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A
L E T T E R

TO THE

EARL OF SHELBURNE

Will. Pitt

ON THE



P E A C E.

Venit summa dies, et ineluctabile tempus

Dardania:_____

_____ ferus omnia Jupiter Argos

Transfuit:_____

L O N D O N :

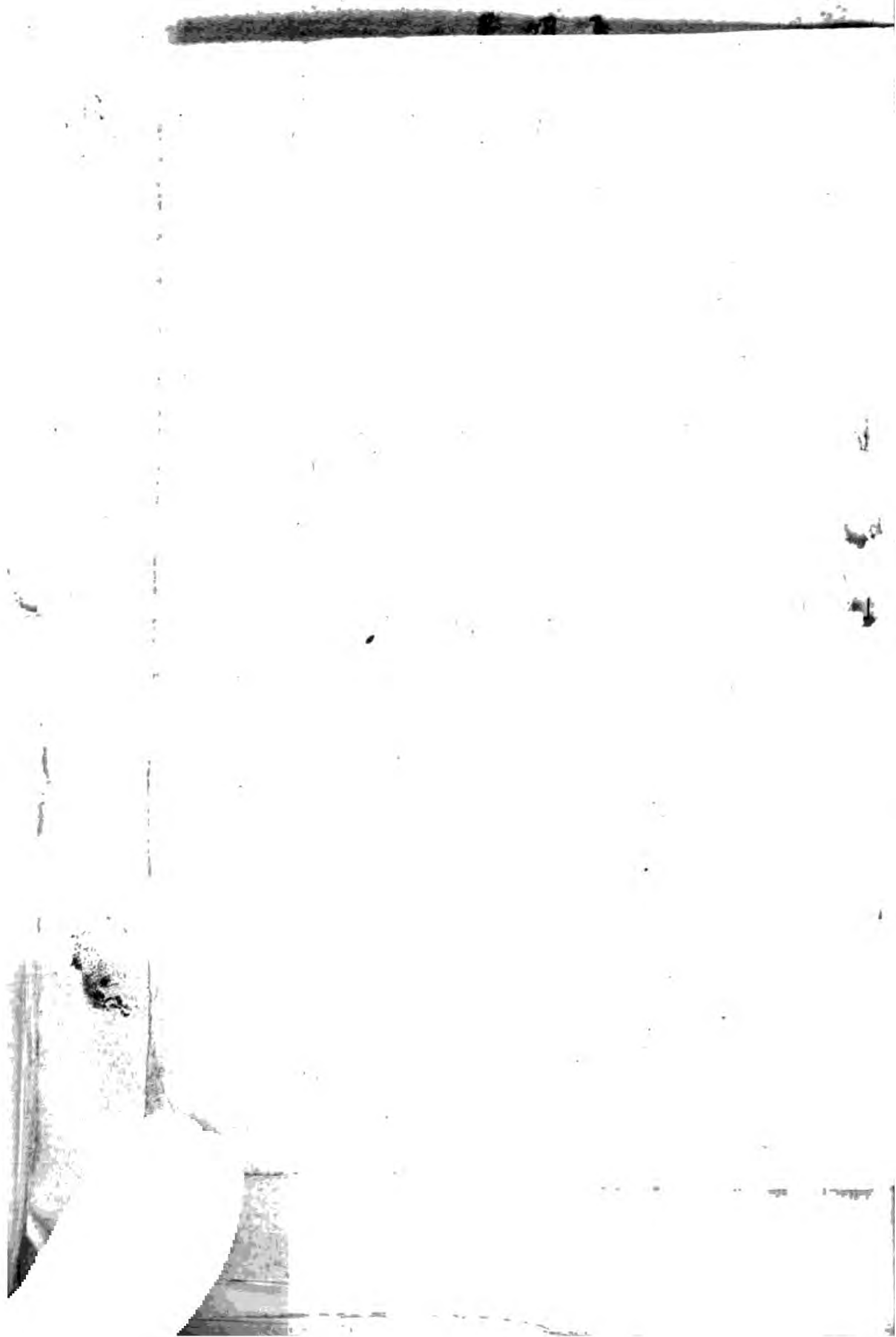
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7.



TO THE
EARL OF SHELBURNE,
Esq. Esq. Esq.

MY LORD,

IF I address the following sheets to your Lordship in preference to any other person of eminent rank, or distinguished talents, it is assuredly neither from any motives of interest, or any propensity to flattery. You have been selected from among the croud of nobility who surround the throne, to conduct the affairs of a mighty empire, which, though it has sustained the rudest shocks, and suffered numerous dilapidations, is still sublime and magnificent in ruin. You have undertaken this arduous employment at a moment big with internal discord, and external calamity, beyond the example of former

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mer times. It required a giant mind, and talents the most rare and uncommon to guide the vessel of State through the storm of political elements, and to save the shattered wreck which had survived the tempest. The experience of modern ages presents no example of a country oppressed beneath so superior a combination of enemies, as the British empire had sustained for many years. The league of Cambray in the sixteenth century, or the great alliance formed in the beginning of the present century, for reducing the exorbitant power of Louis the XIVth, present only a feeble image of the more universal and incredible efforts made to shake the foundations of the English grandeur, and which have been attended with too much success. The convulsions which overturned the Republic of Venice, and shook the throne and monarchy of France, were in a great degree confined to Europe, and to the continent of the Old World; but we were destined to see America and Asia unite their forces, and extend the horrors of war over the most remote extremities of the planet, through every latitude, embracing both hemispheres, and involving the world

in one vast conflagration.—As if unusual fatalities had combined for our destruction, the torch of war was lighted almost in the same precise moment of time, in the two most important and most widely separated parts of the British dominions. While rebellion erected her standard on the walls of Boston, and displayed the signal of revolt to the Americans, a spirit of wanton enterprise, and insatiate ambition, dictated to the government of Bombay, to mix in the intrigues of the Mahratta Court, and to commence hostilities against an empire, whose resources, pecuniary and military, they were so far from knowing, that they had even a very imperfect acquaintance with its geographical extent and limits.

France, ever wakeful to the true interests of her subjects, stung with the humiliation of a war in which her commerce and her glory had been equally obscured—waiting the hour of political vengeance, and suspending the blow she meditated—France at length openly declared her purpose, and united her formidable force to that of Asia and America.

As if the contest was not yet sufficiently unequal, Spain joined her unweildy strength to that of the elder branch of the House of Bourbon, and co-operating with her in naval exertion, covered the ocean with a navy hitherto unseen in the present century. The armada of Philip seemed to revive anew, while the fleet of England, accustomed to vanquish, *fled even* at the entrance of her own harbours.—But the climax of war was not yet compleated. The imbecility and insanity of our Councils in the East, invited new enemies, and seemed to provoke destruction. While a lethargy appeared to pervade the government of Madras, from which no exhortations could rouse, or information awake them, Hyder Ally, a name not confined in its renown to the eastern world, and who might have rivalled Tamerlane or Zinges in his conquests, had he been equally favoured by circumstances,—Hyder, after long preparations, which afforded time for every species of defence on our part, at length broke in upon the unprepared and defenceless Carnatic, cut in pieces the detached corps before they could unite to oppose his progress, and carried terror and victory wherever he appeared.—

To compleat this unexampled assemblage of enemies, Holland last appeared; and reluctantly awaking from a repose of near half a century, buckled on her rusty armour, and unsheathed her sword, to give another stab to a country, which seemed already fainting beneath such an unequal struggle.

Some transient gleams of glory shot, indeed, athwart this troubled sky, but disappeared almost instantaneously, and left the political hemisphere dark as before. The gallant and spirited defence of Barrington at St. Lucia, the trophies gained by Goddard over the armies of the Mahrattas, the repulse of D'Estaing before Savannah, and the fortunate heroism of Rodney off the coast of Spain, only illuminated the gloom which they could not disperse.

Island after island fell in the West-Indies. Incapacity and negligence seemed to combine for our destruction. The disgraceful day of Saratoga was only forgotten and obliterated by the more humiliating catastrophe on the Banks of the York River.

Indecisive

not vanquish Hyder; and gave the Carnatic a momentary respite from the Asiatic Conqueror.

This, my Lord, was the distressful state of the empire at the commencement of the year 1782. Convulsed in every quarter, she seemed to approach the hour of political dissolution; and even in her struggles, to announce her near advance to their termination. Such was the gloomy picture she presented to Europe and the world, at the moment when Lord North, by an act of suicide, rather than by a violent death—by his own want of energy and exertion, rather than by the efforts of his enemies, terminated an administration, unequalled by its misfortunes in the annals of this country.

But that tide of adverse fortune, which for so many years had run with an impetuosity not to be resisted, suspended its course at this critical juncture, and returning in a contrary direction with equal violence and rapidity, bore up the drooping genius of England on its current. Rodney, a name sacred to glory, and always found in the
paths

paths of danger and of fame, arrested with a strong hand the progress of the arms of France. After many disappointments and delays, the navies of the two countries met upon the 12th of April. No History of the antient or modern world presents an instance of a more glorious and brilliant victory. The fleet of France fled under shelter of the night, leaving the Admiral and the Admiral's ship in the victor's hands. The laurels of England, so long withered and faded, bloomed a new. The proud battles of La Hogue and Quiberon were out-done; and the names of Ruffell and of Hawke, no longer stood unrivalled in the naval history of their country. Terror and dismay pursued the flying remains of the vanquished enemy, and accompanied them over every quarter of the world.

But it was not only in the West-Indies that England rose triumphant and vigorous. Successes more than negative, and equally brilliant, attended her exertions in other parts of her dominions. Spain, after having exhausted her monarchy, and drained her arsenals and treasury to re-annex Gibraltar to the

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the Crown, from which it had been torn, was repulsed with an equal loss of honour and of men from before the walls; while the Princes of the Blood of France, who had come to be spectators of its fall, returned inglorious and disappointed home.—Even in India—though success had not attended the efforts made by the Governor-General to procure a peace with the Mahrattas—though Hyder still ravaged and desolated the Carnatic—though the treasuries of Bengal and Madras were exhausted by such ruinous and unremitting efforts——though France made exertions, naval and military, the most desperate, and even above her strength—yet no effectual breach was made in the bulwarks of the empire. Madras remained free from attack or insult. The fleet of England sustained, under many disadvantages, and with inferior numbers, every attempt to break or vanquish them.—The unarmed and defenceless possessions of Holland fell, one after another, into the English hands; and France, after a campaign, in which she had promised herself the most decisive advantages, found her expectations vain, and all her schemes abortive.

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Such, my Lord, was the animating and exhilarating prospect which the Empire exhibited; such was the situation of her enemies at the close of 1782;—a year which had commenced under the most fatal auspices, but which saw at its termination, all the former glories of England beam anew!

This, my Lord, was the precise æra you chose to humble your country at the feet of France and Spain. At the moment when every breast beat high with pride and hope—when the navy of England, reviving from its temporary obscurity, panted to prove again its late asserted superiority—when America, having emancipated herself beyond dispute, had no longer any motive for continuing the war—when Spain was incapable of raising further supplies from her exhausted provinces—when Holland was torn by intestine divisions, menaced by foreign powers, and incapable of any external exertion—when France felt the whole burden of the war falling upon her already bleeding finances—was this, my Lord, the moment, which a wise, a patriot, or a vigorous Minister, would have chosen to supplicate for peace, and to accept from the
condescension,

[11]

condescension, or insolent magnanimity of the Court of Versailles, such terms as the most pusillanimous Minister ought to have disdained? The indecent and ruinous haste with which the treaty was precipitated from a terror of Parliament, did not escape the penetrating eye of the Cabinet of France, nor was it unimproved. You was deceived, my Lord, with regard to the state of their affairs in India—You either did not know, or did not take advantage of the distresses they laboured under at home, from the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of their raising the requisite supplies for the approaching campaign—You did not profit of the rising storms upon the continent, though France saw, and dreaded their consequences.—“Peace was your dear delight, not Fleury’s more;”—and, like that feeble and superannuated statesman, you sacrificed, to obtain it, every object of pride, or of greatness, which you dared to concede——

*Tum magnum exitium (quod dī prius omen in ipsum
Convertant) Priami Imperio, Phrygiisque futurum!
——Quos neque Tydeides, nec Larissæus Achilles,
Non anni domuere decem, non mille Carinæ.*

[12]

Laying aside all pretence to declamation, or attempt to impose on the judgment through the medium of the passions, I shall as coolly and as candidly as I am able, venture to examine the great outlines of this fatal Treaty, in which the honour and the interests of the nation have been so wantonly betrayed. Incapacity, ignominy, or ruin, appear in all its features, and mark it, both to the present age and to distant posterity, as a compleat dereliction of every right of the Crown, and every possession of the subject. Even the Treaty of Utrecht, under the circumstances which marked and accelerated its conclusion, was not equally ruinous, or equally disgraceful.

The Independence of America, however humiliating in its nature, however pernicious and big with ruin in its consequences to this country, yet did not necessarily bury the faith and honour of England in the same grave with her commerce and her grandeur. The bitter draught might still have been qualified; and something might yet have been saved, even in the most wanton extravagance of concession. But, it was reserved for you, my
Lord,

Lord, to render the English faith as much an object of scorn and opprobrium, as her power and glory are of pity and contempt. The "*Punica Fides*," shall be no more a proverbial, or an exclusive expression of national perfidy. You have found out a more indisputable claim to that epithet, without recurring to Roman or Carthaginian story. Your allusions, my Lord, are nearer home, and scorn all foreign assistance.

The dereliction of the unhappy Loyalists, is an act of so atrocious a nature, and of so flagitious and deep a dye, as to supercede all necessity for calling on Englishmen to feel and to detest it. We wanted only this public testimony of our baseness and treachery, to compleat the ignominious monument of fallen greatness, which we hold out to Europe, and the astonished world. Even Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke would not thus have abandoned their miserable fellow-citizens, who had bled and perished in their cause! They, my Lord, only sacrificed the *Catalans*: allies indeed, and brave ones! but not Denizens and Englishmen, descended from one common origin, and protected by
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the same Household Gods. The act is new, I believe in the history of the *Old World*, and only fit to mix with the enormities of Pizarro and Cortez in the *New*. But beware, my Lord, the vengeance which awaits such a conduct! Impunity does not always accompany crimes. Though Oxford, after being impeached by the Commons, escaped capital punishment, merely by a dispute relative to the forms of proceeding between the two Houses of Parliament—Though Bolingbroke eluded by flight the punishment which otherwise would have fallen on the author of the peace of Utrecht, the year 1783 may, perhaps, bear no similarity to the year 1715; and little as the genius of the age in which you live is disposed to exertions of energy and severity, yet there are actions which awaken even the most torpid and lethargic States, and point their reluctant vengeance against the authors of their calamities.

I wish, that in extenuation of this violation of faith contained in the "Provisional Articles" with America, I could trace any shadow of policy, of foresight, or of wisdom, in the other great features of the treaty. But,
I can

I can no more admire the statesman than I can acquit the man. Is it by the ability shewn in drawing the *limits* between the dominions of the United States and those of the English Crown, that you mean, my Lord, to obliterate and compensate for the sacrifice you have made of the honour of your Sovereign and your country? Did you, at least, consult the *commercial* interests of England in the line of separation between Canada and the American Provinces? Or, did you fondly hope, under a long list of barbarous names, of lakes, and rivers unknown to us, to conceal the vices and deficiencies of the imaginary barrier assigned? If you flattered yourself with such expectations, you must have supposed the people of England as fallen in knowledge of their interests, as you have humbled them in pride and in grandeur. But, it scarcely requires a common geographical chart, to expose to universal contempt the fallacious boundaries prescribed to Canada. Would any Minister, who only *knew* the interests of his country, adopt, as a line of partition between two great independent States, the limits laid down by the Quebec Bill, in simply marking the termination of two Provinces

Provinces dependent on, and subject to the same Crown?—Notwithstanding the pompous enumeration of imposing names, the most compleat dereliction of Canada and Nova Scotia could not have more fundamentally sacrificed the benefits to be derived from those Colonies, than the present Articles of Partition have done. How are we to communicate with the Great Lakes of America and the Mississippi? Have we possession of the carrying places? No. Have we possession of the passages by which these Lakes communicate with each other? No. Have we possession of Fort Niagara, or Fort Oswego? No.—How then are we to transport any article of commerce into the interior provinces, except by the allowance and permission of the Americans, who may, and who will impose a limit to our connexion with the Indians, and the countries on the Ohio and Mississippi? They are masters of all the accesses to the Lakes, and of consequence hold us in the compleatest vassallage.

However personally and peculiarly unpleasing to your Lordship it may be, and however devoid of entertainment it may prove
even

to the Public, yet so fatal are the concessions made by the Limits agreed on between us and America, that I owe it to my country and myself, on this most important point, to go into a detail with geographical precision, and to convince every impartial person, that no possible situation or circumstances could justify a Minister in thus abandoning the interests of the Empire. Here, at least, I renounce all declamation, and stand on facts. By the *line* of partition passing up the River St. Croix, the vast tract of country extending from that river to the Kennebec, is given up to America. It is true, indeed, that this country was included in the original charter of the Province of Massachuset's Bay; but the General Court could not grant any part of it without the consent and permission of the Crown of England; and no grants were ever attempted beyond the River Penobscot. By the passage of the *line* from the head of the River St. Croix, along the ridge of the highlands at the back of Massachuset's Bay to the source of the Connecticut River; and passing thence through the 45th degree of northern latitude into the River St. Laurence, the whole of the countries surrounding Lake
D. George

George and Lake Champlain, with both those Lakes, and the two forts of Crown Point and Ticonderago, are ceded to America.

The *line* entering the St. Lawrence below the fort of La Galette, and passing through the middle of the River, resigns compleatly the command of that Rapid to the Americans : and the *line* continuing its course through the middle of the Lake Ontario, and the Streight of Niagara, abandons the whole of the Mohawk Country, Oswego, and the Fort of Niagara, which commands the carrying place, to America.

The *line* proceeding through Lake Eric, and from thence through the middle of the Streight at Detroit into the Lake Huron ; and thence through Lake Superior, and the middle of Long Lake, to the north-western point of the Lake of the Woods, cuts off all communication with the Mississippi, with the Ohio and Illinois countries, and all the Indian nations, except what the generosity of Congress shall be pleased to allow, the access being in their hands. The Lake Michigan is totally given up. Super-added to this,
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the Americans, by commanding the carrying-places at Niagara, Detroit, and at Missilimachinac, preclude all communication between Upper and Lower Canada, even should we allow the passage across the St. Lawrence, at La Galette. To complete the fetters in which this ruinous treaty binds us, the communication from Montreal, by the Outawa River with Lake Superior, is likewise in the hands of the Americans, as they have the command of the streight between it and the Lake Huron: the necessary and inevitable consequence of which is, that even the trade from Canada with the Indians to the *West* and *North* of the Lakes, is totally in their power; and as to the whole country on the *East* side, it is entirely and exclusively their own.

Yet, as if all these ample and destructive concessions were not yet sufficient, you have ventured, my Lord, to extend the prerogative of the Crown, in order to capacitate your Sovereign to resign a vast tract of the Province of Canada, over which you could acquire or confer no right of alienation. In virtue of what parliamentary sanction or permis-

tion, do you find yourself authorized to cede for ever to America that prodigious extent of territory, stretching to the southward of the line drawn from the North-west point of the Lake of the Woods, due West to the Mississippi, and which, by a public and solemn compact, made in 1774, was declared a part of Canada?—If these are not crimes of State meriting impeachment, there can exist none. You doubtless rely either on the lenity of the age, or on the supineness and lethargy of Parliament. Beware, my Lord, lest you be deceived in both!

The continuation of these extraordinary limits, down the Channel of the Mississippi, as well as along the rivers Catahouche, Flint, and St. Mary, to the Atlantic Ocean, are only, and can only be useful to this country, upon the supposition, (which formed the genius and principle of these boundaries at the time they were laid down and signed at Paris, on the 30th of November last) namely, that the Floridas, or at least *East Florida*, would have remained to the Crown of England; otherwise, to what purpose thus accurately

rately trace a frontier, to which we now can have neither access nor outlet, since the Floridas are ceded to Spain? And is it thus you trifle with the patience, and insult the feelings of a great and an informed people? But the illusion is too gross, and too easy of detection, to afford a refuge, however momentary, to its author: even the Moscovites, before the accession of Peter, would have discovered so palpable a deceit, and have resented the insult on their understandings.

Every step I tread, every advance I make in this pernicious treaty, only opens a new and melancholy prospect of departed greatness. Ignominy and ruin keep equal pace. All the sacred barriers which the provident foresight of our ancestors had drawn, to protect the commerce, and rear the future navy of their country, have you, my Lord, subverted. The fishery on the Banks of Newfoundland, which has always been justly regarded as the most indispensable nursery for our seamen, and the monopoly of which we have jealously preserved, through so many wars and revolutions, is laid open, almost without any restriction, to France and to America!

A new

A new and more extended length of coast, as well as greater privileges, are granted to France.

The islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, in the Gulph of St. Laurence, are not only restored to the French, but they are given up, without the smallest reserve or stipulation. The peace of 1763 might have afforded you, my Lord, the most accurate information respecting the danger and importance of those islands, situated so near to Newfoundland. When they were ceded by us, it was under the express and positive limitation, that they were only “to serve as a shelter to the
 “ French fishermen; and his Most Christian
 “ Majesty engaged not to fortify the said
 “ islands; not to erect any buildings upon
 “ them, except merely for the convenience
 “ of the fishery, and to keep upon them
 “ only a guard of *fifty* men for the police.”
 What must now be the necessary and inevitable consequence? France will fortify and garrison both those islands. She will, on a rupture between the two Crowns, instantly expel us from Placentia and St. John's, and become mistress of Newfoundland and the
 whole

whole fishery. It requires, my Lord, a real depth of commercial and political information, only to conceive and comprehend the extent of the evils you have brought upon your country, and the still more alarming calamities which you have prepared for it in succeeding times.

America, though restrained as to the right of drying or curing her fish upon the island, has, however, obtained from your liberal concession, still further permissions and privileges, more dark and undefined indeed, but, for that very reason, more fatal to England. She has "the liberty of drying fish on the unsettled bays, harbours, and creeks of Nova Scotia, Magdalen Islands, and Labrador, so long as the same shall remain unsettled." If there be an article in the whole treaty more pregnant with evil than another, and more calculated to produce remote and future dissensions between us and America, it is this. The Americans, my Lord, you should have known, are not easily induced or compelled to quit any shore on which they settle: and, after a prescription of twenty years, who is to force them to abandon a coast, where they
have

have been accustomed to reside, and to carry on any article of traffic? Is it the erection of three or four miserable cottages on any particular part of the shore of Nova Scotia, or Labrador, that constitutes its being "settled?" I confess I am more alarmed at the darkness and ambiguity of this clause, than at any of those where the destructive tendency is more defined, and the ruin more clearly ascertained.

I am sorry to find no other trace of liberality in your Lordship's conduct, except where it is exerted at the expence of the dismembered empire. To Spain you have been liberal even to prodigality. Did you hope, my Lord, to *gain* the Most Catholic King by this unexampled profusion? Did you intend to detach the younger branch of the House of Bourbon from the elder, by so partial and distinguishing a predilection? Or was it from any profound political aim inscrutable to common minds, that you thus wantonly added the cession of East Florida to the acquisition of West Florida, already made by the arms of Spain? Was it not enough to abandon the unhappy Loyalists, to
deliver

deliver Canada and Nova Scotia fettered into the hands of Congress, to lay open the fisheries to France and to America? Or was the work still incomplete, while a single province remained to England?

Perhaps I shall be told, that " the Floridas
" were onerous to this country; that they
" were infertile wastes, unwholsome, un-
" settled, and productive of scarce any re-
" venue to the Crown." Even was I to
allow these arguments, and grant these asser-
tions in their full force, which I am far, how-
ever, from doing, I reply, that their *local* situa-
tion rendered them invaluable to us. They
command in a great measure the communi-
cation with the River Mississipp, and the in-
terior parts of Carolina and Georgia. They
furnish some very essential articles, particularly
naval stores; and lumber for the West-India
islands. They will be felt in a future war, as
a severe curb on the trade with Jamaica. In
any case, the preservation of one or both
might have done honour to your humanity;
and they would at least have formed some
asylum, however desert or inhospitable, for
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the miserable Loyalists, from the persecution of their conquerors.

But it is not in America that we are to look for the traces either of your beneficence, or your wisdom. It is to the West Indies we are to turn our eyes, if we desire to see the miracles of the Earl of Shelburne's hand. There, unlike to every other part of the treaty, Britain appears to receive, and France to concede. An ostentatious recital of captured islands restored—an enumeration which is so minute as to sloop even to rocks in its detail, imposes on the ear, and dazzles the judgment. Nor am I unwilling to allow, that the islands restored by France are of very essential consequence to the commerce and welfare of the State. Grenada is, perhaps, worth near a million sterling annually to this country. Dominique, contains the most important and valuable harbour in the West Indies. The Court of Versailles may, indeed, consistent with the most cautious policy, and the most discerning sagacity, restore to England all the islands she had taken, since she well knows that we can in future only hold them by the most frail

frail and precarious tenure—namely, the permission of America, and the generosity of France. But, in return, have we not restored to her an island, which, in a military point of view, is above all price, and beyond all calculation? Is there a man, however uninformed, who does not know that St. Lucia is the key to the whole chain of the Carribbee Islands? Its natural strength, its windward position, its artificial force, nay, the very circumstances of its capture, have rendered it as dear to the pride as to the policy of the English nation. The unwholesome nature of the climate, which after its first conquest was found to be highly pernicious to the troops, is not to be adduced as a reason or a justification for restoring it to France. That circumstance no longer exists. The late hurricane in the West Indies, while it spread desolation round, operated as a most salubrious restorative to the Island of St. Lucia, by clearing the woods; and superadded to this, the exertions and labours of the experienced officer who has commanded there for these last two years, have so ameliorated the air of the Morne Fortunée and its vicinity, as to render it one of the most

healthy stations for troops in that quarter of the world. France, my Lord, will know its value better; nor shall we find it such an easy capture, whenever another rupture takes place between the two Crowns. While she possesses St. Lucia, there is not an island free from insult, or exempt from the danger of continual attack. Not content, my Lord, with disarming your own country, you prepare France for future wars, and arm her with the most fatal weapons.

As if St. Lucia was not a sufficient concession, Tobago is added likewise. However inconsiderable it may be, as compared with most of the other islands in the chain, it is not an object of political contempt or disregard. The cotton of Tobago is of a quality far superior to any produced in the West Indies; and its loss will be severely felt by that branch of our manufacturers. It is not in Manchester that you will be peculiarly popular, my Lord; nor is there any danger, that when *you* shall be no longer in his Majesty's Councils, the inhabitants of that great and opulent city will take off the horses
from

from *your* carriage, and draw *you* in triumph through the streets.

It might have been hoped, that in return for so many concessions in Europe and in America, Spain would in amicable revenge have enlarged and extended the territory and the privileges, allowed to the logwood cutters in the Bay of Honduras. It is a most invaluable article of commerce, of which Spain has been always jealous in the extreme, and the conditions annexed to which she has continually, even in time of profound peace, infringed and invaded. Of consequence, every minute particular should have been accurately and pointedly defined, nor any possible subterfuge or evasion left unexplored and guarded against. But, perhaps your Lordship preferred more conciliating modes of binding the Spanish Court and Monarch, as preferable to the fetters of a treaty. Obligations, you considered, should be reciprocal; and your own profusion might authorize you to expect equal generosity from the Councils of Madrid. It is for these reasons, and on these principles undoubtedly, that the *boundaries* of the district for cutting logwood

wood are not defined, but left to future negotiation to fix and ascertain — You have even gone further ; and tacitly, if not avowedly, declared the sovereignty of the Crown of Spain over that coast, which the treaties of Utrecht, of the Pardo, of Seville, and of Fontainbleau, had wisely passed over in silence ; but which can never henceforward be impugned, or called in question.—

From this humiliating and calamitous prospect of the western world, I am now to carry my attention to the East-Indies. There, the same spirit of concession and surrender pervades every article of the treaty. However France might have triumphed beyond the Atlantic ; whatever success might have attended her councils and her arms on the Continent of America—However numerous her list of captured islands, and emancipated provinces, might be in the western hemisphere, no laurels had graced her in India, or trophies marked her progress. Notwithstanding the colossal fabric of the Mahratta empire, and her unremitting efforts to break in upon Bengal — Notwithstanding the impetuous rage of Hyder, and the desolation of the Carnatic—
—Notwith-

—Notwithstanding the reiterated attempts of the fleet of France, in aid of her Asiatic allies—only ruin and misfortunes had attended her affairs. No trace of the French possessions or acquisitions remained to them on either coast of the peninsula. Pondicherry, Carical, Chandenagore, Mahè, every factory and settlement had successively fallen.— You must have known, my Lord, that her fleet under Suffrein could not remain upon the coast of Coromandel after the commencement of October, when the Monsoon begins; and that the arrival of the powerful naval and military reinforcement under Sir Richard Bickerton, which might be expected with great probability in the course of September, must put the safety and protection of India out of all question or suspicion.

You knew likewise that the Mahrattas were treating for peace with the Governor-General; and that Hyder, exhausted by his very conquests, and receiving no such essential assistance from France, as could enable him to approach or invest Madras, must be equally disposed to put an honourable termination to the war.— I do not mention Holland—

She

She only presented objects of plunder, and could hardly be regarded as an enemy.—And were these circumstances such, as to induce a wise Minister to restore to France, not only all that we had captured, but even to bind his Sovereign and his country “to procure” a considerable district of territory, “to serve as a dependancy” round Pondicherry, and round Carical?—Our allies, the Nabob of Arcot, and the King of Tanjore, will doubtless retain a deep and grateful sense of the friendship and protection extended by your Lordship to them, in these liberal concessions from the bosom of the Carnatic and Tanjore. Perhaps, however, these districts may not be “procured” with that yielding facility you seem inclined to suppose; and we have yet to hope, that whatever inclination to concede may be found in the Cabinet of England, the Durbars may be more inflexible on these articles, and refuse to yield obedience to the mandate.

The Preliminaries with Holland are not yet signed; but if we may judge from the spirit of concession which characterizes the treaties already concluded, your Lordship
will

will not be less yielding to the Dutch, than you have been to the other belligerent powers. Perhaps you may even carry your generosity so far, as to bind this country to "procure" a district of territory round Negapatam, similar to those promised to France round their two principal settlements. That you may conceive it wise or equitable, to restore to Holland all her establishments in the kingdom of Bengal, as well as on the coasts of Coromandel and Malabar, I can suppose—but, I trust, my Lord, that you will not dare to sport so far with the great interests of the English people, or tempt their resentment and indignation so far, as ever to restore to the Dutch the Harbour of Trincomalé. Report, however, which unquestionably wrongs you, has ventured to attribute to you intentions of this nature;—nay, it has gone further, and insinuated, that a late resignation at the head of the Board of Admiralty, which this kingdom much regrets, originated, at least partially, from a prescience and a disapproval of your Lordship's resolutions on this important point.

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Trincomalé

Trincomalé is the most invaluable possession to the Crown of England, which she can retain in the East-Indies. Its central position near the southern extremity of the peninsula, protecting both coasts, overhanging Negapatam and Pondicherry, while it secures Madras, and all our establishments in the Bay of Bengal;—the excellence and security of the Bay, in which the whole navy of England may ride secure during all the fury of the Monsoon, at a time when the French must be under a necessity of returning to the islands of Mauritius——Even all the adventitious circumstances attending it—the uncommon salubrity of the air, the immense quantities of excellent fish taken in the harbour, the prodigious plenty of fowl and animal food with which the surrounding woods abound—All these local qualities conspire to render the possession of Trincomalé an object of the highest national importance. But these advantages, numerous and essential as they must be confessed, are eclipsed in the recent and inestimable benefit, derived from its being in our possession during the present war. I will venture to assert, that had Trincomalé been in the hands of France, or even

of Holland, we should long since have ceased to retain a single settlement or possession on the Coast of Coromandel.

Suffrein would have remained in that harbour during the monsoon, when Sir Edward Hughes must have been under a necessity of retiring to Bombay. What the destructive consequences of such a necessity must have been, it would be nugatory to attempt to prove. Madras must have fallen irrecoverably; the northern Circars would have followed; and all the English dominions, from the Western extremity of Bengal to Cape Comorin, must have been for ever lost to the Crown and the Company. I would not willingly, my Lord, add supposititious charges to those, for which I know you to be already answerable to your country; and I shall therefore suspend my opinion on this feature of the Treaty, till we are made acquainted with its final adjustment.

At the termination of the late glorious war, it was regarded as one of the very essential advantages secured to England by the treaty of Fontainebleau, that the gum trade would

be in a great measure exclusively in our possession. Senegal was retained upon that principle, as commanding the navigation and commerce of the river and coast from whence those articles were principally procured. Mr. Pitt, whom your Lordship affects to admire and imitate, esteemed the acquisition of that branch of trade as a most solid and permanent benefit to this country; but this, like so many other commercial sources of wealth, you have thought proper to sacrifice; and in return for Goree and Senegal yielded to France, we are to esteem ourselves fortunate, that the Most Christian King guarantees to us “the possession of Fort James, “ and of the River Gambia.”

If there was one article of this degrading treaty which I should incline to approve and applaud, it would be the cession of Minorca; and had any equivalent been made by Spain for her keeping possession of that island and both the Floridas, I would have been among the first to justify your policy in this instance. But Spain in the present treaty only receives, without conceding any thing in return; for it would be to insult us, my Lord, to talk of
the

the Bahama Islands as any comparative object of restitution. Minorca, I have long regarded, rather as a burden on this country, than as any essential advantage to it. We have little trade in the Mediterranean, and less in the Levant: the Turkey Company has long been sustained by an elymosynary gift of Parliament, annually conferred. Even was the commerce up the Straits in a more flourishing condition than it is, Minorca is little calculated to give it effectual protection;—but Minorca, like Gibraltar, has a relative and factitious value; nor must it be estimated by the benefits resulting to England from its possession, but by the imaginary price which the pride of Spain may annex to it. These, however, are feelings and motives which you, my Lord, might be too magnanimous to profit of, and too generous to insist on with the Court of Madrid.

Dunkirk compleats the list of our disgraces, and of the triumphs of Versailles. That thorn in the commerce of the Channel, that insulting Port which looks into the Thames, and carries depredation to our very doors, is again reinstated in all its capacity
of

of offence. Every stipulation, which the honour or policy of England had compelled France to yield, from the peace of Utrecht to the present moment, is compleatly and totally done away—every article “abrogated and suppressed.” Even the Ministry of Charles the Second, corrupt and profligate as they were, would have blushed at the ignominy in which they involved their Royal Master by consenting to such an article; and have refused to stain his honour, though they might betray his interest.

These are the wonders of the Earl of Shelburne, and such the blessings he has entailed upon his country! The Empire, dismembered, and bleeding at every vein, presents a monument of pity to foreign nations, and the empty recollection of glories for ever set. The treaty of peace only leaves us impotent and debilitated, from the unsuccessful struggles we have made for so many years. It is, indeed, as far as relates to the two Crowns of France and Spain, but too clearly defined, and accurately correct. It is only with America, that every possible ambiguity, and every impolitic source of future disputes are scattered

scattered with a lavish hand. And do you presume to hope, my Lord, that a proud and generous nation will tamely bend beneath the yoke of ignominy, which you have imposed upon them? Is it from a perusal of the history of your own country, and peculiarly of the year 1713, that you venture to draw this inference? Inadequate as the Treaty of Utrecht was to the just expectations of the people of England, it was at least only *negatively* bad, your's is so, in the most *affirmative* sense. Even the political ashes of Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke will disdain to mix with your's. You stand, my Lord, superior and alone, amid the ruins of the Commonwealth, like Marius among the remains of the Carthaginian grandeur; and like him, you may shed tears of fruitless remorse, over the departed glories you can no longer restore. But, to the present age, as well as to distant times, you are accountable for your public conduct; and though you may, like other illustrious culprits, escape the punishment due to your actions from your own cotemporaries, yet posterity, rigid and impartial, will inflict upon your memory the most exemplary severity. To the judgment

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ment of that posterity I shall coolly resign you—content if I have sounded the alarm, and exerted my feeble efforts to awake my sleeping countrymen, at an æra, from which historians yet unborn, will date the downfall of the British Empire.

I have the honour to be,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's,

&c. &c. &c.

P O R T I U S.

February 5, 1783.

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