

L E T T E R F I R S T.

G E N T L E M E N,

IN the present alarming situation of national affairs, I consider it as a debt of public duty which I owe to you, to endeavour to lay before you some state of the public concerns, in which, as one of the most important and respectable boroughs in this kingdom, you have a most material stake depending. I am moreover personally solicitous, to take an opportunity of giving to those friends who have honored me with a parliamentary trust, an early and explicit account, of my own conduct, during the last four years; a period, which has produced such unexpected and momentous events. In this short period of four years, by much the greatest and most encreasing parts, of the British dominions are lost; The lives of many thousands of our fellow-subjects have been sacrificed; thirty or forty millions of national property have been thrown away; an hundred ships of force, and near an hundred thousand men by sea and land, are cut off from the force of this country, at a time, when a war with the House of Bourbon is brought upon us. We are come to a full and experimental conviction, of the folly and impracticability of the American war. That chapter therefore is finally closed, by the total loss of America. Here it is then, that I wish to make an appeal to my Constituents, and to explain to them, that I have in no degree been instrumental, or concurring in those measures, which have produced these misfortunes.

It is said that short accounts make long friends, for which reason it is, that I wish to discharge my mind to you now; with respect to what is past, and at the same time to advertise you, of the alarming prospect of your affairs, as being just upon the opening of a war, with the House of Bourbon joined to America. The inflexible obstinacy of an Administration, who would hear no reason, and who have secreted every information from Parliament, and the Public, till the event too fatally proclaims itself, has wasted your men and millions; has alienated your Colonies, and driven them into the arms of France; has not only brought you into a state unprepared for war, against the natural enemies, and rivals of this country, but has consumed your best resources, previous to the outset. If a minister of the House of Bourbon had dictated every measure, that has been pursued for the last four years, he could not have devised a more systematical plan, for renewing with advantage to our rivals, the antient contest between us, of national greatness and power. What various events may await us, in the renewal of this

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contest,