

which according to their estimation, are not to be held in comparison with the right of appointing governors in America, or the sign manual. I confess to you that the loss of this act of navigation, is a gloomy topic with me, whenever I stumble upon the recollection of it. I do not know whether I should say too much, if I were still farther to confess, that it is the only British interest in America, which I ever took to my heart; but it is gone, irrecoverably gone, and hath not left its fellow behind; though ministers knew not the value of it.

I give but little credit to the good will of Ministers, for the pretended relaxation of their conduct towards America; but I flatter myself with the best prospects of some national reconciliation between the two countries, from the ready and universal acquiescence of all ranks of people in this kingdom, to the system of concession and accommodation, which has been lately professed by the Ministry, and which has been sincerely patronized by the public. We are so far upon the road towards a national reconciliation, that this country has universally declared in favour of an amicable negotiation with America. But still there is one rub, which however in my opinion, appears by no means insurmountable. I mean the alliance between America and France. I will endeavour to lay before you what I conceive to be the state of the treaties between those two parties, and to distinguish such parts of those treaties, as may remain, consistently with a national reconciliation between Great Britain and America, from such other parts of them, as must necessarily be relinquished, before that reconciliation can take place. There are two treaties subsisting between them, which have been announced to the public, by the declaration of the French Court, and by publication of the American Congress, viz. a treaty of commerce, and a treaty of alliance. As to the former, the most strenuous advocate for the rights and interests of this country, is no longer entitled to make objection unless it should contain any exclusive articles. The Commissioners under the conciliatory acts, have made on the 10th of June, 1778, a formal surrender of all the beneficial interests of their country under the act of navigation, by the words "To extend every freedom to trade which our respective interests can require." The condition expressed in the proposition does not refer to any mutual, combined, or united interest, but to the *respective* interest of each party, and therefore amounts to an absolute concession. Again, in the proclamation which I have commented upon, in the former part of this letter, (bearing no date in any printed copy that I have seen, but appearing by the context to have been issued in the latter end of June, 1778) they confirm this surrender as more beneficial to our own country than "to restrain the trade of the Colonies." Here the words stand simply and unqualified by any reference whatsoever. Again, on the 26th of August, 1778, the Commissioners reciting in a declaration of that date, the extent of the offers made by themselves to the Congress, confirm this offer in the following words, viz. "To extend every freedom to trade;" generally, and without any words of construction or limitation. Therefore the surrender of the act of navigation is public, absolute, and unconditional,