

ing up many abuses in one age, and the attempts to remove them in another. These infant settlements surely demanded a more simple, clear, and determinate legislation, though it were of somewhat an homelier kind; laws suited to the time, to their country, and the nature of their new way of life. Many things still subsist in the law of England, which are built upon causes and reasons that have long ago ceased; many things are in those laws suitable to England only. But the whole weight of this ill-agreeing mass, which neither we nor our fathers were well able to bear, is laid upon the shoulders of these colonies, by which a spirit of contention is raised, and arms offensive and defensive are supplied to keep up and exercise this spirit, by the intricacy and unsuitableness of the laws to their object. And thus in many of our settlements the lawyers have gathered to themselves the greatest part of the wealth of the country; men of less use in such establishments than in more settled countries, where the number of people naturally sets many apart from the occupations of husbandry, arts, or commerce. Certainly our American brethren might well have carried with them the privileges which make the glory and happiness of Englishmen, without taking them encumbered with all that load of matter, perhaps so useless at home, without doubt so extremely prejudicial in the colonies.

Laws