

## LETTER TO THE ABBE RAYNAL.

As a competent judge of the parvoative, or, as the Abbe styles them, the *four great causes* of the revolution, he must have resided in America.

The Abbe, in saying that the several particulars he has enumerated did not exist in America, and neglecting to point out the particular period in which he means they did not exist, reduces thereby his declaration to a nullity, by taking away all meaning from the passage.

They did not exist in 1763, and they all existed before 1776; consequently, as there was a time when they did not, and another when they did exist, the *time when* constitutes the essence of the fact; and not to give it, is to withhold the only evidence, which proves the declaration right or wrong, and on which it must stand or fall. But the declaration, as it now appears, unaccompanied by time, has an effect in holding out to the world, that there was no real cause for the revolution, because it denies the existence of all those causes which are supposed to be justifiable, and which the Abbe styles energetic.

I confess myself exceedingly at a loss to find out the time to which the Abbe alludes; because, in another part of the work, in speaking of the stamp act, which was passed in 1764, he styles it "An usurpation of the Americans most precious and sacred rights." Consequently he here admits the most energetic of all causes, that is, an *usurpation of the most precious and sacred rights*, to have existed in America twelve years before the declaration of independence, and ten years before the breaking out of hostilities.

The time, therefore, in which the paragraph is true, must be antecedent to the stamp act; but as at that time there was no revolution, nor any idea of one, it consequently applies without a meaning; and as it cannot, on the Abbe's own principle, be applied to any time after the stamp act; it is therefore a wandering solitary paragraph, connected with nothing, and at variance with every thing.

The stamp act, it is true, was repealed in two years after it was passed; but it was immediately followed by one of infinitely more mischievous magnitude, I mean the declaratory act, which asserted the right, as it was styled, of the British Parliament, "to bind America in all cases whatsoever."

If, then, the stamp act was an usurpation of the Americans most precious and sacred rights, the declaratory act left them no right at all; and contained the full grown seeds of the most despotic government ever exercised in the world. It placed America not only in the lowest, but in the basest state of vassalage; because it demanded an unconditional submission in every thing, or, as the act expresses it, *in all cases whatsoever*; and what renders this act the more offensive, is, that it appears to have been passed as an act of mercy; truly, then, it may be said, that *the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel*.

All the original charters from the Crown of England, under the faith of which, the adventurers from the old world settled in the new, were by this act displaced from their foundations; because, contrary to the nature of them, which was that of a compact, they were now made subject to repeal or alteration at the mere will of one party only. The whole condition of America was thus put into the hands of the Parliament or the Ministry, without leaving to her the least right in any case whatsoever.

There is no despotism to which this iniquitous law did not extend; and though it might have been convenient, in the execution of it, to have consulted manners and habits, the principle of the act made all tyranny legal. It stood nowhere. It went to every thing. It took in with it the whole life of a man, or, if I may so express it, an eternity of circumstances. It is the nature of law to require obedience, but this demanded servitude; and the condition of an American, under the operation of it, was not that of a subject, but a vassal. Tyranny has often been established upon laws, and sometimes against it; but the history of mankind does not produce any other instance, in which it has been established by law. It is so notorious upon the face of civil government, and cannot be too much exposed, in order to be universally detested.

Methuen