is mutual dread and mutual jealousy of this country ; and the policy of those who think it is to be dissolved by a continuance of the war, unless we deem ourselves equal to the conquest of both nations, resembles the attempt of the North Wind, in the Fable, to make the Traveller lay aside his cloak ; the keener blew the blast, the closer he wrapt his mantle round him, to defend him from its severity.

But let Great Britain desist from her chimerical attempts to subdue a country, that is at this mo-

ment better prepared for internal defence than herself; let her either withdraw her garrisons from the American towns, or stipulate to withdraw them upon fair and honourable terms; let her, above all, give every evidence, that under the proposals of reconciliation she conceals no insidious project of renewing a war of conquest; and it is probable that she may unbind the chain, which all her forces would never be sufficient to break. It is evident, that from this moment the Americans will cease to consider the English people as their foe; that from this moment every former prejudice in their favour will be revived, and every ancient affection recur to their minds. Their prohibitory laws will be repealed; their ships, no longer fettered by the tyrannic influence of navigation acts, will voluntarily find their way to our ports, and their harbours in return will be open to our fleets. The industry and ingenuity of our manufacturers will again find ample employment, when so immense a market is opened to their exertions. In this sense, the colonies will still be ours; ours in every rational and enlightened view of interest, without infringing the rights of nature or violating the laws of humanity. Every increase of population or agriculture amongst them will equally contribute to our advantage, by the increased demand for our commodities: thus will they voluntarily alleviate our burthens, and bear without repining the enormous weight of the public impositions here. And indeed, if we consider the  
true



true interests of this country, we shall find that it is commerce alone which had raised us to our late envied pitch of greatness; and that it is by commerce only that we can hope to preserve some political importance, and the shattered fragments of our empire. We neither possess that vast extent of country, or population, which can fit us to aspire at dominion by conquest. Above all, our insular situation, while it secures us from the sudden irruption of our neighbours, renders them in turn more independent of us. For although the empire of the sea may in a certain degree command respect by land, yet I cannot recollect a single instance of any country's being conquered by a naval invasion, that possessed even moderate resources, or the common means of self-defence. The Carthaginians, who were destroyed by Scipio, in the third Punic War, constitute no exception; since they were first exhausted by their own imprudent efforts, and afterwards deserted by the other nations of Africa, to whose jealousy the greater part of the Roman success was owing. Still less can the conquest of the new world by Cortez, in the sixteenth century, be admitted in opposition to the rule; for there, the inequality of arms and discipline operated with an almost irresistible force: yet even that superiority would have been vain, had not the impolitic jealousy of the Tlascalans saved the common destroyer from impending ruin, and first established the Spanish tyranny in Mexico. But as Britain can never look  
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for similar contingencies, so she will be precluded from the dangerous delusion of attempting distant conquests, the instant she properly considers the nature of her own insular situation. Happy indeed would it have been for her, had she perceived this great truth a little earlier. For had she cast even a superficial view upon some of the most important parts of her history, she would have seen enough to sicken her with the very idea of carrying on an offensive war, more especially at such a distance, as must inevitably render courage, policy, and even riches vain, if she had to do with enemies that were not wanting to themselves. What end did all the decisive victories, which she formerly gained over the French, produce, but new toils, new contests, fresh waste of blood and treasure, and at length her final expulsion from every province which she had ever held? What were the effects, in the beginning of the present century, of all the bloody wars about the Spanish succession? Did they not end, in spite of all her boasted advantages, in the accumulation of her own debts, and the establishment of the very competitor they were meant to exclude? Have not similar effects, at a later period, been the uniform consequences of every continental war she has waged? And in respect to the present American contest, did not every dispassionate person foretel the event \*, or at

\* I remember conversing, in the year 1775, with a friend, Mr. Keir, of Birmingham, who had served with honour and  
ability

least demonstrate, that whether baffled or victorious, she must suffer mighty losses, such as she might never recover, without the least rational hope of advantage? For granting for an instant, that the first victories of the British arms had been as decisive as they were splendid, I cannot help deliberately asserting, that unless we had given up all the controverted points at once, and endeavoured to reconcile the irritated minds of the Americans, by restoring to them all they had lost, the event might have been something later, but would have been precisely the same as at present. As to the first alternative, I leave good men to conjecture the nature of that constitutional liberty which was intended for the conquered Americans; but I cannot help making

ability in the last war, tho' since distinguished by his literary and philosophical pursuits, upon the probable consequences of the American contest. He then delivered an opinion, which the experience of seven years has only illustrated and confirmed. "If (said he) the Americans are not wanting to themselves, it will be impossible for this country ever to subdue them; for our force must either be drawn together into one or two spots, and then, however irresistible it may prove, the rest of the continent will remain in the possession of the Americans, or it must be divided into small bodies, to maintain posts and occupy an extent of conquered country; in which case it will be impossible to prevent an enemy, perfectly acquainted with the country, and infinitely more numerous than ourselves, from continually harrassing, annoying, and surprising them." Many officers, I have been informed, have made similar representations during the administration of Lord North; but were always received with coldness, and heard with contempt by the guardians of the public safety.

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some reflections upon the second case, because the ideas of conquest, however suppressed by the little checks we have received in our career of victory, do not seem entirely extinguished in some minds. Let us therefore suppose that the same expence of blood and treasure, which at the end of seven years has placed this country in a worse situation, both as to conquest and defence, than at the beginning, had produced a temporary cessation of hostilities ; and that after a certain number of civil and military executions, confiscations of property, &c. &c. his Majesty's peace had been successively proclaimed in all the Thirteen Provinces of America ; may we not suppose, that the same excellent policy which inclined our Government to make war, in order to reduce the exuberant spirit of liberty in the colonies to the proper bounds of loyalty and discretion, would have judged it equally expedient to provide for futurity, by modelling their respective governments to that excellent system of constitutional liberty, which is at this day found in Canada ? And would not such alterations have probably left that leaven of discontent, which would have made it necessary to maintain a military force among the conquered, amounting to at least forty or fifty thousand men, to prevent future insurrections ? Must not that military force have been continually increased with the increasing population of America, which is reckoned to double in about twenty-five years,



to prevent its becoming inadequate to its intended object? And would it have been an easy task to govern eighty, an hundred and sixty thousand men, and the indefinite multiples of that number, by orders from the War-Office here? Would it have been agreeable to our gentlemen, who with so much true wisdom and sound policy voted the American war, in order to lower their own taxes, to see the land-tax doubled, tripled, &c. in order to pay their military deputies in America? Or, can any one suppose, that the desolations of such a war, as would have subdued all opposition on that continent, would have left the inhabitants any resources to pay such a peace-establishment? As there must have arrived a term, beyond which it was utterly impossible to increase the numbers of our army there, would it not have been at least necessary either to prevent the farther increase of population by an act of our omnipotent Parliament; by destroying a given proportion of all the children that should be born; by selling them as journeymen to the loyal manufacturers of Liverpool, Manchester, &c. or else to relinquish at some given period, the whole American continent, and leave it to that independence which we so much dread? And lastly, would there not have been some danger in the mean time, that all our ambitious neighbours in Europe would have continually cast an eye to America, as our most vulnerable part; and have requited every real or

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imaginary

imaginary offence from us, by entering into leagues with the exasperated colonies, sending them effectual succours to excite new rebellions, and by lighting up new wars; till the utter ruin of this country had produced the final emancipation of all its dependencies \* ?

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\* I cannot resist the temptation of making the following extracts from Cato's Letters, written by the celebrated Mr. Trenchard, which sufficiently prove that the sentiments here advanced have no claim to originality, and that dispassionate men have always entertained similar opinions upon this important subject.

" I would not suggest so distant a thought, as that any of  
 " our colonies, when they grow stronger, should ever attempt  
 " to wean themselves from us: however, I think too much  
 " care cannot be taken to prevent it, and to preserve their  
 " dependencies upon their mother-country. It is not to be  
 " hoped, in the corrupt state of human nature, that any na-  
 " tion will be subject to another any longer than it finds its  
 " own account in it, and cannot help itself. Every man's first  
 " thought will be for himself, and his own interest; and he  
 " will not be long to seek for arguments to justify his being  
 " so, when he knows how to attain what he proposes. Men  
 " will think it hard to work, toil, and run hazards, for the  
 " advantage of others, any longer than they find their own  
 " interest in it, and especially for those who use them ill: all  
 " nature points out that course. No creatures suck the teats  
 " of their dams longer than they can draw milk from thence,  
 " or till they can provide themselves with better food: nor  
 " will any country continue their subjection to another, only  
 " because their great grand-mothers were acquainted.

" This is the course of human affairs; and all wise states  
 " will always have it before their eyes. They will consider  
 " therefore how to preserve the advantages arising from colo-  
 " nies, and to avoid the evils. And I conceive, that there  
 " can be but two ways in nature to hinder them from throw-  
 " ing off their dependence; one to keep it out of their power,  
 " and the other out of their will. The first must be by force;  
 " and the latter by using them well, and keeping them em-  
 " ployed

It is not without particular design, that I have entered into this digression; for I have seen my

“ ployed in such productions, and making such manufactures,  
 “ as will support themselves and families comfortably, and  
 “ procure them wealth too, or at least not prejudice their  
 “ mother-country.

“ Force can never be used effectually to answer the end,  
 “ without destroying the colonies themselves. Liberty and  
 “ encouragement are necessary to carry people thither, and  
 “ to keep them together when they are there; and violence  
 “ will hinder both. Any body of troops considerable enough  
 “ to awe them, and keep them in subjection, under the di-  
 “ rection too of a needy governor, often sent thither to make  
 “ his fortune, and at such a distance from any application for  
 “ redress, will soon put an end to all planting, and leave the  
 “ country to the soldiers alone; and if it did not, would eat  
 “ up all the profits of the colony. For this reason, arbitrary  
 “ countries have not been equally successful in planting colo-  
 “ nies with free ones; and what they have done in that kind,  
 “ has either been by force, at a vast expence, or by depart-  
 “ ing from the nature of their government, and giving such  
 “ privileges to planters as were denied to their other subjects.  
 “ And I dare say, that a few prudent laws, and a little prudent  
 “ conduct, would soon give us far the greatest share of the  
 “ riches of all America, perhaps drive many of other nations  
 “ out of it, or into our colonies for shelter.

“ If violence, or methods tending to violence, be not used  
 “ to prevent it, our Northern Colonies must constantly en-  
 “ crease in people, wealth, and power. Men living in healthy  
 “ climates, paying easy or no taxes, not molested with wars,  
 “ must vastly encrease by natural generation; besides that,  
 “ vast numbers every day flow thither from our own dominions,  
 “ and from other parts of Europe, because they have there  
 “ ready employment, and lands given to them for tilling;  
 “ insomuch that I am told they have doubled their inhabi-  
 “ tants since the Revolution, and in less than a century must  
 “ become powerful states; and the more powerful they grow,  
 “ still the more people will flock thither. And there are so  
 “ many exigencies in all states, so many foreign wars and do-  
 “ mestic disturbances, that these colonies can never want  
 “ opportunities, if they watch for them, to do what they

countrymen so generally elated with the late trifling and accidental successes, and forming to themselves such mighty and chimerical expectations, which seem to embrace no less an object than the destruction of the whole naval forces of all their enemies, that I cannot help trembling for the event. Convinced as I am, that there is no alternative between giving up the independence of America, and seizing the first opportunity of making a general peace, or of engaging anew in all the horrors and disasters of a war of conquest, which must end in the utter ruin of this country, I cannot help attempting to rouse them from their temporary delirium, which is as little allied to real greatness as it is to sound reason and policy. For this reason, I have stated the consequences which appear to me inevitable, had even the British arms, in the commencement of the present

“ shall find their interest to do ; and therefore we ought to  
 “ take all the precautions in our power, that it shall never  
 “ be their interest to act against that of their native country.”

Cato's Letters, Vol. IV. p. 4, 5, 6.

These were the sentiments of a writer as early as the year 1722.—With what gratitude and admiration must this people consider ministers, who, enlightened by the experience of half a century more, and actuated by deeper motives of policy, have treated such reasonings as these with the contempt they deserve; have boldly undertaken to rectify mistakes in the charters of the colonies, and to govern them by a military force; and this, after they had attained that awful period of maturity, which would have induced more timid politicians rather to relax the reins of maternal authority, than to attempt the dangerous task of tightening them!

war,



war, been attended with the most ample and unequivocal success.—But if we are to consider the success of Admiral Barrington as the beginning of a new war, which some of our politicians have asserted, let the English people consider, while they are yet upon the shore, the immensity of that sea on which they are preparing to embark ! What deluges of blood must flow, what millions of treasure be consumed, before this country could be brought back to a situation in which she had the smallest hopes of success ! As to the united navies of our enemies, are they not confessedly to ours in the proportion of three to two ? Have not the French, in every engagement, given such decisive proofs, both of seamanship and courage, as to leave us no pretence to victory, upon equal terms, and frequently scarcely the poor consolation of explaining away a defeat ? Have not the Dutch, whom, in spite of British prejudices, I do not hesitate to name a brave and injured nation, given us such unequivocal proofs of cool and inflexible bravery, that we seem ready to shrink from the contest which we had so wantonly provoked ? What else did all those public rejoicings mean, upon the bare idea of a separate peace with a people, whom, within scarcely the interval of a year, I have heard reviled with every odious epithet, in every part of this metropolis ? I am too sensible, that truths like these are little calculated to gain me either favour or popularity ; and  
would

would some abler pen have undertaken the necessary and dangerous task of awakening the public to their own affairs, by telling bold unpalatable truths, I should with pleasure have continued in native unmolested obscurity.—But since no abler advocate has chosen to appear, and since some possible good may arise from even these weak endeavours, if they should turn the public attention to the sober discussion of these important points, while all the risk and danger are entirely my own, I shall proceed with the same spirit I have begun, to the end of my short career. But, if neither our former menaces to bereave the French and Spaniards of all their possessions in the West-Indies, nor our deeper laid design to crush the Dutch at a single stroke, have succeeded to our wish; if every progressive year has seen our losses increase, and our efforts diminish in the same proportion, how mighty, how complete must be the madness that only proposes to end the war with the humiliation of all our enemies!—Are we yet ignorant that war, even in its most successful state, is scarcely less the scourge of the victorious than of the vanquished party\*? Are

\* “ It is wonderful with what coolness and indifference the  
 “ greater part of mankind see war commenced. Those that  
 “ hear of it at a distance, or read of it in books, but have  
 “ never presented its evils to their minds, consider it as  
 “ little more than a splendid game, a proclamation, an ar-  
 “ my, a battle and a triumph. Some indeed must perish in  
 “ the most successful field, but they die upon the bed of ho-  
 “ nour, resign their lives amidst the joys of conquest, and  
 “ filled

we uninformed, that it is most destructive to a commercial country, that depends for its greatness upon a free exportation of its products and manufactures? Do we consider the general failure of every branch of internal industry, with the gradual aberration of the rich streams of external commerce, which formerly enriched us; those aberrations which it is yet uncertain, whether an

“ filled with England’s glory, smile in death. The life of a  
 “ modern soldier is ill represented by heroick fiction. War  
 “ has means of destruction more formidable than the cannon  
 “ and the sword. Of the thousands and ten thousands that  
 “ perished in our late contests with France and Spain, a very  
 “ small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy; the rest languished in tents and ships amidst damps and putrefaction;  
 “ pale, torpid, spiritless and helpless, gasping and groaning, unpitied among men made obdurate by long continuance of hopeless misery, and whelmed in pits, or  
 “ heaved into the ocean, without notice and without remembrance. By incommodious encampments and unwholesome  
 “ stations, where courage is useless, and enterprise impracticable, fleets are silently dispeopled, and armies sluggishly  
 “ melted away. Thus is a people gradually exhausted, for  
 “ the most part with little effect. The wars of civilized nations make very slow changes in the system of empire.  
 “ The public perceives scarcely any alteration but an increase  
 “ of debt; and the few individuals who are benefited, are  
 “ not supposed to have the clearest right to their advantages.  
 “ If he that shared the danger enjoyed the profit; if he that  
 “ bled in the battle grew rich by the victory, he might  
 “ shew his gains without envy. But at the conclusion of a  
 “ ten years war, how are we recompensed for the death of  
 “ multitudes, and the expence of millions, but by contemplating the sudden glories of paymasters and agents, contractors and commissaries, whose equipages shine like  
 “ meteors, and whose palaces rise like exhalations.”

Falkland’s Islands, p. 42, 43, 44.

age

age of peace and security would completely bring back into their deserted former channels ? Will it not be necessary, before we give a new scope to arrogance and enterprize, to reckon up the vast arrears of the past, and to enquire whether the probable successes of a ten years war, against such formidable opponents, will balance the certain expences of a single year's delay of peace ? Are we not already burthened, beyond the possibility of farther endurance ; burthened, till even the inventive industry of ministerial ingenuity is forced to pause in its oppressions ; lest, by the increase of weight unskilfully applied, the overcharged foundations should give way, and the immense fabric of debts and public credit sink, to rise no more ? And is it in this situation that the English nation employs itself in forming visionary schemes of grandeur and command, which, were they practicable, might ask at least another seven years bloody war, another hundred millions of expence in the execution ? In the mean time, the numerous armies of America surround our few remaining towns ; perhaps, flushed with the confidence of victory, and pushed on by the desire of vengeance, lead the scanty remnants of our late victorious bands into captivity ; perhaps, in the new ardour of successful enterprize, roll back the tide of war upon our late secure possessions, and assist our enemies to seize all that fortune has hitherto permitted us to retain. At least, even  
should



Should these ideas be premature, the fatal progress of our evil destiny is continually accelerated, while we waste the precious moments in empty dreams of chimerical exertions; the wounds which we have inflicted upon the Americans, are festering with redoubled anguish; all Europe is preparing to acknowledge their independence, and solicit their alliance; the riches of their commerce, the only resource, I fear, which, even with an immediate peace, would enable us to bear an annual expence of fifteen millions\*, are doled out to every competitor; and when some new misfortune shall rouse us from our trance, it may find us reduced so low, as to wish for a return of the present crisis, even at the expence of half our remaining territories.

Let us remember, that it is the characteristic of light and frivolous minds alone to be elated beyond measure with every transient ray of better fortune; to be easily incited to form projects which exceed the compass of their abilities; and to be always ready to throw the blame of past miscarriages upon every thing rather than their own rash and chimerical projects. With such men, the change of a General, or of a Minister,

\* On a supposition that a peace is concluded in 1782, the annual charge on the public on the 5th of January 1783, exclusive of collection and management, will be of neat money, 15,020,000l.

State of the Public Debts, &c. by Lord Stair, p. 7. printed for J. Stockdale.

will at any time insure success, and encourage the most extravagant expectations. They cannot believe that heaven, or fortune, will be so unjust to their extraordinary merits, as to submit their destiny to the influence of the common causes which controul human affairs ; or refuse to work a miracle, whenever a miracle is necessary to extricate them from the effects of their imprudence. Are they citizens, like the Romans, of a state which has risen to importance by severer discipline and stricter manners ? They imagine that all the Gods have fixed their residence in the eternal capitol, and will continue to defend the chosen spot, although every virtue which cemented its foundations is withdrawn. But if their country, by a rare coincidence of circumstances, an insular situation, a temperate climate, a system of laws which encourage industry and secure private property, has arrived at commercial and maritime greatness, they mistake these casual blessings for the inherent properties of their soil and climate. They imagine, that they may with impunity engage in every wild and pernicious project, and that their resources will increase in the same proportion that they exhaust and abuse them. Not even the rapid decline of commerce, their own increasing poverty, the miscarriage of their enterprizes, the loss of their fairest possessions, their acknowledged incapacity to meet their enemies on the ocean, or their own shores in consequence undefended, and  
 exposed

exposed to every invader, can make them abate their arrogance, or lower their pretensions: Nor should I doubt that such a people might gravely claim the empire of the sea, when it had neither commerce, fleet, or seamen left, provided some happy genius should institute a naval procession, or, after the example of the Venetians, proclaim a marriage to be solemnized with the Atlantic.

But it is to be hoped, that the national good-sense, when properly applied to the investigation of the subject, will check the desire of military glory, and at length settle in that only measure which can produce any degree of public happiness, a general and substantial peace. Peace is the first and most necessary reform which is required. It is this alone that can restore the almost ruined state of our finances, if that restoration be still possible. A strict and uniform œconomy, applied with unremitting attention, during half a century of peace, might perhaps reduce the public debts within a moderate compass: but what can be expected from our ministers during war, even though they possessed a degree of prudence and disinterestedness which have never yet appeared in man? It is well known that all the schemes of our greatest political œconomists would never have made the public savings amount to half a million; while about three-and-twenty millions may be calculated to compose the moderate purchase of a single year's continuance of the

war. Let my countrymen then seriously reflect upon the accumulation of public debts, such as I believe was never experienced in any other country ; upon the intolerable burthens with which every article of convenience, or necessity, is already loaded ; and upon forty or fifty additional millions of loan and outstanding debts, which must, in all probability, be directly funded, and new taxes imposed to supply the interest, at least if the declining commerce of the country can support them, before new schemes of enterprize and conquest are adopted \*. I should then wish to be resolved by some of our ablest calculators, whether the most uninterrupted successes would be likely in any degree to pay the expences they had cost ; and whether the fee simple of all the possessions we have lost, excepting the monopoly of the American commerce, which I cannot help supposing out of the question, would indemnify us for a two years continuance of the war. But we have no reason to expect such uninterrupted success from any thing we have yet experienced ; and nothing but the most childish presumption can found a sanguine expectation of better fortune, upon the mere remembrance of past disasters. On

\* The balance of unfunded debt, after deducting from the 50,000,000 charged against the Public in account No. I. the 13,500,000, funded in 1782, &c. is £.37,766,338

Total capital debt on the 5th of January, 1783, 250,040,388

State of the Public Debts, p. 12.

the



the contrary, though we have been repeatedly drawn in, like losing gamesters, to hazard more upon a fresh stake, we have constantly experienced the same catastrophe ; nor has there been a single period of six months, which has not degraded us to a worse situation than we were in before, and augmented our difficulties, both in respect to making peace and carrying on the war.—But as to all the past, however pernicious, however absurd the contest may have proved, however deservedly the authors of it may be reprobated as the deliberate enemies of their country, that contest was less absurd in the beginning, and less pernicious in the continuance, than it would prove at present. It had then a precise and determinate object, however fatal both to humanity and public liberty, the exertion of the legislative authority of Great-Britain over the colonies, or, in more explicit terms, the establishment of unlimited authority, and the reducing them to a state of unconditional servitude \*. But this object, however execrable, was adapted to please the vanity of a considerable party in the nation, and few seemed able to discern the immediate loss, the ultimate shame and ruin which might ensue. Although it required no great penetration to foresee that the attempts of this country to extend her authority by force over the colonies, might at some future period produce

\* See the Debates and political publications of that period.  
their

their final emancipation, yet such was the apparent disproportion of the contest, that even the clearest understandings might doubt concerning the immediate event. But with the present experience of our own weakness, and the force with which we are to engage, nothing short of madness can hope for success in a new attack upon the independence of America. Indeed, the absurdity would not be more palpable, were we to revive our ancient pretensions upon France, and send over a mighty armament to annex the territories of his Most Christian Majesty to the crown of England. Were we then to continue an offensive war, it is plain that it must now be a war entirely without an object, since all hopes of subduing the colonies are at an end ; and it must be a struggle of mere disappointed pride and resentment : passions, which cannot long influence the councils of nations without the greatest danger, even in their meridian of power and fortune\*. But

\* Upon what other principle many of those gentlemen act, who, while they admit the truth of every fact and argument advanced in this Pamphlet, seem desirous of prosecuting the war against France, I own myself at a loss to determine. Resentment and revenge are proper topics for the inflammable passions of the multitude, when they are to be incensed beyond the bounds of reason or prudence ; but the real friend to his country looks with contempt upon every consideration, but the solid and essential interests of the many. Whoever is moderately versed in history, must know that the annals of every nation furnish scarcely any other spectacle than that of assassinations, massacres, and atrocious crimes, perpetrated for the meanest and most contemptible purposes.

as to ourselves, we have too long already been subject to the influence of these blind guides, and

purposes. Will mankind, amidst all the boasted improvements of their reason, never understand those truths which are most obvious to common sense, as well as most important to common happiness?---Let those patriots who bear so inveterate an antipathy to France, shew their public spirit, by opposing themselves to the headlong torrent of French fopperies and vices, which now deluges the nation; instead of laying down principles, which, were they to be universally adopted, must nearly cause the extinction of the human race; since, were no nation to accept of peace till it had obtained complete satisfaction for every imaginary wrong, there would exist an eternal necessity of war.---What satisfaction have we yet given to the Spaniards for supporting the Belgic Provinces in their revolt from Philip II. or in more modern times that of the Catalonians, when we deliberately undertook to dismember an independent kingdom, and share its spoils with our allies? Even the perfidious French have repeatedly seen us intermeddling in their domestic affairs, and fomenting the rebellions of the Hugonots. It is true, that we basely deserted both the Catalonians in the war of the Succession, and the Hugonots at the siege of Rochelle; but this conduct, I am afraid, will reflect but little lustre upon our national character. I would recommend to some of our principal Orators, the study of these particular periods of our History, together with that of our political conduct to Scotland and Ireland, while they constituted independent states. The Roman historians are full of invectives against Punic faith, which have been implicitly adopted by most modern compilers; but some instances of Roman virtue have dropt from their pens, which equal or exceed any thing they relate of the Carthaginians. But it is easier to declaim against the perfidy of the French, even while we are imitating them in the most contemptible parts of their character, than to do a noble justice to their virtues and their policy, yet retain the natural simplicity of the English character, and defend the liberty and independence of our country,

wasted

wasted too much in rash and visionary pursuits. No farther projects, no farther experiments can be tried with safety, unless we choose to destroy our remnant of wealth and power, as idly as we have dissipated all the rest. That remnant, if wisely managed, is at least sufficient for every purpose of national happiness, though not calculated to satisfy every demand of national vanity. But whatever may be our wishes or expectations, whether we are disposed to content ourselves with the solid enjoyments of safety and tranquility, or still aspire at dangerous pre-eminence, peace is alike necessary to the acquisition of either object. Peace alone can deliver us from the enormous burthens with which industry is loaded\*, or at least prevent the necessity of new oppressions; peace alone can revive our drooping commerce and agriculture, and enable us, by wise and salutary laws, and internal efforts at improvement, to increase our population and manufactures. Peace would enable us to turn our attention at leisure, to the immense territories we possess in India; a territory so vast, so fertile, so well peopled, that it might compensate many of our losses, could we be convinced of the necessity of regulating it by wholesome laws, adapted to the genius of the inhabitants, instead of making it the theatre where European plunderers contend for

\* See the concluding observations.

pillage.



pillage \*. Peace would make us more respected in all the dependencies which we yet retain, and

\* “ Conquests, cession, inheritance, can bring only alliances with so many independent states under one Sovereign, as long as all controul is tyranny, that is not founded upon the actual consent of the people governed. Some few possessions we still have left. The dominions of our trading company to the East-Indies, from which we have drawn so many resources, and which our acts of parliament have interfered in with so little scruple, have yet enforced no such claims or pretensions; when they do, I trust, we shall find some new distinctions which may retain them under our subjection.” A Letter to John Sinclair, Esq; on Parliamentary Representation, p. 32. To give some idea of what that subjection is, I beg leave to insert the following extracts from an account of the late dreadful famine in India, &c. from the Annual Register of 1771, p. 205.

“ As soon as the dryness of the season foretold the approaching dearth of rice, our gentlemen in the company’s service were as early as possible in buying up all they could lay hold of. When the effects of the scarcity became more and more sensible, the natives complained to the Nabob at Muxadavad, that the English had engrossed all the rice, particularly in the Bahar and Purnea Provinces. This complaint was laid before the president and council by the Nabob’s minister who resides in Calcutta; but the interest of the gentlemen concerned was too powerful at the board; so that the complaint was only laughed at and thrown out.” It is probable these gentlemen were thoroughly convinced of the futility of the principle, that the consent of the people governed is necessary to constitute a just government, and therefore very consistently disregarded their complaints.

“ By the time the famine had been about a fortnight over the land, we were greatly affected at Calcutta; many thousands falling daily in the streets and fields, whose bodies, mangled by dogs, jackalls, and vultures, in that hot season, when at best the air is very infectious, made us dread the consequences of a plague. We had 100 people employed upon the Cutcherry list, on the Company’s account, with

K

doolys,

probably eradicate the seeds of future civil wars, if we do not think it below our dignity to be

“ doolys, sledges, and bearers, to carry the dead, and throw  
 “ them into the river Ganges. I have counted from my  
 “ bed-chamber window in the morning when I got up, forty  
 “ dead bodies lying within twenty yards of the wall, besides  
 “ many hundreds lying in the agonies of death for want,  
 “ bending double, with their stomachs quite close contracted  
 “ to their back-bones. I have sent my servant to desire those  
 “ who had strength to remove farther off; whilst the poor  
 “ creatures, looking up with arms extended, have cried out,  
 “ Baba! baba! my father! my father! This affliction comes  
 “ from the hands of your countrymen, and I am come here to  
 “ die, if it please God, in your presence. I cannot move, do  
 “ what you will with me.”

“ At this time we could not touch fish, the river was so full  
 “ of carcases; and of those who did eat it, many died sudden-  
 “ ly. Pork, ducks, and geese, also lived mostly on carnage;  
 “ so that our only meat was mutton when we could get it,  
 “ which was very dear, and from the dryness of the season  
 “ so poor that a quarter would not weigh one pound and a half.  
 “ Of this I used to make a little broth, and after I had dined,  
 “ perhaps there were 100 poor at the door waiting for the  
 “ remains, which I have often sent among them cut up into  
 “ little pieces; so that as many as could might partake of  
 “ it; and after one had sucked the bones quite dry, and thrown  
 “ them away, I have seen another take them up, sand and all  
 “ upon them and do the same, and so by a third, and so  
 “ on.”

See also upon the subject of Indian Legislation, the Examination of a Bramin before the Secret Committee of the House of Commons.

I cannot help, although with the greatest reverence, enquiring from our nobility and gentry who are so strenuous for punishing the perfidious French, till they have amply atoned for all their crimes; particularly from the Right Hon. Lord North, who has expatiated upon that idea with so much energy and eloquence; whether these facts are true? and, if true, what atonement either the British nation, or the British government, has offered to the manes of these victims, or to their surviving friends and relations?

taught

taught wisdom by our past experience, or unworthy our greatness to redress the just complaints we have occasioned by our former oppressions.

I shall now proceed to state those articles of the treaty of alliance between France and America, signed at Paris, February 6, 1778, which relate to the present subject, and prove the improbability of the colonies listening to any separate terms of peace, before the acknowledgment of their independence. The second article of that treaty expressly states, that "The essential and direct end  
 " of the present defensive alliance is, to maintain  
 " effectually the liberty, sovereignty and independence, absolute and unlimited, of the said  
 " United States, as well in matters of government  
 " as of commerce." The 8th article is, "Neither  
 " of the two parties shall conclude either truce or  
 " peace with Great Britain without the formal  
 " consent of the other first obtained; and they  
 " mutually engage not to lay down their arms,  
 " until the independence of the United States  
 " shall have been formally or tacitly assured by  
 " the treaty or treaties that shall terminate the  
 " war." This I should think is sufficient to prove how visionary and unfounded were the opinions which lately prevailed with many of my countrymen, that the Americans would obey the first invitation of this country to desert the French, and even league with us against them. Nothing but the same ignorance and inattention which have

guided every other part of our conduct, could possibly have produced such a judgment.

But a more specious and important consequence may be deduced from the articles I have quoted: that even should the English allow the independence of the Colonies in the most unequivocal manner, they are so involved with France, that they would not have it in their power to suspend hostilities without the permission of their allies. This interpretation is certainly not unauthorized, and is a sufficient comment upon the wisdom of those, who, in spite of the most authentic information, suffered the Americans to enter into such close connections with our enemies, at a time when it is probable a little moderation and vigilance on our part would have prevented them. But when we consider the sense of the second article, which explains and limits the nature of the alliance, we shall find that it expressly declares it to be defensive for the purpose of maintaining the sovereignty and independence of the United States. Again, the 8th article confirms this interpretation, by limiting the duration of the war to the acknowledgment of the independence of America. The obvious and literal sense of this treaty therefore is to ratify a defensive union between France and America, for the purpose of establishing the independence of the latter; and this end once obtained, leaves both the contracting parties at liberty. Nor can much doubt be entertained that the  
Americans



Americans themselves will consider it in this light, and not think it necessary to carry on a war for the interest of their allies, against a nation with whom they have so many natural connections; and in whose favour we may rationally suppose so many ancient prejudices will arise, the instant all ideas of farther persecution are removed. It is the interest of the contracting parties, which is alone the guardian and interpreter of treaties between independent states; and this interest will evidently run as much in favour of England, when England discovers unequivocal inclinations for peace, as it did before against her. It was the interest of France to separate so large a portion of territory from Great-Britain, whom she justly considers as her most formidable enemy; it was equally her interest to throw down all barriers to the American commerce, which opened such unbounded views to the ingenuity of her manufacturers, and such ample resources to the embarrassments of her finances. Nor was it less the interest of the Americans to accept the overtures and alliance of every power which was hostile to this country, and offered to support their independence against its attacks. An alliance founded upon these principles, will necessarily remain firm and indissoluble, so long as the common interests of the contracting parties coalesce: but let either of them completely acquire the objects of its wishes, and ample scope is given to all the motives

tives of envy, jealousy, and distrust, to exert their power, and gradually corrode the bands of union.

Thus, it appears evident, in whatever light we consider the subject, that acknowledging the independence of America, is a necessary preliminary of peace: for it will either so completely satisfy the interest and ambition of all our enemies, that no material opposition will be made to its ratification; or should it fail to have that effect, will render the Americans so luke-warm and indifferent to the common cause, that we may naturally promise ourselves happier fortune against our remaining enemies.

Some gentlemen indeed seem to imagine, that it is not necessary to make such sacrifices, and that a reconciliation may be effected with America, on terms similar to what we have granted the Irish. But till they shall take the trouble of explaining the reasons of this opinion, I cannot help thinking that it is more calculated to flatter the remains of national pride, than founded upon any real knowledge of the subject.

It is no secret that a commission has been sent over from the American Congress to five commissioners in Europe to treat of peace, whenever Great-Britain shall be inclined to accede to those terms which are essential to its conclusion. It is also certain that several of the American agents, amongst whom Dr. Franklin  
may

may be numbered, have, both in their conversation and letters, expressed the most sincere desire of terminating the present waste of human blood, by a speedy reconciliation with this country ; nor do I doubt that there is still sufficient affection remaining in the minds of many of the Americans, to make them desire every degree of prosperity to this country, which is consistent with the freedom, interest, and honour of their own. It is also equally certain, that not one of these commissioners, amongst whom are included Dr. Franklin, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Laurens, have ever given the present ministry the least hope that any part of America would relinquish its independence, for any terms or advantages proposed by Great-Britain ; on the contrary, I have every reason to believe, that this has been the uniform language of all the American agents who have been consulted upon this subject : “ Great-Britain by her  
 “ pride, her insolence, her unjust attempts to re-  
 “ duce the colonies to servitude, has compelled  
 “ them to resist by arms the intended invasion of  
 “ their rights. In the prosecution of this justifi-  
 “ able resistance they have declared themselves  
 “ independent ; because, neither duty, compact,  
 “ nor allegiance, can subsist between the oppres-  
 “ sor and the oppressed ; between the nation that  
 “ aims a mortal stroke at the existence of ano-  
 “ ther, and the people that takes up defensive  
 “ arms to vindicate itself from slavery and de-  
 “ struction.

"struction. But Providence has uniformly blast-  
 "ed the ambitious designs of England, and fa-  
 "voured the struggles of the Thirteen States, that  
 "through such difficulties, through so many va-  
 "rious fortunes, through such a storm of blood  
 "and death, have persevered in the generous  
 "design of maintaining the rights of nature and  
 "the common cause of the human species. If  
 "Great-Britain, unenlightened by all the past, un-  
 "taught by her own calamities, still persists in  
 "her former arrogance, and dreams of bending  
 "the hitherto unconquerable minds of the Ame-  
 "ricans, let her collect all her remaining forces,  
 "and gather auxiliary troops of mercenaries  
 "from all the tyrants that deal in human blood,  
 "to make a last decisive trial of her fortune. She  
 "has already abridged all other rights, and se-  
 "vered every other tie, by appealing to the sword ;  
 "and the sword is now the only charter of domi-  
 "nion, by which she must hope to rule over  
 "American subjects. Does she imagine that the  
 "ghastly wounds of a seven years civil war are to  
 "be closed in an instant by the charm of a falla-  
 "cious lenity ? Or that the Americans can so  
 "soon forget the injuries they have received,  
 "their property wasted, their towns destroyed,  
 "their country desolated, and every degree of  
 "hostile insult and cruelty offered to their fami-  
 "lies and themselves ? Are these the potent ar-  
 "guments which are to induce them to resign the  
 "price



“ price of all their victories, and trust themselves  
 “ again to the compassion of a British govern-  
 “ ment, at the expence of all that is manly, just,  
 “ or noble, either in nations or individuals ? Is it  
 “ for these benefits, so feelingly enforced, that  
 “ they are to desert allies that have supported  
 “ them in the hour of danger, cherished the rising  
 “ hopes of their infant states, and dared the venge-  
 “ ance and the shock of the proudest, if not  
 “ the most powerful nation in the universe ? Or  
 “ does the same delusion which made the English  
 “ promise themselves so easy a conquest in the  
 “ beginning, make them now imagine that the  
 “ Americans are to be subdued by policy, after  
 “ having proved themselves unconquerable by  
 “ arms ? Why else do they think of proposing  
 “ terms which they must know would be rejected  
 “ with scorn by every people that is not delivered  
 “ up to infatuation ? Shall the Americans brand  
 “ themselves with every epithet of perfidy and  
 “ falsehood, violate the unblemished honour of  
 “ their new republics, and deprive themselves of  
 “ the future favour and assistance of all Europe,  
 “ that must be witness of their shameful ingrati-  
 “ tude, only that they may deliver themselves up  
 “ to the very people that has been so long armed  
 “ for their destruction.—They are not so igno-  
 “ rant of the feelings of established governments  
 “ towards those that are denominated rebels, or  
 “ what they must themselves expect even from the  
 L “ moment

“ moment of their accepting so sinister a league.  
 “ As to the pretended concessions which are some-  
 “ times made to rebellious subjects, they are at  
 “ best but authorized frauds, to disarm the in-  
 “ tended victims of future cruelty and revenge.  
 “ Is there in all the wide extent of history, that  
 “ baneful catalogue of human crimes and mise-  
 “ ries, a single instance of these involuntary con-  
 “ cessions which has not been revoked, without  
 “ regard to faith or humanity, the very moment  
 “ when it might be attempted with impunity ?  
 “ And what is there in the nature of the British  
 “ government, that should produce an exception  
 “ in its favour ? We are not ignorant of the mu-  
 “ tability and inconsistency of its councils ; those  
 “ councils which sometimes menace the security  
 “ and independence of all the surrounding na-  
 “ tions, sometimes solicit peace with the holy fer-  
 “ vour of primitive Christianity. If the English  
 “ themselves repose an implicit faith in their new  
 “ administration, it is not so with the Americans,  
 “ it is not so with the rest of mankind. We know  
 “ that the same breath which has blown up the  
 “ bubble, that now dances upon the atmosphere  
 “ of national conceit, may dissipate its unsubstan-  
 “ tial fabric, and breathe again those pestilential  
 “ vapours which lately threatened the destruction  
 “ of half mankind. As to the English themselves,  
 “ if they have voluntarily joined in this proscrip-  
 “ tion of the Americans, what faith, what confi-  
 “ dence

" dence is to be given to a barbarous unfeeling  
 " nation, that only suspends its cruelties from an  
 " inability to pursue them? — If, on the contrary,  
 " as some pretend, they have been reluctantly  
 " compelled to sanctify outrages which they dis-  
 " approve, on what pretence do they attempt to  
 " modify the rights of others, who are incapable  
 " of defending their own? Let them therefore  
 " understand, that whether their characteristic be  
 " cruelty or weakness, we will neither confide in  
 " the one, nor share in the mischievous conse-  
 " quences of the other. We will remain fixed to  
 " that spot, where fortune and Providence have  
 " established the foundations of our rising empire,  
 " by the agency of our own fortitude and virtue.  
 " If England thinks that she can push us from  
 " the solid basis on which we now stand firm, let  
 " her approach with all her remaining forces, and  
 " make the dangerous experiment. If, on the  
 " contrary, she has had sufficient experience of her  
 " own weakness, and wishes to give the world  
 " and herself some interval of repose, let her,  
 " as a preliminary, desist from all the schemes of  
 " wild and fruitless ambition. Let her equally  
 " lay aside the projects of fraud and violence;  
 " nor attempt, by the contemptible arts of crook-  
 " ed policy, to deceive those whom she is unable  
 " to conquer. Let her meet the Americans with  
 " sincerity and magnanimity; let her make all the

“ atonement which is within her power to those  
 “ she has injured, by desisting from new attempts  
 “ to injure. As to our independence, in the amplest  
 “ sense that can be given to the term, we do not  
 “ ask it of England or her ministers, because it is  
 “ not theirs to give ; we already hold it from  
 “ Heaven and the points of our swords ; and  
 “ upon these alone shall we depend for its prefer-  
 “ vation. Yet if she fairly and honourably treat  
 “ with us upon these terms, we shall acknowledge  
 “ it as a proof of her sincerity, and accept it as a  
 “ pledge of offered peace. By these means, the  
 “ memory of past injuries may be gradually obli-  
 “ terated, and she may yet find in a participation  
 “ of our commerce, the surest prop of her de-  
 “ clining opulence, and in our returning affection  
 “ and future alliance, no contemptible support  
 “ of her remaining empire. But let her at length  
 “ understand the real limits of her power, and  
 “ desist from the attempt to unite and reconcile  
 “ contradictions. The two alternatives of peace  
 “ and war are indeed before her, and she may  
 “ take her choice ; a firm and profitable peace,  
 “ accompanied with the independence of the co-  
 “ lonies, or a war of hatred, revenge, and fury,  
 “ to reduce the Americans to servitude, or perish  
 “ in the attempt. More than this, neither fortune  
 “ nor Heaven allows ; nor her own ungovernable  
 “ madness, which has compelled the Americans  
 “ to



“ to seize that independence which she now in  
 “ vain endeavours to with-hold, and compleated  
 “ the dismemberment of the empire.”

This, or nearly this, I have reason to believe, has been the language of the American agents, whenever they have been consulted : should I be mistaken, or endeavour to mislead, it will be no difficult matter to convict me of ignorance or falsehood. In the mean time, I cannot help supposing this representation to be a just one, and drawing some conclusions from it, which merit all the attention of the public.

It must appear evident, that no conclusion whatever can be admitted from the situation of the Irish to that of the Americans, excepting that a weak and oppressive government will produce similar effects in every part of its dominions. The Irish have obtained every thing they demanded : they asked for a free trade ; that free trade has been granted them : they disclaimed the authority of the British parliament ; that point too has been given up ; and they now declare themselves, as they have every reason to be, contented with the concessions of the government. They have never voted themselves independent, never entered into foreign alliances, never seen their country ravaged, or themselves proscribed, under the pretence of restoring constitutional liberty and happiness. There can be little doubt that the half of these concessions offered to the Americans,  
 when

when they petitioned in the year 1775, would have preserved their union with this country inviolate, and prevented all the mischiefs which have since ensued. But that period is irretrievably past, and never can return. The colonies are now in actual possession of independence ; they have constituted internal governments, which may perhaps leave them little to regret in their loss of the British constitution ; they have formed alliances with other nations, upon the solemn compact of never again submitting to a dependence, either upon this country or crown ; they have repeatedly foiled the attempts of Great-Britain to reduce them to her dependence, and refused to treat upon any other footing than that of independent nations. What is there in all this, similar to the present, or past state of Ireland ; and what can be meant by the proposal of offering to the Americans the same terms we have granted to the Irish, unless a pretext for involving this country in all the miseries of a new war, to support propositions which we are sure will be rejected with contempt ?—Will these terms be offered to the Congress ?—But the Congress have no more power or right to accept them, than the British parliament would have to abdicate the independence of this country, and make it an appendage to France or Spain.—Nay less.—For a British parliament we all know is omnipotent ; an attribute which I believe has never yet been claimed by Congress, who are only the  
deputies

deputies of the several states, to transact whatever business relates to the common interests of the confederacy. Besides, we have some reason to guess at their sentiments upon this subject, by their treatment of the British Commissioners in the year 1778.---Shall we then offer these gracious terms to each of the several states that compose the American confederacy? But I have yet heard of no overtures from any of the provincial governments, which should make us hope that they would be accepted; and we know it to be a fundamental article of the American union, that any state, which shall presume to treat of a separate peace, shall be accounted a deserter of the common cause, and a public enemy. No way therefore would remain, as we can neither expect the Congress, or any of the provincial governments, to treat with us upon these terms, but to have the gracious proposals of a repentant government printed and dispersed over the country, for the benefit of individuals. And as the Americans have already had some experience of our methods of protecting them, I leave every one to conjecture the probable success of such a measure; more especially if we add to it the late vote of the House of Commons against carrying on an offensive war in America. In the mean time I should fear, that these inconveniencies might result from such a step. The Congress  
would

would not fail to pass the most indignant votes upon the occasion; they, and all the friends of the established governments, would paint this conduct of the English nation in the blackest colours of perfidy and deceit. They would represent us as a nation devoid of honesty and sincerity; so determinately inimical to the liberties of America, that we never, even when we assumed the most pacific appearances, could lay aside the idea of enslaving the colonies; that as our hostilities were replete with every species of cruelty, so were our negotiations with treachery and falsehood. “ What are these pretended  
 “ offers (would they add) but a repetition of the  
 “ same insidious arts, which they have so often  
 “ ineffectually tried already? They know your  
 “ prudence and your valour, when united; they  
 “ know that you are neither to be subdued by  
 “ force, nor circumvented by negotiation, and  
 “ therefore they again have recourse to their  
 “ wonted arts, and attempt to dissolve that union  
 “ which renders you so formidable. It is im-  
 “ possible for that haughty nation to consider you  
 “ in any other light than that of slaves, eman-  
 “ cipated for a moment, but destined sooner or  
 “ later to return to her domination. Even when  
 “ all the rest of Europe shall have admitted your  
 “ independence, and solicited your alliance, you  
 “ will be honoured with no other title than that  
 “ of rebels by Great-Britain. The hatred that  
 “ she



“ she nourishes against you, for your emancipa-  
 “ tion, is as unchangeable and eternal as her  
 “ purpose of reducing you again to her do-  
 “ minion, and making you pay the accumulated  
 “ punishment of your too successful resistance.  
 “ This is the spirit which alike animates her wars,  
 “ and dictates her proposals of peace. In the  
 “ one, she has ever been a cruel and vindictive  
 “ enemy; in the other, she is a false, insidious  
 “ friend. Even now, amidst all her professions  
 “ of returning amity, she cannot hide the venom  
 “ which is rankling in her heart, or conceal the  
 “ intolerable arrogance which has so long guided  
 “ all her councils.—Does she offer to treat about  
 “ a peace so necessary to her own affairs?—It is  
 “ in such a manner, as proves, that she still con-  
 “ siders herself as your rightful sovereign, and you  
 “ as revolted subjects, on whom she confers a  
 “ favour, in remitting some part of your merited  
 “ punishment. Though baffled so often, and  
 “ disgraced, she still treats with you as a superior;  
 “ and thinks the honour of her alliance cheaply  
 “ purchased by you, at the expence of national  
 “ honour and independence. Yes, that very in-  
 “ dependence which you possess as absolutely as  
 “ any people in the universe, she pretends to mo-  
 “ dify, and graciously contenting herself with  
 “ bereaving you of more than half your rights,  
 “ is willing that you should hold the rest by the  
 “ charter of her concession. But it is impossible

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“ that

“ that you should be deceived by such contempt-  
 “ tible arts as these; or accept the olive as a pledge  
 “ of peace, whose leaves are incapable of con-  
 “ cealing the serpent which entwines its branches.  
 “ Her offers are too openly insidious, and the  
 “ malignity of her intentions breaks forth too  
 “ glaringly, through the veil of dissembled friend-  
 “ ship, with which she endeavours to conceal it.  
 “ She sees the impossibility of conquering you in  
 “ the field, and therefore has recourse to nego-  
 “ ciations, which she hopes may win their way  
 “ where arms would fail. She wishes to make  
 “ you lose the confidence of your allies, and the  
 “ esteem of Europe; thus will you be the more  
 “ exposed to her future machinations. She  
 “ wishes to scatter feuds, disunion and distrust  
 “ amongst the several states that compose the  
 “ American confederacy, and to arm them one  
 “ against the other, that the whole may be more  
 “ easily oppressed and enslaved. This is the  
 “ reason why she refuses to treat with those  
 “ whom you have appointed to be the arbiters of  
 “ peace and war. She knows too well their vigi-  
 “ lance, their prudence, their inflexibility; she  
 “ fears to meet the guardians of your liberty in  
 “ council, as much as to encounter your armies  
 “ in the field; she therefore endeavours to ensnare  
 “ the ignorance and credulity of individuals, and  
 “ by scattering secret discontents and jealousies,  
 “ to open a way for her usurpations. But go-  
 “ vernments

“vernments that are founded upon principles  
 “of justice, and who claim no power but what  
 “is given them by common suffrage, are unac-  
 “quainted with the fears and low suspicions  
 “which never fail to accompany tyranny. We  
 “therefore submit her proposals to you, con-  
 “scious that there is but one light in which every  
 “friend to American liberty can consider them.  
 “Nor do we fear, that those who have toiled so  
 “nobly through such a contest, to establish the  
 “foundations of the only free governments in the  
 “universe, will tamely yield, without an equiva-  
 “lent, the reward of all their labours.”

Should any one be disposed to treat me as the  
 advocate of American independence for expa-  
 tiating upon these topics; without either confessing  
 or denying the charge, I must observe, that it is  
 entirely foreign to the purpose. No one can  
 doubt that the Congress will refuse our overtures  
 for the future dependence of America, should such  
 overtures be made. Nor will they be contented  
 with a simple refusal; it is equally certain, that  
 they will employ their whole address to represent  
 these overtures in the blackest colours to the  
 body of the people. Whether they are actuated  
 by a noble ambition of raising the glory of their  
 country, or by the low desire of preserving their  
 own authority alone, this will equally be their  
 conduct. Even the advocates for proposing to  
 the Americans terms similar to those we have

granted the Irish, are of this opinion ; since they assert, that neither the agents of the French, nor of the Congress, will be able to prevent the reconciliation which they imagine must be the consequence of such liberal concessions. No one therefore can accuse me of singularity for entertaining an opinion, which is even admitted by those who differ widely from me as to the rest ; and the reflections which I have attributed to the Congress, are such as must present themselves even to the most superficial understandings.

Placed as I am, at an awful distance from the profound mysteries of government, I cannot pretend to decypher accurately the intentions of our rulers. Many circumstances may make it inexpedient that the mazes of state-policy should be exposed to vulgar eyes ; and therefore we ought to wait with a becoming patience, for the success of those negotiations which are now carrying on. But it is impossible for any man who has been an anxious witness of the public calamities, during the present ill-omened contest, not to form conjectures about the future. These conjectures it is the distinguished privilege of every Englishman to dare to offer to the public ; the meanest citizen enjoys this right in common with the proudest ; and the experience of some past years does not tend to prove, that either virtue or ability is engrossed by those who possess the highest stations.

I shall



I shall therefore observe, that the terms now offered to the Americans, either contain an acknowledgment of their independence, or proposals for some limited dependence on this country. In the first case, there is little reason to doubt, that they will be attended with the desired success: and a peace will be no longer delayed than till the different claims of the contending parties can be adjusted. On the second supposition, I will venture to predict, that all proposals for the dependence of America on Great-Britain, however modified, will be rejected with scorn by the Congress, and all the ruling powers in that country. I have sufficiently stated my reasons for this assertion; but it is a speculation of the most interesting nature to enquire, what will be the conduct of our ministers in case of such a refusal.

Some persons may possess that fervour of imagination which may lead them to think, that the revolution of power in this country will produce a similar one on the other side of the Atlantic. They doubtless dream, that when the British offers shall be dispersed over the country, the people will either compel their rulers to accept them, or take up arms to depose both Magistrates and Congress; that all America will forget both republicanism and independence, and unite to celebrate the praises of a patriot administration, in a transport of gratitude and loyalty. As to myself, whatever joy it would give me to see the inhabitants of  
Boston

Boston and Philadelphia approaching the throne with loyal and constitutional addresses, I cannot help fearing, that we are far removed from such an auspicious æra. We know that the attachment of mankind, either to national manners or forms of government, bears no proportion to the comparative excellence of the objects ; if indeed it be possible to establish a criterion to judge of things which are reducible to no common principles, and which vary with every gust of national prejudice or opinion. All the representations of European elegance or enjoyment would no more tempt a Kamtschatkan from his cave, or an Iroquois from his forest, than the love of savage liberty and independence would induce an English nobleman to throw aside the trappings of his exalted station, and take refuge in eternal snows, or pathless deserts. How often do we see the opinions that in one country are treated as the excess of wickedness and impiety, consecrated by altars, priests, and temples, amidst their neighbours ; while the reverence for a particular name or family, which is considered as loyalty and honour on one side of a river or mountain, shall be reprobated as treason and rebellion on the other !—Whatever reverence, therefore, we may feel for the English constitution, whatever blessings we may imagine it capable of imparting, it is impossible to deny, that the Americans may entertain very different ideas upon the subject. The splendour

dour of a court, the advantages of an hereditary monarchy, the sacred name of King itself may be in some minds so strongly associated with the ideas of unlimited power, and the purpose of enslaving mankind, that they may excite no favourable impressions. Whether from reason, obstinacy, or error, we know that these are the sentiments of the Americans; at least a large, if not the largest part of this nation has been accustomed to represent them in this light. But if the natural bent of their dispositions has long inclined them to independence and republicanism, it will be difficult to assign a reason why they should entertain more moderate ideas at present.

But should they persist in these ideas, should they reject the offered terms with the contempt which I am persuaded they will feel for every proposal of dependence, what conduct is this country to observe?—Are we to depart, at length, from all our lofty pretensions, and grant the long-contested boon; are all the fine-spun schemes of political connection to be dissolved; all hopes of returning allegiance to be sacrificed; are fifty thousand lives, and an hundred millions of treasure to be wasted in vain, and only to cement the foundation of thirteen republican states: or will our ministers, animated by a noble despair, pass all the bounds which they had before prescribed, and heedless alike of their own professions and the infamy which must attend such  
gross

gross inconsistency, openly engage themselves in a new war to subdue the Colonies ?

This enquiry is of so much importance, that the illustrious characters who compose the present administration will certainly give the people complete satisfaction upon the subject. They know how much we have already suffered, how repeatedly the public confidence has been abused already by former ministers ; they have long and feelingly arraigned the base duplicity and falsehood which used to prevail in our councils ; and it is to rescue us from evils like these, not from avarice or ambition, or the selfish desire of advancing themselves upon the ruin of others, that they have accepted the reins of government ; every motive of honour, shame, consistency must incline them to a nobler conduct ; nor will they deceive our wishes, or adopt the execrable arts to which we owe so many miseries.

Should they therefore be convinced that the dignity of the crown, the spirit of the constitution, the unity of the empire, require new wars, new sacrifices, and the imposition of heavier burthens, they will at least treat the public with sincerity, and acquaint it with the important change in their sentiments. This change may indeed happen, because there is the greatest difference between a Ministry and an Opposition, and many sources of information and motives of conduct must occur to the one which are totally denied the

the other. But they will lay before us the reasons which they now find to expect success, in schemes which they have so often declared impracticable; they will state the remaining resources of the nation that inspire them with these hopes, the intended expence and probable duration of the war. They will not inveigle us from year to year with false estimates and fallacious hopes; nor will they delude the unwary innocence of the country gentlemen with promises of lowering their taxes from the confiscations and forfeitures of America. Should it be necessary to send over new armies with better auspices, they will not do it under the mean pretence of defending ports, or garrisoning towns. They will also, I hope, think it necessary to assign the limits of their own exertions, and the period at which we may expect some respite, whatever be the fortunes of the war. Wherever these limits may be fixed, whether at public bankruptcy, a seizure of all private property for the use of government, or the general depopulation of the land, it will be some alleviation of our distresses, to look forward to a certain termination; and it will enable those who want faith or loyalty to wait the last extremity, to seek over the habitable globe some asylum from the blessings of the English constitution.

In the mean time, I shall endeavour to state those reasons which induce me to believe, that our present administration have either already acceded.

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to the independence of America, or mean to do it, if that condition should be insisted upon as a preliminary of peace. Those gentlemen while they were out of power have been accustomed to make the American war the subject of their severest and most popular invectives. According to them, the design to subdue the colonies was equally unjust, absurd, and ruinous. All the forces of the British empire were inadequate to such an attempt, and public bankruptcy must be the necessary consequence of persisting in the enterprize. With what energy, with what eloquence have they descanted upon our declining commerce, our involved finances, the distresses of our country-gentlemen, the miseries of the poor, and all the complicated calamities which this unnatural quarrel has produced ! How often and how feelingly have they adjured the late administration to stop the ravages of war, to restore peace to an exhausted nation, and to offer the Americans such terms as they were likely to accept ! With these sentiments, so often, and so solemnly expressed, they have entered upon the management of public affairs, in order to rescue their country from its difficulties by a speedy peace. But it is impossible they could mistake the terms upon which alone it was attainable. They were not ignorant of the treaties the Americans had entered into with France, of the answers of the Congress to former propositions, of the representations of the  
American

American agents ; every thing concurred to enforce the necessity of independence, as a preliminary or condition of peace. Unless therefore they intended giving up this article, their invectives and their professions must have been alike empty and insincere. For what was the crime of the last administration, at least after the commencement of the war, and the treaty of alliance, but refusing to grant the independence of America, and prosecuting the war to make her forego that claim ? That administration never refused to treat on terms short of independence, nor did the Americans ever make any conciliatory proposals to that purpose since the year 1776. But those ministers had repeatedly declared, that they never would acknowledge the independence of America, or desist from war till the colonies had given up the claim ; and it was to save us from the inevitable ruin which must have attended so rash and absurd a resolution, that the rising spirit of the nation has produced the present happy change. But this change has not been effected merely that the people might be amused with a vain shadow of negotiation ; this was a task for which our late ministers were as well qualified as their successors. Nor was it from the hope that the Americans would recede from their haughty declarations of independence, in favour of a new administration ; such a system might amuse the politicians of a coffee-house, or the editor of a newspaper, but was

too ridiculous and unfounded to be adopted by men of sense, who possessed the genuine sources of information. Least of all was it, merely that the conduct of the war might be shuffled from one hand to another : it is the war itself, and not the management of it, that the late opposition have so successfully arraigned ; nor have they ever succeeded so well in proving the incapacity of the late ministers for carrying it on, as in demonstrating that the proposed end itself was chimerical, unjust, and unattainable. But it was to stop the ravages of that pernicious war ; to vindicate our declining commerce and agriculture from new and more intolerable burthens \* ; to restore plenty to their country, and peace to Europe, that men of milder principles, the patrons of public liberty, and the genuine friends of the people, have been elevated to the honours they now enjoy.

Hence it seems to follow, that every friend of the present administration should strenuously vindicate them from the suspicion of meditating any coercive war against America. Such a charge must either include the excess of folly or duplicity :---folly, if they alone were ignorant of facts which every man of common abilities or information clearly understood ; and duplicity, if all their declamations in favour of peace meant no-

\* See the concluding observations.

thing more than to acquire the management of the war. But that degree of ignorance was absolutely impossible : nothing therefore remains but to accuse them of the grossest insincerity. For if, in the present situation of England, the public interest required that we should carry on a war to reduce our colonies to some modified degree of dependence, what must we think of men who have uniformly opposed the very measures they are compelled to adopt at last ? We know too well the uncertain nature of war ; that an opportunity once lost is frequently never to be regained ; and the influence which the opinion of vigour and perseverance exercises over the minds of men ; so great and universal, that mankind are much oftener conquered by their own fears than by the prowess of their enemies. The last ministry had some title to both these qualities ; they lavished the blood and treasures of the nation as profusely as if centuries of duration were comprized in the present moment, and as if America once nominally subdued would set us free from any future struggle ; nor did they ever pretend to humanity or remorse\* ;

\* “ The policy, as well as the benevolence of Great-Britain has hitherto checked the extremes of war, when they tended to distress a people, still considered as fellow-subjects, and to desolate a country, shortly to become again a source of mutual advantage ; but when that country professes the unnatural design, not only of estranging herself from us, but of mortgaging herself and her resources  
“ to

they plainly declared, with a most laudable sincerity, that if they could not conquer America, they wished to render it an uninhabited desert, a smoking pile of ruins. This was plain and manly; it was also consistent with a certain set of principles, which has generally had the sanction of divines, and, for the curse of human nature, has always been the favourite creed of princes and statesmen. But what would have been the conduct of their antagonists upon the supposition I am now examining? Equally convinced of the fatal necessity of these measures, they must have used their whole address and influence to render them abortive, when their success would have been attended with less loss and bloodshed than it would be at present; or else, against their own conviction, they must become the ministers of cruelty and injustice, and desolate the world merely that they may preserve their places \*. The celebrated vote of the House of Commons against prosecuting an offensive war with America, was

“ to our enemies, the whole contest is changed; and the question is, How far Great Britain may, by every means in her power, destroy, or render useless, a connection contrived for her ruin, and for the aggrandizement of France.

“ Under such circumstances, the laws of self-preservation must direct the conduct of Great Britain; and if the British Colonies are to become an accession to France, will direct her to render that accession of as little avail as possible to her enemy.” Manifesto of the British Commissioners.

\* Perhaps it may be necessary to read, “ that they may regain their places.”

certainly



certainly the work of the late minority; and this vote was a plain confession to all the world of our weakness and inability to pursue the war. That vote, with more than magic force, arrested all our military operations, disarmed our veteran bands, and added confidence and intrepidity to their enemies. That vote was a complete abdication of all our boasted sovereignty over America, and gave additional stability both to the Provincial governments and the authority of the Congress. For is it possible, that after such a declaration we could invite a single American to join our banners, or expose ourselves to his derision, by promising our protection? To me indeed, and to every man that is not possessed with the chimerical rage of making conquests, that vote appeared the only mark of public sanity which we have shewn for many years. Considered as the pledge and harbinger of approaching peace, it seemed wisely calculated to abate the animosity of the colonies, and merited all our gratitude and approbation; but if it was nothing more than a public leger-de-main to juggle the cards out of one hand into another, it certainly was the grossest instance of public absurdity that ever was exhibited. Nor would it solve the objection to suppose, that no offensive war was to be waged with the Americans, but only with the French, till they gave up the treaty of alliance and the independence of the colonies. If the French demand immoderate terms of peace,

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we shall be compelled to carry on a war, not against the independence of America, but for our defence. But it will be necessary to prove this in a satisfactory manner, both to this nation and to Europe at large, by exposing the terms that had been offered by us, and refused by them, otherwise it must appear the vilest political quibble that ever disgraced a nation; and only intended to lull one enemy asleep, till we had dispatched the rest, and could return with additional force for his destruction. Such conduct, I am afraid, instead of serving, would only prejudice our cause in the eyes of all mankind, by adding the imputation of treachery to that of violence; and would so totally alienate the Americans, by raising unconquerable suspicions of our sincerity, as would render all reconciliation impossible.

Nothing therefore remains but to suppose, that as our ministers are men of sense, and pledged to the people by every motive that can act on generous minds, they really mean to pursue that conduct which honour and public utility equally require; and to give us that peace, which it is certainly in their power to bestow, and which our difficulties and distresses so loudly demand. This is certainly the wish of the founder, and I believe at present of the most numerous part of the nation; and the experience of every hour will add new converts to the opinion. Whatever may be the frantic exultations or chimerical projects of a  
few,

few, the wiser individuals of every party, think that we have made a sufficient trial of fortune, and that the present strength of our enemies is so overproportioned to our own, that it is a sufficient glory to have been so well able to act upon the defensive. They see that the project of destroying the navies of France, Spain and Holland, is as chimerical as it is unjust; and that were it more practicable than it is, the rest of Europe is too intent upon its own commercial interests, to suffer the balance of naval power to be entirely destroyed, and so great an accession of strength thrown into hands that have not always used it with the greatest moderation. As to America, all parties are now agreed, excepting a few hot-headed zealots, that she has nothing to fear from the attacks of England; and that no future connection can subsist between the two countries, but the voluntary ties of friendship and mutual interest.

In this situation, every thing concurs to make the people desirous of accepting peace, and to induce the ministry to grant it. Every order of men will rejoice to see a termination of public difficulties and impositions, excepting the few who might have promoted a vile, partial interest, by the continuation of the war. Whatever may be the murmurs of that set of men, they will soon subside, extinguished by the voice of a grateful nation, that will sooner or later learn, by its own comparative feelings, the difference between a full  
 O and

and safe enjoyment of the fruits of its industry, a circumstance so necessary to all, and the empty triumphs of such a war as we now carry on, always balanced by contrary fortune, and attended by increasing poverty and distress. These reflexions appear to me so solid and unanswerable, and at the same time so important to this country in the present moment, that I could not resist the impulse of laying them before the public, whatever personal danger or inconvenience may attend the publication of unpalatable truths, so little disguised by artifice or flattery, that they may disgust even those who cannot dispute their authority.

It may be asked, why I alone have thus stood forth, and pretended to instruct a nation. Many will tax me with folly and presumption; many will arraign me as the friend of America, and enemy to the glory of my country; some may perhaps accuse me of secret interest, or disguised ambition. As to any of these charges, I should consider them with indifference and contempt, did not the nature of my subject itself prevent me from passing them over in silence. I shall therefore observe, that what I have here advanced, is little calculated to gain me either patronage or popularity; none but the real, disinterested friends of their country will either excuse the doctrines, or the boldness with which they are enforced; and the only character I can ever expect to gain by

by means like these, is, that of a turbulent, discontented man, incapable of leaguings with any party, and dangerous to all. As to the presumption which I have used, it is no greater than becomes a man; than, I think, becomes an Englishman: every one is equally interested in the welfare of that society of which he is a member; the meanest can but lose his all in common with the greatest; nor are the trappings of state and gewgaws of a crown of more importance to the monarch, than his cottage and humble fare to a peasant: neither nature, reason, or justice, has given to a few individuals the right of judging for all the rest.

But as to the heavier charge of favouring the liberties of America, far from attempting an apology, I shall both confess and glory in the accusation. England is indeed my country; there was a time when I gloried in the name; and I will presume to say, that few have shewn themselves more completely English, either in their principles or conduct, than myself. But I have never been able to cherish an exclusive partiality for any country at the expence of justice and humanity; and were I capable of doing it, the result of all my experience tends to convince me, that the real interest of no society ever was, or will be promoted by systems which contradict the plainest principles of morality. The widest range of empire, the most uninterrupted successes which



have attended the guilty projects of ambition, have never produced any other effect, than that of hurrying nations so much the more rapidly to their decline.

And much would it conduce both to the security and happiness of mankind, were this great truth more clearly understood, or more universally adopted as the principle of action. We might then expect to see honest ends pursued by honourable means; and a care of the essential interests of the people substituted to the paltry intrigues and machinations which have so long been the disgrace of courts and statesmen. Those who claimed superior privileges, or engrossed the powers and distinctions of society, would think it necessary to deserve them by other arts than a contemptible luxury, an habitual practice of low dissimulation, or a blind acquiescence in those pernicious schemes which alike sap the foundations of liberty and public happiness. In peace, we should see them intent on repairing the ravages of war, improving every mean of national defence, regulating the morals, and adding to the convenience of the people. Their care and wisdom would correct every abuse, before it encreased to a dangerous magnitude; nor would the art of legislation remain the greatest reproach to the human understanding, and the least improved by the progress of reason and philosophy. The laws, whose clearness and intelligibility are so essential to the  
happiness

happiness of the people, would be adapted to common use and understandings; not by reducing them to one general principle of promiscuous despotism, an improvement which many of their professors are so desirous of introducing, but by disentangling them from the customs and perplexity of barbarous ages, from the doubtful force of contrary decisions, and all the unmeaning rubbish in which they are now involved. Commerce and agriculture would flourish, not by the regulations of Boards of Trade, or the thousand absurd and contradictory provisions which disgrace our statutes, and deter the honest mechanic from the exertion of his ingenuity, but by securing to every man the produce of his labours, freeing industry from unnecessary restraints, and bounding the incroachments of that all-devouring monster the excise \*. Were it necessary to engage in wars, they would be so clearly just and unavoidable, that there could be no dispute about the expedience of supporting them : a wise œconomy would manage those resources which are drawn from the labours of the people, nor would the public confidence itself be made a reason for its abuse, or the public patience an apology for the profusion of a government.

These indeed are visionary schemes, sufficient to interrupt the gravity of a minister, should he

\* See the concluding Observations.

condescend to read them, or move the risibility of a financier. The deeper projects of modern policy are of a very different nature: they consist in melting down the vigour of a nation by private and public corruption, tolerating every species of abuse, invading the people's property by intolerable taxes, and under that pretence subjecting the most innocent and indifferent actions to restraint \*. Wars of the most destructive nature are entered upon for every purpose but that of national utility; and peace itself brings no alleviation of public burthens, nor always prevents their accumulation. At length, unnerved and harrassed, entangled on every side with the inextricable web of debts, taxes, and penal laws, as well as infected with the secret venom of all-pervading influence, a brave and generous people resigns all claim to privileges it has long disused, forgets that ever it was free, and sinks into the eternal sleep of servitude.

And so universal have been these arts, so general their success, that when we contemplate the different regions of the globe, we shall find they have almost all in turn become the victims of avarice and ambition. Asia has been the seat of immemorial tyranny; Africa sees all its coasts depopulated to satisfy the demand of Christian luxury for slaves; Europe itself is on the point of yield-

\* See the concluding Observations.

ing to the common destiny. Government, that partial benefit, but universal evil, becomes even from the moment of its institution, the engine by which the interests of the many are submitted to the caprices of the few. But moderate at first in its pretensions, and fearful of exciting too powerful an odium, it veils its baneful innovations under the semblance of order, public safety, and national defence. At length, like a stream, which, flowing through an immense extent, has been gradually swelled into a torrent by the accession of a thousand rivulets, it rises over every barrier, and deluges all with irresistible fury. Mankind have then no other choice, but to worship the idols of their own creation, or to be exterminated by the sword which they have foolishly trusted to their hands. From that instant, there are no bounds to insolence on one side, or degradation on the other. The noblest empires seem only created for the sport and riot of a few conceited families; all the productions of the earth are monopolized; the elements themselves become subject to human pride; and man, that believes himself the lord of all, is the only animal that starves amidst universal plenty.

This is the progress of every government; and however retarded in its course, it as invariably tends to despotism as rivers seek the sea by the laws of gravitation. Can any generous or humane mind, therefore, that is convinced of this truth,

truth, behold with disapprobation the struggles which are made in any corner of the globe for liberty? Will he not wish to see the spoilers of the world, the enemies of common happiness, checked in their course, and new asylums opened to the suffering part of the species? But should the contest happen in the very country of which he is a member, will not a much more powerful motive intervene, his own immediate interest; at least if he has learned to attach other ideas to the term than that of personal ease or safety, or the wish to share the plunder, and riot in the spoils of others?

It is upon these motives that I confess I have uniformly detested the American war. No example could arise from the subjugation of that country, excepting a repetition of the common cruelties, which under the name of justice or policy are practised in all conquered countries; and particularly in those where public violence is stimulated and excused by civil animosity. The least that could have been expected, would have been executions, banishment, confiscations of property, and the establishment of a military government to extinguish every spark of liberty before it should begin to flame. I cannot pretend to assign the limits of ministerial mercy; but those that begin by invading every acknowledged right, and demolishing every public barrier, will rarely end by replacing



replacing them \*. On the contrary, the success of the United States affords an awful spectacle, which

\* “ —But an English individual may by the supreme authority be deprived of liberty, and a colony divested of its powers, for reasons of which that authority is the only judge.” Taxation no Tyranny, p. 24.

“ The charter therefore by which provincial governments are constituted, may be always legally, and where it is either inconvenient in its nature, or misapplied in its use, may be equitably repealed; and by such repeal the whole fabrick of subordination is immediately destroyed, the constitution sunk at once into a chaos, the society is dissolved into a tumult of individuals, without authority to command or obligation to obey.” Ibid. p. 28.

“ The Legislature of a colony, let not the comparison be too much disdained, is only the vestry of a larger parish.”

Ibid. p. 44.

“ When they apply to our compassion, by telling us, that they are to be carried from their own country to be tried for certain offences, we are not so ready to pity them, as to advise them not to offend.” Ibid. p. 59.

“ If they are condemned unheard, it is because there is no need of a trial. The crime is manifest and notorious.”

Ibid. p. 60.

“ Let us give the Indians arms, and teach them discipline, and encourage them now and then to plunder a plantation. Security and leisure are the parents of sedition.” Ibid. p. 84.

“ If their obstinacy continues without actual hostilities, it may perhaps be mollified by turning out the soldiers to free quarters, forbidding any personal cruelty or hurt.”

Ibid. p. 85.

“ Nothing can be more noxious to society, than that erroneous clemency, which, when a rebellion is suppressed, exacts no forfeiture, and establishes no securities, but leaves the rebels in their former state.” Ibid. p. 87.

“ Their charters being now, I suppose, legally forfeited, may be modelled as shall appear most commodious to the mother-country. Thus the privileges which are found by experience liable to misuse, will be taken away, and those who now bellow as patriots, bluster as soldiers, and domineer as legislators, will sink into sober merchants and silent planters, peaceably diligent, and securely rich.”

Ibid. p. 88.

cannot be too often renewed for the instruction of mankind, and the information of sovereigns. It teaches the possessors of power to use that power with moderation, unless they would incur the hazard of losing what is so dear to their ambition. It teaches mankind at large, that neither the vaunted prowess of mercenary armies, the possession of unequalled riches, fleets that command the ocean, or all the resources of established authority, are sufficient to prevail over minds that have once determined to meet death rather than submit to slavery. Above all, the establishment of so many free states upon the purest principles of civil and religious liberty, affords the most consolatory prospects to every friend of humanity. The same spirit which has directed their foundations may still extend their limits, till the immense continent of America become the seat of happiness and population, and the refuge of all the miserable, from European tyranny. How different is this view of things from that which the narrow schemes of selfish policy would have presented ! that policy which, rather than emancipate mankind, wished to wage war with Providence, and stop the course of nature ; to desolate the noblest portion of the universe ; and rather make it the receptacle of noxious reptiles and beasts of prey, than suffer it to be inhabited by men that dare to think for themselves, and defend the privileges of their existence.

These were the general principles upon which I always reprobated the American war ; but when  
I considered

I considered its probable consequences upon the safety and happiness of this country,\* motives of private interest concurred to augment my just abhorrence. It was too evidently begun upon principles which had no connection with public utility, however the public credulity might be ensnared to suffer its continuance. The interest of every people consists in a due administration of the laws which defend their persons and their property, in a plenty of those things which the sustenance of life requires, and in a freedom from those restraints and impositions which have so baneful an effect on commerce and agriculture in other parts of the world \*. Could any thinking man believe, that

\* “ Ces encouragemens, pour la propagation du genre humain, paroîtront peut-être singuliers et même superflus à bien des gens ; mais ils changeront de sentimens, lorsqu'ils seront instruits, comme on le sçait par le rapport de différents curés, que beaucoup de payfans ne veulent plus faire d'enfans ou s'en tiennent à un très-petit nombre, pendant qu'ils en pourroient avoir d'avantage.” P. 236.

“ Personne n'ignore que l'agriculture est la base de la prospérité des états ; leur puissance augmente ou diminue en proportion de ce qu'elle s'accroît ou s'affoiblit.” P. 250.

“ Pour rétablir la culture des terres si fort négligée dans ce royaume, ainsi que je l'ai dit, il ne faut employer que des moyens libres et point de forces, qui ne réussiroient pas. L'agriculture, source de toutes les richesses, mere du commerce et des arts, ne veut pas plus être gênée que ses enfans, il est nécessaire de l'exciter, de l'encourager, mais lorsqu'on veut la contraindre, elle s'anéantit et disparoît avec eux ; tout système de finance, auquel elle ne servira point de fondement, ne sera qu'une vaine chimere, et qu'un bâtiment édifié sur la fable, prêt à écrouler à chaque instant.” P. 251.

“ Notre administration intérieure tend directement à décourager les cultivateurs, fatigués par les fréquentes visites des différents commis et employés, dont le nombre prodigieux ôte des bras à l'agriculture et coûte des frais immenses à l'état. Exposés à se voir ruinés d'un moment à

these salutary ends would be promoted by the desolation of America, and the destruction of its inhabitants?—Those gentlemen and merchants who assented to the measure, with the laudable intention of lowering their taxes, and encreasing their markets, must explain their own ideas: to me it always appeared evident, that war could neither promote our commerce, nor diminish our burthens. Could the burning of towns, and the destroying every species of property, increase the American demand for British commodities, or contribute to the employment of our manufacturers? As much as the extinction of liberty in America, and the establishment of a military government there, would have tended to preserve our rights at home, and diffuse the blessings of the English constitution.

But every thing that the opposers of that disastrous war predicted at its commencement, has since been fatally accomplished. Our burthens, instead of being diminished, are increased to that enormous magnitude which threatens the annihilation of commerce and agriculture. The neighbouring nations of Europe, instead of viewing with indifference or applause the chastisement of our rebellious colonies, have ranged themselves on their side, as was foretold; and whatever may

“ l'autre par leurs procès-verbeaux, ils tremblent toutes les fois qu'ils les voyent arriver chez eux.” P. 260.

These passages are all taken from *Memoire sur les Défrichemens, par le Marquis de Tourbilly*; a book which, although written by a Frenchman, contains, in my opinion, more sound sense, genuine political knowledge, and enlightened humanity (I speak with diffidence) than the forty-six volumes in folio of the Journals of . . . . at least since the commencement of the present century.

have



have been the original strength of the Americans, they have been so well supported by our ancient enemies and rivals, as to baffle all our past, and to be secure from all our future attempts. Instead of that contribution which was the avowed object of the war, we have lost the monopoly of their commerce, and must become, if we wish to regain any part of it, suppliants to those whom we disdained to acknowledge as our equals. More than an hundred millions have been already squandered without the reduction of a single province; and more taxes imposed on national industry than, I will venture to say, the exertion of ministerial œconomy will deliver us from in the ensuing century; though it should uniformly proceed in the same rapid torrent with which it has begun.

In the midst of these distresses, a gleam of hope breaks forth, if we deign to profit by our past miscarriages, and to learn wisdom from misfortune. Our late successes will facilitate the means of peace, if we are seriously inclined to propose or accept the terms which are adapted to our situation. Our enemies, wearied with the ravages and losses of a doubtful war, will easily consent to breathe from their toils; the Americans will gladly return to their former peaceable occupations; and all Europe will lose its jealousy of a nation, that even in the midst of victory can resign the spirit of conquest.

But perhaps the measure of our calamities is not yet full, and the pride and folly which have  
so



so long opposed our happiness, may demand severer expiations than any we have yet offered. Our late successes, indecisive as they are, and inadequate to any other object than the acquisition of peace, may raise new dreams of conquest, and renew the general infatuation. A people long accustomed to be deceived, too proud to yield, too indolent to reflect, too corrupted to be just or humane, may insist on kindling again the flames of war, and deluging the earth with blood. A minister selfish and interested like his predecessors, may feel more attachment to pomp and power than to the essential interests of his country. With boundless ambition, but a contracted heart, he may take advantage of popular delusions to violate his own professions ; or, yielding to that mighty influence against which he has so long declaimed, may steer the public vessel towards the very shoals he has so repeatedly pointed out, and, instead of making the port, seek for refuge amidst the storm.

In this case, I cannot expect to avoid the general fate, or to escape that ruin against which I have in vain endeavoured to warn my country. But amidst all the calamities which I foresee will burst upon us, it will be some consolation to me, to have discharged the duties of a virtuous citizen ; and without interest or ambition, without even the wish or hope of fame, to have opposed myself to the stream of public prejudice, and enforced those salutary truths, upon which depend the safety and happiness of the people.

SOME

SOME  
OBSERVATIONS  
UPON THE  
EXCISE-LAWS.

**A**S some of my readers may be unacquainted with the equity and mildness of the excise-laws in this free country, I shall take the liberty of specifying some few of the penalties which are inflicted by them.

By 5 Geo. III. c. 43. a penalty of 20l. upon every brewer who shall alter the position of any tun, cooler, &c. after the same has been set up, without giving notice in writing to the excise-officer.

By 11 Will. III. c. 21. a penalty of 100l. upon any brewer who shall use molasses, coarse sugar, honey or composition, or extract of sugar, in the brewing or working of his beer.

By the same act the same penalty upon every brewer who shall receive, or take into his custody, any quantity of these ingredients exceeding ten pounds. N. B. It is probable that the ingenious fabricators

fabricators of these two clauses did not know that the constituent part of all fermented liquors is nothing but sugar; consequently, all wort is only an extract of sugar, and every brewer that uses malt is subject to this penalty.

By the same act a penalty of 20l. or in default three months imprisonment upon every brewer's servant, or other person who shall be aiding in the crime of using any of these ingredients, or in conveying them into the house, brew-house, or other place belonging to such brewer. N. B. By this act any porter that carries eleven pounds of treacle or sugar to a brewer's house is subject to three months imprisonment.

By 11 Geo. I. c. 30. if any officer, on his searching any un-entered place, shall find candles either made or making, or tallow or other materials melting or melted, or cottons or rushes spread, or any copper, mould, or other utensil warm with tallow, &c. this shall be sufficient evidence to convict the offender, and subject him to the penalty of 100l. N. B. By this clause, I should suppose every man that keeps candles in his house, or melts grease for his cart-wheels, is subject to the penalty of 100l.

By 8 Ann. c. 9. a penalty of 40l. upon every person who shall use, or cause to be used in the inside of his dwelling-house, any lamp wherein any oil or fat (other than oil made of fish within Great Britain) shall be burnt for giving light.—

Thus,

Thus we see the wisdom of our parliament is not above the meanest offices, or the most degrading attentions. What an awful idea must it give foreign nations of our government, and what must be its care and circumspection in every weightier concern, when we thus see the Sovereign, the Lords spiritual and temporal, together with the virtual representatives of the people, gravely controuling the kitchens of the subject, and deciding in what manner he shall light himself to bed!

By 10 Geo. I. c. 10. a penalty of 200l. upon every person who shall make chocolate without making entry at the office, &c. Nevertheless, in consideration of the rights of free-born Englishmen, the following most gracious clause is added: That upon three days notice the officer may give private persons permission to make ditto for private use only, but not less than half an hundred weight of cocoa nuts at each time; and if within three days after finishing, it is not entered, brought to be stamped, and the duty paid, the person for whom the same shall be made, shall forfeit treble the value thereof.

By 12 Geo. I. c. 28. no dealer in cocoa-nuts shall dispose of less than twenty-eight pounds at a time, and then shall enter, in writing, the name and place of abode of the buyer, and on demand produce such account to the officer, on pain of

Q                      forfeiting

forfeiting 20l. for each pound of cocoa-nuts, and 20l. for default of entry.

By 9 Geo. II. c. 35. on information upon oath before any justice, that any person is lurking within five miles of the sea-coast or a navigable river, and that there is reason to suspect that he waits with intent to be assisting in the running of goods, such justice may grant a warrant for apprehending him; when, on his not giving a satisfactory account of himself, he shall be committed to the house of correction, there to be whipped and kept to hard labour not exceeding one month.—Here is a new crime created, “*novum et inauditum scelus*,” that of being within five miles of a navigable river or the sea. Had the makers of this law been apprehended and brought before an honest justice of the peace, is it probable they would all have been able to give a *satisfactory account* of themselves?

By 33 Geo. II. c. 9. every person making or keeping any wash, cyder, or other material fit for distillation, and having in his possession any still or stills, containing, separately or together, ten gallons or upwards, shall be deemed a common distiller for sale, and liable to the survey and duties.

By 2 Geo. III. c. 5. no distiller or dealer in any sort of spirituous liquors shall have any still, or number of ditto, unless such, if a single one, or such ditto taken together shall contain at least

one



one hundred gallons, on pain to forfeit for every such still 100l.

And such stills as shall contain separately less than one hundred gallons, shall be all placed in one room or workhouse, on pain to forfeit for every such still not so placed 100l.

By these clauses it appears, that every person who shall have in his possession a still of ten gallons, with any cyder, beer, &c. in his house, is a common distiller, whether he ever thought of distilling spirits or not, and is subject to the penalty of 100l. for not having stills to the amount of one hundred gallons.

By 6 Geo. I. every person who shall have in his custody above sixty-three gallons of arrack, rum, brandy, spirits, or strong waters, shall be deemed a dealer in such liquor.—I should be much afraid that most of our nobility and gentry, who pride themselves in keeping elegant tables, may by this act be proved common dealers. And were the law rigorously executed, what a check must it prove upon the only science which is at present studied by people of fashion, the science of the table!

By 12 Geo. III. c. 46. every distiller of low wines or spirits from corn, shall, before he begins to distil, provide at his own expence such fastenings to, &c. as shall be approved of in writing by the surveyor of the district, and shall also pay for

such locks and keys as shall be provided by the said surveyor ; and if any such shall presume to distil before such shall be provided, or shall refuse to pay for the locks, or to turn the discharge-cock of, &c. as required, he shall forfeit 50l.

By the same act, if any person, by any contrivance whatsoever, shall open any still-head, charge-cock, or wash-pump, after the same has been secured, before it shall be opened by the proper officer, or shall wilfully damage any lock or other fastening, he shall forfeit for every such offence 200l.

By 2 Geo. III. c. 5. No wash that shall be brewed for the extracting spirits for exportation, shall be pumped into the still but in the presence of an officer, and the low wines immediately run off into an entered vessel, and then kept till gauged; and if any such distiller shall act contrary thereto, or obstruct the officer in the gauging, taking samples of the spirits, or trying the proofs, &c. or shall clandestinely convey away any of the spirits, or wash, or low wines, &c. he shall forfeit for every such offence 500l.

By 9 Ann. c. 12. every person whatsoever who shall plant, or have growing any hops, shall yearly, on or before August the first, give or send notice in writing under his hand, at the next office of excise, or to the officer of the district, of all the hop-grounds in his possession, and the names

names of the parish, township, or place wherein the same shall lie, with the names of the owner, tenant, or occupier thereof respectively, on pain of forfeiting 40s. for every acre.—This wise law I suppose was intended for the encouragement of agriculture; perhaps the same enlightened policy may hereafter extend it to all the productions of the country. The farmer is already subjected to the inquisitorial visits of ecclesiastical tyranny for every vegetable that grows: surely he will not complain to have the same privileges granted to the excise-man, for the exigencies of the state.—What a number of blessings have the Americans lost, in so obstinately refusing these most essential parts of the English constitution!

By 33 Geo. II. c. 7. no person making malt shall set up, alter, or use any utensil, or place for making or keeping of ditto, without first giving notice in writing to the proper officer, on pain of 50l.

By 3 Geo. III. c. 13. every maker of malt for home consumption, shall, at least, twenty-four hours before he shall begin to wet any corn for malt, give notice in writing to the officer, under penalty of 100l.

By the same act, if any maltster having given such notice, and begun to wet any corn, shall neglect or refuse to proceed to cover the whole with water, and to continue the same so covered, for the full space of forty hours from the time of its  
being

being first wet and covered, or shall begin to wet at any other time than between the hours of four in the morning and nine in the evening, he shall forfeit 100l.

By 10 Ann. c. 19. every person who shall make any paper, pasteboard, mildboard, or scaleboard, or shall print, paint, or stain, any ditto, (for sale or not for sale) shall give notice in writing at the next office, of his name and place of abode, and when he intends to make the same, on pain of forfeiting 30l.

By 1 Ann. c. 21. if any person whatsoever shall remove or convey any salt from any salt-works, or place thereunto belonging, without due entry of the same, and payment of the duties thereof, or giving security for, or without warrant, ticket, or licence, any officer may not only seize the salt so removed, but also apprehend and carry such offender before a magistrate; when, if he shall not forthwith pay down the penalty, and no sufficient distress can be found whereupon to levy the same, he shall be committed to the house of correction, there to be whipped, and kept to hard labour, not exceeding one month.

By 5 Geo. III. c. 43. makers of hard soap are to provide proper covers (to be approved of in writing by the hand of the surveyor) to their coppers, pans, and other utensils, which the officer is to lock and seal down when the fire is damped, and the surveyor to provide the locks, keys, and  
other

other fastenings, pipes, &c. at the expence of such maker; and if any ditto shall not provide such covers, or refuse to pay for the locks, or open any copper before the same is duly unlocked, he shall forfeit 20l.

And by the same act, any maker that shall open or cause to be opened any copper, pan, utensil, &c. &c. after the same shall be securely locked and sealed down by the officer, or shall wilfully break or damage any such lock, seal, &c. forfeits 100l.

By 10 Ann. c. 19. all persons before they shall make any starch, are to give notice in writing to the officer, of their names, places of abode, and of their work-houses, store-houses, &c. for keeping materials, and of all utensils for making, on pain of 50l.

By 10 Geo. I. c. 10. no coffee, tea, cocoa-nuts, chocolate, exceeding the quantity of six pounds weight, shall be removed, or carried from any part of this kingdom, by land or by water, without a permit or certificate, on pain of forfeiting the same.

By 12 Geo. III. c. 46. all dealers in and sellers of tea who shall receive into their custody any bohea, congo, fouchong, or other Pekoe tea, shall (on the most conspicuous part) mark each and every cannister, bag, jar, tub, box, cask, or other package in which they shall keep any ditto, with the word black; and also shall mark every cannister



ter, &c. in which they shall keep any other kind of tea than, &c. with the word green.

The officer who is to survey and take the stock of tea at the warehouse, &c. made use of for keeping tea by dealers, &c. shall keep a separate and distinct account of the black tea, and of the green tea; and if such officer shall find any increase, either of green or black tea, in the custody of any such dealer, over and above, &c. such increase shall be taken (unless accounted for) to be made by tea for which no duties were paid, and may be seized and carried away by such officer.

By the same act all dealers, &c. who shall sell or consume the same in small quantities, under the weight of six pounds, shall keep separate and distinct accounts of all the black tea and of all the green tea which they shall sell or consume in small quantities, in each day, under that weight, on pain of forfeiting 100l.

It is necessary to observe, that these clauses are all extracted from Mr. Addington's Abridgement of the Penal Statutes, and make but a very small part of the body of the excise-laws. The whole volume contains three thousand nine hundred and twenty crimes and offences, of which a very considerable portion, if not the greatest, is constituted by the acts which relate to the revenue. The taxes which have been imposed in order to subdue the Americans, and raise a revenue from them, which

which was the great object of our late most unequalled Financier, are sufficiently known ; I will therefore only mention the act for laying a tax upon servants, which, though perhaps intended only to affect the rich, has turned out a plentiful source of oppression to the poor. The clause is the following : “ Every master or mistress who  
 “ shall retain or employ any male-servant in the capacity of maitre d’hotel, house-steward, &c. &c.  
 “ &c. and the respective helpers in the stables, of such coachman, groom, or postillion, or *in the capacity of a gardener (not being a day-labourer)*  
 “ park-keeper, game-keeper, &c. &c. respectively chargeable by the said act,” &c.

It should appear evident to common sense, that the exception of not being a day-labourer, admits that a person employed in the capacity of a gardener may be a day-labourer. Every one who is acquainted with the nature of the country knows, that it is not the circumstance of working in a garden or a field that constitutes a day-labourer, but that of being hired and retained by the day, for any kind of work that may be agreeable to his master. A man may plough, reap, mow, hedge, work in a garden, and if he is retained by the day, he certainly is a day-labourer ; or he may do all these, and if he is hired by the year, he is not a day-labourer. Nevertheless, upon several appeals from the Commissioners of the Excise, the opinion of the Judges has uniformly been, that if a man

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works

works a day in the gardens of fifty different persons, each of those persons is respectively subject to pay the tax of twenty shillings per annum, although his garden may not consist of twenty yards in extent, or contain twenty cabbages. From this cause, an universal terror has pervaded the country, and scarcely a farmer dares to prune a vine, or clip a gooseberry-tree in this land of freedom, from the fear of being metamorphosed into a gentleman, and forced to pay an annual tax for his gardener.

This appears to me a sufficient specimen of the equity and mildness of our excise-laws, that seem invented to plague, torment, and oppress the most useful and industrious part of mankind.

In our present situation, when we are debating whether we shall submit to an *inglorious peace*, as I hear it called in every coffee-house, or nobly engage in a fresh war, to annihilate the navies of France and Spain, I think it cannot be deemed foreign to my subject, if I turn the attention of my readers to the burthens we already suffer. I have remarked, that many of those most useful and necessary orders of men, stock-jobbers, contractors, and, indeed, gentlemen of almost every denomination, who now from the purest motives are ready to advance money for the public exigencies, contented with their own honest profits, and unincumbered by the difficulties which every new  
tax

tax produces among the lower orders, are apt to consider this subject with rather too much indifference. A citizen, who without either trouble or ingenuity clears from twenty to an hundred thousand pounds by every loan, and sees at home the modest plenty of thirty or forty dishes to his dinner, is apt to forget that every ragout he eats, may have deprived an hundred of his fellow-creatures of their daily bread. But as to myself, (and I own there may be much selfishness in the case) as I have never had either merit or consequence enough to be offered place, pension, contract, or even a competent share in the new loan, I have no feelings but what are common to the great body of the people ; and, therefore, I cannot help wishing to preserve some small share of the patrimony and liberty which I have inherited by the laws of my country. I shall conclude with making the following reflections, which I submit to the consideration of the public, and which, whether true or false, certainly merit their whole attention.

It appears from the extracts I have given, and it will appear more clearly to whoever takes the trouble of consulting the excise-laws themselves in the statute-book, that every article of necessity and convenience in this free country is already burthened with the most oppressive impositions, which promise from all past experience to be perpetual.

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That

That almost all our resources are already mortgaged, invaded, alienated; and that the mere political existence of the present system of government requires a degree of external commerce, and internal consumption, which it is very doubtful whether the necessities of the people will admit.

That our taxes and impositions are so numerous and varied, that it is now a science which I am told supports many worthy and respectable characters, to hunt after the few solitary manufactures, and privileged kinds of industry, which have hitherto escaped the claws of ministerial rapacity.

That this truth is so evident, that one of the last efforts of a late great Financier, from whom this country has received so many benefits, was a tax which struck at the root of all national industry, a tax upon inland carriage. It is very remarkable, that a similar tax is enumerated by Dr. Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*, as one of the causes of the decline of the Spanish monarchy.

That under the pretence of raising a revenue, every part of human life, and every employment of man (for I can scarcely call the contemptible pleasures and pursuits of the rich by that name), has been gradually monopolized by the government, and partly interdicted, partly subjected to the most odious and degrading restrictions.

That



That these restrictions being in their own nature most odious and intolerable to every ingenuous mind, consisting in exposing the house of almost every man that practises any useful trade or profession to the continual visits and insolence of excise-men, who are to have unlimited entrance all the day at their own demand, and all the night, with only the intervention of a constable, must have a most powerful influence in discouraging every species of useful industry : and I actually am acquainted with a gentleman who has just engaged in a considerable manufactory, which will save some hundred thousands a-year to this country, if it succeeds, who has refused the offer of having the duties taken off from the principal article of his consumption, rather than expose himself to the influence of the excise-laws.

Nor can I help remarking, that the same government which has with so little scruple invaded the dearest privileges of its subjects in indifferent matters, has thought fit to indulge them in the most unbounded licence, as to two of the most fatal vices which can infect the morals of the lower orders, gaming and drunkenness ; by the yearly lotteries which drain the poor of the capital of their scanty earnings ; and by ale-houses, which it has long been the established policy to encourage in every part of the kingdom.

I must also add, should it even expose me to the imputation of a libel, that the House of Commons,

mons, which, while it was under the immediate influence and controul of the people, was so remarkable for the parsimony of its grants, has, ever since the Revolution and the Septennial Act, acquired an indifference to the interests of the people, which would be absolutely incredible, did we not daily feel it in the increase of our burthens.

That the ease with which more than two hundred millions of the public money has been granted by our pretended representatives, without obtaining the redress of a single grievance, or a single stipulation in favour of the people, whose industry is taxed to pay the interest, may give us great lights into the nature of *virtual* representation; and enable us to guess the œconomy with which the property of the Americans would have been managed, could they have been brought to submit to virtual representation too.

That too many of the country-gentlemen, either with a shameful ignorance of all political knowledge, or with a still more criminal indifference, have been contented with the apparent immunity of their own property, since the beginning of the present century, and delivered up, one after another, every class of their fellow-citizens to a despotism equal or superior to what is exercised in the most slavish governments.

But that in this conduct, they have only exhibited

bited the contracted policy of a man who refuses his assistance to extinguish a fire, because it is a few houses removed from his own, without observing that the flame approaches nearer and nearer every instant to himself ; for that, every other subject of taxation being exhausted, the necessities of a new war, or the mere deficiencies of a peace, may compel that measure which they can never think of without horror. And who will pity them, if they in turn experience the hardships they have been inflicting, who have so repeatedly sacrificed the public cause, and are, at this instant, discouraging the honest exertions of the people to procure a more equal representation, from the fear of losing their family-boroughs, and seeing an equal land-tax ?

That the general spirit, industry, and ingenuity of the English people, animated by that portion of liberty which they have hitherto preserved, had produced the power and opulence which the nation enjoyed at the commencement of the present war, not the wisdom of our government, or the public spirit of our representatives ; since it seems to have been their business to discourage, burthen, and repress that spirit and industry by all the means within their power.

But, that there is a term beyond which taxation cannot be extended, without destroying itself, and the people upon whom it is exercised ;  
and

and that it is the opinion of many of our ablest speculators, that it has nearly, if not altogether, reached that point in this nation.

That it will be necessary not to render the condition of the laborious classes of mankind too miserable in this kingdom, lest they should migrate to the neighbouring countries, many of which appear to be adopting sounder principles of policy, in respect to civil and religious liberty, and particularly to America. And that all laws to prevent migrations are as nugatory as those which tend to prevent the exportation of bullion; since industry will always attract gold, and liberty men.

That perhaps the most salutary event for this nation, would be the sinking the whole national debt at once, by stated equitable proportions, as the Americans have done their paper-money; or should that appear too violent a measure, to lay a general tax upon every species of property both real and personal for its gradual reduction, giving the people the most inviolable securities, either by erecting a tribunal of their own choosing, and under their immediate and absolute controul, or by some other method that shall be adopted by them collectively, not by the representatives of Cornish boroughs and deserted farm-houses, for the faithful application of such a tax.

That if the people are to have no redress in  
respect

respect to the mutilated state of their representation, it might be of considerable service to institute public examinations for members of parliament before they take their seats, and to require certificates of their having wisely and honestly managed their own property, before they take upon them to dispose of that of others. And that a knowledge of the first principles of commerce and agriculture, with the laws and resources of his country, is almost as necessary a qualification in a public character, as an acquaintance with gaming, painting, fiddling, and the *sçavoir vivre*.

And lastly, that if the people of England expect redress of their wrongs, or alleviation of their sufferings, they must take the trouble of attending to their own affairs ; and not expect that either ministers or representatives will be wiser and honest than themselves.

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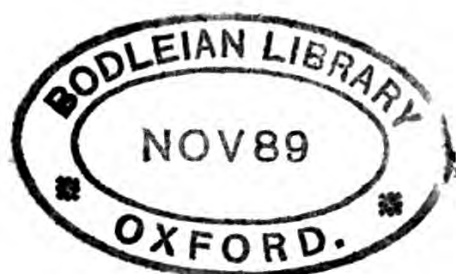
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**H E following Letter was written in the year 1776, at the request of an American gentleman, who desired to know my sentiments upon the Slavery of the Negroes, and professed an intention of restoring all his own to liberty, could he be convinced that duty required the sacrifice. I therefore sent him the following essay, the imperfections of which may perhaps be something extenuated by the precipitation with which it was written. It has lain by me many years in obscurity ; nor did I choose to produce it during the progress

iv    A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

gress of the American contest. Since the happy termination of that disastrous war, I have shewn it to some of my particular friends, who have honoured me so far as to desire copies, and to suggest that its publication might not be unattended with utility. After reflecting upon the subject, I have chosen to comply with their wishes, and present this Fragment to the public; because, whatever discredit it brings upon my head, it may contribute to establish the sincerity of my heart: and if a single human being should by my means be restored to happiness, it is an ample recompence for all the dangers I may incur as an author. Should  
this

## ADVERTISEMENT. v

this essay ever reach America, it may perhaps displease those who have not learned to discern friends from flatterers, and to distinguish between the language of truth and calumny. Those, on the contrary, who are enlightened by a more extensive knowledge of human nature, may perhaps respect an Englishman, who, after daring to assert their cause through all the varied events of the late revolution, dares now with equal intrepidity assert the cause of truth and justice, and of that part of the human species whose wrongs are yet undressed, and almost unpitied. Should it be asked why I rather publish a Fragment than a complete essay, I

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vi      A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

can only answer, that I respect truth so much, that I am not inclined to violate it even as an author; and that this Letter having been really written in the year 1776, and being still in the possession of the gentleman to whom it was sent, I do not choose to piece it with additions in the year 1784.

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## FRAGMENT, &c.

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S I R,

**I** Was extremely surpris'd at receiving a letter, in an unknown hand, which desired me to give my sentiments relative to the Slavery of the Negroes ; till reading to the end, I recollected the name of a gentleman, whom I had the pleasure of seeing with Mr. Laurens\*. Much as I am flattered by finding

\* Colonel John Laurens, son of Henry Laurens, Esq. formerly President of the Congress. This young gentleman was sent over to England for his education, where he endeared himself to all who knew him, by his abilities and affectionate temper. In the beginning of the year 1777 he joined the American army, and from that time was foremost in every danger. He was present and distinguished himself in every action of the army under General Washington, and was among the foremost that entered the British lines at York Town. He fell August 27, 1782, one of the last victims to this disastrous war, in an obscure skirmish with a foraging party. For several days preceding the action, he had been confined to his bed by a raging fever, but left it at the call of duty, and met his death.

Those who were intimately acquainted with this young man, will rank his martial qualities, by which he is chiefly known, as lowest in the catalogue of his virtues. They will lament the untimely loss of a clear discerning mind that united the solid powers of the understanding with inflexible integrity. In him, his country has lost one of its noblest and most useful citizens ; his father the kindest and most affectionate friend ; and all the wretched a generous and disinterested patron.— O my unfortunate country ! must I add, that when I consider all the leaders of thy factions, all thy hereditary magistrates, all that are destined to engross thy dignities or share thy spoils, I seek in vain a Colonel John Laurens ?

my opinion of any consequence with a gentleman of whom I have heard so advantageous a character, I am still more surprised, that he can ask it upon such a question ; a question which I am sure his own humanity and good sense will be sufficient to decide, if he attends, for a moment, to their dictates. I respect you, Sir, too much to doubt the sincerity of the declaration you make, when you profess to be guided by reason and morality upon this question ; for this is the only arbitration which any man can have to consult upon a subject like this : where they are silent, the voice of the whole world ought to be disregarded ; and where they approve, the dissent of all mankind can have no influence upon a mind like yours.—But as you expressly desire to know my sentiments, I must wave both preface and ceremony, and address you with the modest freedom that becomes one man when he is  
speak-

speaking to another upon the most important question in the universe. As a member of that society which has now made a solemn appeal to Heaven, and taken up arms against the nation to which it owes its establishment, you must admit that there are such things as right and justice, to which the whole human species have an indefeasible claim. Indeed, unless there be such a thing as justice, it is in vain we enquire about its precepts, or refer to its arbitration. He that admits no right but force, no justice but superior violence, arms every man against himself, and justifies all excesses. If it be lawful to injure because we can ; if we may seize the property of another, insult his person, or force him to labour for our luxury or caprice, merely because he is weaker ; this principle will be equally fatal to ourselves, when fortune shall strip us of that  
power

power which is our only prerogative, and shift the plea of superiority. You are to remember that, upon this supposition, your slaves, the instant they shall become the strongest, will have a right to the services of yourself and every other gentleman of the southern colonies ; will have a right to force you to labour naked in the sun to the music of whips and chains ; to rob you of every thing which is now dear to your indolence, or necessary to your pleasures ; to goad you to every species of servile drudgery, and punish you for their amusement and caprice ; will have a right to exhaust your youth in servitude, and to abandon your age to wretchedness and diseases : in one word, Sir, they will have a right to use *you*, as you do *them*. Let us, therefore, leave principles which can be maintained by no one but a professed enemy to mankind ; who would

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at one stroke extirpate every thing which alleviates the evils of life, and arm every man in an eternal war against his fellow-creatures, to enquire what are the real dictates of that justice, whose existence, I am persuaded, we both allow. You, therefore, admit there are certain claims, which, for want of a better name, we call rights, to which the human species has an indisputable title. To express myself in other words, " There is a method of pursuing our own happiness in such a manner, that we may promote the general good at the same time ; or, at least, not interfere with it." This, our reason assures us, is the privilege of every created being ; and while he confines himself within these bounds, we feel the most cordial approbation of his conduct. We love, and esteem, and sympathize with him, from the very constitution of our nature. On the contrary, when-

ever

ever any one disturbs or injures a being acting in this manner, or prevents him from attaining the good to which he is impelled, we feel our hatred and indignation most forcibly excited against the aggressor. We consider such a character as armed against the welfare of the world, and as one who is endeavouring to make the common good subservient to his own selfishness. I appeal to the generosity of your own nature, for the existence of these principles. Have they not, a thousand times, animated you to acts of virtue and humanity, as well as inspired you with an involuntary reverence for all who acted from their impulse? Have they not often pleaded the cause of the wretch that lay trembling and defenceless at your feet, and, in spite of the prejudices of your country and education, whispered to your mind that one human being ought not to hold

hold his existence by the tenure of another's will? Do not these principles now inspire you, and frequently impel you beyond the bounds of prudence and safety, while what you call your country's cause animates you to exertion? But this cause is only the united cause and interest of every particular man; those rights which the great Creator taught him to discover when he gave him reason, which he urges him to defend by passion, and which a mind like yours prizes beyond all the gratifications of sense, and dares to grasp at even while it is perishing. This appears to me to be a plain and concise deduction of morality, which means nothing more than that method or rule of conduct by which the whole human species may attain the greatest possible degree of happiness. And I rather choose to express myself so, because I thus comprehend all sects and opinions.

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The religious man allows that the happiness of the species is the great end of the Deity, which he promotes by the rewards and punishments of a future state : the disciple of Shaftesbury understands this, when he talks of the beauty of virtue and the love of order ; and even the gloomy pupil of Hobbes, who resolves every thing into self-interest, must allow the existence of moral distinctions, so far as they influence the welfare of the species. This universal morality appears to me to be the only rational and legal foundation of all human government ; which ought to be nothing more than the application of this general rule to particular societies, and the enforcing it by civil establishments. If, therefore, it be granted, that the rights of a nation are nothing more than the rights of every man in it, and that all just and legal authority supposes a delegated power

entrusted

entrusted solely for the purpose of promoting the general good; it will appear evident that every individual in the universe possesses certain rights, which no man can divest him of without injustice, unless he be guilty of some crime against society which exposes him to its vengeance. Hence it follows, that whenever any nation attacks the rights and happiness of another nation, it deserves to find its own destruction in the attempt; and whenever any individual presumes to exercise this species of authority over his fellow-creatures, he must be a tyrant and an oppressor whom it is permitted to destroy by every possible method. Whoever would deny this, must either deny the existence of right and justice entirely, and then it is in vain to argue; or must shew some natural distinction by which one part of the species is entitled to privileges from which the other is



excluded. The first supposition I have already considered, and the second is altogether absurd : for all alterations and distinctions among mankind solely arise from civil government, which has no other just foundation than natural right ; and natural right, for that reason, must be a principle of higher authority than civil government. Whenever, therefore, civil government tends to destroy and confound the rights of nature, it ceases to have any claim to our obedience ; it becomes tyranny, corruption, and despotism, a pest instead of a blessing, and subversive of every purpose for which it was instituted, or ought to be continued.

I am extremely fearful of expressing myself obscurely upon so abstract a subject, and must, therefore, though with the hazard of prolixity, attempt to place it in a different light.—If you imagine any number

of

of the human species assembled in some particular part of the globe, without any form of government established among them ; it is evident, that these individuals may either live together in such a manner as to produce mutual comfort and assistance, or may be the cause of continual misery to each other. No proposition in the mathematics can be investigated with more precision than the methods of conduct which have these contrary tendencies. Every disposition which inclines one man to assist another, or to avoid giving him offence and doing him injury, must necessarily contribute to the common welfare ; which would be perfect, were these dispositions cultivated in the greatest possible degree. On the contrary, every disposition, which, either by fraud or violence, tends to interrupt the personal security of individuals, or to deprive them of  
those

those things which they have acquired by their industry, is detrimental to the sum of happiness, and would, if carried to the greatest possible degree, entirely destroy that part of the species.—In this view of things, morality arises from necessity, and comprehends “certain rules of conduct founded upon the relations which beings endowed with particular faculties bear to each other; which rules, when properly observed, produce happiness to society; but when violated or neglected, as necessarily occasion misery as fire or pointed substances excite pain, when they act too forcibly upon the nerves.”

I hardly think that the greatest sceptic will deny these distinctions, founded upon facts as certain as the impression of any material substance upon our senses. If we,  
now,

now, proceed a little farther, we shall find that the dispositions which produce these different kinds of conduct are by the moralists expressed by different names, and enforced by different motives, according to their several systems; while natural religion adds its sanctions, and inclines us to believe that the Deity himself, who has displayed so great an attention to the happiness and preservation of his creatures here, may extend his benevolence to another stage of existence, and compensate the evils sometimes unmeritedly suffered below. But if we admit the evidence of revealed religion, the scheme of human things is perfect as it is august; the clouds which overshadowed our horizon are dissipated, and the gradual progress of triumphant virtue, through dangers and difficulties, to eternal happiness, is displayed and ascertained.

Having

Having laid down these principles, it is easy to apply them to the particular case in question. Slavery is the absolute dependence of one man upon another; and is, therefore, as inconsistent with all ideas of justice as despotism is with the rights of nature. It is a crime so monstrous against the human species that all those who practise it deserve to be extirpated from the earth. It is no little, indirect attack upon the safety and happiness of our fellow-creatures, but one that boldly strikes at the foundations of all humanity and justice. Robbers invade the property, and murderers the life of human beings; but he that holds another man in bondage, subjects the whole sum of his existence to oppression, bereaves him of every hope, and is, therefore, more detestable than robber and assassin combined. But if no one who has common feeling will commit the outrage,



outrage, no one who has common sense will attempt to justify it by argument ; since it would involve him in the grossest and most inextricable contradictions. He must allow that every man has by nature a right to life, yet that every other man has a right to rob him of it ; that every man has an equal right to subsistence, yet that every other may deprive him of all the means ; and that while every individual is justified by nature and the Deity in pursuing his own happiness by all innocent methods, every other individual is equally justified in making him miserable. In short, it is reducing every thing to the state before described, a state of contest and desolation, from which right and justice are equally excluded.

Of you, Sir, who say that you have several slaves, I beg leave to ask what are the

D

rights

rights you claim over them? Have you a right to torture them when they are guilty of no faults? Have you a right to kill them for your diversion? Is your power circumscribed by no bounds, and are there particular beings who bring into the world all the rights which you yourself can pretend to, but have so entirely lost them by being transported into another country, as to be beyond the protection both of nature and of nature's God?

Surely, Sir, unless I am deceived in you, you are a man both of honour and humanity. You start at the idea of wanton and unprovoked barbarity. You would not murder a slave to shew your dexterity, nor maim him to prove your strength; you would not dash an infant upon the ground to feed your dogs, even though he was black; nor  
would

would you rip up the belly of his mother while she was suckling him, to improve your skill in anatomy. You neither would, nor *dare* you commit actions like these ; you feel that you have no right to do them ; or, if you have, that every other man has an equal and superior right to destroy you like a beast of prey. What then are your rights ? I anticipate your answer : You will feed and cloath your Negroes ; you will treat them with humanity and tenderness, and then you have a right to moderate advantage from their labours. All this, Sir, is well ; and could I conceive you ever had acted in another manner, I should never have troubled you with this tedious letter. While your Negroes choose to stay with you upon these terms, this is a fair and equitable compact. But what if they should choose to leave you, will you let them go ? If you do, you are

D 2

a man

a man of honour, sense, and humanity ;  
but I fear no West Indian.

Are there no whips, no gibbets, no punishments more dreadful than death itself for contumacious slaves ? And what is this, but claiming the detestable power I have mentioned above, that of making other beings miserable, for your interest or amusement ? Who, Sir, gave you a title to their labours, or a right to confine them to loathsome drudgery ? And, if you have no right to this, what are the punishments you pretend to inflict but so many additional outrages ? Has a robber a claim upon your life because you withhold your property ; or a ravisher a right to a woman's blood because she defends her chastity ? Either then prove your right to their labours, or acknowledge that the punishments inflicted upon fugitive slaves are  
a flagitious

a flagitious insult upon justice, humanity, and common sense.

Permit me, here, to examine for a moment the nature of the title by which you claim an irredeemable property in the labours of your fellow-creatures,---A wretch, devoid of compassion and understanding, who calls himself a King of some part of Africa which suffers the calamity of being frequented by the Europeans, seizes his innocent subjects, or engages in an unnecessary war to furnish himself with prisoners; these are loaded with chains, torn from all their comforts and connections, and driven (like beasts to the slaughter-house) down to the sea-shore, where the mild subjects of a Christian government and a religious king are waiting to agree for the purchase, and to transport them to America. They are then  
thrust



thrust by hundreds into the infectious hold of a ship, in which the greater part frequently perishes by disease, while the rest are reserved to experience the candour and humanity of American patriots.—If you have never yet considered it, pause here for a moment, and endeavour to impress upon your mind the feelings of a being full as sensible, and perhaps more innocent, than you or I, which is thus torn in an instant from every thing that makes life agreeable; from country, friends, and parents; from the intercourse of mutual affection with mistress, lover, or child; which, possessed of feelings more exquisite than European hearts can conceive, is separated for ever from all it loves; that, reduced to a depth of misery, which, even in the midst of freedom and affluence, would be sufficient to overwhelm the most hardened disposition, instead of friends and comforters,

fortors, and obsequious attendants, sees itself  
 surrounded with unrelenting persecutors and  
 unpitying enemies ; wretches who, by long  
 intercourse with misery, are grown callous  
 to its agonies ; who answer tears with taunts,  
 and complaints with torture ! I shudder at  
 the horrors which I describe, and blush to  
 be a human creature ! Yet these are not the  
 colours of description, but a recital of facts  
 less strong than the reality. Can any man  
 reflect upon these things, without unutterable  
 remorse ? Can he know that, perhaps,  
 while he is wallowing in luxury and sensua-  
 lity, there are beings whose existence he  
 has embittered, mothers shrieking for their  
 children, and children perishing for want of  
 their mothers care ; wretches who are fran-  
 tic with rage, and shame, and desperation, or  
 pining in all the agonies of slow and pain-  
 ful death, who might have been at peace if  
 he

he had never existed? Can any man know this, and hope for mercy, either from his fellow-creatures, or his God?—After the arrival of the surviving wretches in America, you well know in what manner they are transferred to their conscientious masters;—how they are brought to the market, naked, weeping, and in chains;—how one man dares to examine his fellow-creatures as he would do beasts, and bargain for their persons;—how all the most sacred duties, affections, and feelings of the human heart, are violated and insulted; and thus you dare to call yourselves the masters of wretches whom you have acquired by fraud, and retain by violence!—While I am tracing this picture, which you and every man, who has been in the islands or the southern colonies of America, knows to be true, my astonishment exceeds even my horror, to find it possible

possible that any one should seriously doubt whether an equitable title to hold human beings in bondage can be thus acquired.

With what face, Sir, can he who has never respected the rights of nature in another, pretend to claim them in his own favour? How dare the inhabitants of the southern colonies speak of privileges and justice? Is money of so much more importance than life? Or have the Americans shared the dispensing power of St. Peter's successors, to excuse their own observance of those rules which they impose on others? If there be an object truly ridiculous in nature, it is, an American patriot, signing resolutions of independency with the one hand, and with the other brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves.

If men would be consistent, they must admit all the consequences of their own principles; and you and your countrymen are reduced to the dilemma of either acknowledging the rights of your Negroes, or of surrendering your own.---If there be certain natural and universal rights, as the declarations of your Congress so repeatedly affirm, I wonder how the unfortunate Africans have incurred their forfeiture.---Is it the antiquity, or the virtues, or the great qualities of the English Americans, which constitutes the difference, and entitles them to rights from which they totally exclude more than a fourth part of the species?---Or do you choose to make use of that argument, which the great Montesquieu has thrown out as the severest ridicule, that they are black, and you white; that you have lank, long hair, while theirs is short and woolly?

The



The more attentively you consider this subject, the more clearly you will perceive, that every plea, which can be advanced upon it, is the plea of interest and tyranny combating humanity and truth. You cannot hide from yourself, that every title you can alledge must be a title founded upon fraud or violence, and supported by open and avowed injustice. Can any thing be clearer, than that a man, who is born free, can never forfeit his inheritance by suffering oppression ; and that it is a contradiction to urge a purchase of what no one has a right to sell ? Nor does it make any difference, whether the unfortunate victim pass from one to another, or from one to a thousand masters, any more than whether a nation be enslaved by a first, or by an hundredth tyrant. There can be no prescription pleaded against truth and justice ; and the continuance of the evil

is so far from justifying, that it is an exaggeration of the crime. What would you say to a man, in private life, who should pretend to be no thief, because he only bought stolen goods ; or that he was no villain, because he did not forge a deed himself, but only paid another to do it, and enjoyed the estate by that honourable security ? Yet this is literally the title which the Americans plead to the unfortunate inhabitants of Africa. You do not go to Africa to buy or steal your Negroes ; perhaps, because you are too lazy and luxurious : but you encourage an infamous, pitiless race of men to do it for you, and conscientiously receive the fruits of their crimes. You do not, merciful men, reduce your fellow-creatures to servitude ! No, men of your independent spirits, that have taken up arms against the government that had protected and established

blished them, rather than pay a tax of three-pence ; that have laid the axe to the root of all human authority, and, instead of drinking the bitter waters of civil abuses and prescriptive obedience, have ascended to the living fountains of truth, justice, and nature, would never make flagitious attempts upon the liberties and happiness of their brethren ! Yes, gentlemen, men of liberal minds like yours, acknowledge all mankind to be their equals. Leave hereditary tyrants and their flatterers to make distinctions unknown to nature, and to degrade one part of the species to brutes, while they equal the other with gods !---You know that this is the greatest of all corruptions ; and as such you detest it. ---What ! are not all men naturally equal ? And are not all civil distinctions, when legitimate, the permission of the people, and consequently subordinate to their power  
and

and controul? Did you not carry the rights of men into the uncultivated desert and the howling wilderness? Not of Frenchmen, nor of Germans, nor of Englishmen, but of men;—men, the first and supreme distinction, who, created for freedom and happiness, transport to every soil the inherent prerogatives of their nature.

“Rome n’est plus dans Rome, elle est par tout ou je suis.”

Yes, gentlemen, as you are no longer English, I hope you will please to be men; and, as such, admit the whole human species to a participation of your unalienable rights. You will not, therefore, drag a trembling wretch from his cottage and his family; you will not tear the child from the arms of his frantic mother, that they may drag on a loathsome existence in misery and chains; you

you will not make depredations upon your unoffending neighbours, and, after having spread desolation over a fertile country, reduce the innocent inhabitants to servitude. To do this, you must be monsters, worse, I fear, than the majority of the House of Commons and the English Ministry \*. But you are men tremblingly alive to all the rights and feelings of the kind, and I believe some of you at least are Christians. Your worst actions, therefore, the greatest crimes which even your enemies can object, are only that you are the voluntary causes of all these mischiefs?—You, you encourage the English pirate to violate the laws of faith and hospitality, and stimulate him to new excesses by purchasing the fruits of his ra-

\* Should this doubt appear absurd, the reader is desired to remember it was written in the year 1776.



( 40 )

pine. Your avarice is the torch of treachery and civil war, which desolates the shores of Africa, and shakes destruction on half the majestic species of man ! . . . . .

F I N I S.



T H E  
LETTERS OF MARIUS:

O R,  
R E F L E C T I O N S

U P O N T H E  
P E A C E,  
T H E  
E A S T - I N D I A B I L L,

A N D T H E  
P R E S E N T C R I S I S;  
By THOMAS DAY, Esq.

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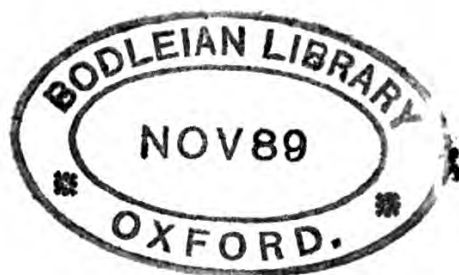
Non ante revellar,  
Exanimem quam te complectar, Roma, tuumque  
Nomen libertas, et inanem prosequar umbram.

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T H I R D E D I T I O N.

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L O N D O N:  
PRINTED FOR J. STOCKDALE,  
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MDCCLXXXIV.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

**I**T is necessary to give a reason why the following reflections are published under the fictitious name of MARIUS. They were originally intended to be printed in the public papers, and the first five letters were written before the author changed his plan. But the bulk into which they insensibly swelled, made them seem more adapted to the form under which they now appear : at the same time neither the urgency of the present crisis, nor the variety of subjects to be treated, allowed him to melt them down anew, and give them the uniformity of a continued essay. The necessity of immediately presenting such sentiments as these, if they are presented at all, to the public, has also induced the author to publish with a precipitation, which he would otherwise disapprove.

T H E





T H E

LETTERS OF MARIUS,  
&c.

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L E T T E R I.

To Dr. J E B B.

S I R,

**I**F, in the most dangerous crisis, the consul Varro was thought to deserve the thanks of the Roman people whose very existence he had endangered, merely, “quod non desperâset de republicâ,” with what honours should the English nation exalt your name?—In the midst of dangers, so much the more formidable as the internal corruption of any state is more to be feared than every external shock, your uniform conduct has been to animate by your  
B example,

example, and to enlighten by your understanding, the wavering and dejected minds of your countrymen. While this has uniformly been your public conduct, your private example seems destined to rescue the injured term of Patriotism from the unmerited ridicule which had been brought upon it by the treachery of its pretended friends.

While every rash adventurer, while every ruined libertine, could find a beneficial trade in duping the credulity of the people; while every broken author, gambler, pimp, or parasite, when deprived of the hope of subsisting by his honest industry, could promise himself a decent subsistence, if not the enjoyment of his favourite vices, by enlisting himself under the banners of the popular cause, it was no wonder that cause should be so often abandoned and betrayed as we have seen it. But, if we lament the misapplication of the public confidence, in a variety of instances, we must, at least, allow that the evil has not been unproductive of utility. There is a limit beyond which credulity itself will not submit to be deceived; and that limit the English people have happily attained. I have not yet heard that the political qualms of Lord North against secret influence, and the harangues of Mr. Fox in favour of a parliamentary majority,

majority, have made a single profelyte out of their own virtuous house. There, indeed, a saving faith, according to the true orthodox form of "Credo quia impossibile," has given a wonderful efficacy to the word; and many a stubborn infidel, who would not have believed "even though one had risen from the dead," has already yielded to the bare promise of a shower of manna, or a second miracle of the loaves and fishes. But with the body of the people the case is widely different. They have learned to attend to the stubborn voice of facts, as well as to the more soothing notes of oratorical persuasion. They demand a certain consistency of life and manners, the delicate colouring of private honesty and integrity, to fill up the flowing outline of public profession, and to make it worthy of a people's admiration. This, sir, is what envy itself will not deny to be your undisputed claim. The English people, therefore, receive you as their undoubted benefactor, and, whatever may be the consequence of your exertions, allow you all the glory which is due to the purity and disinterestedness of your intentions.

But it is not enough, in public contests, to have gained the clearest praise of integrity, unless we can add to it that of discretion and

judgment. Cato expiated, within the walls of Utica, the ill-timed deference which he had shewn to Scipio; and Cicero paid with his blood the price of his fond idolatry of Octavius. The English people, that have been always doomed to expiate either the treachery or the pusillanimity of their leaders, will find it difficult to determine which of these qualities has produced the greatest mischief. While the one has given up all their rights at the very moment when they might have been established, the other has repeatedly checked them in their most successful career, with ideal difficulties, and delays, which are always friendly to usurpation as they are dangerous to liberty.

Never did this appear more evident than in the year 1779, which gave birth to the associations of the people. Wearied out at that time with the absurd conduct of an unjust war, into which they had been betrayed by every species of falsehood and misrepresentation, they turned their eyes, with a gratitude little short of adoration, upon that sudden light which unexpectedly rose upon their darkened horizon. Nor can it be doubted, that it was much less the people who were then wanting to their own cause, than that they were, as usual, deserted by their leaders. A few, a very few disinterested men, among whom

whom it will ever be your praise to have been the foremost, stood forth, and called the public attention to the radical and inveterate corruptions of the constitution. "In vain," said they to that body of the gentry and nobility which supported the cause of opposition, "do you attempt to palliate, or temporize with your disease. In vain do you distract the attention of the people upon the trifling details of their government, and cheat them with idle visions of œconomical reforms. Were the public miseries occasioned either by accidental incapacity, or accidental misfortune, we might hope for relief from time, and spare ourselves the trouble of exertion ; but, where a long unbroken series of events has been unfolded, all tending to the same end, and that end the depression of the people and the destruction of their rights, it calls for all our vigilance and virtue. Even now, the measure of our wrongs is full ; nor have we any remaining hope but from courage founded upon despair. For whom will ye invoke in this extremity of distress, but yourselves? —Will ye prefer your petitions to the throne which has so often spurned, so often rejected them ; and hope that a sovereign will undertake the patronage of public freedom, when it is no longer defended by the spirit of a nation ?

History



History, indeed, commemorates sovereigns who have practised the virtues and the philosophy of private life, who have loved their friends, pardoned their enemies, and endured the approach of truth ; some have even descended from their thrones, and sought for happiness in obscurity : but the example is yet wanting of a prince who has lost an opportunity of increasing his power, or resigned the usurpations of his predecessors.

“ But according to the principles of the English constitution, you have little either to hope or to fear from the private qualities of a sovereign : or, rather, by an happy fiction which makes every minister that shares the executive power answerable for his own omissions, the prince may enjoy all the reverence of his virtues, while his name is never compromised by the guilty projects of ambition. But however implicitly we may admit the maxim, That a king can do no wrong, flattery itself has never yet applied it to his servants ; and should we appeal to experience, it may perhaps be doubted whether the impeccability of the sovereign is not compensated by a contrary quality in his ministers. Nothing then remains but that ye use the only check which the constitution has provided, and order your representatives to impeach the guilty  
authors

authors of your miseries. But, alas ! such is the peculiar unhappiness of our situation, that those whom we should apply to for redress are the very authors of our misfortunes. For is there a single minister, that has insulted the patience or eluded the vengeance of the people, that is not fenced in by a majority of those who call themselves your representatives ? What measure has been so stigmatized by public detestation, so openly inimical to the liberties and interests of a free people, as not to be sanctified by a majority of that honourable house ? If we take their whole successive conduct, from their open and indecent attacks upon the dearest privileges of the people in the Middlesex election, down to their premeditated invasion of the American rights, and all the subsequent horrors of the civil war in which we are now engaged, is there a single action worthy of the generosity, greatness, or understanding of the English people ?—Nor do we found our opinion upon vague surmise or uncertain conjecture. Whatever undoubted virtue and ability this country can boast in its public councils, whatever characters of superior lustre, have all combined in vain to stem the torrent ; and they now appeal from the venal votes of a corrupt majority to the sober and unbiassed suffrages of  
the

the people. Who can doubt the integrity, the disinterestedness, more than the talents of a Fox, and Burke? And when you behold the fruitless efforts of men like these, to point their country's thunders at the head of its implacable foe, and hear them publicly assert that wisdom and ability alike are vain; that all the former spirit of our parliament is evaporated, and has left nothing behind but blind servility to a minister, can we hesitate to admit the fatal truth? —No! could there yet remain a doubt, we feel it in the degradation of our country, and the increasing misery of its inhabitants.—Rouse then, if ever, ye last remaining hopes of liberty, and unite for its defence!”

MARIUS.

LET-

## LETTER II.

To Dr. J E B B.

S I R

W H O E V E R would write adequately concerning public affairs, must not confine his attention to the present moment, but must include a series of past events, as necessary to establish his opinions both of the present and the future. With this intention, I recurred, in my last letter, to the year 1779, and gave a summary of what was then addressed to the people, by those who coincided in your sentiments of the cause of national grievances: I shall now drop the third person, and proceed, in my own, to submit to the judgment of the public the arguments in favour of correcting the representation of the people which were then used; and which are now necessary to be remembered, if we wish for any adequate remedy to the evils which surround us.

History furnishes us with a variety of forms in which the human species have existed under different

different modifications both of tyranny and freedom. Indeed, every thing is so mixed in human affairs, that it is perhaps impossible to produce an instance of any government which is purely either the one, or the other. Scarcely any arbitrary government exists, which is not limited in its excesses, either by the prejudices of manners or religion; scarcely any free one which does not contain within itself the seeds of its own future destruction. This consideration has given wonderful scope to the ingenuity of those who wish to confound the understandings of men, and to misrepresent the plainest facts. You that, for the sake of alleviating the real miseries of your fellow-creatures, are continually obliged to consider those miseries in their most hideous forms, know that nothing is more difficult than to define the precise boundaries of health and disease: yet the wildest sceptic will not deny that these ideas have a real existence, and that it is the essential interest of man to investigate them with all the accuracy he possesses.

In politics, it must be confessed, we can scarcely proceed a step, without finding equal cause to lament the imperfect nature of past experience, and the yet more imperfect manner in which it is recorded. But in what science,  
unless



unless it be pure mathematics, can we pretend to certainty, or even accuracy? The conduct of life, therefore, must either be permitted to probability, or left to fluctuate at random. And, if we observe the common behaviour of our fellow-creatures, we must acknowledge that they do not so much suffer from the scantiness of their materials, as from a want of diligence and judgment in application of them.

Without involving myself, therefore, in all the subtleties of metaphysical distinctions, I shall simply observe, that one common fact is universally found in every free government; a public and legal method, by which the spirit of the nation at large may declare itself to its governors, and either confirm or alter the course of measures. Wherever we turn our eyes, I assert that this circumstance has been always found to accompany public liberty, and to measure its extent and duration: nor is there a single example, in history, of any country that has not been enslaved the very moment when it suffered either violence or cajolery to deprive it of this inestimable privilege.

Nor will it, perhaps, be loss of time, if I pause here to answer a common sophism which I have remarked in all the writers on the other side of the question. Government, they, indeed, al-

low to be a trust, and to be exercised for the good of the people ; but as to the actual consent and will of the people themselves, they place it entirely out of the question. They select, with wonderful ingenuity and perseverance, all the instances of popular fury, caprice, and ingratitude, which they can find in history, to contrast them with the most favourable periods of arbitrary government ; and then they triumphantly ask, whether all these outrages and excuses compose freedom, while justice, order, and humanity as naturally constitute servitude. But this is either a wilful, or involuntary confusion of ideas. There can be no doubt but there are periods in the life of every individual, when it might be more conducive to his interest to be under the controul of a discreet friend, than abandoned to the weakness and inexperience of his own judgment. No doubt, but there are many instances in which you could extend the benefits of the medical art, were you able to enforce your precepts of regimen and exercise by a salutary degree of restraint ; but will any one argue so inaccurately as, for that reason, to assert, that men would become more free by being subjected to the arbitrary will of a physician, in all that concerned their health ; more especially, were one of his subalterns daily  
to

to feel their pulse, in order to determine the alterations which took place ?

In truth, nothing can be more inaccurate than to produce the mischiefs which may sometimes arise from liberty, or the advantages which may accidentally result from slavery, as a reason for confounding the ideas. The man is certainly more free than the child, although in many instances it might be for his advantage still to tremble at the ferula ; and the American savage, even while he is perishing for hunger in his native woods, than the best-fed negro of the islands. But to argue with any regard for accuracy or logic, the battery should be changed ; and it must be maintained, that it is really more for the interest of any nation to abandon its claim to liberty, than to submit to the inconveniences of preserving it. This is the supposition which, under a variety of disguises, has been frequently obtruded upon the press ; and therefore I will bestow some consideration upon it, that I may not be afterwards interrupted in the progress of these letters.

I have often thought it a wonderful fallacy of some divines to depreciate human reason in order to exalt religion : for, unless that religion be imparted by particular inspiration to every individual, what other method is there of establishing it, than proofs adapted to his reason ? The more, there-

therefore, you convince him of the weakness and fallibility of that faculty, the more you must incline him, were he consistent, to doubt his power of judging concerning the particular evidence you propose. But this fallacy does not seem to be confined to the venerable order of the clergy. Politicians practise it at least with equal success, when they descant upon the blindness and ignorance of, what they call, the multitude. The passions of mankind, they tell you, are so strong, and their reasoning powers so weak, that nothing but anarchy and confusion can result from their being permitted to govern themselves. What then is the remedy? Would one not expect that they would bring some god or angel down to take the management of affairs upon himself, and atone for human imperfections? But here they are inferior to their friends the clergy. Instead of this device, they have only the very contemptible one of selecting a small part of the species, who are not only to govern themselves, but all the rest. So that this unavoidable contradiction arises from the supposition; mankind are totally incapable of governing themselves, yet they are not only capable of governing themselves, but millions of others at the same time. Nor is it possible to avoid this consequence, by asserting that certain individuals excel in prudence

dence and wisdom, and therefore are by nature adapted for this purpose ; for what are the marks that distinguish these individuals, and who is to judge of their authenticity ? If the bulk of mankind is too gross and blind to decide concerning this superior excellence, it must be some-body else that determines for it. But how are we to distinguish these few, that, like the Venetian electors, are to chuse for all the rest ; and that without a previous election, or even a form of ballot ? If it be merely the few, in opposition to the many, it will be possible to divide the largest number till you reduce it to the smallest ; but it is an original idea to suppose that ignorance and stupidity may be divided and sub-divided, till they become knowledge and understanding.

But here is the general fallacy both of divines and politicians : both begin by teaching you to distrust yourself, and address themselves, if I may use the expression, to the hypocondriacism of human nature. When their representations have succeeded to a certain degree, they give you to understand that the only cure for all your evils is to adopt their own particular system either of faith or government. What is orthodoxy, true religion, and the will of heaven, on the one side ; or heresy, schism, and idolatry on the other ? — The particular opinions which  
every



every divine holds forth, or which he chuses to condemn.—In the words of Hudibras,

“ What makes all doctrines plain and clear ?

“ About two hundred pounds a year.”

Thus if you demand of the politician what is order, good government, and political wisdom? Will he not answer, if he speak truth, the submission of mankind to the particular opinions which I entertain, or which I am paid for disseminating.—If, on the contrary, what is rebellion, faction, sedition, treason?—Different degrees of the opinions which either my avarice or ambition would prove false. But should you press him further, he must be compelled either to admit the general right of all the species to judge as well as act for themselves, or else to involve himself in inextricable contradictions.

M A R I U S.

LETTER

## LETTER III.

To Dr. J E B B.

SIR

**H**E that builds, from caprice or vanity, may content himself with the flimsy decorations and patch-work ornaments of modern taste. However weak may be the foundations, however frail the materials, the edifice will be the wonder of a day, and may then unheeded crumble into ruins. Had I intended these papers to be the auxiliaries of party, or the instruments of private ambition, I had hastened to seize the perishable topic of the hour, before it gave place to the next new object of fashionable pursuit and wonder. But however vain may be the attempt, however inadequate my ambition, I have proposed to myself an higher object: I aim at placing that solid information before the public, which may guide their judgment, and direct their conduct. I shall too soon be obliged to quit the peaceful walks of speculation for the crooked and dangerous labyrinths of modern statesmen and politicians.

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However strong may be the arguments in favour of political liberty which are produced by the understanding alone, those which are derived from experience will give them additional force.

Man is forbidden by the laws of his organization to aspire at immortality ; yet why should dissolution be equally the fate of every human institution ? May we not conceive a society established on such a basis, as to brave the shocks of time ; and to remain, like the several species of the animal world, immortal and incorruptible, though composed of a thousand perishable generations ?

Alas ! it will be answered, human institutions, though at longer intervals, are equally mortal with the individuals that compose them. To raise an eternal fabric, with materials that are in a continual state of fluctuation and decay, is a vainer attempt than "to build a city and a tower whose top may reach unto Heaven."

What government is recorded, within the annals of time, so wisely framed, so solidly established, as not to have degenerated into tyranny ; and what tyranny that has not soon been overturned, by relaxing all the springs of national defence, and enfeebling the community in order to enslave it ? Nay, the very institutions of Heaven itself, the instant they were entrusted to human passions for their support, have scarcely met  
with

with a different fate, or constituted an exception. The first apostles of christianity were mild and lowly, like the founder of their faith. They addressed themselves to the reason of men, and propagated their religion by persuasion. They abjured the luxuries and the enjoyments of sense; they submitted to every insult; they refused the offered benefits of their friends, and deprecated, only by prayers and blessings, the malice of their enemies. But mark the change! The instant a royal convert has given the clergy entrance to a court, they abjure every principle of their religion. Then we lose sight of a suffering, and begin the æra of a triumphant church. The immediate successors of fishermen and mechanics consent to be cloathed in purple and scarlet, to wallow in all the sensualities of the most abandoned age and country, and to disgrace the simplicity of the most spiritual religion, by the rites and ceremonies of the grossest. The power of consulting about the interpretation of the articles of their religion, which was expressly given to the whole body of christians, is, in a short time, monopolized by the clergy; and the power of chusing their pastors and bishops, a right equally deducible from equity, history, reason, and the scriptures, taken from the laity, and shared between the hierarchy and the civil power. And this system of practice

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and belief, so grossly adulterated, so totally unlike the original, is called Christianity, and enforced by racks, and flames, and gibbets; the antient supporters of civil, and now the welcome auxiliaries of ecclesiastical power. What may we suppose would have been the state of christianity at the present hour, had not the daring and original genius of Luther reduced it something nearer to its original principles, in the sixteenth century? What may we suppose will be its state in the twentieth, should no new Luther arise to teach our clergy the distance between the house of the Lord and the courts of princes, the difference between the service of God and mammon?

But I foresee that some of my readers may here exclaim, All this may be true, but what is it to the purpose? You are writing upon government and political liberty, why then deviate to the abuses and corruptions of christianity?—Because the history of christianity, a perfect and recorded succession of facts, which every man may consider at his leisure, is the best illustration in the universe of the subject on which I am writing. Because, if neither the immediate doctrines of Heaven itself, nor its positive commands, have been able to preserve even a christian clergy from every corruption which can grow upon the selfish passions, what are we to expect will be the  
fate



fate of institutions merely human, if once abandoned to the avarice, ambition, and indolence of those who have an equal interest to pervert them?

While, therefore, I plead the cause of truth, and defend the interest of the human species, the wider my range, the more extensive my observations, the greater will be the force of those conclusions which I shall establish upon the united evidence of speculation, reason, and practical experience.

The favourers of a parliamentary reform have been repeatedly attacked with all the virulence of anonymous selfishness and malevolence. They are "idle speculatists, nursed in the gloom of solitude and ignorance," "men of despicable abilities," "of neither fortune or consequence," "actuated by private interest and malevolence," and an hundred other characters equally liberal and candid.—If they indeed be all this, and the substance of a thousand other invectives which have been lavished upon them, no doubt from the *purest motives*, they certainly deserve the contempt of all their countrymen. But let the matter be brought fairly to issue before that public which is appealed to. MARIUS is the last and meanest of that body. Should he be foiled, an hundred abler champions are ready to enter the field, and the cause which he maintains will receive no disgrace

disgrace from the weakness of its defender. But, should the arguments which he adduces remain unconfuted, what will the public think of the courage of his adversaries, or of the justice of their cause?

“ Each fearless hero dares an hundred foes,  
 “ While the feast lasts, and while the goblet flows;  
 “ But who to meet one martial man is found,  
 “ When the fight rages, and the flames surround? ”

POPE'S ILIAD.

Some of these gentlemen are famous for their metaphysical acuteness. Let them therefore descend into the field, and prove the falsity of the principles which I have laid down. If they can be confuted, it will save me the trouble of proceeding in my course, and prosecuting an enquiry commenced under such inauspicious omens. Or, as they sometimes affect to despise speculation, and seem to imagine that all the understanding of the world is comprized in the dull routine of parliamentary business and opposition dinners, let them disprove this practical maxim upon which I rest the merits of the cause, “ That there is no instance of any body of men which have not abused whatever trusts were reposed in them, to the vilest purposes of selfishness, the instant they were not acted upon by some external force which kept them true to the purposes of their institution.”

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Should these points either not be denied, or being denied should not be adequately disproved by argument, I will take the liberty of stating the manner in which I intend to apply my principles; and the conclusion I shall attempt to establish.

In the first place, it is my opinion, as has been repeatedly affirmed by a majority of the nation, that the present House of Commons is no representation of the English people.

And this, I imagine, will be the more easily conceived even by my adversaries, as many of them; rather than grant the force of any argument in favour of public liberty, have chosen to deny that representation was any part of the English constitution.

In the second place, I assert, that, if the present House of Commons does not really represent the people, the people have no constitutional method of either effectually enforcing or opposing public measures.

In the third place, I will take the liberty of examining the conduct of those who are called the representatives of the people, particularly in respect to the celebrated East-India business.

And should I succeed in establishing the principles which I have here advanced, I shall submit it to the understanding of my countrymen, whether, while they are so tremblingly alive to the rights of  
sovereigns

sovereigns and ministers, it does not become them to have some regard for their own.

I have addressed these letters to you, sir, because I think the esteem and gratitude of the public constitute the fit reward of virtuous actions. No one has exerted himself more strenuously, more disinterestedly, more uniformly. While Mr. — appeared the champion of the people and their rights, you revered him with a zeal which I never thought his conduct deserved. But it is the clearest proof of your own integrity, that you have been able to relinquish those habitual delusions the instant you could be convinced they were misplaced. In respect to the resolutions brought forward at the last meeting of the quintuple alliance, I am convinced, they contain dangerous and salutary truths, little likely to be adopted by the indolence of this nation, but necessary to influence their conduct, if they aspire to continue a free people. To place this subject in the clearest light, and to bring it home to the hearts and understandings of my countrymen, is the only aim of

M A R I U S.

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LETTER IV.

TO THE

Right Honourable the EARL of STAIR.

My LORD,

THERE is an ambition in the human mind, which may at least be pardoned, if not commended, of connecting itself with every object of public esteem. Poets have exhausted the comparison of the oak and ivy, and your lordship is too well acquainted with poetry as well as calculation, to need a reference to the particular passages. I am contented for once to be the subject of the allusion, and to have it supposed that MARIUS would rise to notice upon the blasts which spread your lordship's fame.

In your last pamphlet, you express a wish that the euthanasia of the English constitution may be a mild despotism. Had such a sentiment proceeded from any of the common reptiles that are engendered in the corruptions of a court, we should have only said, "The crea-

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ture's at his dirty work again," and passed it over in silent contempt: but when it proceeds from a man, who, apparently retired from human affairs, shrouds himself in his own integrity, and delivers oracular sayings from the precincts of consecrated groves, we surely must be as much astonished as the frightened heathen, that heard treachery recommended from the tripod of Apollo.

The public, my lord, have given you undoubted credit for the apparent zeal with which you opposed the American war. Considering the prejudices of your country, they allowed it to be no trifling effort. They even pardoned some little advances towards Lord North \*, in consideration of the spirit with which you abused the majority of the parliament and the rest of the administration. But this was nothing more than had been already done by many of the most distinguished characters in the nation; nor  
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\* " The noble lord has much in possession, more in reversion: happy in his family, happy in his fortune and abilities, with strong natural and social affections, no one must drink deeper of the bitter cup of national humiliation and ruin. In his public line of conduct I see, or fancy that I see, and in his alone, of all the ruthless ministerial tribe, some twitches of remorse,  
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can we therefore allow you the full merit of your modest insinuation: "It is the comfort, it is the glory of my life to have opposed, almost singly, in the beginning, that war, at the sure consequence and expence of all that has happened to me\*."

Was your lordship ignorant, when you hazarded that assertion, that the American war had been openly opposed, not only by a considerable party in parliament, but by a numerous body of independent men in every quarter of the kingdom? That petitions had been sent from many of the trading towns and the counties of South Britain?

The ministerial writers of that ill-omened hour are full of menaces against the factious party at home that justified the resistance of the Americans. They first, we are told, lighted up the flame of rebellion; they afterwards gave new force to its half-extinguished violence; they dictated the resolutions of congress, the march of Washing-

some recollections of the fair feelings of humanity, some sweet drops of the milk of human kindness."

FACTS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES, p. 26

I heard it observed, when this passage was first published, that his lordship must have seen all this by second sight; for not an Englishman could ever discover the least of all these wonders.

\* An argument to prove, that it is the indispensable Duty, &c. by John, Earl of Stair, p. 24.

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ton, the independence of America, and the eternal humiliation of their own country :

“ They hated, they despis’d, and they destroy.”

Does your lordship seriously believe that all this series of accusations relates to you alone ? That you were the only object of ministerial hatred, of party rancour, of American gratitude ? Or have you never yet heard the names of Richmond, Chatham, Camden, and even of Dr. Price ?

“ Me, me ! adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum.”

But, if you invest yourself with this pre-eminence, you should at least have fitted yourself to support with dignity the part you voluntarily assume. We can conceive Cato tearing out his own bowels, or Brutus, with his last breath, complaining that heaven had abandoned the cause of virtue ; but we cannot so easily conceive the last of Romans carrying up an address to welcome the conqueror from the plains of Pharsalia, and congratulating his triumphs over the constitution.

But this insinuation may perhaps be controverted by your lordship’s friends : let us try how far it can be brought home from the evidence of your own writings. He that never  
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omits an opportunity of casting contempt and ridicule upon every expedient, one alone excepted, may fairly be imagined to think more highly of that exception, and to prefer it to all the rest. Interest, as well as vanity, may find out more paths than one of arriving at its ends ; and he is little acquainted with the world, who is ignorant that to degrade an enemy is often the same thing as to recommend a friend.

You have taken every opportunity, in the different tracts you have published, of expressing your contempt of all public characters, and of a great majority of the House of Commons. Let us hear your own words : “ The happy counterpoise of the different parts of our constitution is destroyed ; all responsibility is made a jest ; for, backed by a majority, paid to support, and paid to applaud their measures, be they what they may, ministers gather the roses without the cares or the thorns of power ; and from the number and rank, and even fortunes of the corrupted, fashion and ton is given to the basest prostitutions of principles and of talents\*.”— Again : “ Was indeed, as in the days of our ancestors, the fable believed, of a bargain and sale to the Devil for temporary honours and

\* Facts and their Consequences, p. 25.

emoluments,

emoluments, I much fear that the *prince of darkness* would hold a majority in the British parliament†.—I have selected these from a variety of passages equally strong and pointed, because I think they must be allowed to convey a very unequivocal idea of your sentiments. But if ministers, if even parliaments, are so radically corrupted, it can be neither from ministers nor parliaments, such as they are at present, that the nation is to expect its safety. Wherever the prince of darkness may obtain a majority, I will answer for it he will never want a substitute to manage affairs in his behalf.

One only alternative therefore remains, unless the nation ought to be entirely passive under such a complicated weight of injuries and calamities : it may insist upon reforming the corruptions of its representatives, or it may consent to abolish representation altogether, and take shelter in what you feelingly call “a mild despotism.”—Should the few remaining friends of their country’s liberties, for such friends *may* even now remain, adopt the former part of the alternative, it appears to me no reflection upon their *hearts*, and but little upon their *heads*.

† Attempt to balance the Income and Expenditure of the State, p. 18.



The bounds of possibility are little known to the ordinary part of mankind. The few superior minds that have enlarged them for the species, were looked upon at first as rash adventurers, who were only accelerating their own destruction. If the opinions of mankind are forcibly altered by success, it arises, I fear, less from justice than from vanity and meanness. They are willing to derive benefit from the labours and dangers which they began with decrying, and would establish the merit of having foreseen those discoveries which they have gravely pronounced impossible.

As to moral causes and their effects, they are a perpetual contradiction to the boasted powers of penetration. The wisest man in general sees but little before him, and frequently not at all. The objects are sometimes so dark, that it is impossible to distinguish them ; sometimes so luminous, that they dazzle the observer's eye ; and passion, prejudice, and superstition, are perpetually busy to change their colouring and alter their dimensions. If your lordship foresaw the independence of the Americans, when the British parliament as wantonly as foolishly chose to drive them to extremities, was every man even of sense endowed with equal penetration?—Many, I believe, as quick-sighted as yourself, and as  
much

much the friends of universal liberty, trembled for the event. They did not indeed doubt that America would be severed in the end from the mother country, but they could not so easily calculate what might be the immediate effects of the almost unparalleled forces which this country employed against it. Neither could they foresee that happy series of blunders and absurdity which marked the operations of the British Ministry, and which contributed, at least as much as arms, to bring the affair so speedily to a decision. They knew they had much to expect from the genius of Lord - - - - ; but they did not exactly comprehend the full extent of his abilities. That wise procrastination of events in their own nature inevitable ; that judicious mixture of precipitance and delay, of firmness and pliability ; so constantly misapplied that it is scarcely possible to attribute it wholly to the common principles of ministerial dulness ; that lethargy that slumbered over every opportunity ; that activity which never failed to succeed its irremediable loss ; that plausibility which never deceived, and that fortitude which never imposed ; were happy strokes of the sublime in his lordship's character, which required a full series of seven years to develop to the public.

Pardon me, my lord, a digression which the  
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consideration of such unequalled merit draws from my unwilling pen. The noble character which I have been describing, has done much for politicians and historians, and he deserves all that they can bestow.

But if the prospect of distant events is in its own nature so obscure as generally to elude or dazzle the strongest sight, is it from the avowed friends of liberty that we are to expect every degree of ridicule and imputation upon those who dedicate their lives to its preservation?—The present, it is too generally known, is no common or trifling æra. A great and mighty nation, shaken by successive strokes, totters upon its foundations. The noblest constitution in the world “is squirted to death by Eton boys.” “Parliament, to which it is natural to have recourse in times of difficulty and danger, is, I fear, fallen too much into the public contempt to be of any material service. It is, I doubt, too generally looked upon as a body of men without any fixed principles of right and wrong; a weathercock, that obeys each blast of court or popular favour, whichever of them is uppermost\*.” The inevitable conclusion that follows from the premises laid

\* Argument to prove, &c. by John, Earl of Stair, p. 33.

down by the greatest calculator in the nation; is, "*That the state is a bankrupt, and that those who have trusted their all to the public faith, are in very imminent danger of becoming (I die pronouncing it) beggars*†." It is true, indeed, your lordship adds, if nothing effectual is done to prevent these consequences. But whence is this *something effectual* to arise? You have already decried all parties, and have described the wisdom and virtue of parliament too exactly to induce us to expect it from that honorable house. Nothing, therefore, remains, but the euthanasia of the constitution, towards which you seem to cast a longing eye; the mild despotism which has escaped your pen, that is to indemnify us for all our losses; extend the present *narrow* bounds of public credit; and prepare us for new wars, with all their baneful attendants.

Were I inclined to imitate your lordship's candour, I might pronounce all this; as you do of the wishes and exertions of the people, "*mostly impracticable nonsense.*" But I respect your lordship more than you seem to do the sincerest friends of their country. In such a state of things, we can no longer be called upon

† Argument to prove, &c. p. 32.

to content ourselves with the common beaten tracts of political corruption and ministerial cunning. Even the advocates of arbitrary power, since they have abandoned their *jus divinum* and hereditary right in favour of the house of Hanover, and even your countrymen, since they have transferred their attachment from the name of Stuart to that of Brunswick, make protection and obedience inseparable terms. In the present state of things, we seem to be almost as much abandoned by our governors, as we formerly were by the Romans, to our own internal strength. The land-marks of the constitution are all removed, and, were we as slavishly inclined as the antient Cappadocians, who desired a king because they could not conceive the possibility of governing themselves, we know not how to obey, because it is not determined who is to command. Your lordship, indeed, comes forward with a charitable zeal, and offers us a tyrant. This, perhaps it may be observed, is no new present from your country; but almost a century of civil contests and desolations, of private miseries and public executions, of controverted titles, and the last extremes alternately dared and suffered by a noble nation, have made us rather cautious how we accept the boon. Let us, in the mean time, try what



can be effected by methods more adapted to the genius and spirit of the English people. No nation was ever deserted by heaven or fortune till it was first deserted by itself; and the annals of our history may lead us to hope that we are never nearer to our deliverance than when a feeble mind sees nothing around but horror and despair.

MARIUS.

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LETTER V.

TO THE

Right Honourable the EARL of STAIR.

My LORD,

**H**E that disinterestedly dedicates his life to the public service, if such a character can be allowed to exist, is, unless virtue be thought its own reward, more to be pitied than every other description of men. In the course of his labours, he will be obliged successively to attack, if not to join, every party of the great and powerful; and as the malice has always been allowed to exceed the gratitude of our fellow-creatures, he will have much more to expect from the revenge of those he quits, than from the patronage of those with whom he leagues.

Were a prudent man, therefore, to form a silent and reflected scheme of making his fortune

tune by the public, he would naturally attach himself to one of the reigning parties into which this miserable country is divided. It matters not whether the engagement be formed in the hour of triumph or disgrace. Success naturally expands the heart; and defeat has a wonderful tendency to increase the powers of sensibility. A routed faction is never squeamishly nice in admitting friends, or a victorious one in converting enemies. What wonders have we not already seen performed during the administration of Lord North! What additional miracles still attend him in his disgrace!

There are, my lord, who have imagined you composed of such stubborn materials as resist all the alchymy of modern statesmen. The liberal, the merited abuse you have so repeatedly heaped upon ministers and parliaments, seemed to point you out as one of the few unvitriifiable substances which no political flux could mollify. But I have attended, with that prudent jealousy which ever accompanies a long experience of mankind, to the progress of your political career. I have discovered, or fancied that I discovered, "a method in your madness;" a prudence which rarely accompanies violent passions, but which has never failed to temper the ebullitions

tions of your zeal. When in the midst of all your resentment of public wrongs, and even in the more sincere complaint of private injuries, I observed that caution which always distinguished accurately between the sovereign and the minister, I began to think it possible, that all these blunt professions of rugged honesty might mean as little as the tropes and figures of the opposition. Nothing can be more illiberal than national reflections. I admire the industry, the ingenuity, the bravery of your countrymen; but I suspect their patriotism. Rochefaucault observes that the character of every country is as indelibly stamped upon the manners of the individual; as its accent is upon his pronunciation. Will your lordship pretend to constitute the exception?

I anticipate what may be alleged in your defence. It will be observed that duty to the sovereign was never yet reputed treason against the constitution. All the scurrilities which disgrace the press will be produced, from the invectives of the North Briton down to the pointed malevolence of Junius. But is there no medium between the ruffian and the parasite? Can your lordship conceive no modification of the English language which does not  
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terminate either in licentious abuse, or interested flattery?

This nation has been too repeatedly deceived not to preserve an active jealousy. We view the lion's den, and we are obliged to exclaim with the fox in the fable, "*Vestigia nulla retrorsum.*" Not every one that comes to us in the name of the constitution, can be now admitted to the rank and consequence of a patriot. It is one of the characteristics of the latter times, that there shall arise false prophets, and false teachers, that shall deceive even the elect. Since, therefore, you have as yet produced no miracles, nor even pretended to the power of working them, we must try your spirit, not by the marvels you perform, but by the doctrines you preach.

There is, my lord, a certain species of profession, a fashionable cant, which is with justice suspected by every discerning mind. It has been one of the greatest misfortunes of the present reign, that strong professions of loyalty and personal attachment have always prevailed over every other species of political merit. The observation is stale, but it is true, that kings are forbidden by nature to have a friend. Is it their blessing, or their curse, that they are seldom acquainted



acquainted with this great truth, till it is too late to profit by the discovery?

The real and disinterested friend of his country is indeed loyal, but it is loyalty of another stamp which he professes, and which is the principle of his actions. His allegiance to the prince is founded upon the consideration that royalty is an essential part of that constitution which is the object of all his care and reverence. He considers not the person, but the office of the king. The one is frequently not more respectable than the meanest of his subjects, while the other is immortal and unchangeable. The respect, therefore, which he bears to the throne will never degenerate into any idolatry for the individual who is seated upon it. If he is ready to defend its just rights and prerogatives, it is because those rights and prerogatives constitute the English constitution; and that constitution, with all its defects, is more favourable to public happiness and liberty, than any other which could be adopted. In office, he will treat his sovereign with respect, and perform his orders with alacrity and zeal; so long as those orders contribute to the public benefit, and are consistent with public liberty. He will endeavour to preserve unsullied the noblest of the royal prerogatives, the power of pro-

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moting merit and rewarding virtue. Far from him that abject spirit of monopolization, which seizes upon royal favour, as it would do a private patrimony, and prostitutes it to family connections and party leagues. Far from him that servile spirit of flattery, which confounds the office of minister and laureate, and degrades the ruler of a powerful nation into the obsequiousness of a court buffoon. He will endeavour to make the sovereign worthy of the noblest panegyrics; but he will teach him to expect them not from the corrupt echoes of a court, but from the unbiaſſed acclamations of a grateful people.

Alike undaunted amid the tempeſts of popular clamour and factious oppoſition, he will keep his eye fixed upon that ſacred mean which conſtitutes the ſecurity of ſovereign and people. Should there be a meaſure which his ſuperior genius points out as neceſſary to the public ſafety, he will boldly adopt it; deſpiſing alike the arts of deſigning men, and the empty prejudices of a multitude. He will truſt to the uniform integrity of his own conduct for a vindication; and to time, which as neceſſarily eſtabliſhes the ſolid fabrics of truth as it ſweeps away the empty ſystems of falſehood. His fame, he knows, is not the tranſitory beam of either  
royal

royal or popular favour ; it is the result of a whole series of consistent actions directed to one great end, and proceeding from one common principle.

That principle may teach him to oppose the encroachments of faction upon the royal prerogative ; but it will teach him to oppose, with ten-fold zeal, those temporary paroxysms of delirium which tempt a deluded people to lay their privileges at a master's feet. In the first case, they may indeed endanger all, by grasping at too much ; but in the second they give up all, even without the hope of an equivalent. Is the sovereign virtuous ? He will be the last either to persuade or to accept the sacrifice. Is he possessed with the common rage of encreasing his power ? That day which yields the constitution up to his discretion, renders him a tyrant, and destroys the nation.

In what language, therefore, would such a man address the first magistrate of his country, were it necessary to approach the throne ? With respect and modesty, but with firmness ; with reverence, but with truth. He would leave the interested professions of personal attachment and veneration to those who meant to betray the people by flattering the sovereign, or to expose the sovereign himself by soothing the common

prejudices of his station. Should he see the nation almost undone by a disastrous war, in which a favourite and protected administration had borne a principal share, he would not make his commiseration of injured royalty the capital figure of the piece. Well knowing that the sovereign and his family are always the last to feel the weight of public misery, he would reserve his pity for the thousand innocent objects which deserve it better. Could he weep tears more fast or precious "than the Arabian tree", there would not be one to bestow on every victim of such a war as the American has produced. If he is feelingly alive to the temporary embarrassment of a *royal bant* held for a moment at bay, what must he feel for whole provinces that have been for seven years the prey of the bloodiest hunters that ever followed the chase of death? What must he feel for a thousand gallant veterans that line our streets, deform our public ways, and present in vain their wounds, their poverty, their incurable diseases, to those in whose pernicious cause they have contracted them? What must he feel for a nation like the English, which is, with all its faults, one of the most gallant, generous, and deserving in the universe, reduced to universal beggary by a contest which never was national, in a dispute which never interested the public?

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The royal children, my lord, have never yet wanted bread \*, and Heaven forbid they should ever incur that necessity ! They live in the midst of a nation that is sufficiently disposed to share its own last morsels with its rulers. But perhaps it might be more discreet in a loyal subject, to keep the hydra debts of the civil list, that “bougeon” so repeatedly, though lopped and seared so often, and the necessity of incurring new expences, from the public view. Even Lord A——n’s declaration in favour of a *manly and spirited prince* has met with few admirers. Accustomed as we are to bear, with a degrading patience, the vices and follies of our rulers, we have not yet learned to believe that they add more to the glory than to the happiness of the people ; and in our present circumstances, we should willingly exchange the lustre of such a triumph for the more sober advantages of order and œconomy.

## M A R I U S.

\* “The king is forced to take the very bread from his children’s mouths.” Argument to prove, &c. p. 12.

**LET**



LETTER VI.

TO THE

Right Honourable the EARL of SHELBURNE.

My LORD,

**I**F praise be ever agreeable to a delicate taste, it is when it ascends pure and unsuspected; such an offering as an honest mind may bestow, and a generous one accept without a blush. This is what your lordship has been little accustomed to receive during the short period of your political triumphs, and what you are too well acquainted with the world to expect during your disgrace. But,

“When interest calls off all her sneaking train,

“And all the oblig’d desert and all the vain:”

then is the hour for the impartial man to come forward, and declare his sentiments. Nor can you be more surpris’d at this address, which you certainly have never paid for, than I am, to find a single action in a minister worthy of unbought applause. But it appears to me an unpardonable weakness to be more afraid of commending

mending merit than of censuring vice. I therefore seize the moment, when I find myself able to approve the conduct of a minister, lest it should not return.

When, in the beginning of the year 1782, we beheld the dissolution of Lord North's administration, you have not forgotten the general triumphs of the nation. It was not only the capricious love of novelty, however universal may be the principle; it was the involuntary intoxication of a whole people, that, wearied with its miseries, expected some relief from a change of masters. Besides, the very nature of the circumstances had created in the nation an unusual disposition for confidence. The spirit of opposition had raged so long in vain, that it had drawn the bonds of political union tighter than common between the multitude and their leaders. With whatever contempt the illustrious characters that compose the House of Commons are accustomed to treat their constituents, a variety of causes had concurred to produce a temporary relaxation.

The reigning faction could not be ignorant that it was dangerous to reduce even slaves to desperation; and a ten years bitter abstinence from all the sweets of power and emolument had taught their opponents the necessity of condescending to cajole the people. Hence arose  
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those meetings and associations throughout England; popular dinners and popular harangues; fervent professions and unsubstantial promises; with all the train of amorous lies and perjuries, by which our unsuccessful statesmen are accustomed to ensnare a fond, believing multitude. And so thoroughly were they deceived, that they had entirely forgotten that almost invariable law of nature, by which a minister is compelled to contradict all that he had ever promised when out of place. They perhaps imagined that something was to be expected from the unparalleled extremities to which the whole nation was reduced. They thought that a rational self-interest might for once supply the place of virtue, and convince their friends of the utility of preserving some appearance of honour and consistency. Men that were obtruded against the consent of the sovereign might perceive the importance of cultivating the esteem of the people. There was too a sort of religious sanctity attached to the remembrance of common dangers and the ties which they had produced. The pilfering Arab, although inured to spoil and carnage, will spare the wretch that has once claimed the hospitality of his roof: and who could tell but English patriots might so far adopt the example, as for once to *spare their friends*?

But

But there is a sublimity which distinguishes certain minds, although it must ever escape the conceptions of the vulgar. Doomed to the uniformity of private life, they find it difficult to conceive what is placed beyond the reach of common experience. They have indeed a gross and confused suspicion that the inflexible patriot may be gradually softened into the cringing courtier, or the rapacious minister; and that the warmest advocates for liberty may at length incline to the solid blessings of arbitrary power. But these changes they imagine will be the effect of time and sollicitation. They look for the common formalities of gradual corruption, and think it hardly possible that their warmest friends should become their most determined enemies, without passing through the medium of neglect and indifference.

But these are prejudices which are now happily removed for ever; and I will venture to assert that the greatest master of political versatility will find it difficult hereafter to attract applause or surprize an audience. Proteus himself, were he now to visit our island, must own himself outdone, even at his own weapons, and confess the superiority of some of our modern practitioners. Although a god, there were certain ties which could hold him fast, and at

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length compel him to assume his own, after he had run through every other shape. What would he have said to mere mortals, who escape from every tie and put off every character at will?

But, my lord, I am wandering wide of the intended mark. The task which I have proposed to myself is that of collecting facts, and presenting sober reason to my countrymen; and I hasten to fulfil it. However eager, however general were the expectations of the people at the change of ministers which took place in the spring of 1782, they were most bitterly disappointed. The unfortunate death of the Marquis of Rockingham, which so speedily ensued, was the signal for breaking up that administration, which twenty years had scarcely matured, and from which the nation expected its deliverance. I, indeed, had not been one of that sanguine body. Perhaps my dulness or malevolence rendered me less clear-sighted in respect to the expected blessings. My acquaintance with general history, as well as my experience of mankind, had taught me to believe too generally perhaps of public men, that, whatever might be their professions, their aim was nothing but self-interest. I was not so partial to the spirit of the age as to believe it very prolific in superior characters.



characters. When I considered the formal professions and the apparent strength and discipline of our parties, they might appear sufficiently formidable; but when, after the example of Agefilaus\*, I separated them into their respective classes, I found the number of genuine patriots surprizingly diminished. I did not therefore expect to see the golden days, of which so many dreamed, renewed or realized, even under a genuine Whig administration; which had been the Panacea so industriously held forth for every national disease. But I must confess I expected more from the good

\* When Agefilaus commanded the allied army of the Grecians in an expedition into Asia, he was reproached for the small comparative number of Spartans which he had brought with him. He, therefore, took an opportunity, at a general review, of proclaiming that all who practised the trade of carpenters should leave their arms, and go to a particular spot. Many of the allies, who had been brought up to that trade, accordingly quitted the ranks, but not a single Spartan. In this manner he went through every mechanical trade, till the ranks of the allies were almost reduced to nothing, while those of the Spartans had suffered no diminution. "See now," said he, to those who had before murmured, "on which side the balance preponderates: you bring into the field a numerous band of tradesmen and mechanics; but it is Sparta alone that furnishes soldiers."—Probably the author was considering the effect which would be produced upon a certain honorable house by a similar proclamation.

sense and abilities of those gentlemen than has been yet performed. I, indeed, foresaw that all the boasted schemes of reformation would end in appropriating the honours and emoluments of the state to themselves and their creatures ; but I thought something might have been done for the nation in points where the immediate interest of ministers was not concerned. I imagined the first object of a set of men, who came into power upon the express condition of restoring peace, would be to realize the expectations of the public in that particular. I thought too something might be done to heal the wounds which war had made, and to regain the commercial confidence of the Americans ; not by sacrificing the interest or honour of the nation, but by a rational consideration of what its necessities required \*. In respect to the additional burthens which every discerning man knew must be imposed, I thought that some regard might be shewn to commerce, to policy, and even to the inclinations of a people that had already borne so much, and with such unparalleled patience.

\* This subject has been lately most sensibly and forcibly treated in a pamphlet, by Brian Edwards, Esq.

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But, it seems, these expectations, moderate as they may appear, were doomed to be disappointed in a manner which it was impossible to foresee. The premature death of the Marquis of Rockingham broke down the isthmus which separated the hostile factions of the cabinet, and let in the contending tides. I was most sincerely grieved for that premature death, and lamented it perhaps as truly, though not as indiscreetly, as some of his friends. I did not indeed attribute any very extensive range to the political abilities of the noble personage, and I always dreaded the fascinations of party; but he appeared to be a man of amiable and unblemished manners, a promoter of agriculture and industry, and a sincere friend to what he conceived to be the real interests of his country. Above all, fortune had made him the central point which supported a mighty arch; an arch indeed more destined to record the triumphs of a party than the happiness or liberty of a nation; but such an one as could not be then destroyed, without threatening to involve both in the wide compass of its ruin.

I know not what were the exact feelings of the nation, when they first heard of that fatal and irreparable breach in the cabinet, but I will take the liberty of describing my own. What-  
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ever credit I might give to the understandings of the two honorable gentlemen who set the example of resignation, I did not think that conduct afforded a very favourable specimen of either their heads or hearts. I could not conceive that a real friend to any interest of his country would take that opportunity of wreaking his personal spite, at the expence of the public. Unanimity I had heard echoed, at every public meeting, by every subaltern of the party, till I was sickened with the sound. Was it then a time, in such an awful moment of national crisis and danger, to perplex the public councils with the low interests and cabals of faction, at the expence of that very unanimity which had till then been the *word* of the whole party? The public at large can scarcely pretend to decide the paltry quarrels of courts and cabinets; but they felt, that if there was ever an hour when an honest man would have conceded something for the general good, it was the present; and they cared not who was prime minister, provided he gave them peace.

I am almost afraid your lordship will hardly excuse the style of even this panegyric: if you do not, I can easily conceive in what manner it will be received by others. But this is the language of truth; and these are the sentiments

ments of every independent man throughout the kingdom with whom I have conversed.

But when the session was opened with that memorable speech which has been so much the subject of altercation, I could not help feeling something like surprize at the manner in which it was received. Had the lower house been peopled indeed with inveterate republicans, I should have been less surprized at the spirit which guided those memorable debates: but when I saw those very gentlemen, who had so lately given specimens of their extraordinary talents for abject flattery, dealing out the most unmannerly invectives, I could not help blushing for human nature and my country.

In spite, however, of virulence, scurrility, and opposition, the peace was ratified by the same honorable gentlemen whose consciences would not suffer them to approve it. Common minds, indeed, did not comprehend the full force of those subtle distinctions. They thought that if the peace was pernicious and dishonorable, it merited the public opposition of the house. They thought it as much an object of parliamentary interference, as the nomination of a new minister, the first, and most undoubted prerogative of the crown. The nomination of

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an improper minister may be indeed eventually destructive to a nation ; but it is not a measure which requires such immediate interference. A virtuous and independent house of commons, like the present, may always arrest him in his career ; they always possess the dreadful artillery of impeachments, of which they have made so liberal an use during this whole century ; they may at any time send forth their thunders, and hurl him flaming down. But an inadequate and dishonorable peace may reduce the nation, in an instant, to such extremities, as may render all future exertions vain.

But the peace was to be reprobated in order to displace the minister. There was even a peculiar advantage in making him the sacrifice of the only salutary measure which this country has seen during the last twenty years. Even in the hour of triumph and exultation, no peace which is upon record has ever satisfied the expectations of the nation. How then was it possible that a peace, which was to ratify the eternal divorce of America, and which must therefore be attended with some humiliation to this country, could please the wild imaginations of the people ; a people who had suffered enough to sicken them with war, but not enough to make them submit with equanimity

equanimity to the disadvantages of their situation? It is the peculiar misery of human beings never to foresee inconveniences while they may be avoided, or to be able to bear them with patience when they are inevitable.

That the peace was the best which might have been obtained, it is impossible for me to decide. That it included the best terms your lordship was able to procure, may be sufficiently inferred, even from the principles of ambition and self-love: that any of your rivals would have been able to make a better, we have never had a more convincing proof than their own assertions. Such therefore as it is, the merit of it is entirely your own.

Whoever is moderately acquainted with human affairs, will continually lament the blindness both of princes and states. An useless tract of desert, a frozen ocean, a barren rock, may each in turn become the object of jealousy and ambition; may deluge the earth with blood, or cover the sea with carnage. But the solid advantages of peaceful industry, the perfection of internal government, and the improvement of agriculture, are objects that are either overlooked, or rarely suffered to incline the scale. Yet it would not be difficult to prove that there never has existed a nation, which would not

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have been more benefited by applying its attention to these constant sources of happiness and population, than by a series of the most splendid conquests. Yet war is sometimes inevitable; a frantic prince, an ambitious minister, even a favoured parasite, or strumpet, may each alternately endanger the freedom and existence of all the neighbouring states. Every nation must therefore be prepared to defend by arms those rights which may be attacked by arms; and when the contest is once begun, the soundest policy consists in the most vigorous efforts. But when the dispute does not relate either to national safety or independence, but to points of ideal power and speculative ambition; to something which flatters the pride more than it concerns the interest of a nation; above all, when it has originated in the spirit of error, and been carried on by that of delusion, it cannot too soon receive its termination.

That this was the case with the American war, it would now be loss of time to attempt to prove. As to the object of that contest, the minister that brought it on was continually shifting his ground; but, whatever was the pretext, it always implied the subjection of the colonies. When this too, like all the rest, had deserted him; when that subjection had been given up  
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by every party as impracticable, the spirit of infatuation itself could scarcely invent a reason for continuing the war, the instant a tolerable peace was attainable. If there has been a set of men in this country sufficiently blind, and adverse to their country's interests, to attempt to continue it, your lordship will never blush to reckon them in the number of your enemies.

As to most of the reasons which I have heard alleged, they disgrace even the logic of the house of commons. So very contemptible and scanty were they, that even the unhappy loyalists have been dragged into the question, by the very persons that had so frequently represented them as the vile incendiaries of the war. That the situation of many of these unhappy men is truly pitiable I do not deny; that they deserve well of the government, whatever they may do of the nation, is equally certain: but that it was necessary to carry on the war upon their account alone, I think the spirit of party itself will hardly venture to assert. If it was impracticable to conquer America for the British sovereign, or the British parliament, did it cease to be so, when attempted in the name of the loyalists? Or will any one dare to assert that any thing, short of conquest, could have forced the Americans to admit them to what they had lost. If

therefore they wished to be restored to their native country, it was evident that a single year of peace would operate more in their favour, by abating the animosity of their countrymen, than could have been effected by half a century of arms. If they only desired a compensation for their losses, the saving of a dozen or twenty millions in the national expenditure, would nearly have paid the bill, though it had been indorsed by all their friends in the opposition.

But what shall we reply to the heavier charges of national disgrace, incurred by the cession of a barren waste, or a narrow island, to our enemies? Simply this, that public honour will always be better preserved by augmenting the power, than by adding to the weakness of a nation. The relative strength of every nation can never be long a secret to its neighbours; and the opinion which they entertain of this particular, will always be the measure of the respect which they shew, not the detail of past achievements, or the vain remembrance of a prowess it can no longer boast. If this principle be true, it is evident, that great Britain, if doomed to lose the colonies, became actually more formidable the instant a peace had taken place, than she had been at any moment since the confederacy of so many nations against her.

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The power of every state is merely relative, and must be estimated not by any universal standard, but by the comparative force of its neighbours. It is evident that during all the latter years of the war, however great might be the efforts of this country in themselves, they were inadequate to the object proposed: they were inadequate to the conquest of America; they were even inadequate to the defence of all our own possessions. But why were they inadequate? Merely for the same reason that Horatius was inferior to the united force of his three enemies, though singly more than a match for either. A confederacy had been formed against this country, such as we have no precedent of in the annals of our history; such as it will be our own fault, if we are doomed to encounter a second time. Would it not have been reputed a master-stroke of policy to have been able to detach a single member of that confederacy from the rest, and to have decreased the superiority of our enemies? Mr. Fox is said to have tried the experiment with Holland, and your lordship with America: we have great reason to be thankful that both the attempts were abortive.

But, in giving us peace, you effected infinitely more than it was possible to do by any other means.

You

You broke to pieces, at a stroke, that vast colossus of a league which threatened to crush us with its weight, and scattered the fragments abroad to all the winds. You gave us time to repair the ruined state of our finances by the admirable bills of reform which Mr. Burke has introduced ; and to regain the friendship of America by the salutary proclamations of last July. And if the affairs of India had been as wisely and equitably settled as they were intended by Mr. Fox's bill, some part of the glory must have been due to you, who prepared the way, by removing every obstruction.

Where then is the loss of national honour ? If national honour consist in such a mass of force as is singly superior to all that can be brought against it, such national honour never has yet existed. It did not exist even in the proudest times of the Roman commonwealth ; since no one can doubt that the art of dividing enemies and postponing wars contributed, no less than arms, to the establishment of their greatness. To look for it in the nicely-balanced system of contrary forces which now compose the state of Europe, would be the extreme of folly ; since the very stability of that state is confessedly owing to the power of opposing the ambition of one nation by the union of all the rest. Why then should the English people desire  
 impossibilities,

impossibilities, which, even could they be realized, would end in their own destruction; since every human power, which becomes too mighty for resistance, must necessarily produce every species of internal disorder and corruption?

But whether they persist in the pursuit of this chimerical greatness, or bound their wishes with the solid enjoyment of national happiness and security, it is demonstrable that peace was necessary for either object. A war, in which we were so evidently overmatched, and the continuance of which exhausted our national resources so fast, without any adequate means of supply, could never have given us that decided superiority which the successes of Lord Chatham himself had failed to do. Peace therefore became necessary, were it only in the view of promoting the objects of our own ambition.

But the honour of a nation is not to be rated by the chimerical standard of its being singly able to stand against the world in arms, or by a ruinous obstinacy in pursuing impracticable projects. It is to be rated by the opinion of its wisdom and justice, joined with such a degree of power as renders it secure from every probable attack: and all these objects were more attainable by peace, than by the bloodiest continuance of  
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the war. Our wisdom can never be impeached by putting an end to a ruinous contest which had no longer an object; our justice, by desisting from injuring the Americans and the Dutch; or our power, by ceasing to lavish our blood and treasures as unprofitably as we had hitherto done.

And if we possessed sufficient power to carry on the war for several future years, will any of those resources be diminished by the peace? Will they not, on the contrary, be continually increasing, unless our late infatuation is doomed to attend us to the last? By the equity and moderation of our public counsels we certainly may prevent the possibility of such a league as we have lately escaped: and which of our neighbours will *singly* chuse to encounter a nation that has been so nearly equal to all combined?

These, my lord, are the reflections of an impartial man upon the peace which you have given us. In every point of view it rises upon the understanding, and is brought home to our conviction. If the arguments I have used be just, they may tend to diminish the remaining prejudices of our countrymen, and to rescue one action of a minister from the general infamy which awaits the tribe. If they be, on the contrary, false, and liable to be refuted, the malice of your enemies

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is not so much assuaged, as to allow them any permanent triumphs. And while your lordship will escape the ridicule of employing so weak an advocate, I shall deservedly engross the whole disgrace of the undertaking, who,

“Nec Dîs, nec viribus, æquis,”

have engaged a volunteer in such a cause.

M A R I U S.

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L E T T E R VII.

TO EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

SIR,

**I**T is not without a diffidence proportioned to your great abilities and fame, that in the course of my labours I address myself to you.

, . . . But if I must contend,  
Best with the best . . . more glory will be won,  
Or less be lost.—

And there is a passage in your own speech of the first of December last which emboldens me to the attempt, and makes me triumph over the consideration of my own inferiority. You observe, sir, “that nothing is to be found in any habits of life or education, which tends wholly to disqualify men for the functions of government, but that by which the power of exercising those functions is very frequently obtained; I mean a spirit of low cabal and intrigue, which I have never, in one instance, seen united  
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with a capacity for sound and manly policy\*." If this, sir, is any criterion, I can appeal to my own heart, and solemnly declare that I am as little connected with any cabal or intrigue, as any one in your own virtuous and independent majority; as little as yourself, Lord North, and Mr. Fox.

But before I begin to state the observations with which I intend to trouble you, I will take the liberty of settling the limits within which our controversy will be confined. I do not mean to expatiate in the wide field of accusations which are brought against the East-India company: I cannot pretend to be prepared by "three years of laborious parliamentary research," or armed with the artillery of secret committees; whose reports are now the unerring dictates of truth, though in the year 1781 they were "the cursed Pandora's box, whence sprung out that dreadful calamity, the American war." These laurels, sir, are all your own; they have been dearly earned, and it would be equal temerity and injustice to disturb you in their possession. My labours will be of an humbler nature: they will be confined to those points in which every citizen may with propriety pretend to form a judgment, the conduct of our representatives,

\* Mr. Burke's Speech on the first of December, 1783, p. 11, printed for Doddsley.

in meddling with the affairs of the East-India company, the virtue of the attempt, and the wisdom of their proceedings.

A person so intimately acquainted with human life and literature, as I confess you to be, cannot be ignorant that it is one common art of every accuser to excite the indignation of his audience, by every method within his power. When once their passions are thoroughly raised by a recital, whether real or fictitious, of crimes and horrors, it becomes easy to give the storm whatever direction he wishes. Instead of being upon our guard against the suggestions of our heated imaginations, instead of scrutinizing the pretended evidence with a degree of doubt and accuracy proportioned to the enormity of the case, we are too apt to accept of violence and exaggeration instead of proof. Our very prejudices and indolence, in this case, assume the form and dignity of virtue ; and at length the sober dictates of caution and impartiality are utterly discarded, or treated as enemies, that would seduce us from our duty.

It is no wonder, sir, if this should be particularly true of the noble audience that listened to your Philippic. Men of such severe and unblemished manners could scarcely be expected to preserve a due and necessary moderation at such a tale

tale of complicated horrors. Whatever could add either pathos or energy to the description was certainly introduced. Here was the great Mogul—"the descendant of Tamerlane, a personage as high as human veneration can look at," unless perhaps it be the godlike mover of the bill, "standing in need almost of the common necessaries of life\*." Here was Seraja Dowla sold to Mir Jaffier, Mir Jaffier to Mir Coffim; and Mir Coffim to Mir Jaffier again †. Then to shew that the rage and cruelty of the East-India company's servants know no exceptions of sex, or no sex, we are told a moving history of outrages offered to ladies,

\* "The first potentate sold by the company for money was the great Mogul—the descendant of Tamerlane. This high personage, as high as human veneration can look at," &c.—Speech, p. 17.

"The descendant of Tamerlane now stands in need almost of the common necessaries of life."—Ibid. p. 18.

This fact is most satisfactorily explained in many of the publications in answer to Mr. Burke, particularly in the writings of Major Scott. But what does it add to the atrocity of the action, that the great Mogul is the descendant of Tamerlane? Tamerlane himself was a robber and a spoiler, and more destructive to mankind than pestilence, famine, or even the East-India company.

† Speech, p. 19.

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and even to eunuchs †. The story itself of Urfula and her eleven thousand virgins is almost paralleled in that of the nabob of Oude, his two thousand women, the two seraglios more of his near kindred, and the nabob's fourscore children §.

“ Quis talia fando

“ Temperet a lachrymis ?”

It is true, sir, that you had like to have spoiled all again by the mention of the venerable “ grandmother and the ancient household :” this circumstance was too powerful for the muscles of the younger members. But even the great Scriblerus sometimes touched the improper string ; and when you sum up all, by complimenting the house upon their virtue and independency, it was as impossible they should resist, as an ugly woman who hears for the first time commendations upon her beauty.

‡ “ Their chief eunuchs, who were their agents, their guardians, protectors, persons of high rank according to the eastern manners, and of great trust, were thrown into dungeons, to make them discover their hidden treasures ; and there they lie at present.”—Speech, p. 44.

§ “ That family and household consisted of *two thousand women*, to which were added two other seraglios of near kindred, and said to be extremely numerous, and (as I am well informed) of about fourscore of the Nabob's children, with all the eunuchs, the ancient servants, and a multitude of the dependants of his splendid court.”—Ibid, p. 45.

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But I agree with you, fir, that the present is no season for mirth or levity ; and I never held the opinion that ridicule was the test of truth. The points on which we differ are neither to be settled by raillery nor declamation, but by the sober force of truth and argument ; and to these I return.

You observe, fir, “ that the phrase of the chartered rights of men ” is full of affectation, and very unusual in the discussion of privileges conferred by charters of the present description.” I have always considered the expression in the same light, but for another reason. A charter, if I rightly understand the expression, comprehends certain powers conferred by the king in virtue of his prerogative. The East-India company, I believe, may pretend to this security ; but I should hardly think its advocates would much insist upon them, when they can appeal to authorities of higher importance. The first establishment of the East-India company upon its present basis, was, as you very well know, an act of the whole legislature in 9th and 10th of William and Mary, which engaged to incorporate the lenders of two millions to the government into a company, and invested them with certain exclusive rights. So far were the people of that time from insisting upon their chartered rights, that the parliament denied the  
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power of the crown to grant a charter of that description ; and the old East-India company exerted all its influence in vain to procure a parliamentary establishment. And so great was the difference of ideas which then prevailed, that though the old East-India company could claim no other foundation than a royal charter, which had been repeatedly declared insufficient by the commons, though it was contended that its members had been guilty of acts subversive of all the rights which they pretended to, when they were heard in opposition before the lords, yet they were quietly allowed to continue their franchises, till they wisely *coalesced* with the new company in 1702, and put an end to their own separate existence.

The form of that act in 1698, from which the present company derives its establishment, has been the model of all the subsequent ones which the legislature has chosen to pass. But the only clause, which it is now material to take notice of, is that which empowers the government, upon re-payment of the two millions originally borrowed, and giving three years notice after the twentieth of September 1711, to dissolve the said company, and re-assume all the powers with which it had been invested.

Let me now, sir, be permitted to stop for a moment, and consider the nature of the transaction

action which I have just described, and which I believe you will find faithfully copied from the history of those times. Here, then, is a solemn contract entered into by the whole legislature on the one side, and certain individuals on the other, which, in consideration of two millions to be advanced for the public service, settles upon them for a limited time certain exclusive privileges, with an equity of redemption in case it should appear inexpedient to continue those powers beyond the appointed period. Can it be supposed, therefore, that either of these contracting parties was imagined to retain the right of dissolving the agreement, whenever it should judge proper, for reasons of which it was to remain the sole and unaccountable judge? Is it not, on the contrary, one of the most absurd, ridiculous, and unfounded ideas that ever entered into the head of a human being, even into the head of a politician? Where contracts are entered into between one individual and another, there is always some public tribunal which will oppose injustice and enforce their observance: and I believe, till the celebrated receipt-tax of last year, there is scarcely to be found an instance of a government, which did not at least insist upon good faith in its subjects, whatever indulgences it might allow itself.

It is true, sir, that there is one essential difference

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ference between a government and an individual : an individual may be compelled to the observance of his contract, which cannot be done to the former, unless by a general insurrection of the people and a revolution. But does this make any difference in respect to moral obligations or principles of justice ? Or is a state allowed to act upon those principles, which would indelibly involve every individual in such a web of infamy and disgrace, as would destroy his character for ever ? It may, perhaps, be answered, that this is a liberty in which most governments have occasionally indulged themselves. I grant the fact, and you will perhaps grant the consequences : that most governments have become so universally infamous by the practice, that it is difficult to decide whether they are considered with more abhorrence by foreign nations, or by their own subjects. I have little occasion to insist upon some celebrated manoeuvres of this kind in our neighbours ; since there is scarcely a gentleman who voted for the East-India bill, provided he had words enough to make a motion, that has not, in some preceding debate, insisted upon the immense resources of this country in comparison with France, all derived from the consistency of its conduct, and the vast extent of its credit.

I must confess, sir, I have a kind of antiquated prejudice

prejudice in favour of consistency. I can respect men of every different political opinion, provided they are uniform : but I have never been able to understand that eternal versatility of character which changes public debates into the venal eloquence of wrangling lawyers ; nor can I conceive, by any theory which I think myself allowed to mention, whence it arises that these sudden flashes of new conviction are always found to accompany the immediate interests of the party. The gentlemen, who are known by the general name of the Rockingham party, have always distinguished themselves by their inveterate opposition to every parliamentary reform. According to them, it is infinitely better to suffer the noblest constitution of the world to fall into ruins before our eyes, than to change a single stone in the crumbling edifice, or even to add a prop to support it. I have listened, sir, without conviction, to much reasoning of this kind ; and, though I do not recollect that many gentlemen have chosen to put their names to their elaborate defence of the present system, I have always allowed that they might possibly be in earnest. Were it necessary, I could produce many instances of the infinite contempt they heap upon speculative principles of right and wrong, and visionary systems of reformation, from all the celebrated pamphlets of the party.



But, in the name of God, why do they not adhere to their own principles? Are the repeated agreements which the whole legislature has made with the East-India company of less sanctity than the septennial bill, which even the boldest of your own house has never yet contended to be constitutional; and which not one of you can now defend, without asserting that you have a right to subvert the whole system of government at your pleasure? Or, is it imagined, that the solid opinions of mankind upon the subject of right and justice are to be changed by every temporary blast that turns the state weathercock of your honorable house?

But as to the original act of establishment for the East-India company, it was penned with all the requisite discretion and foresight. It was a new experiment made upon a very important subject of political economy, and therefore the government wisely reserved to itself a power of dissolving the company, in case experience should evince the necessity of doing it. But, if they have never taken advantage of that restraining clause, during the term of almost an hundred years, what are we to infer from this forbearance, excepting that the government found nothing in this company "worthy of death." For my part, I attach so much respect to the honorable house  
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of commons, that I cannot easily believe it capable of the grossest contradiction and absurdity. Now, in my humble opinion, it is difficult to admit this new necessity of seizing all the property of the East-India company, and subverting an agreement of the whole legislature, without throwing such insinuations either upon the wisdom or justice of our representatives, as even their most inveterate enemy would scarcely venture.

The last agreement, sir, which is upon record of the government with the East-India company dates no farther back than the spring or summer of the year 1781. Lord North had taken advantage of the approaching expiration of their privilege, to give the requisite notice that he intended to dissolve the company. Had he actually done this, we might have objected to the policy or wisdom of the measure ; but certainly no one could consistently have denied the right. But this was by no means done, or perhaps ever intended ; and therefore, after a variety of political altercation, an act passed in the same form with all the preceding, to extend the Company's exclusive privileges to the year 1791, in consequence of four hundred thousand pounds paid to the government.

It is here worth remarking, that the majority, which ratified this agreement, was a majority of  
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the same house of commons which now exists; and, consequently, I am reduced to the unfortunate dilemma of either believing that the honorable house acquitted the company of all their crimes and delinquencies to the moment when the act passed, or of supposing that so wise, so virtuous, so independent an house could not be ignorant of such a baneful catalogue of crimes, and therefore gravely intended to bite the nation, and swindle the company out of four hundred thousand pounds, upon a pretence which they never intended to realize.

I have heard it observed, that a skilful fencer never exposes himself for the chance of hitting his adversary; yet this seems to be the case of your most eloquent detail of the pretended crimes of the company. The greater part of these atrocious acts were certainly prior to the year 1781. With what propriety, therefore, with what appearance of justice does the same house of commons found a necessity of rescinding its own deliberate engagements, upon allegations, which it either was, or ought to have been acquainted with, at the very moment when it contracted them?

With all the respect, sir, which we may feel either for you or your audience, how is it possible that any human being should avoid smiling, when  
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he hears the privileges of the company attacked upon the principle of their establishing a monopoly, within the walls of that very house, which instituted the monopoly in the last century, and has maintained it by successive sales and contracts throughout the present\*? Still  
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\* "The East-India charter is a charter to establish monopoly, and to *create* power. Political power and commercial monopoly are not the rights of men; and the rights to them derived from charters, it is fallacious and sophistical to call "the chartered rights of men." These chartered rights (to speak of such charters and of their effects in terms of the greatest possible moderation) do at least suspend the natural rights of mankind at large, and in their very frame and constitution are liable to fall into a direct violation of them." — Speech, p. 7.

All this flourish appears to me one of the strongest instances how a good understanding may be abused. If a legislature attempt to sell more than it possesses a right to do, the people may be justified, perhaps, in rescinding an agreement made without their consent, and to their detriment. But what has all this to do with the legislature itself, whose decisions are to be law and justice for all the rest of the community, rescinding its own agreements?—Would not this be a plain confession of ignorance, folly, or injustice, in the very persons who assume to themselves the power of deciding for all the rest? And if this be found to-day, why not to-morrow? If in the last agreement, why not in the next?—Would not this bring the legislature into such extreme contempt as would tend either to tyranny, or to a dissolution of all government?—And is this the noble and excellent spirit of reform which is to be introduced into the English government?— "Unde nefas tantum Latius pastoribus?"—

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more curious is the distinction between the ideas of natural and artificial right. What is it to the buyer, whether the house choose to sell one or the other? He naturally expects to be maintained in what he has fairly purchased. Must no one pretend to enter into a contract with any government, without the interference of Grotius, Puffendorf, and Montesquieu? Or whence do the honorable gentlemen derive their notions of natural right, when they deny to seven millions of people the least interference with the choice of their own representatives?

But what, I wonder, would be said to any man in private life, who, after having voluntarily and deliberately entered into a contract, should pretend to rescind it at will, because it was contrary to his ideas of natural right? Would it not be answered, that this was the silliest pretext by which fraud ever attempted to impose upon credulity? He would be told that he had sufficient leisure to consider the subject, and consult the delicacy of his feelings, before he entered

Let me be pardoned, if I publicly assert, that such an idea is disgraceful to the hitherto untainted reputation of our public faith, and fatal to the confidence which all subjects ought to entertain in the justice of the legislature; worthy only of the spirit of tyranny, and most happily adapted to root out honesty and commerce throughout the kingdom.

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into the engagement: but that little credit would be given to his pretended qualms, when they were evidently dictated by his own interest; that justice and right were never inconsistent with themselves; and that the first duty of both was to fulfil promises and engagements.—But what, if all these scruples should neither tend to a restitution of the rights in question to those from whom they were originally taken, or to any indemnification of their value? Must we not admire the particular delicacy which breaks its own most solemn faith and contract, from the suggestions of conscience, and then finishes by violating those very rights a second time, with as little remorse as it did the first?

For to what, sir, do all these declamations about right and monopoly tend? Will the natural rights of every subject in these kingdoms to carry on a commerce with India, be less invaded when the monopoly is given to seven commissioners of the parliament, than while it remained in the directors of the company? Or is there the least alteration made, or pretended to be made, in the actual state of that monopoly?

But the plea of state-necessity, upon which your honorable friend expatiated with so much eloquence, is a topic much more difficult to be

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confuted, because it is so vague and general as scarcely to admit an answer. Were there some inter-mediate power, indeed, to decide between the contracting parties, it might mean something; but in the present case it means no more than that a minister and a majority may, under the subterfuge of general and equivocal terms, violate every engagement they had entered into. For what enterprise can be conceived so openly flagitious and unjust, which may not be justified by the same persons, and upon the same principles? I will engage to produce an act for vesting all the looms of Manchester, or the forges of Birmingham, in seven commissioners, upon the very same principles of state-necessity which make so great a figure in his speech.

A great metaphysician, like you, sir, need not be told, that the expressions of right, justice, charter, contract, necessity, and an hundred more which might be produced, can never in themselves decide a single controversy between two individuals of the human species. All parties allow their existence, and appeal to them in their own favour. Naturally, the understanding of one man has an equal claim with that of any other, to be attended to in the controversy. But as it is evident, that scarcely any dispute would ever be terminated were it to depend

depend upon the entire acquiescence of one party in the reason of another, public tribunals are instituted in every state, for the administration of justice and the termination of differences. In these tribunals, certain individuals are invested with the power of deciding what shall be justice and law in respect to the rest of the society; not from the supposition that one man is naturally more infallible than another, but because this method, however imperfect, is all that can be effected by human prudence. It is possible to ascertain the person, though not the thing; and while there are eternal disputes about law and equity, there is seldom any concerning the person of the judge or chancellor.

To preserve these venerable personages even from the suspicion of corruption; to guard against the surprises of private prejudice or passion; and to divide the different powers in such a manner as mutually to be a check upon each other, has long been the distinguishing boast of our country and constitution. The meanest individual cannot be condemned, without his passing before so many independent authorities as to leave scarcely a supposition of collusion or injustice. First, he must be accused upon oath before a magistrate, who ought to be a private gentleman of independent fortune.

In the next place, he must be referred to a body of independent gentlemen, who, if they judge the accusation false or groundless, have a right of instantly dismissing it; and these too are sworn to the observance of impartial justice. In the third place, another jury is invested with the power of finally deciding, upon oath, his guilt or innocence; and though the number of this body is only twelve, the criminal may peremptorily except to twenty of those who are returned for the office. These men are expressly to be chosen out of the peers or equals of the accused; that so far from having any interest in his condemnation, they may have the strongest motive to give its proper weight to every plea which can be brought in his favour. The indictment too must be precise and accurate; that no room may be left for the fascinations of eloquence, or the wild suggestions of general and vague accusation; which are seldom employed but to perplex the mind and bewilder the judgment.

These, sir, are the securities which the English law affords to the person of the meanest individual in the kingdom, previous to his being subjected even to the judicial authority: and I have mentioned them thus at length, that the public may contrast them with the proceedings of a certain

tain honorable house in respect to the greatest company of merchants in the universe ; men, who, in whatever light they may be considered by moralists, have done much for the opulence and glory of the kingdom. And I must confess, it strikes me with no little idea of “ the inconstancy of human greatness, and the stupendous revolutions that have happened in our age of wonders,” when I see a set of men, who have just lost thirteen provinces, sitting in judgment upon, and dispossessing those who have added to the British empire “ 281,412 square miles ; which form a territory larger than any European dominion, Russia and Turkey excepted \*.”

“ Nunc et oves ultro fugiat lupo : aurea duræ

“ Mala ferant quercus : narcissus floreat alnus.”

Their proceedings have been worthy of the cause ; for, in the confusion of powers and characters which they have assumed to themselves, it is difficult to distinguish any thing of reason, justice, or even of a regular systematic enquiry. First, they chew the cud of evidence and fact in their secret and select committees ; which is afterwards to be brought up again half-digested, and to become the loathsome nutriment of a criminal prosecution. Then, in their judicial character, they sit to determine upon the merits of this very

\* Speech, p. 12:

evidence,



evidence, which they have before prepared. The accusers are certain orators of their own body ; who, instead of confining themselves to specific charges, or any of the salutary forms which long experience has established as necessary to the impartial administration of justice, deal out their general invectives, and unsupported accusations, without examining a witness, or even waiting for an answer. Thus is the affair hurried on according to the true principles of summary justice, and brought to a speedy termination ; and then too, the same honorable house assumes its last, and, as its enemies would observe, its most consistent character, that of public executioner ; dispatches the offender in an instant, and seizes upon all his spoils as hangman's wages.

Thus, sir, have I gone through the first part of my disagreeable task, in respect to the celebrated East-India business. One plea, indeed, has been omitted, that of an honorable lord, your late enemy, but present friend and colleague, who justifies the invasion of the company's rights by the precedent of his having already violated them in 1772. The argument, I trust, will make but few proselytes out of his own house ; but it is such an illustration of my subject that I cannot pass it over in silence.

To the English nation, therefore, at large I  
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must recommend the consideration of another species of necessity ; the necessity of watching, with a severe and constant attention, the operations of men who call themselves the representatives of the people, yet are continually setting that people at defiance. They resist, with an inflexible obstinacy, every attempt to bring them nearer to the only purpose for which they exist ; yet there is nothing so remote, or sacred, as to escape the interference of their avarice and ambition. Even the most scandalous outrages, the most unjustifiable attempts upon the rights of others, if once submitted to, are boldly brought forward as precedents, and used as arguments for new ones. If a minister dare something of peculiar atrocity or injustice, “ *brevibus gyaris aut carcere dignum*,” it is railed at by his opponents, but enforced by a majority of his creatures. Supposing the wheel of fortune to turn round, and the friends of the people to grasp the distinctions which they long have aimed at, what is to be expected from their promises and their public spirit ? That they should resign the usurpations of their predecessors, or endeavour to give the nation any security for their liberties ? That indeed would shew a most contemptible ignorance of public men, and the history of parties in this country. But what you may safely expect is that  
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they should improve upon all that has been perpetrated by their predecessors, and severely realize the foolish vaunts of a foolish king: "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins: for whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke; my father chastized you with whips, but I will chastize you with scorpions."

**MARIUS.**

**ET.**

L E T T E R VIII.

TO EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

S I R,

**I**F, in the present distracted state of this country, the freedom with which I have considered the conduct of our representatives required an apology, I could use no better one than a quotation from your own celebrated Speech :  
“ They must grant to me, in my turn, that all political power which is set over men, and that all privilege claimed or exercised in exclusion of them, being wholly artificial, and, for so much, a derogation from the natural equality of mankind at large, ought to be some way or other exercised ultimately for their benefit.”

“ If this is true with regard to every species of political dominion, and every description of commercial privilege, none of which can be original self-derived rights, or grants for the more private benefit of the holders, then such rights or privileges, or whatever else you choose to call them, are all in the strictest sense a *trust*; and it is of the very essence of every trust to be

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rendered *accountable* ; and even totally to *cease*, when it substantially varies from the purposes for which alone it could have a lawful existence \*."

I have considered, in my former letter, not so much the pretended abuses in the administration of our East-Indian possessions, of which I confess myself no adequate judge, (though I do not believe nine tenths of your own honorable house more qualified for the decision,) as the method of establishing them, and the jurisdiction of the tribunal before which they are brought. I have attempted to prove, that, in the whole

\* Speech, p. 7.—This extraordinary confession puts me in mind of the following story, to be found, I believe, in Pilpay's Fables. A certain man, very uxoriously inclined, had a young and beautiful wife, who always treated him with the most open aversion and disdain ; till one night, spying a thief in the room, she took refuge in the arms of her husband, who was asleep, with such unusual fondness as awakened him. But when the good man learned the cause of her terrors, he called out in raptures to the thief, who had been alarmed and was moving off, " Pray, sir, stay ! the happiness you have procured me is so great that you are welcome to all I have in return."—This condescension in their representatives is certainly as new to the people of England as was the fondness of the wife to the poor doating husband ; but they do not seem equally grateful : or have they already given so much, that they have no more to bestow ?

proceeding,



proceeding, nothing is to be found worthy the gravity, dignity, or disinterestedness of a British senate; that nothing could be a greater mockery of all ideas of right and justice, than that the same persons should sit in judgment upon the validity of their own engagements, who had contracted them originally, and ratified them at repeated intervals; that, if the honorable house pretended to sit as a court of justice, it has not observed a single rule or decorum which could convince the nation of its impartiality; not even the flimsy forms and punctilios which attended the *quo warrantos* of the last century, or the condemnations of Sydney and Russell. It was a species of summary justice which improves upon Asiatic models, and will afford instructions to each succeeding Jefferies for ages. But another consideration equally important remains: supposing the house of commons had been a tribunal ever so well adapted to the enquiry, supposing the guilt of the East-India company to have been ever so clearly proved, what is the nature of the remedy proposed for these disorders, and what the benefit which we may fairly expect from its administration? For even if all the abuse, which the invention of interest and malice combined have heaped together, should be admitted, it will not follow that the proposed remedy is adapt-

ed to remove the evil, or even to palliate its most alarming symptoms. This examination, sir, will furnish a proper comment for your speech, and may fill up some chasms which I have observed between the premises and the conclusions.

For even supposing certain abuses should have been clearly proved to exist in the administration of the East India Company's affairs, should those abuses also be of sufficient magnitude to justify the interference of parliament, it will by no means follow, that Mr. Fox's pretended bill of reform was either necessary, or adapted to the purpose. But in order to make this arise as an inevitable conclusion, you assume the strangest series of facts that I believe was ever obtruded upon the public. For first you conclude "that this body (meaning the whole body of proprietors), being totally perverted from the purposes of its institution, is utterly incorrigible; and because they are incorrigible, both in conduct and constitution, power ought to be taken out of their hands: just on the same principles on which have been made all the just changes and revolutions of government that have taken place since the beginning of the world."\*

To assume that any body of people is not only corrupted, but incorrigible, is, to a plain and common understanding, one of the most extraordinary

\* Speech, p. 88.

traordinary positions that I think was ever ventured in a serious publication. It should seem, sir, that you hold the doctrine of free-will in so entire and absolute a manner, that you leave no room for the application of new motives to the mind ; or else you fall into the contrary extreme, and assert that the conduct will remain the same, though every principle of action should be changed. Choose which you will of these absurdities ; for they are both before you. Nor is it a common species of corruption alone of which they are accused, such as some ignorant people have attributed to a virtuous majority, the preferring their private to the public interest ; but the more extraordinary one of not only being incapable of regulating their own affairs, but of becoming so by any process that can be operated even by the omnipotence of parliament. Yet this incorrigible body is composed upon the same principles with the Bank, or any other public company that has ever existed ; comprehends many hundred individuals, among whom may be numbered the principal gentry of the kingdom, and the most opulent merchants of the city of London.

I should imagine, sir, that were a foreigner, totally unversed in the party history of this kingdom, to hear so extraordinary an assertion, he  
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would necessarily imagine that the whole preceding history of the East-India company contained nothing but the detail of public frauds and private blunders : more especially, when he reflected upon the repeated generosity which had been used in an arbitrary government, like that of France, to support a similar establishment, he would conclude that the national assistance and generosity here must have been so repeatedly abused as to leave no farther room for pardon or experiment. Necessity, he would observe, may indeed justify, as it occasions every attempt; but it must be a very uncommon kind of necessity that can induce the government of a free state to desert all its usual principles, and to use a discretionary authority with greater rigour than was ever known in an arbitrary one. But what would be his astonishment, when he was told the real history of this oppressed and persecuted company ? That, incorrigible as it is now represented to be, and radically corrupted, it had, by its own exertions, obtained a degree of greatness perhaps unparalleled in the history of the world. That its commerce, while it poured into the bosom of the mother-country all the varied productions of the fruitful East, had afforded such ample supplies to its revenue as would alone support the expences of a moderate state. That its  
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present distresses were chiefly the temporary effects of a ruinous and inevitable war, in which it had been involved by the ambition of those very patriots who now exult with a malignant joy over the wounds which they have occasioned, and, instead of binding them up, are hastening to draw forth the vital fluids by the orifice. Its own resources, it would be added, have nursed it up to a degree of power and opulence which awes one portion of the globe, while it excites the envy of all the rest. Although originally intended for commerce alone, it has gradually extended its power and influence, till it has involved the fates of mighty empires, and attracted them to itself. Whatever may be now advanced, by interest or malevolence, about the crimes and incapacity of its servants, is amply confuted even by the unexaggerated detail of events. What stronger evidence can be given of the solid basis upon which any human power is founded, than its capacity to resist and triumph over the mightiest attacks? This, even exclusively, is the boast of the English East-India company. With every disadvantage of difficulty and distance, it has prevailed, not only over the feeble opposition of Asiatic princes, but over all the efforts of one of the most politic and warlike nations in the universe. Could this have been effected without a spirit, both of counsel, and



and of enterprise?—No—whatever may be the representations of parliamentary orators, the world at large will refute the wild and chimerical accusation. Whatever may be the demerits of the company, whatever the catalogue of its crimes, the comparative series of its ministers may certainly vie with that of any modern government of Europe. It has undoubtedly produced warriors of intrepid minds and heroes of immortal fame ; chiefs that have dared, in their employers and country's cause, all that men can dare ; that have executed every thing which the present colleagues of Mr. Burke have *failed* to do. Even now, “ on evil days though fall’n, and evil tongues,” it can boast of characters that would do honour to any nation ; the foremost of whom is that very culprit, that seems singly, like an electric rod upon a noble edifice, to have protected the building beneath, while he attracts the fury of the tempest upon himself. Yet even he, “ scathed,” as he may appear, by all the lightnings of parliamentary vengeance, nor asks the mercy, nor deprecates the rage of his accusers : he is ready to leave the throne of half the East in order to meet their impeachments ; he bids them take his life, if any thing worthy of death shall be found in his conduct ; nor dare his most inveterate enemies accept the offer.

Is this, sir, the language of party or cabal? If it be, I wish it were oftener heard within the walls of even your own virtuous house. It is the voice of a man who is equally unacquainted with Mr. Hastings and his friends; totally unconnected with the affairs and interests of the East-India company. It is the voice of a man who has never been seen at the levees of either your friends or antagonists; who has never flattered even the people, much as he loves them, in their delusions, or cringed to them for their support. But it is the voice of an independent man, that dares to express his sentiments in defiance of the most powerful faction of this country, and that has a character to hazard upon the stake. As to Mr. Hastings, his abilities are so undoubted, and there is so strong an impression of a great and noble ambition in all his actions, that I cannot help admiring him; and that admiration, I confess, makes me ready to esteem him: I am interested in his fate, and wish to find that he has added the praise of integrity to that of a comprehensive understanding and elevated mind. If ever there was an individual who deserved to have the weaknesses or defects of human nature overshadowed by his triumphs, it certainly is Mr. Hastings; yet, were his achievements and his qualities ten times greater

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than they are, I never would interpose to screen him from public justice, if he has deserved it; on the contrary, I would be the first to mount the rostrum, and arrest him in his triumphal progress, did I live in a country where any punishments were inflicted upon public guilt, or where private virtue might direct the vengeance of the nation. But such as he is, he does not deserve to fall unheard. His fate should be an honorable wound, in fair and equal battle; not to be trodden down by a base and promiscuous rabble that are only struggling for his spoils. Let him fall hereafter, a victim to the offended genius of Asia, and to the insulted justice of his country; but let him, while he lives, enjoy the honors and the veneration of an hero. His death, whenever it arrives, will neither disgrace his friends, nor be unworthy of himself; it will be solemn and lamented, the catastrophe of an awful drama: justice will be expiated and sorrow for the stroke; it will not refuse the consolation of an honorable interment, or deny a martial trophy to adorn his tomb: it is envy alone that would steal the noble corpse, and hew it out to glut the fury of parliamentary hounds\*.

This,

\* There are two circumstances essential to every free state; that no individual should either be elevated beyond the reach of public justice, or condemned unheard. Nothing can be a surer presage of approaching ruin to such a state

This, sir, like many parts of your own Speech, is declamation ; but it is not, as they are,

state than that degree of power which frustrates all enquiry, or that degree of violence which tramples upon the salutary forms of criminal investigation. The more enormous is the imputed guilt, the more cautious should we be in examining whether it really exist. An unfortunate man, not very long ago, fell a victim to the odium which had been excited by the atrocious nature of the crime alleged against him ; and this must sometimes happen, in spite of the most excellent system of criminal proceedings that any country could ever boast. How cautious then ought we to be in pronouncing upon the guilt of those who are absent, and where the scene of accusation lies in another hemisphere ! I am very ill qualified to decide concerning the merit of Mr. Hastings ; but I am sufficiently qualified to pronounce that not one of the charges against him has yet been proved to the satisfaction of any impartial man : nor is there one of them which has not been denied, and very forcibly, at least very speciously, invalidated. Mr. Burke, in the fervour of his complimentary eloquence, has this passage (p. 81): “ This man, whose deep reach of thought, whose large legislative conceptions, and whose grand plans of policy, make the most shining part of our reports, *from whence we have all learned our lessons, if we have learned any good ones ;* this man, from whose materials those gentlemen who have least acknowledged it, have yet spoken as from a brief,” &c. This passage, I must confess, appears to me a very unfortunate one ; since it seems to place the foundation of all the bitter charges, both against Mr. Hastings and the East-India company, upon the evidence and representations of one gentleman alone, and that gentleman known to have been upon terms of personal enmity with the parties accused. Whatever may be the integrity and abilities of any

are, unsupported by fact or argument. And are the proprietors of the East-India stock to be calumniated with every disgraceful epithet that can sting the heart, or degrade the character of man, merely because they did not recall a minister like Mr. Hastings, at the instigation of what now composes a majority of the commons? On the contrary, it would have been madness to have done it; and it is the strongest proof both of their understanding and their independence, that they have dared to disregard the idle thunders of such a vote, and to follow the dictates of their own better sense. Yet, that they have dared to do this, and to maintain the freedom of their own appointments, in opposition to the sense of the committees of the house of commons, is a sufficient reason for your declaring "that the condition of the company is incorrigible." Strange logic indeed! and a new species of dilemma! Either the whole corporation is at once to resign its legal powers

man, common justice requires that allowance should be made for those passions which are inseparable from human nature: nor are such accusations as are produced in the Speech I allude to, to be admitted upon the testimony of any individual in the universe; still less upon another person's representation, even of that very testimony. For Mr. Burke himself allows, *that he has learned his lesson,* without producing his master.

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into the hands of a majority of the house, to change the tenour of its proceedings, displace its servants, and manage its commercial affairs by every caprice of men, who, whatever they may know, can know but little of India affairs, or else the punishment of this *audacity*\* is to be the confiscation of all their privileges, and the forfeiture of all their property. I have heard of an highwayman, that presented a pistol to a gentleman's breast with this apostrophe, "Sir, give me all your money, or else by G—d you'll be robbed." I will not pain your delicacy by the application of the story; but will you please to inform us, where was the crime of the proprietors resisting a vote of the house? If it be a crime, why are they not proceeded against and punished in a legal way? But if it be no more a crime for them to persist in maintaining their own appointment, than it would be in me to keep a footman in defiance of a vote of the house of commons, how can this establish either their corruption or their incorrigibility?

But let me be permitted to analyze your Speech, and, throwing the pomp of metaphor

\* "Ever since the beginning of this session, the same act of audacity was repeated."—P. 87.

and

and allusion aside, to consider the simple facts and arguments which it contains. Neither you, nor any of your honorable friends, can deny that the East-India company have, for a considerable space of time previous to these accusations, managed their affairs with considerable attention and ability. Their prosperity is a sufficient proof of this and the stability of their empire. Now, sir, the whole period which is contained in your accusations scarcely extends to a dozen years. You were their defender in the year 1769, if you are the author of the pamphlet called, "Observations on a late State of the Nation;" and you have defended them as low as the year 1781, if any faith is to be given to the parliamentary Debates. Even in your present Speech you unguardedly allow "the fact is, that for a long time there was a struggle, a faint one, indeed, between the company and their servants\* ; of the directors you affirm, "there have been, sir, very frequently, men of the greatest integrity and virtue amongst them†:" yet, after having paraded through an hundred pages of mere declamation and vague accusations, which have been repeatedly answered and contradicted, you gravely con-

\* Speech, p. 88.

† Ibid. p. 83.

clude

clude that the whole body both of proprietors and directors is utterly incorrigible; the one for opposing the vote of parliament; the other, I suppose, for yielding obedience to it\*. I believe such a conclusion derived from such premises was never before hazarded by a man of your abilities: for what can be inferred even after the most implicit acquiescence in all your charges, not one of which has been authenticated, unless that the servants of the company have for some years past been guilty of misbehaviour, and that the proprietors, piqued, according to your own account †, by the interference

“ \* The directors, still retaining some shadow of respect to this house, instituted an enquiry themselves, which continued from June to October; and, after an attentive perusal and full consideration of papers, resolved to take steps for removing the persons who had been the objects of our resolutions.”—Speech, p. 86.—Yet, p. 89, the directors themselves are all wolves. “ He would appoint the wolf a guardian of the sheep; but he has invented a curious muzzle, by which this protecting wolf shall not be able to open his jaws above an inch or two at the utmost.”

May it not be asked whether any person was ever more constantly represented in the light of a wolf, than Lord North by Mr. Burke and all his friends?—Yet a late transaction is a proof that wolves may either change their nature, or be most happily restrained from mischief, by means of a *coalition muzzle*.

† “ Even the attempt you have made to enquire into their practices, and to reform abuses, has raised and piqued them

terference of the commons, have not shewn all due respect to their illustrious vote ?

But why must they be for this reason incorrigible ? Is not every body of men subject to errors and to passions ? Do not a calmer consideration of affairs, and longer experience, frequently point out the necessity of an alteration of conduct ? And why might not the same revolution of things take place in respect to them, which we have seen exemplified in the house of commons ? For almost twenty years, sir, the nation has heard you and your friends declaiming against venality and secret influence ; for almost twenty years, if we can believe your representations, there has been scarcely a measure which has not begun in folly and terminated in wickedness. This is a longer space of reprobation than what you have alleged against the East-India company. Yet see how time, in its silent progress, accomplishes the most stupendous revolutions ! This house, which formerly was a den of thieves, is now become the temple of the Lord ; “ an independent house of

them to a far more regular and steady support.”—Speech, p. 88.—May it not be suspected that resentment against an interference, which they justly thought improper, might act upon the minds of the proprietors, as much as this original sin of corruption ?

commons ;

commons; an house of commons which has, by its own virtue, destroyed the influence of parliamentary subserviency."†

But as to the idea of any body of men, that is in a continual state of fluctuation, being incurably and necessarily corrupt, the idea is as unphilosophical as the purpose for which it is introduced is unjust. Is it for me, sir, to inform a man, that insists so frequently and with so much pleasure upon his acquaintance with mankind, that every body of men is acted upon by circumstances, and changes its character in unison with the general changes which surround it? Even parliaments have been disinterested and defended the liberties of the people. If they are grown indifferent to these circumstances, it is because the general relaxation of the times admits the depravity; and because faction and intrigue have been discovered to be more effectual ways of making a fortune than virtue or integrity. But should the people once more rouse from their lethargy, and demand a severe account from their representatives, of all the millions which they have squandered, of all the mismanagement which they have connived at; should they for the future insist upon private virtue and public consistency as indis-

† Speech, p. 97.



penfable qualifications, we might perhaps fee a change more extraordinary, in a certain honorable houfe, than any which mark the year 1783.

But as to the defencelefs proprietors of Eaft-India ftock, it is an equal reflection upon your houfe to have fuffered their crimes and obftinacy fo long as you pretend, and to be incapable of correcting it now. All men, in every fituation, are naturally guided by the impulse of their own intereft; nor does a government ever depend upon the virtue of its fubjects, but upon the wifdom of its own regulations. It afcertains the crime, it fixes the mode of profecution, it eftablifhes the penalty. Look, I pray you, fir, at your own ftatutes; there you will find a thoufand of the moft innocent actions in life prohibited under the fevereft penalties. Men may not confume the product of their own fields, they may not fee the light of heaven, they may not fteep an handful of barley-corns in water, without the leave of government. Lately you have undertaken that no man fhall difcharge the duties of common honefty, that not a labourer fhall pay his ale-houfe fcore, without the interference of government; and rather than fail, you hold out an univerfal patronage to every villain throughout the kingdom. Do you imagine, fir, that men fubmit willingly

willingly and chearfully to these absurd oppressions? No; they curse your parties and your politics *in every tongue*, by every *form of religion*, which prevails throughout the empire. But hard necessity compels, the iron hand of power, and the terrors of impending punishment. Are you able to do all this, and are you obliged to yield to the obstinacy alone of India proprietors; men that are chained down in the midst of the capital; who are every instant exposed to your power, and obnoxious to your vengeance; whose fortunes are the constant pledges of their conduct, and exposed, if they disobey, to all your conscientious encroachments? But pardon me, sir, if I tell you that the whole scheme is such a chaos of absurdity, bad reasoning, and oppression, as never before disgraced a government.

Men will certainly neither yield up their property or their liberty to the pretended necessities of government, so long as they can retain them. But are the reports of the committees to enquire into the frauds practised upon the revenue, a sufficient reason to pronounce that the brewers, the distillers, and the numerous other traders who are now the daily victims of the excise, are become incorrigible; and therefore to invest their shops, their warehouses, their distilleries,

in parliamentary commissioners? Yet the principle is equally applicable; with this difference only, that after some hundred pages of declamation, not a single action has been proved against the East-India proprietors, which does not spring from their undoubted right.

But from the first ill-omened hour, the year 1767\*, when the affairs of the company were

\* It is worth while to consider the following account of that transaction.—“The East-India company had for a good while solicited the ministry for a negotiation, by which they proposed to pay largely for some advantages in their trade, and for the renewal of their charter. This had been the former method of transacting with that body. Government having only leased the monopoly for short terms, the company has been obliged to resort to it frequently for renewals. These two parties had always negotiated (on the true principle of credit) not as government and subject, but as equal dealers, on the footing of mutual advantage. The public had derived great benefit from such dealing. But at that time new ideas prevailed,” &c. &c.—See the curious passage at length in a pamphlet called, “Observations on a late State of the Nation,” p. 89.

The following perhaps may not be inapplicable to the present times. “In consequence of this scheme, the terrors of a parliamentary enquiry were hung over them. A judicature was asserted in parliament to try this question. But, lest this judicial character should chance to inspire certain stubborn ideas of law right, it was argued, that the judicature was arbitrary, and ought not to determine by the rules of law, but by their opinion of policy and expediency. Nothing exceeded the violence of some of the managers, except their impatience. They were bewildered by their passions, and by their want of knowledge, or want of consideration of the subject.”—Ibid, p. 90.

exposed

exposed to the prophane and licentious eyes of the house, it was easy to foresee how the interference would end, and what was the reformation intended. Neither faith, nor gratitude, nor promises, can bind the rapacity of ministers and their virtuous majorities. In vain might the company plead their merits with the country ; the numerous advantages which it continually derived from their commerce ; the millions with which it had enriched the public revenue beyond example, almost beyond calculation ! when once a government is thoroughly corrupted, wealth and prosperity are crimes against the state, and the name of private right or franchise becomes rebellion. The spirit of despotism is blind as it is intolerant, and the noblest trees of the forest must fall, to save the trouble of gathering the fruit.

This, and not the desire of reformation, has, I fear, guided all the invasions which have been made upon the company's rights ; from the famous bill which prevented their sending over supervisors † to examine and correct the state of their affairs, down to the present, which punishes them for the omission, by the confiscation of all their property. To distract their counsels, and

† In the year 1772.

embarrass their affairs ; to continue every abuse, but frustrate every plan of reformation, till loaded with a weight of public odium and private distresses, they might sink for ever into the bottomless gulf of ministerial influence ; has this, sir, been, or has it not, the uniform, un-deviating policy of government ?—While you pause upon this important question, I will take my leave of you for the present, with the intention of renewing our correspondence.

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