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THE WRITINGS  
OF  
THOMAS PAINE  
COLLECTED AND EDITED BY  
MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY  
VOLUME I.  
1774 - 1779

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XV.  
COMMON SENSE  
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## INTRODUCTION

PERHAPS the sentiments contained in the following pages,  
are not  
YET sufficiently fashionable to procure them general  
favor; a long  
habit of not thinking a thing WRONG, gives it a  
superficial  
appearance of being RIGHT, and raises at first a  
formidable outcry  
in defence of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time  
makes more  
converts than reason.

As a long and violent abuse of power, is generally the  
Means of  
calling the right of it in question (and in Matters too  
which might  
never have been thought of, had not the Sufferers been  
aggravated  
into the inquiry) and as the King of England hath  
undertaken in his  
OWN RIGHT, to support the Parliament in what he calls  
THEIRS, and  
as the good people of this country are grievously  
oppressed by the  
combination, they have an undoubted privilege to inquire  
into the  
pretensions of both, and equally to reject the  
usurpations of either.

In the following sheets, the author hath studiously  
avoided every  
thing which is personal among ourselves. Compliments as  
well as  
censure to individuals make no part thereof. The wise,  
and the

worthy, need not the triumph of a pamphlet; and those whose sentiments are injudicious, or unfriendly, will cease of themselves unless too much pains are bestowed upon their conversion.

The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind. Many circumstances have, and will arise, which are not local, but universal, and through which the principles of all Lovers of Mankind are affected, and in the Event of which, their Affections are interested. The laying of a Country desolate with Fire and Sword, declaring War against the natural rights of all Mankind, and extirpating the Defenders thereof from the Face of the Earth, is the Concern of every Man to whom Nature hath given the Power of feeling; of which Class, regardless of Party Censure, is  
THE AUTHOR

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Philadelphia, February 14, 1776.

OF THE ORIGIN AND DESIGN OF GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL, WITH  
CONCISE  
REMARKS ON THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION

SOME writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different, but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by wickedness; the former promotes our happiness POSITIVELY by uniting our affections, the latter NEGATIVELY by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher.

Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one; for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries BY A GOVERNMENT, which we might expect in a country WITHOUT GOVERNMENT, our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer. Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise. For were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform, and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other lawgiver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest; and this he is induced to do by the same prudence which in every other case advises him out of two evils to choose the least. WHEREFORE, security being the true design and end of government, it

unanswerably  
follows that whatever FORM thereof appears most likely to  
ensure it  
to us, with the least expence and greatest benefit, is  
preferable to  
all others.

In order to gain a clear and just idea of the design  
and end of  
government, let us suppose a small number of persons  
settled in some  
sequestered part of the earth, unconnected with the rest,  
they will  
then represent the first peopling of any country, or of  
the world. In  
this state of natural liberty, society will be their  
first thought. A  
thousand motives will excite them thereto, the strength  
of one man is  
so unequal to his wants, and his mind so unfitted for  
perpetual  
solitude, that he is soon obliged to seek assistance and  
relief of  
another, who in his turn requires the same. Four or five  
united would  
be able to raise a tolerable dwelling in the midst of a  
wilderness,  
but ONE man might labour out the common period of life  
without  
accomplishing any thing; when he had felled his timber he  
could not  
remove it, nor erect it after it was removed; hunger in  
the mean time  
would urge him from his work, and every different want  
call him a  
different way. Disease, nay even misfortune would be  
death, for  
though neither might be mortal, yet either would disable  
him from  
living, and reduce him to a state in which he might  
rather be said to  
perish than to die.

This necessity, like a gravitating power, would soon  
form our newly  
arrived emigrants into society, the reciprocal blessing  
of which,  
would supersede, and render the obligations of law and

government  
unnecessary while they remained perfectly just to each other; but as nothing but heaven is impregnable to vice, it will unavoidably happen, that in proportion as they surmount the first difficulties of emigration, which bound them together in a common cause, they will begin to relax in their duty and attachment to each other; and this remissness, will point out the necessity, of establishing some form of government to supply the defect of moral virtue.

Some convenient tree will afford them a State-House, under the branches of which, the whole colony may assemble to deliberate on public matters. It is more than probable that their first laws will have the title only of REGULATIONS, and be enforced by no other penalty than public disesteem. In this first parliament every man, by natural right, will have a seat.

But as the colony increases, the public concerns will increase likewise, and the distance at which the members may be separated, will render it too inconvenient for all of them to meet on every occasion as at first, when their number was small, their habitations near, and the public concerns few and trifling. This will point out the convenience of their consenting to leave the legislative part to be managed by a select number chosen from the whole body, who are supposed to have the same concerns at stake which those have who appointed them, and who will act in the same manner as the whole body would act were they present. If the colony continues increasing, it will become necessary to augment the number of the

representatives,  
and that the interest of every part of the colony may be  
attended to,  
it will be found best to divide the whole into convenient  
parts, each  
part sending its proper number; and that the ELECTED  
might never  
form to themselves an interest separate from the  
ELECTORS, prudence  
will point out the propriety of having elections often;  
because as  
the ELECTED might by that means return and mix again with  
the  
general body of the ELECTORS in a few months, their  
fidelity to the  
public will be secured by the prudent reflexion of not  
making a rod  
for themselves. And as this frequent interchange will  
establish a  
common interest with every part of the community, they  
will mutually  
and naturally support each other, and on this (not on the  
unmeaning  
name of king) depends the STRENGTH OF GOVERNMENT, AND THE  
HAPPINESS  
OF THE GOVERNED.

Here then is the origin and rise of government; namely,  
a mode  
rendered necessary by the inability of moral virtue to  
govern the  
world; here too is the design and end of government, viz.  
freedom and  
security. And however our eyes may be dazzled with snow,  
or our ears  
deceived by sound; however prejudice may warp our wills,  
or interest  
darken our understanding, the simple voice of nature and  
of reason  
will say, it is right.

I draw my idea of the form of government from a  
principle in  
nature, which no art can overturn, viz. that the more  
simple any  
thing is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the  
easier  
repaired when disordered; and with this maxim in view, I

offer a few  
remarks on the so much boasted constitution of England.  
That it was  
noble for the dark and slavish times in which it was  
erected, is  
granted. When the world was over run with tyranny the  
least remove  
therefrom was a glorious rescue. But that it is  
imperfect, subject to  
convulsions, and incapable of producing what it seems to  
promise, is  
easily demonstrated.

Absolute governments (tho' the disgrace of human  
nature) have this  
advantage with them, that they are simple; if the people  
suffer, they  
know the head from which their suffering springs, know  
likewise the  
remedy, and are not bewildered by a variety of causes and  
cures. But  
the constitution of England is so exceedingly complex,  
that the  
nation may suffer for years together without being able  
to discover  
in which part the fault lies, some will say in one and  
some in  
another, and every political physician will advise a  
different  
medicine.

I know it is difficult to get over local or long  
standing  
prejudices, yet if we will suffer ourselves to examine  
the component  
parts of the English constitution, we shall find them to  
be the base  
remains of two ancient tyrannies, compounded with some  
new republican  
materials.

FIRST. The remains of monarchical tyranny in the person  
of the  
king.

SECONDLY. The remains of aristocratical tyranny in the  
persons of  
the peers.

THIRDLY. The new republican materials, in the persons of the commons, on whose virtue depends the freedom of England.

The two first, by being hereditary, are independent of the people; wherefore in a CONSTITUTIONAL SENSE they contribute nothing towards the freedom of the state.

To say that the constitution of England is a UNION of three powers reciprocally CHECKING each other, is farcical, either the words have no meaning, or they are flat contradictions.

To say that the commons is a check upon the king, presupposes two things.

FIRST. That the king is not to be trusted without being looked after, or in other words, that a thirst for absolute power is the natural disease of monarchy.

SECONDLY. That the commons, by being appointed for that purpose, are either wiser or more worthy of confidence than the crown.

But as the same constitution which gives the commons a power to check the king by withholding the supplies, gives afterwards the king a power to check the commons, by empowering him to reject their other bills; it again supposes that the king is wiser than those whom it has already supposed to be wiser than him. A mere absurdity!

There is something exceedingly ridiculous in the composition of monarchy; it first excludes a man from the means of information, yet empowers him to act in cases where the highest judgment

is required.

The state of a king shuts him from the world, yet the business of a king requires him to know it thoroughly; wherefore the different parts, by unnaturally opposing and destroying each other, prove the whole character to be absurd and useless.

Some writers have explained the English constitution thus; the king, say they, is one, the people another; the peers are an house in behalf of the king; the commons in behalf of the people; but this hath all the distinctions of an house divided against itself; and though the expressions be pleasantly arranged, yet when examined they appear idle and ambiguous; and it will always happen, that the nicest construction that words are capable of, when applied to the description of some thing which either cannot exist, or is too incomprehensible to be within the compass of description, will be words of sound only, and though they may amuse the ear, they cannot inform the mind, for this explanation includes a previous question, viz. HOW CAME THE KING BY A POWER WHICH THE PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO TRUST, AND ALWAYS OBLIGED TO CHECK? Such a power could not be the gift of a wise people, neither can any power, WHICH NEEDS CHECKING, be from God; yet the provision, which the constitution makes, supposes such a power to exist.

But the provision is unequal to the task; the means either cannot or will not accomplish the end, and the whole affair is a *felo de se*; for as the greater weight will always carry up the less, and as all the wheels of a machine are put in motion by one, it only

remains to  
know which power in the constitution has the most weight,  
for that  
will govern; and though the others, or a part of them,  
may clog, or,  
as the phrase is, check the rapidity of its motion, yet  
so long as  
they cannot stop it, their endeavors will be ineffectual;  
the first  
moving power will at last have its way, and what it wants  
in speed is  
supplied by time.

That the crown is this overbearing part in the English  
constitution  
needs not be mentioned, and that it derives its whole  
consequence  
merely from being the giver of places and pensions is  
self-evident;  
wherefore, though we have been wise enough to shut and  
lock a door  
against absolute monarchy, we at the same time have been  
foolish  
enough to put the crown in possession of the key.

The prejudice of Englishmen, in favour of their own  
government by  
king, lords and commons, arises as much or more from  
national pride  
than reason. Individuals are undoubtedly safer in England  
than in  
some other countries, but the WILL of the king is as much  
the LAW  
of the land in Britain as in France, with this  
difference, that  
instead of proceeding directly from his mouth, it is  
handed to the  
people under the more formidable shape of an act of  
parliament. For  
the fate of Charles the first, hath only made kings more  
subtle--not  
more just.

Wherefore, laying aside all national pride and  
prejudice in favour  
of modes and forms, the plain truth is, that IT IS WHOLLY  
OWING TO  
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE, AND NOT TO THE

CONSTITUTION OF THE  
GOVERNMENT that the crown is not as oppressive in England  
as in  
Turkey.

An inquiry into the CONSTITUTIONAL ERRORS in the  
English form of  
government is at this time highly necessary; for as we  
are never in a  
proper condition of doing justice to others, while we  
continue under  
the influence of some leading partiality, so neither are  
we capable  
of doing it to ourselves while we remain fettered by any  
obstinate  
prejudice. And as a man, who is attached to a prostitute,  
is unfitted  
to choose or judge of a wife, so any prepossession in  
favour of a  
rotten constitution of government will disable us from  
discerning a  
good one.

#### OF MONARCHY AND HEREDITARY SUCCESSION

MANKIND being originally equals in the order of creation,  
the  
equality could only be destroyed by some subsequent  
circumstance; the  
distinctions of rich, and poor, may in a great measure be  
accounted  
for, and that without having recourse to the harsh ill  
sounding names  
of oppression and avarice. Oppression is often the  
CONSEQUENCE, but  
seldom or never the MEANS of riches; and though avarice  
will  
preserve a man from being necessarily poor, it  
generally makes him  
too timorous to be wealthy.

But there is another and greater distinction for which  
no truly  
natural or religious reason can be assigned, and that is,  
the  
distinction of men into KINGS and SUBJECTS. Male and  
female are the  
distinctions of nature, good and bad the distinctions of

heaven; but  
how a race of men came into the world so exalted above  
the rest, and  
distinguished like some new species, is worth enquiring  
into, and  
whether they are the means of happiness or of misery to  
mankind.

In the early ages of the world, according to the  
scripture  
chronology, there were no kings; the consequence of which  
was there  
were no wars; it is the pride of kings which throw  
mankind into  
confusion. Holland without a king hath enjoyed more peace  
for this  
last century than any of the monarchical governments in  
Europe.  
Antiquity favors the same remark; for the quiet and rural  
lives of  
the first patriarchs hath a happy something in them,  
which vanishes  
away when we come to the history of Jewish royalty.

Government by kings was first introduced into the world  
by the  
Heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the  
custom. It was  
the most prosperous invention the Devil ever set on foot  
for the  
promotion of idolatry. The Heathens paid divine honors to  
their  
deceased kings, and the christian world hath improved on  
the plan by  
doing the same to their living ones. How impious is the  
title of  
sacred majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his  
splendor is  
crumbling into dust!

As the exalting one man so greatly above the rest  
cannot be  
justified on the equal rights of nature, so neither can  
it be  
defended on the authority of scripture; for the will of  
the Almighty,  
as declared by Gideon and the prophet Samuel, expressly  
disapproves

of government by kings. All anti-monarchical parts of scripture have been very smoothly glossed over in monarchical governments, but they undoubtedly merit the attention of countries which have their governments yet to form. "RENDER UNTO CAESAR THE THINGS WHICH ARE CAESAR'S" is the scripture doctrine of courts, yet it is no support of monarchical government, for the Jews at that time were without a king, and in a state of vassalage to the Romans.

Near three thousand years passed away from the Mosaiic account of the creation, till the Jews under a national delusion requested a king. Till then their form of government (except in extraordinary cases, where the Almighty interposed) was a kind of republic administered by a judge and the elders of the tribes. Kings they had none, and it was held sinful to acknowledge any being under that title but the Lord of Hosts. And when a man seriously reflects on the idolatrous homage which is paid to the persons of Kings, he need not wonder, that the Almighty ever jealous of his honor, should disapprove of a form of government which so impiously invades the prerogative of heaven.

Monarchy is ranked in scripture as one of the sins of the Jews, for which a curse in reserve is denounced against them. The history of that transaction is worth attending to.

The children of Israel being oppressed by the Midianites, Gideon marched against them with a small army, and victory, thro' the divine interposition, decided in his favour. The Jews elate with success,

and attributing it to the generalship of Gideon, proposed making him a king, saying, RULE THOU OVER US, THOU AND THY SON AND THY SON'S SON. Here was temptation in its fullest extent; not a kingdom only, but an hereditary one, but Gideon in the piety of his soul replied, I WILL NOT RULE OVER YOU, NEITHER SHALL MY SON RULE OVER YOU. THE LORD SHALL RULE OVER YOU. Words need not be more explicit; Gideon doth not DECLINE the honor, but denieth their right to give it; neither doth he compliment them with invented declarations of his thanks, but in the positive stile of a prophet charges them with disaffection to their proper Sovereign, the King of heaven.

About one hundred and thirty years after this, they fell again into the same error. The hankering which the Jews had for the idolatrous customs of the Heathens, is something exceedingly unaccountable; but so it was, that laying hold of the misconduct of Samuel's two sons, who were entrusted with some secular concerns, they came in an abrupt and clamorous manner to Samuel, saying, BEHOLD THOU ART OLD, AND THY SONS WALK NOT IN THY WAYS, NOW MAKE US A KING TO JUDGE US LIKE ALL THE OTHER NATIONS. And here we cannot but observe that their motives were bad, viz. that they might be LIKE unto other nations, i. e. the Heathens, whereas their true glory laid in being as much UNLIKE them as possible. BUT THE THING DISPLEASED SAMUEL WHEN THEY SAID, GIVE US A KING TO JUDGE US; AND SAMUEL PRAYED UNTO THE LORD, AND THE LORD SAID UNTO SAMUEL, HEARKEN UNTO THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE IN ALL THAT THEY SAY UNTO THEE, FOR THEY HAVE NOT REJECTED THEE,

BUT THEY  
HAVE REJECTED ME, THAT I SHOULD NOT REIGN OVER THEM.  
ACCORDING TO  
ALL THE WORKS WHICH THEY HAVE DONE SINCE THE DAY THAT I  
BROUGHT THEM  
UP OUT OF EGYPT, EVEN UNTO THIS DAY; WHEREWITH THEY HAVE  
FORSAKEN ME  
AND SERVED OTHER GODS; SO DO THEY ALSO UNTO THEE. NOW  
THEREFORE  
HEARKEN UNTO THEIR VOICE, HOWBEIT, PROTEST SOLEMNLY UNTO  
THEM AND  
SHEW THEM THE MANNER OF THE KING THAT SHALL REIGN OVER  
THEM, I. E.  
not of any particular king, but the general manner of the  
kings of  
the earth, whom Israel was so eagerly copying after. And  
notwithstanding the great distance of time and difference  
of manners,  
the character is still in fashion. AND SAMUEL TOLD ALL  
THE WORDS OF  
THE LORD UNTO THE PEOPLE, THAT ASKED OF HIM A KING. AND  
HE SAID, THIS  
SHALL BE THE MANNER OF THE KING THAT SHALL REIGN OVER  
YOU; HE WILL  
TAKE YOUR SONS AND APPOINT THEM FOR HIMSELF, FOR HIS  
CHARIOTS, AND TO  
BE HIS HORSEMEN, AND SOME SHALL RUN BEFORE HIS CHARIOTS  
(this  
description agrees with the present mode of impressing  
men) AND HE  
WILL APPOINT HIM CAPTAINS OVER THOUSANDS AND CAPTAINS  
OVER FIFTIES,  
AND WILL SET THEM TO EAR HIS GROUND AND TO READ HIS  
HARVEST, AND TO  
MAKE HIS INSTRUMENTS OF WAR, AND INSTRUMENTS OF HIS  
CHARIOTS; AND HE  
WILL TAKE YOUR DAUGHTERS TO BE CONFECTIONARIES, AND TO BE  
COOKS AND  
TO BE BAKERS (this describes the expence and luxury as  
well as the  
oppression of kings) AND HE WILL TAKE YOUR FIELDS AND  
YOUR OLIVE  
YARDS, EVEN THE BEST OF THEM, AND GIVE THEM TO HIS  
SERVANTS; AND HE  
WILL TAKE THE TENTH OF YOUR FEED, AND OF YOUR VINEYARDS,  
AND GIVE  
THEM TO HIS OFFICERS AND TO HIS SERVANTS (by which we see  
that

bribery, corruption, and favoritism are the standing  
 vices of kings)  
 AND HE WILL TAKE THE TENTH OF YOUR MEN SERVANTS, AND YOUR  
 MAID  
 SERVANTS, AND YOUR GOODLIEST YOUNG MEN AND YOUR ASSES,  
 AND PUT THEM  
 TO HIS WORK; AND HE WILL TAKE THE TENTH OF YOUR SHEEP,  
 AND YE SHALL  
 BE HIS SERVANTS, AND YE SHALL CRY OUT IN THAT DAY BECAUSE  
 OF YOUR  
 KING WHICH YE SHALL HAVE CHOSEN, AND THE LORD WILL NOT  
 HEAR YOU IN  
 THAT DAY. This accounts for the continuation of monarchy;  
 neither do  
 the characters of the few good kings which have lived  
 since, either  
 sanctify the title, or blot out the sinfulness of the  
 origin; the  
 high encomium given of David takes no notice of him  
 OFFICIALLY AS A  
 KING, but only as a MAN after God's own heart.  
 NEVERTHELESS THE  
 PEOPLE REFUSED TO OBEY THE VOICE OF SAMUEL, AND THEY  
 SAID, NAY, BUT  
 WE WILL HAVE A KING OVER US, THAT WE MAY BE LIKE ALL THE  
 NATIONS, AND  
 THAT OUR KING MAY JUDGE US, AND GO OUT BEFORE US, AND  
 FIGHT OUR  
 BATTLES. Samuel continued to reason with them, but to no  
 purpose; he  
 set before them their ingratitude, but all would not  
 avail; and  
 seeing them fully bent on their folly, he cried out, I  
 WILL CALL  
 UNTO THE LORD, AND HE SHALL SEND THUNDER AND RAIN (which  
 then was a  
 punishment, being in the time of wheat harvest) THAT YE  
 MAY PERCEIVE  
 AND SEE THAT YOUR WICKEDNESS IS GREAT WHICH YE HAVE DONE  
 IN THE SIGHT  
 OF THE LORD, IN ASKING YOU A KING. SO SAMUEL CALLED UNTO  
 THE LORD,  
 AND THE LORD SENT THUNDER AND RAIN THAT DAY, AND ALL THE  
 PEOPLE  
 GREATLY FEARED THE LORD AND SAMUEL. AND ALL THE PEOPLE  
 SAID UNTO  
 SAMUEL, PRAY FOR THY SERVANTS UNTO THE LORD THY GOD THAT  
 WE DIE NOT,

FOR WE HAVE ADDED UNTO OUR SINS THIS EVIL, TO ASK A KING. These portions of scripture are direct and positive. They admit of no equivocal construction. That the Almighty hath here entered his protest against monarchical government is true, or the scripture is false. And a man hath good reason to believe that there is as much of king-craft, as priest-craft, in withholding the scripture from the public in Popish countries. For monarchy in every instance is the Popery of government.

To the evil of monarchy we have added that of hereditary succession; and as the first is a degradation and lessening of ourselves, so the second, claimed as a matter of right, is an insult and an imposition on posterity. For all men being originally equals, no ONE by BIRTH could have a right to set up his own family in perpetual preference to all others for ever, and though himself might deserve SOME decent degree of honors of his cotemporaries, yet his descendants might be far too unworthy to inherit them. One of the strongest NATURAL proofs of the folly of hereditary right in kings, is, that nature disapproves it, otherwise, she would not so frequently turn it into ridicule by giving mankind an ASS FOR A LION.

Secondly, as no man at first could possess any other public honors than were bestowed upon him, so the givers of those honors could have no power to give away the right of posterity, and though they might say "We choose you for OUR head," they could not, without manifest

injustice to their children, say "that your children and your children's children shall reign over OURS for ever." Because such an unwise, unjust, unnatural compact might (perhaps) in the next succession put them under the government of a rogue or a fool. Most wise men, in their private sentiments, have ever treated hereditary right with contempt; yet it is one of those evils, which when once established is not easily removed; many submit from fear, others from superstition, and the more powerful part shares with the king the plunder of the rest.

This is supposing the present race of kings in the world to have had an honorable origin; whereas it is more than probable, that could we take off the dark covering of antiquity, and trace them to their first rise, that we should find the first of them nothing better than the principal ruffian of some restless gang, whose savage manners or pre-eminence in subtlety obtained him the title of chief among plunderers; and who by increasing in power, and extending his depredations, over-awed the quiet and defenceless to purchase their safety by frequent contributions. Yet his electors could have no idea of giving hereditary right to his descendants, because such a perpetual exclusion of themselves was incompatible with the free and unrestrained principles they professed to live by. Wherefore, hereditary succession in the early ages of monarchy could not take place as a matter of claim, but as something casual or complimentary; but as few or no records were extant in those days, and traditionary

history stuffed with fables, it was very easy, after the lapse of a few generations, to trump up some superstitious tale, conveniently timed, Mahomet like, to cram hereditary right down the throats of the vulgar. Perhaps the disorders which threatened, or seemed to threaten, on the decease of a leader and the choice of a new one (for elections among ruffians could not be very orderly) induced many at first to favor hereditary pretensions; by which means it happened, as it hath happened since, that what at first was submitted to as a convenience, was afterwards claimed as a right.

England, since the conquest, hath known some few good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones; yet no man in his senses can say that their claim under William the Conqueror is a very honorable one. A French bastard landing with an armed banditti, and establishing himself king of England against the consent of the natives, is in plain terms a very paltry rascally original. It certainly hath no divinity in it. However, it is needless to spend much time in exposing the folly of hereditary right, if there are any so weak as to believe it, let them promiscuously worship the ass and lion, and welcome. I shall neither copy their humility, nor disturb their devotion.

Yet I should be glad to ask how they suppose kings came at first? The question admits but of three answers, viz. either by lot, by election, or by usurpation. If the first king was taken by lot, it establishes a precedent for the next, which excludes hereditary

succession. Saul was by lot, yet the succession was not hereditary, neither does it appear from that transaction there was any intention it ever should. If the first king of any country was by election, that likewise establishes a precedent for the next; for to say, that the RIGHT of all future generations is taken away, by the act of the first electors, in their choice not only of a king, but of a family of kings for ever, hath no parrallel in or out of scripture but the doctrine of original sin, which supposes the free will of all men lost in Adam; and from such comparison, and it will admit of no other, hereditary succession can derive no glory. For as in Adam all sinned, and as in the first electors all men obeyed; as in the one all mankind were subjected to Satan, and in the other to Sovereignty; as our innocence was lost in the first, and our authority in the last; and as both disable us from reassuming some former state and privilege, it unanswerably follows that original sin and hereditary succession are parallels. Dishonorable rank! Inglorious connexion! Yet the most subtle sophist cannot produce a juster simile.

As to usurpation, no man will be so hardy as to defend it; and that William the Conqueror was an usurper is a fact not to be contradicted. The plain truth is, that the antiquity of English monarchy will not bear looking into.

But it is not so much the absurdity as the evil of hereditary succession which concerns mankind. Did it ensure a race of good and wise men it would have the seal of divine authority, but as it opens

a door to the FOOLISH, the WICKED, and the IMPROPER, it hath in it the nature of oppression. Men who look upon themselves born to reign, and others to obey, soon grow insolent; selected from the rest of mankind their minds are early poisoned by importance; and the world they act in differs so materially from the world at large, that they have but little opportunity of knowing its true interests, and when they succeed to the government are frequently the most ignorant and unfit of any throughout the dominions.

Another evil which attends hereditary succession is, that the throne is subject to be possessed by a minor at any age; all which time the regency, acting under the cover of a king, have every opportunity and inducement to betray their trust. The same national misfortune happens, when a king worn out with age and infirmity, enters the last stage of human weakness. In both these cases the public becomes a prey to every miscreant, who can tamper successfully with the follies either of age or infancy.

The most plausible plea, which hath ever been offered in favour of hereditary succession, is, that it preserves a nation from civil wars; and were this true, it would be weighty; whereas, it is the most barefaced falsity ever imposed upon mankind. The whole history of England disowns the fact. Thirty kings and two minors have reigned in that distracted kingdom since the conquest, in which time there have been (including the Revolution) no less than eight civil wars and nineteen rebellions. Wherefore instead of making for peace, it

makes against it, and destroys the very foundation it seems to stand on.

The contest for monarchy and succession, between the houses of York and Lancaster, laid England in a scene of blood for many years. Twelve pitched battles, besides skirmishes and sieges, were fought between Henry and Edward. Twice was Henry prisoner to Edward, who in his turn was prisoner to Henry. And so uncertain is the fate of war and the temper of a nation, when nothing but personal matters are the ground of a quarrel, that Henry was taken in triumph from a prison to a palace, and Edward obliged to fly from a palace to a foreign land; yet, as sudden transitions of temper are seldom lasting, Henry in his turn was driven from the throne, and Edward recalled to succeed him. The parliament always following the strongest side.

This contest began in the reign of Henry the Sixth, and was not entirely extinguished till Henry the Seventh, in whom the families were united. Including a period of 67 years, viz. from 1422 to 1489.

In short, monarchy and succession have laid (not this or that kingdom only) but the world in blood and ashes. 'Tis a form of government which the word of God bears testimony against, and blood will attend it.

If we inquire into the business of a king, we shall find that in some countries they have none; and after sauntering away their lives without pleasure to themselves or advantage to the nation, withdraw from the scene, and leave their successors to tread the

same idle

round. In absolute monarchies the whole weight of business, civil and military, lies on the king; the children of Israel in their request for a king, urged this plea "that he may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles." But in countries where he is neither a judge nor a general, as in England, a man would be puzzled to know what is his business.

The nearer any government approaches to a republic the less business there is for a king. It is somewhat difficult to find a proper name for the government of England. Sir William Meredith calls it a republic; but in its present state it is unworthy of the name, because the corrupt influence of the crown, by having all the places in its disposal, hath so effectually swallowed up the power, and eaten out the virtue of the house of commons (the republican part in the constitution) that the government of England is nearly as monarchical as that of France or Spain. Men fall out with names without understanding them. For it is the republican and not the monarchical part of the constitution of England which Englishmen glory in, viz. the liberty of choosing an house of commons from out of their own body--and it is easy to see that when republican virtue fails, slavery ensues. Why is the constitution of England sickly, but because monarchy hath poisoned the republic, the crown hath engrossed the commons?

In England a king hath little more to do than to make war and give away places; which in plain terms, is to impoverish the

nation and  
set it together by the ears. A pretty business indeed for  
a man to be  
allowed eight hundred thousand sterling a year for, and  
worshipped  
into the bargain! Of more worth is one honest man to  
society and in  
the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever  
lived.

#### THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS

IN the following pages I offer nothing more than simple  
facts, plain  
arguments, and common sense; and have no other  
preliminaries to  
settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself  
of prejudice  
and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings  
to  
determine for themselves; that he will put ON, or rather  
that he  
will not put OFF, the true character of a man, and  
generously  
enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the  
struggle between  
England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in  
the  
controversy, from different motives, and with various  
designs; but  
all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is  
closed. Arms,  
as the last resource, decide the contest; the appeal was  
the choice  
of the king, and the continent hath accepted the  
challenge.

It hath been reported of the late Mr Pelham (who tho'  
an able  
minister was not without his faults) that on his being  
attacked in  
the house of commons, on the score, that his measures  
were only of a  
temporary kind, replied, "THEY WILL LAST MY TIME." Should  
a thought  
so fatal and unmanly possess the colonies in the present

contest, the  
name of ancestors will be remembered by future  
generations with  
detestation.

The sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis  
not the  
affair of a city, a country, a province, or a kingdom,  
but of a  
continent--of at least one eighth part of the habitable  
globe. 'Tis  
not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity  
are virtually  
involved in the contest, and will be more or less  
affected, even to  
the end of time, by the proceedings now. Now is the seed  
time of  
continental union, faith and honor. The least fracture  
now will be  
like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the  
tender rind of a  
young oak; The wound will enlarge with the tree, and  
posterity read  
it in full grown characters.

By referring the matter from argument to arms, a new  
era for  
politics is struck; a new method of thinking hath arisen.  
All plans,  
proposals, &c. prior to the nineteenth of April, 1. E. to  
the  
commencement of hostilities, are like the almanacks of  
the last year;  
which, though proper then, are superceded and useless  
now. Whatever  
was advanced by the advocates on either side of the  
question then,  
terminated in one and the same point, viz. a union with  
Great Britain; the only difference between the parties  
was the method  
of effecting it; the one proposing force, the other  
friendship; but  
it hath so far happened that the first hath failed, and  
the second  
hath withdrawn her influence.

As much hath been said of the advantages of  
reconciliation, which,

like an agreeable dream, hath passed away and left us as we were, it is but right, that we should examine the contrary side of the argument, and inquire into some of the many material injuries which these colonies sustain, and always will sustain, by being connected with, and dependant on Great Britain. To examine that connexion and dependance, on the principles of nature and common sense, to see what we have to trust to, if separated, and what we are to expect, if dependant.

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under her former connexion with Great Britain, that the same connexion is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had any thing to do with her. The commerce, by which she hath enriched herself are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed us is true, and defended the continent at our expence as well as her own is admitted, and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, viz. the sake of trade and dominion.

Alas, we have been long led away by ancient prejudices, and made large sacrifices to superstition. We have boasted the protection of Great Britain, without considering, that her motive was INTEREST not ATTACHMENT; that she did not protect us from OUR ENEMIES on OUR ACCOUNT, but from HER ENEMIES on HER OWN ACCOUNT, from those who had no quarrel with us on any OTHER ACCOUNT, and who will always be our enemies on the SAME ACCOUNT. Let Britain wave her pretensions to the continent, or the continent throw off the dependance, and we should be at peace with France and Spain were they at war with Britain. The miseries of Hanover last war ought to warn us against connexions.

It hath lately been asserted in parliament, that the colonies have no relation to each other but through the parent country, I. E. that Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, and so on for the rest, are sister colonies by the way of England; this is certainly a very round-about way of proving relationship, but it is the nearest and only true way of proving enemyship, if I may so call it. France and Spain never were, nor perhaps ever will be our enemies as AMERICANS, but as our being the SUBJECTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase PARENT or MOTHER COUNTRY hath been

jesuitically  
adopted by the king and his parasites, with a low  
papistical design  
of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of  
our minds.  
Europe, and not England, is the parent country of  
America. This new  
world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of  
civil and  
religious liberty from EVERY PART of Europe. Hither have  
they fled,  
not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the  
cruelty of  
the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the  
same tyranny  
which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their  
descendants  
still.

In this extensive quarter of the globe, we forget the  
narrow limits  
of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England)  
and carry  
our friendship on a larger scale; we claim brotherhood  
with every  
European christian, and triumph in the generosity of the  
sentiment.

It is pleasant to observe by what regular gradations we  
surmount  
the force of local prejudice, as we enlarge our  
acquaintance with the  
world. A man born in any town in England divided into  
parishes, will  
naturally associate most with his fellow parishioners  
(because their  
interests in many cases will be common) and distinguish  
him by the  
name of NEIGHBOUR; if he meet him but a few miles from  
home, he  
drops the narrow idea of a street, and salutes him by the  
name of  
TOWNSMAN; if he travel out of the county, and meet him in  
any  
other, he forgets the minor divisions of street and town,  
and calls  
him COUNTRYMAN; i. e. COUNTY-MAN; but if in their foreign  
excursions they should associate in France or any other

part of  
 EUROPE, their local remembrance would be enlarged into  
 that of  
 ENGLISHMEN. And by a just parity of reasoning, all  
 Europeans  
 meeting in America, or any other quarter of the globe,  
 are  
 COUNTRYMEN; for England, Holland, Germany, or Sweden,  
 when compared  
 with the whole, stand in the same places on the larger  
 scale, which  
 the divisions of street, town, and county do on the  
 smaller ones;  
 distinctions too limited for continental minds. Not one  
 third of the  
 inhabitants, even of this province, are of English  
 descent. Wherefore  
 I reprobate the phrase of parent or mother country  
 applied to England  
 only, as being false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous.

But admitting, that we were all of English descent,  
 what does it  
 amount to? Nothing. Britain, being now an open enemy,  
 extinguishes  
 every other name and title: And to say that  
 reconciliation is our  
 duty, is truly farcical. The first king of England, of  
 the present  
 line (William the Conqueror) was a Frenchman, and half  
 the Peers of  
 England are descendants from the same country; wherefore,  
 by the same  
 method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by  
 France.

Much hath been said of the united strength of Britain  
 and the  
 colonies, that in conjunction they might bid defiance to  
 the world.  
 But this is mere presumption; the fate of war is  
 uncertain, neither  
 do the expressions mean any thing; for this continent  
 would never  
 suffer itself to be drained of inhabitants, to support  
 the British  
 arms in either Asia, Africa, or Europe.

Besides, what have we to do with setting the world at defiance? Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe; because, it is the interest of all Europe to have America a FREE PORT. Her trade will always be a protection, and her barrenness of gold and silver secure her from invaders.

I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation, to shew, a single advantage that this continent can reap, by being connected with Great Britain. I repeat the challenge, not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for by them where we will.

But the injuries and disadvantages we sustain by that connection, are without number; and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instruct us to renounce the alliance: Because, any submission to, or dependance on Great Britain, tends directly to involve this continent in European wars and quarrels; and sets us at variance with nations, who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom, we have neither anger nor complaint. As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she never can do, while by her dependance on Britain, she is made the make-weight in the scale on British politics.

Europe is too thickly planted with kingdoms to be long

at peace,  
 and whenever a war breaks out between England and any  
 foreign power,  
 the trade of America goes to ruin, BECAUSE OF HER  
 CONNECTION WITH  
 BRITAIN. The next war may not turn out like the last, and  
 should it  
 not, the advocates for reconciliation now will be wishing  
 for  
 separation then, because, neutrality in that case, would  
 be a safer  
 convoy than a man of war. Every thing that is right or  
 natural pleads  
 for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice  
 of nature  
 cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the  
 Almighty  
 hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural  
 proof, that  
 the authority of the one, over the other, was never the  
 design of  
 Heaven. The time likewise at which the continent was  
 discovered, adds  
 weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was  
 peopled  
 increases the force of it. The reformation was preceded  
 by the  
 discovery of America, as if the Almighty graciously meant  
 to open a  
 sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home  
 should afford  
 neither friendship nor safety.

The authority of Great Britain over this continent, is  
 a form of  
 government, which sooner or later must have an end: And a  
 serious  
 mind can draw no true pleasure by looking forward, under  
 the painful  
 and positive conviction, that what he calls "the present  
 constitution" is merely temporary. As parents, we can  
 have no joy,  
 knowing that THIS GOVERNMENT is not sufficiently lasting  
 to ensure  
 any thing which we may bequeath to posterity: And by a  
 plain method  
 of argument, as we are running the next generation into  
 debt, we

ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully. In order to discover the line of our duty rightly, we should take our children in our hand, and fix our station a few years farther into life; that eminence will present a prospect, which a few present fears and prejudices conceal from our sight.

Though I would carefully avoid giving unnecessary offence, yet I am inclined to believe, that all those who espouse the doctrine of reconciliation, may be included within the following descriptions. Interested men, who are not to be trusted; weak men, who CANNOT see; prejudiced men, who WILL NOT see; and a certain set of moderate men, who think better of the European world than it deserves; and this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent, than all the other three.

It is the good fortune of many to live distant from the scene of sorrow; the evil is not sufficiently brought to THEIR doors to make THEM feel the precariousness with which all American property is possessed. But let our imaginations transport us for a few moments to Boston, that seat of wretchedness will teach us wisdom, and instruct us for ever to renounce a power in whom we can have no trust. The inhabitants of that unfortunate city, who but a few months ago were in ease and affluence, have now, no other alternative than to starve, or turn out to beg. Endangered by the fire of their friends if they continue within the city, and plundered by the

soldiery if they leave it. In their present condition they are prisoners without the hope of redemption, and in a general attack for their relief, they would be exposed to the fury of both armies.

Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offences of Britain, and, still hoping for the best, are apt to call out, "COME, COME, WE SHALL BE FRIENDS AGAIN, FOR ALL THIS." But examine the passions and feelings of mankind, Bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me, whether you can hereafter love, honour, and faithfully serve the power that hath carried fire and sword into your land? If you cannot do all these, then are you only deceiving yourselves, and by your delay bringing ruin upon posterity. Your future connection with Britain, whom you can neither love nor honour, will be forced and unnatural, and being formed only on the plan of present convenience, will in a little time fall into a relapse more wretched than the first. But if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If you have not, then are you not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and still can shake hands with the murderers, then you are unworthy of the name of husband, father, friend, or lover, and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a

sycophant.

This is not inflaming or exaggerating matters, but trying them by those feelings and affections which nature justifies, and without which, we should be incapable of discharging the social duties of life, or enjoying the felicities of it. I mean not to exhibit horror for the purpose of provoking revenge, but to awaken us from fatal and unmanly slumbers, that we may pursue determinately some fixed object. It is not in the power of Britain or of Europe to conquer America, if she do not conquer herself by DELAY and TIMIDITY. The present winter is worth an age if rightly employed, but if lost or neglected, the whole continent will partake of the misfortune; and there is no punishment which that man will not deserve, be he who, or what, or where he will, that may be the means of sacrificing a season so precious and useful.

It is repugnant to reason, to the universal order of things to all examples from former ages, to suppose, that this continent can longer remain subject to any external power. The most sanguine in Britain does not think so. The utmost stretch of human wisdom cannot, at this time, compass a plan short of separation, which can promise the continent even a year's security. Reconciliation is NOW a falacious dream. Nature hath deserted the connexion, and Art cannot supply her place. For, as Milton wisely expresses, "never can true reconciliation grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep."

Every quiet method for peace hath been ineffectual. Our prayers

have been rejected with disdain; and only tended to convince us, that nothing flatters vanity, or confirms obstinacy in Kings more than repeated petitioning--and noting hath contributed more than that very measure to make the Kings of Europe absolute: Witness Denmark and Sweden. Wherefore, since nothing but blows will do, for God's sake, let us come to a final separation, and not leave the next generation to be cutting throats, under the violated unmeaning names of parent and child.

To say, they will never attempt it again is idle and visionary, we thought so at the repeal of the stamp act, yet a year or two undeceived us; as well may we suppose that nations, which have been once defeated, will never renew the quarrel.

As to government matters, it is not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice: The business of it will soon be too weighty, and intricate, to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience, by a power, so distant from us, and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us, they cannot govern us. To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which when obtained requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness--There was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.

Small islands not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care; but there is something

very absurd, in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet, and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverses the common order of nature, it is evident they belong to different systems: England to Europe, America to itself.

I am not induced by motives of pride, party, or resentment to espouse the doctrine of separation and independance; I am clearly, positively, and conscientiously persuaded that it is the true interest of this continent to be so; that every thing short of THAT is mere patchwork, that it can afford no lasting felicity, --that it is leaving the sword to our children, and shrinking back at a time, when, a little more, a little farther, would have rendered this continent the glory of the earth.

As Britain hath not manifested the least inclination towards a compromise, we may be assured that no terms can be obtained worthy the acceptance of the continent, or any ways equal to the expense of blood and treasure we have been already put to.

The object, contended for, ought always to bear some just proportion to the expense. The removal of North, or the whole detestable junto, is a matter unworthy the millions we have expended. A temporary stoppage of trade, was an inconvenience, which would have sufficiently ballanced the repeal of all the acts complained of, had such repeals been obtained; but if the whole continent must take up arms, if every man must be a soldier, it is scarcely

worth our while  
to fight against a contemptible ministry only. Dearly,  
dearly, do we  
pay for the repeal of the acts, if that is all we fight  
for; for in a  
just estimation, it is as great a folly to pay a  
Bunker-hill price  
for law, as for land. As I have always considered the  
independancy of  
this continent, as an event, which sooner or later must  
arrive, so  
from the late rapid progress of the continent to  
maturity, the event  
could not be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of  
hostilities,  
it was not worth the while to have disputed a matter,  
which time  
would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in  
earnest;  
otherwise, it is like wasting an estate on a suit at law,  
to regulate  
the trespasses of a tenant, whose lease is just expiring.  
No man was  
a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself, before  
the fatal  
nineteenth of April 1775, but the moment the event of  
that day was  
made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen tempered  
Pharaoh of  
England for ever; and disdain the wretch, that with the  
pretended  
title of FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE, can unfeelingly hear of  
their  
slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his  
soul.

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would  
be the  
event? I answer, the ruin of the continent. And that for  
several  
reasons.

FIRST. The powers of governing still remaining in the  
hands of  
the king, he will have a negative over the whole  
legislation of this  
continent. And as he hath shewn himself such an  
inveterate enemy to

liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary  
 power; is he, or  
 is he not, a proper man to say to these colonies, "YOU  
 SHALL MAKE NO  
 LAWS BUT WHAT I PLEASE." And is there any inhabitant in  
 America so  
 ignorant, as not to know, that according to what is  
 called the  
 PRESENT CONSTITUTION, that this continent can make no  
 laws but what  
 the king gives it leave to; and is there any man so  
 unwise, as not to  
 see, that (considering what has happened) he will suffer  
 no law to be  
 made here, but such as suit HIS purpose. We may be as  
 effectually  
 enslaved by the want of laws in America, as by submitting  
 to laws  
 made for us in England. After matters are made up (as it  
 is called)  
 can there be any doubt, but the whole power of the crown  
 will be  
 exerted, to keep this continent as low and humble as  
 possible?  
 Instead of going forward we shall go backward, or be  
 perpetually  
 quarrelling or ridiculously petitioning. We are already  
 greater than  
 the king wishes us to be, and will he not hereafter  
 endeavour to make  
 us less? To bring the matter to one point. Is the power  
 who is  
 jealous of our prosperity, a proper power to govern us?  
 Whoever says  
 NO to this question is an INDEPENDANT, for independancy  
 means no  
 more, than, whether we shall make our own laws, or,  
 whether the king,  
 the greatest enemy this continent hath, or can have,  
 shall tell us,  
 "THERE SHALL BE NO LAWS BUT SUCH AS I LIKE."

But the king you will say has a negative in England;  
 the people  
 there can make no laws without his consent. In point of  
 right and  
 good order, there is something very ridiculous, that a  
 youth of

twenty-one (which hath often happened) shall say to several millions of people, older and wiser than himself, I forbid this or that act of yours to be law. But in this place I decline this sort of reply, though I will never cease to expose the absurdity of it, and only answer, that England being the King's residence, and America not so, make quite another case. The king's negative HERE is ten times more dangerous and fatal than it can be in England, for THERE he will scarcely refuse his consent to a bill for putting England into as strong a state of defence as possible, and in America he would never suffer such a bill to be passed.

America is only a secondary object in the system of British politics, England consults the good of THIS country, no farther than it answers her OWN purpose. Wherefore, her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of OURS in every case which doth not promote her advantage, or in the least interferes with it. A pretty state we should soon be in under such a second-hand government, considering what has happened! Men do not change from enemies to friends by the alteration of a name: And in order to shew that reconciliation NOW is a dangerous doctrine, I affirm, THAT IT WOULD BE POLICY IN THE KING AT THIS TIME, TO REPEAL THE ACTS FOR THE SAKE OF REINSTATING HIMSELF IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCES; in order that HE MAY ACCOMPLISH BY CRAFT AND SUBTILITY, IN THE LONG RUN, WHAT HE CANNOT DO BY FORCE AND VIOLENCE IN THE SHORT ONE. Reconciliation and ruin are nearly related.

SECONDLY. That as even the best terms, which we can

expect to  
obtain, can amount to no more than a temporary expedient,  
or a kind  
of government by guardianship, which can last no longer  
than till the  
colonies come of age, so the general face and state of  
things, in the  
interim, will be unsettled and unpromising. Emigrants of  
property  
will not choose to come to a country whose form of  
government hangs  
but by a thread, and who is every day tottering on the  
brink of  
commotion and disturbance; and numbers of the present  
inhabitants  
would lay hold of the interval, to dispose of their  
effects, and quit  
the continent.

But the most powerful of all arguments, is, that  
nothing but  
independence, i. e. a continental form of government, can  
keep the  
peace of the continent and preserve it inviolate from  
civil wars. I  
dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as  
it is more  
than probable, that it will followed by a revolt  
somewhere or other,  
the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all  
the malice  
of Britain.

Thousands are already ruined by British barbarity;  
(thousands more  
will probably suffer the same fate.) Those men have other  
feelings  
than us who have nothing suffered. All they NOW possess  
is liberty,  
what they before enjoyed is sacrificed to its service,  
and having  
nothing more to lose, they disdain submission. Besides,  
the general  
temper of the colonies, towards a British government,  
will be like  
that of a youth, who is nearly out of his time; they will  
care very  
little about her. And a government which cannot preserve

the peace,  
 is no government at all, and in that case we pay our  
 money for  
 nothing; and pray what is it that Britain can do, whose  
 power will be  
 wholly on paper, should a civil tumult break out the very  
 day after  
 reconciliation? I have heard some men say, many of whom I  
 believe  
 spoke without thinking, that they dreaded an  
 independance, fearing  
 that it would produce civil wars. It is but seldom that  
 our first  
 thoughts are truly correct, and that is the case here;  
 for there are  
 ten times more to dread from a patched up connexion than  
 from  
 independance. I make the sufferers case my own, and I  
 protest, that  
 were I driven from house and home, my property destroyed,  
 and my  
 circumstances ruined, that as a man, sensible of  
 injuries, I could  
 never relish the doctrine of reconciliation, or consider  
 myself bound  
 thereby.

The colonies have manifested such a spirit of good  
 order and  
 obedience to continental government, as is sufficient to  
 make every  
 reasonable person easy and happy on that head. No man can  
 assign the  
 least pretence for his fears, on any other grounds, that  
 such as are  
 truly childish and ridiculous, viz. that one colony will  
 be striving  
 for superiority over another.

Where there are no distinctions there can be no  
 superiority,  
 perfect equality affords no temptation. The republics of  
 Europe are  
 all (and we may say always) in peace. Holland and  
 Swisserland are  
 without wars, foreign or domestic: Monarchical  
 governments, it is  
 true, are never long at rest; the crown itself is a

temptation to  
enterprizing ruffians at HOME; and that degree of pride  
and  
insolence ever attendant on regal authority, swells into  
a rupture  
with foreign powers, in instances, where a republican  
government, by  
being formed on more natural principles, would negotiate  
the mistake.

If there is any true cause of fear respecting  
independance, it is  
because no plan is yet laid down. Men do not see their  
way  
out--Wherefore, as an opening into that business, I offer  
the  
following hints; at the same time modestly affirming,  
that I have no  
other opinion of them myself, than that they may be the  
means of  
giving rise to something better. Could the stragglings  
thoughts of  
individuals be collected, they would frequently form  
materials for  
wise and able men to improve into useful matter.

Let the assemblies be annual, with a President only.  
The  
representation more equal. Their business wholly  
domestic, and  
subject to the authority of a Continental Congress.

Let each colony be divided into six, eight, or ten,  
convenient  
districts, each district to send a proper number of  
delegates to  
Congress, so that each colony send at least thirty. The  
whole number  
in Congress will be least 390. Each Congress to sit and  
to choose  
a president by the following method. When the delegates  
are met, let  
a colony be taken from the whole thirteen colonies by  
lot, after  
which, let the whole Congress choose (by ballot) a  
president from out  
of the delegates of THAT province. In the next Congress,

Let a colony be taken by lot from twelve only, omitting that colony from which the president was taken in the former Congress, and so proceeding on till the whole thirteen shall have had their proper rotation. And in order that nothing may pass into a law but what is satisfactorily just, not less than three fifths of the Congress to be called a majority. He that will promote discord, under a government so equally formed as this, would have joined Lucifer in his revolt.

But as there is a peculiar delicacy, from whom, or in what manner, this business must first arise, and as it seems most agreeable and consistent that it should come from some intermediate body between the governed and the governors, that is, between the Congress and the people, let a CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE be held, in the following manner, and for the following purpose.

A committee of twenty-six members of Congress, viz. two for each colony. Two members for each House of Assembly, or Provincial Convention; and five representatives of the people at large, to be chosen in the capital city or town of each province, for, and in behalf of the whole province, by as many qualified voters as shall think proper to attend from all parts of the province for that purpose; or, if more convenient, the representatives may be chosen in two or three of the most populous parts thereof. In this conference, thus assembled, will be united, the two grand principles of business, KNOWLEDGE and POWER. The members of Congress, Assemblies, or

Conventions, by having had experience in national concerns, will be able and useful counsellors, and the whole, being empowered by the people, will have a truly legal authority.

The conferring members being met, let their business be to frame a CONTINENTAL CHARTER, or Charter of the United Colonies; (answering to what is called the Magna Charta of England) fixing the number and manner of choosing members of Congress, members of Assembly, with their date of sitting, and drawing the line of business and jurisdiction between them: (Always remembering, that our strength is continental, not provincial :) Securing freedom and property to all men, and above all things, the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; with such other matter as is necessary for a charter to contain. Immediately after which, the said Conference to dissolve, and the bodies which shall be chosen conformable to the said charter, to be the legislators and governors of this continent for the time being: Whose peace and happiness, may God preserve, Amen.

Should any body of men be hereafter delegated for this or some similar purpose, I offer them the following extracts from that wise observer on governments DRAGONETTI. "The science" says he "of the politician consists in fixing the true point of happiness and freedom. Those men would deserve the gratitude of ages, who should discover a mode of government that contained the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expense." "DRAGONETTI

## ON VIRTUE AND REWARDS. "

But where says some is the King of America? I'll tell you Friend,  
 he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal  
 Brute of Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in  
 earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the  
 charter; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the word  
 of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know,  
 that so far as we approve as monarchy, that in America  
 THE LAW IS  
 KING. For as in absolute governments the King is law, so in free  
 countries the law OUGHT to be King; and there ought to be no other.  
 But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown at the  
 conclusion of the ceremony be demolished, and scattered among the  
 people whose right it is.

A government of our own is our natural right: And when a man  
 seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will  
 become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer, to form a  
 constitution of our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it  
 in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and  
 chance. If we omit it now, some, [\*1] Massanello may hereafter arise,  
 who laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the  
 desperate and discontented, and by assuming to themselves the powers  
 of government, may sweep away the liberties of the continent like a  
 deluge. Should the government of America return again into the hands  
 of Britain, the tottering situation of things, will be a temptation

for some desperate adventurer to try his fortune; and in such a case, what relief can Britain give? Ere she could hear the news, the fatal business might be done; and ourselves suffering like the wretched Britons under the oppression of the Conqueror. Ye that oppose independance now, ye know not what ye do; ye are opening a door to eternal tyranny, by keeping vacant the seat of government. There are thousands, and tens of thousands, who would think it glorious to expel from the continent, that barbarous and hellish power, which hath stirred up the Indians and Negroes to destroy us, the cruelty hath a double guilt, it is dealing brutally by us, and treacherously by them.

To talk of friendship with those in whom our reason forbids us to have faith, and our affections wounded through a thousand pores instruct us to detest, is madness and folly. Every day wears out the little remains of kindred between us and them, and can there be any reason to hope, that as the relationship expires, the affection will increase, or that we shall agree better, when we have ten times more and greater concerns to quarrel over than ever?

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the

ravisher of his mistress, as the continent forgive the murders of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of his image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a casual existence were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber, and the murderer, would often escape unpunished, did not the injuries which our tempers sustain, provoke us into justice.

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose, not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia, and Africa, have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

Note 1 Thomas Anello, otherwise Massanello, a fisherman of Naples, who after spiriting up his countrymen in the public market place, against the oppression of the Spaniards, to whom the place was then subject, prompted them to revolt, and in the space of a day became king.

#### OF THE PRESENT ABILITY OF AMERICA, WITH SOME MISCELLANEOUS REFLEXIONS

I HAVE never met with a man, either in England or America, who hath not confessed his opinion, that a separation between the countries, would take place one time or other: And there is no

instance, in which we have shewn less judgment, than in endeavouring to describe, what we call, the ripeness or fitness of the Continent for independence.

As all men allow the measure, and vary only in their opinion of the time, let us, in order to remove mistakes, take a general survey of things, and endeavour, if possible, to find out the VERY time. But we need not go far, the inquiry ceases at once, for, the TIME HATH FOUND US. The general concurrence, the glorious union of all things prove the fact.

It is not in numbers, but in unity, that our great strength lies; yet our present numbers are sufficient to repel the force of all the world. The Continent hath, at this time, the largest body of armed and disciplined men of any power under Heaven; and is just arrived at that pitch of strength, in which, no single colony is able to support itself, and the whole, when united, can accomplish the matter, and either more, or, less than this, might be fatal in its effects. Our land force is already sufficient, and as to naval affairs, we cannot be insensible, that Britain would never suffer an American man of war to be built, while the continent remained in her hands. Wherefore, we should be no forwarder an hundred years hence in that branch, than we are now; but the truth is, we should be less so, because the timber of the country is every day diminishing, and that, which will remain at last, will be far off and difficult to procure.

Were the continent crowded with inhabitants, her

sufferings under  
the present circumstances would be intolerable. The more  
sea port  
towns we had, the more should we have both to defend and  
to loose.  
Our present numbers are so happily proportioned to our  
wants, that no  
man need be idle. The diminution of trade affords an  
army, and the  
necessities of an army create a new trade.

Debts we have none; and whatever we may contract on  
this account  
will serve as a glorious memento of our virtue. Can we  
but leave  
posterity with a settled form of government, an  
independant  
constitution of it's own, the purchase at any price will  
be cheap.  
But to expend millions for the sake of getting a few vile  
acts  
repealed, and routing the present ministry only, is  
unworthy the  
charge, and is using posterity with the utmost cruelty;  
because it is  
leaving them the great work to do, and a debt upon their  
backs, from  
which, they derive no advantage. Such a thought is  
unworthy a man of  
honor, and is the true characteristic of a narrow heart  
and a pedling  
politician.

The debt we may contract doth not deserve our regard if  
the work be  
but accomplished. No nation ought to be without a debt. A  
national  
debt is a national bond; and when it bears no interest,  
is in no case  
a grievance. Britain is oppressed with a debt of upwards  
of one  
hundred and forty millions sterling, for which she pays  
upwards of  
four millions interest. And as a compensation for her  
debt, she has a  
large navy; America is without a debt, and without a  
navy; yet for  
the twentieth part of the English national debt, could

have a navy as large again. The navy of England is not worth, at this time, more than three millions and an half sterling.

The first and second editions of this pamphlet were published without the following calculations, which are now given as a proof that the above estimation of the navy is a just one. SEE ENTIC'S NAVAL HISTORY, INTRO. page 56.

The charge of building a ship of each rate, and furnishing her with masts, yards, sails and rigging, together with a proportion of eight months boatswain's and carpenter's sea-stores, as calculated by Mr. Burchett, Secretary to the navy.

For a ship of a 100 guns			35,553 L.
90			29,886
80			23,638
70			17,785
60			14,197
50			10,606
40			7,558
30			5,846
20			3,710

And from hence it is easy to sum up the value, or cost rather, of the whole British navy, which in the year 1757, when it was at its greatest glory consisted of the following ships and guns.

SHIPS.		GUNS.		COST OF ONE.		COST OF ALL.
--------	--	-------	--	--------------	--	--------------

comsn10a. txt

6		100		35,553 _l . _		213,318 _l . _
12		90		29,886		358,632
12		80		23,638		283,656
43		70		17,785		746,755
35		60		14,197		496,895
40		50		10,606		424,240
45		40		7,558		340,110
58		20		3,710		215,180
85		Sloops, bombs, and fireships, one with another, at				170,000
				2,000		
				Cost		3,266,786
				Remains for guns		233,214
				Total .		3,500,000

No country on the globe is so happily situated, so internally capable of raising a fleet as America. Tar, timber, iron, and cordage are her natural produce. We need go abroad for nothing. Whereas the Dutch, who make large profits by hiring out their ships of war to the Spaniards and Portuguese, are obliged to import most of the materials they use. We ought to view the building a fleet as an article of commerce, it being the natural manufactory of this country. It is the best money we can lay out. A navy when finished is worth more than it cost. And is that nice point in national policy, in which commerce and protection are united. Let us build; if we want them not, we can

sell; and by that means replace our paper currency with ready gold and silver.

In point of manning a fleet, people in general run into great errors; it is not necessary that one fourth part should be sailor.

The Terrible privateer, Captain Death, stood the hottest engagement

of any ship last war, yet had not twenty sailors on board, though her

complement of men was upwards of two hundred. A few able and social

sailors will soon instruct a sufficient number of active landmen in

the common work of a ship. Wherefore, we never can be more capable to

begin on maritime matters than now, while our timber is standing, our

fisheries blocked up, and our sailors and shipwrights out of employ.

Men of war, of seventy and eighty guns were built forty years ago in

New England, and why not the same now? Ship-building is America's

greatest pride, and in which, she will in time excel the whole world.

The great empires of the east are mostly inland, and consequently

excluded from the possibility of rivalling her. Africa is in a state

of barbarism; and no power in Europe, hath either such an extent of

coast, or such an internal supply of materials. Where nature hath

given the one, she has withheld the other; to America only hath she

been liberal of both. The vast empire of Russia is almost shut out

from the sea; wherefore, her boundless forests, her tar, iron, and

cordage are only articles of commerce.

In point of safety, ought we to be without a fleet? We are not the

little people now, which we were sixty years ago; at that time we

might have trusted our property in the streets, or fields rather; and slept securely without locks or bolts to our doors or windows. The case now is altered, and our methods of defence, ought to improve with our increase of property. A common pirate, twelve months ago, might have come up the Delaware, and laid the city of Philadelphia under instant contribution, for what sum he pleased; and the same might have happened to other places. Nay, any daring fellow, in a brig of fourteen or sixteen guns, might have robbed the whole Continent, and carried off half a million of money. These are circumstances which demand our attention, and point out the necessity of naval protection.

Some, perhaps, will say, that after we have made it up with Britain, she will protect us. Can we be so unwise as to mean, that she shall keep a navy in our harbours for that purpose? Common sense will tell us, that the power which hath endeavoured to subdue us, is of all others, the most improper to defend us. Conquest may be effected under the pretence of friendship; and ourselves, after a long and brave resistance, be at last cheated into slavery. And if her ships are not to be admitted into our harbours, I would ask, how is she to protect us? A navy three or four thousand miles off can be of little use, and on sudden emergencies, none at all. Wherefore, if we must hereafter protect ourselves, why not do it for ourselves? Why do it for another?

The English list of ships of war, is long and formidable, but not a

tenth part of them are at any time fit for service,  
 numbers of them  
 not in being; yet their names are pompously continued in  
 the list, if  
 only a plank be left of the ship: and not a fifth part,  
 of such as  
 are fit for service, can be spared on any one station at  
 one time.  
 The East, and West Indies, Mediterranean, Africa, and  
 other parts  
 over which Britain extends her claim, make large demands  
 upon her  
 navy. From a mixture of prejudice and inattention, we  
 have contracted  
 a false notion respecting the navy of England, and have  
 talked as if  
 we should have the whole of it to encounter at once, and  
 for that  
 reason, supposed, that we must have one as large; which  
 not being  
 instantly practicable, have been made use of by a set of  
 disguised  
 Tories to discourage our beginning thereon. Nothing can  
 be farther  
 from truth than this; for if America had only a twentieth  
 part of the  
 naval force of Britain, she would be by far an over match  
 for her;  
 because, as we neither have, nor claim any foreign  
 dominion, our  
 whole force would be employed on our own coast, where we  
 should, in  
 the long run, have two to one the advantage of those who  
 had three or  
 four thousand miles to sail over, before they could  
 attack us, and  
 the same distance to return in order to refit and  
 recruit. And  
 although Britain by her fleet, hath a check over our  
 trade to Europe,  
 we have as large a one over her trade to the West Indies,  
 which, by  
 laying in the neighbourhood of the Continent, is entirely  
 at its  
 mercy.

Some method might be fallen on to keep up a naval force  
 in time of

peace, if we should not judge it necessary to support a constant navy. If premiums were to be given to merchants, to build and employ in their service, ships mounted with twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty guns, (the premiums to be in proportion to the loss of bulk to the merchants) fifty or sixty of those ships, with a few guard ships on constant duty, would keep up a sufficient navy, and that without burdening ourselves with the evil so loudly complained of in England, of suffering their fleet, in time of peace to lie rotting in the docks. To unite the sinews of commerce and defence is sound policy; for when our strength and our riches, play into each other's hand, we need fear no external enemy.

In almost every article of defence we abound. Hemp flourishes even to rankness, so that we need not want cordage. Our iron is superior to that of other countries. Our small arms equal to any in the world. Cannons we can cast at pleasure. Saltpetre and gunpowder we are every day producing. Our knowledge is hourly improving. Resolution is our inherent character, and courage hath never yet forsaken us. Wherefore, what is it that we want? Why is it that we hesitate? From Britain we can expect nothing but ruin. If she is once admitted to the government of America again, this Continent will not be worth living in. Jealousies will be always arising; insurrections will be constantly happening; and who will go forth to quell them? Who will venture his life to reduce his own countrymen to a foreign obedience? The difference between Pennsylvania and Connecticut, respecting some

unlocated lands, shews the insignificance of a British government, and fully proves, that nothing but Continental authority can regulate Continental matters.

Another reason why the present time is preferable to all others, is, that the fewer our numbers are, the more land there is yet unoccupied, which instead of being lavished by the king on his worthless dependents, may be hereafter applied, not only to the discharge of the present debt, but to the constant support of government. No nation under heaven hath such an advantage as this.

The infant state of the Colonies, as it is called, so far from being against, is an argument in favor of independance. We are sufficiently numerous, and were we more so, we might be less united. It is a matter worthy of observation, that the more a country is peopled, the smaller their armies are. In military numbers, the ancients far exceeded the moderns: and the reason is evident, for trade being the consequence of population, men become too much absorbed thereby to attend to any thing else. Commerce diminishes the spirit, both of patriotism and military defence. And history sufficiently informs us, that the bravest achievements were always accomplished in the non age of a nation. With the increase of commerce, England hath lost its spirit. The city of London, notwithstanding its numbers, submits to continued insults with the patience of a coward. The more men have to lose, the less willing are they to venture. The rich are in general slaves to fear,

and submit  
to courtly power with the trembling duplicity of a  
Spaniel.

Youth is the seed time of good habits, as well in  
nations as in  
individuals. It might be difficult, if not impossible, to  
form the  
Continent into one government half a century hence. The  
vast variety  
of interests, occasioned by an increase of trade and  
population,  
would create confusion. Colony would be against colony.  
Each being  
able might scorn each other's assistance; and while the  
proud and  
foolish gloried in their little distinctions, the wise  
would lament,  
that the union had not been formed before. Wherefore, the  
PRESENT  
TIME is the TRUE TIME for establishing it. The intimacy  
which is  
contracted in infancy, and the friendship which is formed  
in  
misfortune, are, of all others, the most lasting and  
unalterable. Our  
present union is marked with both these characters: we  
are young, and  
we have been distressed; but our concord hath withstood  
our troubles,  
and fixes a memorable era for posterity to glory in.

The present time, likewise, is that peculiar time,  
which never  
happens to a nation but once, VIZ. the time of forming  
itself into  
a government. Most nations have let slip the opportunity,  
and by that  
means have been compelled to receive laws from their  
conquerors,  
instead of making laws for themselves. First, they had a  
king, and  
then a form of government; whereas, the articles or  
charter of  
government, should be formed first, and men delegated to  
execute them  
afterwards: but from the errors of other nations, let us  
learn

wisdom, and lay hold of the present opportunity--TO BEGIN  
GOVERNMENT  
AT THE RIGHT END.

When William the Conqueror subdued England, he gave them law at the point of the sword; and until we consent, that the seat of government, in America, be legally and authoritatively occupied, we shall be in danger of having it filled by some fortunate ruffian, who may treat us in the same manner, and then, where will be our freedom? Where our property?

As to religion, I hold it to be the indispensable duty of all government, to protect all conscientious professors thereof, and I know of no other business which government hath to do therewith. Let a man throw aside that narrowness of soul, that selfishness of principle, which the niggards of all professions are so unwilling to part with, and he will be at once delivered of his fears on that head. Suspicion is the companion of mean souls, and the bane of all good society. For myself, I fully and conscientiously believe, that it is the will of the Almighty, that there should be diversity of religious opinions among us: It affords a larger field for our Christian kindness. Were we all of one way of thinking, our religious dispositions would want matter for probation; and on this liberal principle, I look on the various denominations among us, to be like children of the same family, differing only, in what is called, their Christian names.

In page [III par 47], I threw out a few thoughts on the propriety of a Continental Charter, (for I only

presume to offer  
hints, not plans) and in this place, I take the liberty  
of  
rementioning the subject, by observing, that a charter is  
to be  
understood as a bond of solemn obligation, which the  
whole enters  
into, to support the right of every separate part,  
whether or  
religion, personal freedom, or property. A firm bargain  
and a right  
reckoning make long friends.

In a former page I likewise mentioned the necessity of  
a large and  
equal representation; and there is no political matter  
which more  
deserves our attention. A small number of electors, or a  
small number  
of representatives, are equally dangerous. But if the  
number of the  
representatives be not only small, but unequal, the  
danger is  
increased. As an instance of this, I mention the  
following; when the  
Associators petition was before the House of Assembly of  
Pennsylvania; twenty-eight members only were present, all  
the Bucks  
county members, being eight, voted against it, and had  
seven of the  
Chester members done the same, this whole province had  
been governed  
by two counties only, and this danger it is always  
exposed to. The  
unwarrantable stretch likewise, which that house made in  
their last  
sitting, to gain an undue authority over the Delegates of  
that  
province, ought to warn the people at large, how they  
trust power out  
of their own hands. A set of instructions for the  
Delegates were put  
together, which in point of sense and business would have  
dishonored  
a schoolboy, and after being approved by a FEW, a VERY  
FEW  
without doors, were carried into the House, and there  
passed IN

BEHALF OF THE WHOLE COLONY; whereas, did the whole colony know, with what ill-will that House hath entered on some necessary public measures, they would not hesitate a moment to think them unworthy of such a trust.

Immediate necessity makes many things convenient, which if continued would grow into oppressions. Expedience and right are different things. When the calamities of America required a consultation, there was no method so ready, or at that time so proper, as to appoint persons from the several Houses of Assembly for that purpose; and the wisdom with which they have proceeded hath preserved this continent from ruin. But as it is more than probable that we shall never be without a CONGRESS, every well wisher to good order, must own, that the mode for choosing members of that body, deserves consideration. And I put it as a question to those, who make a study of mankind, whether REPRESENTATION AND ELECTION is not too great a power for one and the same body of men to possess? When we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember, that virtue is not hereditary.

It is from our enemies that we often gain excellent maxims, and are frequently surprised into reason by their mistakes. Mr. Cornwall (one of the Lords of the Treasury) treated the petition of the New York Assembly with contempt, because THAT House, he said, consisted but of twenty-six members, which trifling number, he argued, could not with decency be put for the whole. We thank him for his involuntary

honesty. [\*Note 1]

TO CONCLUDE, however strange it may appear to some, or however unwilling they may be to think so, matters not, but many strong and striking reasons may be given, to shew, that nothing can settle our affairs so expeditiously as an open and determined declaration for independence. Some of which are,

FIRST--It is the custom of nations, when any two are at war, for some other powers, not engaged in the quarrel, to step in as mediators, and bring about the preliminaries of a peace: but while America calls herself the Subject of Great Britain, no power, however well disposed she may be, can offer her mediation. Wherefore, in our present state we may quarrel on for ever.

SECONDLY--It is unreasonable to suppose, that France or Spain will give us any kind of assistance, if we mean only, to make use of that assistance for the purpose of repairing the breach, and strengthening the connection between Britain and America; because, those powers would be sufferers by the consequences.

THIRDLY--While we profess ourselves the subjects of Britain, we must, in the eye of foreign nations, be considered as rebels. The precedent is somewhat dangerous to THEIR PEACE, for men to be in arms under the name of subjects; we, on the spot, can solve the paradox: but to unite resistance and subjection, requires an idea much too refined for the common understanding.

FOURTHLY--Were a manifesto to be published, and despatched to

foreign courts, setting forth the miseries we have endured, and the peaceable methods we have ineffectually used for redress; declaring, at the same time, that not being able, any longer, to live happily or safely under the cruel disposition of the British court, we had been driven to the necessity of breaking off all connections with her; at the same time, assuring all such courts of our peaceable disposition towards them, and of our desire of entering into trade with them: Such a memorial would produce more good effects to this Continent, than if a ship were freighted with petitions to Britain.

Under our present denomination of British subjects, we can neither be received nor heard abroad: The custom of all courts is against us, and will be so, until, by an independance, we take rank with other nations.

These proceedings may at first appear strange and difficult; but, like all other steps which we have already passed over, will in a little time become familiar and agreeable; and, until an independance is declared, the Continent will feel itself like a man who continues putting off some unpleasant business from day to day, yet knows it must be done, hates to set about it, wishes it over, and is continually haunted with the thoughts of its necessity.

Note 1 Those who would fully understand of what great consequence a large and equal representation is to a state, should read Burgh's political Dissquisitions.

SINCE the publication of the first edition of this pamphlet, or rather, on the same day on which it came out, the King's Speech made its appearance in this city. Had the spirit of prophecy directed the birth of this production, it could not have brought it forth, at a more seasonable juncture, or a more necessary time. The bloody mindedness of the one, shew the necessity of pursuing the doctrine of the other. Men read by way of revenge. And the Speech instead of terrifying, prepared a way for the manly principles of Independence.

Ceremony, and even, silence, from whatever motive they may arise, have a hurtful tendency, when they give the least degree of countenance to base and wicked performances; wherefore, if this maxim be admitted, it naturally follows, that the King's Speech, as being a piece of finished villany, deserved, and still deserves, a general execration both by the Congress and the people. Yet, as the domestic tranquillity of a nation, depends greatly, on the CHASTITY of what may properly be called NATIONAL MANNERS, it is often better, to pass some things over in silent disdain, than to make use of such new methods of dislike, as might introduce the least innovation, on that guardian of our peace and safety. And, perhaps, it is chiefly owing to this prudent delicacy, that the King's Speech, hath not, before now, suffered a public execution. The Speech if it may be called one, is nothing better than a wilful audacious libel against the truth, the common good, and the existence of mankind; and is a formal and

pompous method of offering up human sacrifices to the pride of tyrants. But this general massacre of mankind, is one of the privileges, and the certain consequence of Kings; for as nature knows them NOT, they know NOT HER, and although they are beings of our OWN creating, they know not US, and are become the gods of their creators. The Speech hath one good quality, which is, that it is not calculated to deceive, neither can we, even if we would, be deceived by it. Brutality and tyranny appear on the face of it. It leaves us at no loss: And every line convinces, even in the moment of reading, that He, who hunts the woods for prey, the naked and untutored Indian, is less a Savage than the King of Britain.

Sir John Dalrymple, the putative father of a whining jesuitical piece, fallaciously called, "THE ADDRESS OF THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND TO THE INHABITANTS OF AMERICA," hath, perhaps, from a vain supposition, that the people HERE were to be frightened at the pomp and description of a king, given, (though very unwisely on his part) the real character of the present one: "But," says this writer, "if you are inclined to pay compliments to an administration, which we do not complain of," (meaning the Marquis of Rockingham's at the repeal of the Stamp Act) "it is very unfair in you to withhold them from that prince, BY WHOSE NOD ALONE THEY WERE PERMITTED TO DO ANY THING." This is toryism with a witness! Here is idolatry even without a mask: And he who can so calmly hear, and digest such doctrine, hath forfeited his claim to rationality--an apostate from

the order of manhood; and ought to be considered--as one, who hath, not only given up the proper dignity of a man, but sunk himself beneath the rank of animals, and contemptibly crawls through the world like a worm.

However, it matters very little now, what the king of England either says or does; he hath wickedly broken through every moral and human obligation, trampled nature and conscience beneath his feet; and by a steady and constitutional spirit of insolence and cruelty, procured for himself an universal hatred. It is NOW the interest of America to provide for herself. She hath already a large and young family, whom it is more her duty to take care of, than to be granting away her property, to support a power who is become a reproach to the names of men and christians--YE, whose office it is to watch over the morals of a nation, of whatsoever sect or denomination ye are of, as well as ye, who, are more immediately the guardians of the public liberty, if ye wish to preserve your native country uncontaminated by European corruption, ye must in secret wish a separation--But leaving the moral part to private reflection, I shall chiefly confine my farther remarks to the following heads.

First, That it is the interest of America to be separated from Britain.

Secondly, Which is the easiest and most practicable plan, RECONCILIATION or INDEPENDANCE? with some occasional remarks.

In support of the first, I could, if I judged it

proper, produce  
the opinion of some of the ablest and most experienced  
men on this  
continent; and whose sentiments, on that head, are not  
yet publicly  
known. It is in reality a self-evident position: For no  
nation in a  
state of foreign dependance, limited in its commerce, and  
cramped and  
fettered in its legislative powers, can ever arrive at  
any material  
eminence. America doth not yet know what opulence is; and  
although  
the progress which she hath made stands unparalleled in  
the history  
of other nations, it is but childhood, compared with what  
she would  
be capable of arriving at, had she, as she ought to have,  
the  
legislative powers in her own hands. England is, at this  
time,  
proudly coveting what would do her no good, were she to  
accomplish  
it; and the Continent hesitating on a matter, which will  
be her final  
ruin if neglected. It is the commerce and not the  
conquest of  
America, by which England is to be benefited, and that  
would in a  
great measure continue, were the countries as independant  
of each  
other as France and Spain; because in many articles,  
neither can go  
to a better market. But it is the independance of this  
country of  
Britain or any other, which is now the main and only  
object worthy of  
contention, and which, like all other truths discovered  
by necessity,  
will appear clearer and stronger every day.

First, Because it will come to that one time or other.

Secondly, Because, the longer it is delayed the harder  
it will be  
to accomplish.

I have frequently amused myself both in public and

private  
companies, with silently remarking, the specious errors  
of those who  
speak without reflecting. And among the many which I have  
heard, the  
following seems most general, viz. that had this rupture  
happened  
forty or fifty years hence, instead of NOW, the Continent  
would  
have been more able to have shaken off the dependance. To  
which I  
reply, that our military ability AT THIS TIME, arises  
from the  
experience gained in the last war, and which in forty or  
fifty years  
time, would have been totally extinct. The Continent,  
would not, by  
that time, have had a General, or even a military officer  
left; and  
we, or those who may succeed us, would have been as  
ignorant of  
martial matters as the ancient Indians: And this single  
position,  
closely attended to, will unanswerably prove, that the  
present time  
is preferable to all others. The argument turns thus--at  
the  
conclusion of the last war, we had experience, but wanted  
numbers;  
and forty or fifty years hence, we should have numbers,  
without  
experience; wherefore, the proper point of time, must be  
some  
particular point between the two extremes, in which a  
sufficiency of  
the former remains, and a proper increase of the latter  
is obtained:  
And that point of time is the present time.

The reader will pardon this digression, as it does not  
properly  
come under the head I first set out with, and to which I  
again return  
by the following position, viz.

Should affairs be patched up with Britain, and she to  
remain the  
governing and sovereign power of America, (which, as

matters are now  
circumstanced, is giving up the point intirely) we shall  
deprive  
ourselves of the very means of sinking the debt we have,  
or may  
contract. The value of the back lands which some of the  
provinces are  
clandestinely deprived of, by the unjust extension of the  
limits of  
Canada, valued only at five pounds sterling per hundred  
acres, amount  
to upwards of twenty-five millions, Pennsylvania  
currency; and the  
quit-rents at one penny sterling per acre, to two  
millions yearly.

It is by the sale of those lands that the debt may be  
sunk, without  
burthen to any, and the quit-rent reserved thereon, will  
always  
lessen, and in time, will wholly support the yearly  
expençe of  
government. It matters not how long the debt is in  
paying, so that  
the lands when sold be applied to the discharge of it,  
and for the  
execution of which, the Congress for the time being, will  
be the  
continental trustees.

I proceed now to the second head, viz. Which is the  
easiest and  
most practicable plan, RECONCILIATION or INDEPENDANCE;  
with some  
occasional remarks.

He who takes nature for his guide is not easily beaten  
out of his  
argument, and on that ground, I answer GENERALLY THAT  
INDEPENDANCE  
BEING A SINGLE SIMPLE LINE, CONTAINED WITHIN OURSELVES;  
AND  
RECONCILIATION, A MATTER EXCEEDINGLY PERPLEXED AND  
COMPLICATED, AND  
IN WHICH, A TREACHEROUS CAPRICIOUS COURT IS TO INTERFERE,  
GIVES THE  
ANSWER WITHOUT A DOUBT.

The present state of America is truly alarming to every man who is capable of reflexion. Without law, without government, without any other mode of power than what is founded on, and granted by courtesy. Held together by an unexampled concurrence of sentiment, which, is nevertheless subject to change, and which, every secret enemy is endeavouring to dissolve. Our present condition, is, Legislation without law; wisdom without a plan; constitution without a name; and, what is strangely astonishing, perfect Independance contending for dependance. The instance is without a precedent; the case never existed before; and who can tell what may be the event? The property of no man is secure in the present unbraced system of things. The mind of the multitude is left at random, and seeing no fixed object before them, they pursue such as fancy or opinion starts. Nothing is criminal; there is no such thing as treason; wherefore, every one thinks himself at liberty to act as he pleases. The Tories dared not have assembled offensively, had they known that their lives, by that act, were forfeited to the laws of the state. A line of distinction should be drawn, between, English soldiers taken in battle, and inhabitants of America taken in arms. The first are prisoners, but the latter traitors. The one forfeits his liberty, the other his head.

Notwithstanding our wisdom, there is a visible feebleness in some of our proceedings which gives encouragement to dissensions. The Continental Belt is too loosely buckled. And if something is not done

in time, it will be too late to do any thing, and we shall fall into a state, in which, neither RECONCILIATION nor INDEPENDANCE will be practicable. The king and his worthless adherents are got at their old game of dividing the Continent, and there are not wanting among us, Printers, who will be busy spreading specious falsehoods. The artful and hypocritical letter which appeared a few months ago in two of the New York papers, and likewise in two others, is an evidence that there are men who want either judgment or honesty.

It is easy getting into holes and corners and talking of reconciliation: But do such men seriously consider, how difficult the task is, and how dangerous it may prove, should the Continent divide thereon. Do they take within their view, all the various orders of men whose situation and circumstances, as well as their own, are to be considered therein. Do they put themselves in the place of the sufferer whose ALL is ALREADY gone, and of the soldier, who hath quitted ALL for the defence of his country. If their ill judged moderation be suited to their own private situations ONLY, regardless of others, the event will convince them, that "they are reckoning without their Host."

Put us, say some, on the footing we were on in sixty-three: To which I answer, the request is not NOW in the power of Britain to comply with, neither will she propose it; but if it were, and even should be granted, I ask, as a reasonable question, By what means is such a corrupt and faithless court to be kept to its engagements?

Another parliament, nay, even the present, may hereafter repeal the obligation, on the pretence, of its being violently obtained, or unwisely granted; and in that case, Where is our redress?--No going to law with nations; cannon are the barristers of Crowns; and the sword, not of justice, but of war, decides the suit. To be on the footing of sixty-three, it is not sufficient, that the laws only be put on the same state, but, that our circumstances, likewise, be put on the same state; Our burnt and destroyed towns repaired or built up, our private losses made good, our public debts (contracted for defence) discharged; otherwise, we shall be millions worse than we were at that enviable period. Such a request, had it been complied with a year ago, would have won the heart and soul of the Continent--but now it is too late, "The Rubicon is passed."

Besides, the taking up arms, merely to enforce the repeal of a pecuniary law, seems as unwarrantable by the divine law, and as repugnant to human feelings, as the taking up arms to enforce obedience thereto. The object, on either side, doth not justify the means; for the lives of men are too valuable to be cast away on such trifles. It is the violence which is done and threatened to our persons; the destruction of our property by an armed force; the invasion of our country by fire and sword, which conscientiously qualifies the use of arms: And the instant, in which such a mode of defence became necessary, all subjection to Britain ought to have ceased; and the independancy of America, should have been considered,

as dating its era from, and published by, THE FIRST MUSKET THAT WAS FIRED AGAINST HER. This line is a line of consistency; neither drawn by caprice, nor extended by ambition; but produced by a chain of events, of which the colonies were not the authors.

I shall conclude these remarks, with the following timely and well intended hints. We ought to reflect, that there are three different ways, by which an independancy may hereafter be effected; and that ONE of those THREE, will one day or other, be the fate of America, viz. By the legal voice of the people in Congress; by a military power; or by a mob: It may not always happen that our soldiers are citizens, and the multitude a body of reasonable men; virtue, as I have already remarked, is not hereditary, neither is it perpetual. Should an independancy be brought about by the first of those means, we have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand, and a race of men, perhaps as numerous as all Europe contains, are to receive their portion of freedom from the event of a few months. The Reflexion is awful --and in this point of view, How trifling, how ridiculous, do the little, paltry cavellings, of a few weak or interested men appear, when weighed against the business of a world.

Should we neglect the present favorable and inviting period, and an Independance be hereafter effected by any other means, we

must charge  
the consequence to ourselves, or to those rather, whose  
narrow and  
prejudiced souls, are habitually opposing the measure,  
without either  
inquiring or reflecting. There are reasons to be given in  
support of  
Independence, which men should rather privately think of,  
than be  
publicly told of. We ought not now to be debating whether  
we shall be  
independent or not, but, anxious to accomplish it on a  
firm, secure,  
and honorable basis, and uneasy rather that it is not yet  
began upon.  
Every day convinces us of its necessity. Even the Tories  
(if such  
beings yet remain among us) should, of all men, be the  
most  
solicitous to promote it; for, as the appointment of  
committees at  
first, protected them from popular rage, so, a wise and  
well  
established form of government, will be the only certain  
means of  
continuing it securely to them. WHEREFORE, if they have  
not virtue  
enough to be WHIGS, they ought to have prudence enough to  
wish for  
Independence.

In short, Independence is the only BOND that can tie  
and keep us  
together. We shall then see our object, and our ears will  
be legally  
shut against the schemes of an intriguing, as well, as a  
cruel enemy.  
We shall then too, be on a proper footing, to treat with  
Britain; for  
there is reason to conclude, that the pride of that  
court, will be  
less hurt by treating with the American states for terms  
of peace,  
than with those, whom she denominates, "rebellious  
subjects," for  
terms of accommodation. It is our delaying it that  
encourages her to  
hope for conquest, and our backwardness tends only to

prolong the war. As we have, without any good effect therefrom, withheld our trade to obtain a redress of our grievances, let us NOW try the alternative, by INDEPENDANTLY redressing them ourselves, and then offering to open the trade. The mercantile and reasonable part in England, will be still with us; because, peace WITH trade, is preferable to war WITHOUT it. And if this offer be not accepted, other courts may be applied to.

On these grounds I rest the matter. And as no offer hath yet been made to refute the doctrine contained in the former editions of this pamphlet, it is a negative proof, that either the doctrine cannot be refuted, or, that the party in favour of it are too numerous to be opposed. WHEREFORE, instead of gazing at each other with suspicious or doubtful curiosity, let each of us, hold out to his neighbour the hearty hand of friendship, and unite in drawing a line, which, like an act of oblivion, shall bury in forgetfulness every former dissention. Let the names of Whig and Tory be extinct; and let none other be heard among us, than those of A GOOD CITIZEN, AN OPEN AND RESOLUTE FRIEND, AND A VIRTUOUS SUPPORTER OF THE RIGHTS OF MANKIND AND OF THE FREE AND INDEPENDANT STATES OF AMERICA.

---End of COMMON SENSE by Thomas Paine

Corrections: 55,553 replaced by 35,553

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