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ADDRESS

To Mr. PITT,

CHIEFLY ON THE

TRIPLE ASSESSMENT.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]



AN
ADDRESS

TO THE

Right Hon. WILLIAM PITT,

&c. &c. &c.

ON SOME PARTS OF HIS
ADMINISTRATION.

OCCASIONED BY HIS PROPOSAL OF

THE TRIPLE ASSESSMENT,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

IN NOVEMBER 1797.

Δεῖν οὐ γὰρ ἀμελῆντας, πολλὰν ἀγαθὸν φευσσθαι.
Ἄπαντων Μαχρῆ ἐπτερημεθα· ἡ δὲ Πατρις ἡμῶν δὲ-
λειπται. Ὁ Κινδύος ἔτις μῶνος εἶχει τὰς ἐπιτάδας
τῆς Σωτηρίας. (*Ambigitur.*)

LYSIAS.—De antiquâ Reipublicæ formâ Athenis non
immutandâ.

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London, December 1797.

WHEN the affairs of a great nation are reduced to that state, in which “the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves;” when the common exertions of ministers seem to be at an end, and they propose to the Legislature to make a voluntary formal surrender, or a solemn sacrifice of the stability of private property;

property; it is then time for any individual to propose his sentiments for the common safety. Englishmen have always supported, and I trust they will now more than ever support, the being and the honour of their country, with wisdom and temper, with the purse and the sword. Discretion and quiet good sense always direct them in their collective capacity. But they are roused by the approach of innovation in their domestick government, and of principles which lead to national violence and legalized confiscation. We will support the war against France; we wish to be safe, and know that security cannot be had without paying for it. *The manner* of raising the supply is that, for which we contend. The administration of Mr. Pitt has been long, and, as I think, justly supported by the wise and the well-disposed. I wish that
 support

support to be continued, and deserved. I have been an actual spectator and observer of it for many years. On the present occasion, I will pass over his ministerial labours for the publick, with conciseness, but not without force. Mr. Pitt is a scholar; and I would wish to address him without blunt vulgarity, or confusion of ideas. My education has also taught me something of Attick delicacy and of Roman urbanity: I have freedom by my side, and the tempered firmness of a gentleman. We remember that an obscure Prophet revealed the royal dream in Babylon, and the symbolick destruction of the Dreamer. But at this moment, a plain man may read the characters; and we should all labour, that the Kingdom should not be divided, and given over to another. It is not for any wisdom that I have more than my fellows, that I would speak a few words;

but

but for the sake of us all, that the interpretation of Mr. Pitt's political dream may be more fully known, and that the thoughts of his heart may be changed. My words and sentiments shall be with respect, but without reserve.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT.

SIR,

FOURTEEN years have passed, since you were first called to the direction of affairs. In your appointment, the royal choice and the publick wish were one. We are now arrived at a formidable and an unexpected crisis. Consider the situation in which you stand, and the original terms on which you were *first* placed in high office. The tyrannical pretensions of THE THIRD CHARLES hurled him from his seat. We were resolved on constitutional liberty, and we secured it on the banks of the Thames, beyond Aurora and the Ganges. We felt and

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acknowledged your ability, and saw in you the Marcellus of the empire. You were adopted with choice, trusted with confidence, and continued with favour. Such a minister is never discarded by a nation without regret. You have more to lose, Sir, than any man in this country. I speak not of your office, or of your emoluments; I know you are above them both. There is a sovereignty of nature as well as of rank. You have resources in the sublimity of your intellect, and the variety of your erudition, which might console and elevate the Athenian in his grove, or the learned Consul in the recess of Tusculum. Your virtues are broad and large; comprehensive as your understanding, and active as your spirit. But you were destined to breathe the air of a court and of a Senate; and noxious effluvia will contaminate the soundest frame and the most vigorous members. Your first dreams were with Homer and Jove; they rolled on ideal perfection and Reform. But your necessary converse with mankind, and often with some of the worst among them, soon proved to us that you were not un-

“ instructed

instructed in *Pelagick* subtlety. I think you have a skill and a profundity, which would do honour to the acutest politician of *any* school. Sometimes you walk with Marvell and Locke, with now and then a gracious nod at the obsequious Machiavel. The address, the coy submission, the reluctant delay, with which you *finally* consigned Mr. Hastings to the management and overbearing talents of the unrelenting Orator, I always admired as a master-piece of political art. Mr. Burke delivered yourself and Mr. Dundas from Indian rivalry, and removed the controll of superior local knowledge. When Mr. Fox conceived and effected the *Legatio Libera* of Mr. Adair, that bold unconstitutional interference made us forget the palpable impolicy of your Russian measures. His Grace of Queensberry (*obscaeno facies reverenda minori!*) admired the gallantry of Mr. Fox, kindled in the severity of the north. The idea of the *Legatio* was classical, † but, it may be pre-

† Quid reapse turpius, quam *sine procuratore senator, Legatus sine mandatis, sine ullo Reipublicæ munere?* Cicero de Leg. L. 3. Sect. 8. I should think Cicero had written on the occasion.

sumed, Mr. Adair did not plunge after the imperial Fair one with the amorous determinate warmth of Leander, or Mr. Fawkener; but rather with the art of Sheridan and Dædalus, "*Jusuetum per iter gelidas enavit ad Arctos.*" To you, Sir, it was a most prosperous voyage. You were successful in both the events. Mr. Hastings was discountenanced, disqualified, and disarmed: and Mr. Fox's bust, when removed from every honest man's closet, was transferred to the imperial cabinet. Unfortunately for this country, the original did not admit of a translation.

I HAVE only to admire, Sir, the address and readiness with which you seize on every event. It is not mine to reprobate that sagacity in a minister, which a moralist may find it difficult to reconcile with his ethicks. But in the administration of a state all is a warfare, open or secret. We rarely enquire, is it virtue or finesse? and the corruption of our nature is too apt to give even a preference to the latter. Your opportunities of political self-gratification have been numerous and frequent,

frequent. Your disposition of the Earldom of Leicester, *in time and circumstance*, might have satiated the most refined resentment of Sejanus or Richelieu. Bishop Watson was thrust upon Lord Lansdown and yourself by his late Grace of Rutland, but you have effectually circumscribed the ambition or the avarice of that distinguished prelate.† In your behalf even Heaven seemed to interest itself. The restoration of a beloved Sovereign to his throne and afflicted people, confirmed the dominion of his bold, unshrinking, constitutional minister. It is not mine to descant on circumstances. Alps rise on Alps ; but I would only glance on the illuminated summits of the mountain.

In your *general* system of Finance, it is my opinion, you have shewn to the kingdom that ability which we presumed in you ; clear, minute, comprehensive, accurate. Your principle of redemption is just, and posterity will thank the projector. To *us*, unhappily, it is of little account ; the debt is without measure, and as far as I can see, without limit. NON CONCUSSA FIDES ;
sed multis utite bellum. I AGREE

† I know, *at this moment*, it is in contemplation to translate Bishop Watson, on a future vacancy. Perhaps to *Banger*. But not at the motion of Mr. Pitt.

I AGREE with you, that the war is just and justifiable; but this is a small concession. It was inevitable. Yet perhaps I forget. It might have been avoided, and the price was easy. The overthrow of our constitution from its foundation, the unconditional surrender of our liberties, comforts, and independance to France, and the *affiliation* of Great Britain with democracy and atheism. No more. I had indeed forgot the lesson I learned from Mr. Fox. It might perhaps have been so avoided: I will not however assert it. The right arm of that Republick was red, when she first extended it. *Sacras jaculatus arces terruit urbem*, TERRUIT GENTES. Every battle of her infuriated warriors has indeed been with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood. On this subject rhetoricians have discoursed on the art of war before Hannibal; and the sages of law and logick have directed sieges and descents. Dunkirk and Quiberon have immortalised the sagum of Lord Chancellor Loughborough, and the doctorial gown of Mr. Windham: Whatever of error, unnecessary profusion of the publick money, unskilful direction of the publick
lick

lick force abroad, whatever of fraudulent alliance, of monarchical treachery, and of imperial valour, has been exhibited, it is not for my pen to trace. You have had full opportunity to vindicate them with the power of your commanding eloquence. You had once opponents worthy of your abilities. But the benches in the House are now deserted. † The lions of the forest are in their lair, couching for their prey, and they have sent forth the Jackall. We are told, Mr. Tierney has a general Retainer against you, and Mr. Nicholls ‡ an unlimited commission from himself. Sir John Sinclair lies like marle on the soil of that House; I fear he incumbers what he wishes to fertilize. Upon my word, Sir, I feel for you on this occasion. But you may proceed. Your answers are heard throughout the land. You are happy in letting no opportunity escape, of direct information, or extorted pleasantry. The system of curtailing and *mutilation* you leave to Mr. Nicholls. *The known gravity* of that gentleman provokes to risibility, when his words, and *motions*, and *letters*, bid defiance to all meaning and construction.

† I write in the *first* week of December 1797.

‡ M. P. for Tregony.

tion. Perhaps he is a worshipper of Semiramis, and her political inventions. She is a goddess to Mr. Nicholls; or perhaps he himself is a god, the very *Smintheus* † of the great Poet. You easily disposed of Mr. Nicholls's unintelligible motion about places and pensions, † but some of his and Mr. Tierney's allusions were not lost upon you. I rather expected to hear, what I did hear from you, sarcasm and pleasantry in your answer. When opulence and œconomy were the theme, the name of Buckingham could not be far off. The allusion to him in that debate was gratifying to you. An involuntary smile lighted up your countenance, (I could not be deceived, *for I think I looked steadily at you at the time*) when you assured the House, that "our Cousin of Buckingham" was no member of *your* Administration. The extremes of guilt and of satisfaction are never concealed.

I AM now arrived at that point, when the accumulated burthens of the State call for a providence, and a fertility of resources never yet required.

† Σμινθεύς, an Epithet of Apollo the destroyer of Rats. Hom. Il. 1.

† Dec. 1797.

quired. I have no doubt your deliberation has been calm, deep, and solemn. You have a generous and opulent country to direct and to defend, as the constitutional Minister. The necessity is urgent, and the enemy at the door. France has attempted to subdue the powers of the ocean on it's own shores; and Republican Directors seem to have verified the flattery of the old Courtiers of Canute. I know you too well to suppose that you would ever abandon a salutary measure of the last importance, from personal fear. The necessity is allowed: are the means proposed justifiable? I think not. I fear you have been too precipitate: but your *academical* education should have acquainted you with the law of descent in a *resisting* medium. The double, triple, quadruple, or quintuple Assessment is of a nature too plain, not to be conceived with ease by any understanding. If it is admitted, I see no bound to the consequences. It is *Requisition* in it's first and mildest form. It is a *Requisition* indeed attempted in the proportions of distributive justice, and in some measure, successful. I would

not urge this, if I thought there was a paramount necessity for the measure: in that case I would *contribute* the last shilling, though I should be unwilling to have it forced from me. I would give it—for whom, or for what? For my Country, her Laws, her Liberty. *I would give any thing to be preserved from Republican France.* But you have resorted to this measure of REQUISITION, *before the necessity arrived.* If your own words and statements are true, my assertion is well founded. You declare the resources of the kingdom to be great, and her commerce and revenues increased beyond example. If you borrow a large proportion of the proposed Sum, why might not the rest be borrowed? We are only told, it is *adviseable* not to do so. No more. But old principles are generally safe. To ordinary taxes and loans we submit and have submitted from necessity. Other means I know, and you know too, might be found.

I agree entirely with you, that the contest is FOR THE WHOLE. I believe and I feel so. But we are still allowed to deliberate *on the means* of maintaining it.

There is surely nothing factious, in differing with the Minister on the subject of his measures, when the principle of the war is allowed to be just, and our situation dangerous. You have enough, Sir, of publick debate, and arguments are not new to you. If it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to this principle, and there is nothing left to be tried, I would bow to the necessity. I should indeed look to my country: the ruins say, it was a worthy building. In my conscience I do not believe that necessity is yet arrived. Men of commerce and trade know the consequence of the disclosure of their property. Credit is money. Large capitals, though laid up, are in fact, wealth in action. Look at the resources of the great Globe itself. I would speak soberly, as a politician, not rhetorically, like Mr. Erskine. Look then abroad through nature. She has her hidden springs, her stores, her magazines, her reservoirs, the work of her all-wise artificer. The fountains of the great deep are never opened by the arm of Omnipotence, but for the last necessity. Expand this idea, Sir, by the power

of your comprehensive intellect ; brood over it, till it quicken into life. If commerce were personified, she would acknowledge of you, “ Omnes magnus aliz, *magno commixtus corpore, fetus!*” I would present no ideas to you, unworthy of your mighty mind. I am not to be told, to whom I am speaking. But my object is not to be minute : nor can I descend to calculation.

I MUST own, I have no War-fund to propose to you, or Sketch * of Finances. I leave that to Sir Robert Herries. He is a sensible, grave, reflecting man ; and if the style of his pamphlet is a little embarrassed, Sir Robert promises to improve in conversation. For my part, I have little personal interest in what I advance. *My assessments* are such as are usually found among the muses and their votaries :

Quæ mihi sunt nullæ, nisi quas dedit aurea Clio,
 Quas mihi semoto somni peperere sub antro,
 Aut memoris laureta sacri Parnassides umbræ.

* See a Sketch of Financial and Commercial Affairs in the Autumn of 1797.

I have only a few *laurel* sprigs to offer, gathered in the neighbourhood of Mantua and Twitnam; but unfortunately you agree, with the naturalists of the day, that there is a *poisonous* quality in that shrub. The leaves in my book have no signature from Newland, and his fiscal progeny. You are happier, Sir. Your long courtship is at last consummated, and your embrace is genial. Cornelia and Cato are united. The Matron of the Bank has received her title to lawful bliss in the Chapel of St. Stephen. *Conjugis in gremium lætæ descendis!* and all her children, from Charing-Cross to Lombard-Street, have sung the hymenæal. But if you think even “Sir Robert mighty dull”; I am sure you would not relish a plan from me. I never borrowed a ray from De Moivre; and I always hated the reversionary (*or revolutionary*) calculations of Dr. Price. Things indeed are now changed. Time was, when Bankers were as stupid as their guineas could make them. They were never Orators, Painters, or Poets. But *now*, Mr. Dent has
a speech

a speech and a *bitch* * at your service; Sir Robert has his pencil and canvass; and Mr. Rogers dreams on Parnassus. And if I am rightly informed, there is a great demand among his Brethren for *The Pleasures of Memory*. Sir Robert chose the autumn with propriety for his Sketch. The leaves are indeed falling thick around us; they strow the brooks in Vallombrosa, and imbrown the heights of Holwood.

IN regard to this TRIPLE ASSESSMENT, I would not be altogether severe in the discussion of it. Truth and pleasantry may meet; there is nothing to hinder them. I have heard it was Mr. Fox's intention to propose to you the perusal of the *Acharnensians* of Aristophanes. You know the subject of that witty Comedy was Peace at Athens. I am told Mr. Fox has found great relief from it in his retirement; and is perpetually comforting himself that he has uniformly *acted* the noisy part of Dicæarchus.

* John Dent, Esq. M. P. *The Inventor* of the Dog and *Bitch* Bill.

chus. He thinks it might improve your Greek, and rectify your politicks. I am told, he is perpetually repeating to himself this passage :

Ω Πολις, Πολις!

Εγω αι πρωτιστος εις Εκκλησιαν
 Στενω, κεχνηνα, σκορδινωμαι, περιδομαι,
 Απορω, γραφω, παρατιλλομαι, λογιζομαι,
 Αποβλεπων εις τον Αγρον, Ειρηνης ερων.†

We see that poets, and comedians, *look to the land*, when they think of Peace. It is however singular, that while the temple of Janus is open night and day, wider and wider, the face of that God, *looking before and after*, is no where to be seen. You now rise in your mythology. It is not the bifronted Janus we meet ; it is Hecate in her *triple* form, and she looks angrily. It is you, Sir, like the three-faced *Virgin* huntress, emptying your quiver in the Senate. But perhaps you forget. Before the Queen of Carthage ascended the pile, *on*
which

† Aristoph. Acharn. v. 27. (*Thus Painters write their names at Co.*)

which she expired, the Priestess in a voice of thunder, first invoked THE TRIPLE Deities; and among them the deity of confusion.

Ter centum tonat ore Deos, Erebumque, *Chaosque*,
Tergeminamque Hecaten, tria virginis ora Dianæ.

If you disdain history, be at least warned by mythology. My analysis is new, and you may smile (I wish I could too) at a poetical interpretation.

I TURN from mythology to modern records. You know, Sir, of whom it was said :

A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleas'd with the danger, when the waves beat high,
He sought the storm.*

I doubt not, you have this propensity with the minister of that day. But it is not only in the tempest in which you have displayed skill and courage; you have talents fitted for the calm when the waves subside.

I AM

* Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*.

I AM by no means inclined to accuse you of compendious ideas. Caligula conceived the unity of the Roman neck, and Robespierre realised the idea. Tyrants alone, and their satellites, have recourse to such savage pleasantry. Neither you, nor the beloved Sovereign whose Minister you are, admit these ideas. Your work is for salvation; not for destruction. Your present plan I dislike; the principle of it I abhor. *LATRATU regna TRIFAUCI personat!* I think it fallacious in it's view, destructive in it's progress, and fatal in it's completion. Consider solemnly for a moment. The principle was never heard of in this country, but in times which bear little analogy to the present. It is in effect new. It is worse, you have adopted it from France. If it were not new in this kingdom, I would not say a word; it is not taxation, but a species of extortion. It is an experiment full of fear and danger; and *your Cambridge* philosophers know, it is difficult to adjust the instruments accurately in a *first* experiment. But depend upon it, Sir, the battery and the shock of it will be electrical.

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ONCE more, SIR, consider your character, and the original terms on which you accepted your office. We call on you and expect consistency in the man, who overthrew *the daring innovations* and unconstitutional attempts of Mr. Fox. Remember that gentleman. The scroll of India contains the record of his ability, his disgrace, and his fall. Poets and painters have a liberty, which never was granted to politicians and ministers. But the similitude is not without application. In the design of a great master, we are often so struck with the principal figure, that we disregard the general subject and filling up of the canvass. In Ministers of State, a principle once discovered is fatal in the publick opinion. *En animam et mentem!* We said this of Mr. Fox; let his example weigh with you.

REALLY, SIR, I am not your enemy. But it has been the constant misfortune of your administration to listen to men of judgment and talents, very inferior to your own. You willingly take a hint and a lesson from them. It is a condescension which gratifies them and yourself.

yourself. When there are marks of a great, powerful, and master understanding in an adviser, you are then determined to show yourself still greater and more powerful. I lament in this the weakness of human nature. In ordinary men this conduct is called obstinacy, in you, it is perseverance. In the Senate, Sir, you act otherwise. There you wish for an equal opponent: I always said of you and Mr. Fox; (the words are Cicero's;) † *Quid tam visendum aut audiendum est, quam summorum oratorum in gravissima causa accurata et inimicitis incensa contentio?* I am your admirer and your well-wisher; but my wishes and labours are still more directed to the preservation of my Country, and of all her rights. You cannot impose silence, when the publick mind is not convinced. I never thought your character that of an Impostor. I am solemn in my meaning, and impressed with what I have written; and I am sure you would not wish to see the pen of an Exciseman dipt in any thing but Ink.

I know

† De Opt. Gen. Orat.

I KNOW, Sir, that wherever you proceed on this subject, you find but a choice of difficulties, of great, overbearing, increasing difficulties. But difficulty is the school of ability: I could also send you *a written* plan, if I thought it would answer any other purpose, than to amuse a very amiable man, I mean Mr. Smith, in your antichamber. But by your present principle, the property of the whole kingdom in succession may be legally seized. It is not taxation; Dr. Johnson himself would have been almost induced to call it, tyranny. If the law passes, it is rebellion to resist it. You know the consequences of rebellion, or even of general dissatisfaction, too well to hazard them for a trifle, *and without necessity*. The heat and resentment of a kingdom, rendered desperate and disabled, might be too formidable. A political plague is a natural plague reversed. It first attacks and destroys the higher orders, and then descends in fatal unresisted progress among the mass of the people. Consider, Sir, the same power which lifted you up, may depose you with as little ceremony as the greatest of
your

your Predecessors. I wish your continuance in office. Let it be, as I think it has hitherto been, deserved. *Tutatur favor Eurialum.* I wish to see your authority corrected, not overthrown or annihilated. But we have *no power* in this kingdom constantly in action, and absolutely permanent and hereditary, but that of THE CROWN. Remember we are now, one and all, standing up, alert, armed, and undismayed, *in the cause of the stability of our Property, and of our Constitutional Liberty.* On this point we are at issue. If THE PRINCIPLE is abandoned, the contest with France is hardly worth carrying on.

DOCTRINÆ HEC VINDEX GENIO MONITA ALTA BRITANNO!

THE END.

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