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The works of John
Witherspoon

THE
WORKS
OF
JOHN WITHERSPOON, D. D.

SOMETIME MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT PAISLEY, AND LATE
PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON COLLEGE, IN NEW JERSEY.

CONTAINING
ESSAYS, SERMONS, &c.

ON
IMPORTANT SUBJECTS;

INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE AND ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINE OF
SALVATION BY GRACE, AND TO POINT OUT ITS
INFLUENCE ON HOLINESS OF LIFE.

TOGETHER WITH HIS
**LECTURES ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY,
ELOQUENCE AND DIVINITY;**
HIS SPEECHES IN THE AMERICAN CONGRESS;
AND MANY OTHER VALUABLE PIECES, NEVER BEFORE
PUBLISHED IN THIS COUNTRY.

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AN
E S S A Y
ON
M O N E Y,
AS A MEDIUM OF COMMERCE;
WITH
REMARKS ON THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PAPER
ADMITTED INTO GENERAL CIRCULATION.

FROM every channel of public intelligence we learn, that there is a disposition in many of the legislatures of this country, to emit bills of credit by authority of government, and to make them in some measure at least, or in some cases, a legal tender for debts already contracted. This is a matter of great delicacy and danger. It has occasioned a controversial discussion of the subject in pamphlets and periodical publications. A few plausible things, and but a few that deserve that character, have been published in defence of the measure. Many shrewd and sensible things have been offered against it: but even these last have not been so connected and satisfying, as they might and ought to have been. Some of the pieces have been verbose and declamatory, with many repeti-

tions; others have been full of antitheses, quaint sayings, and witticisms, which have no great tendency to convince or persuade; and some have been mingled with the local and party politics of particular states. Perhaps these different ways of writing may be very proper for several classes of readers, and have a good effect: but there are certainly others who would require a different treatment, because their mistakes are owing not to deceitful intentions, but to erroneous judgment. This has given me a strong desire to try what can be done upon the subject by dispassionate reasoning. By this I mean, endeavouring to carry the matter back to its first principles, to explain them in so simple a manner, as that the unlearned may understand them; and then to deduce the practical consequences with the general theory full in view.

It is impossible to reach my purpose, without saying many things which in a separate and detached manner have been said by others; but this must be forgiven me; because I mean to lay the whole system before the reader, and every part in its proper order and connection. Let us then begin by considering what gave rise to money, and what is its nature and use? If there were but one man upon the earth, he would be obliged to prepare a hut for his habitation, to dig roots for his sustenance, to provide skins or fig-leaves for his covering, &c.; in short, to do every thing for himself. If but one or two more were joined with him, it would soon be found that one of them would be more skilful in one sort of work, and another in a

different; so that common interest would direct them, each to apply his industry to what he could do best and soonest; to communicate the surplus of what he needed himself of that sort of work to the others, and receive of their surplus in return. This directly points out to us, that a barter of commodities, or communication of the fruits of industry, is the first principle, or rather indeed constitutes the essence of commerce. As society increases, the partition of employments is greatly diversified; but still the fruits of well directed industry, or the things necessary and useful in life, are what only can be called wealth.

In establishing a mutual exchange of these, the first thing necessary is a standard of computation, or common measure, by which to estimate the several commodities that may be offered to sale, or may be desired by purchasers. Without this it is easy to see that the barter of commodities is liable to very great difficulties, and very great errors. This standard or common measure must be something that is well known to both parties, and of general or common use. As the first essays in any things are generally rude and imperfect; so I think it appears from the monuments of remote antiquity, that in the early stages of society, cattle were the first things made use of as a standard*. But it

* Servius Tullius, one of the Roman kings, is said to have stamped some pieces with the figure of cattle; an ox, or a sheep. This was as much as to say, this piece is of the value of an ox or a sheep. Hence it is said, the Roman word *pecunia*, comes from *pecus*, cattle. Others

would soon appear that this was a most inaccurate measure; because one ox might be as good as two, from size, fatness, or other circumstances. Therefore in place of this succeeded measures both of dry and liquid, that is, corn, wine, and oil. The first of these was of all others the most proper standard, because universally necessary, and liable to little variation. Men, upon an average, would probably eat nearly the same quantity in the most distant ages and countries. It seems to me, that this circumstance of a standard of computation being necessary in commerce, and the first thing necessary, has been in a great measure overlooked by most writers on money, or rather it has been confounded with the standard value of the sign, although essentially different from it; and the equivocal use of the terms has occasioned great confusion. I must however observe, not only that this must necessarily be taken in, but that if we confine ourselves to a standard of computation only, some known commodity, as measured grain, is better, and more intelligible and unalterable than any money whatever, that either has been or will be made. The great alteration in the value of gold and silver is known to every person who has but dipped into history; and indeed is known to many, even by memory, in this country, since its first settlement*.

have thought it was from the use of leather for money, *quasi pecudum corio*. But the first etymology seems to be the best. See a subsequent note.

* There are two estates near one of the colleges in Scotland, which were originally taxed an equal number of

But after a standard of computation had been agreed upon, in commerce, even of the most moderate extent, something farther would be absolutely necessary. The actual and immediate barter of commodities could in a few instances take place. A man might have the thing that I wanted to purchase, but he might not need or desire what I was willing to give for it. Another might want what I had to spare, but not have what I wanted to purchase with it. Besides, bulky or perishable commodities could not be carried about at an uncertainty, or with safety. Therefore, it became very early necessary, that there should be some sign or signs agreed upon, which should represent the absent commodities, or rather should represent the standard of computation, in all its divisions and multiplications. These signs must be such as could easily be carried about, and therefore could be readily applied to every kind of transactions, which were connected with the commutation of property.

bolls of grain (a boll is about $\frac{5}{8}$ bushels) to that institution. In very remote times, it pleased the proprietor of one of these estates, with consent of the college, to convert the payment into money, according to the then current value, which was a groat, or four pence sterling for a boll. At this present time, the one of these farms pays the same number of bolls, that the other does of groats; which is about thirty-two for one. There is also said to be existing an old lease of a burrow acre near a town in Scotland, for which the tenant was to pay a boll of wheat, and a boll of barley, or if he did not bring the grain between Christmas and Candlemass, the proprietor was not obliged to accept of it, but he must pay a sum which is now $10\text{-}12\text{ths}$ of a penny sterling for the boll of wheat, and $3\text{-}12\text{ths}$ for the boll of barley.

Let us examine the nature and meaning of these signs more particularly. They are of the nature of a tally, that is to say, they are intended to mark and ascertain a fact. Now the fact is, that the person who can shew those signs, having purchased them by his goods or industry, is entitled to receive from somebody, a certain value, or to a certain amount, which they specify, of the standard of computation. They have always a reference to the standard of computation, and at last, by that known reference, the distinction between them and the standard of computation is lost, and they become a secondary standard of computation themselves. Thus a piece is intended at first to be of the value of a measure of grain; but at last men come to make their bargain by the number of pieces instead of the number of measures; using the sign for the thing signified. Thus also, sometimes at least, an ideal measure, generated by the other two, comes to be the standard of computation; as in England, the pound sterling is the money unit, though there be no coin precisely corresponding to it. This is sufficient to explain the relation of the sign to the standard of computation, and at last, if I may speak so, its consolidation with it.

I have said above, that the person possessing the sign is entitled to receive a certain value from *somebody*. The reason of this is, because his debtor is not the same in every state of things. If we consider the sign as given from one individual to another, it is of the nature of a promissory note, and is a confession of having received so much property. Probably there were often such signs or tokens

given in the infancy of society; and it would then signify, that if the feller were to come again, at a distance of time, and find the buyer in possession of such goods as he wanted, he would be entitled to receive the amount of the sign or token that had been given him. But the convenience of using signs is so great, that it would immediately occasion their being made use of by general consent, express or implied; and, at last, the matter would be taken under the direction of the ruling part of the community. In both cases, but especially in this last, the society becomes bound to the person who receives the signs for his goods or industry, that they shall be to him of the value that they specify. I will afterwards shew, that this was not the first but the last step taken in the use of signs, and give the reasons for it; but it is proper to mention it now, when we are considering the nature and use of signs in that single view.

Let it be observed here that as it was before said, if we aim at no more than a standard of computation, some commodities are not only as good, but better than any money, so if we confine ourselves to a sign only separate from a standard, many things that might be named are not only as good, but far better than either the standard itself, or what we call money, because they are much more easily reckoned, transported, and concealed. This appears particularly from the state of signs in modern times, after so much experience and improvement has taken place. For if we can guard sufficiently against the dangers to which they are exposed, signs inconceivably facilitate commerce. We can put any value

we please in an obligation written on a few inches of paper, and can send it over the world itself at very little expence, and conceal it so easily that there shall be no danger of its being taken from us.

But it must have appeared, and did speedily appear, that all mere signs labour under an essential defect. They depend ultimately on the faith or credit of the persons using or answerable for them. Now, whether these be individuals or the multitude by general custom and implied consent, or even the ruling part of the society, there is very great uncertainty. Therefore something farther is necessary to make a complete symbol or medium of general commerce, and that is, *a pledge* or standard of value that may be a security or equivalent for the thing given for it, and at all times be sufficient to purchase a like value of any thing that may be needed by him that holds it. An absent commodity well known, or even in idea well understood, may be a standard of computation and common measure; any thing almost whatever may be a sign, though, since the art of writing has been known, paper is the best, but both are essentially defective; there is wanting a value in the sign, that shall give not only a promise or obligation, but actual possession of property for property.

The mentioning of these three distinct ends to be served by the medium of commerce, and illustrating them separately, was not to convey the idea that there were three steps of this kind taken at a distance of time from each other, or that men first continued long to deal in gross barter; and after that invented signs, and were content with them

for another period ; and at last, perfected the plan, by getting signs possessed of real value. On the contrary, it was to shew that any thing used as a medium of universal or general commerce, must be able to serve all the three fore-mentioned purposes ; and that if there is any production of nature, or fabrication of art, that can unite the whole, at least as far as they are capable of being united, this must be the great *desideratum*. Now it has been found in experience, that the precious metals, especially those now called by that name, gold and silver, do answer all the three ends in a great degree. It cannot be denied that they have been used for this purpose, in fact, from the earliest times, and through every nation in the old world, and indeed also in the new, with such exception only as will confirm the principles of the theory. If any man thinks that this has happened by accident, or through the whim or caprice of mankind, as one would suspect from the language sometimes used in speech and writing, he is greatly mistaken. No effect of whim or accident ever was so uniform or so lasting. The truth is, that these metals do possess in a great degree superior to every thing else, the qualities necessary for the purposes mentioned above.

This will appear to any impartial person who will consider, with a view to the preceding principles, what qualities a medium of general commerce ought to possess. It ought then, to be 1. valuable ; 2. rare ; 3. portable ; 4. divisible ; 5. durable. Whoever will examine the matter with attention, must perceive that any one of these qualities being wholly or greatly wanting, the sys-

tem would be either entirely ruined or remarkably injured. Let us examine them separately.

1. It must be *valuable*; that is to say, it must have an intrinsic worth in itself, in substance distinct from the form. By value or intrinsic worth here, must be understood precisely the same thing that gives to every other commodity its commercial value. Do you ask what that is? I answer, its being either necessary or remarkably useful for the purposes of life in a social state, or at least supposed to be so: and therefore the object of human desire. Without this it could be no more than a bare sign; nor indeed so useful in this view as many other signs. But we want something that must not be only a standard of computation, but a standard of value; and therefore capable of being a pledge and security to the holder, for the property that he has exchanged for it. It is likely some will say, What is the intrinsic value of gold and silver? They are not wealth; they are but the sign or representative of commodities. Superficial philosophers, and even some men of good understanding not attending to the nature of currency, have really said so. What is gold, say some, the value is all in the fancy; you can neither eat nor wear it; it will neither feed, clothe, nor warm you. Gold, say others, as to intrinsic value, is not so good as iron, which can be applied to many more useful purposes. These persons have not attended to the nature of commercial value, which is in a compound *ratio* of its use and scarceness. If iron were as rare as gold, it would probably be as valuable, perhaps more so. How many instances are there of things, which, though

a certain proportion of them is not only valuable, but indispensably necessary to life itself, yet which from their abundance have no commercial value at all. Take for examples, air and water. People do not bring these to market, because they are in superabundant plenty. But let any circumstances take place that render them rare, and difficult to be obtained, and their value immediately rises above all computation. What would one of those who were stifled in the black hole at Calcutta, have given to get but near a window for a little air? And what will the crew of a ship at sea, whose water is nearly expended, give for a fresh supply?

Gold and silver have intrinsic value as metals, because from their ductility, durability, and other qualities, they are exceedingly fit for domestic utensils, and many purposes in life. This circumstance was the foundation of their use as a medium of commerce, and was inseparable from it. No clearer proof of this can be adduced, than that in the earliest times, even when used in commerce, they were weighed before they were divided into smaller pieces, and passed in tale. They must surely then have had intrinsic value; for their value was in proportion to their bulk or quantity. This circumstance as a sign made them worse, but as a valuable metal made them better. The same thing appears as clearly from the practice of modern times. Even when they are taken into the management of the rulers of society, and stamped under various denominations, there must be an exact regard had to their commercial value. The stamp upon them is the *sign*, the intrinsic worth of the metal is

the *value*. It is now found, and admitted by every nation, that they must give to every piece that denomination and value in legal currency, that it bears in bullion; and if any do otherwise, there is neither authority nor force sufficient to make it pass*.

The author referred to in the note has given us quotations from three persons of name in the literary world in support of a contrary opinion. The first is Dr. Franklin, whom he makes to say, "Gold and silver are not intrinsically of equal value with iron; a metal of itself capable of many more beneficial uses to mankind. Their value rests chiefly on the estimation they *happen* to be in among the generality of nations, and the credit given to the opinion that that estimation will continue; otherwise a pound of gold would not be a real equivalent for a bushel of wheat." The second is Anderson on National Industry, who says, "Money considered in itself, is of no value; but in many civilized nations, who have found how convenient it is for

* An author on this subject in a pamphlet lately published, says, "The value of the precious metals is however enhanced by their peculiar aptitude to perform the office of an universal money beyond any real inherent value they possess. This extrinsic value of gold and silver, which belongs to them under the modification of coin or bullion, is totally distinct from their inherent value as a commodity." I do not very well comprehend what this gentleman means by the intrinsic value of gold and silver. Perhaps it is the stamp or nominal value affixed to them by the state; but whatever it is, I will venture to assure him, that their value as coin is so far from being totally distinct from, that it must be precisely the same with, their value as a commodity.

facilitating the barter or exchange of one commodity for another, it has received an artificial value; so that although useless in itself, it has come to be accepted among all civilized nations, as a token proving that the person who is possessed of it, had given something of real value in exchange for it, and is on that account accepted of by another in exchange for something that is of real utility and intrinsic worth." The third is Sir James Stuart, who says, "By money, I understand any commodity which purely in itself is of no material use to man, but which acquires such an estimation from his opinion of it, as to become the universal measure of what is called value, and an adequate equivalent for any thing alienable." The name of any man, how great soever, will not have much weight with me, when I perceive that in any instance he has mistaken his subject. This I believe, has been the case with all the gentlemen just mentioned. There is a considerable confusion in the ideas expressed by the last two; but the thing in which they all agree, and for which they are adduced by this author, is, that they seem to deny the intrinsic value of gold and silver, and to impute the estimation in which they are held, to accidental opinion. Now I must beg leave to observe, as to the comparison of the intrinsic worth of gold and iron, if it were possible to determine whether, on supposition of iron and gold being in equal quantity, the one or the other would be the most valuable, it would not be worth a single straw in the present question; for if iron were the most valuable, it would in that case be the money, and the gold would be but in the next

degree. Accidental opinion has nothing to do with it. It arises from the nature of things. As to a pound of gold not being, as to intrinsic value, equivalent to a bushel of wheat, it might with equal truth be affirmed, that to a man perishing with hunger, a mountain of gold would not be equivalent to half a pound of bread. But is this any argument against the intrinsic commercial value of gold, as it has taken place since the beginning of the world.

As to the other two authors, they seem to say, that money is in itself of no value, and of no material use to man. If by *money* they mean gold and silver, the proposition is directly false; because they are both of material use for the purpose of social life. But what has led them into this error has been their abstracting the idea, and taking money in the single light of a sign, without considering it as a standard. Then no doubt, even gold, while it continues in this form, is of no other use than as a sign of property. But how little is this to the purpose? For it is equally true of every other commodity. A nail, while it continues a nail, is of no other use but joining boards together, or some similar purpose, and can neither be lock nor key; but a quantity of nails, or the iron which they contain, can be easily converted into either the one or the other. So a guinea, while it continues a guinea, is of no use whatever, but as an instrument of commerce; but the gold of which a guinea consists, can easily be converted into a ring, or any thing which its quantity will reach. This is what is called, with perfect propriety, its *intrinsic value*.

2. That which is the medium of commerce must be *rare*. It will not be necessary to say much upon this, because it has already received some illustration from what has gone before. It may however be observed, that the medium of commerce must not only be so rare, as to bring it within commercial value in ordinary cases, but it must be much more rare, than most other things, that its value may be increased, and a small quantity of it may represent goods of considerable variety and bulk. If gold and silver were only twenty times as plentiful as they are at present, they would still have a proper value, could be bought and sold, and applied to many useful purposes, but they would be quite unfit for general circulation.

3. The circulating medium must be *portable*. It must be capable of being carried to a distance with little trouble or expence, and of passing from hand to hand with ease and expedition. This is one of the reasons why it must be rare; but it deserves mention also by itself, because it is possible to conceive of things that may be both valuable and rare, and yet incapable of being carried about, and passing from one to another. Some precious drugs, and some curiosities, may be so rare as to have a high value, and yet may be quite improper for circulation.

4. The medium of commerce must be *divisible*. It ought to be capable of division into very small quantities. This is necessary in order to answer the division of many commodities, and the convenience of persons of different ranks. It is of such importance, that in the calculations of a complex

and diversified commerce, we find divisions and fractional parts even of the smallest coins or denominations of money, that have ever yet been brought into use.

5. Lastly. The medium of commerce ought to be *durable*. It ought to have this quality on two accounts; first, that in perpetually passing from hand to hand, it may not be broken or wasted; and, secondly that if it is preserved or laid up, as may be sometimes necessary, and often agreeable or profitable, it may not be liable to be speedily corrupted or consumed.

All these particulars are not of equal moment, and they have an intimate relation one to another; yet each of them is singly and separately of importance, perhaps more than will be at first view apprehended. I think it is also plain that there is nothing yet known to mankind, in which they are all so fully united, as they are in gold and silver; which is the true reason why these metals have been applied as the instrument of commerce, since the beginning of the world, or as far back as history enables us to penetrate*.

* It has been suggested to me by a friend, that gold and silver possess another quality different from all the above, which, in an eminent degree, fits them for circulation as a medium, *viz.* that they are *equable*. The meaning of this expression is, that the metal of each of these species, when pure, is of the same fineness and worth, and perfectly similar, from whatever different mines, or from whatever distant parts it may have been procured; which, it is said, is not the case with any other metal. It is affirmed, that the copper or lead that comes from one mine, will be preferable to that which comes from another, even

It will probably throw some light upon the above theory, if we take a brief view of the matter, as it has taken place in fact from the beginning of the world. This may be done now to the greater advantage, that the effects of particular causes, and the events that will take place in society in particular circumstances, have been so fully ascertained by the experience of ages, and the progress of science, that we are able to make a better use of the few remains of ancient history, than could have been done by those who lived nearer to the events which are recorded. It appears then, that the discovery and use of metals was one of the earliest attainments of mankind. This might naturally be expected if they were within reach at all, because of their very great utility in all works of industry, and indeed for all the purposes of convenience and luxury. Therefore, I suppose this fact will not be doubted: but it is a truth neither so obvious nor so much known, that gold, silver, and brass, or rather copper, were the most ancient metals, and all of them antecedent to iron *. These metals being applied

after this last has been refined to as high a degree as is possible; but that all gold and silver completely refined are perfectly alike, whether they come from Asia, Africa, or America. I do not pretend to a certain knowledge of this; but if it be true, it is well worthy of being mentioned in this disquisition.

* See upon this subject President Goguet's Rise and Progress of Laws, Arts and Sciences. He has not only sufficiently proved the fact, but also assigned the most probable reason for it, that these metals were found in many places of the earth almost pure, so as to need very little art in refining; whereas extracting iron from the ore is

to all the purposes of life, came of course to constitute a great part of the wealth of the people of ancient times. I have mentioned brass, because it was one of the metals earliest known, and upon the very principles above laid down, was in the beginning made use of for money by many ancient nations. Its being now in a great measure left out is an illustration and proof of what has been already said. It is left out for no other reason than its having lost one of the necessary qualities, *viz. rarity*. That it was made use of for money amongst the Hebrews appears from many circumstances. We read of gold, silver, and brass, brought as contributions to the tabernacle service in the time of Moses, and to the building of the temple in David's. That brass was made use of as money in the early times of the Greeks and Romans, appears both from the assertions of historians, and from the very languages of both nations, for there it is made use of to signify money in general *. That it ceased to serve that

neither so easy nor so obvious. We learn from Homer, that in the wars of Troy, the weapons of war, offensive and defensive, were of copper; and some historians tell us that they had a method of tempering or hardening it so as to make it tolerably fit for the purpose, though certainly not equal to iron or steel.

* In the Roman language, *as* signifies not only brass, but money in general, and from it many other words are derived; as, *ararium*, the treasury; *as alienum*, debt; *are mutare*, to buy or sell money, &c. So in the Greek tongue, *chalkos* signifies brass, *achalkos* and *achalkein*, to be without money, or poor. When the other metals came to be in use as money, the words received the same

purpose afterwards cannot be accounted for in any other way than as above, especially as the neglect of it has been just as universal as the use of it was formerly.

We are also fully supported by history in affirming, that all these metals were at first estimated and passed in commerce by weight. We see that Abraham gave to Ephron for the cave of Machpelah, four hundred shekels of silver *. The Greek money was of different weights from the lower sorts to the talent, which was the largest. The old Roman word *Pondo* was, as it were, the standard, and the divisions of it constituted their different denominations. From this we seem to have derived the English word pound. Very soon, however, they came to have either coins, or at least small pieces reckoned by number. Abimelech gave to Abraham, as Sarah's brother, one thousand *kesepb*; and Joseph was sold for twenty *kesepb*, and he gave to his brother Benjamin three hundred *kesepb*. As the word *kesepb* signifies silver, they must have been reckoned by tale, and are probably very justly

meaning in the language, as, *Argenti sitis—auri sacra fames*, the desire of money. Things proceeded in a way perfectly similar in the three ancient nations of whom we have the distinctest accounts, the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans. *Nahus kesepb zahaw*, in Hebrew; *chalkos arguros* and *chrusos* in Greek; and *as argentum* and *aurum*, in Latin, are all used for money in general.

* See Gen. xxiii. 16. And Abraham weighed to Ephron, the money that he had said, in the presence of the sons of Heth, 400 shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

translated pieces. Agreeably to all this, the time when the Romans began to coin brass, and some hundred years afterwards, silver and gold is distinctly mentioned by the historians*.

It may be proper to observe here, that several antiquaries have mentioned that some barbarous nations made use of baser metals, such as lead, tin, iron, and even leather, shells, and bark of trees for money. This is no way contrary to the above theory, for some nations might indeed use lead, iron, and tin, as things of value, upon the same principles as others used gold, silver, and brass. I think it is said, and indeed it is more than probable, that the nails given by our voyagers to the inhabitants of the South-sea islands, passed from hand to hand as instruments of commerce. As to leather, shells, &c. I suspect some part of this is fabulous; but if it did take place in any measure, it has been a rude essay, using the sign separately from the standard, and could not be of any great extent or long duration. We know indeed of one nation, after society had been far advanced, that made use of iron, even when very plentiful, for money, *viz.* the Lacedæmonians. But this was not at all from rudeness or

* We have the express testimony of Pliny upon this subject, lib. 33. cap. 3. "Servius rex primus signavit æs. Antea rudi usus Romæ Timaus tradit. Signatum est nota pecudum unde et pecunia appellanta.—Servius first coined brass. Timaus says, they used it formerly rough or uncoined at Rome. It was marked with the figure of cattle, whence also it was called *pecunia*." The same author tells us, that silver began to be coined at Rome in the 485th year of the city, and gold 72 years after.

ignorance ; it was one of Lycurgus's extraordinary institutions, who intended by it (and did not conceal his intention) to banish riches, or real and proper money, from the state. He indeed banished industry at the same time, for none of his citizens were allowed even to be husbandmen, or to cultivate their lands. This was left to the slaves. I do not find, therefore, that there is any thing in history deserving credit, that militates against the theory above laid down.

Having thus laid down the theory of money, and supported it by history and experience, I proceed to draw a few inferences from it, and apply them to some opinions which have taken place, and some measures which have been adopted or proposed with respect to currency and commerce in this country. In the *first* place, the above theory will enable every intelligent person to fix in his mind precisely what is or ought to be the meaning of a *circulating medium*. This phrase is in every body's mouth, and we meet with it continually in the essays published in the newspapers, and the speeches of senators in public assemblies. We may say of this as controversial divines used to say long ago, that a misconception of this is the *proton pseudos*, the radical error. Not long since a writer in one of the papers said it was agreed on all hands that there is at present a scarcity of a circulating medium. To this I answer, that it is not agreed upon on any hand, but among those who are wholly ignorant of the meaning of the expression. The circulating medium is not yours nor mine ; it is not the riches of Holland, nor the poverty of Sweden. It is that in-

definite quantity of the precious metals that is made use of among the nations connected in commerce. Whether any particular person, city, or nation, is rich or poor, has more or less comparatively of it, is nothing to the purpose. Every one will receive of the circulating medium that quantity which he is entitled to by his property or industry. It has been shewn that rarity is one of the qualities of a circulating medium. If it were more rare than it is, a less quantity would be sufficient to represent a stated measure of property. If it were more plentiful than it is, a greater quantity would be necessary; but the comparative riches or poverty of nations or persons would be altogether the same.

Is any body ignorant that half a century ago in this country, a man might have bought a bushel of wheat for one quarter of a dollar, for which now he must pay a whole dollar. Was not the quarter dollar then as good a circulating medium as the whole dollar is now? And was not the man just as rich who had it in his pocket? Undoubtedly. Nay, I must further say, it was a better circulating medium, because it was of less size and weight. Has not the quantity of the precious metals increased greatly since the discovery of the mines of South America? Is not the quantity now necessary for any considerable purchase so great as to be burdensome in the transportation? The price of a good horse in silver would at present be a great incumbrance on a long journey. How easy were it to point out places and countries in which there is a greater quantity of the circulating medium than any where else, and yet at the same time greater na-

tional and personal poverty, and probably for this very reason. What would it signify to a labourer in the mines of Peru, if he should get half a johannes, or even two, for a day's work, if at the same time he could hardly purchase with both as much provision as to keep body and soul together? Are not these things true? Are they not known to be so? What then must we say of the extreme ignorance and inattention, to say no worse, of those persons who are continually telling us that there is a want of circulating medium? Are not gold and silver a circulating medium, whose currency is universal? Are these then too scarce for that purpose, when there is hardly a negro slave, male or female without silver buckles in their shoes, and many of them with rings and other ornaments of gold, which five hundred years ago would have denoted a prince or princess? Perhaps I have insisted longer on this than was necessary, but I have been induced to it by the frequent complaints upon this subject, and the absurd application of the phrase, a circulating medium. More reflections will occur, connected with this subject, in the subsequent parts of my discourse. In the mean time I will close, by saying to my reader, you and I may be poor men, the state in which we live may be a poor state, we may want property, rents, resources, and credit, but a circulating medium we want not.

2. From the principles above laid down it will appear, that money having as one of its essential qualities, an intrinsic, that is to say, a commercial value, it must be not only a sign and standard, or a medium of commerce, but also itself a commodity

or a subject of commerce. There are many transactions respecting money in a trading nation; in which it is considered singly in this view. These it is unnecessary for me to enumerate, but even where it is applied directly or principally as a medium of alienation, its value as a standard doth and must always follow and accommodate itself to its value as a commodity. Hence it follows necessarily that money must be subject to every rule that other commodities are subject to in buying and selling. One of the chief of these is, that it must rise and fall in price according to the quantity that is brought to market, compared with the demand there is for it. This is an unavoidable consequence, and as necessary in the case of money as in that of any commodity whatever. If a greater quantity of money than before is brought into any country, even though brought by the fairest and most honourable means, *viz.* increasing industry and profitable trade, it will have the effect of raising the price of other commodities in general, and of industry, which is the source of all commodities. But we must observe, that men are apt to view this in a wrong light. One commodity may rise or fall by its own plenty or scarceness; but when there is a great and general rise of prices, of all commodities, it would be at least as proper, or rather much more so, to say, that money had fallen, than that goods had risen.

We had so large experience of this during the war, by the excessive emissions of paper money, that it needs hardly any illustration. It is true, some persons did then, and do now suppose, that

the depreciation of the money was owing as much to the disaffection of some inhabitants, and the counterfeiting, and other artful endeavours of our enemies to destroy it, as to the increased quantity. But in this they were quite mistaken. Jealousy or suspicion of the money would have had very different effects from a gradual and continual rise of prices. If I meet with a suspicious piece of money, I do not raise the price of my goods, but refuse to sell them. This was indeed the case with all those who doubted the money of Congress in time of the war. Besides it is plain, that the American cause was most doubtful, and its enemies most numerous in the years 1776 and 1777, and yet the currency of the money was then very general, and its depreciation slow; whereas in the three following years, when in consequence of the French treaty and other European alliances, and confidence of the public in the cause was increased, the depreciation was accelerated in an amazing degree. I must also here make a remark upon another opinion often expressed during the war, that the depreciation must have been owing to other causes than the quantity, because it was greater than what they called the natural depreciation, in consequence of the quantity. By this they meant, that it was not regular; but when the quantity had arisen, suppose to five for one, the depreciation was as fifteen or twenty for one. These persons did not understand the depreciation of a commodity in consequence of its quantity, for it is not regular and equable, as in arithmetical progression, but rapid and increasing, so as soon to get beyond all computation. If there

is in any country but one tenth part more of any commodity than there is any demand for, the price will probably fall more than one half; and if there is double or treble the quantity needed, it will be what merchants call a drug, that cannot be sold at all, but if it be a perishable commodity, must sink in the hand of the possessor.

I have said above, that the increase of money, even though in consequence of national prosperity, that is to say, internal industry and profitable trade, will yet necessarily have the effect of raising the price of industry, and its fruits. This, however, must evidently be in a far higher degree, and attended with much more pernicious effects, when it is thrown into circulation without industry; as when silver is found in capacious mines, or paper is issued by the authority of a state, without measure and without end. I verily believe, that if as many millions of silver dollars had fallen from heaven and been thrown into circulation as there were paper ones issued by the United States, the disorder would have been as great or greater than it was. At least it would have been so at first, the difference would have been, that silver being current over all, it would have soon gone abroad and found its level, so that the alteration would have been ultimately not in the United States, but in the general circulating medium over the whole earth. Those, however, among whom it was first found, and who received it without industry, would have suffered most by it. Among them it would have produced laziness and luxury. Other nations would have drained it from them only by superior industry.

The state of the Spanish monarchy at present ought to be, and indeed in a great measure has been, a lesson to the whole world. At the time when they got possession of South-America they were the most powerful and wealthy state in Europe. Would any man at that time have been reckoned found in his judgment who would have affirmed, that they would have grown poor, by the means of the gold and silver mines? Yet it has happened so, and now there is hardly any politician so shallow but he can assign the reason of it. They thought that gold and silver would at once procure them every thing without working; but forgot that the more they had of it, they must pay so much the more to those who were willing to work for them.

3. The above principles will clearly shew, that what is commonly called paper money, that is, bills bearing that the person holding them is entitled to receive a certain sum specified in them, is not, properly speaking, money at all. It is barely a sign without being a pledge or standard of value, and therefore is essentially defective as a medium of universal commerce. I will afterwards speak of the different kinds of it, and point out their real and proper uses; but in the mean time I observe, that to arm such bills with the authority of the state, and make them a legal tender in all payments, is an absurdity so great, that it is not easy to speak with propriety upon it. Perhaps it would give offence if I should say, it is an absurdity reserved for American legislatures; no such thing having ever been attempted in the old countries. It has been found, by the experience of ages, that money

must have a standard of value, and if any prince or state debase the metal below the standard, it is utterly impossible to make it succeed. How then can it be possible to make that succeed, which has no value at all? In all such instances, there may be great injuries done to particular persons by wiping off debts; but to give such money general currency is wholly impossible. The measure carries absurdity in its very face. Why will you make a law to oblige men to take money when it is offered them? Are there any who refuse it when it is good? If it is necessary to force them, does not this demonstrate that it is not good? We have seen indeed this system produce a most ludicrous inversion of the nature of things. For two or three years we constantly saw and were informed of creditors running away from their debtors, and the debtors pursuing them in triumph, and paying them without mercy.

Let us examine this matter a little more fully. Money is the medium of commercial transactions. Money is itself a commodity. Therefore every transaction in which money is concerned, by being given or promised, is strictly and properly speaking, a bargain, or as it is well called in common language, an agreement. To give, therefore, authority or nominal value by law to any money, is interposing by law, in commerce, and is precisely the same thing with laws regulating the prices of commodities, of which, in their full extent, we had sufficient experience during the war. Now nothing can be more radically unjust, or more eminently absurd, than laws of that nature. Among all civilians, the

transactions of commerce are ranged under the head of contracts. Without entering into the nicer distinctions of writers upon this subject, it is sufficient for me to say, that commerce, or buying and selling, is found upon that species of contracts that is most formal and complete. They are called in the technical language, *Onerous contracts*, where the proper and just value is supposed to be given or promised, on both sides. That is to say, the person who offers any thing to sale, does it because he has it to spare, and he thinks it would be better for him to have the money, or some other commodity, than what he parts with; and he who buys, in like manner, thinks it would be better for him to receive the commodity, than to retain the money. There may be mistakes or fraud in many transactions; but these do not affect the argument in the least. A fair and just value is always supposed or professed to be given on both sides.

Well! is it agreed that all commerce is founded on a complete contract? Let then any person who will, open as many books as he pleases written upon the subject, and tell me whether he does not always find there that one of the essential conditions of a lawful contract, and indeed the first of them is, that it be *free* and *mutual*. Without this it may be something else, and have some other binding force, but it is not a contract. To make laws therefore, regulating the prices of commodities, or giving nominal value to that which had no value before the law was made, is altering the nature of the transaction altogether. Perhaps a comparison of this with other transactions of a different kind

might set this matter in a clear light. Suppose a man were to say to one of our lawgivers upon this subject as follows: When you make a law, laying on a tax, and telling me I must pay so much to the public and common expences of the state, I understand this very well. It falls under the head of *authority*. You may lay on an improper or injudicious tax that will operate unequally, or not be productive of what you expect; but still this is within your line, and if I have any complaint, I can only wish that at the next election we may get wiser men. Again, a Justice of Peace in time of war may give a preſs-warrant, and take my horses and waggons to transport provisions or baggage for an army. I understand this also; writers and reasoners tell me that it falls under the head of what they call the *rights of necessity*. The meaning of this is, that no civil constitution can be so perfect but that some cases will occur, in which the property of individuals must give way to the urgent call of common utility or general danger. Thus we know, that in cities, in case of a fire, sometimes a house, without the consent of its owner, will be destroyed to prevent the whole from being consumed. But if you make a law that I shall be obliged to *sell* my grain, my cattle, or any commodity, at a certain price, you not only do what is unjust and impolitic, but with all respect be it said, you speak nonsense; for I do not *sell* them at all: you take them from me. You are both buyer and seller, and I am the sufferer only.

I cannot help observing that laws of this kind have an inherent weakness in them; they are not

only unjust and unwise, but for the most part impracticable. They are an attempt to apply authority to that which is not its proper object, and to extend it beyond its natural bounds; in both which we shall be sure to fail. The production of commodities must be the effect of industry, inclination, hope, and interest. The first of these is very imperfectly reached by authority, and the other three cannot be reached by it at all. Perhaps I ought rather to have said, that they cannot be directed by it, but they may be greatly counteracted; as people have naturally a strong disposition to resist force, and to escape from constraint. Accordingly we found in this country, and every other society who ever tried such measures found, that they produced an effect directly contrary to what was expected from them. Instead of producing moderation and plenty, they uniformly produced dearth and scarcity. It is worth while to observe, that some of our legislatures saw so far into these matters as to perceive, that they could not regulate the price of commodities, without regulating the price of the industry that produced them. Therefore they regulated the price of day-labourers. This however, though but one species of industry, was found to be wholly out of their power.

There were some instances mentioned at the time when these measures were in vogue, which superficial reasoners supposed to be examples of regulating laws attended with good effects. These were the regulation of the prices of chairs, hackney-coaches, and ticket porters in cities, public ferries, and some others. But this was quite mistaking the

nature of the thing. These instances have not the least connection with laws regulating prices in voluntary commerce. In all these cases the persons who are employed solicit the privilege, obtain a licence, and come under voluntary engagements to ask no higher prices; so that there is as complete a free contract as in buying and selling in open shops. I am so fully convinced of the truth and justice of the above principles, that I think, were it proper at this time, I could shew, that even in the most enlightened nations of Europe, there are still some laws subsisting which work in direct opposition to the intention of their makers. Of this kind in general are the laws against forestalling and regrating. They are now indeed most of them asleep, and what the lawyers call in desuetude; but so far as they are executed, they have the most powerful tendency to prevent, instead of promoting, full and reasonable markets. As an example of our own skill in that branch, a law was past in Pennsylvania in time of the war precisely upon that principle. It ordained that in all imported articles there should be but one step between the importer and consumer, and therefore that none but those who bought from the ship should be allowed to sell again. I cite this instance by memory, but am certain that such was the spirit of the law. The makers of it considered that every hand through which a commodity passed must have a profit upon it, which would therefore greatly augment the cost to the consumer at last. But could any thing in the world be more absurd? How could a family at one hundred miles distance from the seaport be supplied with what they wanted? In

opposition to this principle it may be safely affirmed, that the more merchants the cheaper goods, and that no carriage is so cheap, nor any distribution so equal or so plentiful, as that which is made by those who have an interest in it, and expect a profit from it.

I have gone into this detail in order to shew that tender laws, arming paper, or any thing not valuable in itself with authority, are directly contrary to the very first principles of commerce. This was certainly the more necessary, because many of the advocates for such laws, and many of those who are instrumental in enacting them, do it from pure ignorance, without any bad intention. It may probably have some effect in opening their eyes to observe, that no paper whatever is a tender in any nation in Europe. Even the notes of the bank of England, which are as good as gold, and those of the bank of Holland, which are considerably better *, are not armed with any such sanction, and are not a legal tender in the proper sense of that word. That is to say, though I suppose both of them, or any other paper circulating in full credit, may be a

* Perhaps it may be proper to inform some readers what this expression refers to. It refers to the agio of the bank of Holland. A bill of that bank generally goes for a little more in payment with any dealer than the sum it specifies, and this advance or difference is called the agio of the Bank, and rises or falls like the rate of exchange. This probably arises from its perfect security, and the very great advantage in point of ease and expedition, in transferring, reckoning, and concealing of paper above gold and silver. It gives occasion to the vulgar saying in that country, That money goes into the bank but never comes out.

tender in equity, so far as that the person offering them without suspicion of their being refused, could not be condemned in any penalty or forfeiture; yet if the person who was to receive the money should say, I am going abroad, I want gold or silver; it would lie upon the debtor and not the creditor to go and get them exchanged. We may perhaps even say more, *viz.* that the coinage of gold and silver in any country is not so much, if at all to oblige persons to receive it at a certain value, as to ascertain them that it is of the value stamped upon it. Without this, ignorant persons would be continually at a loss to know the fineness and the weight of a piece offered to them. This will appear from the two following remarks. (1.) If by any accident in the coinage, or fraud in the officers of the mint, some of the pieces had not the full quantity, or were not of sufficient fineness, though the stamp were ever so genuine, if I could discover the defect, I should be justified in refusing it. (2.) There is sometimes a fluctuation in the comparative value of gold and silver, and in these cases, though no doubt a debtor, till the error that has crept in be rectified by authority, has a right to pay in any lawful money; yet if I were selling goods, and gold had fallen in its value, I might safely say to the customer, in what coin are you to pay me? I will give you a yard of this silk for twenty-one sterling silver shillings, but if you give me a guinea I must have another shilling before I will part with it. The whole of this serves to shew that nothing short of real money, which is of standard value, ought to be enforced by law in a well regulated society.

4. The principles above laid down will enable us to perceive clearly what is the nature of paper circulating as a medium of commerce, what is its real and proper use, and what are its dangers and defects. As to its nature, it is a sign but not a standard. It is properly an obligation, or to use a modern commercial phrase, it is a promissory note. It is not money, as has been shewn above, but it is a promise of some person or body of men to pay money either on demand or at a particular time, or at some general undefined future time. Obligations of this nature are of more sorts than one. Sometimes they are given by particular persons, or trading companies, who are considered as persons; and frequently in America they have been given by the legislature of the state. In the general definition I have included all kinds of negotiable paper, but it will not be necessary to insist upon more than two of them, *viz.* the notes of banking companies, and state emissions. Bills of exchange are not supposed to pass through many hands, but to proceed as speedily as may be to the place of their payment. Government securities are only bought and sold like other property, and so any bonds or other private obligations, may be transferred as often as people are willing to receive them; but the notes of banking companies, and the state emissions of this country are intended to be, properly speaking, a circulating medium. They are of various regular denominations, and intended to answer all the purposes of money in the smaller transactions of society as well as the larger, and even go to market for purchasing the necessaries of life.

As to value, such obligations must plainly depend upon the credit of the subscriber or obliger, and the opinion or expectation of the receiver. These are mutually necessary to their use in commerce. Let the resources or wealth of the subscriber be what they may, it is the public opinion that must ultimately give them currency. This opinion, however, may be in some instances better, and in some worse founded. That paper which may with most certainty and expedition be converted into gold and silver, seems evidently to have the advantage on this account. Therefore the notes of banking companies, while they maintain their credit, and continue to pay on demand, appear to be the best calculated for general use. They seem also to have another advantage, that private persons and companies are upon a footing with the holder of the bills. He can arrest them, and bring them to account and have justice done upon them; whereas he cannot call the legislature to account, but must wholly depend upon their fidelity as well as resources. Yet it must be owned there have not been wanting instances formerly in this country, in which paper emissions by the states have obtained full confidence, and met with no impediment in circulation.

Let us now consider what is the proper use of paper currency, or whether it be of any real use at all. Many persons in Europe have declared against it altogether as pernicious. I will endeavour to state this matter with all the clearness I am capable of, and to give the reasons for what I shall advance. We have seen above, that nothing can be more ab-

furder than to say that we now want a circulating medium, and that paper is necessary for that purpose. A circulating medium we have already, not in too small, but in too great quantity; so that any person who understands the subject may perceive that gold and silver, especially the last, is losing at least one of the qualities necessary for that purpose, and becoming too bulky and heavy for easy and convenient transportation. Brass, as has been shewn above, was once as just and proper a medium of commerce as gold and silver are now. It has all the qualities necessary for that purpose still, except rarity; so that if it were not too plentiful and too cheap, it would be money to this day. It is probable that this circumstance of the abundance and weight of the precious metals is what gives to many such an inclination for paper money. This will appear strange to some, yet I believe it is at bottom just. The cry with many is, we must have paper for a circulating medium, as there is such a scarcity of gold and silver. Is this just? No. They mistake their own poverty, or the nation's poverty, for a scarcity of gold and silver; whereas in fact, gold and silver used as a circulating medium are so cheap, and the quantity of a moderate sum is such an incumbrance that we want paper, which can be much more easily carried, and much more effectually concealed. So that, contrary to the vulgar idea, we are obliged to have recourse to paper in several cases, not for want of gold and silver, but their too great abundance.

This will appear to be a very uncouth idea to many persons. What, they will say, too great

abundance of gold and silver! when I go about from day to day, and cannot collect what is due to me; when my creditors are calling upon me and I cannot satisfy them. There is a scarcity of money every where. What shall be said to satisfy these persons? I must tell them plainly, It is their poverty, or the nation's poverty, and not a want of gold and silver, and if there were an hundred times as much gold and silver in circulation as there is, their poverty and difficulties would be just the same. If these persons read the scriptures they may there learn, that in Solomon's time the silver was as plentiful *as stones in Jerusalem*; probably they will think that all the people in Jerusalem at that time must have lived like princes, but they must be told, that it was added as a necessary consequence, that *it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon*.

If paper is not then needed as a circulating medium, what benefits arise from it? I answer, the uses of paper substituted for money may be summed up under the two following heads; (1.) It is useful for facilitating commerce. (2.) It is useful for anticipating property or extending credit.

(1.) it is useful for facilitating commerce. Nothing can be more advantageous for that purpose than bills of exchange, which, without the actual transportation of money or goods, can transfer property even to the most distant places with the most perfect facility. There have been many persons who have doubted whether any other sort of paper currency is not upon the whole hurtful, but the benefit of this is beyond all question. We shall afterwards compare the advantages and disadvan-

tages of paper money ; but at present let us leave out the consideration of the evil that it does, and it is manifest that there is so great a facility and safety in the transportation of paper above that of gold and silver, that it must greatly expedite all mercantile transactions, internal and external. Suppose one hundred thousand pounds were to be transported but three hundred miles, if it were to be carried in silver, what an immense load would it be ? But besides the weight, as it could not be concealed, there would be a very great risk of inviting robbers to share in it. Let it be carefully observed, that this good effect of paper is not from the additional quantity thrown into circulation, but from its possessing some advantages superior to gold and silver, provided that the credit of it is supported. Nor must it be forgotten, that it is in great and extensive negotiations only that this advantage is possessed by paper ; for in smaller bargains, and that intercourse between man and man that is carried on every hour, it possesses no advantage at all ; on the contrary, it is liable to wear and waste, and therefore the smaller coins are in all respects to be preferred.

(2.) Another use of paper in commerce is to extend credit. Though in very large transactions the advantage of paper may be great, as it facilitates commerce ; yet when we consider paper as generally circulating, and doing the office of gold and silver, it is by the extension of credit only, or chiefly, that it can be of any advantage. It is unnecessary for me, and perhaps not in my power, to mention all the ways in which credit may be in-

created or facilitated by paper. Some will probably be mentioned afterwards ; at present my business is to shew, that giving credit is one of the advantages, and indeed in my opinion, it is the principle advantage, to be derived from paper circulation of any kind. There are many people whose industry is damped or limited by want of stock or credit, who if they were properly assisted, in these respects might do signal service to themselves, and the community of which they are members. It has been generally said, and I believe with truth, that the institution of the banks in Scotland has improved the country in the course of little more than half a century, to a degree that is hardly credible. It is also probable, that the manufactures and commerce of England have been greatly promoted by the easy and regular methods of obtaining credit from the public and private banks. I am sensible that some very intelligent persons in Britain have condemned the paper circulation even there, and affirmed, that it does more harm than good. It is not necessary for me to enter into the arguments on either side of that question. All that I am concerned to prove is, that if it does good upon the whole, or whatever good it does in any degree, arises from the credit which it is the occasion of extending ; and this I think can hardly be denied. *

* That I may state the matter with fairness and fulness, I will just observe, that the enemies of paper say, the improvement was only coeval with the banks, but not caused by them in whole, nor in any great degree. The banks happened to be nearly coeval with the revolution, and the union of England and Scotland ; both which important

Let us next consider the evil that is done by paper. This is what I would particularly request the reader to attend to, as it was what this discourse was chiefly intended to evince, and what the public seems but little aware of. The evil is this. All paper introduced into circulation, and obtaining credit as gold and silver, adds to the quantity of the medium, and thereby, as has been shown above, increases the price of industry and its fruits.* This consequence is unavoidable, and follows as certainly from good paper as bad, or rather more certainly, for the medium is increased only by that which obtains credit. At the same time this consequence is local, because the paper does not pass among other nations, and therefore it works against the interest of the people who use it, and

events are supposed to have been causes of improvement to Scotland. However the experience of the last thirty or forty years appears to be considerably in favour of banks and dealers in money and bills, which I consider as essentially the same.

* This will perhaps be misapprehended by some readers. They will say, a high price for our industry! This is just what we want, and what all desire. But the price I mean here is not the price which you get for your industry, but that which you pay for it. A high price, by a great demand from foreign nations, is your profit; but the cost which you pay for servants, tools, rent of land, &c. lessens that profit, and it is this which is increased by increasing the circulating medium, and not the other. Make as much money as you please, this will not make foreign nations call for any more of your grain, fish, lumber, tobacco, rice, &c. but it will just as certainly make them cost you more before you can bring them to the market, as adding two to three will make five.

necessarily draws off their gold and silver, which must be made use of in all foreign payments. Men may think what they please, but there is no contending with the nature of things. Experience has every where justified the remark, that wherever paper is introduced in large quantities, the gold and silver vanishes universally. The joint sum of gold, silver, and paper current, will exactly represent your whole commodities, and the prices will be accordingly. It is therefore as if you were to fill a vessel brim full, making half the quantity water and the other oil; the last being specifically lightest, will be at the top, and if you add more water, the oil only will run over, and continue running till there is none left. How absurd and contemptible then is the reasoning which we have of late seen frequently in print, *viz.* the gold and silver is going away from us, therefore we must have paper to supply its place. If the gold and silver is indeed going away from us, that is to say, if the balance of trade is much against us, the paper medium has a direct tendency to increase the evil, and send it away by a quicker pace.

I have said, that this consequence follows from all paper, as such, good and bad, so far as it enters into circulation; but every one must perceive, that there is a peculiar, and indeed a different evil to be feared from paper of a doubtful kind, and especially from that which being doubtful, is obliged to be supported by coercive laws. This must raise general suspicion, and consequently bring on a stagnation of commerce, from universal and mutual distrust. For the same reason it must annihilate

credit, and make every cautious person lock up his real money, that is, gold and silver, as he cannot tell but he may be cheated in the re-payment. This evil is very extensive indeed, for it makes people suspicious, not only of what is, but what may be. Though the injury should be but partial, or inconsiderable at present, it may become wholly ruinous by some unknown future law.

Hence it may be seen, that the resolution of the question, whether it is proper to have paper money at all or not, depends entirely upon another, *viz.* whether the evil that is done by augmenting the circulating medium, is or is not over-balanced by the facility given to commerce, and the credit given to particular persons, by which their industry and exertions are added to the common stock. As it is upon this that the question depends, we shall find that as the circumstances of a nation may be different, it may be for or against its interest to use a paper medium. If any nation were in such circumstances as that credit were either not necessary or easily obtained; if the country were fully settled and the inhabitants fully employed in agriculture, manufactures, and internal commerce, with little foreign trade, any addition to the true money, would be unnecessary or pernicious. This is probably the state of China at present, perhaps in some degree also of France. On the contrary, if a nation had an extensive and complicated commerce, and much land to settle and improve, the facilitating of commerce, and extending of credit, might be highly beneficial. I do not pretend to so exact a knowledge of the state of this country, or

the different parts of it, as to judge with absolute certainty of what is necessary or would be useful to it, but am inclined to think that there must be something in the state of things in America that makes it either more necessary or more expedient to have paper here than in the European states. We are assured that in former times many of the states, then colonies, thought it a privilege to be allowed to strike paper money; and we are told by persons of good understanding, that it contributed to their growth and improvement. If this was the case, I am confident it was chiefly because it was emitted in the way of a loan-office, and by giving credit to husbandmen, accelerated the settlement and improvement of the soil. This question I do not take upon me to decide, and therefore in what follows, desire I may be considered as speaking only hypothetically, the rather, that at present the inclination after paper of some kind or another seems to be so strong, that it would be in vain to withstand it.

If therefore paper is to be employed in circulation, we may see from what has been said above, what are the principles on which it ought to be conducted, the ends that ought to be aimed at, and the evils that ought to be avoided. The ends to be aimed at are, the facilitating of commercial transactions, and extending of credit to those who are likely to make a proper use of it. The plan should be so conceived, as that the increase of the circulating medium should be as little as possible, consistently with these ends. It should be perfectly secure, so as to create an absolute confidence. And

as it is of the nature of an obligation, no force whatever should be used, but the reception of it left entirely to the inclination and interest of the receiver. It may be safely affirmed, that any deviation from these principles, which are deduced from the theory above laid down, will be an essential defect in the system. If we inquire what sort of paper will best answer this description, we find that there is no other sort used in Europe than that of banking companies. The government stamping paper to pass current for coin is unknown there. Notwithstanding the immense sums which have been borrowed by the English government, they always prefer paying interest for them, to issuing paper without value for money. The only thing resembling it in the English history is, James the second coining base metal, and affixing a price to it by proclamation; a project contemptible in the contrivance, and abortive in the execution. This seems to be a considerable presumption, that the measure is upon the whole not eligible. *

The paper of banking companies has many advantages. It is considered as perfectly safe, because it can be exchanged for gold and silver at any time upon demand. Having this security at bottom, it

* It seems to me, that those who cry out for emitting paper money by the legislatures, should take some pains to state clearly the difference between this and the European countries, and point out the reasons why it would be serviceable here, and hurtful there; or else insist that it would be a wise measure every where, and recommend the use of it to the states of England, France, Holland, &c. who will be much indebted to them for the discovery.

is perfectly convenient for transportation, which indeed is common to it with all paper. In addition to this, it is considered as the principal business of all banks to give credit, which, though directly only in favour of commercial, is ultimately useful to many different classes of men. I may upon this observe, that it is the duty of banking companies so to conduct their operations as to extend their regular credit as far as is safe for themselves. If instead of this, as has been supposed at least to have been done by some banks in Britain, they circulate their notes by agents, making purchases in different and distant places, that the sum issued may very far exceed the sum necessary to be kept for probable demands; they are in that case not serving the public at all, but using the money of other people to their own profit. It is also to be observed, that the denomination of their notes should never be very small, it should indeed be as high as is consistent with such a general use as will bring in a sufficient profit. Very small denominations of paper do the greatest injury by entering into universal circulation, and chiefly affecting the industrious part of the community. It was a very great complaint against some banks in Scotland, that they brought down the denominations of their notes as far as ten shillings and some of them even five shillings. If this was an evil, what shall we say of paper, as has been seen in this country, as low as one shilling, six pence, or even three pence value? It is a rule that will hardly admit of any exception, that the higher the denominations of paper bills, the greater the benefit and the less the evil; and on

the contrary, the smaller the denominations, the greater the evil and the less the benefit. High sums in paper obligations may perhaps change hands once a week, but a shilling or six-penny ticket may be in fifty hands in one day.

I must mention here what has been often objected against banks in America, which, if just, would, from the reasoning in the preceding part of this discourse, tend to their condemnation. It is, that they have destroyed credit instead of extending it, and have introduced or given occasion to excessive usury. I am not sufficiently informed to say how far this is really the case, but cannot help observing, that treating the matter theoretically, as I have all along done, and considering the nature of the thing, this does not appear to be a necessary consequence. One would rather think that the regular credit which is or ought to be given by banks should prevent usury, by supplying all those who deserve to be trusted. Agreeably to this it was found in fact, that the institution of banks in Scotland lowered the interest of money, which indeed seems to be the natural effect of every such institution, from the increased circulation. But if any instances more than before have happened of this kind, it may be by persons in extreme necessity applying to others who have credit with the bank, and who have so little conscientious scruple as to take advantage of their neighbour's poverty. If this is the case, it is only a particular abuse, or occasional bad consequence of a thing otherwise good and useful. It is not a just objection against any thing, that it may be or has been in some instances abused. Besides,

as it is the duty of every banking company to guard against this evil as much as possible, even by personal resentment, against those who make this use of their confidence, so it is an evil not out of the reach of legal punishment or general infamy. Wise and well executed laws against usury, would at least so far restrain it, as to make it an evil of little consequence.

But in examining the nature and operation of different kinds of paper, I must consider an objection of much greater importance, upon the principles of this discourse, against the paper of banks, or at least, a defect in their system, that seems to call for other measures in addition to it. This is, that banking companies give credit only so as to be serviceable to merchants, and those immediately connected with them, but do not extend it to husbandmen, or those who improve the soil, by taking mortgages for a considerable time : yet according to the theory above laid down, this is not only one of the advantages, but perhaps the chief advantage to be derived from a paper circulation of any kind. Now, I admit, that the settlement and cultivation of the soil is the radical source of the prosperity of this country. It is indeed the source of the prosperity of every country, but comparatively more so of that of this country than most others. I also admit that credit, properly extended, to industrious persons in this way would be exceedingly beneficial. For this reason, and for this alone, Dr Franklin and others perhaps judged right when they said, the country received great benefit from the loan office paper of former times. I am also sensible, that it

is not practicable nor proper for banking companies to give credit upon mortgages on distant lands. They being bound to prompt payment, must expect the same; therefore they are not to be blamed for refusing it in this form *. For all these reasons, I do not take upon me wholly to condemn a measure in America, which would be unnecessary or improper in Europe. We hear from every quarter, that is to say, from almost every state, a loud cry for paper money. Now when there is a great and universal complaint, it is seldom without some foundation; and though I have taken much pains in the preceding discourse to shew that they mistake their own wants, that they do not want a circulating medium, but use that phrase without understanding its meaning; yet they certainly do want something. They want particular *credit*; and they look back with desire to the former times when they had paper money, which, by its name itself, pointed out its nature and use, the notes being then called bills of credit. I will therefore proceed, keeping a steady eye upon the principles above laid down, to state in what manner a loan office may be established † within moderate bounds, that shall render a

* I must here observe, that the banks of Scotland never gave credit upon mortgages, but personal security only, and yet they were universally supposed to put it in the power of landed men to improve their estates; so that the money transactions must have been, though not directly, yet remotely in their favour.

† I am not ignorant that there has been in one of our states, I mean Pennsylvania, a violent controversy for and

service probably greater than the evils necessarily consequent upon it.

I would therefore propose, that any state that thinks it necessary, should emit a sum of suppose one hundred thousand pounds, and that the following rules should be laid down in the law, and invariably adhered to. 1. That not a shilling of that money should issue from the loan-office treasury, but upon mortgage of land to the amount of double the sum in value. 2. That it should not be a legal tender for any debts contracted or to be contracted, but receivable in all taxes within the state, and payable for the wages of Council and Assembly, and the fees and perquisites of all public officers, after it has been so received. 3. That at the end of twelve calendar months, a sum precisely equal to the interest that had been accrued or become due in that time, should be consumed by fire, and public intimation given of its being done. The same thing should be done every subsequent year. 4. That at no time any part of this money should be made use of in the payment of the public debts, but that which had been first levied in taxes. It would not be proper

against the bank, between the political factions which divide that state. On this account, I am sorry I was obliged to mention banks at all? but it was impossible for me to do justice to the subject, without considering their general nature and effects; and I will not so much as name any of the arguments on either side of this question, but what is necessarily connected with money in general as a currency, and its effects upon the national interest.

even to borrow from the stock for this purpose by anticipation*.

If these rules were observed, credit would be given to some persons, who needed and deserved it, to the amount of the whole sum. The bills current would be diminished in quantity every year so as not to load the circulation, which would have a sensible effect upon the public opinion, and indeed, from the nature of the thing, would increase their value, or rather confirm it from year to year †. At the end of fourteen or fifteen years they would be wholly taken out of circulation, and that not by any tax laid on for the purpose, but by the hire or use of the money itself, and after all, the principal sum would be still due to the state in good money, which might bear interest for ever. It would be an important addition to this scheme, if no bills

* The paying of the public creditors is one of the most common and popular arguments for paper emissions, but to pay them with money not loaned, is not paying, but continuing the debt upon the state, and only make it change hands. All such bills so paid must be accounted for by the public. It is better, therefore, that by the loans men may be enabled easily to pay their taxes; and then let the public creditors be paid by money demanded equally from the whole for that purpose.

† I cannot help observing here, that the titles of most of the acts for emitting money, do unawares confess the justice of all that has been said above; they run thus, "An act for emitting — thousand pounds in bills of credit, and directing the manner of *sinking the same*." Does not this shew what sort of a circulating medium they are? Does it not admit, that they will do evil if they continue to circulate? When you coin gold and silver, do you provide for sinking it?

less than two dollars, or perhaps three, or five, should be emitted, as this would still keep silver at least in circulation. On the above principles, all the good that can be produced by paper would be effected, viz. facilitating commerce, and giving credit; and as little of the evil as possible, because the quantity would be fixed and moderate at first, and continually decreasing, so as at last to vanish altogether; and then another emission of the same kind might be made, if the utility of the first should recommend it.

Perhaps it will be said, that this money not being a legal tender, would not answer the purpose of borrowers by paying their debts, nor get at all into circulation. To this I answer, that it would not answer the purpose of those who want to pay their debts with half nothing and cheat their creditors; nor do I wish to see any thing attempted that would produce that effect. But I affirm, that it would get better into circulation than by a tender law, which creates general and just suspicion. Tender laws, as has been already proved, may be made use of by deceitful persons to do particular acts of injustice, but are not sufficient to procure general circulation, nor to excite and reward industry, without the opinion and approbation of the public. Such money as I have described would excite no alarm, it might easily be tried. It should, in my opinion, certainly be tried, for all would know that it would pay every tax to government, and even borrowers of large sums might make trial of it, without any risk at all, because, if it would not answer their end, they might after a few months, repay it, and take

up their mortgage. But I cannot help thinking, that the principles of it are so just, and the plan so certain, that all understanding persons would perceive and approve it.

I must here take the occasion and the liberty of saying, that it were greatly to be wished that those who have in their hands the administration of affairs in the several States of America, would take no measures, either on this, or any other subject, but what are founded upon justice, supported by reason, and warranted by the experience of former ages, and of other countries. The operation of political causes is as uniform and certain as that of natural causes. And any measure which in itself has a bad tendency, though its effects may not be instantly discernible, and their progress may be but slow, yet it will be infallible; and perhaps the danger will then only appear when a remedy is impossible. This is the case, in some degree, with all political measures, without exception, yet I am mistaken if it is not eminently so with respect to commercial dealings. Commerce is excited, directed, and carried on by interest. But do not mistake this, it is not carried on by general universal interest, nor even by well informed national interest, but by immediate, apparent, and sensible personal interest. I must also observe, that there is in mankind a sharp-sightedness upon this subject that is quite astonishing.

All men are not philosophers, but they are generally good judges of their own profit in what is immediately before them, and will uniformly adhere to it. It is not uncommon to see a man who ap-

pears to be almost as stupid as a stone, and yet he shall be as adroit and dexterous in making a bargain, or even more so, than a man of the first rate understanding, who, probably, for that very reason, is less attentive to trifling circumstances, and less under the government of mean and selfish views. As to currency, which has been our general subject, if coins of any particular species happen, as is sometimes the case, to pass at a rate, ever so little higher, in one country, or corner of a country, than another, thither they will immediately direct their course; and if the matter is not attended to, nor the mistake rectified, they will be all there in a very short time, and the place which receives them must bear the loss.

I will now sum up, in single propositions, the substance of what has been asserted, and I hope sufficiently proved, in the preceding discourse.

1. It ought not to be imputed to accident or caprice, that gold, silver, and copper, formerly were, and the two first continue to be, the medium of commerce; but to their inherent value, joined with other properties, that fit them for circulation. Therefore, all the speculations, formed upon a contrary supposition, are inconclusive and absurd.

2. Gold and silver are far from being in too small quantity at present for the purpose of a circulating medium, in the commercial nations. The last of them, viz. silver, seems rather to be in too great quantity, so as to become inconvenient for transportation.

3. The people of every nation will get the quantity of these precious metals, that they are

entitled to by their industry, and no more. If by any accident, as plunder in war, or borrowing from other nations, or even finding it in mines, they get more, they will not be able to keep it. It will in a short time find its level. Laws against exporting the coin will not prevent this. Laws of this kind, though they are still in force in some nations, supposed to be wise, yet are in themselves ridiculous. If you import more than you export, you must pay the balance, or give up the trade.

4. The quantity of gold and silver at any time in a nation, is no evidence of national wealth, unless you take into consideration the way in which it came there, and the probability of its continuing.

5. No paper of any kind is, properly speaking, money. It ought never to be made a legal tender. It *ought* not to be forced upon *any* body, because it *cannot* be forced upon *every* body.

6. Gold and silver, fairly acquired, and likely to continue, are real national, as well as personal wealth. If twice as much paper circulates with them, though in full credit, particular persons may be rich by possessing it, but the nation in general is not.

7. The cry of the scarcity of money, is generally putting the effect for the cause. No business can be done, say some, because money is scarce. It may be said with more truth, money is scarce, because little business is done. Yet their influence, like that of many other causes and effects, is reciprocal.

8. The quantity of current money, of whatever kind, will have an effect in raising the price of in-

dustry, and bringing goods dearer to market, therefore the increase of the currency in any nation by paper, which will not pass among other nations, makes the first cost of every thing they do greater, and of consequence the profit less.

9. It is however possible, that paper obligations may so far facilitate commerce, and extend credit, as by the additional industry, that they excite, to overbalance the injury which they do in other respects. Yet even the good itself may be overdone. Too much money may be emitted even upon loan, but to emit money any other way than upon loan, is to do all evil and no good.

10. The excessive quantity of paper emitted by the different states of America, will probably be a loss to the whole. They cannot however take advantage of one another in that way. That state which emits most will lose most, and *vice versa*.

11. I can see no way in which it can do good but one, which is to deter other nations from trusting us, and thereby lessen our importations; and I sincerely wish, that in that way it may prove in some degree a remedy for its own evils.

12. Those who refuse doubtful paper, and thereby disgrace it, or prevent its circulation, are not enemies, but friends to their country.

To draw to a conclusion, it is probable that those who perceive, which it will be easy to do, that the author of this tract is not a merchant or trader, by profession, will be ready to say, What has this gentleman to do with such a subject? Why should he write upon what he has no practical knowledge of, money and commerce? To these I answer, that I

have written, not as a merchant, but as a scholar. I profess to derive my opinions from the best civilians of this and the last age, and from the history of all ages, joined with a pretty considerable experience and attention to the effects of political causes within the sphere of my own observation. It is not even too much to say, that one of the mercantile profession, unless his views were very enlarged indeed, is not so proper to handle a general subject of this kind as some others. His attention is usually confined to the business, and to the branch of that business in which he is employed. In that his discernment will be clear, and he will find out, if possible, where he can buy cheapest, and sell dearest. But as to the theory of commerce, or the great objects of national interest or connection, he can have no advantage at all over a person given to study and reflection, who has some acquaintance with public life. With these remarks by way of apology, and having no interest in the matter but what is common to every citizen, I freely commit the whole to the judgment of the impartial public.

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

PRESENT STATE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS,

AND

ON THE DUTY AND INTEREST OF AMERICA
IN THIS IMPORTANT CRISIS.



THAT the present is an important æra to America, has been so often repeated, that I suppose no man doubts it, and I hope few will forget it. Yet, however august the idea, it is capable of being greatly enlarged. It will be an important æra in the history of mankind. The extent of this country is such, that as it is now, and probably will soon be settled, it makes no inconsiderable part of the globe itself. The European in general, but particularly the British settlements in America, have for these hundred years past, been exhibiting to the world a scene differing in many respects from what it ever beheld. In all the ancient emigrations, or colonial settlements, the number was small, the territory very limited, and which was still more, the people and the soil were almost alike uncultivated; and therefore both proceeded to improvement by very slow degrees. But in America we see a coun-

try almost without bounds, new and untouched, taken possession of at once by the power, the learning, and the wealth of Europe.

Hence it is that the cultivation and the population of America have advanced with a rapidity next to miraculous, and of which no political calculators have principles or data sufficient to make a certain judgment. I hold every thing that has been said on the numbers in America to be good for nothing, except in certain places where they have proceeded on actual numeration. When writers state, that the inhabitants in America double themselves in twenty or twenty-five years, they speak by guess, and they say nothing. It may be under or over the truth in certain places; but there are others in which they become twenty times the number in seven years. I do not know, and therefore will not attempt to conjecture, how fast mankind may multiply in a country that is in the most favourable state possible, both in itself, and for receiving an accession from others less happily circumstanced. What is more certain, as well as of more importance to observe, is, that the British colonies in North-America, have in this respect exceeded every other country upon the face of the earth.

What has caused this difference? Does the climate of Britain naturally produce more wisdom, strength and activity, than that of France, Spain, or Portugal? Surely not, or wo to America itself; for the best of its colonies are in the climate of these very countries. It is therefore without doubt owing to the liberty which pervades the British constitution, and came with the colonists to

this part of the earth. Montefquieu has, with inimitable beauty, shewn, that the natural causes of population or depopulation, are not half so powerful as the moral causes; by which last he means the state of society, the form of government, and the manners of the people. War, famine, and pestilence are scarcely felt, where there is liberty and equal laws. The wound made by those fore judgments is speedily closed by the vigour of the constitution; whereas, in a more sickly frame, a trifling scratch will rankle and produce long disease, or perhaps terminate in death. We need go no further than our own country to have full proof of the force of liberty. The southern colonies, blessed as they are with a superior soil and more powerful sun, are yet greatly inferior to Pennsylvania and New England, in numbers, strength, and value of land in proportion to its quantity. The matter is easily solved. The constitutions of these latter colonies are more favourable to universal industry.

But with all the differences between one colony and another, America in general, by its gradual improvement, not long ago exhibited a spectacle, the most delightful that can be conceived, to a benevolent and contemplative mind. A country growing every year in beauty and fertility, the people growing in numbers and wealth, arts, and sciences, carefully cultivated and constantly advancing, and possessing security of property by liberty and equal laws, which are the true and proper source of all the rest. While things were in this situation, Great-Britain reaped a great, unenvied, and still increasing profit from the trade of the

colonies. I am neither so weak as to believe, nor so foolish as to affirm, as some did in the beginning of this contest, that the colony trade was the whole support of a majority of the people in Great Britain. How could any person of reflection suppose that the foreign trade of three millions of people, could be the chief support of eight millions, when the internal trade of these eight millions themselves, is and must be the support of double the number that could be supported by the trade of America, besides their trade to every other part of the world? But our trade was still of great importance and value, and yielded to Great Britain yearly a profit vastly superior to any thing they could reasonably hope to draw from taxes and impositions although they had been submitted to without complaint.

This however did not satisfy the king, ministry and parliament of Great Britain. They formed golden, but mistaken and delusive hopes of lightening their own burdens by levying taxes from us. They formed various plans, and attempted various measures, not the most prudent I confess, for carrying their purpose into effect. The ultimate purpose itself was in some degree covered at first, and they hoped to bring it about by slow and imperceptible steps. In some instances the imposition was in itself of little consequence; as appointing the colonies to furnish salt, pepper and vinegar to the troops. But the laudable and jealous spirit of liberty was alive and awake, and hardly suffered any of them to pass unobserved or unresisted. Public spirited writers took care that it should not

sleep; and in particular the celebrated Pennsylvania Farmer's Letters were of signal service, by furnishing the lovers of their country with facts, and illustrating the rights and privileges which it was their duty to defend.

The last attempt made by the ministry in the way of art and address, was repealing the act laying duties on paper, glass, and painter's colours, and leaving a small duty on tea, attended with such circumstances, that the tea should come to us no dearer, but perhaps cheaper, than before. This was evidently with design that we might be induced to let it pass, and so the claim having once taken place, might be carried in other instances to the greatest height. This manœuvre, however, did not elude the vigilance of a public spirited people. The whole colonies declared their resolution never to receive it.

T H O U G H T S

O N

A M E R I C A N L I B E R T Y.

THE Congress is, properly speaking, the representative of the great body of the people of North America. Their election is for a particular purpose, and a particular season only; it is quite distinct from the assemblies of the several provinces. What will be before them, is quite different from what was or could be in the view of the electors, when the assemblies are chosen. Therefore those provinces are wrong, who committed it to the assembly as such, to send delegates, though in some provinces, such as Boston and Virginia, and some others, the unanimity of sentiment is such, as to make it the same thing in effect.

It is at least extremely uncertain, whether it could be proper or safe for the Congress to send, either ambassadors, petition or address, directly to king or parliament, or both. They may treat them as a disorderly, unconstitutional meeting—they may hold their meeting itself to be criminal—they may find so many objections in point of legal form, that

it is plainly in the power of those who wish to be able to do it, to deaden the zeal of the multitude in the colonies, by ambiguous, dilatory, frivolous answers, perhaps severer measures. It is certain that this Congress is different from any regular exertion, in the accustomed forms of a quiet, approved, settled constitution. It is an interruption or suspension of the usual forms, and an appeal to the great law of reason, the first principles of the social union, and the multitude collectively, for whose benefit all the particular laws and customs of a constituted state, are supposed to have been originally established.

There is not the least reason, as yet, to think that either the king, the parliament, or even the people of Great Britain, have been able to enter into the great principles of universal liberty, or are willing to hear the discussion of the point of right, without prejudice. They have not only taken no pains to convince us that submission to their claim is consistent with liberty among us, but it is doubtful whether they expect or desire we should be convinced of it. It seems rather that they mean to force us to be absolute slaves, knowing ourselves to be such by the hard law of necessity. If this is not their meaning, and they wish us to believe that our properties and lives are quite safe in the absolute disposal of the British Parliament, the late acts with respect to Boston, to ruin their capital, destroy their charter, and grant the soldiers a licence to murder them, are certainly arguments of a very singular nature.

Therefore it follows, that the great object of the

approaching Congress should be to unite the colonies, and make them as one body, in any measure of self-defence, to assure the people of Great Britain that we will not submit voluntarily, and convince them that it would be either impossible or unprofitable for them to compel us by open violence.

For this purpose, the following resolutions and recommendations are submitted to their consideration:—

1. To profess as all the provincial and county rulers have done, our loyalty to the king, and our backwardness to break our connection with Great Britain, if we are not forced by their unjust impositions. Here it may not be improper to compare our past conduct with that of Great Britain itself, and perhaps explicitly to profess our detestation of the virulent and insolent abuse of his majesty's person and family, which so many have been guilty of in that island.

2. To declare, not only that we esteem the claim of the British Parliament to be illegal and unconstitutional, but that we are firmly determined never to submit to it, and do deliberately prefer war with all its horrors, and even extermination itself, to slavery rivetted on us and our posterity.

3. To resolve that we will adhere to the interest of the whole body, and that no colony shall make its separate peace, or from the hope of partial distinction, leave others as the victims of ministerial vengeance, but that we will continue united, and pursue the same measures, till American liberty is settled on a solid basis, and in particular, till the

now suffering colony of Massachusetts Bay is restored to all the rights of which it has been, on this occasion, unjustly deprived.

4. That a non-importation agreement, which has been too long delayed, should be entered into immediately, and at the same time, a general non-consumptive agreement, as to all British goods at least, should be circulated universally through the country, and take place immediately, that those who have retarded the non-importation agreement, may not make a profit to themselves by this injury to their country.

5. That some of the most effectual measures should be taken to promote, not only industry in general, but manufactures in particular; such as granting premiums in different colonies for manufactures which can be produced in them; appointing public markets for all the materials of manufacture; inviting over and encouraging able manufacturers in every branch; and appointing societies in every great city, especially in principal sea-ports, to receive subscriptions for directing and encouraging emigrants who shall come over from Europe, whether manufacturers or labourers, and publishing proposals for this purpose, in the British newspapers.

6. That it be recommended to the legislature of every colony, to put their militia upon the best footing; and to all Americans to provide themselves with arms, in case of a war with the Indians, French or Roman Catholics, or in case they should be reduced to the hard necessity of defending themselves from murder and assassination.

7. That a committee should be appointed to draw up an earnest and affectionate address to the army and navy, putting them in mind of their character as Britons, the reproach which they will bring upon themselves, and the danger to which they will be exposed, if they allow themselves to be the instruments of enslaving their country.

8. That a plan of union should be laid down for all the colonies, so that, as formerly, they may correspond and ascertain how they shall effectually cooperate in such measures as shall be necessary to their common defence.

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ON THE
C O N T R O V E R S Y
ABOUT
I N D E P E N D E N C E.

SIR,

I BEG leave by your assistance, to publish a few thoughts upon the manner of conducting, what I think is now called the independent controversy, in which this country in general is so greatly interested. Every one knows that when the claims of the British Parliament were openly made, and violently enforced, the most precise and determined resolutions were entered into, and published by every colony, every county, and almost every township or smaller district, that they would not submit to them. This was clearly expressed in the greatest part of them, and ought to be understood as the implied sense of them all, not only that they would not *soon* or *easily*, but that they would *never*, on *any event*, submit to them. For my own part, I confess, I never would have signed these resolves at first, nor taken up arms in consequence of them afterwards, if I had not been fully

convinced, as I am still, that acquiescence in this usurped power, would be followed by the total and absolute ruin of the colonies. They would have been no better than tributary states to a kingdom at a great distance from them. They would have been therefore, as has been the case with all states in a similar situation from the beginning of the world, the servants of servants from generation to generation. For this reason I declare it to have been my meaning, and I know it was the meaning of thousands more, that though we earnestly wished for reconciliation with safety to our liberties, yet we did deliberately prefer, not only the horrors of a civil war, not only the danger of anarchy, and the uncertainty of a new settlement, but even extermination itself, to slavery, rivetted on us and our posterity.

The most peaceable means were first used; but no relaxation could be obtained: one arbitrary and oppressive act followed after another; they destroyed the property of a whole capital—subverted to its very foundation, the constitution and government of a whole colony, and granted the soldiers a liberty of *murdering* in all the colonies. I express it thus, because they were not to be called to account for it where it was committed, which every body must allow was a temporary, and undoubtedly, in ninety-nine cases of an hundred, must have issued in a total impunity. There is one circumstance however in my opinion, much more curious than all the rest. The reader will say, What can this be? It is the following, which I beg may be particularly attended to:—While all this was a doing, the king in his speeches, the parliament in their acts, and the

people of Great Britain in their addresses, never failed to extol their own lenity. I do not infer from this, that the king, parliament and people of Great Britain are all barbarians and savages—the inference is unnecessary and unjust: But I infer the misery of the people of America, if they must submit *in all cases whatsoever*, to the decisions of a body of the sons of Adam, so distant from them, and who have an interest in oppressing them. It has been my opinion from the beginning, that we did not carry our reasoning fully home, when we complained of an arbitrary prince, or of the insolence, cruelty and obstinacy of Lord North, Lord Bute, or Lord Mansfield. What we have to fear, and what we have now to grapple with, is the ignorance, prejudice, partiality and injustice of human nature. Neither king nor ministry, could have done, nor durst have attempted what we have seen, if they had not had the nation on their side. The friends of America in England are few in number, and contemptible in influence; nor must I omit, that even of these few, not one, till very lately, ever reasoned the American cause upon its proper principles, or viewed it in its proper light.

Petitions on petitions have been presented to king and parliament, and an address sent to the people of Great Britain, which have not merely been fruitless, but treated with the highest degree of disdain. The conduct of the British ministry during the whole of this contest, as has been often observed, has been such, as to irritate the whole people of this continent to the highest degree, and unite them together by the firm bond of necessity

and common interest. In this respect they have served us in the most essential manner. I am firmly persuaded, that had the wisest heads in America met together to contrive what measures the ministry should follow to strengthen the American opposition and defeat their own designs, they could not have fallen upon a plan so effectual, as that which has been steadily pursued. One instance I cannot help mentioning, because it was both of more importance, and less to be expected than any other. When a majority of the New-York Assembly, to their eternal infamy, attempted to break the union of the colonies, by refusing to approve the proceedings of the Congress, and applying to Parliament by separate petition—because they presumed to make mention of the principal grievance of taxation, it was treated with ineffable contempt. I desire it may be observed, that all those who are called the friends of America in Parliament, pleaded strongly for receiving the New-York petition; which plainly shewed, that neither the one nor the other understood the state of affairs in America. Had the ministry been prudent, or the opposition successful, we had been ruined; but with what transport did every friend to American liberty hear, that these traitors to the common cause had met with the reception which they deserved.

Nothing is more manifest, than that the people of Great Britain, and even the king and ministry, have been hitherto exceedingly ignorant of the state of things in America. For this reason, their measures have been ridiculous in the highest degree, and the issue disgraceful. There are some who

will not believe that they are ignorant—they tell us, how can this be? Have they not multitudes in this country who gave them intelligence from the beginning? Yes they have; but they would trust none but what they called official intelligence, that is to say, from obsequious, interested tools of government; many of them knew little of the true state of things themselves, and when they did, would not tell it, lest it should be disagreeable. I have not a very high opinion of the integrity and candour of Dr C——, Dr C——, and other mercenary writers in New-York; yet I firmly believe, that they thought the friends of American liberty much more inconsiderable, both for weight and numbers, than they were. They conversed with few but those of their own way of thinking, and according to the common deception of little minds, mistook the sentiments prevailing within the circle of their own acquaintance, for the judgment of the public.

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ON

C O N D U C T I N G

THE

A M E R I C A N C O N T R O V E R S Y.

SIR,

I TAKE the liberty, by means of your free and uninfluenced press, of communicating to the public a few remarks upon the manner of conducting the American controversy in general, and on some of the writers that have appeared in your paper in particular. That you may not pass sentence upon me immediately as an enemy to the royal authority, and a son of sedition, I declare that I esteem his majesty king George the third to have the only rightful and lawful title to the British crown, which was settled upon his family in consequence of the glorious revolution. You will say, this is nothing at all; it is the creed of the factious Bostonians. I will then go a little further, and say, that I not only revere him as the first magistrate of the realm, but I love and honour him as a man, and am persuaded that he wishes the prosperity and happiness of his people in every part of his dominions. Nay, I

have still more to say, I do not think the British ministry themselves have deserved all the abuse and foul names that have been bestowed on them by political writers. The steps which they have taken with respect to American affairs, and which I esteem to be unjust, impolitic, and barbarous to the highest degree, have been chiefly owing to the two following causes. 1. Ignorance or mistake, occasioned by the misinformation of interested and treacherous persons employed in their service. 2. The prejudices common to them, with persons of all ranks in the island of Great Britain.

Of the first of these, I shall say nothing at present, because perhaps it may occur with as great propriety afterwards. But as to the second, there is to be found in the newspapers enough to convince every man of reflection, that it was not the king and the ministry only, but the whole nation that was enraged against America. The tide is but just beginning to turn; and I am in some doubt whether it has fairly turned yet, upon any larger principles than a regard to their own interest, which may be affected by our proceedings. It can hardly be expected, that the eyes of a whole nation should be at once opened upon the generous principles of universal liberty. It is natural for the multitude in Britain, who have been from their infancy taught to look upon an act of parliament as supreme and irresistible, and to consider the liberty of their country itself as consisting in the dominion of the house of commons, to be surpris'd and astonish'd at any society or body of men, calling in question the authority of parliament, and denying

its power over them. It certainly required time to make them sensible that things are in such a situation in America, that for the house of commons in Great Britain to assume the uncontrouled power of imposing taxes upon American property, would be as inconsistent with the spirit of the British constitution, as it appears at first sight agreeable to its form. It argues great ignorance of human nature to suppose, that because we see a thing clearly, which we contemplate every day, and which it is our interest to believe and maintain, therefore they are destitute of honour and truth who do not acknowledge it immediately, though all their former ideas and habits have led them to a contrary supposition. A man will become an American by residing in the country three months, with a prospect of continuing, more easily and certainly than by reading or hearing of it for three years, amidst the sophistry of daily disputation.

For these reasons, I have often been grieved to see that the pleaders for American liberty, have mixed so much of abuse and invective against the ministry in general, as well as particular persons, with their reasonings in support of their own most righteous claim. I have often said to friends of America, on that subject, it is not the king and ministry, so much as the prejudices of Britons, with which you have to contend. Spare no pains to have them fully informed. (Add to the immoveable firmness with which you justly support your own rights, a continual solicitude to convince the people of Britain, that it is not passion but reason that inspires you.) Tell them it cannot be

ambition, but necessity, that makes you run an evident risk of the heaviest sufferings, rather than forfeit for yourselves and your posterity, the greatest of all earthly blessings.

Another circumstance gave me still more uneasiness, *viz.* that many American patriots seemed to countenance, and to think themselves interested in the prosperity of that most despicable of all factions that ever existed in the British empire, headed by the celebrated John Wilkes, Esq. That shameless gang carried on their attacks with such gross, and indecent, and groundless abuse of the king and his family, that they became odious to the nation, and indeed so contemptible, that the ministry sent at one time the lord mayor of London to the tower, without exciting the least resentment in the persons of property in that great city, so as to be felt in the operations of the treasury.

I am sensible, and I mention it with pleasure, that no American ever proceeded to such offensive extravagance on these subjects, as the people in Britain. Far greater insults were offered to the sovereign, within the city of London, and within the verge of the court, than ever were thought of, or would have been permitted, by the mob in any part of America. Even the writings containing illiberal abuse from England, were scarcely sought after here, and many of them never published, although it could have been done without the least danger of a prosecution. Yet, though the people of America are as dutiful and respectful subjects to the king as any in his dominions, there were some things done, and some things published,

that seemed to intimate that we had one and the same cause with the author of the *North Britain*, No. 45. The evil consequence of this was, that it had a tendency to lead the king and ministry to think that the American claim was no better than the Wilkite clamour, and so to oppose it with the same firmness, and to treat it with the same disdain. Nothing could be more injudicious than this conduct in the Americans; and it arose from the most absolute ignorance of political history. The stamp-act, that first-born of American oppressions, was framed by the chief men of that very faction; and it is plain from their language to this hour, that they make no other use of American disturbances, but as engines of opposition, and to serve the mean purposes of party or of family interest.

I do not mean by this to take any part with or against the present ministry. I have seen many changes of the ministry, without any sensible change of the state of public affairs. Nothing is more common with them than to raise a hideous outcry against a measure, when they are out, and yet, without shame or conscience, do the very same thing as soon as they get in. I look upon the cause of America at present to be a matter of truly inexpressible moment. The state of the human race through a great part of the globe, for ages to come, depends upon it. Any minister or ministry, who is in or out of court-favour, at a particular juncture, is so little a matter, that it should not be named with it.

A R I S T I D E S.

SIR,

I HAVE a few thoughts to communicate, first to yourself, and after that, if you please, to the public, upon the manner of conducting what is now called the independent controversy, in the newspapers. There are to be found in the tracts upon one side of this question, almost without exception, complaints of some restraints, felt or feared, upon the freedom of the press. I shall be glad to be informed, because I am yet ignorant, what foundation there is for these complaints. A pamphlet was published sometime ago, calling itself Common Sense, which nobody was obliged to read, but those who were willing to pay for it, and that pretty dearly too. It was however read very generally, which I suppose must have arisen either from the beauty and elegance of the composition, or from the truth and importance of the matter contained in it. That it did not arise from the first of these causes, I shall take for granted, until I meet with somebody who is of a different opinion; and when this is added to the circumstance of its being sold in the manner above mentioned, it is plain that the subject matter of Common Sense was proposed to the world under every disadvantage, but that of its own manifest importance and apparent truth or probability.

Things being in this situation, after time sufficient to have matured any pamphlet of an ordinary size, out comes an answer to *Common Sense*, under the title of *Plain Truth*. This, in one respect, was perfectly fair, for it was pamphlet against pamphlet; and the said *Plain Truth* also was sold, as well as *Common Sense*, at a very high price. For this last circumstance, there was no need for assigning a reason, because I apprehend it is the undoubted right of every author, to set what price he pleases upon the productions of his genius, and of every printer upon the productions of his press, leaving it always to the public to determine whether they will purchase these productions at that price, or any other. A reason however was assigned, which was as singular as it was unnecessary. We were told that only a small number of copies was printed of the *first* edition, I believe this is the only instance that can be produced, of calling a book in its publication, the first edition. The only reason of making more editions than one of any book, is the speedy sale of that number of copies, which the modesty of the author, or the prudence of the bookseller, thought might be sufficient for the public demand. In this case, there is what is stated by the printers a *call* for another edition. But there are multitudes of publications, as to which this call is never heard, and therefore none of them can, with propriety of speech be styled the first edition. How would it sound if I should say, that a man who came alone into my house, was the first of the company that entered; or that my wife, who is still alive and well, is my first wife, when it is very possible that

ſhe may live till I am unfit for any other wife, or till ſhe is at liberty to take a ſecond husband ?

But further, ſuppoſing that the author and bookſeller had been right in that expectation, which the uſe of the phraſe plainly ſhews the vanity of the one and the miſtake of the other had raiſed in them, I deſire to know how that was a reaſon for printing few copies, and thus rendering them unconſcionably dear. You printers know beſt, but I take it for granted from the nature of the thing, that you print feweſt copies of a book, when you do not expect a general ſale. If I were certain that this diſſertation of mine would cauſe an unuſual demand for the paper that contains it, I would modeſtly ſuggeſt to you, to print three or four hundred of that number more than common. In like manner, if it was certain at the appearance of this pamphlet, that it would be the firſt of many editions, following one another in rapid ſucceſſion, it ſeems the moſt obvious thing in the world that the edition ſhould have been as large as poſſible. Upon the whole, this was an unlucky ſtumble at the threshold in the author of Plain Truth, as well as an unexpected *lapſus* of the great, illuſtrious, and exalted R. B. Providore, as he calls himſelf, to the ſentimentaliſts, for which I find no way of accounting, but that they were inadvertently led by the ſubject they had in hand to act, as well as write, in direct oppoſition to Common Senſe.

Well, the book comes out, of which I had a preſent of two copies, from different perſons, notwithſtanding the ſmallneſs of the number printed. But what ſhall I ſay, either of the ſtyle or reaſoning of

the performance. The reading of three pages gave me the opinion of it, which all who read it afterwards concurred in, and which all who have not read it easily acquiesced in. In execution it was so contemptible, that it could not procure a reading on a subject, as to which, the curiosity of the public was raised to the greatest height; it not only wanted good qualities in point of taste and propriety, but was eminently possessed of every bad one. Common Sense sometimes failed in grammar, but never in perspicuity. Plain Truth was so ridiculously ornamented with vapid, senseless phrases, and feeble epithets, that his meaning could hardly be comprehended. He often put me in mind of the painted windows of some old gothic buildings, which keep out the light. If Common Sense in some places wanted polish, Plain Truth was covered over, from head to foot, with a detestable and stinking varnish.

As to the argument itself, although nothing could be more clearly stated than it was in Common Sense, yet in Plain Truth it was never touched upon in the least degree. The author of Common Sense did not write his book to shew that we ought to resist the unconstitutional claims of Great Britain, which we had all determined to do long before; he wrote it to shew that we ought not to seek or wait for a reconciliation, which in his opinion, is now become both impracticable and unprofitable, but to establish a fixed regular government, and provide for ourselves.—Plain Truth, on the contrary, never attempts to shew that there is the least probability of obtaining reconciliation on such terms as will preserve and secure our liberties, but has exerted all

his little force, to prove, that such is the strength of Great Britain, that it will be in vain for us to resist at all. I will refer it to the impartial judgment of all who have read this treatise, whether the just and proper inference from his reasoning is not, that we ought immediately to send an embassy with ropes about their necks, to make a full and humble surrender of ourselves and all our property to the disposal of the parent state. This they have formally and explicitly demanded of us, and this we have with equal clearness determined we will never do. The question then is; Shall we make resistance with the greatest force, as rebel subjects of a government which we acknowledge, or as independent states against an usurped power which we detest and abhor?

After this reprobated author was off the stage, a new set of antagonists appeared against Common Sense; but instead of publishing the first edition of pamphlets, they chose to appear in the newspapers. The propriety of this I beg leave to examine. Much has been said about the liberty of the press; suffer me to say a few words for the liberty of readers. When a pamphlet is published and sold, nobody is wronged. When the answer to it is published and sold, the thing is quite fair. The writers and their cause will undergo an impartial trial; but when the answering one pamphlet by another, has so shamefully failed, to undertake the same thing by various detached pieces in the newspapers, is cramming the sense or nonsense of these authors down our throats, whether we will or not. I pay for your newspaper, and for two more,

and frequently read others besides. Now, if I pay for news, must my paper be stuffed with dissertations, and must I read them four or five times over? I do declare, that I have paid, and am to pay, three times for the most part of Cato's letters, and if they were to be published in a pamphlet, I would not give a rush for them altogether. But it will be said, the custom is old and universal, to write dissertations in newspapers. I answer, it is both old, universal, and useful, when under proper direction; but it may be abused. It is the right of every publisher of a newspaper to insert in it upon his own judgment and choice, when news are scarce, whatever he thinks will recommend his paper to his readers. In this view, an able writer is a treasure to a publisher of any periodical paper, and ought certainly to be paid liberally, either in money or thanks, or both; and therefore, Sir, if you have paid for, or even solicited from the author, the papers you have published, you are wholly acquitted of blame, further than sometimes a mistaken choice; but if, on the contrary, which I strongly suspect, you and others are paid for inserting political pieces, I affirm, you take money to deceive your readers.

As the subject is of some importance, especially at this time, I shall take the liberty of stating the objections I have against the practice, as above described, leaving you to shape your future course as you think proper, and determining to use my prerogative of taking or giving up your paper as it seems to deserve. In the *first* place, if you admit pieces into your paper for pay, I presume from the

nature of all mankind, that those who pay best, will have the preference. Then shall we have a new standard of literary merit; and a man who is able and willing to refute pernicious principles, or to detect the falsehood of impudent assertions, may yet be too poor to obtain a place, where only it can be done to any good purposes. The moment it is in the power of persons unknown, to conduct or bias the public channels of intelligence, both the people in general, and particular persons, may be deceived and abused in the grossest manner. It is scarce worth while, when things of so much greater moment are to be added, yet I will just mention, that you force nonsense upon us which could not make its appearance in any other mode of publication. Pray, Sir, how much copy money would you have given for a pamphlet in which you had found that ridiculous pun upon Mount Seir, which is to be seen in one of Cato's letters, and the wretched parody upon Hamlet's soliloquy? Parody in general, is one of the lowest kind of writing that has yet found a name; and that poor speech has been repeated, imitated, and mangled so often, that it must excite disgust in every person who has any acquaintance with newspapers and pamphlets to see it again. I could easily mention twenty different ways, in which I have seen that speech parodied. To speak, or not to speak, that is the question—To fight, or not to fight, that is the question—To wed, or not to wed, that is the question—To drink, or not to drink, that is the question, &c. &c. &c. Is this then a time for filling the newspapers with such egregious trifling?

But this is not all; I could mention a case that happened a few years ago in New York. A gentleman had published a small piece by itself, and put his own name and description on the title page; he was immediately attacked in the most virulent and unmannerly style, by anonymous writers in the newspapers, and it was with the utmost difficulty, that even for pay itself, his friends could get a few words inserted by way of reply. This practice, indeed, is liable to the highest degree of corruption. Whether are we to suppose it was pay or profaneness, that introduced into the paper printed by the infamous R——, pieces containing the grossest obscenity, and which ought to have been punished by the magistrates of the place, as a public nuisance? It is also generally believed of that printer, that he encouraged or hired worthless persons to publish aspersions against a gentleman in the neighbourhood, of good estate, but of no great judgment, that he might squeeze money out of him for the liberty of contradicting them. I do not say that things are come this length with you; but the practice leads to it, and therefore should be early and vigorously opposed.

For the above reasons, caution is to be used in admitting essays into the newspapers at any rate, or suffering a controversy in which people are greatly interested, to be agitated there at all. The writers are very apt to become personal and abusive, and to forget the subject by refuting or exposing every thing that has been thrown out by their antagonists. Certainly, however, they ought to confine themselves to the pieces that have been origi-

nally published in the newspapers, and are supposed to have been read by the same persons who read the answers. To answer a whole book by a series of letters in the newspapers, is like attacking a man behind his back, and speaking to his prejudice before persons who never saw nor heard of him, nor are ever likely so to do. Common Sense has been read by many, yet the newspapers are read by many more; and therefore I affirm, that permitting his adversaries to attack him there, is giving them an undue advantage over him, and laying the public at the mercy of those who will not stick to assert any thing whatever in support of a bad cause.

Let no body say I am writing against the freedom of the press. I desire that it should be perfectly free from every bias; but I would have all writings of consequence upon such a cause as this, published by themselves, that they may stand or fall by their own merit, and the judgment of the public. How do you think, Sir, the letter of the *common man* published in your paper, some time ago, would do if lengthened out a little, and printed in a pamphlet? Under a thin and silly pretence of impartiality, he takes upon him to tell us what a number of things must be all previously settled, before we proceed to fix upon a regular plan of government; such as, what price we must expect for our produce at this and the other nation and port. Shall we call this reasoning? Are our understandings to be insulted? If all or any such things must be previously settled, any man of common invention may enumerate fifty thousand perfectly similar, which will never be settled by previous computation

till the end of the world, but will speedily fettle themselves by common interest, when a trade is open, and the *common man* shall never know any thing of the matter.

But what I chiefly complain of, is the tedious, trifling, indecent altercation, occasioned by handling this subject in the newspapers. It certainly requires a speedy decision, as well as mature deliberation; yet must we wait till Cato and other writers have exhausted their invention in the newspapers, from week to week, guessed at one another's persons, and triumphantly expressed their disdain at each other's sentiments or style. If Cato's letters had been a pamphlet, I could have read all that he has said in an hour, and all the reasoning part by itself, in the fourth part of the time; yet after eight letters, must we wait some weeks more, for it would be indecent to proceed to action before he has done speaking. But after all, the worst of it is, that in this way of letter and answer, we never come to the argument at all. If I mistake not, the points to be discussed are very plain and not numerous, and yet wholly untouched, at least by Cato, though he has been repeatedly called upon by his adversaries. For example—Is there a probable prospect of reconciliation on constitutional principles? What are these constitutional principles? Will any body shew that Great Britain can be sufficiently sure of our dependence, and yet we sure of our liberties? A treatise upon this last subject would be highly acceptable to me, and if well executed, useful to all. I shall add but one question more. Will the country be as orderly and

happy, and our efforts for resistance as effectual, by the present rules and temporary proceedings, as when the whole are united by a firm confederacy, and their exertions concentrated like the strength of a single state? I am greatly mistaken if these points ought not to be the hinge of the controversy, and yet if they have been examined fully, or the greatest part of them even touched upon by Cato or his coadjutors, I have read their works with very little attention.

Now, Sir, this paper goes to you, that if you please you may insert it, but neither money nor promise of good deed to make way for it, so that its fate is wholly uncertain.

I remain, Sir,

Yours, &c.

ARISTIDES.

P A R T

OF A

S P E E C H I N C O N G R E S S,

ON THE

C O N F E R E N C E

PROPOSED BY

L O R D H O W E.

MR PRESIDENT,

THE subject we are now upon, is felt and confessed by us all to be of the utmost consequence, and perhaps I may also say, of delicacy and difficulty. I have not been accustomed in such cases to make solemn professions of impartiality, and shall not do it now, because I will not suppose that there are any suspicions to the contrary in the minds of those who hear me. Besides the variety of opinions that have been formed and delivered upon it, seem to prove that we are giving our own proper judgment, without prejudice or influence; which I hope will lead to the discovery of what is most wise and expedient upon the whole.

As the deliberation arises from a message sent to us by Lord Howe, at least by his permission, I

think it is of importance to attend with greater exactness to all the circumstances of that message, than has been done by any gentleman who has yet spoken on the subject. It comes from the commander in chief of the forces of the king of Great Britain, and one who is said to carry a commission to give peace to America.

From the conduct of the ministry at home, from the acts of parliament, and from Lord Howe's proclamation in conformity to both, it is plain, that absolute unconditional submission is what they require us to agree to, or mean to force us to. And from the most authentic private intelligence, the king has not laid aside his personal rancour; it is rather increasing every day. In these circumstances, Lord Howe has evidently a great desire to engage us in a treaty; and yet he has constantly avoided giving up the least punctilio on his side. He could never be induced to give General Washington his title. He plainly tells us he cannot treat with Congress as such; but he has allowed a prisoner of war to come and tell us he would be glad to see us as private gentlemen.

It has been said that this is no insult or disgrace to the Congress; that the point of honour is hard to be got over, in making the first advances. This, Sir, is mistaking the matter wholly. He has got over this point of honour; he has made the first overtures; he has told General Washington, by Colonel Putnam, that he wished that message to be considered as making the first step. His renewed attempts by Lord Drummond, and now by General Sullivan, point

out to all the world that he has made the first step. It will doubtless be related at home, and I am of opinion it is already written and boasted of to the ministry at home, that he has taken such a part. Therefore, any evil or condescension that can attend seeking peace first, has been submitted to by him. Yet has he uniformly avoided any circumstance that can imply that we are any thing else but subjects of the king of Great Britain, in rebellion. Such a message as this, if in any degree intended as respectful to us, ought to have been secret; yet has it been open as the day. In short, such a message was unnecessary; for if he meant only to communicate his mind to the Congress by private gentlemen, he might have done that many ways, and it needed not to have been known either to the public or the Congress, till these private gentlemen came here on purpose to reveal it.—These, then, are the circumstances which attend this message as it is now before us; and the question is, shall we comply with it in any degree, or not? Let us ask what benefit will be derived from it? There is none yet shewn to be possible. It has been admitted by every person without exception who has spoken, that we are not to admit a thought of giving up the independence we have so lately declared: and by the greatest part, if not the whole, that there is not the least reason to expect that any correspondence we can have with him will tend to peace. Yet I think, in the beginning of the debate, such reasonings were used as seemed to me only to conclude that we should grasp at it as a means of peace. We were told that it was easy for us to boast or

be valiant here; but that our armies were running away before their enemies. I never loved boasting, neither here nor any where else. I look upon it as almost a certain forerunner of disgrace. I found my hope of success in this cause, not in the valour of Americans, or the cowardice of Britons, but upon the justice of the cause, and still more upon the nature of things. Britain has first injured and inflamed America to the highest degree; and now attempts, at the distance of three thousand miles, to carry on war with this whole country, and force it to absolute submission. If we take the whole events of the war since it commenced, we shall rather wonder at the uniformity of our success, than be surpris'd at some cross events. We have seen bravery as well as cowardice in this country; and there are no consequences of either that are probable, that can be worth mentioning as ascertaining the event of the contest.

Lord Howe speaks of a decisive blow not being yet struck; as if this cause depended upon one battle, which could not be avoided. Sir, this is a prodigious mistake. We may fight no battle at all for a long time, or we may lose some battles, as was the case with the British themselves in the Scotch rebellion of 1745, and the cause notwithstanding be the same. I wish it were considered, that neither loss nor disgrace worth mentioning, has befallen us in the late engagement, nor comparable to what the British troops have often suffered. At the battle of Preston, Sir, they broke to pieces, and ran away like sheep, before a few highlanders. I myself saw them do the same thing at Falkirk, with

very little difference, a small part only of the army making a stand, and in a few hours the whole retreating with precipitation before their enemies. Did that make any difference in the cause? Not in the least—so long as the body of the nation were determined, on principle, against the rebels. Nor would it have made any other difference, but in time, though they had got possession of London, which they might have easily done if they had understood their business; for the militia in England there gathered together, behaved fifty times worse than that of America has done lately. They generally disbanded and ran off wholly as soon as the rebels came within ten or twenty miles of them. In short, Sir, from any thing that has happened, I see not the least reason for our attending to this delusive message. On the contrary, I think it is the very worst time that could be chosen for us; as it will be looked upon as the effect of fear, and diffuse the same spirit, in some degree, through different ranks of men.

The improbability of any thing arising from this conference, leading to a just and honourable peace, might be shewn by arguments too numerous to be even so much as named. But what I shall only mention is, that we are absolutely certain, from every circumstance, from all the proceedings at home, and Lord Howe's own explicit declaration in his letter to Dr Franklin, that he never will acknowledge the independence of the American States.

I observed that one or two members said, in objection to the report of the board of war, that it

was like a begging of the question, and making a preliminary of the whole subject in debate. Alas, Sir, this is a prodigious mistake. It was not only not the whole, but it was properly no subject of debate at all, till within these three months. We were contending for the restoration of certain privileges under the government of Great Britain, and we were praying for re-union with her. But in the beginning of July, with the universal approbation of all the states now united, we renounced this connection, and declared ourselves free and independent. Shall we bring this into question again? Is it not a preliminary? has it not been declared a preliminary by many gentlemen, who have yet given their opinion for a conference, while they have said they were determined on no account, and on no condition, to give up our independence? It is then a necessary preliminary—and it is quite a different thing from any punctilios of ceremony. If France and England were at war, and they were both desirous of peace, there might be some little difficulty as to who should make the first proposals; but if one of them should claim the other, as they did long ago, as a vassal or dependent subject, and should signify a desire to converse with the other, or some deputed by him, and propose him many privileges, so as to make him even better than before, I desire to know how such a proposal would be received? If we had been for ages an independent republic, we should feel this argument with all its force. That we do not feel it, shews that we have not yet acquired the whole ideas and habits

of independence; from which I only infer, that every step taken in a correspondence as now proposed, will be a virtual or partial renunciation of that dignity so lately acquired.

I beg you would observe, Sir, that Lord Howe himself was fully sensible that the declaration of independence precluded any treaty, in the character in which he appeared; as he is said to have lamented that he had not arrived ten days sooner, before that declaration was made. Hence it appears, that entering into any correspondence with him in the manner now proposed, is actually giving up, or at least subjecting to a new consideration, the independence which we have declared. If I may be allowed to say it without offence, it seems to me that some members have unawares admitted this, though they are not sensible of it; for when they say that it is refusing to treat, unless the whole be granted us, they must mean that some part of that whole must be left to be discussed and obtained, or yielded, by the treaty.

But, Sir, many members of this house have either yielded, or at least supposed, that no desirable peace, or no real good, could be finally expected from this correspondence, which is wished to be set on foot; but they have considered it as necessary in the eye of the public, to satisfy them that we are always ready to hear any thing that will restore peace to the country. In this view it is considered as a sort of trial of skill between Lord Howe and us, in the political art. As I do truly believe, that many members of this house are determined by

this circumstance, I shall consider it with some attention. With this view it will be necessary to distinguish the public in America into three great classes. 1. The tories, our secret enemies. 2. The whigs, the friends of independence, our sincere and hearty supporters. 3. The army, who must fight for us.

As to the first of them, I readily admit that they are earnest for our treating. They are exulting in the prospect of it; they are spreading innumerable lies to forward it. They are treating the whigs already with insult and insolence upon it. It has brought them from their lurking holes: they have taken liberty to say things in consequence of it, which they durst not have said before. In one word, if we set this negotiation on foot, it will give new force and vigour to all their seditious machinations. But, Sir, shall their devices have any influence upon us at all? if they have at all, it should be to make us suspect that side of the question which they embrace. In cases where the expediency of a measure is doubtful, if I had an opportunity of knowing what my enemies wished me to do, I would not be easily induced to follow their advice.

As to the whigs and friends of independence, I am well persuaded that multitudes of them are already clear in their minds, that the conference should be utterly rejected; and to those who are in doubt about its nature, nothing more will be requisite, than a clear and full information of the state of the case, which I hope will be granted them.

As to the army, I cannot help being of opinion, that nothing will more effectually deaden the operations of war, than what is proposed. We do not ourselves expect any benefit from it, but they will. And they will possibly impute our conduct to fear and jealousy as to the issue of the cause; which will add to their present little discouragement, and produce a timorous and despondent spirit. — —
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S P E E C H
IN
C O N G R E S S,
ON THE
C O N V E N T I O N
WITH
G E N E R A L B U R G O Y N E.

MR PRESIDENT,

I AM sensible, as every other gentleman in this house seems to be, of the great importance of the present question. It is of much moment, as to private persons, so to every incorporated society, to preserve its faith and honour in solemn contracts: and it is especially so to us, as representing the United States of America, associated so lately, and just beginning to appear upon the public stage. I hope, therefore, we shall detest the thoughts of embracing any measure which shall but appear to be mean, captious, or insidious, whatever advantage may seem to arise from it. On the other hand, as the interest of this continent is committed to our care, it is our duty, and it will be expected of us, that we give the utmost attention that the

public suffer no injury by deception, or abuse and insult, on the part of our enemies.

On the first of these principles, it is clearly my opinion, that we ought, agreeably to the spirit of the first resolution reported, to find, that the convention is not so broken, on the part of General Burgoyne, as to entitle us to refuse compliance with it on ours, and detain him and his army as prisoners of war. I admit that there is something very suspicious in the circumstance of the colours, when compared with his letter in the London Gazette, which makes mention of the British colours being seen flying upon the fort. I agree, at the same time, that the pretence of the cartouch boxes not being mentioned in the convention is plainly an evasion. They ought, in fair construction, to be comprehended under more expressions of that capitulation than one—arms, ammunition, warlike stores. They were so understood at the capitulation of St John's. In this present instance many of them were delivered up, which certainly ought to have been the case with all or none. And once more, I admit that the detention of the bayonets in the instances in which it was done, was undeniably unjust.

As to the first of these particulars, I am unwilling to distrust the honour of a gentleman solemnly given; and therefore as General Burgoyne has given his honour to General Gates, that the colours were left in Canada, I suppose it is substantially true, whatever small exception there might be to it. The colours seen flying at Tyconderoga, were perhaps old colours occasionally found there, or perhaps taken from some of the vessels lying at the place, and left

there when the army proceeded farther up the country. This is the rather probable, that if the regiments in general had had colours, they must have been seen very frequently by our army in the battles, or upon the march.

As to the other circumstances, they are so mean and little in their nature, that I suppose them to have arisen from the indiscretion of individuals, quite unknown to the commander in chief, or even to the officers in general.

We ought also to consider that it was so unexpected, and must have been so humiliating a thing, for a whole British army to surrender their arms, and deliver themselves up prisoners to those of whom they had been accustomed to speak with such contempt and disdain—that it is not to be wondered at, if the common soldiers did some things out of spite and ill humour, not to be justified. To all these considerations, I will only add, that though the want of the colours deprives us of some ensigns of triumph which it would have been very grateful to the different states to have distributed among them, and to have preserved as monuments of our victory, the other things are so trifling and unessential, that it would probably be considered as taking an undue advantage, if we should retain the whole army here on that account. I would therefore, Sir, have it clearly asserted, that though we are not insensible of those irregularities, and they may contribute to make us attentive to what shall hereafter pass before the embarkation, we do not consider them as such breaches of the convention, as will authorize us in justice to declare it void.

On the other hand, Sir, it is our indispensable duty to use the greatest vigilance, and to act with the greatest firmness, in seeing that justice be done to the American States. Not only caution, but what I may call jealousy and suspicion, is neither unreasonable nor indecent in such a case. This will be justified by the knowledge of mankind. History affords us many examples of evasive and artful conduct in some of the greatest men and most respectable nations, when hard pressed by their necessities, or when a great advantage was in view. The behaviour of the Romans when their army was taken at the Caudine Forks may be produced as one. The conduct of the Samnites was not overwise; but that of the Romans was dishonourable to the last degree, though there are civilians who defend it. Their consul, after his army had passed through the yoke, a symbol at that time of the utmost infamy, made a peace with the Samnites. The senate refused to ratify it; but kept up a shew of regard to the faith plighted, by delivering up the consul to the Samnites, to be used as they thought proper. That people answered, as was easily suggested by plain common sense, that it was no reparation at all to them to torment or put one man to death; but that if they disavowed the treaty, they ought to send back the army to the same spot of ground in which they had been surrounded. No such thing, however, was done. But the Romans, notwithstanding, immediately broke the league; and with the same army which had been let go, or a great part of it, brought the unhappy Samnites to destruction.—Such instances may be brought from

modern as well as ancient times. It is even the opinion of many persons of the best judgment, that the convention entered into by the late duke of Cumberland, was by no means strictly observed by the court of London.

When I consider this, Sir, I confess I look upon the expression in General Burgoyne's letter to General Gates, of November 14, as of the most alarming nature. For no other or better reason, even so much as pretended, than that his quarters were not so commodious as he expected, he declares *the public faith is broke, and we are the immediate sufferers*. In this he expressly declares and subscribes his opinion, that the convention is broken on our part; and in the last expression, we are the *immediate sufferers*, every person must perceive a menacing intimation of who shall be the sufferers when he shall have it in his power.

Being sufficiently settled as to the principle on which I shall found my opinion, it is unnecessary for me to give an account of the law of nature and nations, or to heap up citations from the numerous writers on that subject. But that what I shall say may have the greater force, I beg it may be observed, that the law of nature and nations is nothing else but the law of general reason, or those obligations of duty from reason and conscience, on one individual to another, antecedent to any particular law derived from the social compact, or even actual consent. On this account, it is called the law of nature; and because there are very rarely to be found any parties in such a free state with regard to each other, except independent nations, there-

fore it is also called the law of nations. One nation to another is just as man to man in a state of nature. Keeping this in view, a person of integrity will pass as sound a judgment on subjects of this kind, by consulting his own heart, as by turning over books and systems. The chief use of books and systems is, to apply the principle to particular cases and suppositions differently classed, and to point out the practice of nations in several minute and special particulars, which unless ascertained by practice, would be very uncertain and ambiguous.

But, Sir, I must beg your attention, and that of the house, to the nature of the case before us—at least as I think it ought to be stated. I am afraid that some members may be misled, by considering this declaration of General Burgoyne as an irregularity of the same species, if I may speak so, with the other indiscretions or even frauds, if you please to call them so, of withholding the cartouch boxes, or hiding or stealing the bayonets. The question is not, whether this or the other thing done by the army is a breach of the convention. I have for my part given up all these particulars, and declared my willingness to ratify the convention, after I have heard them and believe them to be true. But we have here the declared opinion of one of the parties, that the public faith is broken by the other. Now, the simplest man in the world knows, that a mutual onerous contract is always conditional; and that if the condition fails on one side, whether from necessity or fraud, the other is free. Therefore we have reason to conclude, that if Mr Burgoyne is of opinion that the convention is broken on our part, he

will not hold to it on his. He would act the part of a fool if he did. It is of no consequence to say his opinion is ill-founded or unjust, as it manifestly is in the present case; for whether it is just or unjust, if it is *really* his opinion (and we should wrong his sincerity to doubt it) the consequences are the same with respect to us. Men do often, perhaps generally, adhere with greater obstinacy to opinions that are ill, than those that are well founded, and avenge imaginary or trifling injuries with greater violence than those that are real and great. Nay, we may draw an argument for our danger from the very injustice of his complaint. If he has conceived the convention to be broken on so frivolous a pretence as that his lodging is not quite commodious, after the just caution inserted by General Gates in the preliminary articles, what have we to expect from him as soon as he shall recover his liberty, and the power of doing mischief? It shews a disposition to find fault, and an impatience under his present confinement, the future effects of which we have the greatest reason to dread.

The more I consider this matter, Sir, the more it strikes me with its force. General Gates says upon the subject of accommodation, *granted as far as circumstances will admit*. Was not this proper and necessary? It was very natural to suppose that General Burgoyne, accustomed to the splendor of the British court, and possessed with ideas of his own importance, would be but ill pleased with the best accommodations that could be obtained for him, and his numerous followers, in one of the frugal states of New England. It was also in the neighbourhood

of a place not in the least expecting the honour of such guests, which had been long the seat of war which had been exhausted by our army, and plundered by their's. One would have thought that the recollection of the ruin of Charlestown, the burning of which, if I mistake not, in a letter of his from Boston to England, he calls a glorious light, might have prevented his complaints, even though he had less elbow room than he wished for. But as circumstances stand, by what conduct shall we be able to satisfy him? When will pretences ever be wanting to one seeking to prove the convention broken, when it is his inclination or his interest to do so?

It has been said, Sir, that we ought not to take this declaration of his in so serious a manner: that it was written rashly, and in the heat of passion; and that he did not mean that we should dread such consequences from it. All this I believe to be strictly true. It probably fell from him in passion—and very unadvisedly. But is he the first person that has rashly betrayed his own mischievous designs? Or is this a reason for our not availing ourselves of the happy discovery? His folly in this instance is our good fortune. He is a man, Sir, whom I never saw, though I have been more than once in England; but if I should say I did not know him, after having read his lofty and sonorous proclamation, and some other productions, I should say what was not true. He is evidently a man showy, vain, impetuous, and rash. It is reported of General Gates, from whom I never heard that any other words of boasting or ostentation fell, that he said he knew Burgoyne, and that he could build a wall for him to run his head against

I do not by any means approve of boasting in general. I think a man should not boast of what he has done, much less of what he only means to do; yet I cannot help saying, that this was a most accurate prediction, which, with the event that followed it, plainly points out to us the character of General Burgoyne. Do you think that such a man would not take the advantage of this pretended breach of the convention on our part; and endeavour to wipe off the reproach of his late ignominious surrender by some signal or desperate undertaking? — —

S P E E C H

IN

C O N G R E S S,

ON A

M O T I O N F O R P A Y I N G

T H E I N T E R E S T O F

L O A N - O F F I C E C E R T I F I C A T E S .

MR PRESIDENT,

I MUST entreat the attention of the house, while I endeavour to state this subject with as much brevity and perspicuity as I am master of. It is not easy to forbear mentioning, yet I shall but barely mention, the distressed and unhappy situation of many of the persons concerned in the public loans. I shall also pass by their characters, as whigs and friends to the American cause. I shall pass by the services which many of them have rendered, in their persons, by their friends, by their purses, and by their prayers. These are affecting considerations, which ought not, and which I am confident will not fail, to have their weight with every member of this house. Let us then, leave these topics altogether, and let us confine ourselves to the duty and

interest of the United States in their present situation, when the care of their affairs is committed to us who are here assembled.

Public credit is of the utmost moment to a state which expects to support itself, at any time; but it is all in all in a time of war. The want of it defeats the wisest measures, and renders every department torpid and motionless. It cannot be denied, that by many unhappy, if not unwise measures, public credit among us has been reduced to the lowest ebb, first by a monstrous and unheard of emission of paper money; next by an act of bankruptcy, reducing it to six pence in the pound; then by a table of depreciation. There remained but one thing which preserved us some degree of respectability, that the promises made to lenders of money before a certain period, had been kept for three years; but now as the last and finishing stroke, this also is broken to pieces, and given to the winds.

Let not gentlemen cry out as before, why distinguish these people from other public creditors? I do not distinguish them by asking payment for them alone; but I distinguish them, because their circumstances and disappointment give a new and disgraceful stroke to the credit of the United States. I distinguish them, because I hope that their sufferings and complaints may induce us to take some step towards the payment of all. Strange it is to the last degree, that this comparison should seem to set gentlemen's minds at ease—because great injury has been done to one class, therefore the same may and ought to be done to another. In this way

it would be very easy to rid ourselves of both, and to say, why all this noise about loan-office certificates? have not all the receivers of continental bills suffered as much or more than they, and had the immense sum of two hundred millions sunk in their hands?—If this would be a good answer in one case, it certainly would in the other. Now is it proper or safe in our present situation, to refuse all kind of payment to the public creditors in this country, so numerous and so variously circumstanced? Let us examine it a little.

We are now endeavouring to borrow, and have the hope of borrowing money in Europe. Is this the way to succeed? Is it not possible, is it not highly probable, that our treatment of our creditors here, will soon be known there? Nay, are not some of our creditors interested in this very measure, residing there? Must not this repeated insolvency, neglect and even contempt of public creditors, prevent people from lending us in Europe? I am sorry to say it, but in truth I do believe that it is their ignorance of our situation and past conduct, that alone will make them trust us. I confess, that if I were at Amsterdam just now and had plenty of money, I would give what I thought proper to the United States, but would lend them none.

It is to be hoped, that in time truth and justice will so far prevail, that our posterity will see the necessity of doing their duty; but at present we seem but little disposed to it.—By making some payment to the public creditors immediately, and prosecuting the measures already begun for further security, we should obtain a dignity and weight a-

broad, that would procure money wherever it could be found.

Let us next consider the effect upon our credit at home. It has ever been my opinion, that if our security were good, and our credit entire, so that obligations by the public would be turned into money at any time, at par or at little less, we should find no inconsiderable number of lenders. Every thing of this kind proceeds upon such certain principles as never to fail in any instance of having their effect. From the general disposition, that prevails in this new country, real estate is less esteemed, and money at interest more, that is to say comparatively speaking, than in the old. Now, whatever success we may have in Europe, I am persuaded we should still need, or at least be much the better of loans at home, which are in their nature preferable to those abroad; and therefore whatever leads utterly to destroy our credit at home, does an essential injury to the public cause. Nay, though there were not any proper loans to be expected or attempted at home, some trusting to public credit would be necessary, to make those to whom we are already indebted patient, or at least silent for some time. To this may be added that annihilating public credit, or rather rendering it contemptible, has an unhappy influence upon every particular internal temporary operation. People will not seek your service, but fly from it. Hence it is well known, that sometimes stores and ammunition or other necessaries for the army, have stood still upon the road till they were half lost for want of ready money, or

people who would trust you, to carry them forward.

We must now go a little further, and say, that if this proposition is enforced, it will be a great hindrance to the payment of taxes, and raising the supplies which must be called for from the states. I do not insist upon what has been already mentioned, that the payment proposed would enable many to pay their taxes; because, though that is certainly true with respect to those who shall receive it, and though it is admitted they are pretty numerous, yet in my opinion, it is but a trifle to the other effects of it, both in the positive and negative way. It would give dignity to the public spirit, and animation to the people in general. It would give the people better thoughts of their rulers, and prevent murmuring at public persons and public measures. I need not tell this house how much depends in a free state, upon having the esteem and attachment of the people. It is but a very general view that people at a distance can take of the management of men in public trust; but in general it is well known, they are abundantly jealous, and as ready to believe evil as good. I do not speak by guess, but from facts, when I tell you that they say, we are now paying prodigious taxes, but what becomes of all the money? The army, say they, get none of it, being almost two years in arrear. The public creditors say they get none of it, not even interest for their money. This was told me by the county collector of Somerset county, New Jersey, who was not a contentious man, but wished to know what he ought to say to the people. Now this

small payment, as it would be very general, would be much talked of; and I am persuaded, for its general good influence, would be worth all, and more than all the sum we shall bestow. I have heard it said in some similar cases, you must sometimes throw a little water into a pump, in order to bring a great deal out of it.

Now, on the other hand, what will be the consequence of a total refusal? You have told the public creditors, that you have no money in Europe to draw for. They will very speedily hear of this loan in Holland. They are sufficiently exasperated already; this will add to their indignation. They really are already fore; their minds will be rankled more than ever. They are looking with an evil eye upon some new men coming into play, and thinking themselves unjustly and ungratefully used. I believe they are not so much without principle, as to turn their backs upon the public cause; but a spirit of faction and general discontent, upon such plausible grounds, may do it essential injury. They may combine to refuse their taxes; and if any such unhappy association should be formed, it would spread; and many from a blind attachment to their own interest, would pretend to be upon the same footing, though they have no concern in the matter: and if this disposition should become general, it would put an entire stop to all our proceedings. This discouraging prospect is not merely founded on conjecture. I have been told that there have already been meetings for entering into concert for refusing to pay taxes. Is it possible we can, in our circumstances, more profitably employ the sum

mentioned in the motion, than in giving satisfaction to a deserving body of men, and in preventing evils of so alarming a nature.

It is possible, Sir, that some are comforting themselves with their own sincerity and good intentions ; that they ultimately resolve to pay all honourably ; that they have taken, and are taking measures to prepare for it.—A sum of money is called for on purpose to pay the interest of the public debts ; and the five per cent. impost is appropriated to the same purpose. But, Sir, it will take a considerable time before the most speedy of these measures can bring money into the treasury ; and in the mean time the late step of refusing to draw bills, has given such a stroke to loan-office certificates, that their value is fallen to a very trifle—the spirits of the people are broken—a gentleman told me the other day, I see the loan-office certificates are gone, as well as all the rest of the money. The inevitable consequence will be, that hard and irresistible necessity, or incredulity and ill humour, will make them part with them for a mere nothing ; and then the greatest part of them by far will really be in the hands of speculators. When this is notoriously the case, I shall not be at all surpris'd to find that somebody will propose a new scale of depreciation, and say to the holders, you shall have them for what they were worth and generally sold at, at such a time. Past experience justifies this expectation, and no declaration we can make to the contrary, will be stronger than that of Congress in the year 1779, that they would redeem the money, and that it was a vile and slanderous assertion, that they

would suffer it to sink in people's hands. I know particular persons also, who by believing this declaration, lost their all. Now, if this shall be the case again, public faith will be once more trodden under foot; and the few remaining original holders of certificates will loose them entirely, being taken in connection with those who purchased them at an under value.

P A R T
OF A
S P E E C H IN C O N G R E S S,
ON THE
F I N A N C E S.

MR PRESIDENT,

I HAVE little to say against the resolutions, as they stand reported by the superintendant of finance. Perhaps they are unavoidable in the circumstances to which we are reduced. Yet the step seems to be so very important, and the consequences of it so much to be dreaded, that I must intreat the patience of the house, till I state the danger in a few words, and examine whether any thing can possibly be added to it, which may in some degree prevent the evils which we apprehend, or at least exculpate Congress, and convince the public that it is the effect of absolute necessity.

Sir, if we enter into these resolves as they stand, it will be a deliberate deviation from an express and absolute stipulation, and therefore it will, as it was expressed by an honourable gentleman the other day,

give the last stab to public credit. It will be in vain, in future, to ask the public to believe any promise we shall make, even when the most clear and explicit grounds of confidence are produced. Perhaps it will be said that public credit is already gone; and it hath been said that there is no more in this, than in neglecting to pay the interest of the loan-office certificates of later date; but though there were no other differences between them, this being another and fresher instance of the same, will have an additional evil influence upon public credit. But in fact, there is something more in it than in the other. The solemn stipulation of Congress, specifying the manner in which the interest was to be paid, was considered as an additional security, and gave a value to these certificates, which the others never had. I beg that no gentleman may think that I hold it a light matter to withhold the interest from the other lenders; they will be convinced, I hope, of the contrary before I have done; but I have made the comparison merely to shew what will be the influence of this measure upon the public mind, and therefore upon the credit and estimation of Congress. Now it is plain, that the particular promise of giving bills upon Europe, as it had an effect, and was intended to have it in procuring credit, it must, when broken or withdrawn, operate in the most powerful manner to our prejudice. I will give an example of this, in our melancholy past experience. The old continental money was disgraced and sunk, first by the act of March 18th, 1780, (which the Duke de Vergennes justly called an act of bankruptcy,) telling you would pay no more of your debt

than sixpence in the pound. This was afterwards further improved by new estimates of depreciation, of seventy-five and one hundred and fifty, for new state paper, which itself was sunk to two or three for one; and yet bad as these men's cases were, the disgrace arising from them was more than doubled, by people's referring to, and repeating a public declaration of Congress, in which we complained of the injurious slanders of those that said we would suffer the money to sink in the hands of the holders, and making the most solemn protestations, that ultimately the money should be redeemed dollar for dollar; and to my knowledge, some trusting to that very declaration, sold their estates at what they thought a high price, and brought themselves to utter ruin.

I cannot help requesting Congress to attend to the state of those persons who held the loan-office certificates which drew interest on France; they are all, without exception, the firmest and safest friends to the cause of America; they were in general the most firm, and active, and generous friends. Many of them advanced large sums of hard money, to assist you in carrying on the war in Canada. None of them at all put away even the loan-office certificates on speculation, but either from a generous intention of serving the public, or from an entire confidence in the public credit. There is one circumstance which ought to be attended to, *viz.* the promise of interest—bills on Europe were not made till the 10th of September, 1777. It was said a day or two ago, that those who sent in cash a little before March 1st, 1778, had by the depreciated state of

the money, received almost their principal; but this makes but a small part of the money, for there were but six months for the people to put in the money, after the promise was made; only the most apparent justice obliged Congress to extend the privilege to those who had put in their money before. Besides, nothing can be more unequal and injurious than reckoning the money by the depreciation either before or after the 1st of March, 1778, for a great part of the money in all the Loan offices was such as had been paid up in its nominal value, in consequence of the Tender laws.

This points you, Sir, to another class of people, from whom money was taken, *viz.* widows and orphans, corporations and public bodies. How many guardians were actually led, or indeed were obliged, to put their depreciated and depreciating money into the funds—I speak from good knowledge. The trustees of the college of New Jersey, in June, 1777, directed a committee of theirs to put all the money that should be paid up to them, in the loan-office, so that they have now nearly invested all. Some put in before March, 1778, and a greater part subsequent to that date. Now it must be known to every body, that since the payment of the interest bills gave a value to these early loans, many have continued their interest in them, and rested in a manner wholly on them for support. Had they entertained the slightest suspicion that they would be cut off, they could have sold them for something, and applied themselves to other means of subsistence; but as the case now stands, you are reducing not an inconsiderable number of

your very best friends to absolute beggary. During the whole period, and through the whole system of continental money, your friends have suffered alone—the disaffected and lukewarm have always evaded the burden—have in many instances turned the sufferings of the country to their own account—have triumphed over the whigs—and if the whole shall be crowned with this last stroke, it seems but reasonable that they should treat us with insult and derision. And what faith do you expect the public creditors should place in your promise of ever paying them at all? What reason, after what is past, have they to dread that you will divert the fund which is now mentioned as a distant source of payment? If a future Congress should do this, it would not be one whit worse than what has been already done.

I wish, Sir, this house would weigh a little, the public consequences that will immediately follow this resolution. The grief, disappointment and sufferings of your best friends, has been already mentioned—then prepare yourselves to hear from your enemies the most insulting abuse. You will be accused of the most oppressive tyranny, and the grossest fraud. If it be possible to poison the minds of the public, by making this body ridiculous or contemptible, they will have the fairest opportunity of doing so, that ever was put in their hands. But I must return to our plundered, long ruined friends; we cannot say to what their rage and disappointment may bring them; we know that nothing on earth is so deeply resentful, as despised or rejected love—whether they may proceed to any violent or disor-

derly measures, it is impossible to know. We have an old proverb, That the eyes will break through stone walls, and for my own part, I should very much dread the furious and violent efforts of despair. Would to God, that the independence of America was once established by a treaty of peace in Europe; for we know that in all great and fierce political contention, the effect of power and circumstances is very great; and that if the tide has run long with great violence one way, if it does not fully reach its purpose, and is by any means brought to a stand, it is apt to take a direction, and return with the same or greater violence than it advanced. Must this be risked at a crisis when the people begin to be fatigued with the war, to feel the heavy expence of it, by paying taxes; and when the enemy, convinced of their folly in their former severities, are doing every thing they can to ingratiate themselves with the public at large. But though our friends should not be induced to take violent and seditious measures all at once, I am almost certain it will produce a particular hatred and contempt of Congress, the representative body of the union, and still a greater hatred of the individuals who compose the body at this time. One thing will undoubtedly happen; that it will greatly abate the respect which is due from the public to this body, and therefore weaken their authority in all other parts of their proceedings.

I beg leave to say, Sir, that in all probability, it will lay the foundation for other greater and more scandalous steps of the same kind. You will say what greater can there be? Look back a little to

your history. The first and great deliberate breach of public faith, was the act of March 18th, 1780, reducing the money to forty for one, which was declaring you would pay your debt at sixpence in the pound—But did it not turn? No, by and by it was set in this state and others at seventy-five, and finally set one hundred and fifty for one, in new paper, in state paper, which in six months, rose to four for one. Now, Sir, what will be the case with these certificates? Before this proposal was known, their fixed price was about half a crown for a dollar of the estimated depreciated value; when this resolution is fairly fixed, they will immediately fall in value, perhaps to a shilling the dollar, probably less. Multitudes of people in despair, and absolute necessity, will sell them for next to nothing, and when the holders come at last to apply for their money, I think it highly probable, you will give them a scale of depreciation, and tell them, they cost so little that it would be an injury to the public to pay the full value. And in truth, Sir, supposing you finally to pay the full value of the certificates to the holders, the original and most meritorious proprietors will in many, perhaps in most cases, lose the whole.

It will be very proper to consider what effect this will have upon foreign nations; certainly it will set us in a most contemptible light. We are just beginning to appear among the powers of the earth, and it may be said of national, as of private characters, they soon begin to form, and when disadvantageous ideas are formed, they are not easily altered or destroyed. In the very instance before us, many of

these certificates are possessed by the subjects of foreign princes, and indeed are in foreign parts. We must not think that other sovereigns will suffer their subjects to be plundered in so wanton and extravagant a manner. You have on your files, letters from the Count de Vergennes, on the subject of your former depreciation; in which he tells you, that whatever liberty you take with your own subjects, you must not think of treating the subjects of France in the same way; and it is not impossible that you may hear upon this subject, what you little expect, when the terms of peace are to be settled. I do not in the least doubt that it may be demanded that you should pay to the full of its nominal value, all the money as well as loan-office certificates, which shall be found in the hands of the subjects of France, Spain or Holland, and it would be perfectly just. I have mentioned France, &c. but it is not only not impossible, but highly probable, that by accident or danger, or both, many of these loan-office certificates may be in the hands of English subjects. Do you think they will not demand payment? Do you think they will make any difference between their being before or after March 1st, 1778? And will you present them with a scale of depreciation? Remember the affair of the Canada bills, in the last peace between England and France—I wish we could take example from our enemies. How many fine dissertations have we upon the merit of national truth and honour in Great-Britain. Can we think without blushing, upon our contrary conduct in the matter of finance? By their punctuality in fulfilling their engagements as to interest, they have been able to

support a load of debt altogether enormous. Be pleased to observe, Sir, that they are not wholly without experience of depreciation: navy debentures and sailors' tickets have been frequently sold at an half, and sometimes even at a third of their value; by that means they seem to be held by that class of men called by us speculators. Did that government ever think of presenting the holders of them, when they came to be paid, with a scale of depreciation? The very idea of it would knock the whole system of public credit to pieces.

But the importance of this matter will be felt before the end of the war. We are at this time earnestly soliciting foreign loans. With what face can we expect to have credit in foreign parts, and in future loans, after we have so notoriously broken every engagement which we have hitherto made? A disposition to pay, and visible probable means of payment, are absolutely necessary to credit; and where that is once established, it is not difficult to borrow. If it may be a mean of turning the attention of Congress to this subject, I beg of them to observe, that if they could but lay down a foundation of credit, they would get money enough to borrow in this country, where we are. There is property enough here; and, comparatively speaking, there is a great number of persons here who would prefer money at interest to purchasing and holding real estates. The ideas of all old country people are high in favour of real estate. Though the interest of money, even upon the very best security there, is from four to four and a half, four and three quarters, and five per centum; yet when any

real estate is to be sold, there will be ten purchasers where one only can obtain it, and it will cost so much as not to bring more than two, two and a half, and at most three per centum.

It is quite otherwise in this country, and indeed it ought to be otherwise. To purchase an estate in the cultivated parts of the country, except what a man possesses himself, will not be near so profitable as the interest of money; and in many cases where it is rented out, it is so wasted and worn by the tenant, that it would be a greater profit at the end of seven years, that the land had been left to itself, to bear woods and bushes that should rot upon the ground, without any rent at all. Any body also may see, that it is almost universal in this country, when a man dies leaving infant children, that the executors sell all his property to turn it into money, and put it in securities for easy and equal division.

All these things, Mr President, proceed upon certain and indubitable principles, which never fail of their effect. Therefore, you have only to make your payments as soon, as regular, and as profitable as other borrowers, and you will get all the money you want; and by a small advantage over others, it will be poured in upon you, so that you shall not need to go to the lenders, for they will come to you.

P A R T

O F A

S P E E C H I N C O N G R E S S,

U P O N T H E

C O N F E D E R A T I O N.

THE absolute necessity of union to the vigour and success of those measures on which we are already entered, is felt and confessed by every one of us, without exception; so far, indeed, that those who have expressed their fears or suspicions of the existing confederacy proving abortive, have yet agreed in saying that there must and shall be a confederacy for the purposes of, and till the finishing of this war. So far it is well; and so far it is pleasing to hear them express their sentiments. But I intreat gentlemen calmly to consider how far the giving up all hopes of a lasting confederacy among these states, for their future security and improvement, will have an effect upon the stability and efficacy of even the temporary confederacy, which all acknowledge to be necessary? I am fully persuaded, that when it ceases to be generally known, that the delegates of the provinces consider a lasting union as impracticable, it will greatly derange the minds.

of the people, and weaken their hands in defence of their country, which they have now undertaken with so much alacrity and spirit. I confess it would to me greatly diminish the glory and importance of the struggle, whether considered as for the rights of mankind in general, or for the prosperity and happiness of this continent in future times.

It would quite depreciate the object of hope, as well as place it at a greater distance. For what would it signify to risk our possessions and shed our blood to set ourselves free from the encroachments and oppression of Great Britain—with a certainty, as soon as peace was settled with them of a more lasting war, a more unnatural, more bloody, and much more hopeless war, among the colonies themselves?—Some of us consider ourselves as acting for posterity at present, having little expectation of living to see all things fully settled, and the good consequences of liberty taking effect. But how much more uncertain the hope of seeing the internal contests of the colonies settled upon a lasting and equitable footing?

One of the greatest dangers I have always considered the colonies as exposed to at present, is treachery among themselves, augmented by bribery and corruption from our enemies. But what force would be added to the arguments of seducers, if they could say with truth, that it was of no consequence whether we succeeded against Great Britain or not; for we must, in the end, be subjected, the greatest part of us, to the power of one or more of the strongest or largest of the American states? And here I would apply the argument which we have

so often used against Great Britain—that in all history we see that the slaves of freemen, and the subject states of republics, have been of all others the most grievously oppressed. I do not think the records of time can produce an instance of slaves treated with so much barbarity as the Helotes by the Lacedemonians, who were the most illustrious champions for liberty in all Greece; or of provinces more plundered and spoiled than the states conquered by the Romans, for one hundred years before Cæsar's dictatorship. The reason is plain; there are many great men in free states. There were many consular gentlemen in that great republic, who all considered themselves as greater than kings, and must have kingly fortunes, which they had no other way of acquiring but by governments of provinces, which lasted generally but one year, and seldom more than two.

In what I have already said, or may say, or any cases I may state, I hope every gentleman will do me the justice to believe, that I have not the most distant view to particular persons or societies, and mean only to reason from the usual course of things, and the prejudices inseparable from men as such. And can we help saying, that there will be a much greater degree, not only of the corruption of particular persons, but the defection of particular provinces from the present confederacy, if they consider our success itself as only a prelude to a contest of a more dreadful nature, and indeed much more properly a civil war than that which now often obtains the name? Must not small colonies in particular be in danger of saying, we must secure ourselves?

If the colonies are independent states, separate and disunited, after this war, we may be sure of coming off by the worse. We are in no condition to contend with several of them. Our trade in general, and our trade with them, must be upon such terms as they shall be pleased to prescribe.—What will be the consequence of this? Will they not be ready to prefer putting themselves under the protection of Great Britain, France or Holland, rather than submit to the tyranny of their neighbours, who were lately their equals? Nor would it be at all impossible, that they should enter into such rash engagements as would prove their own destruction, from a mixture of apprehended necessity and real resentment.

Perhaps it may be thought that breaking off this confederacy, and leaving it unfinished after we have entered upon it, will be only postponing the duty to some future period? Alas, nothing can exceed the absurdity of that supposition. Does not all history cry out, that a common danger is the great and only effectual means of settling difficulties, and composing differences. Have we not experienced its efficacy in producing such a degree of union through these colonies, as nobody would have prophesied, and hardly any would have expected?

If therefore, at present, when the danger is yet imminent, when it is so far from being over, that it is but coming to its height, we shall find it impossible to agree upon the terms of this confederacy, what madness is it to suppose that there ever will be a time, or that circumstances will so change, as

to make it even probable, that it will be done at an after season? Will not the very same difficulties that are in our way, be in the way of those who shall come after us? Is it possible that they should be ignorant of them, or inattentive to them? Will they not have the same jealousies of each other, the same attachment to local prejudices, and particular interest? So certain is this, that I look upon it as on the repentance of a sinner—Every day's delay, though it adds to the necessity, yet augments the difficulty, and takes from the inclination.

There is one thing that has been thrown out, by which some seem to persuade themselves of, and others to be more indifferent about the success of a confederacy—that from the nature of men, it is to be expected, that a time must come when it will be dissolved and broken in pieces. I am none of those who either deny or conceal the depravity of human nature, till it is purified by the light of truth, and renewed by the Spirit of the living God. Yet I apprehend there is no force in that reasoning at all. Shall we establish nothing good, because we know it cannot be eternal? Shall we live without government, because every constitution has its old age, and its period? Because we know that we shall die, shall we take no pains to preserve or lengthen out life? Far from it, Sir: it only requires the more watchful attention, to settle government upon the best principles, and in the wisest manner, that it may last as long as the nature of things will admit.

But I beg leave to say something more, though with some risk that it will be thought visionary and

romantic. I do expect, Mr President, a progress, as in every other human art, so in the order and perfection of human society, greater than we have yet seen; and why should we be wanting to ourselves in urging it forward? It is certain, I think, that human science and religion have kept company together, and greatly assisted each other's progress in the world. I do not say that intellectual and moral qualities are in the same proportion in particular persons; but they have a great and friendly influence upon one another, in societies and larger bodies.

There have been great improvements, not only in human knowledge, but in human nature; the progress of which can be easily traced in history. Every body is able to look back to the time in Europe, when the liberal sentiments that now prevail upon the rights of conscience, would have been looked upon as absurd. It is but little above two hundred years since that enlarged system called the balance of power, took place; and I maintain, that it is a greater step from the former divided and hostile situation of kingdoms and states, to their present condition, than it would be from their present condition to a state of more perfect and lasting union. It is not impossible, that in future times all the states on one quarter of the globe, may see it proper by some plan of union, to perpetuate security and peace; and sure I am, a well planned confederacy among the states of America, may hand down the blessings of peace and public order to many generations. The union of the seven provinces of the Low Countries, has never yet been

broken; and they are of very different degrees of strength and wealth. Neither have the Cantons of Switzerland ever broken among themselves, though there are some of them protestants, and some of them papists, by public establishment. Not only so, but these confederacies are seldom engaged in a war with other nations. Wars are generally between monarchs, or single states that are large. A confederation of itself keeps war at a distance from the bodies of which it is composed.

For all these reasons, Sir, I humbly apprehend, that every argument from honour, interest, safety and necessity, conspire in pressing us to a confederacy; and if it be seriously attempted, I hope, by the blessing of God upon our endeavours, it will be happily accomplished.

S P E E C H
IN
C O N G R E S S,
ON THE APPOINTMENT OF
P L E N I P O T E N T I A R I E S.

MR PRESIDENT,

I AM sorry to observe, that after going through the instructions to be given to our plenipotentiary or plenipotentiaries, we should have so warm a debate, and indeed seem to be so equally divided upon the question, whether there should be one or more to whom we will entrust the negotiation?

As to the practice of European nations, I believe it is so various as not to afford any argument on one side or the other; we may appoint one or more—there will be nothing singular or remarkable in it, so as to make our conduct look like ignorance in such matters. I am inclined to think, however, that negotiations are generally conducted near to their conclusion, by one confidential person, though after the more important preliminaries are settled, more may be sometimes appointed, to give greater solemnity to the conclusion. We are therefore at

liberty to determine ourselves wholly by the general reason and nature of the thing, and our own particular circumstances.

As to the first of these, on the side of one person, it may be said, there will be more precision, more expedition, more uniformity, and more certainty of agreement with others, and consistency with himself. And the person whom we have employed, is a man of sound and clear understanding, and has had the advantage of being a long time in Europe, and no doubt has been turning his thoughts, and making enquiries upon the subject ever since he went there; so that we may suppose him pretty ripely advised.

On the other side, it may be said, that, if alone, he might be at a loss, and that it would be of advantage to him to have the advice of others. It is even said, that there is a necessity of others better acquainted with parts of the country different from those with which he has been chiefly connected.—As to council, that does not strike me much—perhaps there is greater safety in one than three; because he is fully responsible; whereas if a common council is taken, the blame is divided, and every one is less difficulted to justify his conduct in the issue. Besides, is there no danger to the cause itself, from an obstinate division of sentiments in those who are entrusted with the conduct of it? This would expose us, in the opinion of those who observed it, and might perhaps give less respect to what each or all of them might say or do.

As to the necessity of persons from different parts of the country, it is not easy to conceive what cir-

cumstances, in a negociation of this kind, can be peculiar to one part of the country more than another. If it were to make rules for the internal government, taxation, or commerce of the states, there would be some force in the remark; but when it is only to make peace for the liberty and protection of all, there seems to be little weight in it.

But now let us consider our particular circumstances. Mention has been made of the difference between Mr Adams and the count de Vergennes. I have given particular attention to all that was said in his letter upon that subject, and all that has been said by the minister of France here; and there was not one hint given that could lead us to think it was their desire or expectation that he should be dismissed or superseded, or even bridled by the addition of others in the commission. We have fully complied with their desire upon this subject, in the instructions. There is the greatest reason to think that they are well satisfied upon it. But if we should still go further, and either discharge him, or do what is in substance the same, or might be supposed or conceived by him to be the same, this would rather be an act of too great obsequiousness, and but an ill example for the future conduct of our affairs. What we do now, will be often mentioned in after times; and if the like practice prevail, it will discourage public servants from fidelity, and lessen their dignity and firmness. There is also some reason to fear that there may not be the most perfect agreement among them; and if a jealousy in point of affection between them should arise, it might still be more fatal than a dif-

ference in opinion. You may observe, that Dr Franklin particularly mentions the impropriety of having more ministers than one at one court and in the same place. We have felt the bad consequences of that already in more instances than one. Congress were led into such steps as ended in our parting with Mr Lee, chiefly by the argument of his being disagreeable to the French court; and though he was in my opinion one of the most able, faithful, and active servants we ever had, and certainly one of the most disinterested—he was but barely able to go off with a cold ceremonial adieu, that had very little in it of a grateful sense of his services, or cordial approbation. It is not pleasant to reflect, Mr President, that so early in the history of this new state, persons in public employment should be so prone to enter into ambitious contention, and push one another into disgrace.

I cannot help putting you in mind, upon this subject, of what has just now come to light. You are informed by the French court, in the most authentic manner, and indeed if I am not mistaken, it is by implication at least in the king's letter, that you had been ill served by the people you employed there, and cheated both in point of quality and price; and that on this account they intend to give directions on that subject themselves. Now, Sir, perhaps it may be news to many members of this body, that these were the very contracts made by Mr Dean, without the knowledge or consent of Mr Lee, of which Mr Lee loudly complained. These were the very servants whose accounts Mr Lee objected to, and whose conduct he censured. But what did he get

by it? Mr Dean was supported by his venerable old friend, as he called him: Mr Lee was complained of as jealous and troublesome, and disagreeable to the court of France; and not only opposed and slighted by many members of this house, but I may say attacked and persecuted in such a manner, that if he had not been supported with a generous frankness by others, might have ended in public infamy.

I have just further upon this subject to observe, that you very lately sent a new minister to the French court, Mr Laurens—a measure much disapproved by many; and it was then foretold, it would be a disgraceful thing to Dr Franklin. Probably he has conceived it in that light; and as he has no desire at all to return home, I am well convinced that this is the true cause of the desire expressed in his last letter to resign his commission.

Some have mentioned the importance of the matter, and that the chance is greater against corruption, where three are to be taken off, than one. It is very true, that *ceteris paribus*, as is commonly said, there is a greater chance for one incorruptible person in three than in one: but there are single persons in whom I would confide as much as in ten. And besides, the thing may be taken the other way; for there is a greater chance of finding one corruptible person in three than in one; and in a commission of that nature, one traitor is able to do much mischief, though the others are perfectly upright. He, being admitted into the secret, may not only disclose measures, but perplex them, let the abilities of his colleagues be what they will. I have seen a man in Congress, who upon the supposition of his being a

traitor, I am sure had address enough to draw many into his measures—many not contemptible in understanding, and sincerely attached to their country's cause.

Before I conclude, I would say a little upon our circumstances in another respect. The first appearances we make upon the public stage, are of consequence. It is to be wished therefore, that the credit of the United States were consulted. If we were sure that our commissioners would be immediately admitted to public and co-ordinate session with the other plenipotentiaries, perhaps a commission of three would be august and honourable; but if, as I strongly suspect will be the case, they are not at first publicly admitted at all, but obliged to negotiate through the plenipotentiaries of France—if, as it is not impossible, even in the settlement of the treaty, we are not considered as the formal contracting parties at all, but our interest attended to in articles as it were occasionally introduced—if this is done as a salvo to the honour of England, and to purchase for us advantages substantial and durable, a pompous commission to a number of delegates will rather lessen our dignity, and detract from our wisdom and caution.

Upon the whole, Sir, I am of opinion, that it would be much better to assign to one the commission already given, with the instructions which have been cordially agreed upon, and seem to be in every respect agreeable to the desires of the court of France, and the opinion of the king's minister in this country.

● N T H E
P R O P O S E D M A R K E T
I N
G E N E R A L W A S H I N G T O N ' S C A M P .

TO HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL WASHINGTON, AND THE OFFICERS OF THE AMERICAN ARMY.

SIR,

ABOUT ten days ago, I was informed that you were consulting with the farmers in the neighbourhood, and laying a plan for holding a market at the camp. This was to me the most pleasing news I had heard from camp for a long time. I supposed that you had now discovered the true and proper way of providing comforts and refreshments to your soldiers, which, pardon me, I think has hitherto, in God's most holy will, been *hid from your eyes*. Last week's news-paper brought us the plan, in which I have been so much disappointed, that I have taken pen in hand, to make a few remarks upon it, and submit them to your view. Rest assured that they come from a firm friend to American liberty, who has felt the tyranny of General Howe, and therefore holds him and his cause in detestation. You are not to expect from a plain country farmer, high sounding language,

and well turned phrases—It is possible I may be held in derision for this, by some of your learned generals; for I am told you have some who can write full as well as they can fight, perhaps better; be that however as it may, I mean to write only of what I think I understand, and shall make use of the plainest words possible, that I may be understood.

I must begin by saying, that if you are under any difficulty in supplying your army, either with the necessaries or conveniencies of life, it is wholly owing to mistaken principles, or unfaithful conduct in the manner of procuring them. You are in the midst of a plentiful country.—You command it by your sword, except a small spot in which the enemy is confined; and I most heartily wish you would pen them in closer than you do.—You have also the hearts of the country; for let people talk as they please of the number of tories, they are altogether inconsiderable to the friends of liberty, in every state in this continent. When the English army leaves any place, we do not need your army to conquer it for us. All that were friends to them, flee with them, or skulk into corners trembling for their lives. Let us consider then how the matter stands—Your army consists, I shall suppose at present of 20,000 men; for though it was considerably larger lately, I reckon from the number gone home on recruiting parties, and for other reasons, that may be about or near the truth. Suppose it however 25,000; if these were distributed one in every house, for the twenty-five thousand houses that are nearest to the camp, they would not reach

so far east as the Delaware, nor so far west as Lancaster; and though no provisions were brought into that space on their account, they could be well fed, and the burden never felt. This shews that the whole difficulty arises from the necessity of procuring and transporting provisions to such a number of men collected together in one place, a difficulty which one would think might be easily surmounted. It is not my intention at present, to make remarks on the commissary's department for supplying the capital necessaries, though I want not inclination. Suffice it to say, that for refreshments and smaller necessaries, you are now making an attempt towards the only effectual way, *viz.* a market, or in other words, inviting people to bring them to you of their own accord.

Now, Sir, I have read and considered your plan, the chief part of which is settling the prices of a variety of articles, which it is expected will be exposed to sale. Fixing the price of commodities, has been attempted by law in several states among us, and it has increased the evil it was meant to remedy, as the same practice ever has done since the beginning of the world. Such laws, when they only say men shall be punished if they sell at any higher prices than the legal, and that if any will not sell at these prices, their goods shall be taken by force, have some meaning in them, though little wisdom; but to publish a list of fixed prices, as an encouragement to a weekly market, is a new strain of policy indeed. If people bring their goods to market, and are willing to sell them at these, or lower prices, is not that enough? and if they are

not willing to sell, how shall they be made willing to come? Probably you were told these were reasonable prices; now I shall be glad to know what you call a reasonable price. If it be that which is proportioned to the demand on the one side, and the plenty or scarcity of goods on the other, I agree to it; but I affirm that this will fix of itself, by the consent of the buyer and seller, better than it can be done by any politician upon earth. If you mean any thing else, it signifies nothing at all, whether it be *reasonable* or not; for if it is not *agreeable*, as well as reasonable, you might have one market day, but not a second. There are some things which are not the object of human laws, and such are all those that essentially depend for their success upon inward inclination. Laws, force, or any kind of limitation, are so far from having any tendency of themselves, to persuade or incline, that they have generally the contrary effect. It would be much to the advantage of many lawgivers and other persons in authority, if they would carefully distinguish between what is to be effected by force, and what by persuasion, and never preposterously mix these opposite principles, and defeat the operation of both. Laws and authority compel; but it is reason and interest that must persuade.

The fixing of prices by authority, is not only impolitic, as I have shewn above, but it is in itself unreasonable and absurd. There are so many different circumstances to be taken in to constitute equality or justice in such matters, that they cannot be all attended to, or even ascertained. The plenty of one kind of provision, and scarcity of ano-

ther—The plenty in one corner of the country, and scarcity in another—The distance of one place, and nearness of another—The changes of circumstances in the course of a few weeks or days—Good or bad roads, or good or bad weather—The comparative quality of the goods—These, and an hundred other circumstances which can never be foreseen, actually govern the prices of goods at market, and ought to govern them. If a price is just to one who brings his goods fifteen miles, it is certainly too much for one who brings them only one. If ten pence per pound is a just price for veal at present, I am certain it must be too much a month hence, when veal will be much more plentiful. If one shilling and four pence per pound is reasonable for a fat turkey, ought not I to have more for a fatter, which is better both in its quality and weight—being lighter to its bulk, because fat is not so heavy as either lean flesh or bones. If it is reasonable to pay me one shilling per pound for any meat in a good day, I shall expect more if I go out in a storm; if not, I will stay at home on a bad day, and so you must starve one week, and pamper the next.

All these circumstances you must allow to restrain and limit one another. He who is nearest, and has goods in plenty, will by selling cheap, moderate the demands of him who comes far. If you pay very dear for any article one day, the news of that spreading abroad, brings in prodigious quantities, and the price falls, and so it happens in every other case. Thus it appears that it is out of your power to tell what is a reasonable price, and by at-

tempting to do it, you not only refuse the expectation of the people, but you treat them with injustice.

I have one more remark to make upon this subject; that to fix the prices of goods, especially provisions in a market, is as impracticable as it is unreasonable. The whole persons concerned, buyers and sellers, will use every art to defeat it, and will certainly succeed.

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A D D R E S S

TO

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

THE President and Faculty of the College of New Jersey, beg leave to embrace this opportunity of congratulating your Excellency on the present happy and promising state of public affairs; and of sincerely wishing you prosperity and success in the ensuing campaign, and in what may yet remain of the important conflict in which the United States are engaged.

As this College, devoted to the interests of religion and learning, was among the first places of America, that suffered from the ravages of the enemy—so, happily, this place and neighbourhood was the scene of one of the most important and seasonable checks which they received in their progress. The surprize of the Hessians at Trenton, and the subsequent victory at Princeton, redounded much to the honour of the commander who planned, and the handful of troops which executed the measures; yet were they even of greater moment to the cause of America, than they were brilliant as particular military exploits.

We contemplate and adore the wisdom and good-

ness of divine Providence, as displayed in favour of the United States, in many instances during the course of the war; but in none more than in the unanimous appointment of your Excellency to the command of the army. When we consider the continuance of your life and health—the discernment, prudence, fortitude, and patience of your conduct, by which you have not only sacrificed as others have done, personal ease and property, but frequently even reputation itself, in the public cause, choosing rather to risk your own name than expose the nakedness of your country—when we consider the great and growing attachment of the army, and the cordial esteem of all ranks of men, and of every state in the Union, which you have so long enjoyed—we cannot help being of opinion, that God himself has raised you up as a fit and proper instrument for establishing and securing the liberty and happiness of these States.

We pray that the Almighty may continue to protect and bless you—that the late signal success of the American arms, may pave the way to a speedy and lasting peace; and that, having survived so much fatigue, and so many dangers, you may enjoy many years of honourable repose in the bosom of your grateful country.

JOHN WITHERSPOON.

Memorial and Manifesto

OF THE

U N I T E D S T A T E S

OF

N O R T H - A M E R I C A ,

TO THE MEDIATING POWERS IN THE CONFERENCES FOR PEACE,
TO THE OTHER POWERS IN EUROPE, AND IN GENERAL TO
ALL WHO SHALL SEE THE SAME.

THE United States of North-America, having been made acquainted, by their illustrious ally the king of France, that there is a proposal for holding a Congress under the mediation of the emperors of Russia, and the emperor of Germany, to treat of terms of accommodation with Great Britain, have thought proper to publish, for the information of all concerned, the following memorial, which shall contain a brief detail of the steps by which they have been brought into their present interesting and critical situation.

The United States (formerly British colonies) were first planted and settled by emigrants from that country. These settlers came out at different times, and with different views. Some were actuated by the spirit of curiosity and enterprise, which was so prevalent in Europe in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries ; some were chiefly induced by the hope of riches ; and some were driven from their native country by the iron rod of sacerdotal tyranny. They solicited their charters, and settled their governments on different principles, such as best pleased those who were chiefly concerned in each undertaking. In one thing, however, they all agreed, that they considered themselves as bringing their liberty with them, and as entitled to all the rights and privileges of freemen under the British constitution.

Pursuant to these sentiments, they looked upon it as the foundation stone of British liberty, that the freeholders or proprietors of the soil, should have the exclusive right of granting money for public uses, and therefore invariably proceeded upon this plan. With respect, indeed, to the whole of their internal government, they considered themselves as not directly subject to the British parliament, but as separate *independent* dominions under the same sovereign, and with similar co-ordinate jurisdiction. It appears from several events, that happened in the course of their history, and from public acts of some of their governments, that this was their opinion many years before the late unjust claims and oppressive acts, which gave birth to the bloody conflict not yet finished.

From the first settlement of the colonies, they willingly submitted to Britain's enjoying an exclusive right to their commerce ; though several of the acts of the British parliament upon this subject, they always looked upon as partial and unjust. Some of these appear, at first view, to be such

badges of servitude, that it is surprising that a free people should ever have been patient under them. The truth is, they would not probably have been submitted to, but that the rigid execution of them at this distance was in its nature impossible.

It was always the opinion of the inhabitants of these states, that the benefits which arose to Britain from the exclusive commerce of America, and the taxes which it enabled her to raise, on her own subjects, was more than their proportion of the common treasure necessary to the defence of the empire. At the same time, great as it was, the loss to them, by being confined in their trade, was greater than the benefit to her; as it obliged them to purchase any thing they had occasion for from her, and at her own price, which necessarily retarded their growth and improvement. All this notwithstanding, when any extraordinary emergency seemed to render it necessary, and when application was regularly made to the assemblies of the colonies, they complied in every instance with the requisitions, and made advances of sums which, in one or two instances, Britain herself considered as above their ability, and therefore made restitution or compensation for them.

The true reason of this long and patient acquiescence, was the natural and warm attachment which the inhabitants of America had to Great Britain, as their parent country. They gloried in their relation to her; they were zealous for her honour and interest; imbibed her principles and prejudices with respect to other nations; entered into her quarrels, and were profuse of their blood for the purpose of

securing or extending her dominion. Almost every city and county in Great Britain had its counter part, which bore its name in the new world; and those whose progenitors for three generations had been born in America, when they spoke of going to Britain, called it going home.

Such was the state of things, when some unwise counsellors to the British king, thought of raising a revenue without the consent of the American legislatures, to be carried directly to the English treasury. The first essay on this subject was the famous stamp act, of which we shall at present say nothing, but that the universal ferment raised on occasion of it was a clear proof of the justness and truth of the preceding representation. So odious was it over the whole country, and so dangerous to those who attempted to carry it into execution, that in a short time it was repealed by themselves. Parliament, however, by their declaratory act, which passed in the same session, shewed that they intended to maintain the right, though they desisted in this instance from the exercise of it. The Americans overjoyed at the immediate deliverance, returned to their affection and attachment, hoping that the claim would again become dormant, and that no occasion would be given for the future discussion of it.

But it was not long before the English ministry proposed and carried an act of parliament, imposing duties on tea, glass, &c. which by the smallness of the duties themselves, and several other circumstances, was plainly designed to steal upon us gradually, and if possible imperceptibly, the exercise of their pretended right. It was not, however, in their

power to blind the colonies, who rose up against the execution of this act, with a zeal proportioned to the importance of the subject, and with an unanimity not to be expected but where a great and common danger keeps every cause of jealousy and dissention out of view. Not only every colony, by its representative body, but every county, and almost every corporation or other subordinate division, publicly declared that they would defend their liberty at the risk of their estates and lives. In the meanwhile the English government professed a determination equally firm to enforce the execution of this act by military power, and bring us to unconditional submission.

Thus did the rupture take place; and as to the justice of our cause, we must say, that if any impartial persons will read the declaratory act, that the lords and commons of Great Britain in parliament, have a right to make laws binding upon the colonies *in all cases whatsoever*, and which was now producing its proper fruit, he must be convinced, that had we submitted to it, we should have been in no respect different from a set of conquered tributary states, subject to a foreign country; and the colonial assemblies would have become both useless and contemptible. The writings in England upon this subject, proving that we were represented *in Middlesex*, and using many other equally forcible arguments, are and will remain a disgrace to reason, as well as an insult on American understanding.

At this period of time not only the people of England in general, but the king of England in his speeches, and his parliament in their addresses,

affected to represent the commotions in America as raised by a few seditious persons, and the consequence of a pre-concerted scheme to throw off the dominion of Great Britain, and set up an independent empire. 'This unjust and indeed absurd accusation may be refuted by a thousand arguments. 'The strong predeliction of the people of America for the people, the fashions and the government of Britain, proves its falsehood. There was no person, nor any number of persons in any state of America, who had such influence as to be able to effect this, or even view it as a probable object of ambition. But what must demonstrate the absurdity of this supposition, is the state in which America was found when she began to grapple with the power of Britain. No step had been taken to open the way for obtaining foreign aid. No provision had been made of arms, ammunition, or warlike stores of any kind ; so that the country seemed to be exposed, naked and helpless, to the dominion of her enemy.

Agreeably to this, addresses and petitions were the means to which we had recourse. Reconciliation to Britain, with the security and preservation of our rights, was the wish of every soul. The most explicit professions of loyalty to the prince, and the most express assurances of effectual support in his government, if we were called on in a constitutional way, made the substance of our declarations. Every succeeding petition, however, was treated with new and greater insult, and was answered by acts of parliament, which for their cruelty will be a stain upon the annals of the kingdom, and bring the character of the nation itself into disgrace.

Single acts of inhumanity may be accounted for from the depravity of an individual; but what shall we say of grave and numerous assemblies, enacting such laws as the Boston port-bill, which reduced at once so many people to beggary, and their property itself to nothing—the act permitting those charged with murdering Americans, to be sent to England to be tried, that is to say, either not to be tried at all, or certainly absolved—the act appointing Americans taken at sea, to be turned before the mast in English ships, and obliged either to kill their own relations, or be killed by them—and the act appointing American prisoners to be sent to the East Indies as slaves. But what is of all most astonishing is, that they never failed to extol their own lenity, when passing such acts as filled this whole continent with resentment and horror. To crown the whole, the last petition sent by Congress to the king, which beseeched him to appoint *some mode* by which our complaints might be remedied, and a way be paved for reconciliation, was treated with absolute contempt, and no answer given to it of any kind. Thus was all intercourse broken up. We were declared rebels; and they themselves must confess, that no alternative was left us, but either to go with ropes about our necks, and submit ourselves, not to the king, but to the kingdom of England, to be trampled under foot, or risk all the consequences of open and vigorous resistance.

The last part of the alternative we chose without hesitation; and as it was impossible to preserve civil order any longer under the name and form of a government which we had taken arms to oppose, we

found it absolutely necessary to declare ourselves independent of that prince who had thrown us out of his protection. This great step was taken with the full approbation, and indeed at the ardent desire of the public at large. The extent and growth of the colonies seemed, in the nature of things, to call for such a separation long before; yet it would not probably have happened for many years, if it had not been forced upon us by the conduct of our unkind parent herself.—The thing indeed seems to have been the purpose of God Almighty; for every measure of the court of Great Britain had the most direct tendency to hasten, and render it unavoidable.

We must take notice, that before the declaration of independence, there was something like an attempt to reconcile us, commonly called Lord North's conciliatory motion; but it was so trifling in its nature, and insidious in its form, that probably no success was expected from it, even by those who contrived it. Who does not perceive in it an artful attempt to divide us? and that while every thing else is left in the greatest uncertainty, the main point for which we contended is clearly decided against us?

After the declaration of independence, Lord and General Howe brought out a commission for *giving peace to America*. But as they had not liberty so much as to acknowledge us by an open treaty, so the substance of what they offered was pardon upon submission; that the parliament would revise the acts they had passed, and if any of them were found improper, they would amend them: which, in one word, amounted to this, that they would do for *us* what they *themselves* thought good. These offers,

however, poor as they were, came too late. So important a step as the declaration of independence, could not be recalled; and the formidable armament sent out against us in the year 1776, rendered it more necessary than ever.

We are sorry to be obliged to take notice of the manner of conducting the war. It would be for the honour of humanity, that it could be buried in oblivion. Many were the instances of persons, after they had submitted and begged mercy on their knees, being murdered in cold blood. The treatment of prisoners was from the beginning, and has continued through the war, with some exceptions, savage and barbarous to the last degree. Multitudes, before any exchange took place, died by famine and stench. Many were, by threatening and ill usage, constrained to enlist in their enemy's service; and many were forced on board their ships of war, or sent to Britain to rot in prison, at a distance from their friends, without hope of relief. It is not easy to enumerate the houses and even towns which have been wantonly burnt, or to describe the devastation of the country, and robbery of the inhabitants, wherever the army passed. To this may be added, hiring the savages to come upon the back settlements. There is the greater shame in this expedient, that they are not formidable either for their number or their valour, but for the shocking manner in which they torture their prisoners, and murder women and infants who fall into their hands. Civilized nations will perhaps find it hard to believe this representation; but every part of it can be supported by the most unquestionable facts, and it is rendered credible not only by the circumstance that ci-

vil wars are carried on commonly with a rancour and animosity greater than those between independent nations, but by the expressions of hatred and contempt which have been used with respect to the Americans, by almost every speaker and writer in England. What effect could such language have on the minds of the soldiery, but to steel them against all impressions of pity and tenderness, as we find was really the case, till they were restrained in some degree, by the fear of retaliation upon their people in our hands.

At last after four years of real, and near two years of professed and declared independence, it pleased God to incline the heart of the king of France to give relief to the oppressed, by entering into a treaty with the United States, on the most liberal and disinterested principles. No exclusive privileges are there stipulated for the French nation, but the secure, open, and equal intercourse to which all other nations are invited. This acknowledgment and support from one of the most powerful monarchs in Europe, it may easily be supposed, gave a new turn to our affairs, and a new dignity to our cause. The terms of this treaty so favourable to us, as well as honourable to our ally, cannot fail to add the bond of gratitude to that of justice, and make our adherence to it inviolable.

Not long after this treaty was signed, the court and parliament of Great Britain sent out commissioners to make an offer of terms, which we readily confess were not only as good, but better, than what three years before would have been cheerfully accepted. But the ground was now wholly chan-

ged. We were offered freedom from taxes, and even a species of independence itself, upon the *easy* terms of breaking our faith so lately pledged, and uniting our force with that of Great Britain; and both would doubtless have been immediately employed in taking vengeance on France for the assistance she had lent to us in our distress. Yet even here, the whole was to be subject to the revision of parliament; that is to say, any part of the agreement might be approved or rejected as to the wisdom of that assembly should seem meet.

These last proposals from Great Britain, deserve very particular notice. They are a clear dereliction of the first cause of quarrel, and an ample confession that the demands of America were just; while the time and circumstances of their being made, shew that they could not be accepted with any regard either to justice, gratitude, or policy. Could we be guilty of a direct breach of faith, when the ink was hardly dry by which our ratification of the treaty was marked? Could we instantly forget those favours which had been so earnestly solicited, as well as generously bestowed? Could we, who had not entered into a league offensive and defensive with France, except for the present struggle in our own behalf, because we did not wish to be involved in the wars of Europe, throw ourselves into the arms of an hostile nation, and promise to make peace or war with her, against our benefactors?

Upon the whole, since the American colonies were, from their extent and situation, ripe for a separation from Great Britain, and the nature of things seemed to demand it; since their growing

power, added to that of Great Britain, would give her such a dominion of the sea, as must be dangerous to the liberty and commerce of other nations; since, by her own acts of oppression, she has alienated the minds of the Americans, and compelled them to establish independent governments, which have now taken place; and since these governments, which are distinct though confederated, wholly settled upon republican principles, and fit only for agriculture and commerce, cannot be an object of jealousy to other powers, but by free and open intercourse with them a general benefit to all; it is to be hoped that the revolution which they have effected, will meet with universal approbation.

ON THE
C O N T E S T
BETWEEN
G R E A T B R I T A I N A N D A M E R I C A.

PHILADELPHIA, *Sept. 3, 1778.*

DEAR SIR,

YOUR very acceptable letter of the 21st of March, I received about the middle of June, and would have answered it long ago, if there had been any encouraging prospect of conveying it safely. As to writing you a short letter that must have gone open through the enemy's posts, I did not think it worth while. I have, however, now come to a resolution of writing you pretty fully, and trying to convey it by France or Holland; and if it should fall into their hands, and never get to your's, there will be no other loss than my time in writing; for as to any other consequences, either to the public or to myself, I have not the least apprehension.

Your letter came to me sealed, and apparently never opened, in a packet from the British commissioners, which arrived at York-town while the Congress was sitting; and consequently it, as well

as one from Mr F——, was delivered to me in presence of the whole members. As the same packet, besides the public message, contained some private letters addressed to particular members, some of them from Governor Johnstone, one of the commissioners, a proposal was made by a member, who read publicly one received by himself, that every gentleman who had received private letters from any person with the enemy, should deliver them to Congress, that they might be read. This would have been attended with no difficulty as to me; except some family affairs in Mr F——'s letter very improper to be publicly read, and some expressions in his letter a little offensive speaking of Congress. However, it was not done at that time; and afterwards, in a diet at many days distance, every member who had received any such letters, was called upon to read from them what related to public affairs, which was done.

I am and have been greatly concerned, as you seem to be, for the contest between Great Britain and America; and certainly, from my own interest, have by far the greatest reason of the two; and as I suppose, it will be agreeable to you, shall make a few observations. 1. Upon the public cause; and, 2. On my own conduct, which I understand from many different quarters, to be highly blamed in my native country.

As to the public cause, I look upon the separation of America from Britain to be the visible intention of Providence; and believe, that in the issue it will be to the benefit of this country, without any injury to the other—perhaps to the advan-

tage of both. It seems to me the intention of Providence for many reasons, which I cannot now enumerate, but in a particular manner for the following—that I cannot recollect any instance in history, in which a person or people have so totally and uniformly mistaken the means for attaining their own ends, as the king and parliament of Britain have in this contest. I do seriously and positively affirm to you, my dear Sir, that it is my opinion, that Congress itself, if they had been to direct the measures of the British ministry, could not, or would not, have directed them to measures so effectual to forward and establish the independence of America, as those which they chose of their own accord. They have had a mistaken opinion of the state of things in America, from the beginning to this hour, and have founded their whole conduct upon their mistakes. They supposed sometimes, that the people of America, in general, were seditious and factious—desirous of a separation from Great Britain, and that their conduct on occasion of the stamp-act was the effect of this disposition. Nothing could be more untrue. I am a witness that the people of this country had an esteem of, and attachment to the people of Great Britain, exceedingly strong. They were proud of them, and of their own descent from them. British fashions, British goods, and even British persons, were in the highest esteem. A person educated in the old counties had a degree of rank and credit from that circumstance, independent of every other. I think they were even partial in this respect. I believe, had I myself been born and educated in America, I

should have met with a degree of acceptance and success in my station, far inferior to what actually happened. When an American spoke of going to England, he always called it going home; and wherever you are in this country, you meet with almost nothing but counties, townships, and houses, called by English names. I live at Princeton in Middlesex county; and on the opposite side of the street is Somerset county, and indeed, I believe all the counties in New Jersey, are called by English names.

From this I desire that you may infer, that the opposition made to the claims of parliament, arose from a deep and universal conviction in the people, that they were inconsistent with their own security and peace. In this I am satisfied that they judged right; for had the claim set up been acquiesced in, the provincial assemblies would have become contemptible and useless, and the whole colonies no better than a parcel of tributary states, which, placed at so great a distance, would have been, from error, ignorance, and self-interest, loaded in the most insupportable manner.

Another mistake, into which the ministry and parliament of England fell, was, that this was a deep-laid scheme of a few artful and designing men, who stirred up the multitude for their own ends; that the sentiments in favour of America, were by no means general; but that the artful leaders imposed upon them. This I have seen asserted from the beginning to the end of the quarrel; and to complete the absurdity, the very commissioners

now here from Britain, continue to reason in the same manner—impeach the Congress with ambitious and designing views, and seem disposed to appeal to the people. Alas! they know nothing of the matter. The Congress is a changeable body: members are going from it, and coming to it every month, nay, every week. — —

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ON THE
A F F A I R S
OF THE
UNITED STATES.

{ TUSCULUM, NEAR PRINCETON,
March 20. 1780.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received a letter from you, dated June 11, 1778, a few days after I had written to you a long letter of the date, Sept. 21. that year. The design of it was to desire me to enquire after, and endeavour to procure the enlargement of one Alexander Muirhead, supposed to be carried into Boston. I immediately wrote to Boston myself, and caused one of the delegates of that state also to write; but we could hear nothing of him, so that probably he was not carried into that place.

Your favour of March 19, 1779, acknowledging the receipt of mine of the 21st of September preceding, I received in the month of August last year. I am to blame in not answering it sooner; but I had no inclination to send an open letter through the English posts, and any proper opportunity of sending it another way seldom occurs. This goes by a gentleman who means to get to Europe

upon business, and has promised to take particular care of it; so that I mean to embrace the opportunity of writing to you and some other of my friends. I am obliged to you for your particular private home news about Glasgow, and would be glad of the continuance of such intelligence, and the more so, if you would take in Paisley also.

I have been, since I wrote you last, in general in good health, and indeed am at present in better health than I have been since I had the last fit. Excepting these fits, and the weakness that followed upon them, my health has been good ever since I came to America; and that weakness has been chiefly a swimming in my head, and fear and uncertainty when I went to make a long discourse in public. It was the opinion of Dr. Rush, that these fits were something of the apoplectic kind. It is remarkable, that for these twelve months past, I have had almost constantly a succession of pimples, or rather small biles or blotches, about the temples, within the hair and sometimes on the forehead; since which time I have been sensibly better and freer from the other complaint.

I have now left Congress, not being able to support the expense of attending it, with the frequent journies to Princeton, and being determined to give particular attention to the revival of the college. Professor Houston, however, our professor of mathematics, is a delegate this year; but he tells me he will certainly leave it next November. I mention this circumstance to confirm what I believe I wrote you formerly, that the members of Congress in general, not only receive no profit from that office,

but I believe five out of six of them, if not more, are great losers in their private affairs. This cannot be otherwise; for as none of the delegates are allowed to have any lucrative office whatever, either in their own state or for the United States, though their expenses should be fully borne, their time is taken up, and their own private estates are neglected. At the end of the year 1778, I gave notice to our legislature that they must either not chuse me at all, or leave me at full liberty to attend only when I could conveniently. They chose me however, and I made a good deal of use of that liberty in the year 1779; and this year all the delegates were changed but one, who had only been in one year, and who has not a house to go home to, his estate being in the neighbourhood of New York.

My family are well so far as I know. The trustees of the college have last September chose my son-in-law, Mr. Smith, professor of moral philosophy. He came to Princeton with his family in December. To him I gave up my house at college, and devolved upon him the whole business of boarding young gentlemen, and retired to my house in the country, at the distance of one mile, and in full sight of Princeton. This I have had in view for some years, and intend to spend the remainder of my life, if possible, *in otio cum dignitate*. You know I was always fond of being a scientific farmer. That disposition has not lost but gathered strength since my being in America. In this respect I got a dreadful stroke indeed from the English when they were here, they having seized and mostly destroyed my whole stock, and committed such rava-

ges that we are not yet fully recovered from it. My (now) eldest son sailed in October last for France, with Mr Girard and Mr. Jay, late president of Congress. He is to purchase a few medicines and instruments in Europe, and return to prosecute his business as a physician. My other son was studying law; but for the mean while, is private secretary to the present president of Congress, and my youngest daughter is at home.

As to public affairs, it seems to be yet uncertain whether we shall have peace soon. Greatly do I and many others in America desire it; and yet, were our condition ten times worse than it is, nothing short of the clear independence of this country would be accepted. I observe, by your letter of the 19th of March last year, that you had a high opinion of your successes at St. Lucia, in Georgia, and against the French trade. I believe before the end of the campaign, there was little reason to boast of your success upon the whole. I mentioned to you in my last how obstinately the court of England continued in erroneous opinions respecting America; and now I think that obstinacy has become incurable. It is plain that they still harp upon the same string, that a few leading men in Congress stir up the people, and persuade them to continue the contest. Allow me to assure you, that this is one of the most absurd and groundless opinions that ever was formed. The Congress is changing every day. There is no instance in the whole contest, in which the public opinion did not go before their resolutions. To go back to the very beginning—the declaration of independence was forced upon the ma-

majority of the then Congress, by the people in general: and, in consequence of subsequent elections, every six months that I have been in Congress has weakened the party that was suspected of coldness upon that subject; and now, perhaps, I may say it is annihilated.

I have read lately your parliamentary enquiry into the causes of your want of success in America. The examination of Galloway in particular is a curiosity. I know that he and such as he are blinded and stupified to an almost incredible degree, by their prejudices; and yet it is hard to suppose that he thought as he said in all points. For example, when he endeavours to make it be believed, that the difficulty of supplying general Washington's army arose from the disaffection of the country to his cause. I admit that he was in the winter 1777, in a part of the country where there are more people either cool or disaffected to the cause of America, than in any other on the continent; and yet his want of supplies did not arise from that in the least degree. It arose from the state of our money. If he and his commissaries had had as much hard money as general Howe, he would have had all the provisions in the country laid down at his tent door.

I am not only fully sensible, by a general knowledge of the country in this and other states, that the public mind is entirely on the side of liberty, and for the independence of America—but I could mention a great many facts and circumstances as evidences of it, stronger than could well be imagined, and indeed which have turned out stronger than even my expectations. One circumstance is

alone decisive upon this subject, which is well known to yourselves, that the moment your army leaves any part of the country, it is not only lost to you, but returns so strongly to the interest of Congress, that all the persons known to have been attached to you are obliged to fly with terror and confusion. But there is another strong circumstance, the universal attachment of the people to the French alliance. In vain have your partisans endeavoured to alarm the people with the fears of popery and arbitrary power. It makes not the least impression even upon the common people.

Please to attend to the circumstance I am going to mention; because it surpris'd myself when I observed it. There are always, you know, little feuds and contentions, jealousy and emulation, in every society and in every association; both in Congress and in the country, I have observed that when one set or faction wants to make the other odious, they charge them with being cold to the French alliance, and ungrateful to them for their services. This, to my knowledge, has been the subject of mutual reproaches, when I do not believe there was any truth in it on either side. Would you think it—some have seriously attempted to persuade me, that the New-England delegates were cold to the French, and inclined to the English; to which I answered, that I well knew the contrary, but that they were of an independent spirit, and would not easily submit to unwarrantable influence, either from the French or the English. I mention all this singly with this view, to shew you the bent and inclination of the public mind.

I have been lately reading over governor Johnston's speech after his return, in which to my amazement, he positively and publicly denies his having sent any message by a lady to Mr. Reed. The thing is now publicly known and confessed. He says they would have named the lady if there had been any such thing. Mr. Reed forbore naming the lady out of tenderness to her; but it has now come out. It was Mrs. F——, daughter of the late Dr. G——, married to Mr. F——, son of R. F——, of———. What should people think of persons of his character so boldly and solemnly to deny a certain fact.

I will mention another circumstance to you. The distress of this country by the depreciation of the money, has been very great. Many have suffered great losses; not a few have been utterly ruined. Yet I never could perceive that this altered the inclination of the people as to the public cause in the least. Nay, notwithstanding the dreadful complaints made against particular classes of men, such as forestallers and engrossers, commissaries and quartermasters, yet I am persuaded that any body who should but propose to return to submission to England for relief from their depredations, would be torn in pieces.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

IMPROVEMENT OF AMERICA.

NORTH AMERICA is at present from the natural course of things, in a growing state. It will therefore of itself, for a series of years gradually improve. There are however many things by which that improvement may be facilitated or retarded; and it is the laudable purpose of this society, to attend to these circumstances with care, and use their utmost endeavours to encourage the one and to remove the other. Having had the honour of being admitted a member of this society, and not having it much in my power any otherwise to promote American improvements, I could not resist the inclination I felt to digest and put in writing, a few reflections upon the police of countries in general, the great principles on which the Philadelphia Society ought to proceed, and perhaps I may propose some particular regulations.

1. The moral causes of the prosperity of a country, are almost infinitely more powerful than those that are only occasional. This observation is taken from Montesquieu, by whom it is admirably illustrated, and it ought never to be out of view, with

those who wish to promote the general good. The moral causes arise from the nature of the government, including the administration of justice, liberty of conscience, the partition of property. The rise of a particular town, the cultivation and beauty of a particular quarter of a country, may sometimes be justly ascribed to the surprising effects of a single person who set the example; yet he was only the occasion properly speaking, of the vigorous exertion. The consequences could never be general or lasting, if there was not a disposition to it in the constitution of the country. Therefore, a sacred regard should be had by every lover of mankind, to the principles of equity and liberty, that they may never be violated by any public proceedings. Pennsylvania is so happy in this particular, that its constitution need not be improved, but preserved and defended.

2. It is extremely difficult, after you depart from general principles, to discover what particular regulations will be for the interest of a country. It requires a very comprehensive mind, and a thorough knowledge of the course of trade and police in general. Besides, it is not only difficult, but impossible to foresee what circumstances may afterwards occur. Many things are useful and expedient at one time, which in a few years become unnecessary or hurtful. Nay, many selfish laws have operated from the beginning, in a manner directly contrary to what was expected. The incorporation of trades in the cities in Britain, is an instance of the first: and almost every law made to the prejudice of Ireland, is an example of the last.

S U P P L I C A T I O N

OF

J. R.*****.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY HENRY LAURENS, ESQUIRE, PRESIDENT,
AND OTHER, THE MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE, THE
AMERICAN CONGRESS, &c. &c. &c.

THE HUMBLE REPRESENTATION AND EARNEST SUPPLICATION OF
J. R. — PRINTER AND BOOKSELLER IN NEW-YORK,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

THAT a great part of the British forces has already left this city, and from many symptoms there is reason to suspect, that the remainder will speedily follow them. Where they are gone or going, is perhaps known to themselves, perhaps not; certainly however, it is unknown to us, the loyal inhabitants of the place, and other friends of government who have taken refuge in it, and who are therefore filled with distress and terror on the unhappy occasion.

That as soon as the evacuation is completed, it is more than probable, the city will be taken possession of by the forces of your high mightinesses, followed by vast crowds of other persons—whigs by nature and profession—friends to the liberties, and foes to the enemies of America. Above all, it will undoubtedly be filled with shoals of Yankies, that is

to say, the natives and inhabitants (or as a great lady in this metropolis generally expresses it, the *wretches*) of New England.

That from several circumstances, there is reason to fear that the behaviour of the wretches aforesaid, may not be altogether gentle to such of the friends of government as shall stay behind. What the governing powers of the state of New York may do also, it is impossible to foretel. Nay, who knows but we may soon see, *in propria persona*, as we have often heard of *Hortentius*, the governor of New Jersey, a gentleman remarkable for severely handling those whom he calls traitors, and indeed who has exalted some of them (*quanquam animus meminisse horret lectuque refugit*) to a high, though dependant station, and brought *America under their feet*, in a sense very different from what Lord North meant when he first used that celebrated expression.

That your petitioner in particular, is at the greatest loss what to resolve upon, or how to shape his course. He has no desire at all, either to be roasted in Florida, or frozen to death in Canada or Nova Scotia. Being a great lover of fresh cod, he has had thoughts of trying a settlement in Newfoundland, but recollecting that the New England men have almost all the same appetite, he was obliged to relinquish that project entirely. If he should go to Great Britain, dangers no less formidable present themselves. Having been a bankrupt in London, it is not impossible that he might be accommodated with a lodging in Newgate, and that the ordinary

there, might oblige him to say his prayers, a practice from which he hath had an insuperable aversion all his life long.

In this dreadful dilemma, he hath at last determined to apply to your high mightinesses, and by this memorial to *lay himself at your feet*, which he assures you, is the true modish phrase for respectful submission, according to the present etiquette of the court. Being informed however, that some of you are Presbyterians and Religionists, he has been also at some pains to find out a scripture warrant or example for his present conduct, and has happily found it, in the advice given by the servants of Benhadad, king of Syria, to their master, 1 Kings xx. 31. *And his servants said unto him, behold now we have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings: Let us we pray thee, put sackcloth upon our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel, peradventure he may save thy life. So they girded sackcloth upon their loins, and put ropes upon their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live.* In like manner, O most mighty and venerable Congress-men, your servant J. R. ——— saith, I pray you let me live.

Having thus preferred my petition, I must now intreat leave to lay before your high mightinesses, sundry reasons, which I hope will incline you to lend a favourable ear to it, in doing which, I shall, use all possible plainness and candour.

I. In the first place, there cannot possibly be any danger to the United States, in suffering me to live. I know many of you think and say that a Tory heart

acquires such a degree of founess and malevolence, in addition to its native stock, and such a habit of treachery, by breaking through the most endearing ties of nature, that no good can be expected from it, nor any dependance placed upon it, let pretences or appearances be what they will. I remember also, about seven years ago a certain person hearing accidentally one or two paragraphs read from the writings of an eminent controversial divine in this country, said, That fellow must be a turn-coat; it is impossible that he could have been educated in the profession which he now defends. What is your reason for that opinion? said another gentleman who was present—Because, says he, he discovers a rancour of spirit and rottenness of heart, unattainable by any other class of men. But I contend that these remarks relate only to the natives of this country, who like parricides took up arms for her destruction; and to apostates in religion; neither of which, I am certain, can be applied to me. I was born, as is well known, in old England; and as for the accusation of apostacy, I set it at defiance, unless a man can be said to fall off from what he was never on, or to depart from a place which he never saw.

But what I beg of you particularly to observe is, that let the disposition to mischief be as great as you please, where the ability is wanting there can be no danger. I have often seen the lions in the tower of London without fear, because there was an iron grate between me and them. Now it is certain that the Tories in general, would do any thing sooner than fight. Many of them became Tories for no other reason, than that they might avoid fighting.

The poor chicken-hearted creatures cried out to the potent King of England, to take them under his wings for protection, which he endeavoured to do, but they were too short to cover them. Even the late petition for arms in which they promised to go without the lines, and sweep you all away with the besom of destruction, was but an idle rhodomontade—It was something like a poor boy shouting and singing in the dark, to keep himself from being afraid. At that very time, to my certain knowledge they would have given the world for a place to fly to, out of the reach of Washington and Gates. But I return to myself, *egomet sum proximus mihi*. I can assure your high mightinesses, that no danger can arise from me, for I am as great a coward as King James the VIth of Scotland, who could never see a naked sword without trembling; having been, as it is said, frightened in his mother's belly, when the fierce barrons of that country came in, and killed David Rizzio in his presence. I was once severely caned by a Scots officer now (if employed) in your service. Though the gentlemen of that choleric nation have been very much our friends in the present controversy, I find it is dangerous to offend them. Buchanan their own historian says, *perferendum est Scotorum in genium*. Therefore by the by, or *en passant*, for I suppose you are at present best pleased with French phrases, I would advise every man who regards his own peace, however smooth and gentle a Scotchman may appear, not to take him *against the hair*, as the saying is in their own country, but to remember the motto that surrounds the thistle, *Nemo me impune lacessat*. I also

very narrowly escaped a sound beating from a New England parson, who was strong enough, without either cane or cudgel, to have pounded me to a mummy. All this, and much more of the same kind, I bore with the most exemplary patience and submission. Perhaps it will be said, that though no danger is to be apprehended from any deeds, yet I may do harm enough by words and writing. To this I answer, that I have expended and exhausted my whole faculty of that kind in the service of the English. I have tried falsehood and misrepresentation in every shape that could be thought of, so that it is like a coat thrice turned that will not hold a single stitch. My friend, Gen. R—————n, told me some time ago in my own shop, that I had carried things so far that people could not believe one word I said even though it were as true as the gospel. From all this I hope it plainly appears, that there could be no danger from me; and therefore as you cannot surely think of being cruel for cruelty's sake, that you will suffer me to live.

II. Any further punishment upon me, or any other of the unhappy refugees who shall remain in New York, will be altogether unnecessary, for they do suffer and will suffer from the nature of the thing, as much as a merciful man could wish to impose upon his greatest enemy. By this I mean the dreadful mortification (after our past puffing and vaunting) of being under the dominion of the Congress, seeing and hearing the conduct and discourse of the friends of America, and perhaps being put in mind of our own, in former times. You have probably seen many of the English newspapers, and

also some of mine, and you have among you the *few* prisoners who by a miracle escaped death in our hands. By all these means you may learn with what infinite contempt, with what provoking insult, and with what unexampled barbarity, your people have, from the beginning to the end, been treated by the British officers, excepting a very small number, but above all by the Tories and Refugees, who not having the faculty of fighting, were obliged to lay out their whole wrath and malice in the article of speaking. I remember, when one of the prisoners taken after the *gallant* defence of Fort Washington had received several kicks for not being in his rank, he said, is this a way of treating a gentleman? The answer was, gentleman? G—d——n your blood, who made you a gentleman? which was heard by us all present with unspeakable satisfaction, and ratified by general applause. I have also seen one of your officers, after long imprisonment, for want of clothes, food and lodging, as meagre as a skeleton and as dirty and shabby as a London beggar, when one of our friends would say with infinite humour, look you there is one of King Congs's ragged rascals. You must remember the many sweet names given you in print, in England and America, Rebels, Rascals, Ragamuffins, Tatterdemallions, Scoundrels, Blackguards, Cowards, and Poltroons. You cannot be ignorant how many and how complete victories we gained over you, and what a fine figure you made in our narratives. We never once made you to *retreat*, seldom even to *fly* as a routed army, but to *run off into the woods*, to *Scamper away through the fields*, and to *take to your heels as usual*.

You will probably soon see the gazette account of the *defeat* of Mr. Washington at Monmouth. There it will appear how you scampered off, and how the English followed you and mowed you down, till their officers, with that humanity which is the *characteristic of the nation*, put a stop to this carnage, and then by a masterly stroke of generalship, stole a march in the night, lest you should have scampered back again and obliged them to make a new slaughter in the morning.

Now, dear gentlemen, consider what a miserable affair it must be for a man to be obliged to apply with humility and self-abasement to those whom he hath so treated, nay, even to beg life of them, while his own heart upbraids him with his past conduct, and perhaps his memory is refreshed with the repetition of some of his rhetorical flowers. It is generally said that our friend Burgoyne was treated with abundance of civility by general Gates, and yet I think it could not be very pleasing to him to see and hear the boys when he entered Albany, going before and crying, *Elbow Room* for General Burgoyne there. Fear and trembling have already taken hold of many of the refugees and friends of government in this place. It would break your hearts to hear poor Sam. S——, of Philadelphia, weeping and wailing, and yet he was a peaceable Quaker who did nothing in the world but hire guides to the English parties who were going out to surprize and butcher you. My brother of trade, G— is so much affected, that some say he has lost, or will soon lose, his reason. For my own part I do not think I run any risk in that respect. All

the wisdom that I was ever possessed of is in me still, praised be God, and likely to be so. A man that has run the gauntlet of creditors, duns and bailiffs, for years in England, and has been cudgelled, kicked, and p—d upon in America, is in no danger of losing his reason by any circumstance whatever, so long as there is the least prospect of saving his life. I have heard some people say that dishonour was worse than death, but with the great Sancho Pancha, I was always of a different opinion. I hope, therefore, your honours will consider my sufferings as sufficient to atone for my offences, and allow me to continue in peace and quiet, and according to the North British proverb, *sleep in a whole skin*.

III. I beg leave to suggest, that upon being received into favour, I think it would be in my power to serve the United States in several important respects. I believe many of your officers want politeness. They are like old Cincinnatus, taken from the plow; and therefore must still have a little roughness in their manners and deportment. Now I myself am the pink of courtesy, a genteel, portly, well-looking fellow, as you will see in a summer's day. I understand and possess the *bienveillance*, the *manner*, the *grace*, so largely insisted on by Lord Chesterfield; and may without vanity say, I could teach it better than his Lordship, who in that article has remarkably failed. I hear with pleasure; that your people are pretty good scholars, and have made particularly very happy advances in the art of swearing, so essentially necessary to a gentleman. Yet I dare say they will themselves confess, that

they are still in this respect far inferior to the English army. There is, by all accounts, a coarseness and sameness in their expression; whereas there is variety, sprightliness and figure, in the oaths of gentlemen well educated. Dean Swift says very justly, ‘a footman may swear, but he cannot swear like a lord.’ Now we have many lords in the English army, all of whom, when here, were pleased to honour me with their friendship and intimacy; so that I hope my qualifications can hardly be disputed. I have imported many of the most necessary articles for appearance in genteel life. I can give them Lavornitti’s soap-balls, to wash their brown hands clean, perfumed gloves, paint, powder, and pomatum. I can also furnish the New England men with rings, seals, swords, canes, snuff-boxes, tweezer-cases, and many other such *notions*, to carry home to their wives and mistresses, who will be *nation*-glad to see them. You are also to know that I import a great many patent medicines, which may be of use to your army. It is said that some of them are exceedingly liable to a disorder called by physicians the *raucomania*, which is frequently followed by the two twin diseases of plumbophobia and siderophobia. If they will but submit to a strict regimen, and take the tincture drops and pills which I prepare, I am confident the cure in most cases would be infallible.

I have been informed, that a certain person, well known to your august body, has clearly demonstrated that virtue and severity of manners are necessary to those who would pull an old government down, which fate is now happily accomplished; but that luxury, dissipation, and a taste for pleasures, are

equally necessary to keep up a government already settled. As I suppose you are fully convinced of this most salutary truth, I take it for granted, now that you have settled governments in all the states, you are looking out for proper persons to soften the rigid virtue of the Americans, and lay them asleep in the lap of self-indulgence. Now, I am proud to say, that there is not a man on this continent more able to serve you in this respect, than myself. I have served many of the British officers in a most honourable station and character, of which the great Pandarus of Troy was the most ancient example. If I am happy enough to make my own conversation and manners the standard of the mode, I believe you will see very powerful effects of it in a short time. But if, after recovering your friendship myself, I am able also to bring back and reconcile to this country the Rev. Dr A——, I believe the system will be perfect. That gentleman, by his robust form, is well fitted to be an ecclesiastical bruiser, if such an officer should be needed; and, with all due deference to the officers of the American army, I should think that a better way of terminating differences among them in the last resort than sword or pistol, for many obvious reasons. He has also distinguished himself by the publication of some poems, on subjects extremely well suited to the character of a Christian clergyman, and very proper for initiating the tender mind in the softest and most delicious of all arts, *viz.* the art of love.

Finally, I hope I may be of service to the United states, as a writer, publisher, collector, and maker of news. I mention this with some diffidence; because perhaps you will think I have fore-

clofed myself from fuch a claim, by confeffing (as above) that my credit as a news-writer is broken by over-ftretching. But it is common enough for a man in bufinefs, when his credit is wholly gone in one place, by fhifting his ground, and taking a new departure, to flourifh away, and make as great or greater figure than before. How long that fplendour will laft is another matter, and belongs to an after confideration. I might therefore, though my credit is gone in New York, fet up again in the place which is honoured with your refidence. Befides, I might write thofe things only or chiefly, which you wifh to be difbelieved, and thus render you the moft effential fervice. This would be aiming and arriving at the fame point, by *manœuvring retrogade*. Once more, as I have been the offenfible printer of other people's lies in New York, what is to hinder me from keeping *incog.* and inventing or polishing lies, to be iffued from the prefs of another printer in Philadelphia? In one, or more, or all of thefe ways, I hope to merit your approbation. It would be endless to mention all my devices; and therefore I will only fay further, that I can take a truth, and fo puff and fwell and adorn it, ftill keeping the proportion of its parts, but enlarging their dimenfions, that you could hardly difcover where the falfehood lay, in cafe of a ftrict investigation.

That I may not weary you, I conclude with recommending myfelf to your kind countenance and protection; and in the mean time, waiting for a favourable answer, your petitioner, as in duty bound, fhall ever pray, &c.

R E C A N T A T I O N

• F

BENJAMIN TOWNE.

THE FOLLOWING WAS PRINTED IN LOUDON'S NEW YORK PACKET PUBLISHED AT FISHKILL, OCTOBER 1. 1778.



THE following facts are well known. 1st. That I Benjamin Towne used to print the Pennsylvania Evening Post, under the protection of Congress, and did frequently, and earnestly solicit sundry members of the said Congress for dissertations and articles of intelligence, professing myself to be a very firm and zealous friend to American liberty. 2d. That on the English taking possession of Philadelphia, I turned fairly round, and printed my Evening Post under the protection of General Howe and his army, calling the Congress and all their adherents, rebels, rascals, and raggamuffins, and several other unfavoury names, with which the humane and polite English are pleased to honour them. Neither did I ever refuse to insert any dissertation however scurrilous, or any article of intelligence sent to me, although many of them I well knew to be, as a certain gentleman elegantly expresses it, *facts that never happened.* 3d. That I am now will-

ing and desirous to turn once more, to unsay all that I have last said, and to print and publish for the United States of America, which are likely to be uppermost, against the British tyrant; nor will I be backward in calling him, after the example of the great and eminent author of *Common Sense*, *The Royal Brute*, or giving him any other appellation still more opprobrious, if such can be found.

The facts being thus stated, (I will presume to say altogether fairly and fully) I proceed to observe, that I am not only proscribed by the President and Supreme executive council of Pennsylvania, but that several other persons are for reprobating my paper, and alledge that instead of being suffered to print, I ought to be hanged as a traitor to my country. On this account I have thought proper to publish the following humble confession, declaration, recantation and apology, hoping that it will alluage the wrath of my enemies, and in some degree restore me to the favour and indulgence of the public. In the first place then, I desire it may be observed, that I never was, nor ever pretended to be a man of character, repute or dignity. I was originally an undertrapper to the *famous Galloway* in his *infamous* squabble with *Goddard*, and did in that service contract such a habit of meanness in thinking, and scurrility in writing, that nothing *exalted*, as brother *Bell* provedore to the sentimentalists, would say, could ever be expected from me. Now changing sides, is not any way surprizing in a person answering the above description. I remember to have read in the Roman history, that when *Cato* of *Utica* had put himself to death, being unable to

survive the dissolution of the republic, and the extinction of liberty; another senator of inferior note, whose name I cannot recollect, did the same thing. But what thanks did he receive for this? The men of reflection only laughed at his absurd imitation of so great a personage, and said—he might have lived though the republic had come to its period. Had a Hancock or an Adams changed sides, I grant you they would have deserved no quarter, and I believe would have received none; but to pass the same judgment on the conduct of an obscure printer is miserable reasoning indeed. After all, why so much noise about a trifle? What occasion is there for the public to pour out all its wrath upon poor Towne; are turn coats so rare? Do they not walk on every side? Have we not seen Dr. S——, J—— A——, T—— C——, and many others who were first champions for liberty; then friends to government,—and now discover a laudable inclination to fall into their ranks as quiet and orderly subjects of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The rational moralists of the last age used to tell us, that there was an essential difference between virtue and vice, because there was an essential difference to be observed in the nature and reason of things. Now, with all due deference to these great men, I think I am as much of a philosopher as to know that there are no circumstances of action, more important than those of time and place. Therefore if a man pay no regard to the changes that may happen in these circumstances, there will be very little virtue, and still less *prudence* in his behaviour. Perhaps I have got rather too deep for common readers, and there-

fore shall ask any plain Quaker in this city what he would say to a man who should wear the same coat in summer as in winter in this climate? He would certainly say, "Friend, thy wisdom is not great." Now whether I have not had as good reason to change my conduct as my coat, since last January, I leave to every impartial person to determine. 2. I do hereby declare and confess, that when I printed for Congress, and on the side of liberty, it was not by any means from principle, or a desire that the cause of liberty should prevail, but purely and simply from the love of gain. I could have made nothing but tar and feathers by printing against them as things then stood. I make this candid acknowledgment not only as a penitent to obtain pardon, but to shew that there was more consistency in my conduct than my enemies are willing to allow. They are pleased to charge me with hypocrisy in pretending to be a whig when I was none. This charge is false; I was neither whig nor tory, but a printer. I detest and abhor hypocrisy. I had no more regard for General Howe or General Clinton, or even Mrs. Lowring, or any other of the *chaste nymphs* that attended the Fete Champetre, alias Mischianza, when I printed in their behalf, than for the Congress on the day of their retreat. It is pretended that I certainly did in my heart incline to the English, because I printed much bigger lies and in greater number for them, than for the Congress. This is a most false and unjust insinuation. It was entirely the fault of the Congress themselves, who thought fit (being but a new potentate in the earth) to be much more modest, and

keep nearer the truth than their adversaries. Had any of them brought me in a lie as big as a mountain it should have issued from my press. This gives me an opportunity of shewing the folly as well as malignity of those who are actuated by party spirit; many of them have affirmed that I printed monstrous and *incredible* lies for General Howe. Now pray what harm could incredible lies do? The only hurt, I conceive, that any lie can do is by obtaining belief, as a truth; but an incredible lie can obtain no belief, and therefore at least must be perfectly harmless. What will those cavillers think, if I should turn this argument against them, and say that the most effectual way to disgrace any cause, is to publish monstrous and incredible lies in its favour. In this view, I have not only innocence, but some degree of merit to plead. However, take it which way you will, there never was a lie published in Philadelphia that could bear the least comparison with those published by J—— R—— in New York. This in my opinion is to be imputed to the superiority, not of the printer, but of the prompter or prompters. I reckon Mr. T—— to have excelled in that branch; and probably he had many coadjutors. What do you think of 40,000 Russians, and 20,000 Moors, which Moors too were said by Mr. R—— to be dreadful amongst the women? As also of the boats building at the forks of Monongahela to carry the Congress down the Ohio to New Orleans? These were swingers.— As to myself and friend H——, we contented ourselves with publishing affidavits to prove that the king of France was determined to preserve

the friendship that subsisted between him and his good brother the king of England, of which he has given a *new proof*, by entering into and communicating his treaty with the United States of America. Upon the whole, I hope the public will attribute my conduct, not to disaffection, but to attachment to my own interest and desire of gain in my profession; a principle, if I mistake not, pretty general and pretty powerful in the present day.

3dly. I hope the public will consider that I have been a timorous man, or, if you will, a coward, from my youth, so that I cannot fight,—my belly is so big that I cannot run,—and I am so great a lover of eating and drinking that I cannot starve. When those three things are considered, I hope they will fully account for my past conduct, and procure me the liberty of going on in the same *uniform* tenor for the future. No just judgment can be formed of a man's character and conduct, unless every circumstance is taken in and fairly attended to; I therefore hope that this justice will be done in my case. I am also verily persuaded that if all those who are cowards as well as myself, but who are better off in other respects, and therefore *can* and *do run* whenever danger is near them, would befriend me, I should have no inconsiderable body on my side. Peace be with the Congress and the army; I mean no reflections; but the world is a wide field, and I wish every body would do as they would be done by. Finally, I do hereby recant, draw back, eat in, and swallow down, every word that I have ever spoken, written or printed to the prejudice of the United States of America, hop-

ing it will not only fatisfy the good people in general, but alfo all thofe fcatterbrained fellows, who call one another out to fhoot pistols in the air, while they tremble fo much that they cannot hit the mark. In the mean time I will return to labour with affiduity in my lawful calling, and effays and intelligence as before fhall be gratefully accepted by the public's moft obedient humble fervant,

BENJAMIN TOWNE.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE

OF

NEW JERSEY.

ANSWERS IN PART TO MR MARBOIS'S QUESTIONS RESPECTING
NEW JERSEY.

I. **N**EW JERSEY is bounded on the north by a line drawn from the North or Hudson's river to the boundary of Pennsylvania, fixed about ten years ago by commissioners appointed from New York and New Jersey, and marked in all the late maps. This line runs nearly west, and passes about thirty miles north of Morris-town in New Jersey.

It is bounded on the east by Hudson's river, from the line just now mentioned to the sea.

It is bounded on the south by the Atlantic Ocean, from the mouth of Hudson's river to Cape May, at the mouth of Delaware Bay. And on the west by the Delaware, to the place where the first mentioned line strikes it, between two and three hundred miles from the sea.

II. Smith's history of New Jersey is the only publication that can answer the design of this query.

III. New Jersey consists of thirteen counties, which, beginning at Cape May on the Delaware Bay, lie in the following order: Cape May, Salem, Cumberland, Gloucester, Burlington, Hunterdon, Sussex, Morris, Bergen, Essex, Somerset, Middlesex, Monmouth. These counties are subdivided into townships or precincts.

There are no cities in New Jersey, but Burlington and Perth Amboy, which were severally the capitals of East and West Jersey, as will be seen by the patents and history of the settlement.

The chief villages, or considerable places in New Jersey, are Haddonfield, Mountholly, Burdowntown, Trenton, Princeton, Brunswick, Morriston, Springfield, Woodbridge, Elizabeth-town, Newark, Hackensack, Pittstown, Cranberry, Shrewsbury, Allentown, Pennington, and some others of less note.

The only river of considerable extent in New Jersey, is the Raritan; the two branches of which passing through the north-eastern parts of the state, unite near twenty miles above Brunswick, and receiving the Millstone and some other smaller streams, it becomes navigable about two miles above Brunswick, and from thence to Amboy bay, about twenty miles by water, is navigated by shallops and small vessels of one hundred or one hundred and fifty tons.

South river passes through Cranberry, in Middlesex county, and empties itself into the Raritan before it reaches Amboy.

Black river is a considerable stream, passing thro' Morris county eastward, and empties itself into Hudson's river.

Passaic river passes through Bergen county, and enters into the bay opposite to Newark. There are falls pretty remarkable on this river, at the head of the bay, which many people go to see as a curiosity.

There are many other small rivulets, not considerable, and many creeks and inlets upon the sea coast, and particularly in the bay and river of Delaware, none of them navigable far into the country.

As to mountains, there is a ridge not very high, but commonly called Rocky Hill, which crosses the great road from Philadelphia to New York, about five miles eastward of Princeton, and runs from the south-east to the north-west, continuing about ten miles in length, passing about one mile and a half to the north of Princeton. Though there are no hills properly speaking, there is a continued and gradual ascent from the Delaware to Princeton, and a gradual descent from thence to the eastward. There is a great ridge of mountains near and on the boundary between New Jersey and New York, running chiefly from east to west.

The trees are very various. As to forest trees, there are oaks of various kinds, ash, maple, birch, chestnut, walnut, pine, locust. The middle and upper parts of the country run much into the several kinds of oak, and in the lower parts are to be found great quantities of pine and cedar. The mulberry tree thrives in most parts of the state; and it seems remarkably favourable to fruit trees, particularly apples, pears, cherries and peaches, of all which there is great abundance. The vine grows spontaneously in many parts, and bears a large blue grape, not unpleasent to eat.

The produce of the improved farms, is wheat, rye, barley, Indian corn, buckwheat, flax, and hemp. It is usual for farmers to have a small piece of land in tobacco; but it is only for their own use, or that of their servants; it is not raised in New Jersey for sale. All the garden herbs raised in France and England, thrive well in New Jersey; so probably would vines, if cultivated by persons who understood the business.

Black cattle are raised in New Jersey to great advantage—also horses. There is a particular turn in the inhabitants for raising fine horses, from the breed imported from England. There is also a large breed of heavy draught horses, in those parts of the state chiefly inhabited by the Low Dutch.

IV. The number of inhabitants in New Jersey at present, is certainly not less than two hundred thousand. There was an exact list of them taken about ten years ago, which will be procured in a short time. There are negroes, but they are certainly not above one seventh or one tenth part of the whole. The negroes are exceedingly well used, being fed and clothed as well as any free persons who live by daily labour.

V. There is no profession of religion which has an exclusive legal establishment. Some particular churches have charters of incorporation; and probably they would not be refused to a body of any denomination. All professions are tolerated, and all protestants are capable of electing and being elected, and indeed have every privilege belonging

to citizens.—There are in New Jersey, English Presbyterians, Low Dutch Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, Quakers. The two first, except the difference of the national connexion of the one with the church of Scotland, and the other with the church of Holland, and the language, are of the same principles as to doctrine. They have the same worship and government, and they are by far the most numerous. There is a great majority of the present legislature of these two denominations. Formerly the Quakers, though not the majority, had considerable influence; but since the late contest with Great Britain, they are fewer in number, and altogether without power. The Episcopalians are few. The Baptists are Presbyterians in all other respects, only differing in the point of Infant-baptism; their political weight goes the same way as the Presbyterians; their number is small.

VI. There is at Princeton a college, which had originally a royal charter, begun in 1748. It is now confirmed in its privileges, with some alterations and improvements, by act of assembly. The charter name of it is, the college of New Jersey; the name of the building, Nassau Hall. It was in a flourishing state before the war, having about one hundred and fifty under graduates and other scholars; but was entirely desolated, and the house made a wreck, by the confusion of the times—first by the English army, which entirely scattered the scholars, and took possession of the house; and afterwards, by the American army making it a barrack and hospital. It now begins to recover, having of under graduates

and scholars about sixty.—A printed account of the college has been given to Mr Marbois before.

There is also in New Jersey a college, whose charter name is Queen's College, set up by the Low Dutch, with a particular view to preserve their language, and all the peculiar customs of the church of Holland. They have no building as yet, but have carried on their instruction sometimes at Brunswick, sometimes elsewhere.

The college of New Jersey is the best building in the state. Neither churches nor court-houses are any where sumptuous. There is no public hospital in the state.

There are few men of letters in the state of New Jersey, except those who belong to law, physic, or theology; and many of these professions are often taken up without a liberal education. The state consists almost wholly of substantial farmers. There has been formerly known, especially when the Quakers had some power, a prejudice against learning—That prejudice begins to wear off.

There are no turnpike roads. There are statutes for the widening of the public roads; also for repairing, though it is generally poorly done—yet from the climate and the level position of the country, the roads are excellent in summer. The accommodations in taverns are in general as good as in any state in America. The great road from Philadelphia to New York, lies through the middle of New Jersey, by Trenton, Princeton, Brunswick, Woodbridge, Elizabeth-town, and Newark.

VII. I cannot at present recollect any customs

peculiar to the state, or that from their singularity deserve notice. New Jersey was first peopled by the Low Dutch, at least the eastern part of it. Their language is continued there as yet, though wearing out. They are a remarkably cleanly people, and frugal. They use their slaves and other servants with great humanity, often not scrupling white and black to eat together. People from all the other states are continually moving into and out of this state, so that there is little peculiarity of manners.

VIII. *The present state of manufactures, commerce, and exterior trade.*

New Jersey being in general settled by farmers, with a great equality of rank and even possessions, no considerable manufactures are established in it. There are, however, tradesmen dispersed through it, of almost every kind. The farmers being frugal and plain in their manners, always made both linen and woolen cloth for their own families and their servants. They have given greater attention to this matter within these five or six years that the differences with Great Britain have subsisted. I believe it may be depended upon, that there is not one in ten of the members of the legislature of New Jersey, who is not clothed in the manufacture of his own family for the greatest part, and many of them have no other clothing of any kind. At this time a great quantity of very good cloth is made in the families. Some tradesmen in different places make for sale, but not much. There are some very considerable dealers in leather, and still a greater number in hats.

All iron tools are well made here, but not for exportation out of the state.

From the situation of New Jersey, there is hardly any foreign trade carried on directly from it. The merchants in Trenton, Brunswick, Burdowntown, and several other places, have boats, shallops, and other small vessels, with which they trade to Philadelphia or New York. In former times ships might be entered both at Burlington and Amboy, for any part of the world: but few are sent abroad—such of our merchants as are concerned in foreign trade, being almost always joined in company with some of the large cities above mentioned.

IX. A notice of the best sea-ports in the state, and how big are the vessels they can receive.

The best sea-port in the state of New-Jersey is Amboy, which can receive vessels of as great burden as New York. There has never been as yet any great foreign trade at Amboy. The vicinity of New York has probably been a hindrance to it. There are harbours at little Egg-harbour and great Egg-harbour, on the coast of the Atlantic, which privateers and traders have made a considerable use of since the war. They cannot receive vessels of great burden; but the greatest part of the trading vessels can go in there. The same is the case with the creeks on the Jersey shore, in the river Delaware.

X. A notice of the commercial productions peculiar to that state, and of those objects which the inhabitants are obliged to draw from Europe and from other parts of the world.

The productions of New Jersey, and the sources

of its wealth, are grain of every kind, as mentioned under question third—horses, cattle, salted beef and pork, and poultry. In times of peace, great quantities of all these are sent to the West Indies, and flax-seed to Europe, shipped however more commonly in Philadelphia or New York, than any port in New Jersey. The city of Philadelphia receives a great proportion of its provisions, including vegetables of every kind, from New Jersey. The soil of that part of New Jersey which is opposite to Philadelphia, is exceedingly proper for gardening, and derives much of its value from its proximity to that city.

The state of New Jersey is obliged to draw from Europe and other parts, tea, sugar, wine, spirits. Before the war they purchased considerable quantities of English cloth, both linen and woolen, because cheaper than they could manufacture it in many instances, and because many tradesmen and others had not the materials of manufacture. All articles of finery they must purchase if they use them—lawns, gauzes, silks and velvet.

XI. The weights, measures, and the currency of hard money—Some details relating to the exchange with Europe.

The weights and measures now used in New Jersey, are the same as in England, of every kind—measures of length, solidity, superficies, dry and liquid. The most common for grain is the bushel, which contains eight Winchester gallons, and each gallon two hundred and seventy-two and a quarter solid inches.

The exchange between New Jersey and Europe, is carried on almost wholly through Philadelphia and New York.

The statute currency of money in New Jersey is in the same proportion to sterling as that of Pennsylvania, that is as five to three. A Spanish milled dollar is, of New Jersey proclamation money, seven shillings and sixpence. There was twenty years ago, a currency or way of reckoning in New Jersey, commonly called light money, according to which a dollar was eight shillings and eight pence, but this seems now to be wholly difused, or confined only to the north-eastern part of the state. The other way of reckoning is called *proclamation money*, which prevails.

XII. *The public income and expences.*

The public income of New Jersey consists, so far as is known to me, of taxes annually laid by the assemblies; and is great or small, as they shall think the exigences of the state require. There is in general a great disposition to save the public money; indeed such as in many instances to make inadequate provision. The salary of the governor was by the act of supply, October 1775, before the change from a colony to a free state, twelve hundred pounds, proclamation money; the judges of the supreme court, three in number, had each of them one hundred and fifty the same year; all other expences for clerks, &c. were small; and the members of council and assembly had each eight shillings for every day's attendance. The delegates in Congress had at first twenty shillings per day; and during the de-

preciation of the money, if they made any allowance at the beginning of the year because of its bad state then, they never made any amends for the increased depreciation before the year expired.—As to this and all such matters, they may be seen more fully from the printed laws, which I believe may be purchased of Isaac Collins, printer to the state, in Trenton.

XIII. *The measures taken with regard to the estates and possessions of the rebels, commonly called Tories.*

They have been all sold off *in perpetuum*, and are now in possession of the new proprietors; the debts upon them to faithful subjects, having been first discharged.

XIV. *The marine and navigation.*

There are no vessels whatever belonging to the state of New Jersey. There are privateers who have commissions, which sail from the ports on the coast, or on the enemy's lines. There is an Admiralty Court established for the condemnation of prizes.—As to merchant ships, see the answer to question eighth.

XV. *A notice of the mines, and other subterranean riches.*

There are some very valuable iron mines in New Jersey, in Morris and Sussex counties. Some companies in England were concerned in working some of these mines before the war. It was suspected some years ago, that there were copper mines in New Jersey; but no trial hitherto made has fully

succeeded—some gentlemen lost their fortunes in the attempt.

It is not known whether there are any coal mines or not, as people every where burn wood.

XVI. *Some samples of the mines, and of the extraordinary stones; in short, a notice of all that can increase the progress of human knowledge.*

Iron ore is so very common, that it cannot be supposed to be an object of curiosity. I have heard of and seen some pieces of black matter, that was said, when dissolved in water, to be exceedingly good ink. If this or any other curiosity can be obtained by enquiry, they shall be forwarded.—There is very good marl in some parts of New Jersey, to the eastward.—There is no limestone in the parts of New Jersey where I have been, but probably there is some in Suffex.—There are in several places of New Jersey, sugar-maple trees, whence the country people draw sugar for their own use, as in the back parts of New Hampshire and Vermont.

XVII. *A description of the Indians established in the states, before the European settlements, and of those who are still remaining. An indication of the Indian monuments discovered in that state.*

The Indians and their manner of life, are described in several books, much better than I can do it, who was never among them. And indeed by comparing together all that I have ever heard or read, it appears, that the characteristic features of the Indians of North America, are the same which have distinguished savages in all parts of the world, and wherever

discovered—gravity and fullness of deportment, love of hunting and war—that is to say, depredation; ferocity to their captives, laziness and aversion to habitual labour, tyranny over the female sex, passive courage, and, if it may be called so, active cowardice, and strong passions both of lasting gratitude and unextinguishable resentment.

The chief thing that a philosopher can learn from the Indians in New Jersey is, that perhaps the most complete experiment has been made here how they would agree with cultivated life. At the time when the Indians sold and confirmed the lands to the settlers, at their own request, a tract of land was purchased for them to live in the heart of the colony, in Burlington county, of three thousand acres and more which was secured to them by law. They had a village built, and a house of worship and a minister, and every possible encouragement to them to cultivate the land, and carry on trades; yet, after all, they were so far from increasing in numbers or improving in industry, that at different times several of them went back into the woods, and the remainder dwindled away, so that there are few of them now left. On the whole it does not appear, that either by our people going among them, or by their being brought among us, that it is possible to give them a relish of civilized life. There have been some of them educated at this college, as well as in New England; but seldom or never did they prove either good or useful.

A F E W

REFLECTIONS

HUMBLY SUBMITTED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC
IN GENERAL, AND IN PARTICULAR TO THE CONGRESS OF
THE UNITED STATES.

THOUGH the following reflections come from an individual citizen, no way connected with public business, I hope they will be read with candour and attention. All good conduct proceeds from certain radical principles; and retired theoretical persons certainly may judge as well, perhaps they often judge better, of those, than such as are engaged in the bustle and hurry of an active life, or occupied in the management of particular affairs. Another circumstance which encourages me in this hope is, that I intend to offer nothing but what shall be even beyond the imputation of proceeding, either from party attachment or mercenary views.

When the Federal constitution was agreed on, it was the fervent desire, and I may say the earnest prayer of many, that it might take place, and get into operation with quietness, and under the acquiescence and approbation of the public. This I

think we may say has happily been the case so far as we have yet proceeded. The persons chosen to fill the houses of Congress, have been generally approved. Perhaps some states, in a few instances, might have made a better choice; but upon the whole, there is little reason to complain. I remember to have heard a gentleman well acquainted with the subject, say of the former Congress which conducted the war, that he had never known a time in which it did not contain a great plurality of men of integrity, and of those a very respectable number of distinguished abilities. I hope and believe that this is the case at present; and may it always continue to be so.

The measures taken by Congress in their last session, have in general given satisfaction. I am not ignorant that there have been some severe, and in my opinion petulant and insolent remarks made upon the salaries fixed for public officers, and the compensation allowed for the attendance of members of Congress, especially the last. I am of opinion, however, that they are both reasonable, and the last at least as reasonable, if not more so, than the first. I hope few persons will ever be in Congress, who devoting their time to the public service, may not well deserve the compensation fixed for them, from their character and talents. And if they have lucrative professions, or valuable private fortunes, these must be deserted for a time, and probably a loss incurred greater than the whole wages. I should also be sorry to hear of any member of Congress who became rich by the savings above his expence. I know very well, that there have been

Congress men and Assembly men too, who have carried home considerable sums from less wages; but they were such generally, as did more good to their families by their penury, than to their country by their political wisdom.

I come now to what I chiefly intended by this short essay. Much time of the last session was spent in debates upon fixing a place for the permanent residence of Congress, and building a federal city. That matter was under the consideration of the former Congress, and was fixed and unfixed I believe more than once. It always occasioned great altercation; nor was it possible to tell when it was settled, for whenever Congress changed its members, or the members changed their opinions, every thing that had been done was undone. In the last meeting of the federal Congress, it seems to have been finally decided; but, either by accident or the address of some who were opposed to the decision, it was thrown open again, and is now left as unsettled as ever. I have not met with any body who was sorry, but with many who were happy at this circumstance; and I sincerely wish that it may be suffered to sleep in its present situation at least for a considerable time, and till some other business of greater and more confessed importance shall be completely finished. I am now to give my reasons for this opinion.

1. A determination upon that subject is not *necessary*. When I say it is not necessary, I mean that we are not urged to it by any pressing inconveniences or injuries which we have suffered, or are suffering for want of it. Every body must own, that it would be very expensive, and indeed I am

one myself, who, if it were to be done at all, and there were buildings to be erected which should not belong to any state, but to the union, would wish that they should not be barely elegant, but magnificent, that they might not derogate from the dignity of the empire. This is not even contrary to the general principle of economy; for it has been observed, that some of the most frugal nations have been most sumptuous in their public edifices, of which the Stadthouse at Amsterdam is an example. Therefore, if the necessity were great, if the public business could not be carried on, nor the public authority maintained without it, I should be for submitting to every inconvenience—I would not be deterred even by the expence itself. But is this really the case? Does it appear to be necessary from the nature of the thing? No. The weight and influence of any deliberative or legislative body, depend much more on the wisdom of their measures, than the splendid apartments in which they are assembled. Does it appear to be necessary from experience or the example of other nations? I think not. I can hardly recollect above one or two of the kingdoms or states of Europe, in which the capital is central; and as to confederated republics, some of them have no common capital at all. The Swiss Cantons have no federal city. The different states of which this last consists, have for ages, when they had occasion to meet for common consultation, held their Diets in different places. But we need go no further than our own experience. Did not the former Congress carry on the war with Great Britain, depend and secure the liberties of the United States,

without a federal city? Was the want of it greatly or deeply felt as an inconvenience? I do not recollect a single complaint made in speech or writing upon the subject.

2. It can be but little *profitable*. The truth is, when I attempt to recollect and enumerate the advantages to be derived from a federal city, in a central place, yet thinly inhabited, I find them very few and very small. If the American empire come to be one consolidated government, I grant it would be of some consequence that the seat of that government and source of authority should not be too distant from the extremities, for reasons which I need not here mention. But if the particular states are to be preserved and supported in their constitutional government, it seems of very little consequence where the Congress, consisting of representatives from these states, shall hold their sessions. There is not only little profit in their being fixed and central, but perhaps some advantages might arise from their being unfixed and ambulatory. This last seems to be more suitable to the equality of rights of the several states. It is far from being an impossible supposition, that the state in which Congress should be fixed, would think itself entitled to a leading, if not a domineering influence over the other states. As to easiness of access, such is the state of this country, lying along the sea-coast, and having so many navigable rivers, that any city whatever on the coast or great rivers is easily accessible, and the difference of distance, especially when the payment is to be in proportion to the distance, is not worth mentioning. It is farther to be observed, that though buildings may be immediately raised for the accommodation

of Congress, yet a great city, or a city of opulence and commerce, could not be raised for a long tract of time. It is even uncertain whether the bare residence of Congress during their annual sessions (which it is to be hoped in a few years will be but short) independent of other circumstances, will ever raise a great commercial city at all. The Hague, though the residence of the Stadtholder, is far from being the largest, most populous, or most wealthy city in Holland. Now I humbly conceive, that if not residence in, yet nearness to some important commercial city or cities, will be found to be absolutely necessary for transactions relating to money or finance: so that, if the advantages and disadvantages of a federal city on the proposed plan are fairly weighed, the latter would preponderate.

3. There is reason to fear that it may be very hurtful. Nothing is of so much consequence to us at present as union; and nothing is so much the desire of all unprejudiced, public-spirited and virtuous men. The federal constitution is but new. It is, we hope, taking place; but cannot yet be said to have taken root. It will from the nature of things, take some time before it can acquire the respect and veneration necessary in every government from the body of the people, who are always guided by feeling and habit, more than by a train of reasoning, however conclusive. Now, is there no reason to fear that the disputes upon this subject may produce warmth and violence, and perhaps an alienation of mind in some states against others, very prejudicial to public order? The most trifling subjects of dispute have sometimes created divisions.

both in larger and smaller political bodies, which have ended in common ruin. If I am rightly informed, the disputes which have already taken place in Congress upon this subject, have been carried on with greater virulence of temper and acrimony of expression, than upon any other that has been under their deliberation. This is not to be wondered at; for it is indeed of such a nature, that it has a nearer relation to state attachments and local prejudices than any other that can be named. Perhaps in such a question it is lawful, decent, and even necessary, to plead the local interest of particular states; and therefore it is to be expected that every delegate will contend with earnestness for that of his own. At any rate, whatever ostensible public reasons may be devised by a fertile invention, all unprejudiced hearers will believe, that it is local attachment that guides their judgment, and inflames their zeal. The only use that it is necessary for me to make of such a remark, is to shew that the contention and animosity raised by this dispute will probably extend itself to every other, and that it will not be confined to the contending members in Congress, but will spread itself through all the states, whose cause they plead, and whose interest they seem to espouse. This is one of those questions that had much better be decided wrong by general consent, than decided right by a small majority, without convincing or satisfying the opponents.

4. In the last place, it is certainly at least *unseasonable*. Though it were possible justly to answer all the objections I have stated above, I must still say, there is a time for every thing under the sun. A measure may be good in itself, and even necessary

in a qualified sense, yet if there be another duty incumbent upon the same body, that is better and more necessary, this surely ought to have the precedence in point of time. Now, I think it cannot be denied, and all intelligent persons in the United States seem to be of opinion, that bringing order into our finances, restoring and establishing public credit, is the most important business which the Congress has to do. It is also the most urgent in point of time; because in the interval, many public creditors are in a situation truly deplorable, whereas I can think of nobody that is suffering much for want of a federal city. The two designs are also connected together as cause and effect; and I need not tell any body which of these ought to go foremost. What a romantic project will it be to fix on a situation, and to form plans for building a number of palaces, before we provide money to build them with, or even before we pay those debts which we have already contracted? This is a matter in which not only all the citizens of America, those who are, and those who are not, public creditors, are deeply concerned, but on which will depend our future security, our interest and influence among foreign nations, and even the opinion that shall be formed of us by posterity itself.

These few reflections, not enlarged upon as they might easily have been, nor swelled or exaggerated by pompous declamation, but simply and nakedly proposed,—I leave to the judgment of the impartial public; and remain,

Their most obedient,

Humble servant,

X. Y.

ON THE

G E O R G I A

C O N S T I T U T I O N.

SIR,

IN your paper of Saturday last, you have given us the new Constitution of Georgia, in which I find the following resolution, "No clergyman of any denomination shall be a member of the General Assembly." I would be very well satisfied that some of the gentlemen who have made that an essential article of this constitution, or who have inserted and approve it in other constitutions, would be pleased to explain a little the principles, as well as to ascertain the meaning of it.

Perhaps we understand pretty generally, what is meant by a clergyman, *viz.* a person regularly called and set apart to the ministry of the gospel, and authorized to preach and administer the sacraments of the Christian religion. Now suffer me to ask this question: Before any man among us was ordained a minister, was he not a citizen of the United States, and if being in Georgia, a citizen of

the state of Georgia? Had he not then a right to be elected a member of the assembly, if qualified in point of property? How then has he lost, or why is he deprived of this right? Is it by offence or disqualification? Is it a sin against the public to become a minister? Does it merit that the person who is guilty of it should be immediately deprived of one of his most important rights as a citizen? Is not this inflicting a penalty which always supposes an offence? Is a minister then disqualified for the office of a senator or representative? Does this calling and profession render him stupid or ignorant? I am inclined to form a very high opinion of the natural understanding of the freemen and freeholders of the state of Georgia, as well as of their improvement and culture by education, and yet I am not able to conceive, but that some of those equally qualified, may enter into the clerical order: and then it must not be unfitness, but some other reason that produces the exclusion. Perhaps it may be thought that they are excluded from civil authority, that they may be more fully and constantly employed in their spiritual functions. If this had been the ground of it, how much more properly would it have appeared, as an order of an ecclesiastical body with respect to their own members. In that case I should not only have forgiven but approved and justified it; but in the way in which it now stands, it is evidently a punishment by loss of privilege, inflicted on those who go into the office of the ministry; for which, perhaps, the gentlemen of Georgia may have good reasons, though I have not been able to discover them.

But besides the uncertainty of the principle on which this resolution is founded, there seems to me much uncertainty as to the meaning of it. How are we to determine who is or is not a clergyman? Is he only a clergyman who has received ordination from those who have derived the right by an uninterrupted succession from the apostles? Or is he also a clergyman, who is set apart by the imposition of hands of a body of other clergymen, by joint authority? Or is he also a clergyman who is set apart by the church members of his own society, without any imposition of hands at all? Or is he also a clergyman who has exhorted in a methodist society, or spoken in a quaker meeting, or any other religious assembly met for public worship? There are still greater difficulties behind:—Is the clerical character indelible? There are some who have been ordained who occasionally perform some clerical functions, but have no pastoral charge at all. There are some who finding public speaking injurious to health, or from other reasons easily conceived, have resigned their pastoral charge, and wholly discontinued all acts and exercises of that kind; and there are some, particularly in New England, who having exercised the clerical office some time, and finding it less suitable to their talents than they apprehended, have voluntarily relinquished it, and taken to some other profession, as law, physic, or merchandize—Do these all continue clergymen, or do they cease to be clergymen, and by that cessation return to, or recover the honourable privileges of laymen?

I cannot help thinking that these difficulties are

very considerable, and may occasion much litigation, if the article of the constitution stands in the loose, ambiguous form in which it now appears; and therefore I would recommend the following alterations, which I think will make every thing definite and unexceptionable.

“ No clergyman, of any denomination, shall be capable of being elected a member of the Senate or House of Representatives, because [here insert the grounds of offensive disqualification, which I have not been able to discover] Provided always, and it is the true intent and meaning of this part of the constitution, that if at any time he shall be completely deprived of the clerical character by those by whom he was invested with it, as by deposition for cursing and swearing, drunkenness or uncleanness, he shall then be fully restored to all the privileges of a free citizen; his offence shall no more be remembered against him; but he may be chosen either to the Senate or House of Representatives, and shall be treated with all the respect due to his *brethren*, the other members of Assembly.”

THE
D R U I D,

*ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN NUMBERS
PERIODICALLY.*

N U M B E R I.

SIR,

IT is my intention, by your permission and assistance to attempt the instruction and entertainment of the public once a month, on miscellaneous subjects. This letter shall serve as the first paper, and shall be an introduction to those that are to follow, by pointing out the spirit and design of the undertaking, and the plan upon which it is to be conducted.

The title which I have assumed, was not intended to carry any wit in it, and indeed not much meaning, further than what is common to all names, the distinction of one thing or person from another. It proved a matter of no little difficulty to fix upon a title, after so great a variety as the world has seen, since the practice of periodical essays was first introduced. After a good deal of deliberation on a matter of very little moment, the above was suggest-

ed, by the place which is now, and is likely to be, my residence, while I continue on earth. It is a small but neat house, in a pleasant, retired situation, surrounded with woods, in all the simple majesty of their uncultivated state. Neither was it unfuitable to my time of life, the age of fifty, a cool and contemplative season, when men of education or business have generally seen as much of the world as satisfies their curiosity, and enables them to understand well enough what is passing in it; so that they have neither necessity nor inclination to mix again in its active scenes.

I was born and educated in Great Britain, and had all the advantage I could receive from a long residence in one of the most celebrated seats of learning in that happy kingdom. The prime and vigour of life I spent in the midst of public business and had a thorough knowledge of the greatest part, and personal intimacy with not a few, of the persons most distinguished in rank, politics, or literature, for the last thirty years. From what circumstances, or with what views, I came into this country, it is of no consequence for the reader to know; suffice it therefore to say, that I was not transported by Sir John Fielding, but came of my own proper motion and free choice; and indeed have never met with any thing in passing through life, that could be supposed either to sour the temper, or break the vigour of the mind. There are not a few who, towards the close of life, acquire, a settled hatred or contempt of mankind, and seem disposed to avenge their own real or supposed calamities on the world in general, by the acrimony of their

conversation, and the virulent satire of their writings. Productions dictated by such a spirit, have often; it must be owned, such a poignant severity, as deeply wounds the object of their resentment, and yet, I think seldom adds to the relish of those for whom the entertainment is provided.

It has been generally supposed, that satire and invective is the way of writing, of all others, most agreeable to the public; and the reason given for it is very little to the credit of human nature, *viz.* The prevalence of envy and malignity in the bulk of mankind. Had I been of this opinion, I would have cautiously avoided introducing the sentiment, at least so soon, as it would have been but a poor compliment to that very public, whose attention I mean to solicit, and whose improvement I wish to promote. I confess that a thorough knowledge of the world, and extensive reading in history, have often produced mean thoughts of human nature. We see sometimes old hackneyed politicians discover a jealousy of the characters, and an indifference to the sufferings of others, which surprises and offends men of less experience, who are therefore often laughed at for their weakness. This, in some instances is the mistake of the observer, while the coolness and composure of spirit, the deliberate and self-collected carriage, which is the effect of time, is falsely called a callous or unfeeling disposition. But where the remark is just, and a real and general hatred of others has obtained full dominion, it would not be so decent to infer from it that mankind are universally worthless or incorrigible, as to

impute it to the selfish meanness of that heart in which it had taken place.

It is very common for authors to go to an extreme on the one hand or on the other, in speaking of human nature. Those philosophers who speak of it in such exalted terms as to contradict the truths of religion, have present experience and the history of past ages directly against them. The most illustrious persons in the records of time, have derived the greatest part of their lustre itself, either from the singularity of their character, or, which is nearly the same thing, from the depravity of others, who needed their assistance for instruction or correction. It was smartly, at least, if not justly said, by an author not many years ago, that the wisdom of legislators, and the admirable policy of states, and even the purity of moral precepts, are just such arguments for the dignity of human nature as gibbets are. There is, doubtless, no small degree of error, ignorance prejudice and corruption to be found among men; but these, when properly viewed, serve rather to demonstrate the importance and necessity of information and instruction. There are not only particular instances in which the human mind has discovered the most exalted virtue as well as amazing powers, but the human race in general, with all its defects, is certainly the noblest and most valuable in this lower world, and therefore the most worthy of cultivation. To this may be added, that there is no circumstance in which there is a more manifest distinction between man and the inferior creatures, than that the individual is more helpless as well as the kind more noble; and therefore the intercourse of

society and mutual assistance is absolutely necessary to his improvement and perfection.

But this is perhaps treating the subject in too abstract and philosophical a manner, which I well know is not much to the taste of the present age. The importance of knowledge, and the power of intellectual light, will be readily confessed. The questions to be seriously debated with himself by an author, at his first setting out, are, what encouragement he has to devote himself to the public service? and, what reason to think he hath any thing to communicate that is worthy of the public attention? Now, as to the *first* of these, it is my opinion, that though error, prejudice, and partiality, are very universal, that is to say, they have place in some degree in many persons of every rank, age, and country; yet their influence in each, has properly speaking, but a narrow sphere. Truth is much stronger than them all. They shew themselves chiefly in the smaller interests of particulars; but there is a candor and impartiality in a diffusive public which may be in a great measure depended upon, and which will both hear truth and obey it. There is not, perhaps, a man in that public, but has many prejudices and prepossessions; but these are confined within certain bounds, like the sphere of attraction of particular bodies, round himself: when you go beyond that sphere, they are not felt, or they are felt very weakly. There is an observation I have sometimes made, which I do not remember to have read in any author, but which, if just, should teach every man to revere the public judgment. The remark is, that I can scarcely recollect any person well and intimately known to me, whose performances, either in speak-

ing or writing, had been exhibited to the world for any time, of whose talents and erudition the great plurality did not judge exactly in the same manner that I did myself. If they do justice to every other person, why should I doubt their doing it to me? Ignorance, prejudice, malice, or accident, may have some influence at first; but their effects are merely temporary, and are speedily effaced. Time is a diligent enquirer, and a just judge. I could almost say the same thing of a man's moral character, under two exceptions: If you go beyond the bounds of local politics, and abstract entirely from religious differences, every man is spoken of pretty nearly as he deserves. I am sufficiently aware that there are particular exceptions to this general theory, but I have not now time to enter upon them; and therefore shall leave them till they fall in my way in the discussion of such subjects as shall be undertaken in my future papers.

As to the *second* point, whether I have any thing to communicate that is worthy of the public attention? It is plain from the appearance of this paper, that I have already judged of it so far as to make the attempt; it is therefore too late for me, and too early for the reader, to take that matter into consideration. I shall, however, mention briefly the plan which I mean to follow. The general subject of these papers shall be the philosophy of human nature and of human life; I would willingly join science and reflection to experience and observation. Literature and morals, arts and industry, shall be my chief themes; and under one or other of these, every thing may be introduced, that can

in the least contribute to the happiness of social or private life. I must beg the reader to observe, that in handling all these subjects, I shall have a particular view to the state and interest of this rising country. As in youth the human frame wears its loveliest form; as the spring is the most charming season of the revolving year: so, a country newly planted, and every day advancing to a maturer state, affords the highest delight to a contemplative philosopher, and is, at the same time, the strongest invitation to activity and usefulness.

I am sensible that some will think the present an improper season for beginning on so extensive a plan. They will say the time calls not for speculation but action. Our industry is now all turned into one channel, the vigorous exertion of the spirit of defence. When liberty, property and life are at stake, we must not think of being scholars, but soldiers. When happy peace returns we shall be able to apply with proper attention and vigour to the improvement of our minds, as well as to the cultivation of the soil: till then we have other work upon our hands. I must inform the reader, that these are mistaken reflections. There is such a connection among all the arts that improve or embellish human nature, that they are best promoted in conjunction, and generally go in a body. As I look without solicitude, or rather with unshaken confidence of success, on the present glorious and important struggle for the liberties of mankind; so I consider it as a proper season for the most ardent application to the improvement of this country in all respects. In times of public commotion the human mind is roused, and shakes off the incumbrances of sloth and self-

indulgence. Those who put on the harness and go into the field, must be encouraged, assisted, and even supported, by the activity and industry of those who remain at home. Besides, I am much mistaken if the time is not just at hand, when there shall be greater need than ever in America, for the most accurate discussion of the principles of society, the rights of nations, and the policy of states; all which shall have a place in the subsequent numbers of this paper. But above all, can it ever be unreasonable to lay before the public what tends to improve the temper and morals of the reader, which shall be the ultimate object of all my disquisitions? He who makes a people *virtuous*, makes them *invincible*.

The reader will now, in some degree, understand the design and extent of this undertaking. As to wit and humour, I choose to make no promises upon that head, lest I should break them. Most people, perhaps, differ from me; but I confess I would rather read a tedious argument than a dull joke. Yet the favours of the ingenious, as the saying is (post paid) may perhaps enable me sometimes to gratify a reader of taste: only I must take the liberty of being pleased myself first, otherwise they shall sleep with me, or return to the authors. Some, perhaps, will wonder that I have said nothing of the delightful themes of love and gallantry, especially as it is so easy to establish a connection between the tender passion and military glory. The younger class of my readers may rest satisfied, that they shall not want good advice enough, which may be applied to that and to every other subject; but I do not take myself to be qualified to paint the

ardors of a glowing flame. I have not seen any killing eyes these several years. It was but yesterday, that I smiled involuntarily on reading a poem in your last magazine, setting forth, that both Beauty and Wisdom had taken up their residence with a certain nymph, the one in her cheek, the other in her tongue, and that they were resolved never to depart; which I thought was a little unfortunate for all the rest of the sex. I wish every Strephon and Daphne heartily well, and that the exalted and rapturous phrases of Arcadia may be soon brought down to the composed discourse of a quiet man and wife in Philadelphia; in which character, perhaps they may sometimes hear from me, I hope, to their great benefit.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THE DRUID.

NUMBER II.

SIR,

WHEN I first came into this country, nothing was farther from my expectation than the contest that has now taken place between Great Britain and the Colonies. The reader, I suppose, will also readily believe me when I affirm, that what relates to this important struggle, made but a small part of the matter I had meditated and digested for the subject of these dissertations. But, from some letters which I have received, and much con-

versation that I have heard, it appears plain, that something of this kind is expected from me, and that if it is long withheld, it will be difficult to avoid suspicion from the warmer sons of liberty. It is not easy to determine what branches of this great argument it would be best to take up, as most suitable to a speculative philosopher, and at the same time most necessary or useful to the bulk of my readers. The natural rights of mankind, and the cause of liberty in general, have been explained and defended in innumerable treatises, ancient and modern. The application of these principles to the American controversy, has been made by many writers among us, with the greatest clearness and precision. The nature of government, and method of balancing a civil constitution, I cannot say has been handled either with so much fulness or propriety as the other topics; yet on this also many excellent observations have been made. If it has not been much reasoned on, it seems nevertheless to be both felt and understood, in almost every corner of this continent.

Leaving, therefore, these subjects for the present, as we are yet engaged in a war somewhat singular in its nature, important in its consequences, and uncertain in its duration, I shall beg leave to make some remarks as a scholar, and as a citizen of the world, on *the manner of carrying on war*. By this is not meant, to lay down a plan of discipline, or tactics for an army, or of stratagems and manœuvres for a general or inferior leader; but to consider by what means wars of different kinds may be carried on, consistently with reason,

conscience, or common utility. Every body must have observed how frequently the newspapers have been filled with complaints of our enemies, as acting savagely and barbarously—as being guilty of unnatural cruelty—as carrying on a felonious and piratical war—as acting contrary to the laws of war. I have, however, taken notice, that among all these dissertations little or nothing has been said to shew *why* they have acted barbarously, further than that they have acted unjustly in being our enemies at all. No one has told us what are the laws of war, or endeavoured to make us understand when enemies may be said to act a fair and honourable, and when a dastardly and cruel part.

This subject I shall now therefore enter upon; and will endeavour to handle it with as much simplicity as possible, that it may be useful to persons of the lowest rank, and most common understanding. Let me trace it to its source. Wherever society exists founded upon clear established laws, this obliges us to form an idea of a state previous to the formation of society, or before such, or any laws, were made and acknowledged to be in force. This is called a state of nature. I do not enter into the innumerable questions upon this subject; as, how long it could continue, when men increased in number? Whether it is a state of war or peace? Whether inclination prompted, or necessity compelled, men to enter into society? It is sufficient for my purpose, to observe, that independent nations are in a state of natural liberty with respect to one another, or as man to man previous to the social compact. When they disagree, they have no common umpire

or judge to resort to, but must decide their quarrels by the sword. The questions then to be resolved are three: 1. Are there any laws at all by which they are bound? or, are all kinds of force or violence equally just? 2. If not, what is the law? what is it that makes the distinction? and, 3. what is the sanction of the law? To whom shall we complain when it is broken?

If there is any such law, it is certainly very justly denominated, by civilians, the *law of nature and nations*. Of nature, because its principles are to be derived from the state of natural or universal liberty, and personal independence; and of nations, because there is no person in such a state at present, excepting nations or large bodies, who consider themselves as independent of each other. Now, that there is such a law, I think is evident, not only from the universal acknowledgment of men, and the practice of nations from the earliest ages, but from the nature of the thing. If there are any duties binding upon men to each other, in a state of natural liberty, the same are due from nation to nation. Bodies politic do not in this circumstance, differ from individuals. The same answer must be made to the second question. It is impossible to mention any right that an individual may justly claim, either as to person or property, from his fellow men, but a society has the like claim upon any other society. Their persons must not be assaulted, nor their property invaded. The single purpose of society, indeed, is to protect the individual, and to give him the strength of the public arm, in defence of his just and natural right.

But it will be asked, in the third place, What is the function of this law? and who is to call the offender to account? To this I answer, That the function of the law of nature is nothing else but a sense of duty, and accountableness to the supreme Judge; to which may be added, such a sense of general utility, as makes men fear, that if they notoriously trample upon it, reproach and infamy among all nations will be the effect, and probably resentment and indignation by common consent. Agreeably to this, having recourse to force is often called an appeal to heaven, and it is, at the same time, generally accompanied with an attempt, by some public declaration, to convince other nations of the justice of the cause.

Omitting many things that are not connected with the point I have in view, particularly without enumerating the legitimate causes of war, but supposing nations engaged in a war which they believe on both sides to be just, let us ask, What are the means by which this war is to be carried on? The first and most obvious answer is, By all manner of force or open violence; and the most able warrior is presumed to be the one that can invent weapons the most deadly and destructive. It is admitted also, on all hands, that force may be used, not only against the persons and goods of rulers, but of every member of the hostile state. This may seem hard, that innocent subjects of a state should suffer for the folly and indiscretion of the rulers, or of other members of the same state. But it is often unavoidable. The whole individuals that compose a state are considered but as one body. It would

be impossible for an enemy to distinguish the guilty from the innocent. When men submit to a government, they risk their own persons and possessions in the same bottom with the whole, in return for the benefits of society.

Upon this principle, open violence may be said to have no bounds, and every method that can be invented to send destruction and misery to any part of the hostile state, may be thought to be permitted. But upon the principles of general equity, and the consent and practice of modern times, acts of cruelty and inhumanity, are to be blamed, and to be considered as a violation of the law of nations. Many of them might be easily enumerated, such as refusing quarter to those who submit, killing prisoners when they might be kept without any danger, killing women and children, inventing methods of torture, burning and destroying every thing that might be of use in life. The use of poisoned weapons also has been generally condemned, as well as poisoning of springs and provisions.

The celebrated Dr. Robertson of Edinburgh, in a sermon before the society for propagating Christian knowledge, has made an observation to this purpose, "that to the honour of modern times, and (as he thinks) particularly to the honour of Christianity itself, there is much more gentleness and humanity in the manner of carrying on war than formerly." If we look into ancient history we shall see such instances of ferocity and cruelty in many cases, as are too shocking to be related. There is no fact, however, in the records of anti-

quity on this subject, that ever struck me so much as the account given of Sesostris, because it shews, not the barbarity of a particular monster, but the spirit of the times. He is extolled by many ancient authors for his clemency, because he did not put to death the princes whom he unjustly attacked and conquered. Yet he ordered them to wait upon him with a yearly tribute, and on these occasions used to yoke them in his chariot, and make them draw him, in place of horses, to the temple. How much worse than death would this appear at present to a captive prince?

But however justly praise may be due to modern times for comparative humanity, what we have said above is only general and undefined. Let us seek for the true principle that ought to govern the conduct of refined and enlightened nations. This, if I mistake not, is, *That all acts of cruelty which have no tendency to weaken the resisting force, are contrary to reason and religion, and therefore to the law of nature and nations.* The end of war is to obtain justice, and restore peace, therefore whatever tends to lessen or destroy the force of the enemy, must be permitted. It is in this view alone that the capture of private property is allowed and justified. But to take lives without necessity, and even to treat prisoners with oppression or insult, above all to distress or torture the weaker sex, or the helpless infant, ought to be detested by every nation professing the gospel.

The principle which I have laid down, may be applied universally, and will serve to point out when any measure is to be justified or condemned, be-

tween persons professing open hostility against each other. I will take the liberty to apply it to some things that have been done or attempted in the present war, carried on by Great Britain against America. It is now undeniable, that endeavours have been used to bring the Indian tribes upon the back settlements. This I call an act of extreme and unjustifiable barbarity, because their manner of making war is well known. They are neither formidable for their number nor their strength, but for making inroads upon the dwellings of their enemies, and putting to death women and children, with circumstances of horrid cruelty. This is so far from weakening the force of the people against whom it is practised, that it tends to inspire them with a revenge and fury not to be resisted. The well known history of the late war, will both explain and support what I have said. The cruelty of the Indians produced such a spirit in the back settlers, which not only repelled their attacks, but in some instances retaliated their injuries, in a manner that I will not take upon me either to defend or excuse. Therefore, when we blame the British ministry for stirring up the Indians against us, we do not blame them for asking assistance from other nations, which is common in all wars, when any party apprehends itself weak, but for a method of attack, the cruelty of which bears no proportion to any advantage that can be derived from it.

The same thing I say of proclaiming liberty to slaves, and stirring them up to rebel against their masters. There is, however, some little difference in the application of the principle to this and the

preceding instance. It is probable that the people in Great Britain reckoned upon a degree of advantage from this measure, vastly superior not only to what it produced in effect, but to what they themselves expected from the incursions of the Indians. I gather this from an expression in a treatise published in England on the American controversy, to this purpose, that 'if England declare freedom to the slaves, they (the Americans) have not six weeks to be a people.' These apprehensions may be thought to justify them in the attempt, as they must have taken it to be so speedy and effectual a means of producing absolute submission. But I must observe, in addition to what I have said above, that there are some things so base and treacherous in their nature, and so pernicious in the example to human society in general, that whatever effect they might be supposed to have in a particular case, all men of liberal minds have concurred in rejecting them. For example, though it is generally agreed, that aiming particularly at the life of a leader in battle, is not only lawful, but prudent, as it is of more consequence than fifty others, yet to suborn his servants to assassinate him privately, though it might have the same effect upon the military operations, is universally condemned. An instance in history occurs to me, in which a measure, though likely to have a great influence in weakening the enemy, yet, for its extreme cruelty, deserves to be spoken of with horror. It was that of king James VII's general at the siege of Londonderry, 1689, who, when the garrison was reduced to extremity for want of provisions, drove all the protestants

within thirty miles, chiefly old men, women, and infants, under the walls of the city, to be either taken in, or suffered to perish with hunger under the eyes of their friends. Had this measure been successful, it would have been, notwithstanding, condemned as unjust; but I am happy in being able to observe, that acts of extreme cruelty do very seldom produce the effects intended by them. When a certain point is exceeded, fear itself is converted into rage, and produces the unexpected and incredible efforts of despair.

The principle I have above laid down, will also enable us to judge what opinion we should form of acts of violence and depredation. When an army can avail itself of the goods and property of the members of a hostile state, or probably reduce them to the necessity of making peace, not only the seizure, but the reduction of both may be justified upon the principles of reason. But when men can only destroy and not possess, and that destruction can only fall upon an inconsiderable number of helpless people, it is at once inconsistent with greatness of mind, and for the most part against the interest of the destroyer. It operates as an inflammatory principle, and calls up every man, from the strongest to the feeblest, to assist in repelling or punishing the savage invader. For this reason I give it as my opinion, that burning and destroying houses, where there is no fortress, as has been in some instances done, deserves all the epithets of barbarous, savage, and inhuman, that have been bestowed upon it, either by those who have suffered, or those who have felt in their behalf.

A few more reflections should have been added, upon wars differently circumstanced, and particularly upon civil wars; but they must be referred to the next, or some future paper.

NUMBER III.

SIR,

MY last paper was employed in examining what is the radical principle, according to the law of nature and nations, for determining *the just and lawful means* of carrying on war. Having left the subject unfinished, I will now add what seems further necessary upon it. The chief and most remarkable distinction of wars, to be found in civilians, is into what they call *foreign* and *civil* wars. By the first are to be understood, wars between nations confessed on both sides to be separate and independent. By the second, wars between different parts of the same state. The first are supposed to arise from some occasional injury or partial encroachment, and to have for their end the reparation of the wrong, and the restoration of security and peace. The second, in which one part of the subjects of a state rises against another, are much more various, both in their causes and ends, although the rulers of every state generally affect to consider them all as of the same nature, and belonging to the same class. The light in which they wish them to be viewed is, as an insurrection of disorderly citizens against law and order in gé-

neral, and therefore as including the greatest crime that can be committed against society, and deserving the severest punishment. This is the true and proper import of the laws against treason in any country, and if the object on which they take hold is really such as they describe, no fault can be found with their severity. He who breaks the public peace and attempts to subvert the order of the society of which he is a member, is guilty of the greatest crime against every other member, by robbing him of a blessing of the greatest value in itself, as well as essentially necessary to the possession of every other.

For this reason it is, that in civil wars one party takes upon itself to be on the side of order and good government, and considers every person of the opposing band, not as a citizen contending for the supposed rights of his own state, but as a felon and a criminal, breaking the law of God and man, and if subdued and taken, destined to public ignominious, legal punishment. But let us consider a little the causes and circumstances of civil wars, as they have appeared in history. Some have doubtless been of the kind above described, and which the law in general presumes; but if they have been numerous, they have hardly ever been formidable. Insurrections of profligate or even mistaken citizens have generally been local, and occasioned by some circumstances that do not affect the whole body of an empire, and therefore have been easily suppressed. Many of the civil wars which have torn and distracted great empires, have arisen from the ambition and turbulence of particular men, contending

for power and influence in the administration of government. Such were the wars of Sylla and Marius, Cæsar and Pompey, in the Roman republic; in which, though the partisans on both sides were certainly criminal, yet at the same time, they were equally so. We may place in the same rank, the civil wars in England and France, which were so long in the one country, and so bloody in both, about the succession to the crown. In these wars the principle on which they were waged, was fundamentally wrong, *viz.* that there was a claim of right in one family or person, which entitled them to authority distinct from common consent, or the general good. But this principle was the same to both parties; many persons of equal honour and truth embraced the opposite sides of the question; and we can perceive no difference at all between them, in point of merit or demerit towards the society. If one contends for the uncle, and the other for the nephew, to be king, or the posterity of each many generations distant, and a bloody war must decide the question, little other reflection can occur to a considerate man, than to pity the weakness of human nature.

There remains another class of civil wars, in which a part or the great body of a monarchy or republic resist the authority of their rulers, on pretence that they are suffering under oppression. They do this sometimes with a view to redress their grievances, and sometimes to subvert their government altogether as insupportable, and re-settle it upon a new foundation. It also frequently happens, that they begin with the first of these, and in the course

of the quarrel find or think it necessary to end with the last. There are many wars of this kind upon record, some of which have been successful, and others not. If they have been successful, history dignifies them with the name of Revolution; and if otherwise, they must bear that of Rebellion. Their success, however, is no certain criterion of their justice. The civil war in England of the last century, which bears the name of the grand rebellion, and the late vigorous contest of the Corsicans against the republic of Genoa, though they were sold into slavery, were as honourable in the principles, as the successful resistance of the Seven United Provinces to the king of Spain, or the efforts of the English nation at that period, which we have now agreed to call the *glorious revolution*.

Let us apply these remarks to the subject of our present enquiry, the means and manner of carrying on war. In fact, it has always been found that civil wars have been carried on with a rage and animosity much greater than those of independent nations.—Acts of cruelty have been much more frequent while they lasted; and after peace has taken place, the alienation of mind and inward resentment has been much more great and of longer continuance. The barbarity of the Syllan and Marian factions to each other in Rome, as well as the proscription of the two subsequent triumvirates of that state, were so horrible, that it is difficult to conceive how human nature could be brought to such an unfeeling and hardened temper, as to give or execute the bloody orders. As soon as a war between independent nations ceases, the wound is perfectly healed,

and particular persons of these nations do not retain the least resentment against each other. It is quite otherwise in civil wars. They often give a name and character to the different factions, which is not obliterated for many generations. Whig and Torry are names by which persons and families are still distinguished in England, although they are both of great antiquity, and the first of them more than a hundred years old.

Whenever any effect is general and constant, there must be some suitable and permanent cause or causes for it. It may not therefore be amiss, either in a philosophical or a moral view, to examine the causes of this phenomenon in political life. One cause may be assigned for it which is very general, but which will perfectly apply to this, as well as to every other kind of strife. The greater the injury that is done, and the stronger the obligations to friendship that are broken through, the deeper the resentment that is felt by a sensible mind. Now, it is certain, that to disturb the internal peace of a state by a civil war, is a much more dreadful evil, and touches the people more universally, than war with a foreign kingdom. Besides, injuries done, or supposed to be done, by those with whom we are nearly connected, and from whom we expected every act of friendship, wound more deeply than those done by strangers or persons unknown. This is so generally true, that differences between near relations, if they come to a certain height, and are publicly known, are scarcely ever thoroughly reconciled. They may be apparently or imperfectly taken away, the fore may be skinned

over, but it still rankles at bottom, and upon the slightest touch is ready to break out anew.

Another cause which may be assigned for the barbarity exercised in civil wars, is the hateful or contemptible idea which the one side, at least, often entertains of the other. It is a fine observation of a moral writer of the last age, "If you want to be wholly free from the guilt of injury, oppression, or slander, you must take care what you *think* of others, for it is certain that your treatment of them will be according to the opinion you have formed of their character and merit." This remark is perfectly just, for if once a man allow himself to hate another heartily, there is no answering for what he will do to him, nor is the natural humanity of his disposition the least security against his going to excess. Persons of the gentlest nature and the softest sex, when completely enraged, have been guilty of the most horrid cruelty. This is commonly accounted for by the mixture of fear and hatred. But if another ingredient is added to the composition, it will be yet more powerful; I mean contempt. Some may think that fear and contempt are inconsistent, but this is a mistake. You cannot fear the strength of an enemy and despise it at the same time; but you may easily fear his strength and malice, and despise his character. If therefore you join all these together, fear, hatred, and contempt, towards an enemy, it will not be wonderful if the treatment he receives is unmerciful or unjust. This is often the case in civil wars. Those who are on the side of government are apt to form the most unjust, as well as despicable ideas of their opponents, and never to speak

of them but in the most opprobrious terms. By this they are naturally led to behave towards them with inhumanity, and sometimes in their correspondence they will scarce consider themselves as upon an equality, or be bound by the laws of sincerity and truth.

I could illustrate the influence of character, and the opinion we entertain of others, on our conduct toward them, by many instances in history. It is the true and genuine source of the Roman Catholics not keeping faith with heretics. This their enemies charge them with as an avowed principle; which they deny. But that they have acted agreeably to it is fact. The example of John Huss of Bohemia, and several others, put it beyond all question. It is also the true cause of the cruelty of the inquisition, commonly called the bloody Tribunal. Nothing is more common than to consider the ministers of this court as monsters divested of every feeling of humanity, and so to lay three fourths of the blame upon the personal character, whereas in truth, it ought to be wholly imputed to the power of bigotry and false zeal. When once a person is believed to be an enemy to God, and meriting his utmost vengeance, it is not wonderful that men should co-operate with him, and inflict that little part of it that is in their power. It is not so properly suffering in itself, as the innocence of the sufferer, or the disproportion of the suffering to the crime, that excites our compassion. When crimes are very atrocious, we sometimes feel, and in some degree regret, the weakness of human vengeance, which cannot possibly give them their due. I can recollect several instances of criminals,

on whose condemnation, not one but many would say, "he deserves, if it were possible, a thousand deaths."

But now let me draw this dissertation to a conclusion, or as divines would say, to the application. It is easy to see, from the above principles, what are the dictates of truth and justice as to the manner of carrying on civil wars. There is but one class of them in which the behaviour should be different from the practice that prevails in wars with independent states; I mean when tumultuous and disorderly citizens attempt to subvert law and order altogether. But when the grounds of the quarrel are plausible on both sides, and when it is demonstrable that persons of the strictest honour and integrity may be found adhering to the opposite parties, they are bound by every tie to candour in judgment, and to humanity and mercy in their conduct towards each other. Happily we often see the parties in such wars compelled to humanity through self-interest, and restrained by fear or one of the justest of all laws, that of retaliation. I could wish, however, that a sense of duty should be added to this obligation; for neither necessity, nor even inclination, is so stable and powerful a principle of action, as reason and truth impressed on the conscience. Necessity does not always seem equally strong, and the impulse of natural affections is transient and changeable; but that which we consider as essential to our duty, we should adhere to without the assistance of either, and ought to do it even in opposition to both.

I do truly think myself, in my present retirement (begging the reader's pardon) not ill qualified, in point of impartiality, for handling this subject, and applying it to the present contest between Great Britain and America. I am past the age of bearing arms, and whatever I have done before, shall probably never again wield any other weapons, than those improperly so called, the tongue and the pen. I do clearly see the perfect justice and great importance of the claim on the one hand, and easily conceive the power of prejudice on the other. On the part of America, there was not the most distant thought of subverting the government, or hurting the interest of the people of Great Britain, but of defending their own privileges from unjust encroachment; there was not the least desire of withdrawing their allegiance from the common sovereign, till it became absolutely necessary, and indeed was his own choice: On the other hand, I can easily conceive that those who have been long accustomed to subjection, and from whom it is really due, should not suddenly enter into the reasons of exempting a people, otherwise situated from the same burden. They are therefore of course easily deceived by false or imperfect accounts of a distant country, and insensibly biased by the phraseology constantly used, particularly the terms rebels and rebellion. Upon the whole, as I am now to dismiss this subject and prosecute the plan laid down in my first number, I shall conclude with saying, That humanity is the noblest attendant on true valour; and that he will probably fight most bravely, who ne-

ver fights till it is necessary, and ceases to fight as soon as the necessity is over.

NUMBER IV.

SIR,

ONE of the greatest difficulties that occurs to writers of miscellaneous essays, and which has been often complained of, is the fixing upon proper subjects. We are confined, as a certain writer observes, to ‘human nature and life,’ and yet these have been so completely ransacked, and almost every character and occurrence has been placed in such a variety of lights, that it is hardly possible to find a corner that is wholly untouched. At the same time, as to the manner of writing, the reader generally expects two things that seem to be incompatible and mutually destructive of each other. The one is, that it be striking and original; and the other, that it be simple, natural, and obvious. If we say what any body might say, then it is a trite beaten, common-place, hackneyed topic; and if we say what would not readily occur to others, then it is a forced, unnatural, *out of the way* manner of thinking and writing, than which there cannot be a greater disparagement of either writer or speaker, nor any that will more speedily or effectually prevent his success. But notwithstanding this apparent hardship, there is a real justice in the expectation of the public in both respects, when rightly understood.

A writer's sentiments should be properly his own, and yet they should not be too much repugnant to other people's. And as one man's face is easily distinguished from that of every other, though the general features are the same in all, he may preserve his genuine character without going far *out of the way*, or aiming at any thing odd or particular for this purpose. I know not how it is with others, but for my own part, I would rather write on a subject that has been often handled, or a character that has been often described, than one of a contrary kind; because, in such cases, I can form my own sentiments with greater precision, and express them with greater perspicuity and force.

The reader may consider the above as an introduction, preface, or if he pleases, apology for the following dissertation, which shall have for its subject a certain human character or quality, generally called *plain common sense*. I must, in the first place, settle the meaning of the expression. There are in every language, certain fine or nice distinctions in the use both of phrases and single terms, which, though introduced and finally settled by general practice, are not always attended to or fully understood. In the case before us, I think, the term is used very differently in the negative, from what it is in the positive form. When we say of a man, that he *wants common sense*, we mean that he is a very great fool, and sometimes that he is the next thing to a changeling or idiot. But when, in the positive form, we say of a man, that he is a man of *plain common sense*, we give him a good character, and are understood by it as affirming, that there are not many superior or

equal to him in that particular, as also that he possesses a quality of no inconsiderable value. It is plain, that in these two ways of speaking, the term common sense stands for different things. In the first of them it signifies, that sense that is really common to all men, or at least nearly universal : in the second, it signifies either something totally different, or at least a degree of that sense which is not possessed by the plurality, but perhaps is called common, because it may be found in some persons of every rank.

Let me now enquire a little into the characters of common sense. It is the *gift of nature*, and may be clearly distinguished from what is acquired by study or application. In the thoughts on various subjects, by Swift and Pope, we have one to this purpose, that ‘ fine sense, is not half so useful as common sense, for he that has the one without the other, is like one that carries nothing about him but gold coin, who must be often at a loss for want of change.’ In another of these thoughts we are informed, ‘ that to attempt to move the multitude with fine sense, is like attempting to hew a block with a razor.’ With all respect to these great men, I must say, that though there is something smart and lively in the above recited sentiments, yet they are more brilliant than just ; they seem to suppose, that refinement is a thing of the same kind with common sense, and only higher in degree, and yet at the same time that a man may possess genuine refinement and be without common sense, neither of which, in my opinion, is true, at least in such a sense as to make their similitudes just, or their reasoning

conclusive. Refinement is as different from common sense as the culture is from the soil, or the climate from either ; but as their joint influence is necessary to the production of the crop, so fine sense, without common sense as its ground work and foundation, very ill deserves the name. If I saw a man attempting to hew a block with a razor, or heard him speaking in metaphysical, abstract, unintelligible terms, to a multitude of common people, I should heartily agree that he wanted common sense ; but that he possessed fine sense, I should not be easily brought to confess.

The use of scientific terms and sentiments, brought from what is known only to scholars and improperly introduced, has been long treated with the contempt it deserves ; but it is considered as belonging only to the learned professions. I was well acquainted with a divine many years ago, who began a prayer in his congregation with these words, ‘ O Lord, thou art the simplest of all beings,’ which incensed his hearers against him to such a degree, that they accused him of having spoken blasphemy ; whereas the poor man only meant to say, that God was philosophically simple and uncompounded, altogether different from the grossness, divisibility, or, as it is sometimes more learnedly called, the discernibility of matter. I was also acquainted with a physician, who, sitting with a lady in her own house, and being asked by her, ‘ Doctor, are artichokes good for children?’ answered, ‘ Madam, they are the least flatulent of all the esculent tribe,’ indeed, doctor, says the lady, I do not understand a word of what you have said. Now, I think, few would have much admired either the fine or com-

mon sense of these gentlemen, though certainly the divine would have been considered as the greater fool of the two; for physicians, as a body, have asserted and maintained their right to the use of hard phrases beyond any other class of scholars. But there is a certain species of this fault, which, I think, has not been much taken notice of; and that is, when men, either of high station or real sense and literature, are filled with self-sufficiency, and cannot think of descending to the level of those with whom they converse, either in sentiments or phraseology. I suspect there were a few grains of this failing in the illustrious persons not long ago mentioned; and that their sentiments, above related, are an evidence of it. In this instance, their fine sense was an over-match for their common sense, and this was an evident proof of the imperfection of both.

If then fine sense does not differ essentially from common sense, and the first is nothing more than a certain brightness or polish given to the last, it would seem as if by common sense we ought to understand the rational powers in general, and the *capacity* of improvement. But here we meet with a difficulty which seems to need a resolution. If common sense is nothing else but the strength of the intellectual powers taken complexly, then must it be in every person in proportion to those powers; and science if it does not improve, certainly cannot diminish it. Yet there is no branch of science whatever but we find some persons capable of learning it, and frequently even of shining in it, who are notwithstanding very defective in common sense, and after their learned acquisitions, the defect is either

greater in itself, or at least more visible than before. We find many who learn the dead languages to great perfection, who learn arithmetic, geometry, natural philosophy, rhetoric, politics, who even become eminent in some of them, and tolerably skilled in all, whom yet we reckon greatly inferior to more ignorant persons, in clear, sound, common sense.

Perhaps it may be thought that these ignorant persons only wanted the opportunity of improvement, and would have excelled the others also in literature had they applied to it. This I do not find to be the case, from the instances in which a trial has been made. Doubtless there are some examples of persons eminently possessed of judgment or common sense, as well as capable of acquiring skill in the sciences; but these talents are by no means the same, or in direct proportion to one another. I have known persons who seemed capable of learning any thing, and who did know a great deal upon many subjects, who yet had such a comical cast in their general behaviour, that it was not easy to avoid smiling at their speech and conduct. I have even known persons, male and female, with whom you could find no fault, but that their carriage and conversation were too complete and perfect at all times, and yet we suspected them of folly, merely because they were free from the follies and irregularities of others. I remember an instance, in early life, of my being in company, for the first time, with a certain young lady, and after a few minutes, she asked me a very judicious question upon the character and history of Augustus Cæsar, which made me immediately suspect, that

she was not quite found; whereas, if she had only said it was a fine day after the rain, or uttered any such wise and pertinent reflection, I should have concluded nothing to her prejudice. On the other hand, there are many instances of persons who have made trial of study and science with very little success, and who, giving them up, have applied to active life, and have deservedly acquired the character of clear headed, sensible, judicious men. The truth is, the distinction between literature and common sense, seems to be well known and generally acknowledged. There are some who evidently give way to, or even affect an absence of mind, from forgetfulness and inattention to what they are about, and expect we should consider it as an indication of profound study and deep learning. This is one of the most ridiculous pieces of affectation imaginable. Such gentlemen, if they be logicians, should be told that *a particulari ad universale non valet consequentia*. We know very well that some great scholars are fools, but this will never prove that all fools are great scholars. Upon the whole, it seems that science, or a capacity for it, is not common sense.

Since then common sense is a gift of nature, different from a capacity for science in general, shall we say that it is genius, including particularly those exalted and admired talents which have been, by some of the latest writers, called the powers of imagination. Here we are further from the point than ever, for great wit and a lively imagination are rather considered as opposed to judgment and prudence, and other happy fruits of common sense.

So much is this the case, that the poet has been often cited with approbation, who says,

“ Great wit to madness sure is near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.”

It is common to say, that such a man has more fail than ballast, meaning that his imagination, fire and sprightliness are an overmatch for his prudence, and clearly carrying the supposition, that this last quality is as opposite to the others, as fail is to ballast, or even motion to rest. To all this may be added, that some who really were, and many who desired to be thought, men of great genius, have actually claimed it as their right, not to be confined to common forms, and indeed have generally acted accordingly.

We have seen then that refinement, science, genius, are not common sense, shall we now go any further? Is there not a character in which there is knowledge of the most liberal kind, clearness of understanding, penetration of mind upon every subject, and yet a weakness or want of common sense, in conduct and behaviour? Are there not some who seem to have, not only all other senses, but common sense too, for every body but themselves? They can immediately and readily discover the mistakes of others, they can give the best and soundest advice upon every subject, and yet never could act a wise part themselves on any subject. Some who are even connoisseurs in œconomy, never can keep their own affairs in tolerable order. I have known a gentleman who reduced himself to beggary by foolish projects, yet, after having sold his pater-

nal inheritance, he employed himself in thinking and writing on that subject on which he had acted wrong, and published essays on agriculture, modestly pointing out to gentlemen and farmers by how small a portion of land, well improved, they might speedily acquire a plentiful estate.

Upon comparing all these observations together, I beg leave to lay down a few propositions which appear to be nearest the truth in the way of theory or system, and on them to ground a few practical advices. There seem to be three separate qualities of the human mind very well expressed in the old philosophy, by the three known terms of memory, imagination and judgment. These are truly distinct one from another; for any one of them may not only exist, but be in high perfection, in the absence of both the others. This will not I think, be doubted as to the two first, and even as to the last, I have known some persons not only without imagination as a talent, but with very little taste for works of imagination, and whose memory was no ways remarkable, who have passed through life with great dignity and credit, who, with or without learning, have conducted their own affairs with prudence and discretion, and discovered the highest sense of propriety and decorum in all their intercourse with others, under the happy guidance of plain common sense.

In the next place, though these qualities are distinct, they are by no means incompatible. There have been instances of persons who possessed all the three in high perfection; and there must be a con-

siderable proportion of each to form a character truly illustrious. Some, in whom imagination has been very strong, have also been remarkable for clearness of judgment in their works, good sense and prudence in their whole deportment. The same thing I say of memory. Some prodigies of memory have been defective in judgment; but many great men have also excelled in this respect, and no small measure of it is necessary both in works of genius and the functions of public life. Again,

Of these three qualities, judgment is by far the most valuable and important. Of itself it is amiable and respectable, while the others, without it, are contemptible useless, or hurtful. A man of memory, without judgment, is a fool; and a man of imagination, without judgment, is mad; but when this great quality takes the government of both, they acquire lustre, and command universal esteem. No human accomplishment, unless it has this as its foundation and ground work, can reach perfection, even in its own kind. Memory will make a linguist, imagination will make a poet, penetration will make a philosopher, public life will make a politician, and court breeding will make a man of fashion; yet all of them are essentially defective, if common sense is weak or wanting. There is something in the application and direction of all these accomplishments which judgment must supply, and which neither instruction, example, nor even experience will bestow.

It is probable that many would readily grant me (what yet I do not ask, being hardly of the same opinion) that of all the characters just now men-

tioned, that of a man of fashion or politeness is the most superficial, and what may be most easily attained by imitation and habit. Yet even here, nothing is more easy than to see the dominion of judgment and good sense, or the prevalence of folly and indiscretion. That want of presence of mind or embarrassment, which is often the effect of modesty or bashfulness, nay, even the errors and blunders which visibly proceed from ignorance and mistake of the reigning mode, are not half so absurd and ridiculous, as the affected airs and misplaced ceremonies of a fop, of which the ladies are always most attentive observers, and to give them their due, generally not incompetent judges.

Once more, judgment is an original and radical quality, that is of all others least capable of being communicated by instruction, or even approved or augmented by culture. Memory and imagination are also gifts of nature; but they may be greatly increased, the one by exercise, and the other by indulgence. You may teach a man any thing in the world but prudence, which is the genuine offspring of common sense. It is generally said that experience teaches fools, but the meaning of the proverb is often mistaken, for it does not signify that experience makes them wise: it signifies that they never are wise at all, but persist in spite of instruction, warning and example, till they feel the effects of their own folly. If a man is born with a fund of good sense and natural discernment, it will appear in the very first stages of his education. He who outstrips his fellows in a grammar school, will not always be the greatest scholar in advanced life; but

he who does not discover discernment and sagacity when a boy, will never be distinguished for it so long as he lives. It is often said, in a certain country, that a fool of forty will never be wise; which is sometimes understood as if a man made as regular a progress to the summit of his wisdom, till the age of forty, as he does to that of his stature till twenty; which is a very great mistake. I take it to be in this case, as in the other, that a man of forty has sufficiently proved to all the world that he is not, and therefore that he never was, and never will be wise.

Shall we say then that this most valuable of all human qualities receives no benefit at all from a well conducted education, from study, or from an acquaintance with the world. I answer, that I do not think it is capable of any change in its nature, or addition to its vigour, but it may be joined to other talents of more or less value, and it may be applied to purposes more or less useful and important, and thence acquire a lustre and polish, of which it would otherwise be destitute. The same good sense and prudence, which alone would make a sensible judicious farmer, would, if united to memory and imagination, and enriched with skill in the liberal arts, make an eminent scholar, and bring in large contributions to the treasury of human science. The same soundness of judgment, which, in a country life or contracted neighbourhood, would set an example of frugality, be an enemy to disorder, and point out the possessor as a proper umpire in unhappy dissensions; would in a more enlarged sphere, make an accomplished senator or a politician, to

manage the affairs of a large community, or settle the differences of contending nations.

I come now to offer my readers some advices, a practice to which I am by nature and habit exceedingly prone. A difficulty, it must be confessed, seems to occur in this matter. If the above theory be just, there seems to be little room left for advice, as the great talent, so largely described, is supposed to be original and unalterable. This difficulty, however, notwithstanding, important instruction may be grafted upon it, not only to parents and others who have the charge of the education of youth, but to every man, for the future direction of his own conduct.

As to the first of these, I would entreat parents to guard against that fond partiality which inclines them to form a wrong judgment of the capacity of their children; particularly it were to be wished, that they would not take a few sallies of pertness and vivacity for an evidence of distinguished parts. It is well known, and has been frequently observed, how apt parents are to entertain their visitors with an account of the bright sayings or shrewd schemes of their children, as most promising symptoms of their future talents; and yet so far as my observation reaches, the things related might for the most part justify a contrary supposition. I should run little risk in affirming, that three-fourths at least of those anecdotes, which parents relate with so much triumph of their children, are to be accounted for from memory, or petulance, or even stupidity. A child will repeat, at an improper time, a phrase or remark that he has heard, and it will make so ab-

furd a contrast with what is going on, that it is impossible to forbear laughing. I ask whether this is an evidence of the greatness or the want of understanding in the child? Another will give an insolent and saucy answer, and acquire great reputation for what deserved the most severe and exemplary correction. To crown all, I will tell a true story: An old gentleman, whom I knew, would often say, in commendation of his son's wisdom, then a boy about ten or twelve years of age, That when other boys are breaking their legs by falls from limbs of trees, or going a fishing in rivers, at the risk of being drowned, his son would fish a whole afternoon with a crooked pin, in a tub of foul water in the kitchen. I suppose any reader will agree, that the fact and the remark taken together, constitute a full proof that the mother was honest, and the son lawfully begotten.

It would be a great advantage, that parents should make a moderate estimation of the talents of their children in two respects. (1.) It would preserve the children themselves from being puffed up with unmerited praise, and thus mistaking their own character and capacity. Though the native force and vigour of common sense can neither be augmented nor destroyed, yet it may be, and I believe frequently is neglected and despised, or overgrown by the rank weeds of ostentation and self-sufficiency. When young persons are vain of the talents which they do not possess, or ambitious of a character which they cannot attain, they become ridiculous in their conduct, and are generally unsuccessful in their pursuits. (2.) It would incline and

make their parents to conduct their education in the most proper manner, by giving particular attention to those branches of instruction, which though less splendid, are more generally useful than some others. It would lead me too much into detail to give many examples for the illustration of this remark, and therefore I shall only say, that common sense, which is a modest unassuming quality, and a diligent application to the useful parts of science, will neither distress nor weaken a fervent imagination, when it really resides in the same subject; but giving loose reins to a warm imagination, will often overset a moderate degree of judgment, so that it will never more dare to shew its head. I have known some youths of bright genius in their own esteem, who have looked down with great contempt upon quiet and orderly boys as dull plodding fellows, and yet these last have, in the issue, become men of spirit and capacity, as well as literature, while the others have evaporated into rakes and bullies, and indeed blockheads; or taking the road to Mount Helicon, have become poets, fools, and beggars.

I must advise every reader, especially those in early years, to form his opinion of others, and his friendly attachments, upon the principles above laid down, nothing will more effectually mislead young persons, than an excessive admiration of showy talents in those with whom they converse, whether they be real or supposed. I have known many instances of persons who apparently owed their ruin, to their imbibing early in life, a notion that decency, order, and a prudent management of their

affairs, were marks of dulness; and on the contrary, that petulance, forwardness, and irregularity, and even vicious excesses, were the effects of spirit and capacity. Many follow the leading person in frolics, not from any inward approbation of such practices, but merely to avoid the reproach which in such societies is so unjustly bestowed. I beg all such to believe me, as a person of some experience in places of public education, when I assure them, that in nine instances out of ten, your ramblers, night-walkers, and mischief-workers, are block-heads and thick-skulls. Does it require any genius, think you, to throw a log in another's way in a dark passage, and after he has stumbled over it, to raise a triumphant laugh at him, who was such a fool as not to see without light.

I conclude with observing, that whatever may be the capacity of any person in itself, if it is neglected or misimproved, it will either be wholly lost or be of little consequence in future life. Our very bodily frame presents us with a lesson of instruction upon this subject. Though formed by nature complete and regular, if it is accustomed to any improper torture or ungraceful motion, the habit will soon become unconquerable; and any particular limb or member that for a long time is not used, will become useless. This holds yet more strongly as to the powers of the mind: they are lost by negligence; but by proper application they are preserved, improved, and in many cases increased. Let all, therefore, who wish or hope to be eminent, remember, that as the height to which you can raise a tower depends upon the size and solidity of

its base, so they ought to lay the foundation of their future fame deep and strong, in sobriety, prudence, and patient industry, which are the genuine dictates of *plain common sense*.

NUMBER V.

SIR,

A MAN is not, even at this time, called or considered as a scholar, unless he is acquainted in some degree with the ancient languages, particularly the Greek and Latin. About one hundred and fifty years ago, however, those languages were better understood than they are at present; because at that time, authors of reputation published almost all their works in Latin. Since the period above mentioned, the modern, or as they are sometimes called, the northern languages, have been gradually polished, and each nation has manifested a zeal for, and an attention to, the purity and perfection of its own tongue. This has been the case, particularly with respect to the French and English. The French language is, as nearly as I can guess, about fifty years before the English, in this respect; that is to say, it is so much longer since their men of letters applied themselves to the ascertaining, correcting, and polishing of it. The English, however, has received great improvements within the last hundred years, and probably will continue to do so. He must have little judgment, or great ob-

stinacy, who does not confess that some late authors have written the English language with greater purity, than those of the first character in former times. From this we may certainly infer, that the education must be very imperfect in any seminary where no care is taken to form the scholars to taste, propriety, and accuracy in that language which they must speak and write all their life afterwards.

To these reflections it may be added, that our situation in America is now, and in all probability will continue to be such, as to require peculiar attention upon this subject. The English language is spoken through all the United States. We are at a great distance from the island of Great Britain, in which the standard of the language is as yet supposed to be found. Every state is equal to, and independent of, every other; and, I believe, none of them will agree, at least immediately, to receive laws from another, in discourse, any more than in action. Time and accident must determine what turn affairs will take in this respect in future, whether we shall continue to consider the language of Great Britain as the pattern upon which we are to form ours; or whether, in this new empire, some centre of learning and politeness will not be found, which shall obtain influence, and prescribe the rules of speech and writing to every other part.

While this point is yet unsettled, it has occurred to me to make some observations upon the present state of the English language in America, and to attempt a collection of some of the chief improprieties which prevail, and might be easily corrected. I will premise one or two general remarks.

The vulgar in America speak much better than the vulgar in Great Britain, for a very obvious reason, *viz.* that being much more unsettled, and moving frequently from place to place, they are not so liable to local peculiarities, either in accent or phraseology. There is a greater difference in dialect between one county and another in Britain, than there is between one state and another in America. I shall also admit, though with some hesitation, that gentlemen and scholars in Great Britain speak as much with the vulgar in common chit chat, as persons of the same class do in America: but there is a remarkable difference in their public and solemn discourses. I have heard in this country, in the senate, at the bar, and from the pulpit, and see daily in dissertations from the press, errors in grammar, improprieties and vulgarisms, which hardly any person of the same class, in point of rank and literature, would have fallen into in Great Britain. Curiosity led me to make a collection of these, which, as soon as it became large, convinced me that they were of very different kinds, and therefore must be reduced to a considerable number of classes, in order to their being treated with critical justice. These I now present to the public under the following heads, to each of which I will subjoin a short explication, and a number of examples, with remarks where they seem necessary.

1. Americanisms, or ways of speaking peculiar to this country.
2. Vulgarisms in England and America.
3. Vulgarisms in America only.

4. Local phrases or terms.
5. Common blunders arising from ignorance.
6. Cant phrases.
7. Personal blunders.
8. Technical terms introduced into the language.

It will be proper to put the reader in mind, that he ought not to expect that the enumeration under each of these heads can be complete. This would have required a very long course of observation; and indeed is not necessary to my purpose, which is by specimens to enable every attentive and judicious person to make observations for himself.

1. The first class I call Americanisms, by which I understand an use of phrases or terms, or a construction of sentences, even among persons of rank and education, different from the use of the same terms or phrases, or the construction of similar sentences, in Great Britain. It does not follow, from a man's using these, that he is ignorant, or his discourse upon the whole inelegant; nay, it does not follow in every case, that the terms or phrases used are worse in themselves, but merely that they are of American and not of English growth. The word Americanism, which I have coined for the purpose, is exactly similar in its formation and signification to the word Scotticism. By the word Scotticism is understood any term or phrase, and indeed any thing either in construction, pronunciation, or accentuation, that is peculiar to North Britain. There are many instances in which the Scotch way is as good, and some in which every person who has the least taste as to the propriety or

purity of language in general, must confess that it is better than that of England, yet speakers and writers must conform to custom.

Scotland, or the northern part of Great Britain, was once a separate independent kingdom, though, except in the Highlands, the people spoke the same language as in England; the inhabitants of the Lowlands, in both countries, having been originally the same. It is justly observed by Dr. Robertson, in his history of Scotland, that had they continued separate kingdoms, so that there should have been a court and parliament at Edinburgh, to serve as a standard, the small differences in dialect, and even in pronunciation, would not have been considered as defects; and there would have been no more opprobrium attending the use of them in speech or writing, than there was in the use of the different dialects of the ancient Grecian republics. But by the removal of the court to London, and especially by the union of the two kingdoms, the Scottish manner of speaking came to be considered as provincial barbarism; which, therefore, all scholars are now at the utmost pains to avoid. It is very probable, that the reverse of this, or rather its counter part, will happen in America. Being entirely separated from Britain, we shall find some centre or standard of our own, and not be subject to the inhabitants of that island, either in receiving new ways of speaking, or rejecting the old.

The examples follow.

1. "The United States, or *either* of them." This is so far from being a mark of ignorance, that it is used by many of the most able and accurate

speakers and writers, yet it is not English. The United States are thirteen in number, but in English either does not signify one of many, but *one or the other* of two. I imagine *either* has become an adjective pronoun, by being a sort of abbreviation of a sentence, where it is used adverbially, *either the one or the other*. It is exactly the same with *ἑαυτερος* in Greek, and *alterutur* in Latin.

2. This is to *notify* the public; or the people had not been *notified*. By this is meant *inform* and *informed*. In English we do not notify the person of the thing, but notify the thing to the person. In this instance there is certainly an impropriety, *for to notify*, is just saying by a word of Latin derivation, *to make known*. Now if you cannot say this is to make the public known, neither ought you to say this is to notify the public.

3. *Fellow Countrymen*. This is a word of very frequent use in America. It has been heard in public orations from men of the first character, and may be daily seen in newspaper publications. It is an evident tautology, for the last word expresses fully the meaning of both. If you open any dictionary, you will find the word *countryman* signifies one born in the same country. You may say, fellow citizens, fellow soldiers, fellow subjects, fellow Christians, but not *fellow countrymen*.

4. These things were ordered delivered to the army. The words *to be* are omitted. I am not certain whether this is a local expression or general in America.

5. I wish we could contrive it to Philadelphia. The words *to carry, to have it carried*, or some such,

are wanting. It is a defective construction, of which there are but too many that have already obtained in practice, in spite of all the remonstrances of men of letters.

6. We may *hope* the assistance of God. The word *for* or *to receive* is wanting. In this instance, hope, which is a neuter verb, is turned into the active verb, and not very properly as to the objective term assistance. It must be admitted, however, that in some old English poets, hope is sometimes used as an active verb, but it is contrary to modern practice.

7. I do not consider myself equal to this task. The word *as* is wanting. I am not certain whether this may not be an English vulgarism, for it is frequently used by the renowned author of *Common Sense*, who is an Englishman born; but he has so happy a talent of adopting the blunders of others, that nothing decisive can be inferred from his practice. It is, however, undoubtedly an Americanism, for it is used by authors greatly superior to him in every respect.

8. Neither to day *or* to morrow. The proper construction is, either the one or the other, neither the one *nor* the other.

9. A *certain* Thomas Benson. The word *certain*, as used in English, is an indefinite, the name fixes it precisely, so that there is a kind of contradiction in the expression. In England they would say, a certain person called or supposed to be Thomas Benson.

10. Such bodies are *incident* to these evils. The

evil is incident or ready to fall upon the person, the person liable or subject to the evil.

11. He is a very *clever* man. She is quite a *clever* woman. How often are these phrases to be heard in conversation? Their meaning, however, would certainly be mistaken when heard for the first time by one born in Britain. In these cases, Americans generally mean by *clever*, only goodness of disposition, worthiness, integrity, without the least regard to capacity; nay, if I am not mistaken, it is frequently applied, where there is an acknowledged simplicity, or mediocrity of capacity. But in Britain, *clever* always means capacity, and may be joined either to a good or bad disposition. We say of a man, he is a *clever* man, a *clever* tradesman, a *clever* fellow, without any reflection upon his moral character, yet at the same time it carries no approbation of it. It is exceeding good English, and very common to say, He is a *clever* fellow, but I am sorry to say it, he is also a great rogue. When *cleverness* is applied primarily to conduct, and not to the person, it generally carries in it the idea of art or chicanery, not very honourable; for example—Such a plan I confess was very *clever*, *i. e.* sly, artful, well contrived, but not very fair.

12. I was quite mad at him, he made me quite mad. In this instance mad is only a metaphor for angry. This is perhaps an English vulgarism, but it is not found in any accurate writer, nor used by any good speaker, unless when poets or orators use it as a strong figure, and to heighten the expression, say, he was mad with rage.

These shall suffice for the first class.

 NUMBER VI.

SIR,

I PROCEED now upon the plan laid down in my last paper, to the second general class of improprieties, *viz.* vulgarisms in England and America. Of these there is great plenty to be found every where, in writing and in conversation. They need very little explication, and indeed would scarcely deserve to be mentioned in a discourse of this nature, were it not for the circumstance hinted at in the introduction, that scholars and public persons are at less pains to avoid them here, than in Britain.

1. I will mention the vulgar abbreviations in general, as an't, can't, han't, don't, shouldn't, would'nt couldn't, &c. Great pains were taken by the Spectator to shew the barbarity and inelegance of that manner of speaking and writing. The endeavours of that author, and others of later date, have been successful in Britain, and have banished all such harsh and mutilated phrases from public speaking, so that they remain only in conversation, and not even in that among persons of judgment and taste. I need hardly say how far this is from being the case in America.

2. I *know'd* him perfectly well, for, I *knew* him.
3. I *see* him yesterday, or I *see* him last week, for

I *ſaw* him. In Scotland the vulgar ſay, I *ſeed* him laſt week.

4. *This here* report of *that there* committee. Some merchants whom I could name, in the English Parliament, whoſe wealth and not merit raiſed them to that dignity, uſe this vulgarifm very freely, and expoſe themſelves to abundance of ridicule by ſo doing.

5. He was *drownded* in the Delaware. This is ſo common, that I have known a gentleman reading it in a book to a company, though it was printed *drowned*, read *drownded*.

6. She has got a new *gownd*. This and the former are vulgarifms in converſation only; but even there very improper and unbecoming for perſons of education. In London you are ſometimes aſked if you will take a glaſs of *wind*, for wine. Of the ſame nature are an impertinent *feller*, for *fellow*; *waller*, for *wallow*; *winder*, for *window*.

7. Some on'em, one on'em, many on'em. This though frequent in the northern parts of England, and ſome parts of America, perhaps is rather local, than general. This indeed may be the caſe with ſeveral others which have fallen under my obſervation.

8. It *lays* in Buck's county, for it *lies*, &c. This is not only a prevailing vulgarifm in converſation, but has obtained in public ſpeaking, and may be often ſeen in print. I am even of opinion that it has ſome chance of overcoming all the oppoſition made to it, and fully eſta bliſhing itſelf by cuſtom, which is the final arbiter in all ſuch caſes. Lowth in his grammar, has been at much pains to correct it

yet, though that most excellent treatise has been in the hands of the public for many years, this word seems to gain instead of losing ground. The error arises from confounding the neuter verb to *ly* with the active verb to *lay*, which are very different in the present, preterite and participle. The first of them is formed thus, *ly*, *lay*, *lien* or *lain* : the second, *lay*, *laid*, *laid*.

9. I *thinks* it will not be long before he come. This is a London vulgarism, and yet one of the grossest kind. To this confusion or disagreement of the person may be added the disagreement of the number, giving a verb singular to a nominative plural, which is more frequent than the other, as, after all the *stories* that *has* been told, all the *reasons* that *has* been given.

10. Equally *as* well, and equally *as* good. This is frequent in conversation and public speaking. It is also to be found in some publications, of which it is needless to name the authors ; but it is just as good English to say, the *most highest* mountain in America.

11. One of the most common vulgarisms or blunders in the English language, is putting the preterite for the participle. This is taken particular notice of by Lowth, in his grammar, as after he had *fell* down, for *fallen* ; and in the same manner, *rose*, for *risen* ; *spoke*, for *spoken* ; *wrote*, for *written*, *broke*, for *broken*. Some of these appear, as he observes, barbarous to scholars ; others we are so accustomed to, that they give little offence to the ear. Had not a gentleman *threw* out—the reasons of protest were *drew* up. These are offensive, but you may

meet with similar errors even in good authors, such as I had *wrote*, I had *spoke*, the bone was *broke*. The best way to judge of this impropriety, is to try it upon a word that has been seldom so misused, as for example, If you go to the battle perhaps you will be *slew*.

12. Just as you *rise* the hill—little or no bread-corn is *grown* in this country. These are similar corruptions arising from turning neuter into active or passive verbs. They are also, if I am not mistaken, among the newest corruptions of the language, and much more common in England than America. The above two examples are taken from Cook's first voyage by Hawkesworth, where some others of the same kind are to be found.

13. I *set* out yesterday morning, for I fet out. The verb fet has no change of termination, the present, preterite and participle being the same. I fet out immediately; I fet out three days sooner than he; after I had fet out. The error lies in taking the preterite of the verb *fit*, and making use of it for the past time of the other—fit has three terminations, fit, fat, fitten.

14. He said *as how* it was his opinion. This absurd pleonasm is more common in Britain than in America.

The third class consists of vulgarisms in America only. This must be understood, so far as I have been able to observe, and perhaps some of them are local. It will not be necessary either to make the examples on this head numerous, or to say much upon them, because the introduction of vul-

garisms into writing or public discourses is the same, whether they are of one country or another.

1. I have not done it yet, but am just going to. This is an imperfect construction; it wants the words *do it*. Imperfect constructions are the blemish of the English language in general, and rather more frequent in this country than in England.

2. It is *partly all* gone, it is *mostly all* gone. This is an absurdity or barbarism, as well as a vulgarism.

3. This is the weapon with which he defends himself when he is *attacted*, for attacked; or according to the abbreviation, attack'd.

4. As I told Mr. —, for as I told you. I hope Mr. — is well this morning. What is Mr. —'s opinion upon this subject? This way of speaking to one who is present in the third person, and as if he were absent, is used in this country by way of respect. No such thing is done in Britain, except that to persons of very high rank, they say your majesty, your grace, your lordship; yet even there the continuance of the discourse in the third person is not customary.

5. I have been *to* Philadelphia, for *at* or *in* Philadelphia; I have been *to* dinner, for I have dined.

6. Walk *in* the house, for *into* the house.

7. You *have no right* to pay it, where right is used for what logicians would call the correlative term obligation.

8. A *spell* of sickness, a long *spell*, a bad *spell*. Perhaps this word is borrowed from the sea dialect.

9. *Every* of these states; *every* of them; *every* of us; for *every one*. I believe the word every is used

in this manner in some old English writers, and also in some old laws, but not in modern practice. The thing is also improper, because it should be every one to make it strictly a partitive and subject to the same construction, as some of them, part of them, many of them, &c. yet it must be acknowledged, that there is no great impropriety, if so great, in the vulgar construction of *every*, than in another expression very common in both countries, viz. *all of them*.

Having finished these two classes, I shall make a remark or two upon vulgarisms in general. Probably many will think and say, that it would be a piece of stiffness or affectation to avoid them wholly in conversation or common discourse. As to some of those which have been described above, perhaps this may be admitted; but as to the greatest part, it is certainly best to avoid them wholly, lest we should fall into them inadvertently where they would be highly improper. If a gentleman will not imitate a peasant male or female, in saying *if so be*, and *forsooth*, and many other such phrases, because he knows they are vulgarisms, why should he imitate them in saying *equally as good*, or *I see him yesterday*, but because he does not know, or does not attend to the impropriety.

The reader is also desired to observe, that we are not by far so much in danger of the charge of affectation for what we omit saying, as for what we do say. When a man is fond of introducing hard words, or studies a nice or pompous diction, he brings himself immediately into contempt; but he may easily attain a cautious habit of avoiding low phrases or vulgar

terms without being at all liable to the imputation either of vanity or constraint.

I conclude with observing, that as bombast and empty swelling is the danger to which those are exposed who aim at sublimity, so low sentiments and vulgar terms are what those are in most danger of, who aim at simplicity. Now, as it is my intention, in the course of these papers, to set a mark of reprobation upon every affected and fantastic mode of expression, and to recommend a pure, and, as it may be called, classic simplicity, it is the more necessary to guard the reader against that low and grovelling manner which is sometimes mistaken for it.

NUMBER VII.

SIR,

THE fourth class of improprieties consist of *local phrases or terms*. By these I mean such vulgarisms as prevail in one part of a country and not in another. There is a much greater variety of these in Britain than in America. From the complete populations of the country, multitudes of common people never remove to any distance from where they were born and bred. Hence there are many characteristic distinctions, not only in phraseology, but in accent, dress, manners, &c. not only between one county and another, but between different cities of the same county. There is a county in the North of England, very few of the natives of

which can pronounce the letter *r*, as it is generally pronounced in the other parts of the kingdom.

But if there is a much greater number of local vulgarisms in Britain than America, there is also for this very reason, much less danger of their being used by gentlemen or scholars. It is indeed implied in the very nature of the thing, that a local phrase will not be used by any but the inhabitants or natives of that part of the country where it prevails. However, I am of opinion, that even local vulgarisms find admission into the discourse of people of better rank more easily here than in Europe.

1. He *improved* the horse for ten days. This is used in some parts of New England for riding the horse.

2. *Raw salad* is used in the South for *salad*.
N. B. There is no salad boiled.

3. *Chunks*, that is, brands, half burnt wood. This is customary in the middle colonies.

4. He is *confiderable* of a surveyor, *confiderable* of it may be found in that country. This manner of speaking prevails in the northern parts.

5. He will *once in a while*, i. e. *sometimes* get drunk. The middle states.

6. Shall I have *occafion*, i. e. opportunity to go over the ferry. New England.

7. *Tot* is used for *carry*, in some of the southern states.

The fifth class of improprieties may be called *common blunders through ignorance*. In this they differ from the former classes, that the similarity of one word to another, in pronunciation or derivation, makes ignorant people confound them and use them

promiscuously, or sometimes even convert them and use them each in the other's room. The following are examples.

1. *Eminent* for *imminent*. How often do we hear that a man was in eminent danger.

2. *Ingenious* for *ingenuous*. How common is it to say he is an ingenious young man—he is a young man of a very ingenious disposition, they are both English words. Ingenious signifies of good capacity; ingenuous signifies simple, upright, sincere; ingenuity, however, the word that seems to be derived from ingenuous, is used in both senses, sometimes for fairness, openness, candor; sometimes for capacity or acuteness of invention. I should think this last, though done by good authors, to be contrary to the analogy of the language, especially as we have two words for these opposite ideas regularly derived from the correspondent adjectives, ingeniousness and ingenuousness.

3. Three or four times *successfully*, for *successively*. This is a blunder through ignorance, very common among the lower sort of people in England.

4. *Intelligible*, for *intelligent*. It was a very intelligible person who told me.

5. *Confiscate*, for *confiscate*. The most ignorant of the vulgar only use this phrase.

6. *Fictitious* for *fictional*. That is no more than a *fictional* story. This is used by people somewhat superior to those who would use the former.

7. *Veracity* for *credibility*. This is not a blunder in conversation only, but in speaking and writing. I have some doubt of the veracity of this fact, says a certain author. Veracity is the character of the

person; truth or credibility, of the story told. The same is the case with all, or most of the words, of similar formation, capacity, rapacity, tenacity. These all are applied to the person or the disposition, not to a particular action of the one, or effect of the other. We say, a man of capacity—this work is a proof of capacity, but not the capacity of this performance; and so of the rest.

8. *Susceptive*, for *susceptible*. I must acquaint the reader, that after I had marked this word as an example of the mistakes men fall into from ignorance, I found it in some English writers, who cannot be called altogether contemptible, and also in Johnson's Dictionary. As to the last of these, I shall have occasion to make a remark or two upon that lexicographer under the next class, and therefore shall say nothing of it now. As to the other particular, I observe, that though the word is used by some writers, it is not only contrary to general practice, but contrary to the analogy of the tongue.—All the adjectives ending in *ive* are of an active, and those ending in *able* or *ible* of a passive nature, as active, decisive, communicative, significative, demonstrative, and on the contrary, able, capable, communicable, demonstrable, contemptible.

9. They are so very *duplicity* that I am afraid they will *rescind* from what they have done. Here are two errors in one sentence. *Duplicity* is an adjective made by guess from duplicity, and *rescind* is mistaken, by the likeness of sound, for *recede*.

10 *Deteet* for *dissect*. A lady, in a certain place at dinner, asked a gentleman if he would be so good as *deteet* that piece of meat for her. To these I might add a long list of errors, in which ignorance or or-

thography makes a vitious pronunciation, and that pronunciation continued by the same ignorance, makes a vulgar word in place of the true one, of which take one example—A gentleman writes to his friend, that on such a day they had a smart *scrimitch*, for *skirmish*.

The sixth class consists of *cant* phrases, introduced into public speaking or composition. The meaning of *cant* phrases, is pretty well known, having been fully explained as long ago as the days of Mr Addison.—They rise occasionally, sometimes, perhaps, from the happy or singular application of a metaphor or allusion, which is therefore repeated and gets into general use, sometimes from the whim or caprice of particular persons in coining a term. They are in their nature temporary and sometimes local. Thus, it is often said, a man is *taken in*, he is *bilked*, he is *bit*, that was a *bit* indeed, that is not *the thing*, it was quite *the thing*. Innumerable others will occur to every reader. Sometimes the cant consists in the frequent and unnecessary repetition, or improper application of a word that is otherwise unexceptionable. Thus, when *vast* was in repute, a thing was *vastly* good, and *vastly* bad, *vastly* pretty, and *vastly* ugly, *vastly* great, and *vastly* little.

It is worth while, in remarking on the state of language, to reflect a little on the attack made by Addison, Steel, Swift, Pope, and Arbuthnot, on many of these cant phrases in their day, such as bite, bamboozle, pos. rep. mob. &c. Some of them they succeeded in banishing from, or rather prevented from being ever admitted into public discourses and

elegant writing, such as bite, bamboozle, &c. some they banished from all polite conversation, such as pos. rep. plenipo. and some have kept their ground, have been admitted into the language, and are freely and gravely used by authors of the first rank, such as *mob*. This was at first a cant abbreviation of *mobile vulgus*, and as such condemned by the great men above mentioned; but time has now stamped it with authority, the memory of its derivation is lost, and when a historian says an unruly *mob* was assembled in the streets, or he was torn in pieces by the *mob*, no idea of any thing low and ludicrous is conveyed to the mind of the reader.

I promised, under this head, to make a remark upon Johnson's Dictionary. It is a book of very great value on several accounts, yet it may lead ignorant persons into many mistakes. He has collected every word, good or bad, that was ever used by any English writer; and though he has, in the larger Dictionary, given his authorities in full, yet that is not sufficient to distinguish them. There are instances in which this may be the very cause of wrong judgment. If an author of reputation has committed a single error, his authority should not be made any use of to sanctify that error—sometimes, also, the author's design is mistaken. In the abridgement of that Dictionary, at the word *bamboozle*, you find added, a *low word*; but the authority is *Arbuthnot*: now would not any man imagine, who was not otherwise informed, that Arbuthnot was a low writer; whereas, in fact, he used that word only to disgrace and put it out of practice. The lexico-

grapher would have acted more wisely not to have mentioned the word at all.

It would be very easy to make a large collection of cant or low phrases at present in use, such as helter skelter, topsy turvy, upside down, the Devil to pay, at sixes and sevens, put to his trumps, flung all in a heap. Every one of these has been seen in print, and many of the same stamp, as well as heard in conversation.

It is not long since I read, in a piece published by a sensible writer in this city, ‘low methods of *shamming Abraham*.’ Now, pray what is shamming Abraham? With some difficulty I have understood, that it is a cant phrase among seamen, for pretending sickness when they are well, and other fetches of the same kind. I should be glad to know how a foreigner could translate this expression into his own language.

Under the head of cant phrases, I would include all proverbial or common sayings introduced into the language, as well as trite and beaten allusions. Of the first sort are these, I want to put the fiddle upon the right horse, the labouring oar lies upon you; of the second, the following, that is only *gratis dictum*, the Supreme Being by his almighty fiat, I will not pay any regard to *his ipse dixit*. All these are taken from printed pieces, some of them by authors not contemptible; the last of them, *his ipse dixit*, is of the most frequent use, and yet is the most pedantic and puerile of the whole. I conclude with observing, that a cant phrase, if it do not die by the way, has three stages in its progress. It is, first, a cant phrase; secondly, a vulgarism; third-

ly, an idiom of the language. Some expire in one or other of the two first stages; but if they outlive these, they are established for ever. I have given an example of this above, in the word *mob*; and I think *topsy turvy* and *upside down* have very nearly attained the same privilege.

The seventh class consists of *personal blunders*, that is to say, effects of ignorance, and want of precision as an author, which are properly his own, and not reducible to any of the heads above mentioned. I shall give an example or two of this kind, because it will make the meaning of the former classes more clear. The examples follow.

1. ‘The members of a popular government should be continually *availed* of the situation and condition of every part. The author of this did not know that avail is neither an active nor passive, but a reciprocal verb; a man is said to *avail himself* of any thing, but not *to avail* others, or *be availed* by them.

2. ‘A degree of dissentions and oppositions under some circumstances, and a political lethargy under others *impend* certain ruin to a free state.’ Here a neuter verb is made an active one. I have before given some examples in which this is done commonly, but in the present case it belongs to this author alone.

3. ‘I should have let your performance sink into *silent disdain*.’ A performance may fall into contempt, or sink into oblivion, or be treated with disdain, but to make it sink into *silent disdain*, is a very crude expression indeed.

4. He is a man of most *accomplished* abilities. A

man may be said to be of distinguished abilities or great accomplishments, but *accomplished abilities* is wholly new.

5. 'I have a *total* objection against this measure.' I suppose the gentleman meant, that he objected to the whole, and every part of it. It was only an irregular marriage of the adjective to the wrong substantive.

6. 'An *axiom* as well established as any Euclid ever demonstrated.' Now, it happens that Euclid, notwithstanding his great love of demonstration, never demonstrated axioms, but took them for granted.

I hope the reader will forgive me for not referring to the treatises from which these examples are taken. They were in general anonymous; and as it is probable many of the authors are alive, and may be of further use to their country, so being wholly unknown to me, without the least degree of envy or malevolence, I mean not to injure but improve them.

F I N I S.



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