

TAXATION NO TYRANNY

AN ANSWER TO THE RESOLUTIONS AND ADDRESS OF THE
AMERICAN CONGRESS.

by Samuel Johnson

In all the parts of human knowledge, whether terminating in science merely speculative, or operating upon life, private or civil, are admitted some fundamental principles, or common axioms, which, being generally received, are little doubted, and, being little doubted, have been rarely proved.

Of these gratuitous and acknowledged truths, it is often the fate to become less evident by endeavours to explain them, however necessary such endeavours may be made by the misapprehensions of absurdity, or the sophistries of interest. It is difficult to prove the principles of science; because notions cannot always be found more intelligible than those which are questioned. It is difficult to prove the principles of practice, because they have, for the most part, not been discovered by investigation, but obtruded by experience; and the demonstrator will find, after an operose deduction, that he has been trying to make that seen, which can be only felt.

Of this kind is the position, that "the supreme power of every community has the right of requiring, from all its subjects, such contributions as are necessary to the publick safety or publick prosperity," which was considered, by all mankind, as comprising the primary and essential condition of all political society, till it became disputed by those zealots of anarchy, who have denied, to the parliament of Britain the right of taxing the American colonies.

In favour of this exemption of the Americans from the authority of their lawful sovereign, and the dominion of their mother-country, very loud clamours have been raised, and many wild assertions advanced, which, by such as borrow their opinions from the reigning fashion, have been admitted as arguments; and, what is strange, though their tendency is to lessen English honour and English power, have been heard by Englishmen, with a wish to find them true. Passion has, in its first violence, controlled interest, as the eddy for awhile runs against the stream.

To be prejudiced is always to be weak; yet there are prejudices so near to laudable, that they have been often praised, and are always pardoned. To love their country has been considered as virtue in men, whose love could not be otherwise than blind, because their preference was made without, a comparison; but it has never been my fortune to find, either in ancient or modern writers, any honourable mention of those, who have, with equal blindness, hated their country.

These antipatriotick prejudices are the abortions of folly impregnated by faction, which, being produced against the standing order of nature, have not strength sufficient for long life. They are born only to scream and perish, and leave those to contempt or detestation, whose kindness was employed to nurse them into mischief.

To perplex the opinion of the publick many artifices have been used, which, as usually happens, when falsehood is to be maintained by fraud, lose their force by counteracting one another.

The nation is, sometimes, to be mollified by a tender tale of men, who fled from tyranny to rocks and deserts, and is persuaded to lose all claims of justice, and all sense of dignity, in compassion for a harmless people, who, having worked hard for bread in a wild country, and obtained, by the slow progression of manual industry, the accommodations of life, are now invaded by unprecedented oppression, and plundered of their properties by the harpies of taxation.

We are told how their industry is obstructed by unnatural restraints, and their trade confined by rigorous prohibitions; how they are forbidden to enjoy the products of their own soil, to manufacture the materials which nature spreads before them, or to carry their own goods to the nearest market; and surely the generosity of English virtue will never heap new weight upon those that are already overladen; will never delight in that dominion, which cannot be exercised, but by cruelty and outrage.

But, while we are melting in silent sorrow, and, in the transports of delirious pity, dropping both the sword and balance from our hands, another friend of the Americans thinks it better to awaken another passion, and tries to alarm our interest, or excite our veneration, by accounts of their greatness and their opulence, of the fertility of their land, and the splendour of their towns. We then begin to consider the question with more evenness of mind, are ready to conclude that those restrictions are not very oppressive, which have been found consistent with this speedy growth of prosperity; and begin to think it reasonable, that they who thus flourish under the protection of our government, should contribute something toward its expense.

But we are soon told, that the Americans, however wealthy, cannot be taxed; that they are the descendants of men who left all for liberty, and that they have constantly preserved the principles and stubbornness of their progenitors; that they are too obstinate for persuasion, and too powerful for constraint; that they will laugh at argument, and defeat violence; that the continent of North America contains three millions, not of men merely, but of whigs, of whigs fierce for liberty, and disdainful of dominion; that they multiply with the fecundity of their own rattlesnakes, so that every quarter of a century doubles their numbers.

Men accustomed to think themselves masters do not love to be threatened. This talk is, I hope, commonly thrown away, or raises passions different from those which it was intended to excite. Instead of terrifying the English hearer to tame acquiescence, it disposes him to hasten the experiment of bending obstinacy, before it is become yet more obdurate, and convinces him that it is necessary to attack a nation thus prolific, while we may yet hope to prevail. When he is told, through what extent of territory we must travel to subdue them, he recollects how far, a few years ago, we travelled in their defence. When it is urged, that they will shoot up, like the hydra, he naturally considers how the hydra was destroyed.

Nothing dejects a trader like the interruption of his profits. A commercial people, however magnanimous, shrinks at the thought of declining traffick and an unfavourable balance. The effect of this terrour has been tried. We have been stunned with the importance of our American commerce, and heard of merchants, with warehouses that are never to be emptied, and of manufacturers starving for want of work.

That our commerce with America is profitable, however less than ostentatious or deceitful estimates have made it, and that it is our interest to preserve it, has never been denied; but, surely, it will most effectually be preserved, by being kept always in our own power. Concessions may promote it for a moment, but superiority only can ensure its continuance. There will always be a part, and always a very large part of every community, that have no care but for themselves, and whose care for themselves reaches little further than impatience of immediate pain, and eagerness for the nearest good. The blind are said to feel with peculiar nicety. They who look but little into futurity, have, perhaps, the quickest sensation of the present. A merchant's desire is not of glory, but of gain; not of publick wealth, but of private emolument; he is, therefore, rarely to be consulted about war and peace, or any designs of wide extent and distant consequence.

Yet this, like other general characters, will sometimes fail. The traders of Birmingham have rescued themselves from all imputation of narrow selfishness, by a manly recommendation to parliament of the rights and dignity of their native country.

To these men I do not intend to ascribe an absurd and enthusiastick contempt of interest, but to give them the rational and just praise of distinguishing real from seeming good; of being able to see through the cloud of interposing difficulties, to the lasting and solid happiness of victory and settlement.

Lest all these topicks of persuasion should fail, the greater actor of patriotism has tried another, in which terrour and pity are happily combined, not without a proper superaddition of that admiration which latter ages have brought into the drama. The heroes of Boston, he tells us, if the stamp act had not been repealed, would have left their town, their port, and their trade, have resigned the splendour of opulence, and quitted the delights of neighbourhood, to disperse themselves over the country, where they would till the ground, and fish in the rivers, and range the mountains, and be free.

These, surely, are brave words. If the mere sound of freedom can operate thus powerfully, let no man, hereafter, doubt the story of the Pied Piper. The removal of the people of Boston into the country, seems, even to the congress, not only difficult in its execution, but important in its consequences. The difficulty of execution is best known to the Bostonians themselves; the consequence alas! will only be, that they will leave good houses to wiser men.

Yet, before they quit the comforts of a warm home, for the sound of something which they think better, he cannot be thought their enemy who advises them, to consider well whether they shall find it. By turning fishermen or hunters, woodmen or shepherds, they may become wild, but it is not so easy to conceive them free; for who can be more a slave than he that is driven, by force, from the comforts of life, is compelled to leave his house to a casual comer, and, whatever he does, or where ever he wanders, finds, every moment, some new testimony of his own subjection? If choice of evil be freedom, the felon in the galleys has his option of labour or of stripes. The Bostonian may quit his house to starve in the fields; his dog may refuse to set, and smart under the lash, and they may then congratulate each other upon the smiles of liberty, "profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight."

To treat such designs as serious, would be to think too contemptuously of Bostonian understandings. The artifice, indeed, is not new: the blusterer, who threatened in vain to destroy his opponent, has, sometimes, obtained his end, by making it believed, that he would hang himself.

But terrors and pity are not the only means by which the taxation of the Americans is opposed. There are those, who profess to use them only as auxiliaries to reason and justice; who tell us, that to tax the colonies is usurpation and oppression, an invasion of natural and legal rights, and a violation of those principles which support the constitution of English government.

This question is of great importance. That the Americans are able to bear taxation, is indubitable; that their refusal may be overruled, is highly probable; but power is no sufficient evidence of truth. Let us examine our own claim, and the objections of the recusants, with caution proportioned to the event of the decision, which must convict one part of robbery, or the other of rebellion.

A tax is a payment, exacted by authority, from part of the community, for the benefit of the whole. From whom, and in what proportion such payment shall be required, and to what uses it shall be applied, those only are to judge to whom government is intrusted. In the British dominions taxes are apportioned, levied, and appropriated by the states assembled in parliament.

Of every empire all the subordinate communities are liable to taxation, because they all share the benefits of government, and, therefore, ought all to furnish their proportion of the expense.

This the Americans have never openly denied. That it is their duty to pay the costs of their own safety, they seem to admit; nor do they refuse their contribution to the exigencies, whatever they may be, of the British empire; but they make this participation of a publick burden a duty of very uncertain extent, and imperfect obligation, a duty temporary, occasional, and elective, of which they reserve to themselves the right of settling the degree, the time, and the duration; of judging when it may be required, and when it has been performed.

They allow to the supreme power nothing more than the liberty of notifying to them its demands or its necessities. Of this notification they profess to think for themselves, how far it shall influence their counsels; and of the necessities alleged, how far they shall endeavour to relieve them. They assume the exclusive power of settling not only the mode, but the quantity, of this payment. They are ready to cooperate with all the other dominions of the king; but they will cooperate by no means which they do not like, and at no greater charge than they are willing to bear.

This claim, wild as it may seem; this claim, which supposes dominion without authority, and subjects without subordination, has found among the libertines of policy, many clamorous and hardy vindicators. The laws of nature, the rights of humanity, the faith of charters, the danger of liberty, the encroachments of usurpation, have been thundered in our ears, sometimes by interested faction, and sometimes by honest stupidity.

It is said by Fontenelle, that if twenty philosophers shall resolutely deny that the presence of the sun makes the day, he will not despair but whole nations may adopt the opinion. So many political dogmatists have denied to the mother-country, the power of taxing the colonies, and have enforced their denial with so much violence of outcry, that their sect is already very numerous, and the publick voice suspends its decision.

In moral and political questions, the contest between interest and justice has been often tedious and often fierce, but, perhaps, it never happened before, that justice found much opposition, with interest on her side.

For the satisfaction of this inquiry, it is necessary to consider, how a colony is constituted; what are the terms of migration, as dictated by nature, or settled by compact; and what social or political rights the man loses or acquires, that leaves his country to establish himself in a distant plantation.

Of two modes of migration the history of mankind informs us, and so far as I can yet discover, of two only.

In countries where life was yet unadjusted, and policy unformed, it sometimes happened, that, by the dissensions of heads of families, by the ambition of daring adventurers, by some accidental pressure of distress, or by the mere discontent of idleness, one part of the community broke off from the rest, and numbers, greater or smaller, forsook their habitations, put themselves under the command of some favourite of fortune, and with, or without the consent of their countrymen or governours, went out to see what better regions they could occupy, and in what place, by conquest or by treaty, they could gain a habitation.

Sons of enterprise, like these, who committed to their own swords their hopes and their lives, when they left their country, became another nation, with designs, and prospects, and interests, of their own. They looked back no more to their former home; they expected no help from those whom they had left behind; if they conquered, they conquered for themselves; if they were destroyed, they were not by any other power either lamented or revenged.

Of this kind seem to have been all the migrations of the early world, whether historical or fabulous, and of this kind were the eruptions of those nations, which, from the north, invaded the Roman empire, and filled Europe with new sovereignties.

But when, by the gradual admission of wiser laws and gentler manners, society became more compacted and better regulated, it was found, that the power of every people consisted in union, produced by one common interest, and operating in joint efforts and consistent counsels.

From this time independence perceptibly wasted away. No part of the nation was permitted to act for itself. All now had the same enemies and the same friends; the government protected individuals, and individuals were required to refer their designs to the prosperity of the government.

By this principle it is, that states are formed and consolidated. Every man is taught to consider his own happiness, as combined with the publick prosperity, and to think himself great and powerful, in proportion to the greatness and power of his governours.

Had the western continent been discovered between the fourth and tenth century, when all the northern world was in motion; and had navigation been, at that time, sufficiently advanced to make so long a passage easily practicable, there is little reason for doubting, but the intumescence of nations would have found its vent, like all other expansive violence, where there was least resistance; and that Huns and Vandals, instead of fighting their way

to the south of Europe, would have gone, by thousands and by myriads, under their several chiefs, to take possession of regions smiling with pleasure, and waving with fertility, front which the naked inhabitants were unable to repel them.

Every expedition would, in those days of laxity, have produced a distinct and independent state. The Scandinavian heroes might have divided the country among them, and have spread the feudal subdivision of regality from Hudson's bay to the Pacifick ocean.

But Columbus came five or six hundred years too late for the candidates of sovereignty. When he formed his project of discovery, the fluctuations of military turbulence had subsided, and Europe began to regain a settled form, by established government and regular subordination. No man could any longer erect himself into a chieftain, and lead out his fellow-subjects, by his own authority, to plunder or to war. He that committed any act of hostility, by land or sea, without the commission of some acknowledged sovereign, was considered, by all mankind, as a robber or pirate, names which were now of little credit, and of which, therefore, no man was ambitious.

Columbus, in a remoter time, would have found his way to some discontented lord, or some younger brother of a petty sovereign, who would have taken fire at his proposal, and have quickly kindled, with equal heat, a troop of followers: they would have built ships, or have seized them, and have wandered with him, at all adventures, as far as they could keep hope in their company. But the age being now past of vagrant excursion and fortuitous hostility, he was under the necessity of travelling from court to court, scorned and repulsed as a wild projector, an idle promiser of kingdoms in the clouds; nor has any part of the world yet had reason to rejoice that he found, at last, reception and employment.

In the same year, in a year hitherto disastrous to mankind, by the Portuguese was discovered the passage of the Indies, and by the Spaniards the coast of America. The nations of Europe were fired with Boundless expectations, and the discoverers, pursuing their enterprise, made conquests in both hemispheres of wide extent. But the adventurers were not contented with plunder: though they took gold and silver to themselves, they seized islands and kingdoms in the name of their sovereigns. When a new region was gained, a governour was appointed by that power, which had given the commission to the conqueror; nor have I met with any European, but Stukely, of London, that formed a design of exalting himself in the newly found countries to independent dominion.

To secure a conquest, it was always necessary to plant a colony, and territories, thus occupied and settled, were rightly considered, as mere extensions, or processes of empire; as ramifications which, by the circulation of one publick interest, communicated with the original source of dominion, and which were kept flourishing and spreading by the radical vigour of the mother-country.

The colonies of England differ no otherwise from those of other nations, than as the English constitution differs from theirs. All government is ultimately and essentially absolute, but subordinate societies may have more immunities, or individuals greater liberty, as the operations of government are differently conducted. An Englishman in the common course of life and action feels no restraint.

An English colony has very liberal powers of regulating its own manners, and adjusting its own affairs. But an English individual may, by the supreme authority, be deprived of liberty, and a colony divested of its powers, for reasons of which that authority is the only judge.

In sovereignty there are no gradations. There may be limited royalty, there may be limited consulship; but there can be no limited government. There must, in every society, be some power or other, from which there is no appeal, which admits no restrictions, which pervades the whole mass of the community, regulates and adjusts all subordination, enacts laws or repeals them, erects or annuls judicatures, extends or contracts privileges, exempt itself from question or control, and bounded only by physical necessity.

By this power, wherever it subsists, all legislation and jurisdiction is animated and maintained. From this all legal rights are emanations, which, whether equitably or not, may be legally recalled. It is not infallible, for it may do wrong; but it is irresistible, for it can be resisted only by rebellion, by an act which makes it questionable, what shall be thenceforward the supreme power.

An English colony is a number of persons, to whom the king grants a charter, permitting them to settle in some distant country, and enabling them to constitute a corporation enjoying such powers as the charter grants, to be administered in such forms as the charter prescribes. As a corporation, they make laws for themselves; but as a corporation, subsisting by a grant from higher authority, to the control of that authority they continue subject.

As men are placed at a greater distance from the supreme council of the kingdom, they must be intrusted with ampler liberty of regulating their conduct by their own wisdom. As they are more secluded from easy recourse to national judicature, they must be more extensively commissioned to pass judgment on each other.

For this reason our more important and opulent colonies see the appearance, and feel the effect, of a regular legislature, which, in some places, has acted so long with unquestioned authority, that it has forgotten whence that authority was originally derived.

To their charters the colonies owe, like other corporations, their political existence. The solemnities of legislation, the administration of justice, the security of property, are all bestowed upon them by the royal grant. Without their charter, there would be no power among them, by which any law could be made, or duties enjoined; any debt recovered, or criminal punished.

A charter is a grant of certain powers or privileges, given to a part of the community for the advantage of the whole, and is, therefore, liable, by its nature, to change or to revocation. Every act of government aims at publick good. A charter, which experience has shown to be detrimental to the nation, is to be repealed; because general prosperity must always be preferred to particular interest. If a charter be used to evil purposes, it is forfeited, as the weapon is taken away which is injuriously employed.

The charter, therefore, by which provincial governments are constituted, may be always legally, and, where it is either inconvenient in its nature, or misapplied in its use, may be equitably repealed; by such repeal the whole fabrick of subordination is immediately destroyed, and the constitution sunk at once into a chaos; the society is dissolved into a tumult of individuals, without authority to command, or obligation to obey, without any punishment of wrongs, but by personal resentment, or any protection of right, but by the hand of the possessor.

A colony is to the mother-country, as a member to the body, deriving its action and its strength from the general principle of vitality; receiving from the body, and communicating

to it, all the benefits and evils of health and disease; liable, in dangerous maladies, to sharp applications, of which the body, however, must partake the pain; and exposed, if incurably tainted, to amputation, by which the body, likewise, will be mutilated.

The mother-country always considers the colonies, thus connected, as parts of itself; the prosperity or unhappiness of either, is the prosperity or unhappiness of both; not, perhaps, of both in the same degree, for the body may subsist, though less commodiously, without a limb, but the limb must perish, if it be parted from the body.

Our colonies, therefore, however distant, have been, hitherto, treated as constituent parts of the British empire. The inhabitants incorporated by English charters are entitled to all the rights of Englishmen. They are governed by English laws, entitled to English dignities, regulated by English counsels, and protected by English arms; and it seems to follow, by consequence not easily avoided, that they are subject to English government, and chargeable by English taxation.

To him that considers the nature, the original, the progress, and the constitution of the colonies, who remembers that the first discoverers had commissions from the crown, that the first settlers owe to a charter their civil forms and regular magistracy, and that all personal immunities and legal securities, by which the condition of the subject has been, from time to time, improved, have been extended to the colonists, it will not be doubted, but the parliament of England has a right to bind them by statutes, and to bind them in all cases whatsoever; and has, therefore, a natural and constitutional power of laying upon them any tax or impost, whether external or internal, upon the product of land, or the manufactures of industry, in the exigencies of war, or in the time of profound peace, for the defence of America, for the purpose of raising a revenue, or for any other end beneficial to the empire.

There are some, and those not inconsiderable for number, nor contemptible for knowledge, who except the power of taxation from the general dominion of parliament, and hold, that whatever degrees of obedience may be exacted, or whatever authority may be exercised in other acts of government, there is still reverence to be paid to money, and that legislation passes its limits when it violates the purse.

Of this exception, which, by a head not fully impregnated with politicks, is not easily comprehended, it is alleged, as an unanswerable reason, that the colonies send no representatives to the house of commons.

It is, say the American advocates, the natural distinction of a freeman, and the legal privilege of an Englishman, that he is able to call his possessions his own, that he can sit secure in the enjoyment of inheritance or acquisition, that his house is fortified by the law, and that nothing can be taken from him but by his own consent. This consent is given for every man by his representative in parliament. The Americans, unrepresented, cannot consent to English taxations, as a corporation, and they will not consent, as individuals.

Of this argument, it has been observed by more than one, that its force extends equally to all other laws, for a freeman is not to be exposed to punishment, or be called to any onerous service, but by his own consent. The congress has extracted a position from the fanciful Montesquieu that, "in a free state, every man, being a free agent, ought to be concerned in his own government." Whatever is true of taxation, is true of every other law, that he who is bound by it, without his consent, is not free, for he is not concerned in his own government.

He that denies the English parliament the right of taxation, denies it, likewise, the right of making any other laws, civil or criminal, yet this power over the colonies was never yet disputed by themselves. They have always admitted statutes for the punishment of offences, and for the redress or prevention of inconveniencies; and the reception of any law draws after it, by a chain which cannot be broken, the unwelcome necessity of submitting to taxation.

That a freeman is governed by himself, or by laws to which he has consented, is a position of mighty sound; but every man that utters it, with whatever confidence, and every man that hears it, with whatever acquiescence, if consent be supposed to imply the power of refusal, feels it to be false. We virtually and implicitly allow the institutions of any government, of which we enjoy the benefit, and solicit the protection. In wide extended dominions, though power has been diffused with the most even hand, yet a very small part of the people are either primarily or secondarily consulted in legislation. The business of the publick must be done by delegation. The choice of delegates is made by a select number, and those who are not electors stand idle and helpless spectators of the commonweal, "wholly unconcerned in the government of themselves."

Of the electors the hap is but little better. They are often far from unanimity in their choice; and where the numbers approach to equality, almost half must be governed not only without, but against their choice.

How any man can have consented to institutions established in distant ages, it will be difficult to explain. In the most favourite residence of liberty, the consent of individuals is merely passive; a tacit admission, in every community, of the terms which that community grants and requires. As all are born the subjects of some state or other, we may be said to have been all born consenting to some system of government. Other consent than this the condition of civil life does not allow. It is the unmeaning clamour of the pedants of policy, the delirious dream of republican fanaticism.

But hear, ye sons and daughters of liberty, the sounds which the winds are wafting from the western continent. The Americans are telling one another, what, if we may judge from their noisy triumph, they have but lately discovered, and what yet is a very important truth: "That they are entitled to life, liberty, and property; and that they have never ceded to any sovereign power whatever a right to dispose of either without their consent."

While this resolution stands alone, the Americans are free from singularity of opinion; their wit has not yet betrayed them to heresy. While they speak as the naked sons of nature, they claim but what is claimed by other men, and have withheld nothing but what all withheld. They are here upon firm ground, behind entrenchments which can never be forced.

Humanity is very uniform. The Americans have this resemblance to Europeans, that they do not always know when they are well. They soon quit the fortress, that could neither have been mined by sophistry, nor battered by declamation. Their next resolution declares, that "Their ancestors, who first settled the colonies, were, at the time of their emigration from the mother-country, entitled to all the rights, liberties, and immunities of free and natural-born subjects within the realm of England."

This, likewise, is true; but when this is granted, their boast of original rights is at an end; they are no longer in a state of nature. These lords of themselves, these kings of ME, these demigods of independence sink down to colonists, governed by a charter. If their ancestors

were subjects, they acknowledged a sovereign; if they had a right to English privileges, they were accountable to English laws; and, what must grieve the lover of liberty to discover, had ceded to the king and parliament, whether the right or not, at least, the power of disposing, "without their consent, of their lives, liberties, and properties. "It, therefore, is required of them to prove, that the parliament ever ceded to them a dispensation from that obedience, which they owe as natural-born subjects, or any degree of independence or immunity, not enjoyed by other Englishmen.

They say, that by such emigration, they by no means forfeited, surrendered, or lost any of those rights; but, that "they were, and their descendants now are, entitled to the exercise and enjoyment of all such of them, as their local and other circumstances enable them to exercise and enjoy."

That they who form a settlement by a lawful charter, having committed no crime, forfeit no privileges, will be readily confessed; but what they do not forfeit by any judicial sentence, they may lose by natural effects. As man can be but in one place, at once, he cannot have the advantages of multiplied residence. He that will enjoy the brightness of sunshine, must quit the coolness of the shade. He who goes voluntarily to America, cannot complain of losing what he leaves in Europe. He, perhaps, had a right to vote for a knight or burgess; by crossing the Atlantick, he has not nullified his right; but he has made its exertion no longer possible*. By his own choice he has left a country, where he had a vote and little property, for another, where he has great property, but no vote. But as this preference was deliberate and unconstrained, he is still "concerned in the government of himself;" he has reduced himself from a voter, to one of the innumerable multitude that have no vote. He has truly "ceded his right," but he still is governed by his own consent; because he has consented to throw his atom of interest into the general mass of the community. Of the consequences of his own act he has no cause to complain; he has chosen, or intended to choose, the greater good; he is represented, as himself desired, in the general representation.

But the privileges of an American scorn the limits of place; they are part of himself, and cannot be lost by departure from his country; they float in the air, or glide under the ocean:

"Doris amara suam non intermisceat undam"

A planter, wherever he settles, is not only a freeman, but a legislator: "ubi imperator, ibi Roma." "As the English colonists are not represented in the British parliament, they are entitled to a free and exclusive power of legislation in their several legislatures, in all cases of taxation and internal polity, subject only to the negative of the sovereign, in such manner as has been heretofore used and accustomed. We cheerfully consent to the operation of such acts of the British parliament, as are, bona fide, restrained to the regulation of our external commerce —excluding every idea of taxation, internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects of America, without their consent."

Their reason for this claim is, "that the foundation of English liberty, and of all government, is a right in the people to participate in their legislative council."

"They inherit," they say, "from their ancestors, the right which their ancestors possessed, of enjoying all the privileges of Englishmen." That they inherit the right of their ancestors is allowed; but they can inherit no more. Their ancestors left a country, where the representatives of the people were elected by men particularly qualified, and where those who wanted qualifications, or who did not use them, were bound by the decisions of men, whom they had not deputed.

The colonists are the descendants of men, who either had no vote in elections, or who voluntarily resigned them for something, in their opinion, of more estimation; they have, therefore, exactly what their ancestors left them, not a vote in making laws, or in constituting legislators, but the happiness of being protected by law, and the duty of obeying it.

What their ancestors did not carry with them, neither they nor their descendants have since acquired. They have not, by abandoning their part in one legislature, obtained the power of constituting another, exclusive and independent, any more than the multitudes, who are now debarred from voting, have a right to erect a separate parliament for themselves.

Men are wrong for want of sense, but they are wrong by halves for want of spirit. Since the Americans have discovered that they can make a parliament, whence comes it that they do not think themselves equally empowered to make a king? If they are subjects, whose government is constituted by a charter, they can form no body of independent legislature. If their rights are inherent and underived, they may, by their own suffrages, encircle, with a diadem, the brows of Mr. Cushing.

It is further declared, by the congress of Philadelphia, "that his majesty's colonies are entitled to all the privileges and immunities granted and confirmed to them by royal charters, or secured to them by their several codes of provincial laws."

The first clause of this resolution is easily understood, and will be readily admitted. To all the privileges which a charter can convey, they are, by a royal charter, evidently entitled. The second clause is of greater difficulty; for how can a provincial law secure privileges or immunities to a province? Provincial laws may grant, to certain individuals of the province, the enjoyment of gainful, or an immunity from onerous offices; they may operate upon the people to whom they relate; but no province can confer provincial privileges on itself. They may have a right to all which the king has given them; but it is a conceit of the other hemisphere, that men have a right to all which they have given to themselves.

A corporation is considered, in law, as an individual, and can no more extend its own immunities, than a man can, by his own choice, assume dignities or titles.

The legislature of a colony (let not the comparison be too much disdained) is only the vestry of a larger parish, which may lay a cess on the inhabitants, and enforce the payment; but can extend no influence beyond its own district, must modify its particular regulations by the general law, and, whatever may be its internal expenses, is still liable to taxes laid by superiour authority.

The charters given to different provinces are different, and no general right can be extracted from them. The charter of Pennsylvania, where this congress of anarchy has been impudently held, contains a clause admitting, in express terms, taxation by the parliament. If, in the other charters, no such reserve is made, it must have been omitted, as not necessary, because it is implied in the nature of subordinate government. They who are subject to laws, are liable to taxes. If any such immunity had been granted, it is still revocable by the legislature, and ought to be revoked, as contrary to the publick good, which is, in every charter, ultimately intended.

Suppose it true, that any such exemption is contained in the charter of Maryland, it can be pleaded only by the Marylanders. It is of no use for any other province; and, with regard even to them, must have been considered as one of the grants in which the king has been

deceived; and annulled, as mischievous to the publick, by sacrificing to one little settlement the general interest of the empire; as infringing the system of dominion, and violating the compact of government. But Dr. Tucker has shown, that even this charter promises no exemption from parliamentary taxes.

In the controversy agitated about the beginning of this century, whether the English laws could bind Ireland, Davenant, who defended against Molyneux the claims of England, considered it as necessary to prove nothing more, than that the present Irish must be deemed a colony.

The necessary connexion of representatives with taxes, seems to have sunk deep into many of those minds, that admit sounds, without their meaning.

Our nation is represented in parliament by an assembly as numerous as can well consist with order and despatch, chosen by persons so differently qualified in different places, that the mode of choice seems to be, for the most part, formed by chance, and settled by custom. Of individuals, far the greater part have no vote, and, of the voters, few have any personal knowledge of him to whom they intrust their liberty and fortune.

Yet this representation has the whole effect expected or desired, that of spreading so wide the care of general interest, and the participation of publick counsels, that the advantage or corruption of particular men can seldom operate with much injury to the publick.

For this reason many populous and opulent towns neither enjoy nor desire particular representatives: they are included in the general scheme of publick administration, and cannot suffer but with the rest of the empire.

It is urged, that the Americans have not the same security, and that a British legislator may wanton with their property; yet, if it be true, that their wealth is our wealth, and that their ruin will be our ruin, the parliament has the same interest in attending to them, as to any other part of the nation. The reason why we place any confidence in our representatives is, that they must share in the good or evil which their counsels shall produce. Their share is, indeed, commonly consequential and remote; but it is not often possible that any immediate advantage can be extended to such numbers as may prevail against it. We are, therefore, as secure against intentional deprivations of government, as human wisdom can make us, and upon this security the Americans may venture to repose.

It is said, by the old member who has written an appeal against the tax, that "as the produce of American labour is spent in British manufactures, the balance of trade is greatly against them; whatever you take directly in taxes is, in effect, taken from your own commerce. If the minister seizes the money, with which the American should pay his debts, and come to market, the merchant cannot expect him as a customer, nor can the debts, already contracted, be paid. —Suppose we obtain from America a million, instead of one hundred thousand pounds, it would be supplying one personal exigence by the future ruin of our commerce."

Part of this is true; but the old member seems not to perceive, that, if his brethren of the legislature know this as well as himself, the Americans are in no danger of oppression, since by men commonly provident they must be so taxed, as that we may not lose one way, what we gain another.

The same old member has discovered, that the judges formerly thought it illegal to tax Ireland, and declares that no cases can be more alike than those of Ireland and America; yet the judges whom he quotes have mentioned a difference. Ireland, they say, "hath a parliament of its own." When any colony has an independent parliament, acknowledged by the parliament of Britain, the cases will differ less. Yet, by the sixth of George the first, chapter fifth, the acts of the British parliament bind Ireland.

It is urged, that when Wales, Durham, and Chester were divested of their particular privileges, or ancient government, and reduced to the state of English counties, they had representatives assigned them.

To those from whom something had been taken, something in return might properly be given. To the Americans their charters are left, as they were, nor have they lost any thing, except that of which their sedition has deprived them. If they were to be represented in parliament, something would be granted, though nothing is withdrawn.

The inhabitants of Chester, Durham, and Wales were invited to exchange their peculiar institutions for the power of voting, which they wanted before. The Americans have voluntarily resigned the power of voting, to live in distant and separate governments; and what they have voluntarily quitted, they have no right to claim.

It must always be remembered, that they are represented by the same virtual representation as the greater part of Englishmen; and that, if by change of place, they have less share in the legislature than is proportionate to their opulence, they, by their removal, gained that opulence, and had originally, and have now, their choice of a vote at home, or riches at a distance.

We are told, what appears to the old member and to others, a position that must drive us into inextricable absurdity: that we have either no rights or the sole right, of taxing the colonies. The meaning is, that if we can tax them, they cannot tax themselves; and that if they can tax themselves, we cannot tax them. We answer, with very little hesitation, that, for the general use of the empire, we have the sole right of taxing them. If they have contributed any thing in their own assemblies, what they contributed was not paid, but given; it was not a tax or tribute, but a present. Yet they have the natural and legal power of levying money on themselves for provincial purposes, of providing for their own expense at their own discretion. Let not this be thought new or strange; it is the state of every parish in the kingdom.

The friends of the Americans are of different opinions. Some think, that, being unrepresented, they ought to tax themselves; and others, that they ought to have representatives in the British parliament.

If they are to tax themselves, what power is to remain in the supreme legislature? That they must settle their own mode of levying their money is supposed. May the British parliament tell them how much they shall contribute? If the sum may be prescribed, they will return few thanks for the power of raising it; if they are at liberty to grant or to deny, they are no longer subjects.

If they are to be represented, what number of these western orators are to be admitted? This, I suppose, the parliament must settle; yet, if men have a natural and unalienable right to be represented, who shall determine the number of their delegates? Let us, however, suppose them to send twenty-three, half as many as the kingdom of Scotland, what will this

representation avail them? To pay taxes will be still a grievance. The love of money will not be lessened, nor the power of getting it increased.

Whither will this necessity of representation drive us? Is every petty settlement to be out of the reach of government, till it has sent a senator to parliament; or may two of them, or a greater number, be forced to unite in a single deputation? What, at last, is the difference between him that is taxed, by compulsion, without representation, and him that is represented, by compulsion, in order to be taxed?

For many reigns the house of commons was in a state of fluctuation: new burgesses were added, from time to time, without any reason now to be discovered; but the number has been fixed for more than a century and a half, and the king's power of increasing it has been questioned. It will hardly be thought fit to new-model the constitution in favour of the planters, who, as they grow rich, may buy estates in England, and, without any innovation, effectually represent their native colonies.

The friends of the Americans, indeed, ask for them what they do not ask for themselves. This inestimable right of representation they have never solicited. They mean not to exchange solid money for such airy honour. They say, and say willingly, that they cannot conveniently be represented; because their inference is, that they cannot be taxed. They are too remote to share the general government, and, therefore, claim the privilege of governing themselves.

Of the principles contained in the resolutions of the congress, however wild, indefinite, and obscure, such has been the influence upon American understanding, that, from New England to South Carolina, there is formed a general combination of all the provinces against their mother-country. The madness of independence has spread from colony to colony, till order is lost, and government despised; and all is filled with misrule, uproar, violence, and confusion. To be quiet is disaffection, to be loyal is treason.

The congress of Philadelphia, an assembly convened by its own authority, has promulgated a declaration, in compliance with which the communication between Britain and the greatest part of North America, is now suspended. They ceased to admit the importation of English goods, in December, 1774, and determine to permit the exportation of their own no longer than to November, 1775.

This might seem enough; but they have done more: they have declared, that they shall treat all as enemies who do not concur with them in disaffection and perverseness; and that they will trade with none that shall trade with Britain.

They threaten to stigmatize, in their gazette, those who shall consume the products or merchandise of their mother-country, and are now searching suspected houses for prohibited goods.

These hostile declarations they profess themselves ready to maintain by force. They have armed the militia of their provinces, and seized the publick stores of ammunition. They are, therefore, no longer subjects, since they refuse the laws of their sovereign, and, in defence of that refusal, are making open preparations for war.

Being now, in their own opinion, free states, they are not only raising armies, but forming alliances, not only hastening to rebel themselves, but seducing their neighbours to rebellion.

They have published an address to the inhabitants of Quebec, in which discontent and resistance are openly incited, and with very respectful mention of "the sagacity of Frenchmen," invite them to send deputies to the congress of Philadelphia; to that seat of virtue and veracity, whence the people of England are told, that to establish popery, "a religion fraught with sanguinary and impious tenets," even in Quebec, a country of which the inhabitants are papists, is so contrary to the constitution, that it cannot be lawfully done by the legislature itself; where it is made one of the articles of their association, to deprive the conquered French of their religious establishment; and whence the French of Quebec are, at the same time, flattered into sedition, by professions of expecting "from the liberality of sentiment distinguishing their nation, that difference of religion will not prejudice them against a hearty amity, because the transcendant nature of freedom elevates all, who unite in the cause, above such low-minded infirmities."

Quebec, however, is at a great distance. They have aimed a stroke, from which they may hope for greater and more speedy mischief. They have tried to infect the people of England with the contagion of disloyalty. Their credit is, happily, not such as gives them influence proportionate to their malice. When they talk of their pretended immunities "guaranteed by the plighted faith of government, and the most solemn compacts with English sovereigns," we think ourselves at liberty to inquire, when the faith was plighted, and the compact made; and, when we can only find, that king James and king Charles the first promised the settlers in Massachusetts's bay, now famous by the appellation of Bostonians, exemption from taxes for seven years, we infer, with Mr. Mauduit, that, by this "solemn compact," they were, after expiration of the stipulated term, liable to taxation.

When they apply to our compassion, by telling us, that they are to be carried from their own country to be tried for certain offences, we are not so ready to pity them, as to advise them not to offend. While they are innocent they are safe.

When they tell of laws made expressly for their punishment, we answer, that tumults and sedition were always punishable, and that the new law prescribes only the mode of execution.

When it is said, that the whole town of Boston is distressed for a misdemeanor of a few, we wonder at their shamelessness; for we know that the town of Boston and all the associated provinces, are now in rebellion to defend or justify the criminals.

If frauds in the imposts of Boston are tried by commission without a jury, they are tried here in the same mode; and why should the Bostonians expect from us more tenderness for them than for ourselves?

If they are condemned unheard, it is because there is no need of a trial. The crime is manifest and notorious. All trial is the investigation of something doubtful. An Italian philosopher observes, that no man desires to hear what he has already seen.

If their assemblies have been suddenly dissolved, what was the reason? Their deliberations were indecent, and their intentions, seditious. The power of dissolution is granted and reserved for such times of turbulence. Their best friends have been lately soliciting the king to dissolve his parliament; to do what they so loudly complain of suffering.

That the same vengeance involves the innocent and guilty, is an evil to be lamented; but human caution cannot prevent it, nor human power always redress it. To bring misery on those who have not deserved it, is part of the aggregated guilt of rebellion.

That governours have been sometimes given them, only that a great man might get ease from importunity, and that they have had judges, not always of the deepest learning, or the purest integrity, we have no great reason to doubt, because such misfortunes happen to ourselves. Whoever is governed, will, sometimes, be governed ill, even when he is most "concerned in his own government."

That improper officers or magistrates are sent, is the crime or folly of those that sent them. When incapacity is discovered, it ought to be removed; if corruption is detected, it ought to be punished. No government could subsist for a day, if single errors could justify defection.

One of their complaints is not such as can claim much commiseration from the softest bosom. They tell us, that we have changed our conduct, and that a tax is now laid, by parliament, on those who were never taxed by parliament before. To this, we think, it may be easily answered, that the longer they have been spared, the better they can pay.

It is certainly not much their interest to represent innovation as criminal or invidious; for they have introduced into the history of mankind a new mode of disaffection, and have given, I believe, the first example of a proscription published by a colony against the mother-country.

To what is urged of new powers granted to the courts of admiralty, or the extension of authority conferred on the judges, it may be answered, in a few words, that they have themselves made such regulations necessary; that they are established for the prevention of greater evils; at the same time, it must be observed, that these powers have not been extended since the rebellion in America.

One mode of persuasion their ingenuity has suggested, which it may, perhaps, be less easy to resist. That we may not look with indifference on the American contest, or imagine that the struggle is for a claim, which, however decided, is of small importance and remote consequence, the Philadelphian congress has taken care to inform us, that they are resisting the demands of parliament, as well for our sakes as their own.

Their keenness of perspicacity has enabled them to pursue consequences to a greater distance; to see through clouds impervious to the dimness of European sight; and to find, I know not how, that when they are taxed, we shall be enslaved.

That slavery is a miserable state we have been often told, and, doubtless, many a Briton will tremble to find it so near as in America; but how it will be brought hither the congress must inform us. The question might distress a common understanding; but the statesmen of the other hemisphere can easily resolve it. "Our ministers," they say, "are our enemies, and if they should carry the point of taxation, may, with the same army, enslave us. It may be said, we will not pay them; but remember," say the western sages, "the taxes from America, and, we may add, the men, and particularly the Roman catholicks of this vast continent, will then be in the power of your enemies. Nor have you any reason to expect, that, after making slaves of us, many of us will refuse to assist in reducing you to the same abject state."

These are dreadful menaces; but suspecting that they have not much the sound of probability, the congress proceeds: "Do not treat this as chimerical. Know, that in less than half a century, the quitrents reserved to the crown, from the numberless grants of this vast continent, will pour large streams of wealth into the royal coffers. If to this be added the

power of taxing America, at pleasure, the crown will possess more treasure than may be necessary to purchase the remains of liberty in your island."

All this is very dreadful; but, amidst the terrour that shakes my frame, I cannot forbear to wish, that some sluice were opened for these streams of treasure. I should gladly see America return half of what England has expended in her defence; and of the stream that will "flow so largely in less than half a century," I hope a small rill, at least, may be found to quench the thirst of the present generation, which seems to think itself in more danger of wanting money, than of losing liberty.

It is difficult to judge with what intention such airy bursts of malevolence are vented; if such writers hope to deceive, let us rather repel them with scorn, than refute them by disputation.

In this last terrific paragraph are two positions, that, if our fears do not overpower our reflection, may enable us to support life a little longer. We are told by these croakers of calamity, not only that our present ministers design to enslave us, but that the same malignity of purpose is to descend through all their successors; and that the wealth to be poured into England by the Pactolus of America, will, whenever it comes, be employed to purchase the "remains of liberty."

Of those who now conduct the national affairs, we may, without much arrogance, presume to know more than themselves; and of those who shall succeed them, whether minister or king, not to know less.

The other position is, that "the crown," if this laudable opposition should not be successful, "will have the power of taxing America at pleasure." Surely they think rather too meanly of our apprehensions, when they suppose us not to know what they well know themselves, that they are taxed, like all other British subjects, by parliament; and that the crown has not, by the new imposts, whether right or wrong, obtained any additional power over their possessions.

It were a curious, but an idle speculation, to inquire, what effect these dictators of sedition expect from the dispersion of their letter among us. If they believe their own complaints of hardship, and really dread the danger which they describe, they will naturally hope to communicate the same perceptions to their fellow-subjects. But, probably, in America, as in other places, the chiefs are incendiaries, that hope to rob in the tumults of a conflagration, and toss brands among a rabble passively combustible. Those who wrote the address, though they have shown no great extent or profundity of mind, are yet, probably, wiser than to believe it: but they have been taught, by some master of mischief, how to put in motion the engine of political electricity; to attract, by the sounds of liberty and property; to repel, by those of popery and slavery; and to give the great stroke, by the name of Boston.

When subordinate communities oppose the decrees of the general legislature with defiance thus audacious, and malignity thus acrimonious, nothing remains but to conquer or to yield; to allow their claim of independence, or to reduce them, by force, to submission and allegiance.

It might be hoped, that no Englishman could be found, whom the menaces of our own colonists, just rescued from the French, would not move to indignation, like that of the Scythians, who, returning from war, found themselves excluded from their own houses by their slaves.

That corporations, constituted by favour, and existing by sufferance, should dare to prohibit commerce with their native country, and threaten individuals by infamy, and societies with, at least, suspension of amity, for daring to be more obedient to government than themselves, is a degree of insolence which not only deserves to be punished, but of which the punishment is loudly demanded by the order of life and the peace of nations.

Yet there have risen up, in the face of the publick, men who, by whatever corruptions, or whatever infatuation, have undertaken to defend the Americans, endeavour to shelter them from resentment, and propose reconciliation without submission.

As political diseases are naturally contagious, let it be supposed, for a moment, that Cornwall, seized with the Philadelphian phrensy, may resolve to separate itself from the general system of the English constitution, and judge of its own rights in its own parliament. A congress might then meet at Truro, and address the other counties in a style not unlike the language of the American patriots:

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-SUBJECTS,—We, the delegates of the several towns and parishes of Cornwall, assembled to deliberate upon our own state, and that of our constituents, having, after serious debate and calm consideration, settled the scheme of our future conduct, hold it necessary to declare the resolutions which we think ourselves entitled to form, by the unalienable rights of reasonable beings, and into which we have been compelled by grievances and oppressions, long endured by us in patient silence, not because we did not feel, or could not remove them, but because we were unwilling to give disturbance to a settled government, and hoped that others would, in time, find, like ourselves, their true interest and their original powers, and all cooperate to universal happiness.

"But since, having long indulged the pleasing expectation, we find general discontent not likely to increase, or not likely to end in general defection, we resolve to erect alone the standard of liberty.

"Know then, that you are no longer to consider Cornwall as an English county, visited by English judges, receiving law from an English parliament, or included in any general taxation of the kingdom; but as a state, distinct and independent, governed by its own institutions, administered by its own magistrates, and exempt from any tax or tribute, but such as we shall impose upon ourselves.

"We are the acknowledged descendants of the earliest inhabitants of Britain, of men, who, before the time of history, took possession of the island desolate and waste, and, therefore, open to the first occupants. Of this descent, our language is a sufficient proof, which, not quite a century ago, was different from yours.

"Such are the Cornishmen; but who are you? who, but the unauthorised and lawless children of intruders, invaders, and oppressors? who, but the transmitters of wrong, the inheritors of robbery? In claiming independence, we claim but little. We might require you to depart from a land which you possess by usurpation, and to restore all that you have taken from us.

"Independence is the gift of nature. No man is born the master of another. Every Cornishman is a freeman; for we have never resigned the rights of humanity; and he only can be thought free, who is not governed but by his own consent.

"You may urge, that the present system of government has descended through many ages, and that we have a larger part in the representation of the kingdom than any other county.

"All this is true, but it is neither cogent nor persuasive. We look to the original of things. Our union with the English counties was either compelled by force, or settled by compact.

"That which was made by violence, may by violence be broken. If we were treated as a conquered people, our rights might be obscured, but could never be extinguished. The sword can give nothing but power, which a sharper sword can take away.

"If our union was by compact, whom could the compact bind, but those that concurred in the stipulations? We gave our ancestors no commission to settle the terms of future existence. They might be cowards that were frightened, or blockheads that were cheated; but, whatever they were, they could contract only for themselves. What they could establish, we can annul.

"Against our present form of government, it shall stand in the place of all argument, that we do not like it. While we are governed as we do not like, where is our liberty? We do not like taxes, we will, therefore, not be taxed: we do not like your laws, and will not obey them.

"The taxes laid by our representatives, are laid, you tell us, by our own consent; but we will no longer consent to be represented. Our number of legislators was originally a burden, and ought to have been refused; it is now considered as a disproportionate advantage; who, then, will complain if we resign it?

"We shall form a senate of our own, under a president whom the king shall nominate, but whose authority we will limit, by adjusting his salary to his merit. We will not withhold a proper share of contribution to the necessary expense of lawful government, but we will decide for ourselves what share is proper, what expense is necessary, and what government is lawful.

"Till our counsel is proclaimed independent and unaccountable, we will, after the tenth day of September, keep our tin in our own hands: you can be supplied from no other place, and must, therefore, comply, or be poisoned with the copper of your own kitchens.

"If any Cornishman shall refuse his name to this just and laudable association, he shall be tumbled from St. Michael's mount, or buried alive in a tin-mine; and if any emissary shall be found seducing Cornishmen to their former state, he shall be smeared with tar, and rolled in feathers, and chased with dogs out of our dominions.

"From the Cornish congress at Truro."

Of this memorial what could be said, but that it was written in jest, or written by a madman? Yet I know not whether the warmest admirers of Pennsylvania eloquence, can find any argument in the addresses of the congress, that is not, with greater strength, urged by the Cornishman.

The argument of the irregular troops of controversy, stripped of its colours, and turned out naked to the view, is no more than this. Liberty is the birthright of man, and where obedience is compelled, there is no liberty. The answer is equally simple. Government is necessary to man, and where obedience is not compelled, there is no government.

If the subject refuses to obey, it is the duty of authority to use compulsion. Society cannot subsist but by the power, first of making laws, and then of enforcing them.

To one of the threats hissed out by the congress, I have put nothing similar into the Cornish proclamation; because it is too wild for folly, and too foolish for madness. If we do not withhold our king and his parliament from taxing them, they will cross the Atlantick and enslave us.

How they will come, they have not told us; perhaps they will take wing, and light upon our coasts. When the cranes thus begin to flutter, it is time for pygmies to keep their eyes about them. The great orator observes, that they will be very fit, after they have been taxed, to impose chains upon us. If they are so fit as their friend describes them, and so willing as they describe themselves, let us increase our army, and double our militia.

It has been, of late, a very general practice to talk of slavery among those who are setting at defiance every power that keeps the world in order. If the learned author of the Reflections on Learning has rightly observed, that no man ever could give law to language, it will be vain to prohibit the use of the word slavery; but I could wish it more discreetly uttered: it is driven, at one time, too hard into our ears by the loud hurricane of Pennsylvanian eloquence, and, at another, glides too cold into our hearts by the soft conveyance of a female patriot, bewailing the miseries of her friends and fellow-citizens.

Such has been the progress of sedition, that those who, a few years ago, disputed only our right of laying taxes, now question the validity of every act of legislation. They consider themselves as emancipated from obedience, and as being no longer the subjects of the British crown. They leave us no choice, but of yielding or conquering, of resigning our dominion or maintaining it by force.

From force many endeavours have been used, either to dissuade, or to deter us. Sometimes the merit of the Americans is exalted, and sometimes their sufferings are aggravated. We are told of their contributions to the last war; a war incited by their outcries, and continued for their protection; a war by which none but themselves were gainers. All that they can boast is, that they did something for themselves, and did not wholly stand inactive, while the sons of Britain were fighting in their cause.

If we cannot admire, we are called to pity them; to pity those that show no regard to their mother-country; have obeyed no law, which they could violate; have imparted no good, which they could withhold; have entered into associations of fraud to rob their creditors; and into combinations to distress all who depended on their commerce. We are reproached with the cruelty of shutting one port, where every port is shut against us. We are censured as tyrannical, for hindering those from fishing, who have condemned our merchants to bankruptcy, and our manufacturers to hunger.

Others persuade us to give them more liberty, to take off restraints, and relax authority; and tell us what happy consequences will arise from forbearance; how their affections will be conciliated, and into what diffusions of beneficence their gratitude will luxuriate. They will love their friends. They will reverence their protectors. They will throw themselves into our arms, and lay their property at our feet; they will buy from no other what we can sell them; they will sell to no other what we wish to buy.

That any obligations should overpower their attention to profit, we have known them long enough not to expect. It is not to be expected from a more liberal people. With what

kindness they repay benefits, they are now showing us, who, as soon as we have delivered them from France, are defying and proscribing us.

But if we will permit them to tax themselves, they will give us more than we require. If we proclaim them independent, they will, during pleasure, pay us a subsidy. The contest is not now for money, but for power. The question is not, how much we shall collect, but, by what authority the collection shall be made.

Those who find that the Americans cannot be shown, in any form, that may raise love or pity, dress them in habiliments of terrour, and try to make us think them formidable. The Bostonians can call into the field ninety thousand men. While we conquer all before us, new enemies will rise up behind, and our work will be always to begin. If we take possession of the towns, the colonists will retire into the inland regions, and the gain of victory will be only empty houses, and a wide extent of waste and desolation. If we subdue them for the present, they will universally revolt in the next war, and resign us, without pity, to subjection and destruction.

To all this it may be answered, that between losing America, and resigning it, there is no great difference; that it is not very reasonable to jump into the sea, because the ship is leaky. All those evils may befall us, but we need not hasten them.

The dean of Gloucester has proposed, and seems to propose it seriously, that we should, at once, release our claims, declare them masters of themselves, and whistle them down the wind. His opinion is, that our gain from them will be the same, and our expense less. What they can have most cheaply from Britain, they will still buy; what they can sell to us at the highest price, they will still sell.

It is, however, a little hard, that, having so lately fought and conquered for their safety, we should govern them no longer. By letting them loose before the war, how many millions might have been saved. One wild proposal is best answered by another. Let us restore to the French what we have taken from them. We shall see our colonists at our feet, when they have an enemy so near them. Let us give the Indians arms, and teach them discipline, and encourage them, now and then, to plunder a plantation. Security and leisure are the parents of sedition.

While these different opinions are agitated, it seems to be determined, by the legislature, that force shall be tried. Men of the pen have seldom any great skill in conquering kingdoms, but they have strong inclination to give advice. I cannot forbear to wish, that this commotion may end without bloodshed, and that the rebels may be subdued by terrour rather than by violence; and, therefore, recommend such a force as may take away, not only the power, but the hope of resistance, and, by conquering without a battle, save many from the sword.

If their obstinacy continues, without actual hostilities, it may, perhaps, be mollified, by turning out the soldiers to free quarters, forbidding any personal cruelty or hurt. It has been proposed, that the slaves should be set free, an act, which, surely, the lovers of liberty cannot but commend. If they are furnished with firearms for defence, and utensils for husbandry, and settled in some simple form of government within the country, they may be more grateful and honest than their masters.

Far be it from any Englishman, to thirst for the blood of his fellow-subjects. Those who most deserve our resentment are, unhappily, at less distance. The Americans, when the stamp

act was first proposed, undoubtedly disliked it, as every nation dislikes an impost; but they had no thought of resisting it, till they were encouraged and incited by European intelligence, from men whom they thought their friends, but who were friends only to themselves.

On the original contrivers of mischief let an insulted nation pour out its vengeance. With whatever design they have inflamed this pernicious contest, they are, themselves, equally detestable. If they wish success to the colonies, they are traitors to this country; if they wish their defeat, they are traitors, at once, to America and England. To them, and them only, must be imputed the interruption of commerce, and the miseries of war, the sorrow of those that shall be ruined, and the blood of those that shall fall.

Since the Americans have made it necessary to subdue them, may they be subdued with the least injury possible to their persons and their possessions! When they are reduced to obedience, may that obedience be secured by stricter laws and stronger obligations!

Nothing can be more noxious to society, than that erroneous clemency, which, when a rebellion is suppressed, exacts no forfeiture, and establishes no securities, but leaves the rebels in their former state. Who would not try the experiment, which promises advantage without expense? If rebels once obtain a victory, their wishes are accomplished; if they are defeated, they suffer little, perhaps less than their conquerors; however often they play the game, the chance is always in their favour. In the mean time, they are growing rich by victualling the troops that we have sent against them, and, perhaps, gain more by the residence of the army than they lose by the obstruction of their port.

Their charters, being now, I suppose, legally forfeited, may be modelled, as shall appear most commodious to the mother-country. Thus the privileges which are found, by experience, liable to misuse, will be taken away, and those who now bellow as patriots, bluster as soldiers, and domineer as legislators, will sink into sober merchants and silent planters, peaceably diligent, and securely rich.

But there is one writer, and, perhaps, many who do not write, to whom the contraction of these pernicious privileges appears very dangerous, and who startle at the thoughts of "England free, and America in chains." Children fly from their own shadow, and rhetoricians are frightened by their own voices. Chains is, undoubtedly, a dreadful word; but, perhaps, the masters of civil wisdom may discover some gradations between chains and anarchy. Chains need not be put upon those who will be restrained without them. This contest may end in the softer phrase of English superiority and American obedience.

We are told, that the subjection of Americans may tend to the diminution of our own liberties; an event, which none but very perspicacious politicians are able to foresee. If slavery be thus fatally contagious, how is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?

But let us interrupt awhile this dream of conquest, settlement, and supremacy. Let us remember, that being to contend, according to one orator, with three millions of whigs, and, according to another, with ninety thousand patriots of Massachusetts's bay, we may possibly be checked in our career of reduction. We may be reduced to peace upon equal terms, or driven from the western continent, and forbidden to violate, a second time, the happy borders of the land of liberty. The time is now, perhaps, at hand, which sir Thomas Browne predicted, between jest and earnest:

"When America should no more send out her treasure,
But spend it at home in American pleasure."

If we are allowed, upon our defeat, to stipulate conditions, I hope the treaty of Boston will permit us to import into the confederated cantons such products as they do not raise, and such manufactures as they do not make, and cannot buy cheaper from other nations, paying, like others, the appointed customs; that, if an English ship salutes a fort with four guns, it shall be answered, at least, with two; and that, if an Englishman be inclined to hold a plantation, he shall only take an oath of allegiance to the reigning powers, and be suffered, while he lives inoffensively, to retain his own opinion of English rights, unmolested in his conscience by an oath of abjuration.