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A LETTER TO *EDMUND BURKE*, Esq;

Controverting the Principles of

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT,

Laid down in his lately published

SPEECH

ON

AMERICAN TAXATION,

Delivered in the

HOUSE of COMMONS,

On the 19th of APRIL, 1774.

LONDON:
Printed for the AUTHOR, by *H. S. Woodfall.*
Sold by J. WILKIE, No. 71, St. Paul's Church-yard.
M.DCC.LXXV.

ADVERTISEMENT.

" IT may not be improper to inform the pub-
" lic that this letter was ready for the preſs
" when Lord Chatham's conciliatory propoſal
" made its appearance. In hopes that ſome fea-
" ſible plan of accommodation with the colonies
" would thereupon have taken place, and ſuch
" meaſures have enſued as might have made it
" unneceſſary for the advocates of American free-
" dom any longer to have kept up in its full
" force their contention againſt an overſtrained
" and unjuſtifiable authority, the author thought
" proper to with-hold it awhile from the public
" eye: but being totally diſappointed in his wiſhes,
" and now deſpairing that any good conſequences
" whatever can reſult from the meaſures deter-
" mined to be purſued by government (notwith-
" ſtanding the late attempt of adminiſtration to
" amuſe us by making a ſhew of taking new
" ground) he now humbly ſubmits it to the pe-
" ruſal of his fellow-citizens; in hopes that, ſmall
" as may be its comparative weight, it yet may
" prove a mite not unacceptable in the ſcale which
" the good genius of Britain and of Britiſh Ame-
" rica is anxious ſhould preponderate. In ſaying
" that he deſpairs of any good conſequences from
" adminiſtration's pertinacious oppreſſion of the
" colonies, he begs to be underſtood as meaning
" only *thoſe good conſequences which the authors of*
" *the preſent meaſures eſteem to be ſuch, and which*
" *they propoſe to bring about.*

" Indeed he hopes, *and will venture to prophecy*, " that, odious and ſhocking as are the means by " them to be made uſe of, yet the end will be " the ſame as himſelf hath propoſed to obtain by " a very different way of proceeding; and that, " take which courſe we will, the preſent diſpute " cannot poſſibly terminate in any thing ſhort of " American Independence. Whether it will prove " better to have ſevered the colonies from this " country by the helliſh ſword of war, or by the " generous hand of equity; whether it will prove " better to have inſpired them with revenge and " deadly hatred, or with gratitude and warm " affection; and whether one or the other will " prove moſt beneficial to us, time alone muſt " finally determine."

To *E. B.* Esq;

SIR, *February*, 1775.

WHEN my twelfth letter to the Legislature, proposing the independency of America, went to the press (see Public Advertiser, *Jan.* 23, 24,) I thought I had taken a final leave of the subject; but several passages in your late published speech tending, as I fear, to mislead the public judgment, teach me that it lies too near my heart for me to suffer them to pass altogether unnoticed. It is the convincing argumentation with which you demonstrate the folly, as well as injustice, of taxing America; together with the persuasive powers of eloquence there displayed, powers which can sometimes charm us into a belief of what we do not comprehend, that make your error, with regard to the sovereignty of Great-Britain, the more dangerous at this crisis, when all good men are anxious for the rights of America, though few of them are free from your own mistake, and when even the dissipated triflers of the age have a wish at least, if not a thought, to bestow in their favour. The multitude in this kingdom, when they become serious, and take a thing up in earnest, are too formidable for a minister to contend with; but alas! they believe only as they are taught by some great authority: and even men of knowledge and reflection pay it sometimes too much respect. For my own part, Sir, I look up to you as to one of those "guide-posts and land-marks of state whose credit in the "nation" gives general currency to your opinions; I consider you as one of our great national "lights." I wish therefore, as a matter of the last importance to the public, that you may ever hold on your course with regularity and truth: and not, like the changeful "luminary *" you so happily describe, misguide your observers.

Believe

* Charles Townshend.

Believe me, Sir, I am not one of thoſe who can, without a painful reluctance, withdraw my admiration from the glories of the ſun, in order to contemplate his ſpots. But it is by an accurate obſervation of them, that we correct erroneous ſcience; cauſing, as I may ſay, by theſe means, even the darkneſſes of that brilliant orb to throw light upon objects of importance to mankind. Had I a bad opinion of your heart, I would not make the vain attempt to argue you into the right; nor would I provoke you to exert your ſuperior talents ſtill more, in order to deſtroy the truth. 'Tis not as you are ingenious, but ingenuous, that I mean to diſpute with you. Nor is it for me to take the large field of diſcuſſion; to lay open all hiſtory, or to unfold the legitimate laws of our conſtitution. I leave theſe deep and capacious reſervoirs of knowledge and policy to be ranſacked by thoſe who are my ſuperiors in learning and eloquence; and are better able to take a laborious part in the great cauſe we are now engaged in; contenting myſelf to draw from the fountain head, a ſmall portion of the waters of truth; which, like a dew from heaven, have, I believe, the moſt kindly influence upon the production and growth of true wiſdom. It is to the pure, the genuine principles of our perfect conſtitution, and the unalterable law of nature, that I will refer; it is to your reaſon and your conſcience I will appeal. This will bring the queſtion within a very ſmall compaſs, and to a ſhort iſſue. But be apprized, Sir, that it is not to any creature of your own imagination, an *ideal* "*conſti-*" *tution of the Britiſh Empire* [94.]," (for I totally deny its exiſtence, and believe that a faith and hope in it lead to perdition,) which I now mean to refer to; but to the *conſtitution of Great-Britain*; whoſe exiſtence, divinity, and powers of ſalvation, are known to us all. This is the *only* compaſs that ever proved a ſure guide upon the tempeſtuous ſea of politics. It is a *ſure* guide, becauſe it is a compaſs *without variation*. It points not to any earthly loadſtone, joſtled by ſome convulſion of nature out of the true axis of our crazy planet, but the cauſe of its magnetiſm is the rock of truth, fixed in the pole of heaven from all eternity; immoveable as the throne, immutable as the nature of God. He who ſhall imagine that the Britiſh conſtitution is a compaſs adapted only to

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one latitude and longitude; and when he arrives with it at a diſtant ſhore, depending on deluſive obſervations, ſhall *ſuppoſe* a very conſiderable variation; and then, like the ignorant ſkipper of ſome little coaſting bark, ſhall go about to adjuſt it, to the imaginary occaſion, by giving the needle a correſponding deviation from its repreſentative on the card, or rather chart; ſhall ſoon find himſelf in a moſt dangerous, if not a fatal error. Happy if he make not ſhipwreck of the political veſſel. Great knowledge and practical experience may be neceſſary to thoſe who hold the command, who guide the helm, and direct all the manœuvres in the ſhip; but *the very cabin-boy knows his compaſs*; and when the port is in ſight, and all the dangers of the navigation are above water and in view, *he* can tell, as well as the pilot, how to ſteer *for* the one or *from* the other. When out of ſight of land, he knows equally well, that in order to arrive ſafe in America, he muſt ſteer to the Weſtward; nor could all the ſophiſtry of the pilot, though he ſpoke with the tongue of an angel, nor the authority of the captain, though aided by the logic of the cat-o'-nine-tails, ever convince him, that it would be poſſible to ſecure a proſperous voyage by ſteering either Eaſt, South, or North. So when the Britiſh conſtitution, whoſe form is ſo manifeſt to the eye of common ſenſe, and whoſe principles by their ſelf-evidency are ſo ſimple and ſo obvious, lies before us, 'tis in vain for miniſters, for ſtateſmen, or even for orators, to endeavour to impoſe upon our underſtandings, by repreſenting that we muſt hold one courſe in Britain, and another in America, for attaining civil ſecurity and happineſs; when it is impoſſible to arrive at them, but by keeping the prow in a true direction for liberty, whoſe ſtar, like as the rock of truth, is in the pole and faſt by the throne of heaven. It is true indeed, and for the reaſons you have [91] aſſigned, that the neareſt courſe we can keep is but "an approximation towards the right "one;" yet we ſhall run into a moſt ruinous error, if, to the *unavoidable* deviations cauſed by the inteſtine motion and tempeſtuous agitations of the political element, we make any *intentional one*, by playing tricks with our needle, and departing from that courſe which our compaſs, *if faithfully conſulted*, ſhews to be the true one. You deſire

Great-

Great-Britain to " be content to bind America by laws " of trade; becauſe ſhe hath *always* done it: and not to " burthen her with taxes, becauſe ſhe was not uſed to do " ſo *from the beginning*. Theſe," you add, " are the " arguments of ſtates and kingdoms." [89, 90.] But, with your leave, Sir, theſe are the arguments of Egyptian taſk-maſters, of Carthaginian blood-ſuckers, of Roman monſters and Spaniſh tyrants; for ſilencing the murmurs of their fleeced, pardon me, I mean flead provinces and miſerable bond-men. What! Sir; are preſcripts and precedents, be they natural or unnatural, be they good or bad, be they juſt or unjuſt; the proper arguments of ſtates and kingdoms? So then, nothing is wanting to reconcile us to the moſt infernal way of governing, but that our tyrant hath always done ſo; that he was uſed to act the tyrant from the beginning!—Fie, fie! What a leſſon for a young Telemachus to learn from the lips of his Mentor! " You may be as great a tyrant as you pleaſe, " provided you only eſtabliſh your precedents in the begin- " ning." Should murmurs afterwards ariſe, or the accumulating weight of your power in length of time become ſo intolerable as to cauſe your *right* to be called in queſtion; —" reaſon not at all—oppoſe the ancient policy and prac- " tice of the empire, as a rampart againſt the ſpeculations " of innovators,—and you will ſtand on great, manly, and " ſure ground."—Excellent doctrine! O Locke, thou reputed ſage, " hide thy diminiſhed head!" What are all thy *refinements*, [94] thy " *metaphyſical diſtinctions* [89,"] to maxims ſuch as theſe!—You expreſsly acknowledge, Sir, [41] that " you think the *commercial reſtraint is full as* " *hard a law for America to live under*, as the ſchemes of " American revenue; and, if *uncompenſated*, to be a condi- " tion of as rigorous ſervitude as man can be ſubject to. " But America bore it from the fundamental act of navi- " gation until 1764—Why? Becauſe," you add, " *men* " *do bear the inevitable conſtitution of their original nature* " *with all its infirmities*." Now, that I cannot attain knowledge without ſtudy, or happineſs without wiſdom; that I cannot preſerve my health without exerciſe, or my freedom without courage; nor penetrate with my eye the opaqueneſs of a ſtone, or the complicated folds of my neigh-

* (94) " Refining ſpeculatiſts."

neighbours heart; may poſſibly be all reckoned among the defects and infirmities of my "original nature:"—but that it is "the *inevitable* conſtitution" of any one man, or of any one nation, to ſubmit to the tyranny of another, I muſt poſitively deny; as the contrary hath been long ſince proved by the United Provinces, and lately by the law of England, in the caſe of a negroe ſlave when brought into this free country. Nor do I in the leaſt doubt, but that America will very ſhortly give a convincing refutation to this curious propoſition: which, Sir, if you will review it with candour, you may poſſibly perceive to be *much worſe than a* "metaphyſical diſtinction," or the "re-"finement of a ſpeculatiſt;" ſince it tends to *debaſe*, not to refine; to *confound*, and not to diſtinguiſh. Is it for man, arrogantly to lord it over his brother, to impoſe upon him reſtraints and bonds, and then to aggravate his ſufferings by the inſult of a proffered *compenſation!*—a compenſation, ſuch alone, and ſuch in degree, as he, the *impious impoſer*, ſhall judge *expedient* for inſuring his power and advancing his own intereſt? If reſtraint and bonds, *even thus compenſated*, be not rigorous ſervitude, I know not what is. 'Tis not the preſent *ſuffering under*, but the being *ſubject to*, the power of another, which *conſtitutes* ſlavery. Give us but the ſlavery, and the ſuffering will not fail to follow in due time. Now, Sir, from *the whole* of what you advance, with regard to *the ſupremacy of parliament over the legiſlatures of the ſeveral ſtates of America*; as well as from your expreſs and repeated declarations of ſtedfaſtly abiding by *the miniſter and the ſyſtem of* 1766 *, when parliament, in its folly, aſſumed a right of repealing the irrevocable laws of God, by enacting, that his majeſty in parliament, of right, had power to make white men black men; to oblige the Antipodes to hear, ſee, and feel, by the ſenſes of Engliſhmen; and to transform millions of the human ſpecies, into calves and camels;—or what is no leſs abſurd (meaning the *right* not the fact) '*to bind the people of the American colonies by ſtatutes in* all caſes whatſoever;'—I ſay, from the whole of theſe opinions and aſſertions, it is but too evident, Sir, that your political com-

 paſs,

* "I honeſtly and ſolemnly declare, I have in all ſeaſons "adhered to the ſyſtem of 1766," pag. 96.

paſs, how true and ſafe ſoever to ſteer by in Britain, hath loſt its rectitude when removed to America. Correct it, Sir, I beſeech you, ere it be too late; becauſe I fear that thouſands will confide in it; and probably the firſt peace-making miniſter, availing himſelf of this confidence, and the general error of the people, will ſteer by one adjuſted to the ſame imaginary variation; to the inevitable diſtreſs, if not, in the end, to the ſhipwreck of the ſtate. Do not, Sir, imitate the modern miniſterial *dignity*, of perſiſting in wrong; nor the bed-ridden parental dotage, which talks of pap, of leading-ſtrings, and the rod, for that child, which, did it but retain its ſenſes, it might perceive to be in a ſtate of manly vigour and independence; parent himſelf of a numerous offſpring, lord of a mighty houſhold, and maſter of immenſe poſſeſſions; and yet the filial, though not the ſlaviſh; the voluntary, not the ſervile, prop of its declining age and decrepitude. Lay, then, Sir, your hand upon your heart, and anſwer me, or rather anſwer to God and to America, the three following plain queſtions: 1. Doth not the Britiſh conſtitution, and the law of nature, *which may in no wiſe be overturned by any human conſtitution whatſoever* *, (malgre all the qualifications, reſervation, and ſubtle evaſions that ſophiſtry can deviſe) abſolutely require that the people, thoſe at leaſt who are proprietors of, and are thereby permanently attached to, the ſoil, ſhall *actually ſhare* in the powers of legiſlation; by giving their conſent either perſonally or by repreſentatives of their own chooſing, *to all laws* which are to be *the rules of their actions*:— Not only thoſe of taxation, but thoſe equally which *limit the exerciſe* of executive power, which *erect national tribunals*, and which eſtabliſh any other regulation (be it even of their

* This law of nature, being co-eval with mankind and dictated by God himſelf, is of courſe ſuperior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and ſuch of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original.

Blackſtone's Com. Vol. I. p. 40.

their *foreign trade*,) that may affect their properties, their liberties, or their happineſs in any particular:—And doth not the conſtitution, in requiring all this, as abſolutely pronounce that, *where there is no ſuch participation, no ſubjection is due?* 2. What ſhare or participation in the powers of the Britiſh parliament is poſſeſſed by any American, *as an American?* 3. If no individual then, in America, by ſharing in, be ſubject to, the powers of the Britiſh parliament; how can *all of them*, in their collective capacities as ſtates and civil communities, be ſubject to this power? Surely that circumſtance which ſinketh an individual below the level of freedom, muſt equally debaſe a nation into a condition of ſlavery.—The "ſuperintending "power" of Great-Britain which [92] you propoſe her "to "diſpenſe, as from *the throne of heaven*," perhaps I might not ſo ſtrongly object to; could I be tolerably well aſſured, it would not in time degenerate (as human magiſterial power uncontrouled *hath ever done* ſince the beginning of the world,) into a power that the Americans would rather ſuppoſe to be diſpenſed from the dark council of Pandemonium; or could I be certain that it was not equally to be dreaded, as *neceſſarily tending* to the deſtruction of *our own liberties*. But, preſuming, Sir, you will not become her ſurety in that reſpect, ſince you very prudently tell the miniſter [10] "you can give no ſecurity," that *the coloniſts* ſhall not riſe in their demands, upon *a conceſſion of juſtice* being made them, which you eſteem it infamous to with-hold; I can by no means agree with you to put into her hands this weighty ſceptre, for "co-"ercing the negligent, reſtraining the violent, and aid-"ing the weak and deficient, by the over-ruling pleni-"tude of her power;" eſpecially ſince you tell me in plain terms, (not, I am ſure, adverting to the blaſphemous nature of the expreſſion) "this power muſt be *boundleſs*;" [93] becauſe I verily believe, that without the other *boundleſs* attributes and infinite perfections of *the Deity*, to whom *alone* boundleſs power belongs, to direct its operations, it would infallibly bruiſe the head of America, and cruſh her into a *Sardinian* ſervitude*. I hope, Sir, it

 was

* Farmer's Letters.

was not at the time when you were yourſelf connected with a very noble perſon at the head of the Treaſury department [56] that you firſt affixed to the words *Britiſh Empire*, thoſe magnificent ideas you give us of it, page 92, 93; nor that any hope or perſuaſion of mind that the ſyſtem of 1766, together with its framers, ſhall one day be reſtored, which attaches you ſo firmly to it. I hope this, Sir, from the opinion I have of the goodneſs of your heart, and from my natural unwillingneſs to believe that the man, who, beſides being an aſſiduous and diſtinguiſhed labourer in the public cauſe, is no leſs the amiable example of virtuous privacy and the charm of domeſtic ſociety, can ever become ſo egregiouſly ſottiſh, as to caſt away ſuch happineſs and true glory, for aught that Mammon or Lucifer hath to offer him. Unjuſt as the declaratory act of 1766 was in its principle, I know not, but at that period, it might have been quietly acquieſced in by the Americans, provided our taxing ſchemes had not been revived; but I cannot believe, even in that caſe, it could have operated ſo contrary to the nature of things, as to have preſerved concord and mutual advantages to the two countries for any conſiderable length of time to come; except the aſſumption of this unlimited power had, like the ſplendid titular aſſumptions of a Chineſe Emperor, been univerſally conſidered as *mere empty words without any meaning*, and Great-Britain had *totally abſtained from the ſmalleſt attempt towards an exerciſe of it.* Theſe being my ſentiments, I cannot but look on the paſſing of ſuch an act as a moſt unpardonable folly. Conſcious as you ſeem to be [87, 90,] that *the diſcuſſion* of ſuch a queſtion had a direct tendency to deſtroy, even that degree of authority (and no ſmall one) which the blind affection and ſuperſtitious reverence of the colonies for their mother country had eſtabliſhed, by habit and undiſputed precedents, from the beginning; had it not been wiſer to have totally abſtained from ſtarting it at all; and to have invariably acted towards the colonies, as we ſhould have done towards ſtates that knew full well, and jealouſly maintained, their independency of us; but yet of whoſe fidelity towards us we were well aſſured, by an unexampled national attachment and union of intereſts, together

gether with all the influences of one common language, religion, and conſtitution; the ſame manners, cuſtoms, and ſentiments? Had we thus, *in the year* 1766, ſagaciouſly avoided "going into the diſtinction of rights, "and attempting to mark their boundaries [89];" (that is, on the part of the poor Americans; for the rights of Great-Britain *we modeſtly declared to be boundleſs*;) we had done well; we had done wiſely. It was your own miniſter, Mr. Burke, it was Lord Rockingham, and poſſibly, Sir, adviſed by yourſelf, who, in a more eſpecial manner, brought into diſcuſſion theſe "metaphyſical di-"ſtinctions;" who thus "intemperately, unwiſely, fa-"tally ſophiſticated and poiſoned the very ſource of go-"vernment," and attempted "to argue the colonies into "ſlavery:" and that too, by what court reaſoners ſeem to plume themſelves upon as a very "ſubtle deduction, "from the unlimited and illimitable nature of ſupreme ſo-"vereignty;" though in truth it is a dogma fit only to paſs in the ſublime Divan, or from the infallible lips of his holineſs, towards Turkiſh and Italian toe-kiſſers and lickers of the duſt; whereas his lordſhip's doctrine of 'binding in all caſes whatſoever,' was preached to an intelligent and free people, having legiſlatures of their own, and who owed *not the ſmalleſt obedience whatever* to ſuch ſovereignty. To ſuppoſe that king, lords, and the houſe of commons for the time being, conjointly have authority to do any wrong or injury to the reſt of the ſtate, is as ridiculous as to admit, that the *head* and *hand* may contrive and execute any miſchief or mutilations upon the reſt of the body. Nor, until ſome great chriſtian caſuiſt hath demonſtrated ſuicide to be juſtifiable, ſhall we ever be brought to acquieſce in the abſurd, though very ſolemn deciſion of the learned Judge Hale, and recited, with no ſmall parade, as an indubitable authority by his more learned brother Blackſtone, in his Com. p. 161. in order to prove that one's *hand* may plunge a dagger into one's *heart*, or one's *head* by the denying of nouriſhment, may ſtarve one's *body* to death; and for this wiſe and wonderful reaſon that the heart and the body cannot help themſelves.——Here indeed my alluſion fails me; as their reaſoning, had they recollected how many *ſupreme ſovereigns* have been

puniſhed

punifhed for their "mif-government *," did them: and I truft that *the body* of the people of thefe free kingdoms, *the heart* and the reft of *the faithful members*, will either reftrain or punifh *that hand* or *that head* which fhall ever confpire or attempt any thing againft its life or well-being. This *illimitability* may be an ingenious *law fiction*, and well calculated, as fuch, to anfwer certain ufeful purpofes in difpatching the bufinefs of the law courts: but when offered to our underftandings for *a fact*, it muft be rejected with difdain as *a moft abominable dogma*; either the legitimate child of ignorance or a cunning baftard of tyranny, but certainly the natural parent of flavery. I would therefore beg leave to propofe, that in the next edition of your fpeech, there be made to every propofition ftating "the illimitable nature of fupreme fovereignty," the fmall addition of thefe three words, 'to do good,' by way of amendment; which, from a fallacy and a treafonable affertion, will convert it into a truth, and a conftitutional maxim. Had thefe "fubtle deductions," in favour of the "boundlefs power" of parliament, been the "me-"taphyfical diftinctions" you meant, p. 89, I fhould moft heartily have accorded with you in "hating the "very found of them:" but when the enormous, the odious pretenfions of the Declaratory Act, preceded and fucceeded by a train of grievous oppreffions under other adminiftrations, had rouzed the unmindful colonifts and their Englifh friends to an exertion of their thinking faculties, in order to fhew the juft diftinctions of the facred rights of human nature, and to mark their boundaries, I fhould not have expected from any, but the fophiftical advocates of tyranny, a condemnation of fuch a proceeding; as I efteem it a moft generous tafk, and one of the moft indubitable marks of genuine patriotifm. Milton and Locke were refpectively ftigmatized, by the tools of defpotifm, as "refining fpeculatifts;" and Sydney paid the forfeit of his blood for oppofing, to the abfurd and impious dogmas of Filmer, (the champion of *illimitable fovereignty and powers for binding in all cafes whatfoever*,) his "metaphyfical diftinctions:" but pofterity hath done them all juftice. Whatever might have been the profpects of advantage

* Comment. p. 161.

advantage in the year 1766, from eſtabliſhing an unjuſt ſovereignty over America, it is evident, that even then, the actual exerciſe of it would have been ſcarcely practicable with the moſt extreme caution and tenderneſs: but now, in the year 1775, after all that hath paſſed during nine irritating years to awaken the ſleeping coloniſts, and to exaſperate them to the laſt degree their patience is capable of bearing; but *now*, I ſay, the attempt is a flight of madneſs not to be accounted for, but from an apprehenſion that God ſees it is high time to humble our pride, by leaving it to baffle its own vicious deſigns by its folly; or, for the ſins of the nation, is pleaſed to ſuffer it, by infatuation, to caſt itſelf headlong into deſtruction. America may now be conſidered, as an induſtrious and intelligent youth juſt arriving at man's eſtate; who, having chearfully ſerved a long *apprenticeſhip* under us, muſt now, *if not admitted into partnerſhip*, become our *rival* in trade. Like other juniors, *he will be content* to ſhare the profits in a ſubordinate degree, proportioned to the inferiority of his capital and connections; but he will acknowledge no other dependence; he will no longer be our bond-ſervant. Too well doth he remember the hardſhips he hath ſuffered in our ſervice, to enter into new indentures of ſervitude, now that his legal term is drawing towards its expiration. Indeed, had we been poſſeſſed of any portion of that wiſdom which belongeth to "the children of this world," we might, for a long time to come, have kept him in ignorance of this ſecret; his indentures being in our own keeping, and he being eaſily ſatisfied with whatever interpretation of them we thought fit to make: until, ſwelling with the flatulent ideas of our own dignity and importance; debauched and impoveriſhed by luxury and extravagance; we impoſed upon him too ſevere a drudgery, and began to ſtarve and to ſcourge him rather too unmercifully. By this folly we have literally ſcourged him into a neceſſity of aſſerting his independency, for we have driven him, not only from his relaxations and play, but from his work; and forced him to deny himſelf even common repoſe, in order to ſeek in the ſchools for forms of language, in which to expreſs his ſenſe of our ill uſage, and the natural feelings of his ſoul, which taught him to

know

know that there was ſomething incompatible, between our treatment of him and what he was intitled to. Nor hath he ſought in vain: but, ſupported in his own mind by a conſciouſneſs of his juſt rights, and juſtified by "the "refinements" of thoſe "ſpeculatiſts," Locke, Milton, and Sydney: and by the "metaphyſical diſtinctions" which the volume of nature hath unfolded to his own reſearches, he is now ready, Sir, in your own expreſſive words, to "caſt your ſovereignty in your face." Nay, the American is become both by precept and example your moſt faithful monitor, your beſt inſtructor, in the only poſſible means of preſerving your own liberties; and of recovering from that ſtate of corruption, of which the conſtitution is ſick at heart; by maintaining his own rights on the undeniable principles of truth and juſtice; oppoſing tyranny with a manly temper, firmneſs and dignity; and, above all, by intruſting the guardianſhip of them to *unplaced, unpenſioned, and uncorrupted delegates.* Doth it not behove us then, either as "children of this world," or as "children of light," no longer to injure or inſult him with the exerciſe, or the claim, of any power incompatible with his abſolute liberty, his perfect freedom? Your "ſubordinate liberty," take my word for it, (and I hope I am not a "refining ſpeculatiſt," as I am certain I am no "factious demagogue,") will not now be thought by him, "enough for the eaſe and happineſs of man;" [94] becauſe the *reſerved part* is to be with-held from him by injuſtice and force; and lodged in the very hands which do him this wrong; and therefore not very fit to be intruſted with ſo ſacred a depoſit. No, Sir, he will demand perfect freedom,—Britiſh freedom—that very freedom you yourſelf enjoy, and which alone is the legitimate iſſue of the *Britiſh conſtitution:* he will be content with nothing ſhort of *a participation in that power* which frames *all the laws* he is to be ſubject to as the rule of his actions.—I beg pardon, Sir;—my zeal in the cauſe of America, and the irreſiſtible impreſſions of juſtice on my mind, have carried me one ſtep too far: for, ſuch is the moderation of America, ſuch her deſire to "ſeek peace and enſue it," that ſhe tells you, in her 4th Reſolve in Congreſs, that "from "the neceſſity of the caſe, and a regard to the mutual "intereſts

" interests of both countries, she *chearfully consents* to the " operation of such acts of the British parliament, as are " bona fide, restrained to the regulation of her external " commerce, *for the* purpose of securing the commercial " advantages of the whole empire *to the mother country*." Here, Sir, she shews that no contemptuous slights nor injuries; not a ten-years series of oppression and insult; nor even the sight of the uplifted British axe aimed directly at the root of her liberties, can provoke her to forego her rivetted attachment to this country. This single instance of her unabated affection, her voluntary humiliation and subserviency to the welfare of the parent state, effectually gives the lie to the charge of ingratitude, and the design of breaking through all the commercial restraints which secure us the monopoly of her trade; that have been so loudly and so indefatigably trumpeted forth by the diabolical agents of tyranny, and have exercised so many prostitute pens. This proves that, anxious and irritated as she is, it is pure justice and wisdom, not resentment, by which she is actuated: and in this it is that she confirms, under her own hand and seal, what I undertook to engage for on her part, when last spring I proposed a *parliamentary declaration of her independency*, and the forming with her *an effectual union of interests*, by means of *a league*, in which she should be *a free, voluntary contracting party*. These are my words: " Not being able to pay Great-" Britain in subsidies of ready money for her protection " and friendship, they (the American states) will grant " her an equivalent in exclusive trade *."—What more, in the name of common sense would we have?—Will nothing satisfy us, but her liberties at our feet?—Shall we " wade up to the eyes in blood" for only *the chance* of the shadow, when she offers us the substance, the reality?—Will the high-sounding word *sovereignty*, or millions of sterling gold, best fill the treasury and support the dignity of Great-Britain? Possibly I may be somewhat singular in opinion; but I cannot help being much inclined to consider the tyranny and perverseness of administration towards America for ten years past, as one of those

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* American Independence the interest and glory of Great-Britain, p. 66.

gracious and benevolent dispensations of Providence towards a chosen people, which, though a present calamity, is nevertheless, according to the established order of things, a necessary one; and productive of great, solid and lasting blessings in future. Such is the imperfection of our nature, that for the most part, and nationally considered, we are incapable of understanding, of valuing or enjoying, any state of extraordinary prosperity and happiness, that hath not been preceded by one of adversity; by a comparison with which we can estimate its felicities. In order *to enjoy*, we must not merely *possess:* but it is requisite that our minds, by activity and exercise, perceive all the *causes*, *connections*, *relations* and *dependencies* of that which we possess; the noble faculties of our souls must be called forth by *trials*, *hardships*, and *struggles*; *losses*, *disappointments* and *dangers*, together with every species of discipline which, in this state of probation, is necessary to the perfecting of virtue. Had not God, in his paternal anger, permitted this chosen nation to have been visited by the detested race of Stewarts and a long afflicting civil war, 'tis certain the succeeding chain of events had not taken place: and 'tis more than probable, that the seeds of dissolution which lay lurking in the bowels of the state before their advancement to the throne, had they been nourished by an uninterrupted calm and the treacherous sunshine of apparent prosperity, would long since have spread their poison to the immediate sources of life, and destroyed the constitution. But it was *that dreadful night of tempest and darkness, that season of severe adversity*, which rouzed the genius and spirit of the nation; and to which we were indebted for the succeeding beauty and vigour of the constitution, by purging off the greater part of those foul impurities and seeds of death. Heaven grant that its now fading bloom and failing strength, those sure symptoms of inward disease, may be again restored ere it be too late! ——It was, I say, during *the very term* of that visitation of God's anger, that he was providing for the future unparalleled felicities of this nation; and literally causing good to grow out of evil, by raising up within that period those great and excellent men, who, feeling the feverish and alarming state of the times, contemplating the scene

around them, and ſteering by the compaſs of the *Britiſh* conſtitution, have by their writings done more ſervice to the cauſe of liberty and the rights of mankind, than ever had been done before by all the boaſted patriots of Greece and Rome, together with thoſe of every other nation in the world collectively.—As thoſe unhappy times produced *Sydneys*, *Lockes* and *Miltons*; ſo we find the preſent, daily bringing forth *Shipleys*, *Dickenſons*, and many other "truly "noble, honourable, and patriotic advocates of civil and "religious liberty, who generouſly and powerfully eſpouſe "and defend the cauſe of America, both in and out of "parliament *." I do not therefore repine at the diſtreſsful conteſt which hath ſo long exiſted between theſe kingdoms and the colonies, ſince by God's mercy it hath as yet been bloodleſs; and ſince, ſtill relying on the goodneſs of his Providence, I truſt it will terminate in adjuſting their true, their natural and moſt beneficial relation to each other, which is that of *an independent friendſhip and alliance*; in perpetuating their harmony; and in radically curing thoſe latent diſtempers, which might otherwiſe have proved fatal to the liberties of both. Such I think no man of foreſight can doubt would have been the ſad event, had either the ſupineneſs of America, or the cunning moderation of the miniſters of Great-Britain, kept her in what you call [87] "her old, her ſtrong, her tenable "poſition," long enough to have fixt her immoveably on that "ſure ground," on whoſe ſolid baſis her machines once fixed, ſhe might, as you inform her, "have drawn "worlds towards her." But worlds, Sir, are not to be drawn towards each other, or fettered with chains and unnatural bonds, but to their mutual deſtruction. Their general well-being; and the benefits reciprocally to be derived, from light and genial warmth reflected on each other reſpectively, are only to be preſerved by their keeping their appointed diſtances, by moving each in its own orbit, and by being kept from flying off from their centers into chaos, by the ſweet influences of *attraction*, that beſt, that univerſal, that ſtupendous law of nature, by which the material, the moral and the divine worlds are all upheld and preſerved in harmony. Truſting, as I ſay, that

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* Concluding reſolve of the congreſs.

our present contest will finally terminate in the independency of America, and stop us short in the mad career of dominion; that it will teach us to know that any *imperial* possession * beyond the British seas, except a few scattered islands, factories and forts for the ends of trade, would ever be a mill-stone at the neck of the constitution; in as much as it would encumber it with extrinsical powers *it could not manage*, or exert but in a way *inimicable to internal health*; and as it would most obviously add enormous weight to court influence; against which, the other balancing powers are already little more than a feather; as the unavailing wisdom and eloquence of yourself and others, in both houses of parliament, must long since have convinced you; I cannot but congratulate with my country on *the very error of Mr. Grenville*, which hath been thought so prolifick of mischief, and kiss with reverence the rod of our chastisement. A Hercules with many bodies under one head, would have been an impotent, unwieldy monster; not an invincible hero and demi-god: ——it would have been a more preposterous fiction, than that of the hydra with many heads to one body. But a monster with a multitude of bodies, *all of which* except one *are feigned to be three thousand miles from its head*, was a monster reserved for an abortive conception in the wild imagination of modern policy in its delirious reveries. Believe me, Sir, there is no sterling sense in the words, "*British Empire*," when signifying *unbounded* dominion with *unbounded* power over the immeasurable space of the North American Continent; and that, so applied, they are no better than 'sounding brass or a tinkling 'symbal,' to charm a proud, deluded nation to its ruin. In the warmth of a senatorial debate, and the rapid flow of your imagination, which resembles the Amazonian torrent, the collected force of ten thousand streams, breaking irresistibly a glorious inroad through the frontier of the vast Atlantic, and scornfully beating back his embattled waves, it might indeed have been allowed you to have cravoned out for Great-Britain a fanciful "*imperial character*; in which, as from the throne of heaven, she "should superintend all the several inferior legislatures "of

* American Independence, p. 23.

"of America; guiding and controlling, without annihi-
"lating any;—coercing the negligent, restraining the
"violent, and aiding the weak and deficient, by the
"over-ruling plenitude of her *boundless* power; and when
"her requisitions were not implicitly obeyed, saying to
"the delinquents,—tax yourselves for the common sup-
"ply, or *parliament will do it for you*;" [92]—all this, I say, as well as to pass by "nice distinctions," and to trespass a little on the "boundaries of right," might have been very allowable, while flying before the wind on the flood-tide of eloquence, and by way of declamation; but when you coolly, and deliberately, sat down to *write* for the instruction of the public; when it was of the last importance not to give currency to any opinions; not to excite any vain, proud, ambitious and misguiding passions in the people; nor to afford any countenance for the ministerial tyranny you profess to oppose; and which is all supported on *the very principle you admit*, and, *if it be admitted*, is clearly *justifiable*, since *legal authority* with *boundless power*, if indeed it may be supplicated, may in no wise be withstood:—when, I say you acted with this deliberation, surely, Sir, you ought to have omitted, in your transcript all such erroneous, fallacious and fatal doctrines!

That the "imperial *rights* of Great-Britain as stated
"in the declaratory act of 1766, and the privileges which
"the colonists ought to enjoy are just the most recon-
"cileable things in the world," you tell us indeed in so many words [92]; and indeed, Sir, to do you justice, you also, by the aid of your *heavenly* allusion, reconcile them very glibly to your own imagination, and, I have no doubt, to the entire satisfaction of administration. While Lewis the XIVth was intoxicated with the drunken fancy of universal monarchy, his courtiers did not fail to satisfy him that "the *imperial rights*" of France and "the privileges which the dependent states of Europe "*ought to enjoy* (wondrous condescension!) were just the "most reconcilable things in the world:" and that he had an undoubted right, clear as that two and two make four, "to superintend, to guide, and control them, as "from the throne of heaven;" though they humbly

hoped

hoped his *divine* Majesty would not in his displeasure "annihilate any of them." Yet, Sir, there unluckily remains one omission, one small defect in your argument, which the "refining speculatist" and the "metaphysi-"cian," nay I fear even *the dull American*, will never be able to get over:—you have forgot the *proof* of your proposition; you have totally omitted the *legality*, the *moral rectitude* of your well-sounding proposal. These are considerations, trifling enough, God knows, in the opinions of some statesmen; but they are nevertheless by a free people, thought *absolutely necessary* to be attended to, before obedience and authority can be reconciled. Thanks, Sir, to the native honesty of your heart, which, though it incautiously suffered you *to pronounce* the aforesaid words, "imperial *rights* of Great-Britain," hath kept you uniformly from attempting to *explain* them; or in any than this and other equivalent and synonimous expressions throughout your whole speech, from so much as *hinting* at their existence: nay you have given hints, and broad ones too, that she *hath not* these rights, if her title-deeds come to be well perused and examined into; or why should she have any reason to "apprehend" that any "metaphysical process" whatever, could "argue her out of *her whole authority?*" [87] Why admonish her to "*reason not at all?*"—to oppose "*policy* and *practice* to "*truth* and *justice?*"—Besides, you remark [87, 88.] that "the distinction of *internal* and *external* duties," or taxes, "is as nothing with regard to *right*;" in which, Sir, you say most justly; and perfectly agree with me when I assert that, "to acknowledge their independency, "and to form with them a friendly league, is therefore "the only method, *on the principles of equity*, of laying "them under restrictions in trade and manufactures, for "the exclusive advantage of their protectors; but conti-"nuing to impose these restrictions by *our own authority*, "and by *force*, as it deeply affects them in their property, "by *preventing money coming into their pockets*, (which is "very nearly allied, when done unjustly, to *taking it out* "*of their pockets without their consent*) is undoubtedly ty-"rannical *." And, again; [89] interrogating the minister,

* American Independence, p. 77.

nister, you say—" Do you mean to tax America, and " to draw a productive revenue from thence? If you do; " speak out:—If you *murder*—rob! If you *kill*; take " possession: and do not appear in the character of, " madmen as well as *assassins*." Here again, Sir, I intirely agree with you, that taxing where no revenue is to be got, is *madness*; that taxing those who are unrepresented, is *robbing*; and that they who assume legislative authority where there is no right, are *murderers* and *assassins*; if it be true that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, is indeed an *adulterer*; as upon divine authority we are informed he is; (*Matt.* iv. 28.) and moreover, that to claim a " *boundless power*," is a presumptuous invasion, an impious usurpation on the prerogative of *the Omnipotent*. Thanks, once more, to " the " abundance of your heart out of which your mouth " speaketh," for these honest acknowledgments, that Great-Britain, *on your own principles*, and *according to your own system of* 1766, is at present no better than a *murderous assassin*. You may see then, Sir, clearly enough, " what is to become of the declaratory act asserting the " entireness of British legislative authority." [92] It ought to be sacrificed to justice, wisdom, and concord. As for those men who are at once base enough to assert in direct terms, and silly enough to attempt to demonstrate, that subjection and tyranny are not only reconcileable but right; to offer them conviction would be casting pearls before swine; or I would beg leave, in order to save them the trouble of turning over the folios of the Sydney of the last century, to refer them to three letters of his more concise name-sake, which I read, with infinite pleasure and the highest esteem for the honest author, in the Gazetteer of *Jan.* the 5th and 26th, and *Feb.* 23d: but, Sir, to your attentive perusal I will recommend them; and request you also to review once more what myself, the feeblest advocate in the cause of liberty, and others have advanced in favour of American Independence;—or rather, Sir, with candour and uprightness consult your own very superior understanding and feeling heart. Your serious reflection, Sir, must convince you of your error: and that all your arguments, without exception, in favour of Great-

Great-Britain's ſovereignty, are nothing better than a flimſy ſtring of ſophiſms—a mere rhetorical rope of ſand which, not to fear that it might diſſolve like a morning vapour as you ſtretched it acroſs the wide Atlantic, would aſſuredly prove no more powerful, nor fit to "*bind* "*America in all caſes whatſoever*," than the well-twiſted wreath aſcending from the profound politician's ſolemn pipe. And would you, Sir, if it were poſſible, by contributing towards the foundations of ſuch a power, "ſtand "anſwerable to God for embracing a ſyſtem that tends "to the deſtruction of ſome of the very beſt and faireſt "of his works?" [96.]

Reflect then, Sir, for heaven's ſake!—and be conſiſtent in your pleadings for the coloniſts. When there ſhall no longer appear in your politicks any leaven of *ſubordination* to ſour their "liberty;" any reſervations whatever of imperial rights, in diminution of the privileges of nature; any ſophiſtical arguments concerning requiſitions, which, in ſpite of every plauſible pretext, involve in them the claims of an inadmiſſible arbitrary power; or any unjuſt, becauſe *impoſed*, reſtrictions on their freedom;—but you ſhall become, Sir, their generous advocate, and demand for them a truly Britiſh liberty, that liberty which you yourſelf enjoy; then, Sir, you will be their friend indeed; then, Sir, every good man will give you praiſe; and I will venture to foretel that your eloquence, thus breathing pure truth, wiſdom and patriotiſm, will then be attended with the powers of perſuaſion, and obtain a ſure aſcendency over many minds that are now unmoved by it. It will no longer be ſtopped by the cloſing valves of ſuſpicion, and held back as a tuneful ſong to pleaſe the ear; but will be allowed a free paſſage to the heart, and received there as a cordial, invigorating balm; congenial with all its generous feelings, its nobleſt emotions, its deareſt hopes. How ſhall you ſee to remove the beam from the miniſterial eye, without firſt at leaſt plucking out the *mote* from your own!—I conjure you then, Sir; you, who are not wont to deal in ſophiſtry, or to elude the force of truth by ſubtlety, ſubterfuge, or wilful deafneſs; you, whoſe penetrating genius hath enlarged the bounds of true

true ſcience; whoſe luminous eloquence is dreaded as the detector of falſehood and the certain foe of all diſhoneſt darkneſs; you, who have greatly diſtinguiſhed yourſelf as a friend to the Britiſh conſtitution; you, who are not amongſt the wiſe ones who wear morality as a cloak, nor the wits who ſcoff at religion and all its ſacred obligations; you, Sir, I conjure by all theſe conſiderations, to reflect ſeriouſly on what, with the honeſt freedom which becomes every man who hath the public good at heart, I have pointed out to you; and then obey the truth-ſpeaking dictates of that monitor which God hath given you for your moral guide. I want you not, Sir, to break through your attachment to Lord Rockingham; or to diſſolve any honourable connection that may enable you to ſerve your country the more effectually. But let it be apparent that it is your country, and not a party, you mean to ſerve; that you are truly and wholly actuated by public ſpirit, and not by private intereſt. Flatter no man's weakneſs; defend no man's errors; miniſter to no man's ambition, at your country's expence. Lay aſide every party prejudice, and every ill-founded ſyſtem; eſpecially that which gave birth to the tyrannical and abſurd declaratory act of 1766. Prove yourſelf, by purity of principle and conſiſtency of conduct, to be unbiaſſed, uninfluenced and independent: and leave us not to lament that faction and corruption are at the bottom of every pretence of ſerving the deſerted and deluded public; and to repeat, with a melancholy, a mournful emphaſis; "Cæſar hath friends; and Pompey hath "friends: but none are friends to Rome."

I have repeatedly denied the legality, as we all deny the expediency, of the late and preſent Britiſh ſyſtem of American government: and the fields of alluſion are well-nigh exhauſted in order to illuſtrate theſe truths. There are however a few alluſions more, which, if they have been made uſe of, I do not remember to have obſerved. But before I proceed to them, let me remark, that when we ſpeak of Great-Britain and America as *mother* and *daughter*, it is rather a deluſion than an alluſion as it tends to obſcure, not to illuſtrate their real relation to each other. For 'tis not the *country* of the new world,

 brought

brought as it were into exiſtence by late diſcovery, the inanimate *earth*, the *trees*, the *ſtocks* and *ſtones*, which in old England are the objects of our thoughts when we diſpute about the government of it; but it is the *people*, the inhabitants of that new world, which are, or ought to be, the objects concerning which we reaſon. Now it is evident that the preſent generation in this ſame old England, can with no propriety be eſteemed the parents of the preſent generation in America; and therefore are not intitled, on that plea, to any authority over them. It is evident alſo, that their true relation by blood, is the ſame as that of two deſcendants from the ſame family ſtock; whoſe reſpective progenitors long ſince ſeparated, and branched into two diſtinct families. We may therefore with the ſtricteſt propriety, and with a clear illuſtration of the principles I maintain, conſider Great-Britain (the *nation*, not the country; the *people*, not the ſoil;) as the male deſcendant, repreſentative, and heir, of the elder, while we regard America as the blooming heireſs, of the younger branch. How lovely, how deſirable an object of enjoyment to Great-Britain, let every one judge! But ſhall he, like an Eaſtern deſpot, doom her to a ſplendid wretchedneſs in his ſeraglio; never more to hold a ſocial commerce with any but her hated lord; nor to taſte the ſweets, the pure delights of liberty; and though mocked with the ſoothing title of Sultana, knowing too well ſhe is no better than the ſlave of his luſtful appetites? Or, like a ſtill worſe Barbarian, a very banditti ruffian, unmoved at her tears and intreaties, and deaf to her cries, ſhall he brutiſhly think to ſtrike her to the earth, and while deprived of the powers of reſiſtance, to become her impious raviſher? But let him not forget, that ſhe hath a noble and indignant ſoul; and that the poignard, with which ſhe hath been taught to arm herſelf, was he to make the foul attempt, might poſſibly, in the moment of her deſpair, be plunged with a deep and deadly ſtab into his guilty heart, and preſerve her honour unviolated.—No!—" Better counſels ſhall guide " him."——Recovering from the ſtate of inebriation, in which the baſe ſycophants who fed his pride, and the vile pandars of his unlawful pleaſures, had artfully kept this

this noble youth, for their own wicked purpoſes; and with a ſtern, majeſtic countenance, commanding them from his preſence; he ſhall view with his own eyes the lovely virgin; and recollecting their mutual tenderneſs from earlieſt infancy, and the inſeparable nature of their intereſts; acknowledging her native charms, and all her intrinſic worth; his fierceneſs in a moment ſhall melt into fondneſs; when, leaving her to her juſt liberty and rightful independency, he ſhall court her to his embrace with a manly and generous frankneſs; with ſincere love, honour and reſpect: while ſhe, wiping away the laſt falling tear, and giving to the winds all the anxieties with which his lately eſtranged affections had filled her aking boſom, all her preſent ſuſpicions, all her future fears and apprehenſions, ſhall, with angelic lovelineſs and heart-felt rapture, fly into his protecting arms; when inſtantly the ſacred hymeneal rites and plighted vows ſhall ſeal between them an indiſſoluble union. An union agreeable to nature, to juſtice, and to freedom; and ſurely the fitteſt that can be imagined for promoting their mutual intereſts! The nuptial *contract*, with the *voluntary conſent* of America; and not *a Britiſh ſtatute*, doing *violence to juſtice* and *her inclinations* muſt be the Declaratory Act to limit their reciprocal duties, and the reſpective degrees of control and ſubordination neceſſary between them. But though I propoſe that America ſhall become the *wife* of Great-Britain, be it remembered, that I do not mean ſhe ſhall therefore *obey* his arbitrary will, nor that he ſhall have a direct power to *rule over her*: becauſe ſhe hath hitherto always behaved towards him as an affectionate kinſwoman, rendering him every good office in her power; and becauſe ſhe cannot yet, the nuptials not being ſolemnized, have forfeited that natural independency which God hath given her, by liſtening to the ſuggeſtions of the devil, and cauſing her huſband's ruin, as Eve did that of Adam; and for which alone it was, that ſhe was made ſubject to his will, by the *curſe* of obedience. America therefore, *not* being ſubject to this curſe, will be entitled to all the benefits of marriage at its original inſtitution; when God in his bounty beſtowed " the dominion and property in and

" over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and every " thing on the face of the earth upon *husband and wife* " *jointly*," Gen. i. 28, 29. Nor, prior to the curse, did he make any distinction between them, but what he hath also made between Great-Britain and America. The former was prior in existence, and hath superior wisdom and strength; not for the purpose of tyrannic rule, but of guidance and protection: the latter is " an " help meet for him;" not in the abject condition of a slave, but in that of a loving, respectful, and prudent wife, a faithful friend, a social companion. And herein are laid, by the laws of nature, the true foundations for all the superior influence and control that is proper or desirable for the husband; and in which America, as a dutiful and faithful wife, will ever acquiesce with pleasure. Let Great-Britain then say; " This is now bone " of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be " called *British* America, because she was taken out of " *Britain*: and therefore I will leave father and mother, " and will cleave unto my wife; and we will be one " flesh," *Gen.* ii. 23, 24. As you so frequently, Sir, resort to holy writ, as to the genuine source of the *sublime and beautiful*, you will not, I flatter myself, be displeased with these references to it; nor to the following quotation, with which I shall close this letter: nor will the very singular, and most remarkable aptness with which it may be applied to *British America*, of whom, as the wife of Great-Britain, it might well pass for a prophecy, be lost upon you. " Who can find a vir- " tuous woman? for her price is far above rubies (*a*). " The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her; " so that he shall have no need of spoil (*b*). She will " do him good and not evil all the days of his life. " She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly " with her hands. She is like the merchant-ships; she " bringeth

(*a*) As British America is in value far above Spanish and Portugueze America, abounding with precious stones and metals.

(*b*) We had better cultivate our laborious North American commerce, than debauch and corrupt ourselves with the spoils of the East.

" bringeth her food from afar. She riſeth alſo while it
" is yet night, and giveth meat to her houſehold and a
" portion to her maidens. She conſidereth a field and
" buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands ſhe planteth
" a vineyard (*c*). She girdeth her loins with ſtrength,
" and ſtrengtheneth her arms (*d*). She perceiveth that
" her merchandize is good (*e*): her candle goeth not
" out by night. She layeth her hands to the ſpindle,
" and her hands hold the diſtaff. She ſtretcheth out
" her hand to the poor; yea, ſhe reacheth forth her
" hands to the needy (*f*). She is not afraid of the
" ſnow for her houſehold; for all her houſehold are
" clothed with double garments (*g*). She maketh her-
" ſelf coverings of tapeſtry; her clothing is ſilk (*h*) and
" purple. Her huſband is known in the gates, when
" he ſitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh
" fine linen, and ſelleth it; and delivereth girdles (*i*)
" unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her
" clothing; and ſhe ſhall rejoice in time to come. She
" openeth her mouth with wiſdom, and in her tongue
" is the law of kindneſs (*k*). She looketh well to the
" ways of her houſehold (*l*); and eateth not the bread
" of idleneſs. Her children ariſe up and call her bleſſed;
" her huſband alſo, and he praiſeth her. Many daugh-
" ters have done virtuouſly (*m*), and have gotten riches;
" but thou excelleſt them all," *Prov.* xxxi.

It

(*c*) The cultivation of vines hath been attended to for ſome years in North America.

(*d*) Her militia is numerous and well diſciplined.

(*e*) The non-importation agreements ſhew this.

(*f*) She feedeth and cloatheth thouſands of our poor manufacturers.

(*g*) See the margin to the text.

(*h*) The ſouthern provinces of Georgia and the Carolinas produce fine ſilk.

(*i*) Belts of wampum.

(*k*) Journal of the Proceedings of the Congreſs.

(*l*) She has not a court-kalendar quite ſo well filled with the names of placemen and penſioners as Great-Britain.

(*m*) See the margin to the text.

It is with great respect, and a sincere desire that you may both merit and attain the name of patriot, that greatest of all earthly appellations, regal and imperial titles not excepted, that I subscribe myself,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

CONSTITUTIO.