





THE
MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

WITH
NOTES AND QUERIES

Extra Number—No. 79



A CURE FOR THE SPLEEN *Sir Roger De Coverly (1775)*

TARRYTOWN, N. Y.

REPRINTED

WILLIAM ABBATT,
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EDITOR'S PREFACE

OUR present Extra is one of a sort not before represented in our Series—a very rare tract on the Tory side of the question of England's right to tax the colonies. It was written by Jonathan Sewall (1728—96) a Harvard graduate and Boston lawyer, who "inclined to the patriotic side until chagrined by the refusal of the State to pay the debts left by his uncle (Chief Justice Stephen Sewall 1704-1760—) "and by the opposition of the Otises to his petition. No lawyer in the State surpassed him in eloquence or acuteness. He was esteemed one of the ablest writers in New England, and defended the doctrines of Coercion with force and learning in the Tory newspapers," and was rewarded by the British government with lucrative appointments, but in 1775 was forced to leave his native country for England, and in 1779 his estate was confiscated. His last years were spent in St. John, New Brunswick. As the pamphlet was printed in Boston in 1775, but without either author's or printer's name, it is probably the last thing printed from his pen. It is very rare—the only copy sold in many years brought \$40 in 1918.

Though all the arguments, advanced by his hero, Parson Sharp, have been refuted by history, the tract is very well written, and not a great deal of imagination is required to visualize the scene in the tavern, "over a friendly tankard and pipe" with the Parson's six less-educated companions, who gradually draw out of the conversation, allow him to do most of the talking, and are finally converted by his presentation of his side of the case. Anyone who has ever seen the "taproom" of an old New England tavern will agree that the story of the meeting offers an excellent opportunity for the brush of a historical painter.

A
CURE FOR THE SPLEEN.
 OR
A M U S E M E N T
 FOR
A WINTER'S EVENING;
 Being the Substance of a Conversation on the Times, over
A FRIENDLY TANKARD AND PIPE.

B E T W E E N

SHARP,	A Country Parson
BUMPER,	A Country Justice
FILLPOT,	An Inn-keeper
GRAVEAIRS,	A Deacon
TRIM,	A Barber
BRIM,	A Quaker
PUFF,	A late Representative

Taken in short Hand by

SIR ROGER DE COVERLY
 (JONATHAN SEWALL)

Omne tulit Punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci,
 Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.

HORACE

A M E R I C A :

Printed and sold in the Year MDCCLXXV.

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A
C U R E
F O R T H E
S P L E E N, &c.

Enter Sharp and Bumper.

Sharp

YOUR servant squire *Bumper*, pray walk in; how do you do?

Bump. In pretty good health, I thank you sir; how is it with yourself and madam?

Sharp. We're moving about, tollerably well, for old folks; pray sit down.

Bump. Thank you sir, [*sits down*] very fine weather for the season.

Sharp. Yes, we have had a very favorable winter hitherto; and have great cause for thankfulness.

Bump. Aye, as you say sir, we ought to be thankful for a little, and that's the way to get more, as the saying is—he! he! he! Excuse my joking a little, you know it is my way, sir—hem!

Sharp. Oh, I love a joke; but we may enjoy many favors of a kind providence, and we ought not to be ungrateful squire; we have a very plentiful year for every thing except cyder; that indeed has fallen short.

Bump. Why aye, as you say sir, we have but precious little cyder this year—this puts me in mind of your tankard—he! he!

he! Excuse my boldness, but I am somewhat thirsty; and a drop of your old pomona to moisten the clay, as the saying is; and then a pipe of *Mc. Intire's* best; and then we'll settle the nation, ha! ha! ha!

Sharp. With all my heart.—Tony; a tankard of cyder, and pipes and tobacco here, quick; and take the squire's hat and cane.

Enter to them Fillpot, Graveairs and Trim.

Sharp. Your servant gentlemen, pray sit down; how do you do, deacon?

Grave. I thank you revd sir, this cough has not quite left me yet,—h—hugh—h—hugh—h—hugh—tho' thro' mercy, it is much better,—h—hugh—h—hugh.

Sharp. I'm glad to hear it. How do you do landlord?

Fill. As well as I can these hard times sir.

Sharp. Hard times! Why surely you've no reason to complain, landlord.

Fill. Why no sir, I don't complain; that is, on my own account—but then our public affairs, you know sir, we must think a little about them.

Sharp. I believe if we mind every one his own business, and leave the affairs of the state to the conduct of wiser heads, we shall soon be convinced that we are a happy people.

Trim. Excuse me there revd sir, saving your presence why; sir, if I was deny'd the privilege of my shop to canvass politicks, as a body may say, that is *Lord North*, East-India company, constitution, charter rights and privileges, duties, taxes and the like of that, body o'me sir, strip me of this darling privilege, and you may e'en take my razors, soap, combs and all, and set fire to my shop.—Why sir, I remember the time when every man minded his own business, as *you* say, and then my customers were in such a con-

founded hurry, that if they could not be shav'd in a twinkling, without loss of time, they'd go to meeting with their beards hanging down to the waistbands of their breeches, and I must lose their custom; but now sir, if forty come in together, and all in the most feezing hurry, I have nothing to do but to souse plump into a decant upon the times, and in the snap of a finger every man is as patient and still as any blockhead in my shop—*arrectis auribus*, they sit gaping, with solemn unmeaning phiz's—every one listens with silent attention to me, and forgets his beard, until I am pleased to dissolve the charm by closing my discourse: I tell them how I would trim *Lord North*, and have the Lords and Commons (excepting the dissentients) the East-India Company, Gov. *Bernard* Gov. *Hutchinson*, &c. over head and ears in the *suds*, if I could get at them; and then I rattle away upon grievances, opposition, rebellion and so on, only for the innocent purpose of supporting the credit of my shop. Pray sir, if you have any compassion for poor *Trim*, for heaven's sake don't preach up that old fashioned doctrine of every one's minding his own business; for if you do, I must decamp, and seek a living in some town where I can find a more orthodox minister. Would you please to be shaved sir?

Sharp. Why really neighbor *Trim*, you prove the truth of your doctrine, by making me an example of the force of your eloquence; amazed at your harrangue, I had entirely forgot your business as to shave me: come sit down.

Trim. Non tanto me dignor honore, domine; I know my place too well to sit down before yourself, and his worship here.

Bump. Come, come, sit down Mr. *Trim*; and pray no more of your lingo, 'till Mr. *Sharp* recollects the cyder, because it will grow flat by standing, he! he! he! Excuse me revd sir.

Sharp. I beg your pardon squire—my service to you. [*drinks*].

Bump. Deacon my service to you—[*drinks*.]—Choice cyder upon my honor—but I am afraid it won't come round again—mum!

Sharp. Never fear squire, we'll replenish the tankard when it's out—there's plenty in the cellar—pray drink, deacon.

Grave. Revd sir, here's towards your good health [*drinks.*] mighty fine cyder, truly.

Enter to them Brim and Puff.

Sharp. How do you do, friend Brim?

Brim. I thank thee friend *Sharp*, in pretty good health; how is it with thee and thy family?

Sharp. Pretty well I thank you. Your servant Mr. *Puff*: Pray be seated gentlemen. Come, we are all smoakers, I think, except Mr. *Trim*, and it is what the seamen call a leward evening; let us enjoy a social pipe; and I suppose neighbor *Trim*, you will have patience to tarry an hour, if you can be indulg'd with a dish of politicks.

Trim. O, by all means sir, I'm in no hurry—but as for politicks I can do well enough without them here, provided always that you don't banish them from my shop; for there they are a part of my trade; at least, they are the *Causa sine qua non* of my custom; and a trade in *theory* without the *practical* part, will go but little way towards keeping the pot boiling.

Brim. Verily, friend *Trim*, thou art arch today—why I have often heard thee holding forth to thy customers, with such energy and apparent zeal, against British tyranny and oppression, that I was verily persuaded thou wast infected with the epidemical frenzy of the times; but now I find thou wast only cunningly working at thy trade forsooth—truly thou art a very wag.

Trim. Aye friend *Brim*, all trades have their mysteries, and one half the world live by the follies of the other half.

Puff. But pray Mr. *Trim*, are you such a *tory* as to turn all our grievances into scorn and derision, and only pretend to be a friend to your country, for the sake of a living?

Trim. Why, between you and I and the post, Mr. *Puff*, I believe *you*, when you would be a representative, and *Trim* the barber, when he would get and keep good custom, act upon much the same principles with ninety nine in a hundred of the most flaming, patriotic Sons of Liberty. Interest is the word! But I claim the *exclusive* right of preaching *myself*, only in *my own shop*; every where else, I had much rather be a hearer of my good minister Mr. *Sharp*—therefore you must excuse me from entering the lists here, unless it be now and then a word or so, by way of marginal note: And upon the word of an honest shaver or trimmer, or call me what you please, I'd shave or trim you all round for nothing, if I could but hear you settle intelligibly what is a whig, and what a tory—what is constitution, and what are charter rights and privileges—what is the obedience due from an American Englishman, to the King and Parliament of Great-Britain, and what are our grievances; for by the mother that bore me, and by the father (if I ever had one) who begot me, I do solemnly affirm, friend *Brim*, that notwithstanding all I have *heard*, and the still greater all I have *preached* upon this subject, I am ignorant of the essential difference (if there is any) between a *true whig* and an *honest tory*. I know nothing in our constitution by which we can claim any privileges which are deny'd us. I have never heard of any obedience, demanded by the King and Parliament, which I can in conscience withhold; and I have no more idea of the grievances which for the sake of my custom, I am oblig'd to join in complaining of, than I have of the political disputes in the moon; though I believe they are pretty much alike, because ours, I can safely swear, favor strong of *lunacy*.

Brim. Friend *Trim*, in good truth, thou speakest like an oracle—I would thou and I could hear these matters discuss'd.

Fill. I say, amen—for I hear them talk'd about and about every day, and many a good mug of flip do I sell upon the same account, and that's all I get by it; for, burn my barroom, if I understand a word of the pudden:

Bump. I don't know where Mr. *Trim* got his learning, but, in his Majesty's name I do solemnly declare, that in my judgment no mere man, since the days of *Coke* upon *Littleton*, could in so few words have express'd more upon the subject than he has done; and I heartily second his motion—provided always, that we first light our pipes, after having previously put about the tankard—Once before you fill, and twice before you light says the proverb—You know revd sir—he! he! he! hem! excuse me—sir my service to you.

Puff. Hem! he! hem! I cannot for the life of me comprehend how it is possible for a man of Mr. *Trim's* good natural sense, to be so egregiously mistaken in his notions of our constitutional rights and privileges as he seems to be; why, Mr. speaker!—I beg pardon—gentlemen, I mean—but no matter—let that slip—I ask pardon gentlemen—but as I was saying—for him to say as this here—to wit—that there is no difference between a *whig* and a *tory*—why what a dickens are we contending about, if so be as how this here was the case—a fine case truly—why has not Lord *North* and Lord *Hillsboro* and that *George Greenville* stript us of all our constitutional charter rights and privileges—the birth-right of Englishmen, which our pious fore-fathers purchased with their blood and treasure when they came over into this waste howling wilderness—and has not Lord *Chatham* and Mr. *Pitt* and Lord *Cambden*, and—and—and—Lord what d'ye call 'em—it's immaterial about their names—I say please your honors—gentlemen, I mean—'ask pardon; have not these great and good men stood up for our rights and privileges against the tyrannical designs of the corrupt ministry and House of Commons—and now, for to tell me that there is no difference between a *whig* and a *tory*—and for a man to say as how our constitution isn't taken away—and that we've no grievances, and the like of that—I say, in my humble opinion, he is an *enemy to his country*—just as if every man did not know what constitution is—and whether we had any grievances, and so forth; why Mr. *Trim* may talk his Latin stuff if he pleases, with his *Causis sino qua no*, and such like—

I know some Latin as well as he; and I say he's an *ignoramis*, if so be he talks at this rate—I hope in mercy we shall have no bloodshed; but I swagger, (I ask pardon for swearing) but I snore, before I'd give up our just rights and privileges I'd take my gun, and load and fire and pull trigger like the nation and fight up to the knees in blood—but I wont put myself in a passion—I ask pardon gentlemen—By your leave sir, I'll make bold to take a drink of your cyder. Gentlemen, all your healths.

Trim. I believe Mr. *Puff* it is with you pretty much as it is with your humble servant, you can preach best in *your own shop*; but as *your shop* as well as *mine* happens to be *shut up* at this present writing, I fancy we both should save credit by leaving it to others to discuss these knotty points; for I have frankly confess'd my ignorance; and if you follow my example, it will positively be your shortest way out of the labyrinth in which you seem to be bewildered—*sat verbum sapienti.*

Puff. None of your unmanly reflections Mr. *Trim.* I suppose you think I don't understand *Greek.*

Brim. Friend *Trim,* I like thee and thy discourse, well—thy motion is good, and thy humour pleaseth my mind; and I do verily believe a calm debate upon these matters, interlarded with thy pithy marginal notes, would tend greatly to our edification.

Trim. I believe so too; and by my aunt *Tabitha's* muff, I protest good Mr. *Puff,* that I had no design to offend you in any thing I have said; and if I have offended, I ask pardon, and that's the satisfaction of a gentleman; and now I hope we shall verify the old proverb, *Amantium ira amoris redintegratio est.*

Puff. Well, well, no more of your French jabbering—I'm not a man to hold anger, tho' I say it—but howsomever I say again, rather than tamely give up my rights and privileges, I would fight to the last drop of—

Trim. Cyder.

Bump. Ha! ha! ha! well put in *Trim*—here's your good health Mr. *Puff*.

Grave. Upon my word gentlemen, these are no laughing matters—h—hugh—as Mr.—h—hugh—*Puff* has very well observed, all our charter rights and privileges are torn from us and we are made slaves, and the Lord send us deliverance—h—hugh—h—hugh—h—hugh.

Sharp. Don't you carry matters rather too far, deacon? You certainly view our public affairs through a gloomy deceitful medium; you say *all* our charter rights and privileges are torn from us—and that we are *slaves*. Pray consider, don't you sit quietly under your own vine and under your own fig tree? Don't you enjoy full liberty of conscience in religious matters? Don't you reap without interruption the fruit of your own labours? Does any one meddle with your person or property? Are you overburdened with taxes? Compare your situation with that of any other people under heaven: Turn your eyes to your brother Englishmen in Great-Britain—see with what taxes and duties they are burdened—and you will find you enjoy liberty, freedom and ease in a degree so far superior to them, that if you have the least spark of gratitude in your bosom, you will be so far from murmuring and complaining, like the grumbling, rebellious Jews of old, that you will exclaim, with the most grateful effusion of soul, “The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places. Yea, we have a goodly heritage.”

Trim. Or with the poet,

O fortunatos, nimium, sua si bona norint,

Americanus!

That is to say, Mr. *Puff*, *How happy are Americans, if they did but know it!*

Sharp. The truth is, and it is a melancholly truth, we have been lifted up to heaven in privileges, and now like the chosen people of old, we spurn at the hand that raised and has hitherto sustained us: Our king has planted us in a land flowing with milk and honey,

and has driven out the Canaanites from before us, and left us no thorn in our side—and now we vauntingly and ungratefully say, who shall be Lord over us? The description given of the Jews by Mr. *Dryden*, fits us, so very nearly, that I cannot help repeating it—

“The Jews, a head-strong, moody, murm’ring race,
 As ever try’d th’ extent and stretch of grace;
 God’s pamper’d people, whom, debauch’d with ease,
 > No *king* could *govern*, and no *God* could *please*;
 (Gods they had try’d of every shape and size,
 That godsmiths could produce, or priests devise:)
 These *Adam*-wits, too fortunately free,
 > Began to dream they wanted *liberty*;
 And when no rule, no precedent was found,
 Of men, by laws less circumscrib’d and bound;
 They led their wild desires to woods and caves,
 And thought that all but Savages were slaves.
 Those very Jews, who at their very best,
 Their humour, more than loyalty, exprest;
 Now wonder’d why, so long, they had obey’d
 An idol monarch which their hands had made;
 Thought they might ruin him they could create,
 Or melt him to that golden calf, a state.
 But these were random bolts”——

Puff. But pray revd sir, have the Parliament any right to make laws for us? And isn’t this a grievance?

Fill. Aye, there was a Boston minister, and another gentleman, lodged at our house last night, and they talk’d a great deal about this very thing, and made it out as clear as the sun at noon-day, that the Parliament have no such right; tho’ I did not understand them—but I know they argued very powerfully, and proved that we ought to resist. However, I don’t like taking up arms neither, that I must own.

Trim. No, no, let you alone for that; if we come to gun-powder and cold iron, I'll be shot if you a'n't found intrench'd in your bar, behind a tier of case-bottles, loaded with good cherry stingo.

Brim. Prithee friend *Trim* restrain thy wit a little—I would gladly hear friend *Sharp* discourse upon this authority of Parliament; I plainly perceive that the minds of friend *Graveairs*, and friend *Puff*, and friend *Fillpot* stand in need of enlightning—and friend *Sharp* seems to be moved to become a light to their feet and a lamp to their paths.

Trim. *Tace*, is the Latin for a candle—I am dumb. *Perge Domine reverende.*

Sharp. I have no objection against delivering my opinion freely upon this question, I can appeal to you all as my vouchers, that I have never cloak'd my sentiments, or conform'd outwardly to popular prejudices, as too many of my reverend brethren have done; and I wish I could not add with truth, that too many of them, instead of inculcating the peaceable principles of the gospel, have by their prayers, sermons and examples encouraged sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion; and stimulated their hearers, to every evil work—witness the late impious fast—an unparallel'd piece of solemn mockery, shocking to every serious mind—for what can be conceived more horrible than to beseech the fountain of truth and justice to espouse and abet the cause of robbery and injustice, by imploring of him a miraculous interposition for the removal of grievances brought upon the metropolis by a most highhanded robbery, plunder and destruction of their neighbor's property, and continued only by an obstinate refusal to make that restitution which the laws of justice, equity and good conscience loudly demand? Sorry I am that such a heaven-daring farce should originate with ministers—I am grieved that so many of our sacred order should, by this and other parts of their conduct, have discovered such a disposition to increase instead of curing our popular distractions.

Trim. Nothing new sir, I remember to have read of priests in days of yore, that they were,

—————“Well vers’d of old,
In godly faction, and in treason bold,
For who so fit for reign as Aaron’s race,
If once dominion they could found in grace?
These lead the path, tho’ not of surest scent,
Yet deepest mouth’d against the government.”

And *Lilly’s* grammar ranks them with beasts and robbers,—
“*Bos, fur, sus, atque sacerdos.*”——No offence to you sir.

Sharp. Hold, hold neighbor *Trim*, you are not to take liberties with my cloth because I do myself. But to proceed—In considering this question of the right of Parliament to make laws to bind us, I shall observe the distinction made by Mr. *Pitt*, Mr. *Dickinson*, Mr. *Wilkes*, Mr. *Otis*, and all other advocates for the rights of the Colonies, between *legislation* and *taxation*—they say there must necessarily be a supreme power, lodg’d somewhere, of governing and regulating the trade of the Colonies; and this is in the King, Lords and Commons of Great-Britain, but that this does not extend to *internal taxes*, tho’ it includes the right of laying *duties* on such articles of trade as they allow us to import, if we choose to import them—and upon this distinction was founded our opposition to the unhappy stamp-act—we then acknowledged the authority of Parliament, in its full extent, excepting only in the matter of *internal taxation*; tho’ it is very true we have since been daily growing wiser and wiser, ’till at length we openly avow principles of *absolute independency*, and deny that the Parliament of Great-Britain have any more *rightful authority* over us, than the Parliament of Paris, or the divan of *Constantinople*. And the grand argument in support of this new doctrine is, that our *charter* is a *compact* between the king and our ancestors, by which the *sole* power of legislation is given forever to our general assembly. And in answer to this it is said, that it never was in the *power* of the King to put any British subjects out of the jurisdiction of Parliament,

and therefore, if he had given such a charter, it would be void; but it is said further, that it is not true in fact; for that no such grant of a supreme, independant, uncontrollable power of legislation is, or ever was contained in the charter. Now if such a power be convey'd by the charter, it is either *expressed* or *implied*—that it is not *expressed* is too clear to be deny'd—and therefore it must be *implied*, or it is not convey'd by the charter, but is merely imaginary. This is a question of the highest importance to every man who has got a head, or any property to save or to lose; for the principle, if wrong, leads directly to *treason* and *rebellion*; to which we are hastening with a rapidity which I greatly fear will soon plunge us headlong in irretrievable ruin, unless we are stopped in our career. In order to a right understanding of this important matter, it is necessary to go back and consider how the case stood before, at, and ever since the time of our receiving the charter:—And from this view we shall also perceive whether the present claim of Parliament is new, as many ignorantly suppose, or whether it was made openly and expressly, before the grant of the charter, and has ever since been uniformly exercised by them, and acknowledged by us. To satisfy myself in this matter, I have made a journey to Boston, on purpose to see the statutes at large; and I find the case to be thus: In 1650, an act of Parliament was made for blocking up the ports of *Barbados*, *Virginia*, *Bermudas* and *Antigua*, in which the supreme authority of Parliament over all the Colonies is most clearly and expressly claimed, and it is declared “that they are, and ought to be, subordinate to, and dependant upon England; and have, ever since the planting thereof, been, and ought to be subject to such laws, orders and regulations as are, or shall be made by the Parliament of England.—*Any letters patent, or other authority formerly granted or given, to the contrary notwithstanding.*” This was during the protectorship of *Oliver Cromwell*.

Trim. That same *Oliver Cromwell* was a huge Son of liberty, as I take it.

Brim. Yea verily, so huge that he never left, 'till he had got the whole liberty of the nation into his own hands; and bequeathed it all to Charles the second, as a recompence for taking off the head of his father, only for desiring his share of it: But Charles the son being a very different man from Oliver, return'd the nation their liberty.

Sharp. In 1663, under the reign of King *Charles* the second, was passed *An act for the encouragement of trade*—in which is this very remarkable clause—“And in regard his majesty’s plantations beyond the seas are inhabited and peopled by his *subjects* of this *kingdom of England*; for the maintaining a greater correspondence and kindness between them, and keeping them in a *firmer dependance* upon it, and rendering them yet more beneficial and advantageous unto it, in the further employment and increase of English shipping and seamen, vent of English woollen and other manufactures and commodities, rendering the navigation to and from the same, more safe and cheap, and making this kingdom a staple, not only of the commodities of those plantations, but also of the commodities of other countries and places, for the supplying of them; and it being the usage of other nations to keep their plantation-trade to themselves:” &c. Our charter was granted by King *William* and Queen *Mary*, in 1692, which impowers the general-court to make laws “so as the same be not repugnant or contrary to the laws of the realm of England.” And in 1696, during the same glorious reign, an act of Parliament was made extending all the acts of trade to the Colonies, and requiring all governors and commanders in chief “to take a solemn oath to do their utmost, that all the clauses, matters and things contained in that and former acts of Parliament, relating to the colonies and plantations be punctually and *bona fide* observed.” And it is therein expressly enacted, “That all laws, by-laws, usages and customs, at this time, or which hereafter shall be in practice, or endeavored or pretended to be in force or practice, in any of the said plantations, which are in any wise repugnant to the before-

mentioned laws or any of them, so far as they do relate to the said plantations, or any of them, or which are any ways repugnant to this present act, or to any other law hereafter to be made in this kingdom, so far as such shall relate to and mention the said plantations, are illegal, null and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever." Thus it appears that two and forty years before the grant of our charter, the jurisdiction of Parliament over us, was openly and explicitly claimed; and again, twenty-nine years before; and then in the charter itself, this supreme jurisdiction is expressly reserved; and four years after it is again confirmed in the most positive terms, and all governors bound by an oath to see it submitted to. Now, when we consider this claim, openly and repeatedly made, before, at, and immediately after the granting and accepting of the charter, if the charter can be view'd in the light of a *compact*, is not this evidently one essential article of the agreement, on our part, namely, that we will acknowledge and submit to the jurisdiction of Parliament? It is plain we accepted the charter under this condition. How then can this, with the least color of truth, be called a *new* claim? Especially, when this right of Parliament has not only been thus amply *claimed*, but has been all along *exercised*, in various instances, and without any opposition, denial or question on our part—and this I find to be the case in fact—for from the time of our charter, in every reign, acts of Parliament have been continually making, imposing duties, and for regulating the trade, manufactures and internal government and police of this and the other Colonies;— thus duties have been imposed and paid upon sugar, rum, molasses, coffee, wines, &c. and on the other hand, bounties and premiums have been granted on various articles; the trade of hatters, and the manufacture of iron, by slitting mills, has been regulated and restrained—wool prohibited from being waterborne—the post-office erected—the rates of coin established—the cutting of pine trees prohibited—lands made liable to the payment of debts—the statute of wills extended to the Colonies—the paper currency restrained—indentured servants impowered to enlist—troops

raised here made subject to the articles of war—acts of assembly made void—and in divers other instances has this supreme right of Parliament been exercised and acquiesced in, continually, without interruption, from the usurpation of *Oliver Cromwell* to the reign of *George* the third.

Trim. GOD bless his majesty.

Sharp. Amen—And yet such is the infatuation, that people seem to be rushing into open rebellion upon a supposition, that the Parliament of England are setting up a new, and unheard of claim, in order to inslave a whole people, for whom they have ever discover'd a parental fondness, and whose liberties and happiness are most intimately connected and interwoven with their own.

Trim. O tempora! O mores!

Sharp. From the foregoing view of the matter, if attended to, every unprejudiced man must be convinced that an exclusive, supreme power of legislation is so far from being convey'd to our assembly by *implication*, that on the contrary, their subordination to the supreme legislative authority of the British Parliament is most strongly and clearly implied in the charter, and has been repeatedly and expressly claimed and exercised by Parliament, and tacitly acknowledged and quietly submitted to by us, for at least a hundred and twenty-four years last past, and consequently whatever argument may be against the claim, this of its being *new*, must fall to the ground.

Fill. Well I do protest sir, I'd given as good a mug of brandy-flip as I could make, that you had been at our house last night, to argue with that Boston minister and t'other man; for I don't believe they know one word of all this; because they declared as how the parliament never thought of making laws for us before that *George Greenville* put it into their heads; and how it was right against our charter, and such like—why if they'd known of these acts of Parliament you have been telling of, they couldn't have talk'd so.

Trim. Split me neighbor *Fillpot*, if I believe you'll ever be hanged for witchcraft, or had any hand in the plot;—why man they know 'em all, as well as I know that my political preachments to my shallow-pated customers, are all stuff'd with catch-penny lies, but I suppose it is a part of *their trade* as well as of *mine*—heaven forgive us all.

Grave. I must confess revd sir, I never understood so much of this matter before, and truly if there are such acts of Parliament as you have been mentioning, it alters the case very much h—hugh—h—hugh, in my opinion.

Bump. If there are! Oh, you may take my word for that, deacon, it's a long time since I read 'em, but I remember them perfectly, now Mr. *Sharp* puts me in mind of 'em.—Gentlemen, your healths.

Trim. I hope, please your worship, the Parliament won't lay a tax upon *cyder*.

Bump. Ha! ha! ha! you're a merry wag, you trim close, but you shan't spoil my draught—come, here's t'ye old cock—I can take a joke.

Trim. Aye, and swallow it too, by jingo.

Puff. As for that matter, revd sir, if so be, the acts of Parliament be as you tell of, and our charter is such a kind of a compact as you seem to suppose, why I'm free to own, that I don't see so much reason to complain; but then how can that be? For I'm sure Mr. ***** told the house, last sessions as how the tea act was an ent'ring wedge, contrived by Lord *North*, to enslave all the colonies, and Col. ***** said as much. What is your opinion of the tea act, sir?

Sharp. My opinion is this: Before the late tea act was made, no tea could be shipped to America, unless the merchants first paid a duty of *one shilling* sterling a pound; and this duty was paid *in England*, and the merchant took the risque of its ever reaching

America. This made tea so dear that the Dutch could greatly undersell the English East India company; and the American merchants, at least some of them, found their account in purchasing tea of the Dutch, and running it here; wherefore to enable the English to sell as cheap as the Dutch, the Parliament took off *nine pence* of the duty, and left only *three pence*; and this is not paid before the tea arrives safe here, but must be paid by the merchant before it is landed. And with the same view, they by another act enabled the East India company to sell their tea by wholesale, at public auction, in Boston; by this means, if we did not foolishly oppose it, instead of paying from a dollar to eight shillings a pound for tea, we might have it at two pistareens, or half a dollar, at most.

Trim. This is a mighty grievance truly; who would not fight rather than be deprived of the liberty of paying treble price for what they buy?

Sharp. But the grievance complain'd of lies here. This act laying the three penny duty on tea, expressly mentions, among other purposes, the *raising a revenue*: This, say we, is taking money out of our pockets without our consent; and it is argued that if they may do it in this trifling instance, they may do it in all others; and will go on till they leave us nothing. Upon which I would observe, in the first place, that it is not true that this is taking money out of our pockets without our consent; because we are not *compell'd* to buy; and if we *will* buy, the small pittance which we pay for the duty we pay with our own *consent*, as much as we do any money which we pay for any commodity we buy. The same might as well be said, when we buy a quart of rum, or a dram, for when we pay for it we pay our proportion of the duty laid by act of Parliament on molasses. This we have done a long time, and never found out that it was a *grievance*, or that we were thereby made *slaves*—but the consequence is false and absurd; for it can never follow that because we submit to a *reasonable* law, therefore we must be call'd to submit to the most *tyrannical*, *unjust* and *unreasonable* laws. And what is the

danger from this law, any more than from other revenue laws to which we have so long submitted? Those laws have all along, in fact, *raised a revenue*; and because this is mentioned in the act, can this possibly alter the case? Yes, say our patriots, this is claiming a right to tax us; but I deny it; for as I have clearly shown, this is no other claim than has been made, exercised and submitted to, for more than a century: It is essentially different from *taxing* us; for a *tax* is raised by *compulsion*, whether we will or no; but this is a *regulation of trade*, by which, though it *may* raise a *revenue*, and is *designed* for this purpose, yet no man can be *compell'd* to pay any part of it; and if he does, it is his own voluntary act, as much as when he chooses to drink wine or rum, rather than cyder, or to wear English cloth rather than homespun; and they are doing no service to their country who thus absurdly place *tax acts* and *revenue laws* upon the same footing, and infer a right of *taxation*, from a right of *legislation* in other respects. But further, The tea act, as it is called, was made in the seventh year of the present reign; and the preamble, which I took a copy of, runs thus, "Whereas it is expedient that a *revenue* should be raised in your Majesty's dominions in America, for making a more certain and adequate provision for defraying the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government, in such provinces where it shall be found necessary, and towards further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting and securing the said dominions."——Now it is generally supposed that this *express purpose of raising a revenue* in the Colonies, is entirely new and unprecedented; but to show that this is a mistake, I will read you a copy of the preamble to an act passed in the fourth year of this reign, which is thus, "Whereas it is expedient that new provisions and regulations should be established for improving the *revenue* of this kingdom, and for extending and securing the navigation and commerce between Great-Britain and your Majesty's dominions in America, which by the peace have been so happily enlarged: And whereas it is just and necessary that a *revenue* be *raised* in your Majesty's said dominions in America, for defraying

the expenses of defending, protecting and securing the same," &c. and then the act goes on to lay duties on sugars, wines, East-India goods, &c. imported from Great-Britain &c. This act has been, and still is, submitted to without the least complaint. Now I should be glad to know what difference there is between these two preambles, so far as respects the matter of *raising a revenue*.

Trim. Six of one, and half a dozen of t'other, that's all.

Sharp. Nay, so long ago as the year 1670, in an act made for regulating the plantation trade, one reason expressly assign'd is, that otherwise "the trade of them would, in a great measure be diverted from England, and carried elsewhere, and his Majesty's customs and *revenues* much *lessened*." In short, every *revenue act* is, in the nature of it, *an act for raising a revenue*, whether it be so expressed or not; and it is trifling at this time of day, to start an objection, which does not carry the force even of a quibble. If it be said that the money raised by this act is misapplied, because our civil officers are paid out of it, I answer, this is a distinct matter: The monies raised by this, and all other revenue acts, are, and for more than a century have been, paid into his Majesty's exchequer; and if, when there, instead of being applied towards easing British subjects in their taxes, as formerly, they are now applied for our ease, by paying the salaries of our governor, judges, &c. which otherwise, we must pay by an internal tax on our polls and estates, it seems as if we could have no reason to complain of this as a grievance: However, even though the money when raised was never so grossly *misapplied*, it would by no means affect the legality and constitutional right of *raising* it; these are matters quite distinct and independant of each other.

Puff. But pray sir, for if I am wrong I am willing to be set right, I would make bold to ask yourself, whether you don't believe the Parliament have made an act to tax our lands five shillings sterling an acre, or that they will very soon make it?

Fill. Indeed sir, I do assure you, the Boston minister declared it had actually passed the House of Commons, though the King had not sign'd it; and, more than all that, he told how it was a deep plot to get away all our lands; for he said they knew as how we would never submit to it, and then it would be called high treason, and then General Gage was to take all our lands and cut them into lordships, and divide them among the new counsellors.

Trim. Slice me like a lemmon, landlord *Fillpot*, if I would not undertake, for one nippikin, to make you believe, *nolens volens*, that larks may be catch'd by the sky's falling, or, by putting salt on their tails; or that the Pope of Rome, or *man* of sin, is a real painted *whore*, of the feminine gender; or, that the moon is made of green cheese—why,

“You make me think you are that tool,

“Which knaves do work with, call'd a fool.”

Pray Mr. Sagacity, don't you believe there is an act of Parliament laying a duty of fifty pounds sterling upon every marriage; and another fifty pounds upon every child born in lawful wedlock; and another giving fifty pounds bounty upon every murder of a bastard child, provided always, any thing in the said act to the contrary notwithstanding, that such child be not above the age of two years; tell me honestly my host, don't you, in your conscience firmly believe these quaint improbabilities?

Fill. Why you may laugh if you please, because as how you've got a glib tongue; but I'm ready to take my corporal oath, that the Boston minister, just after he'd been to prayer with my family, solemnly declared there was such an act actually past, and that he had seen it, and read it too, more than that; but I never saw it.

Puff. Well, if you havn't, I have; but howsomever, that last part, about murder, *stagers* me for all all.

Brim. And well it may, friend *Puff*; and verily, thy understanding must be firm and *solid*, or thou must needs have *stumbled* at the *threshold*; for I affirm, should an act be passed, containing

only the first clause of this *bastard act*, I should be weak enough to renounce all my peaceable principles, and putting my trust in an arm of flesh, should join in trying the strength and temper of carnal weapons; but friend *Sharp* will lighten thy darkness, and, if possible, fine down the dregs of friend *Fillpot's* understanding.

Trim. If he can, I'll be sworn he's an adept at refining; and I would advise neighbor *Fillpot*, after that, to let some of his liquors undergo the same operation; for, as I'm a sinner, it is like host, like wines; both *cloudy*, not to say *muddy*.

Bump. That's the barber, *positivo*;—here's t'ye, honest *Trim*.

Fill. Why your tongue's no slander, *Trim*, and so I shan't resent it; but every body knows my wine *must* be good, for I have my Madeira of 'squire ****, and my Fayal of deacon *****'s son in law there, I forget his name, and so it can't be *thick*; and so there you're out for once.

Trim. That's what the learned call a *non sequitur*; for by the same kind of argument you may prove your skull is not *thick*; for there nobody will dispute the character of the *Maker*; and yet, I'll be cut up into fiddle-cases, if the world don't agree that it is too *thick*,—but Mr. *Sharp's* pipe is lighted—*Attendamus*.

Sharp. When I first read that pretended act of Parliament for discouraging marriages, and making it lawful to murder poor innocent bastard children, I supposed it was designed only as a witty piece of banter, without any mischievous intention; and little did I think, notwithstanding the general infatuation, that a single man could be found weak enough to believe it was a real act of Parliament; but to my astonishment, I find there are some, though I hope, for the honor of the country, they are but few, who like gudgeons have swallowed the bait, without perceiving the hook, though it lies so bare; and it seems in vain to attempt undeceiving such, for they can have no understanding of their own to apply to, or at best they have not the free use and exercise of it; so that it is

like talking upon colors to a blind man, or upon sounds, or any other subject, to a deaf man; there can be no absurdity too gross for such simple credulous persons to be taken in with, provided it is convey'd through the *right channel*.

Fill. Why sir, the Boston minister told how it was exactly fitted to answer the wicked corrupt design of the ministry, which was to prevent *poculation*.

Brim. Thou wouldest say *population*, I conclude, friend *Fillpot*.

Trim. * * * * *

Grave. Pho! pshaw! Mr. *Trim*, I wonder at you h—hugh hem, you make me smile, but indeed you are naughty—fie! fie—h—m.

Bump. As I am one of his Majesty's justices of the peace, *Trim* you are a good jolly companion; and the old grave coachman here loves the smack of the whip; come deacon, here's t'ye, ha! ha! ha! h—a! here it goes.

Sharp. The man who forged the act we are speaking of, has been guilty of such an unprecedented insult upon the wisdom and integrity of the King and Parliament, and upon the understandings of Americans; and it now appears to be done with so wicked a design of stirring up the people to open rebellion, that if he could be detected, I can hardly think of a punishment that could be call'd unjust or severe; for what effusion of human blood—what extensive and shocking miseries is that man chargeable with, who by wicked arts involves a country in rebellion! The report, so industriously spread, of a *land tax*, is another malicious falshood of the same kind, calculated and reading to produce the same horrid, mischievous effects. There is not the slightest reason to suppose the King or any member of the House of Lords or House of Commons, have had the least thought of laying any sort of tax on our lands; or of laying upon us or our estates any internal tax of any kind whatever; but it is trump'd up here, to deceive and mislead the ignorant country

people, and betray them into such acts as must end in the loss of life and estate.

Puff. Why do you really believe all this, sir?

Sharp. As firmly as I believe that I must hereafter give an account of all my words and actions, to that all-seeing judge, who knows my heart, and cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked.

Grav. I am dreadfully afraid we have been deceived; but who could have thought mankind could be so wicked.

Brim. Why verily, friend *Graveairs*, had'st thou but made use of thine own understanding, instead of blindly following those filthy sons of Belial, whose very existence depends upon the confusion of their country, thou wouldest not now marvel at what friend *Sharp* has been conveying to thy mind.

Puff. But pray, revd sir, we have some grievances, certainly, why there's the governor's and judges' salaries—and then there's the alteration of our council and juries—pray sir a'nt this taking away our charter?

Sharp. That the new method of appointing the council is an alteration of that part of our charter is true, and that the new regulation respecting jurors is different from that prescribed by our province law is also true, but that these are *grievances*, may well be questioned.—The English constitution has ever been thought by the wisest men of all nations, the best form of government in the whole world—and if so, these two alterations in our constitution are so far from being *grievous*, that they are *benefits*, because they bring us nearer to *perfection*—for our jurors are now to be chosen in the same manner they are in England; and our council being now made independent of the governor and people, and removeable only by the King, as the Governor is, brings them to a much nearer resemblance to the House of Lords; and besides, both council and juries are now upon exactly the same footing as they are in New-Hampshire, New-York and all the southern governments, and in all the West-

India Islands, so that if this makes us *slaves*, all those other governments, as well as England, are, and ever have been, slaves—and the same may be observed of the King's paying his governor and judges, for the case is just the same in all King's governments; and in England likewise, so far as respects the judges—and if we look back to former times, and consider how our council was situated.—

Trim. Like a turnip between two trenchers.

Sharp. Liable annually to be displac'd, either by the *Governor* or the *House*, if they offended either, and how miserably our judges have been paid, and how dependent they also were upon both the Governor and the House, we must see the wisdom of both these alterations; and when we are cool, I doubt not we shall highly approve of, and rejoice in them: And as to juries, the same privilege of being *tried* by our *countrymen*, is left to us—and the method of choosing them is such as long experience has proved to be the best; and not attended with any dangerous consequences.

Puff. Well, don't you think sir, these things were brought about by enemies to the country, among ourselves?

Sharp. No, it is our own imprudent conduct has shown the King and Parliament the necessity of these alterations, and they have done it for our good.

Puff. Why there's the Quebec bill; don't you think they intend to bring in Popery? For the Boston minister said as how they did; and that every man that wouldn't turn Papist, was to lose his land.

Sharp. That Boston minister, as well as some others, I'm sorry to say it, has much to answer for—he knows better—the Quebec bill can no more affect our civil or religious liberties than the laws of Holland can,—what Parliament has done is no more than they were bound to do, by every rule of equity and common justice—The Canadians surrendered their country to his Britannic Majesty upon express condition, among others, that they should enjoy the

free exercise of their religion; and to this end, that they should have a Roman-Catholic bishop, to be approved of by the King of England—this was one article of the capitulation, expressly agreed to by the general to whom they surrendered—this engagement is now confirm'd by Parliament, and this is all—now it is plain, they are entitled to the enjoyment of their religion, according to the full extent and meaning of this agreement, or their country ought to be restored to them—and if the English government intended to comply with their terms of capitulation, ought they not to give them the fullest assurance of it, by confirming them by an act? Surely, if Parliament is to be blamed for any thing, it should seem to be rather, that they have not quieted the minds of the Canadians by giving them this assurance before—for we must remember that their religion is as dear to them as ours is to us, and they have the same right to worship God in the way they think right, that we claim for ourselves—they have prejudices of education to bias them, as we have; and they have their own natural understandings, and their priests to guide them as we have; and they have an equal right with us to the benefit of the gospel rule, “Do to others as ye would they should do unto you.” And we should do well to remember that “with what measure we meet, it shall be measured unto us again.—In short, the only principles upon which Parliament can be arraigned in this instance, are entirely destructive of all liberty of conscience; and in point of common justice, and the faith of nations, they can be found fault with, only upon the malevolent, unjust, diabolical position, which, God forbid Protestants should ever adopt, that no faith is ever to be kept with hereticks. As to the danger arising to our religion from this act, it is a mere bugbear, raised to disturb weak minds; for nothing can be more egregiously absurd than to infer that because the King and Parliament from the plain dictates of justice and humanity have comply'd with their most solemn treaty made by their general, and upon the faith of which an extensive country has been surrendered to them, that therefore the King intends to violate his coronation oath, and break thro' the condition

upon which he holds his crown; and that the Lords and Commons, collected from all parts of England, are joining in this impolitic, iniquitous, foolish design. Let us turn the tables, and make the present case of the Canadians, our own.—Suppose the King of France had conquer'd New England, at the time the King of England conquer'd Canada; and we had capitulated upon condition that we should enjoy our own religion, and choose our own ministers, as we had done from the first settlement of the country to this time; and the French general had agreed to this, as general Amherst did to their terms; and we had remained ever since under the French government; and when the King of France and his Parliament had confirmed this treaty by a law; and the province of Canada should make a clamour, and say the King of France, being governed by his mistresses, intended to introduce the Protestant religion among them: I ask every unprejudiced man whether he would not think and say, the Canadians were the most jealous, unreasonable and unjust people under heaven?—I will venture to answer, yes, for every Englishman upon the continent—and are our clamours less unreasonable than theirs would be under similar circumstances? Certainly with what judgment we should judge them, we ought to be judged—but further, whence arises the mighty danger? The act of Parliament grants no new liberty; it only confirms what they have enjoy'd for eleven or twelve years, since the conquest, and for a century before; and has Popery spread or prevail'd in any degree in the other Colonies during that time—or has our religion suffered from the prevalency of that of the Roman Catholics in *Virginia*, for many years past—surely people must feel but little of the power and influence of their religion, who fear any danger arising to it, from the bare *toleration* of any *other religion* in any *other part* of the globe. In short, it is plain, beyond a possibility of doubt, that this innocent and just act of Parliament is greedily catch'd at, by your deceivers, as a lucky prop to a cause which has no foundation but in delusion; and consequently, is in danger of falling every moment—they have persuaded you that the two grand objects for which men

in society will fight, if they ever fight, are now at stake, viz. *religion* and *property*.

Trim. Aye, *pro aris et focis*—that's now the watch-word, not that I believe they'll *fight* for them, without better proof of their being in *danger*.—Our people *talk* too much to *fight*, your true fighting fellows are always pretty silent—they talk little, and pay it off in thinking.

Bump. I'll forfeit my commission if there's any fighting, 'till there's better cause for it—fighting forsooth! Why what should they fight for? Do they feel any grievance yet? Are any taxes demanded of them? Does any body meddle with their lands? Are the pulpits shut up? Are their Bibles taken from them? Are they restrained of their liberty to go and come, and do as they please? Are their wives ravish'd or their daughters?

Trim. Ha! ha! ha!—Whiz.

Bump. What do they feel? What do they see? What do they hear, but idle tales? Don't they say and do as they please? And isn't this a proof of the mildness of the government? Talk of liberty—why, in the name of wonder, what is liberty if this isn't? They say and do as they will, and get what they can, and keep what they get, and go to church, or stay at home, as they list; they swear and drink, and lie and whore and cheat, and rob, and pull down houses, and tar and feather, and play the devil in every shape, just as the devil and their own inclinations lead them; and yet they cry out for liberty; what the deuce would they have, or what would they be at? Why too much liberty has made them so raving mad, that they can't distinguish liberty from slavery; fighting! I say fighting—a fiddle-stick's end—these are not your fellows for fighting; they'll run upon the first fire, if they wait for that.

Sharp. Indeed, they don't well consider what they talk of, when they talk of fighting the King's troops; they don't sit down first and count the costs; they don't consider that they are entering

the lists with a power which is more than a match for all the other powers of Europe; they don't consider the horrors of a civil war; the terrible attendants even on a successful rebellion; much less, the fatal consequences of an unsuccessful, forceable opposition to their lawful sovereign and his lawful authority. England is a powerful state by sea, superior to all the rest of the world combined; she can block up all our harbors, and prevent all foreign imports, and cut off all communications between the Colonies by sea; by this means we may at once be cut off from all supplies of cloathing, grain, *rum*, sugar, molasses, *salt*, ammunition, fish, and every article of foreign trade, either for our own necessary consumption or for re-exportation; the shipping of the province may all be made lawful prize, and every sea-port town be laid in ruins.—By land, with a very few regiments, she may cut off all intercourse between town and town, and go on to lay waste and utterly destroy our houses, barns, fields, cattle, grain and stock of all kinds, until a body can assemble who shall dare to face them in the field. And here arises to our view innumerable difficulties not yet attended to: Our wives and children must be secured; our estates deserted; provisions, arms, ammunition, camp-equipage and other necessaries of war must be provided; leaders skill'd in the art of war must be found; and if we think we have any such among us, what a vast proportion of them will, before the crisis comes on, declare for the loyal side; and what numbers, must we be sure, will follow them when we reflect, that this is a country of *property* and consider what will be the certain consequences of a defeat: For the punishment of open traitors and rebels is not, and cannot be, governed by any certain rules of law, but is inflicted summarily according to the exigence of the times; and what these consequences must be, it is shocking to humanity to consider: Suppose a battle, and numbers slain and the rest put to flight; what multitudes must be sacrificed in the subsequent pursuit; what numbers taken prisoners, impaled and gibbeted from unavoidable necessity; and what then becomes of their wives and helpless innocent children; and of the aged and infirm; for then it will

be impossible to make those distinctions which humanity would wish for, but one general calamity must involve the innocent, if such there are, with the guilty—but suppose by a lucky accident, a body of the King's forces should be worsted, how long would it be before they would appear again with an irresistible force, and with a resentment that would mark the whole country with desolation and misery; imagine to yourselves, an individual head of a family, mortally wounded in battle, but lingering in the pangs of death—what would be his bitter reflections, and how would he condemn his own rashness and folly in that awful interval; in some such plaintive moans as these, may we well suppose, he would breathe out his life—"What have I done, foolish man that I was—why did I blindly rush upon certain ruin—now that my passions are cooled, and reason, alas! too late, has resumed her seat, all those imaginary grievances disappear—I now die a traitor and rebel by the laws of my country—my estate is forfeited—my affectionate wife and our innocent babes, the sweet pledges of our loves—how have I, who ought to have been their guide and protector—how have I left them friendless, forlorn, destitute of the means of procuring daily bread—to what hardships, dangers and distresses have I abandoned them—O my God, how shall I look up in this hour of torture—take them, O take them under thy protection—for they are innocent of the heavy crime that now weighs down the soul of their unhappy husband and father."

Trim. I wonder what makes my eyes water so—I believe it grows late.

Brim. Verily friend *Trim*, thy humanity is more pleasing than even thy sprightly humour—thou needst not be ashamed of thy weakness in this case—that silent tear, drop'd over the picture of thy distress'd country, does thee an honor which kings might envy, but could not confer.

Sharp. Such are the miseries to which this poor, unhappily deluded people are hastening apace; and all to save those liberties, which their own foolish credulity, and the wicked arts of their de-

signing leaders, have misrepresented to their heated imaginations as being in danger; and which, heaven knows, how soon they may lose in good earnest, if they go on in their mad career; well is it said, that rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, for in both cases the minds of men are entirely actuated by such a spirit as renders them proper *demoniacs*; otherwise it would be morally impossible, that they should throw up lives and fortunes, merely because they fear they are in danger of losing a few of those rights, which no people under heaven either do or wish to enjoy—and without which, I may add, we should have been much happier, had we never fancied ourselves entitled to them.

Puff. But, with submission revd sir, has not the grand Continental Congress, in their wisdom, adopted the Suffolk resolves, and called upon us *to extend our views to the most unhappy events, and be IN ALL RESPECTS prepared for every contingency?* And what is this but preparing for civil war?

Sharp. They have advised to this and many other extraordinary steps; but that they have done it in their *wisdom*, is, I confess, more than I can see.

Trim. We read of a kind of *wisdom* which is *foolishness*; and if the measures of our *august Congress* can be said to be *wise*, I believe it must be in some such *figurative sense*.

Sharp. I never was so painfully deceived in my expectations, in any instance, as I have been in this of the conduct of the Congress; I comforted myself with the most sanguine hopes that they would adopt such prudent measures as might tend to bring about an accommodation of all our unhappy disputes: but instead of this, they have blown up a spark, which was but kindling, into a raging conflagration. Their *resolves* are nothing short of *high treason*; their *association* is an open declaration of *hostilities*, partaking so equally of *wickedness* and *folly*, that it is hard to say which is its prevailing characteristic; it recommends robbery to the whole continent; it is calculated to reduce thousands of families to poverty and ruin;

it tends directly to quarreling, fightings and murders; it is a scheme, in the fixed nature of things, impossible to be executed; it must render us contemptible in the eyes of Britons, a reproach, a laughing-stock and a bye-word, among all civilized nations. Their addresses are a jargon of contradictions and absurdities; *Britons* and *Canadians* must smile with ineffable contempt. at so gross an imposition upon their understandings. In short, every step they have taken has been just the reverse of what it ought to have been, and in my opinion, they have remov'd us infinitely further from peace and happiness than we should have been, had a Congress never been thought on.

Brim. To my understanding, it appears in a clear light that all our public measures in Congresses, town meetings, body-meetings, and delegate-meetings, have tended, instead of mending matters, to make bad worse; they have all partook of one and the same evil spirit; government, without which mankind cannot live in society, has been overturned and trampled on—magistrates insulted, abused and driven from their habitations—the courts of justice violently shut up—individuals persecuted and buffeted and their property destroyed, merely for exercising the right of private judgment—high treason and rebellion stalk through the land at noon day—and civil war is openly talked of, with a blind, enthusiastic zeal, equal to that which in former days crowded friend *Whitefield's* lectures. But if such measures procure a redress of grievances, as the cant phrase is, it must be because the nature of things is changed, and the same causes produce effects contrary to those they have ever before produced.

Bump. Fiddle faddle, 'tis all stuff and nonsense; *redress of grievances* is but the decoy set up to catch the ignorant and unwary. The leaders aim at an independency on Great-Britain, in order to become themselves the tyrants of the Colonies. And, if GOD in judgment for our ingratitude and folly, should give us up to our own heart's desire, we should soon see *high and mighty states*, like

those of Holland, or swarms of *petty princes* like those of Germany, whose little fingers would be thicker than the loins of King, Lords and Commons; who would trample on the liberties and tread on the necks of this infatuated people; would chastize them with scorpions, and their portion would be the curse of Ham, to become the servant of servants; a long scene of war and bloodshed would despoil and depopulate this fertile, happy country; 'till some more fortunate villain would rise superior to his comrades, and become alone the lordly tyrant over this now free people. It is enough to make a wise man mad to see how tamely the common people suffer themselves to be fooled, first out of their senses, and then out of their *liberty, property, and lives*. Let a *mountebank*, who has fled from justice for *blasphemy, treason and rebellion* in another province, set himself up *here* for a *patriot*, forsooth, and they will stand gaping like idiots, and let him take all their teeth out of their heads. Tell them thro' the channel of a seditious news-paper the most improbable tale about grievances, and they believe it more firmly than they will those many parts of Holy Writ which enjoin submission to rulers, as a Christian duty. Let one of their demagogues but hint that some hundreds of persons of the greatest property in the province—who were born here—whose families are here—whose estates are here—whose characters in public and private life they have long known, proved and adored, are all at once become enemies to their country, to their friends, to their neighbors, to their families, to themselves and to God, and they instantly fall upon them with a savage barbarity which the uncivilized, unchristianized Indians never exercised towards the invaders of their peaceful retreats. Tell them the Parliament of Great Britain may be made to tremble at the threats of an American Congress, and they believe it; tell them the veteran troops of that potent kingdom will fly before an undisciplined multitude of New-England squirrel-hunters, and they will swallow it without a hiccough; and each hero in his chimney corner kills his dozen, and crows victorious; tell them all communication is cut off between Boston and the country, and down it goes,

though they go there every day to market and return without molestation; tell them, though our trade and our seaport towns should be all destroyed, it would do us no hurt; that, if they beat their ploughshares into swords, and their crowbars into gun-barrels, and go all to training, nevertheless their lands without tilling will produce sufficient for themselves and all the inhabitants of the sea-port towns, and they believe it most seriously; tell them a duty of a *three pence* upon tea is more a grievance than a duty of a *shilling*, and they believe it; tell them what would be high treason in England is no crime at all in America, and on they go, blindfold, to the open commission of it, with the same devotion that they go to meeting to hear the same comfortable doctrine preached:—In short there is no absurdity too great for their swallows, or too hard for their stomachs, if it does but come from the right books, and through the proper channel. And as they believe, so they practice. How silly has been their behavior all over the province; two thousand assembled at Great-Barrington—as many more at Springfield; three thousand at Worcester, and four thousand at Cambridge; besides other formidable bodies Eastward and Southward; all with halters about their necks; and for what? Why truly, to prevent four unarmed judges from holding a provincial, constitutional, charter court of justice; and to compel one, two, or at most three counsellors, appointed by the King, to resign their seats at the board, which seats they either had never accepted, or if they had, their resignations were void and of no effect. Other bodies of wiseacres have assembled, in warlike array, for the heroic purpose of compelling an aged, infirm, justice, who had sign'd an address; to *recant*; that is, to set his name to an infamous lie fabricated, in general, if they have been truly retailed in the news-papers, by heroes in their *cups*, incapable of spelling or reasoning. And in those instances where the devoted victims have either secreted themselves, or had resolution enough to appear and refuse, like Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego, to fall down and worship the *brazen* image, some have been deny'd the common rights of humanity; such as having corn ground for the

daily bread of themselves and families; others the common privileges and conveniences of society, such as employing laborers for hire, to reap, mow, thresh, &c. nay the very dumb beasts of some have been deny'd the common rights of nature; an instance of this kind happened in the country of Middlesex, where an unfortunate addresser having a cow, sent her over to his neighbor, a deacon, who was the owner of a bull, and to whom he had, for some years, sent all his cows in the like exigencies; but the pious deacon, animated with a holy zeal against Lord *North* and Gov. *Hutchinson*, warmed with the steams of *modern patriotism*, and free from the infirmity of *universal benevolence*, swore *his* bull should not bull a *tory* cow.

Trim. I fancy the deacon was well stricken in years.

Bump. In all parts of the province, we have seen instances of this egregious folly of the mob, in compelling addressers to Gov. *Hutchinson*, and to his present Excellency Gen. *Gage*, to recant; just as if such forced recantations could persuade the world that such addressers did *not* address! The actors in these-tragi-comi farcical scenes have no meaning at all; in them it is all the effect of rum and flip. Their abettors mean to make administration believe that we are all of one mind; but their folly is glaring; a band of highway robbers might as well make the world believe that they and the persons robb'd are all of a mind, by obliging them, when in their power, to sign a confession that they consented to the robbery. People have been gulled, imposed on, and misled long enough; it is high time for them to look about them; the night is far spent, the day is at hand—the day of reckoning—the day when the friends and foes, the liege subjects and the rebels and traitors, to George the third, must be distinguished. And however speciously the leaders may flatter their blind followers with hopes of success in their opposition, by publishing *extracts of letters from England*, they may assure themselves there is not the least reason to suppose that Parliament will not support their authority, even to the ruin of the present generation, in this and all the other Colonies, if it can't be established

at a less expence. And it is as certain that *submission* is required only to save the *honor* of government; they never intend to tax us; they don't wish to enslave us; they abhor the thought; they want us to be happy and free; but no, we forsooth, must quarrel for a *shadow*, under a moral certainty of losing the *substance* in the contest. The people are told by their oracles that if they give way now, their chains are riveted, and such kind of trumpery; but if they would but open their eyes, they might see that this is mere delusion; let them try the experiment of submitting; and if all their grievances are not redress'd, they may as well take up the cudgels, one or two or ten years hence, as now. They will have hands and guns *then* as well as *now*; and the deuce is in it, if they don't think their wives, their children, their estates and their necks, worth *trying* to save. Some tell them they have been *guilty of treason already*, they have *put their hands to the plough*, and it's too late to look back. This is the language of vile seducers; but it is never too late in this world to repent; and the sooner the better; they have a gracious King to deal with and a Parliament of Britons, who know the value of civil and religious liberty, and can make all due allowances for the sudden extravagancies of Englishmen, when first impressed with the fear of losing it; but it must be remembered that the obstinate perseverance of incorrigible offenders will put a period to the long suffering even of the Deity. I think I can perceive, that the eyes of many begin to open; I heartily wish they may attain a full view of their danger, before the door of mercy is shut. But I ask pardon, revd sir, for breaking in upon your discourse, and interrupting it so long; the distresses coming upon my country, through the wicked machinations of mock patriots lie uppermost in my mind; and when I enter upon the subject, I know not where to stop. But I have done.—

Sharp. Indeed Squire, there needs no apology; you have deliver'd my sentiments in much better terms than I can pretend to. The subject as you observe, is of the greatest moment; and happy will it be, if you, by your conversation, and I by my preaching, can

awaken our neighbors and friends to serious consideration, before it be too late.

Trim. Well, I'm determin'd to drop my shop preachments, or else, for the future, to take the right side of the question, and discharge my conscience, whatever becomes of my custom.

Grave. I verily fear we are all wrong, and the sooner we turn about, the better for the country.

Puff. I profess, I'm of the same mind; I begin to see things in a different light from what I did. Indeed I never liked the high proceedings of the provincial Congress; this affair of seizing the King's monies, and taking the militia out of the hands of the governor, I could never see through; it is against the King's prerogative, and sounds too much like treason; and I'm resolved not to go to the next, if I am chosen.

Fill. I desire to be thankful I've had nothing to do with these matters, and don't intend to; I'll mind my own business and that's enough for me.

Trim. Bravo, neighbor *Fillpot*—stick to that, and you'll do well enough—I'll be sworn your business will never fail, 'till all the ports upon the continent are blocked up. And as to you, neighbor *Puff*, you have made the wisest speech and the best resolution you ever made in your life; stand by it, and you may save your bacon yet. I hope my past offences will be forgiven, in consideration of the strength of the temptation; and I'll give them leave to tuck me up, without ceremony, if ever I preach up treason and rebellion again, so long as my name's *Trim*.

Brim. Ah! Friend *Trim*, if all that have preached treason and rebellion were to be tuck'd up, as thou phrasest it, the harvest truly would be plenteous, and the laborers few.

Trim. Hemp would bear a good price, I believe.

Brim. Treason is an odious crime in the sight of God and men; may we none of us listen to the suggestions of Satan, but may the

candle of the Lord within lighten our paths; and may the spirit lead us in the way of truth, and preserve us from all sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion. But it grows late, and the spirit moveth me to be getting home. Friend *Sharp*, fare thee well. Come friends.

Sharp. Gentlemen, I wish you all a very good night.—
Exeunt omnes.

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