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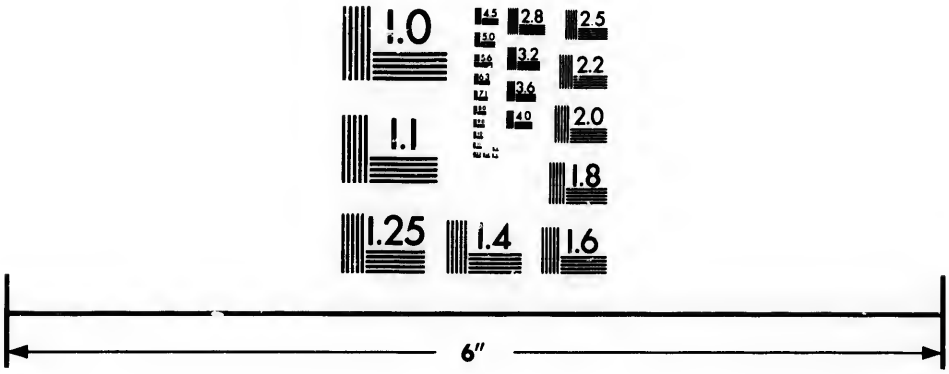

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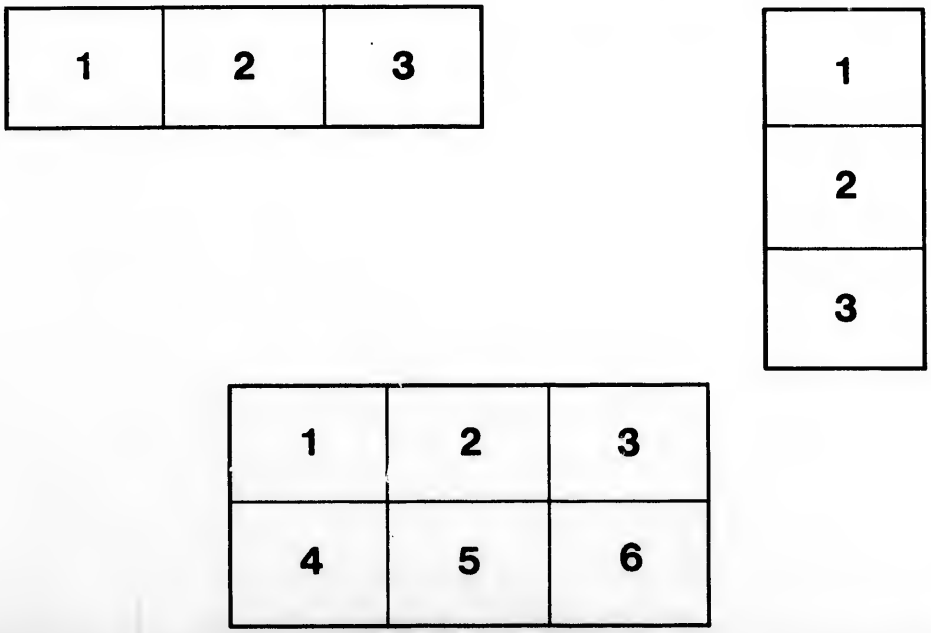

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

UNITED STATES

OF

NORTH AMERICA.

To which is added,

A Letter to the Hon. ROBERT MORRIS, Esq. with Notes and Observations.

By SILAS DEANE, Esq.

Late one of the Commissioners Plenipotentiary from the UNITED STATES, to the Court of VERSAILLES.

LONDON:

Printed for J. DEBRETT, opposite Burlington-House, Piccadilly. 1784.

ADVERTISMENT.

THE following Addreſs was ſent to America, within a few days after its date, with orders to have it publiſhed, but for reaſons, which the circumſtances, and temper of the times ſuggeſted, the publication was deferred, and I know not if it has as yet been made public in the United States; but my ſilence, on this ſubject, has been conſtrued ſo much to my diſadvantage, that I cannot in juſtice to myſelf, any longer delay that vindication of my conduct, whilſt in the ſervice of my country, which has been ſo long expected from me.

TO THE

Free and Independant Citizens

OF THE

UNITED STATES

OF

NORTH AMERICA.

Friends, and Fellow Citizens,

THE happy period being arrived, in which we may, in peace, take a review of the ſcenes through which we have paſſed, and with calmneſs and impartiality examine and judge of paſt tranſactions, I am encouraged to come forward, and to addreſs you on a ſubject of infinite importance to myſelf, and of ſo much to you, as to excuſe me from the making any previous apology on the occaſion ;—perhaps I ought rather to make one, for my having been ſo long ſilent, under the many heavy charges brought againſt me, in the public papers, in America.—Neither a want of ſufficient means to refute them, or any indif-

ference as to the opinion of my countrymen, occaſioned my ſilence; but the reflection, that during the rage and violence of war, and whilſt party prejudices, heats and jealouſies, were in their full force, it was by no means the time for a cool and diſpaſſionate diſcuſſion of any ſubject, on which, appearances had already prejudiced the minds of the public.

I therefore reſolved to wait, and to improve the firſt moment of public peace and tranquility, to appear, and to plead my cauſe at your bar; during near three years of misfortunes, and exile, I have impatiently looked for it; I now flatter myſelf that it is arrived, and in that confidence, venture to call your attention to my caſe. It is of ſome importance to you to know, if one, who formerly had your confidence to a great degree, actually betrayed, and deſerted you, and was guilty of the frauds, peculation, and treachery, with which he has been charged; or if artful, and deſigning men, inimical to him, have taken the advantage of his weakneſs, or imprudence, to charge him, with thoſe enormous crimes, to excite a general clamour againſt him, and from his ſilence, to infer, in the ſtrongeſt manner, his guilt. Though I may ſolicit your examination of the ſubject at this time, under very great diſadvantages, yet I am by no means thereby deterred, from doing it. As yet you have heard but one ſide of the queſtion, and that at a time

when

when your ſituation made you juſtly apprehenſive, and jealous of danger from every quarter, and rendered you, as it were, feelingly alive in every pore. At preſent, when we are happily freed from the alarms, and dangers of war, you will not refuſe to hear the other part, and thereby become capable of judging on the whole with certainty, and with juſtice, to the accuſer, as well as to the accuſed, which is all I aſk, or wiſh for. Unwilling to take up more of your time, than what is abſolutely neceſſary, I ſhall not, in this addreſs, recapitulate the many ſurmiſes, and inſinuations thrown out by my enemies, in the courſe of their perſecuting of me, but confine myſelf to their direct charges, all of which, are comprehended under two heads: Firſt, That I was guilty of fraud, and peculation, in the management of the public monies committed to my care; and Secondly, That after my return to France, in 1781, I wrote thoſe letters, which were intercepted, and publiſhed in New-York, from intereſted motives, and with a baſe and treacherous deſign, to injure my country, having previouſly engaged myſelf, in the intereſt of her enemies. If on an impartial examination of facts, you ſhall judge me guilty of theſe crimes, nothing that has hitherto been ſaid, or done againſt me, will be deemed unjuſt, or too ſevere; but if, on the other hand, you ſhall, from the moſt unqueſtionable facts and circumſtances, find thoſe charges to be falſe and

groundleſs, whatever weakneſs or imprudence you may find me juſtly chargeable with, you will, at leaſt, acquit me of any thing criminal, and pronounce me to be, *a man more ſinned againſt than ſinning*. My conduct in the early part of the late conteſt, and until my leaving America in April, 1776, to go for France, in the character of commercial and political agent, and commiſſioner for the United States, is too well known, to require my referring to any part of it. The charges againſt me, originate, after that period; previous to it, I had no charge of public monies.

I arrived in France in June, 1776, and acted as ſole commercial and political agent, for the United States until the month of December following, when I received a commiſſion from Congreſs, appointing Doctor Franklin, Mr. Lee, and myſelf, their joint commiſſioners plenipotentiary. And I continued to act in this laſt character, until the firſt of April, 1778, when, in obedience to the orders of Congreſs, I left Paris on my return to America, and from that period to the preſent hour, have not been entruſted with the monies of the public, or with any public employ. It therefore follows, that if frauds, peculation, and embezzlement, were practiſed, and committed by me, they muſt have been, in and during that period, that is between April, 1776, and April, 1778;—and that I muſt have committed them, in my tranſactions at

Paris,

Paris, where I conſtantly reſided. The time and place being aſcertained, the juſtice or injuſtice of this charge, will at once be ſeen, by an examination of my receipts, and diſburſements of public monies. On the 4th of March, 1778, I received a poſitive order from Congreſs, to return immediately to America, to acquaint them *with the ſtate of their affairs in Europe*; in the reſolution of Congreſs tranſmitted, and in the letter accompanying of it, this appeared to be the only motive, and object of my recall.

Though the treaties with France, had been concluded and ſigned on the 6th of February preceding, yet they had ſtill been kept ſecret, and, by agreement with the Court of France, were not to be made public in Europe, until intelligence ſhould be received of their being arrived, and publiſhed in America; but ſeveral circumſtances concurred at that time, to induce the Court of France, to change their plan, and publicly to announce to the Court of London, their having entered into treaties of commerce, and alliance with the United States, and to diſpatch with all poſſible ſecrecy, and expedition, the fleet then at Toulon to America, under the command of the Count d'Eſtaing; and the Count de Vergennes and Doctor Franklin, joined in adviſing me, to keep my recall, and my intention to return, ſecret, until the fleet ſhould ſail, in which it was propoſed that I ſhould embark.

At

At this time, moſt of the contracts for ſtores, arms, cloathing, &c. and for ſhips to tranſport them to America, were compleated; the execution of thoſe contracts had been principally under my direction, but though monies had been advanced on all of them, the accounts of the contractors, had not been brought in for ſettlement, and it was impoſſible for me, (if I literally complied with the order of Congreſs, and with the urgent requeſt of the French Miniſter, and of Dr. Franklin, to go out in the fleet;) to do any thing previouſly, towards the calling in and ſettling the public, or even my private accounts; any attempt that way, would have defeated the ſecrecy, and diſpatch enjoined me. Though nothing appeared in the order of Congreſs, or in any of their letters, which intimated the leaſt diſſatisfaction with my conduct, or any ſuſpicion of the faithful management, and application of the public monies, yet as I had, from the firſt, the misfortune, to have in Mr. Lee, one of my colleagues, a moſt jealous, and artful enemy, and ſenſible that many ill offices, had been done me in America, I was extremely deſirous to put off my return, until all the tranſactions, in which I had had any concern, for the public, ſhould be ſettled and cloſed: but finally, I ſubmitted, to the advice of Count De Vergennes, and of Doctor Franklin, and contented myſelf, with taking from Mr. Grand,

Grand, the Banker for Congrefs, an accompt of all the monies received, or paid out, on accompt of the United States, up to that time, this was all that was in my power to do; and as Mr. Grand, had mentioned in this accompt, the names of all the perfons to whom he had paid the money, and as I carried out with me, the moft honorable teftimonials *, from his moft Chriftian Majefty, from his Minifter, and from my colleague and intimate friend, Dr. Franklin, of my zeal and integrity in the fervice of my country, I had no reafon to apprehend the being cenfured for not having fettled, and brought out with me all the public accompts, and their vouchers, in detail; but on my arrival in Philadelphia, I foon found that my enemies; had been to a certain degree fuccefsful, in poifoning the minds of the public, by infinuating that I had become immenfely rich, in their fervice, and confequently, that I muft have been guilty of undue, and difhoneft practices; and though I had been fent for, exprefsly to inform Congrefs, of the ftate of their affairs in Europe, and notwithftanding the honorable characters I had fuftained, as their political and commercial Agent, and afterwards as one of their Commiffioners Plenipotentiaries, I could not obtain an audience of that body, until after fix weeks attendance and folicitation.

* See Appendix, No. 1, 2, 3.

I then

I then gave them, verbally, a faithful detail of the ſtate of their affairs in Europe, and laid before them Mr. Grand's accompt, of the receipts and payments of monies, to the time of my leaving Paris; and requeſted, that if there had been any charge, or inſinuation againſt me, for miſmanagement or neglect, that I might be informed of it, and be permitted to be heard in my defence. I was not told of any; and though Congreſs appeared no ways diſſatisfied with the account I then gave them of the ſtate of their affairs in Europe, and of my own conduct in their ſervice; and though the ſettlement of the public, as well as of my private accompts, preſſed me to return as early as early as poſſible to France, yet I could not obtain any reſolution of Congreſs, either to approve, or to diſapprove, of any part of my conduct; and though I almoſt daily ſolicited for a ſecond audience, I did not obtain one, until late in December following; I then gave them a written narrative of my tranſactions, from my leaving America, in their ſervice, until my recall and return.

Congreſs then appeared diſpoſed, to take the matter up, and to examine it, and to come to ſome determination on the ſubject; a committee was appointed to examine the ſtate of their foreign affairs, and into the conduct of their commiſſioners and agents, and for greater diſpatch, the committee

mittee were ordered to meet every evening, Saturday and Sunday evenings excepted; yet that committee never condescended, to admit me to an audience, or to ask me a single question on the subject of their enquiry; and though I had been sent for expresly to inform the Congress of the state of their affairs in Europe, yet their committee studiously evaded, the giving me an opportunity of laying before them, any information on the subject, or of explaining any part of my own conduct whilst in their service. During more than fourteen months attendance in Philadelphia, I obtained but two audiences from Congress, and none from their committee, whose proceedings and report (if indeed they made any) were kept secret from me.—In December, 1778, having waited five months in Philadelphia, almost daily soliciting Congress to examine my transactions whilst in their service, I found that a party, determined on my ruin, had sufficient interest to prevent all examination, and to bear me down, by the most mortifying delay, and neglect; I therefore resolved to lay my case before my countrymen, and fellow-citizens, but on my first address, Congress resolved to give me an audience, and afterwards appointed a committee, as I have before mentioned.—As I then flattered myself, that Congress had resolved to examine into the state of their foreign affairs,

 and

and of thoſe tranſactions in which I had been a principal actor, and to come to ſome determination on the ſubject, I could not conſider myſelf at liberty to proceed, in publiſhing the ſtate of my caſe; in the mean time I was attacked, and abuſed, in the moſt baſe and outrageous manner, in the public papers. I made no reply to the many calumnies, and falſehoods publiſhed by a noted ſcribbler, and by his aſſociates, and patrons, but earneſtly requeſted of Congreſs, and their committee, to grant me a hearing, and to do me juſtice; but my ſolicitations were ineffectual; though from December 1778, to Auguſt 1779, I wrote more than thirty letters to Congreſs, humbly petitioning for a public examination, and trial, yet they never condeſcended to take the leaſt notice, of my requeſts. In private converſation with the members, I was told, that the only difficulty lay in my accounts not being ſettled. To obviate this, I returned to France, on aſſurances from Congreſs, that they had appointed, and empowered a gentleman in France, to audit, and ſettle all their public accounts; but on my arrival in France, in July, 1780, and application to him, I found that his power was ſo limitted, that he declined acting under it. I wrote immediately to Congreſs, ſoliciting for more ample powers to him, or to ſome other perſon, and ſet myſelf to put not only my accounts, but thoſe of my colleagues,

and

and of every one, with whom I had transacted any business on account of the public, in a state for being audited, and settled; and I passed more than twelve months at Paris, at a heavy expence, flattering myself, that as Congress had made no objection whatever, to any part of my conduct in their service, except my not having settled my accounts, and as my enemies, both in Congress and out of it, professed to believe that I was a defaulter, they would not, after the prodigious expence of time, and money, which I had been put to, delay the appointment of an auditor to examine my accounts, and to ascertain the only point in question with regard to me; but I heard nothing on the subject, until November, 1781, when I received a resolve of Congress, informing me, that by the appointment of a consul, provision was made for the settlement of my accounts; but in a few days after, I met with Mr. Barclay, the consul, who, to my extreme surprize, and disappointment, assured me, that he had no instructions on the subject; and a few days after, this I had the mortification of learning, that my letters of May, and June preceding, had been intercepted, and published at New-York, and that the most unfavourable construction had been put upon them, both in America and in France. This placedme in such a situation, as I believe, but few men have ever been so unfortunate as to experi-

ence. Proſcribed in my own country and in France, and obnoxious to this government, I ſubmitted to a tedious exile in Flanders, where I remained, until the treaty of peace was concluded; but, in the mean time, I tranſmitted my accounts to Congreſs, and ſolicited a ſettlement and the payment of the balance due to me: I alſo ſent duplicates of them to Dr. Franklin. It is now more than eighteen months, ſince Congreſs have been in poſſeſſion of my accounts; it is more than five years, ſince I had either the money, or any employment for the public, entruſted to my management.

Is it poſſible, that any fraud or embezzlement committed by me ſhould remain undetected? had I been guilty of any, would not my enemies, with all the particulars of my accounts in their power, have pointed them out and publiſhed them, inſtead of charging me generally with being a defaulter for unaccounted millions?

In March, 1778, Doctor Franklin aſſured Congreſs, that he had been an eye witneſs of my conduct in France, whilſt his colleague, and that I had acted the part, of *an able, active, and faithful miniſter, and to his knowledge had, in various ways, rendered great and important ſervice to my country.* * In December, 1782, almoſt five years after, when,

* Appendix, No. 4.

when, from our difference in political principles, he was no way prejudiced in my favour, and when, had I been guilty of fraud, or embezzlement, it was impossible but that it must have come to his knowledge, he certified, that he had *never known, or suspected any cause to charge me with any want of probity, in any purchase, or bargain whatever, made by me, for the use or account of the United States.* To charge me with being a defaulter, and with having defrauded my country of large sums of money, and at the same time to evade an examination and settlement of my accounts, by which only the justice or injustice of the charge could be ascertained, is a conduct which needs no comment, nor do I fear to rest my cause on it, and on the testimony, and certificate of Doctor Franklin; but clear and convincing as these proofs are of my innocence, I have a sufficiency of others, independent of the testimonies, or certificates of any man, or of the conduct of any set of men, whether friendly, or inimical to me.

In January, 1776, I contracted with the commercial committee of Congress to make a voyage to France, and to purchase for the public, goods to the amount of forty thousand pounds sterling. They engaged to furnish me with that sum in cash or good bills, and to allow me a five *per cent.* commission on the purchase. At the same time, the secret committee appointed me the commer-

cial

cial and political agent for the United States in Europe*, and directed me to purchase for them one hundred pieces of brass cannon, and arms, and cloathing for twenty-five thousand men, and ammunition in proportion, and to procure ships, in Europe, to transport the whole to America; on these purchases, they also stipulated to give me five *per cent.* commission, and to make me a reasonable and adequate allowance for any political services I might render my country in France. When we reflect on the situation of our affairs at that period, it must be acknowledged that no man was ever charged with a more important commission, and when the circumstance of my being ignorant of the language, as well as of the manners and politics of the country, in which I was to execute it; without friend or patron to advise, to countenance, or to introduce me, and without that best of all patrons, and supporters, a fund adequate to the purpose; when these are taken into consideration, it must also be allowed, that no commission of this nature was ever attended with more difficulties, and embarrasments. I left Philadelphia in the month of March, 1776, in a brig bound to Bourdeaux; and such was the situation of our affairs at that time, that she sailed with ballast only, on account of the want of

* Appendix, No. 5.

of any thing to make remittances with in a cargo. An accident at ſea obliged her to return, and I reimbarked in a ſloop bound to Bermuda. The funds put into my hands, to enable me to execute my commiſſion, and to make the above-mentioned purchaſes, to the value of nearly 300,000l. ſterling, amounted to little more, than three thouſand, in bills of exchange, about one third of which were proteſted, and returned; and of near five thouſand pounds afterwards remitted to me in bills, one ſmall bill, of two hundred and thirty pounds only, was accepted, and paid; and from my leaving Philadelphia, in 1776, until my return in 1778, no remittances were made of any importance to enable me to execute this important commiſſion, which I undertook to execute, more from a certainty, that foreign aid was become abſolutely neceſſary, and that it muſt be obtained, or our country muſt ſoon be obliged to give over the conteſt, and to ſubmit unconditionally to the Britiſh Parliament, than from any pecuniary or perſonal motives. On my arrival in France in June, 1776, I applied (agreeable to my inſtructions from the ſecret committee) to the Miniſter, to obtain theſe ſupplies, on which the fate of the next year's campaign, and the iſſue of the war depended, but received neither countenance, or encouragement from him, any farther than a general promiſe of perſonal protection, and

that,

that, providedmy operations, in procuring the cannon, military ſtores, &c. from individuals, and ſhipping them to America, ſhould be carried on with ſo much caution, and ſecrecy, as to give no alarm to the Britiſh Miniſters, the court of France would wink at the proceeding, but otherways they could not, as the treaties with Great Britain, and the King's ordinances, would not permit us to purchaſe and import military ſtores from France. My ſituation was extremely critical and arduous; I had in the firſt place to ſolicit a credit, from individuals, and to induce them to give it, I could not advance any part of the large capital wanted. I had not money even to defray the contingent expences, of the tranſportation of the ſtores, to the ports, at which they muſt be embarked, and I could give no other ſecurity for the articles wanted, than my letter of inſtructions from the ſecret committee, authoriſing me to make thoſe purchaſes, and their general promiſe, in behalf of Congreſs, that the ſame ſhould be paid for; but after I had obtained a credit, a ſtill greater obſtacle preſented itſelf, for it was impoſſible to purchaſe a large train of artillery, and arms, cloathing, tents, and military ſtores for an army of twenty-five thouſand men, and to tranſport the whole to the ſea-ports, and embark them for America in ſuch a ſecret, and private manner, as to elude the vigilance of the Britiſh Miniſter at the

Court

Court of Verſailles, who, from my firſt arrival in Paris, could have been at no loſs to conclude what the main object of my errand was.—In the month of July I obtained a credit for the whole of the ſtores wanted, and for the charter of ſhips to tranſport them to America; and apprehenſive that ſome part of them might be intercepted on their paſſage, I ventured to exceed the orders given me, and inſtead of one hundred, I purchaſed upwards of two hundred pieces of braſs cannon, and mortars, and arms, cloathing, and ſtores, for thirty thouſand men, though my inſtructions were but for twenty-five thouſand.—Beſides theſe purchaſes, for which I obtained a credit for twelve months, and a promiſe of a longer term on intereſt, I purchaſed other ſtores, ſuch as powder, ſaltpetre, &c. to the amount of about fifteen thouſand pounds, on three months credit: and relying on remittances, being on the way to me, I gave my notes, and bills for the money.—The cannon, arms, &c. were purchaſed in different parts of France, a great part of the cannon were to be tranſported upwards of two hundred miles, part of the way by land, to the ſea ports; this could not be done ſecretly, and the tranſportation of ſuch a quantity of cannon, and military ſtores, at a time when France was in profound peace, neceſſarily excited inquiries, and no one could remain at a loſs, as to their deſtination;—the conſequence was, that

the British minister remonstrated, and orders were issued to suspend our operations; in a few days, permission was privately obtained to proceed; fresh alarms were given, and repeated counter orders issued; whenever news unfavourable to us arrived from America, or the British Minister remonstrated in a high tone, all my operations were instantly suspended; a few anecdotes, and extracts of letters favourable to us, (whether authentic or not) with proper management, and a judicious application of douceurs, set the affair again in motion; and these permissions, and counter orders, succeeded each other every few weeks, and frequently oftener, until the stores were embarked; nor did the court quit this fluctuating mode of conduct, or give the least encouragement, of finally acting decisively in our favour, until the news of the surrender of General Burgoyne's army, arrived in France;—in a word, our success or misfortunes, and the remonstrances of the British Minister, gave the tone, and stile of the French Ministers, from my arrival in France, to the receipt of the above-mentioned intelligence, and even until the signing of the treaties of the 6th of February, 1778.—It would require a volume, to give but a general history of these manœuvres, and of the embarrassments, and expences which attended them; unfortunately for me, as well as for the creditor of those supplies, a great part of the ex-

pences

pences were of ſuch a nature, that no vouchers can ever be produced for them.—When it was known, that orders were going to be iſſued, to ſuſpend the tranſportation, or the embarkation of the cannon and ſtores, or to forbid the ſhips loaded, or loading with them, from ſailing the doceurs given to delay ſuch orders, or the execution of them, for a few days, or for a few hours only; as was ſometimes the caſe;—the extra ſums given to waggoners, to boatmen and others to exert themſelves on ſuch occaſions, can never be ſupported by vouchers. What I have already ſaid, is ſufficient to give a general idea of my ſituation at that time, and of the obſtacles and embarraſſments which I had to encounter with;—and it is well known, that I ſo far ſurmounted them, as to have upwards of two hundred pieces of braſs cannon, and mortars, with thirty thouſand fuſils, with ammunition, cloathing and tents for an army of thirty thouſand men at the ports, and ready to be embarked, and ſhips to receive them, in the month of November, within the ſhort ſpace of ſix months after my arrival in France.—It ought to be equally well known, that after the moſt poſitive orders were given by the Court, forbidding the embarkation of them, and the ſailing of the ſhips, means were deviſed, and practiſed, ſo far to elude them, that two ſhips, the Amphitrite and Mercure, with near one hundred of the cannon,

twenty thouſand fuſils, and other ſtores, under pretence of ſailing for St. Domingo, were got to ſea, and fortunately arrived at Portſmouth, in New-Hampſhire, in April, 1777; and that when General Burgoyne capitulated at Saratoga, his army was ſurrounded by men, armed with thoſe fuſils, and ſupported by that train of artillery, purchaſed and ſent out, as I have already mentioned; and as that event alone, brought France to conclude a treaty with us, and enter into a war with England, the purchaſe, and ſending out thoſe cannon, arms, and ſtores, in a great degree decided the fate, or the independance of the United States.—To ſhew that I do not over-rate the importance of theſe ſupplies, or my ſervice in procuring of them, I muſt refer to Monſ. Beaumarchais' letter of the 23d of March, 1778, to Congreſs, and to the letter from the Preſident of Congreſs to him, of the 15th of January, 1779. Monſ. Beaumarchais ſays, "*I aſſure you, that if my "zeal, my advances of money, my cargoes of ſtores and "merchandize have been of ſervice to the Honourable "Congreſs, their gratitude on this occaſion, is due to the "indefatigable pains which Mr. Deane has taken through "the whole of this tranſaction.*"

Congreſs, on the 15th of January, 1779, ſay, "*The Congreſs of the United States of America, ſen-"ſible of your exertion in their favour, preſent you with "their thanks, and aſſure you of their regard;—they*

"*lament*

" *lament the inconveniences you have ſuffered, by the great* " *advances made in ſupport of theſe States; circum-* " *ſtances have prevented a compliance with their wiſhes,* " *but they will take the moſt effectual meaſures, in their* " *power to diſcharge the debt due to you;—the liberal* " *ſentiments, and extenſive views which alone could dic-* " *tate a conduct like yours, are conſpicuous in your ac-* " *tions, and adorn your character; while with great* " *talents you ſerved your Prince, you have gained the* " *eſteem of this infant republic, and will receive the* " *merited applauſe of a new world.*" I need not remind you of the treatment, which I met with, and that Congreſs, whilſt they voted the thanks of the United States to Monſ. Beaumarchais, and declared that his ſervices, *merited the applauſe of a new world,* refuuſed me an audience, or to take any notice of my petitions to them, for an examination of my conduct, whilſt in the ſervice of my country; although they at the ſame time knew, that but for me, the meritorious ſervices, of that gentleman, would never have been performed.—Dr. Franklin arrived at Paris in December, 1776, but he brought no funds of any importance with him, from the Congreſs, and I found by his account of the ſtate of affairs in America, that I could not depend on any remittances from thence. My ſituation was extremely diſtreſſing, the ſmall ſum which I brought out with me was expended, and my notes and bills above-mentioned were within

a few

a few weeks of becoming due; in this crisis the Court of France secretly interposed, and ordered Mr. Grand to pay us 500,000 livres quarterly, during the year ensuing; and the Farmers General advanced one million of livres on a contract for tobacco. (The two millions from the Court was then said to be a free gift, and I know not, but have heard, that it has lately been charged in the accompt of France, against the United States.) By these sums I was enabled, to make good my personal engagements, and the commissioners put in a state to make further purchases of stores for our army, by advancing part of the purchase money. In the mean time, Congress, instead of making remittances, began to draw on their Commissioners for large sums, and in October, we found our funds so far exhausted, that our engagements exceeded what we could command, or depend on, by near two millions of livres. The Court was then at Fountainbleau, and, from the unfavourable accounts from America, appeared less disposed to assist us, than at any preceding period; but on my going to Fountainbleau, and informing the Minister of our situation, and that without an immediate advance of money, we could not execute the contracts we had entered into, for cloathing, &c. and must give over any further attempts to furnish our countrymen, with store for prosecuting the war, I obtained a promise from him,

that

that Mr. Grand ſhould pay us, three million of livres in the courſe of the year then enſuing, in quarterly payments; this enabled us to make good our engagements. At the time of my leaving France to return to America, the firſt quarter, or 750,000 livres had become due, and Mr. Grand had given the United States credit for that ſum, which with the ſums before-mentioned, amounted to 3,750,000 livres, which was the total of the monies, received by Mr. Grand on our account to that time, and his accounts which I gave to Congreſs in Auguſt, 1778, ſhew to whom, and on what account he paid it out; and that he paid me 69,225 livres 7s. 6d. for my private expences; I have charged Congreſs with the ſum of 100,947 livres $\frac{1}{4}$ for the whole amount of them, from my engaging in the public ſervice in January, 1776, to my return to France, in July, 1780, to ſettle the public accounts.—Mr. Arthur Lee, in his letter to Congreſs, dated June 1, 1778, ſays, "*I* "*find that the expence of living in character, cannot be* "*leſs than three thouſand pounds ſterling per annum,* "*and adds, if left to themſelves, I conceive that moſt* "*perſons will exceed that ſum*;" that is 68571 livres. I was (as Mr. Lee expreſſes it) left to myſelf, but I did not exceed that ſum. From June, 1776, to April, 1778, almoſt two years, I advanced nearly the whole of the monies paid out for the relief of priſoners; the ſum of 6406 livres 5s. 9d. only

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was paid by the banker; my charges for this department amount to 19,225 livres 7s. 10d. but in eleven months from my recal, Congreſs are charged by the Commiſſioners, with the ſum of 33,782 livres 19s. advanced to priſoners; from ſuch facts, a judgment may be formed of my œconomy, or diſſipation whilſt in the ſervice of my country.—The amount of my charges to Congreſs, excluſive of my commiſſion account, is 258,194 livres 9s. 2d. of which my expences already mentioned, amount to 100,947 livres $\frac{1}{4}$, the remainder was for my time, and diſburſements of various kinds, ſpecified in my account, long ſince before Congreſs, on this account the ballance is 175,107 livres $\frac{7}{8}$ in my favour.—Mr. William Lee made one journey to Vienna, on account of the public, and Mr. Izard who was at Paris for the education of his children, received whilſt there a commiſſion from Congreſs to the Court of Tuſcany, but never went out of Paris or quitted his family on the buſineſs of the public; the former of theſe gentlemen received 72,000 livres, and the latter 60,000 for their private expences; yet theſe men are among the loudeſt againſt me for an extravagant waſte of public money.—And permit me here, my countrymen and fellow-citizens, to requeſt, that you will examine for yourſelves, or that if your diſtance from Congreſs, will not permit you to do it, that you will demand of your delegates an account of all the

monies

monies ever remitted to me by Congreſs, or that I ever received on their accompt; by this you will be able to form a judgment, with ſufficient preciſion, if I am a defaulter for millions, as has been aſſerted by my enemies, or one of the public creditors.

But excluſive of the above ballance due to me, after accounting for all the monies, received by me, I am entitled to a commiſſion of five per cent. on goods and military ſtores purchaſed by me, to the amount of 4,756,393 livres, 17 ſols, which makes the ſum of 238,445 livres, expences of poſtage, &c. included. Theſe goods and military ſtores I purchaſed, previous to the arrival of my colleagues, in conſequence of the order given me by the ſecret committee of Congreſs, and on which I was promiſed the ſame commiſſion, as was then given to other agents and purchaſers, which was uniformly five per cent.—For the purchaſes made jointly with my colleagues, I have not charged any thing, being then in a different capacity, as joint commiſſioner plenipotentiary, with them. Thus it appears, that inſtead of being a defaulter, I am one of the public creditors, and to a large amount; and of all the public creditors, perhaps no one has ſuffered ſo much in point of intereſt, certainly no one ſo much in point of character; but of this I may take notice, on ſome future occaſion. I need not take up any more of your time at preſent on the ſubject of

my accounts, they have long ſince been before Congreſs, and to them I appeal, to juſtify the general ſtate, which I have given of my money tranſactions for the public. I have ſhewn, and it will appear from them, that from my arrival in France in June, 1776, to the December following, when joined by Doctor Franklin and Mr. Lee, I had had no money, or next to none of the public's, at any time in my hands; but, on the contrary, was at that time, in advance for my employers; and that afterwards, until my return to America, I did not receive a ſum, any way equal to my expences and diſburſements; and from that period to the preſent, I have not had any public employment. The ſecond charge againſt me is, on account of my having in May and June, 1781, wrote my opinion of our public affairs to my friends in America, and adviſed peace, and an accommodation with Great-Britain.

I confeſs that the letters publiſhed by Rivington in New-York, as mine, do not materially differ from thoſe which I actually wrote at that time and which, unfortunately for me, were intercepted; and that they contain the undiſguiſed ſentiments of my heart, on the then apparent ſituation of our affair; but I never yet heard of its being, a crime in any free ſtate, for the citizens of it to give their opinion, and advice on public affairs, and meaſures. To ſuppoſe me to have been in the intereſt of the

miniſters

miniſters of this country, and to have wrote thoſe letters to promote their views, is as abſurd as to ſuppoſe, that I amaſſed an immenſe fortune in the ſervice of my country; yet, although my well known circumſtances, and connections, at that period, and previous to it, as well as ſince, demonſtrate the abſurdity, and falſehood of ſuch ſuppoſitions, yet both the one, and the other have been not only *ſuggeſted*, but poſitively aſſerted, by certain writers in America, who ſtick at nothing, however extravagant.

I can hardly imagine, notwithſtanding the late, and preſent proſperous ſtate of our affairs, that any one can have forgot the ſituation, in which they were in 1781, when I wrote thoſe letters, and previous to the ſurrender of Lord Cornwallis, and of his army at York. In May, and in June, 1781, the Britiſh forces were in poſſeſſion, of the whole of our ſea coaſt, from the Cheſapeak ſouthward; and whilſt they ravaged, and diſtreſſed the interior country, their ſhips of war and cruizers intercepted almoſt the whole of our trade, and of our ſupplies. We had no naval force, to oppoſe to theirs, nor any probability at that time, that our ally would ſend to our aſſiſtance, a naval force ſuperior to that of the enemy. The army under General Waſhington, was too weak of itſelf, for any offenſive operations; and Congreſs had neither money or credit, to put it on a more reſpectable footing.

General Washington did not scruple at that period to declare, " that without a decidedly superior " fleet to that of Great-Britain in America, all op- " position to the British forces in America, would " soon be at an end." All the letters from America were in the same stile; many circumstances at that time, my own observations, and the information I was then in the way of, led me to conclude, that there was not the least probability, of there being a French fleet on our coast that campaign, superior to the British. Accidents, and circumstances, unforeseen at that time, and those extremely improbable ones, gave the French fleet that superiority, which alone decided the fate of Lord Cornwallis, and of his army at York. Had not this event happened, of which when I wrote there was not the most distant probability, the war must have terminated against us in that campaign;—In this I was supported by the unanimous opinion, of the best judges on the subject, then in America: was it a crime in me, to write to America in the same stile, in which our Generals, and leading men, wrote to their friends in Europe? My letters have been published, theirs have not; this is the sole difference, except the cruel circumstance of mine having been published by the enemy, at a time when our danger was over, and when the publication could serve no other purpose, but to ruin me in the opinion of my countrymen.

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At the time of my writing, every thing conſpired to convince me, that France had only her own intereſt, and that of Spain in view, in the war; and that however it might terminate, ſhe would be very far from conſulting our intereſt in the peace; perſuaded of this, I wrote it to be my opinion, and for this I have been deemed an enemy and traitor to France, as well as to the United States.

But have not events, in part already juſtified this opinion of mine? You beſt know by what intrigues the French Court prevailed with Congreſs, to order our commiſſioners, not to ſign any treaty with Great-Britain, without the knowledge and conſent of the Court of Verſailles; and thus to put our future *peace, liberty, and ſafety*, abſolutely into their power: nor can you, I preſume, be ignorant, that the Court of France, having thus bound us, began to take off the maſk, and to take meaſures with, and to propoſe terms to, the other powers for excluding us from the fiſheries, and for ſupporting the extravagant claims of Spain to Eaſt Louiſiana; and that our commiſſioners, alarmed at this, wiſely ventured to ſign the preliminary articles, without either the knowledge or conſent of the miniſters at Verſailles. Are not theſe well known facts, abundantly ſufficient to juſtify me, for having in 1781, entertained ſuſpicions of France, in her profeſſions of diſintereſted friendſhip to the United States? By our treaty with Great-Britain,

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we are entitled to a right in her ſhare of the Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia fiſheries; but has not France wholly excluded us from any in hers? Does not France at this time encourage and ſupport Spain, in her claims to the richeſt and moſt extenſive part of the territory allowed by Great-Britain, in the late treaty, to belong to us? Theſe attempts are not marks of friendſhip, but are the moſt unequivocal characteriſtics, of that inſidious, intereſted policy, which I pointed out in my letters, and warned my friends to be on their guard againſt.

In my letter to Mr. Morris, I gave him my opinion, with reſpect to the future ſtate of our commerce, under independent ſovereignty, and the grounds on which I was led to form it; and I ſhall be happy, if experience, (which alone can decide in ſuch caſes) proves that my opinion and reaſoning on that ſubject, were erroneous and ill-founded. Apprehenſive at the time, and diſtreſſed by the thought, that we muſt either fail in the conteſt, and in ſuch caſe ſubmit to the laws of our conquerors, rendered imperious, and ſevere, from their ſucceſs; Or, that if ſucceſsful curſelves, that in the ſituation in which our country muſt be, on the peace; burthened with heavy taxes on account of the public debts contracted by the war, and ſtill heavier for the future ſupport of independant ſovereignty, and at the ſame time expoſed to the evils ariſing from

internal

internal factions, and divisions, and from our jarring and incompatible interests; that our democratic governments, which we had established in Congress, and in our several States, would not be found to have sufficient energy, and coercion, to establish and maintain such a degree of order, and of due subordination, as must ever be indespensibly necessary, in all governments, to prevent anarchy and confusion; And that in such a situation, independant sovereignty, instead of proving a blessing, must become the heaviest misfortune, which could befall us;—Strongly impressed by this opinion, I judged it to be my duty, to urge and press my countrymen, by every argument in my power, to improve that important crisis, and by an accommodation, and re-union with Great-Britain, on equal, safe, and honourable terms, to secure our future peace, safety and liberty, both internal, and external.

I then thought that a re-union, not simply on the condition of being replaced in the state, in which we were, previous to 1763; (for which alone, Congress in 1774, and afterwards in 1775, petitioned,) but on conditions, and terms, every way preferable; viz. Those of being governed, solely by laws of our own enacting, and of being taxed only by our assemblies, and of enjoying the same commercial privileges, and protections, as other subjects of the British Empire were, or might be entitled to; I say that it was then my opinion, that an accommodation and re-

union

unionon thoſe terms, was to be preferred, to a continuation of the war, to running the riſque of its uncertain iſſue, and to hazarding the dangerous experiment of Independant Sovereignty.—This opinion of mine, has been deemed a crime little ſhort of that of high treaſon.—But it ought to be remembered, that this was ſimply my opinion, and that I communicated it to my friends, at a time, when our proſpects were gloomy, and diſcouraging.

It is proper here, to review the ſentiments of the firſt, and of the ſecond Congreſs on this ſubject; the firſt in their reſolutions, and in their petition to the King complain of no grievances anterior to 1763: their words are, " We preſent this petition, only to " obtain redreſs of grievances, and relief from " fears, and jealouſies, occaſioned by the ſyſtem of " ſtatutes, and regulations, adopted ſince the cloſe " of the late war, for raiſing a revenue in " America;—extending the powers of the Courts " of Admiralty, and Vice Admiralty;—trying " perſons in Great-Britain, for offences alledged " to be committed in America;—affecting the " Province of the Maſſacuſett's Bay;—and alter- " ing the Government, and extending the limits " of Quebec." This is the liſt of grievancces, then enumerated, and they add, " By the abolition of " which ſyſtem, the harmony between Great- " Britain, and theſe Colonies, ſo neceſſary to the " happineſs of both, and ſo ardently deſired by

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" the latter, and the usual intercourses will be im-
" mediately restored ;—for, appealing to that Be-
" ing who searches thoroughly the hearts of his
" creatures, we solemnly profess, that our councils
" have been influenced by no other motive, than
" a dread of impending destruction." (That is
from the above system). " Permit us then, most
" gracious Sovereign, in the name of all your
" faithful people in America, with the utmost
" humility to implore you, for the honor of
" Almighty God, *whose pure religion our enemies*
" *are undermining*, for your glory, which can be
" advanced only by rendering your subjects
" happy, for the interest of your family ; depend-
" ing on an adherence to the principles that en-
" throned it ; for the safety and welfare of your
" kingdoms, and dominions, threatened with
" almost unavoidable dangers, and distresses, that
" your Majesty, as the loving father of your whole
" people, connected by the same bonds, *of law*,
" *loyalty*, *faith*, *and blood*, though dwelling in
" different countries, will not suffer the transcen-
" dant relation formed by these ties to be farther
" violated, in uncertain expectation of effects that,
" if attained, never can compensate for the cala-
" mities through which they must be gained, we
" therefore, &c."—These were the sentiments of
the first Congress ;—the second, though con-

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vened after hostilities had been commenced, and although their petition was agreed to, after they had made an arrangement of the army, had commissioned the generals, had issued money and become to all intents, *de facto*, Independent; yet they still persevered in the same sentiments, as to their grievances, and the terms on which a reconciliation was desired; they refer to the petition of the first Congress, and solemnly "declare, before God and the world, that they had not "raised armies with the ambitious designs, of separating from Great-Britain, and establishing "Independent States," and that they fought, "not for glory or conquest;" and add, "attached "to your Majesty's Person, Family, and Government, with all that devotion which principle, "or affection can inspire, connected with Great-"Britain, by the strongest ties which can unite "societies, our breasts retain too tender a regard "for the kingdom from which we derive our "origin, to request such a reconciliation as "might in any manner be inconsistent, with her "dignity and welfare; these, related as we are to "her, honor and duty, as well as inclination, "induce us to support and advance." Within a few days after signing of this petition, Doctor Franklin drew up several resolutions in form of proposals, to be made by Congress for a reconciliation, which he introduced in the following words;

words; "Forasmuch as the enemies of America, "in the Parliament of Great Britain, to render "us odious to the nation, and give an ill im-"pression of us in the minds of other European "Powers, have represented us unjust and un-"grateful in the highest degree; asserting on every "occasion, that the Colonies were settled at the "expence of Britain, &c. *That they aim at inde-"pendency, that they intend an abolition of the Na-"vigation Acts, &c. and as by frequent repetition of "these groundless assertions, and malicious calumnies, "may, if not contradicted and refuted, obtain farther "credit, and be injurious throughout Europe to the "reputation, and interest of the confederated Colonies,* "it seems proper, and necessary to examine them "in our own just vindication." He then proceeds to shew, that these charges were groundless, and then to make the following proposals: "That "on a reconciliation with Britain, we shall not "only continue to grant aid in time of war, but "whenever she shall think fit to abolish her mo-"nopoly, and give us the same privileges in trade, "as Scotland received at the Union, and allow "us a free commerce with all the rest of the "world, we shall willingly agree to give and pay "into the sinking fund, 100,000 l. sterling an-"nually, for the space of one hundred years to "come, which duty, faithfully and inviolably "applied to that purpose, is demonstrably "more than sufficient to extinguish all her present

" national debt, &c. But if Britain does not
" think fit to accept this propoſition, we, in
" order to remove her groundleſs jealouſies,
" *that we aim at independence, and an abolition*
" *of the Navigation Act, which, in truth, has never*
" *been our intention*, and to avoid all future
" diſputes about the right of making that, and
" other acts, for the regulating our commerce, do
" hereby declare ourſelves ready, and willing to
" enter into a covenant with Great-Britain, that
" ſhe ſhall fully poſſeſs, enjoy, and exerciſe that
" right for one hundred years to come." (See
" the Doctor's political, miſcellaneous and philo-
" ſophical pieces, fol. 357.) His editor ſays,
" *This paper was drawn up in a committee of Con-*
" *greſs, June* 25, 1775, *but does not appear on their*
" *minutes; a ſevere act of parliament which arrived*
" *about that time, having determined them not to give*
" *the ſum propoſed in it.*" But the editor was miſ-
informed; the paper here referred to, was not
drawn up in a committee, nor by the direction of
Congreſs, or by the advice of a committee.—
Doctor Franklin firſt committed his thoughts, on
the terms for a reconciliation, to writing, and
afterwards, in a committee, which was appointed
for a very different purpoſe, whilſt their report
was tranſcribing, he read the draught above-
mentioned: Col. R. H. Lee, who was one of the
committee, approved of it, and requeſted the
Doctor

Doctor to lay it before Congreſs, or to permit him to do it, not as a report, for no committee had been appointed on the ſubject, but in the uſual way of motion, by an individual member; Doctor Franklin declined the taking of this, on himſelf, and gave the paper to Col. Lee, who the next day introduced, and read it in Congreſs, and moved that the two propoſals contained in it, ſhould paſs into reſolutions of the houſe; the motion was ſeconded, and ſupported by a delegate from one of the New England ſtates, ſince unjuſtly charged, with having aimed at independence from the firſt of the diſpute: the propoſals appeared no way diſagreeable to the houſe, but it was obſerved, that having but a few days before, in a petition to his Majeſty, requeſted him *to direct the mode* and forms "*for a happy, and permanent reconciliation*," it was proper to wait the effects of that petition, and that, in the mean time, to make any ſpecific propoſals, would be premature, and to a certain degree inconſiſtent with our own requeſts; beſides this objection, a great part of the members, eſpecially of thoſe from the Southern ſtates, were ſtill confident, that the prayer of our petition would be granted, and a reconciliation take place on the terms, of our being reſtored to the ſtate in which we were, at and previous to 1763. On theſe conſiderations the motion was withdrawn; and the reaſon why no entry was made

made of it, in the minutes or journals of Congreſs, was, leaſt after being reſtored unconditionally to the ſtate in which we were in 1763, future advantage might be taken of theſe offers. As I was one of the committee, to whom the contents of this paper was firſt communicated, and in Congreſs during the tranſaction, I cannot in juſtice to the wiſhes, and diſpoſition of Congreſs, at that time for a reconciliation, omit giving this brief hiſtory of thoſe propoſals; and in juſtice to myſelf, I muſt obſerve, that the terms propoſed by me in my letter, are infinitely preferable, to thoſe offered, and prayed for by the firſt, and ſecond Congreſs, as well as to thoſe contained, in this paper drawn up by Doctor Franklin. After the declaration of independence, Doctor Franklin, with the knowledge and approbation of Congreſs, correſponded with Lord Howe; in his letter of the 30th of July, 1776, to his Lordſhip, he ſays, "Long did I endeavour with unfeigned and unwearied zeal, to preſerve from breaking that fine, and noble china vaſe, the Britiſh empire; for I knew, that being once broken, the ſeparate parts could not retain, even *their ſhare* of the ſtrength, and value, which exiſted in the whole, and that *a perfect re-union of thoſe parts could ſcarce ever be hoped for.*" Was it a crime in me, in 1781, to wiſh for a perfect re-union, and in private letters, to urge my friends to do all in their

their power to promote, and bring about an *event* (which, by the Doctor's letter, appears to have been, even in 1776) *most devoutly to be wished for?*

But we now enjoy independent sovereignty and peace, on the most favourable and honourable terms, and have obtained every thing which we either hoped for, or demanded; and happy, indeed, should I be, were I certain, that none of the evils, which I apprehended in 1781, were either felt, or feared by my countrymen at this time; in such case I should be contented, to be ridiculed, or even pitied for my weak, and gloomy forebodings. But General Washington, in his circular letter, says, "That it is a question, yet to be "decided, whether the revolution must ulti-"mately be considered as a blessing, or a curse. "A blessing, or a curse, not to the present age "alone, for with our fate will the destiny of "unborn millions be involved." I ask, that these expressions of the General, after the great object of our independent sovereignty, has been obtained, and ratified by treaties, may be compared with the expressions in my letters of 1781, on the same subject, and that my countrymen will then say, if it was a criminal desertion of the cause, of my country, or if it was an unpardonable weakness, and despondency of mind in me at that time, to make a question of that, which now, when success and peace, have secured our independent sovereignty,

is

is by General Washington declared to be still a *question undecided* and doubtful, and that not only so as to the present day, but to future ages. If, indeed, the small degree of order, of restraint, and of subordination, which has for the last seven years prevailed in our country, be now thrown off, and the legislative and executive powers once more return, in effect, into the hands of committees, and conventions; if in place of that subordination to law and government, of those decent, frugal, and virtuous manners, and habits; of that ease, and even affluence, in which our fellow-citizens formerly lived in peace and safety; in a word, if instead of those manners, principles, and circumstances, which once marked our character, the reverse should in future take place, and prevail, under a government too weak, to prevent or remedy the evils, there cannot then remain a question on the subject, but such anarchy and confusion must ensue, as to render our independence a curse, and the present and future age in America, as unhappy as any ages to be met with, in the history of civilized nations have ever been.

The great end of civil society is, to secure to men united in it, the great blessings of peace, of liberty and safety, both in their persons and in their property, and in deciding what form of government most effectually answers this great and beneficent

beneficent purpoſe, experience, not theory, muſt direct us.

This is not a ſubject for recluſe philoſophers, or ſubtle metaphyſicians, to decide on in their cloſets;—and whenever they have been referred to, they have given the preference to Utopian, or ideal and imaginary ſyſtems of their own, before thoſe plain and ſimple ones, which experience has ſhewn to be practicable and ſafe.—But without looking abroad, to profit by the experience of other nations, our own muſt now, with the utmoſt preciſion, and certainty, determine this great queſtion, as *yet undecided*, and bring conviction, home to every one; either that our preſent ſyſtem of government is preferable, to that under which we and our anceſtors, for more than one century and a half, were free, ſafe, and happy, or that it is not. Our ſituation, previous to the late revolution, muſt be ſtill freſh in our memories, and our preſent, cannot long be diſguiſed or miſunderſtood by us, from our ſenſes; from what we ſee and feel, we muſt judge with certainty of it; and by comparing the preſent with the paſt, this important queſtion *muſt ultimately be decided.*

If happily for us, it be in favour of the preſent, no man will more ſincerely rejoice than what I ſhall on the occaſion; but if on a compariſon of our preſent with our paſt ſituation, the revolution ſhould, which General Waſhington, ſeems to ap-

 prehend,

apprehend, be found a *curse, instead of a blessing* then indeed, I shall be one of the most unhappy of men, and the sole consolation which will be left me, will be (the almost only one which I now enjoy) a consciousness of my integrity, in the service of my country, and of the purity and rectitude of my intentions, in the opinion and advice, which, in 1781, I gave in my letters to my friends in America.—Having shewn, that instead of being a defaulter, I am a creditor of the public's to a considerable amount, and impartially stated the contents, and object of my letters of 1781, I shall take my leave for the present, and submit the whole, to your candid consideration, and whatever my fate may be, if to be restored to your good opinion and confidence, and to the bosom of my friends, and country, or to remain far exiled from them, the first and most ardent wish of my soul, will ever be, that my country's happiness may be perpetual, in the full enjoyment of peace, liberty and safety.

I am with great sincerity and respect,

Your friend and fellow citizen,

S. DEANE.

London, August 10, 1783.

P. S. I have avoided entering on the subject of the numerous calumnies, which have been propagated

pagated againſt me, by anonymous writers, it would have been endleſs, and quite unneceſſary, ſince every thing which has either been ſaid, or ſuggeſted againſt me, may be reduced to two queſtions only. Firſt, if I acted faithfully, and was an honeſt ſteward of the public money, whilſt in the ſervice of my country; and ſecondly, if the contents of my letters of May, and June, 1781, were of ſuch a nature as to merit the harſh cenſures, paſſed on me in America on their account; In France, I can expect no other, than to be condemned, it is what every one muſt expect, who calls in queſtion, the diſintereſtedneſs of the motives of France in the late war, or who attempts to prevent our country, from becoming virtually dependant on that power. As to the reports circulated here, and which may probably reach America, of my being at the levees of the Miniſters, and in frequent conference with them, and that I have acted an unfriendly part reſpecting our commerce, and the like, I can with the greateſt truth and ſincerity declare, that there is not the leaſt foundation for them, I have not ſo much as ſeen any of the Miniſters, ſince my arrival in this country.—And as to our commerce, I gave my opinion in 1781, in my letter to Mr. Morris, as to the reſtrictions, which I thought it would fall under on a peace; if any part of what I then apprehended has been realiſed, I am not to blame;

I moſt heartily wiſh that no part of it may ever be ſo, but that experience may ſhew me, to have been in an error in what I wrote on that ſubject.

APPEN-

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM THE COUNT DE VERGENNES TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS.

MONSIEUR, *A Verſailles, le 25 Mars, 1778.*

M. DEANE ſe diſpoſans à retourner en Amérique, je ſaiſé avec plaiſir, cette occaſion pour rendre témoignage au zélé, à l'activité & à l'intelligence avec les quels il s'eſt occupé des intérets des Etats unies ; c'eſt à ces differens titres qu'il à mérité, l'eſtime du Roi mon Maitre, & que Sa Majeſté à bien voulu lui donner de marques de ſa ſatisfaction. Au reſte M. Deane pourra rendre compte au Congrés, des diſpoſitions ou eſt le Roi à l'egard des Etats unies. Les liens qu'ils ont formes, avec Sa Majeſté, doivent remplir leurs voeux, le Roi, de ſon coté eſt non ſeulment convaincu qu'ils ſont fondés ſur des principes inalterables, mais auſſi qu'ils contribueront au bonheur des deux peuples.

J'ai l'honneur d'etre, avec une tres ſincere attachment,

Monſieur,

Votre très, humble & très obeiſſans ſerviteur,

DE VERGENNES.

TRAN-

No. 1.

TRANSLATION OF A LETTER FROM THE COUNT DE VERGENNES TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS.

SIR, *At Verſailles, 25th March,* 1778.

Mr. DEANE being about to return to America, I embrace the occaſion with pleaſure, to give my teſtimony to the zeal, activity, and intelligence with which he has conducted the intereſts of the United States, by which he has merited the eſteem of the King, my Maſter, and for which his Majeſty has been pleaſed to give him marks of his ſatisfaction. Mr. Deane will be able to inform Congreſs, of the diſpoſition of the King toward the United States; the engagements formed with his Majeſty, will doubtleſs ſatisfy their wiſhes. The King on his part, is not only convinced that they are founded on principles unalterable, but alſo that they will contribute to the happineſs of both nations.

I have the honor to be with the moſt ſincere attachment,

Your moſt humble and obedient ſervant,

(Copy.) (Signed.) DE VERGENENS.

No. 2.

LETTER *from his* EXCELLENCY THE COUNT DE VERGENNES, MINISTER, *and* SECRETARY *of* STATE, *March* 26, 1778.

A Verſailles, le 26 *Mars*, 1778.

COMME je ne dois plus, Monſieur, avoir l' honneur de vous voir avant votre depart, je vous prie de recevoir ici mes ſouhaits pour que votre voyage, ſoit prompt et heureux, et que vous trouvies dans votre patrie les memes ſentimens que vous avez inſpirés en France. Vous n'aviés rein a deſirér Monſieur, de ceux que je vous ai voües et que je vous conſerverai autant qui je vivrai; ils vous ſont garans du veritable intereſt que je ne ceſſerai dans aucun tems de prendre a votre bonheur comme a la proſperitè de votre patrie.

Le Roi deſirant vous donnér un temoignage perſonnel de la ſatisfaction quil a de votre conduite, ma chargé d' en informér M. Le Preſident du Congrès unis; ceſt l'objet de la lettre que M. Gerard vous remettra pour M. Hancock; il vous remettra encore une boet avec le portrait du Roi; vous ne refuſerès par ſans doute d' emportér dans votre patrie l'image de ſon ami le plus zèlé.—La preuve en eſt dans faits.

Jai l'honneur d' etre, avec une tres ſincere conſideration, MONSIEUR, Votre tres humble et tres obeiſſant ſerviteur,

DE VERGENNES.

M. DEANE.

No. 2.

At Verſailles, the 26th March, 1778.

AS I am not, Sir, to have the honour of ſeeing you again before your departure, I pray you to receive here my wiſhes, that your voyage may be ſpeedy, ſhort, and happy, and that you may find in your own country the ſame ſentiments which you have inſpired in France. You need not, Sir, deſire any addition to thoſe which I have devoted to you, and which I ſhall preſerve for you to the end of my life; they will be ſureties to you of the true intereſt which I ſhall for ever take in your happineſs, as well as in the proſperity of your country.

The King, deſirous of giving you a perſonal teſtimony of the ſatisfaction which he has in your conduct, has charged me to communicate it to the Preſident of the Congreſs of the United States; this is the object of the letter which Mr. Gerard will deliver you for Mr. Hancock; he will alſo deliver you a box with the King's portrait. You will not, I preſume, Sir, refuſe to carry to your country the image of its moſt zealous friend.— The proof of this is in facts.

I have the honour to be, with the moſt ſincere conſideration, SIR, Your moſt humble, and moſt obedient ſervant,

DE VERGENNES.

No. 3.

Passy, near Paris, March 31, 1778.

SIR,

MY colleague, Mr. Deane, being recalled by Congress, and no reasons given that have yet appeared here, it is apprehended to be the effect of some misrepresentations from an enemy or two at Paris, and at Nantes. I have no doubt that he will be able, clearly to justify himself, but having lived intimately with him now fifteen months, the greatest part of the time in the same house, and been a constant witness of his public conduct, I cannot omit giving this testimony, though unasked, in his behalf, that I esteem him a faithful, active, and able minister, who, to my knowledge, has done, in various ways, great and important services to his country, whose interests I wish may always be, by every one in her employ, as much, and as effectually promoted.

With my dutiful respects to the Congress,
I have the honour to be,
SIR,
your most obedient,
and most humble servant,

BEN. FRANKLIN.

Hon. HENRY LAURENS,
President of Congress.

No. 4.

CERTAIN paragraphs having lately appeared in the Engliſh news-papers, importing, that Silas Deane, Eſq. formerly Agent, and Commiſſioner Plenipotentiary, of the United States of America, had ſome time after his firſt "arrival in France, "purchaſed in that kingdom, for the uſe of his "countrymen, 30,000 muſkets, &c. that he gave "three livres for each of them, being old con-"demned arms; that he had them cleaned and "vamped up, which coſt near three livres more, "and that for each of theſe, he charged and re-"ceived a louis d'or."—And that he alſo committed ſimilar frauds, in the purchaſe of other articles, for the uſe of his country; and Mr. Deane having repreſented, that the ſaid paragraphs, are likely to injure him in the opinions of many perſons, unacquainted with his conduct, whilſt in public ſervice; I think it my duty, in compliance with his requeſt, to certify, and declare, that the paragraphs in queſtion, according to my beſt knowledge and belief, are entirely falſe, and that I have never known, or ſuſpected any cauſe to charge the ſaid Silas Deane, with any want of probity, in any purchaſe, or bargain whatever made by him for the uſe or account of the United States.

Given at Paſſy, the 18th December, 1782.

(Signed.) B. FRANKLIN,

Miniſter Plenipotentiary from the United States of America, at the Court of France.

No. 5.

EXTRACT OF INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF CONNGRESS, MARCH 2d, 1776, "TO THE HON. SILAS "DEANE, ESQ. AGENT FOR THE THIRTEEN "UNITED COLONIES.

"The ſupply we at preſent want is cloathing, "and arms, for 25,000 men, with a ſuitable "quantity of ammunition, and 100 field pieces. "If France ſhould grant theſe ſupplies, the whole "will make a cargo which it might be well to "ſecure, by a convoy of two or three ſhips of war. "But if theſe ſupplies on the credit of Congreſs "ſhould be refuſed, (that is by the Court of "France) you are then to endeavor the obtaining "permiſſion, of purchaſing thoſe articles, or ſo "much of them as you can find credit for."

(Signed) B. FRANKLIN, BENJ. HARRISON, JOHN DICKINSON, ROBT. MORRIS, JOHN JAY. } Secret Committee.

THE

THE following letter, contains the ſubſtance of what in 1781, I wrote to my friends, and correſpondents in America, in thoſe letters, which were intercepted, and publiſhed in New-York; where the publication by Rivington, differs from the original, I have noted, and corrected it, in this, and therefore the preſent may be relied on, to be authentic.—The variations in this, or in any of thoſe letters, as publiſhed, from the originals are not ſo material, as to acquit me, of the cenſures, already paſſed on me, by my countrymen on account of their contents, if on an impartial examination of the ſentiments, expreſſed in them, and on a review of the ſtate of public affairs, at the time, when I wrote, it ſhall be judged, that I merited thoſe cenſures.—I have ſelected this letter, becauſe that it contains, more fully, than any one of the others, my ſentiments, at the time, of the paſt, and of the then probable future ſituation, of the commerce, of the United States, under independant ſovereignty.—The very unfavourable appearance of the war, on the part of my country, at the time, when I wrote, added to the treatment, which I had met with, by the prevalence of a faction in America, and to a ſeries of private misfortunes, may be ſuppoſed,

to

to have caſt a gloom, over a mind, by nature, and habit, not either volatile, or ſanguine, and to have turned my view, to the unfavourable ſide of the objects before me;—with the candid, and generous, theſe circumſtances, will apologize for me, if indeed any apology can be thought neceſſary, for a free citizen's having communicated his ſentiments, on ſubjects of infinite importance to his country, in confidential letters to his fellow-citizens, and intimate friends. If this be a crime, if by this I have merited the obloquy, and cenſure, with which I have been loaded in America. I can only ſay, that it is a newly diſcovered crime, and that a correſpondence, ſimilar to that of mine, was never before deemed criminal, or reprehenſible, in any free ſtate, from the earlieſt ages of the world, to the preſent.

From various circumſtances, and accidents, unforeſeen, and improbable at the time, the iſſue of the war, with ſome other, leſs important events, have been very different, from what I feared, and thought to be inevitable, when I wrote;—this has afforded a ſubject for triumph over me, to thoſe, who judge of men, and of meaſures, only by events; I do not repine at their triumph, on the contrary, I moſt ardently pray, that it may be compleat, and that not one of the evils, which my gloomy imagination foreboded, in 1781, may ever be realized.—The ſubſtance of all my letters,

ters, which were intercepted, and publiſhed, tended in the firſt place, to ſhew the extreme improbability, of the final eſtabliſhment, of the independant ſovereignty, of the United States; and ſecondly, that if eſtabliſhed, it would prove rather a curſe, than a bleſſing to us; the firſt point is already determined, and contrary to the appearance of the war, in 1781, our independance, and ſovereignty, are acknowledged, and confirmed to us, by the treaty of peace;—but the ſecond, and infinitely the moſt important, is a queſtion, which General Waſhington, in his circular letter, ſays, *is ſtill to be decided.* At the date of my letters, in May, and June, 1781, the iſſue of the war, was at beſt doubtful; but he wrote, after the war had been concluded, and the independant ſovereignty of the United States, was confirmed, in the moſt explicit, and favourable terms, yet he ſays, "*It is* "*a queſtion which remains ſtill to be decided, whe-* "*ther the revolution muſt ultimately be conſidered, as* "*a bleſſing, or a curſe;—a bleſſing, or a curſe, not* "*to the preſent age alone, for with our fate, will the* "*deſtiny of unborn millions, be involved.*" In my letter of the 20th of May, 1781, to Mr. Root, after a brief review, of the progreſs of the war, and of the ſtate of our affairs, at that time, I ſaid; "*From theſe reflections, combined with all the facts,* "*and informations, that I have been able to obtain, I* "*have deduced two propoſitions, of the truth of which*

I am

" *I am fully convinced, however extraordinary they may* " *appear in America:—The first of these is, that there* " *is no probability of our being able, finally to establish* " *our independancy; and the second, that if it were* " *established, it would prove rather a curse, than a* " *blessing to us.*" My views in publishing this letter, with a few observations on it, are, in the first place, to obtain, a calm, and impartial rehearing, in which I flatter myself, that I shall not be condemned for having, in 1781, given it as my opinion, that independance, if obtained, would " *prove rather a curse, than a blessing*, to us, since after its being established, General Washington in his letter referred to above, declares it to be a question, still undecided:—Secondly, to shew my countrymen, (who have been told that I am inimical to their commercial interests) what my sentiments were in 1781, as to the embarrassments, and restrictions, which our commerce must necessarily meet with, under independant sovereignty, and that if events, have hitherto tended, to justify those sentiments, I cannot thence be culpable, for having foreseen, what from the first, to the present moment, I have done every thing in my power to prevent. And in the last place, by again laying before my countrymen, or reminding them, of the principles, and grounds, on which I formed my opinion, that our political, and commercial situation, would be every way less favourable, under independency,

independency, than what it had been, previous to our ſeparation from Great-Britain, or that independency would prove *rather a curſe, than a bleſſing*, I may excite them, to take proper, and reaſonable meaſures, to avoid thoſe evils, which I apprehended, when I wrote thoſe letters. If I ſucceed in theſe points, I ſhall be perfectly ſatisfied, and if in the laſt only, by much the moſt important object, in my view, will be obtained.

Paris, 10th June, 1781.

Dear Sir,

THE dangerous crisis* to which our affairs are rapidly advancing affects me greatly—I can speak of nothing else with attention when in company,

* At the date of this letter, the British forces were in possession of New-York, of Long Island, and Staten Island, of all the sea coast, from the Capes of Virginia Southward, they had penetrated far, into the country, without meeting, with any material resistance, and had such a decided superiority, in the American seas, that full three-fourths, of all the vessels that put to sea, from the United States, were captured;——The paper of Congress could not be passed at any rate, and General Washington, with other general officers, in their letters, to their friends in Europe, did not scruple to say, that, without aid from France, in money to pay the troops, and a fleet decidedly superior to the British, all opposition, would end with that campaign.——The whole of the naval force, ordered by France to America, that season, (that is, to the Continent, and to the West-Indies) was not equal, to that of the British, then on those seas;—the Count de Grasse, who commanded, was ordered first to the West-Indies, and thence to the Continent, but as upwards of four hundred sail of French merchant ships, would in the course of that Summer, be in want of a convoy from the West-Indies, to Europe, and it was given out, and expected, that the Count, previous to his sailing, to the Northward, would send off that rich fleet of merchantmen, under a strong convoy, which would have rendered him, unable to do more, on the American coast, than to give some temporary relief, and to act on the defensive.——No one

company, it excludes every thing elſe from my thoughts when alone, we have been deceived, and that principally by ourſelves, we have deceive' others unintentionally I charitably believe.

one at that time, could foreſee, or rationally preſume, Firſt, That the Count de Graſſe, would leave, that immenſely valuable fleet, to remain in port, for want of a convoy, and take every French ſhip of war in the Weſt-Indies, with him, to the Northward ;—Or, Secondly, That Lord Cornwallis, after having made himſelf maſter, of all the ſea coaſt, from the Capes of Virginia Southward, would fix on one of the moſt unfavourable poſitions, in all that country, to encamp, and fortify himſelf on ;—Or, Thirdly, That Gen. Clinton would ſuffer Gen. Waſhington and Count Rochambeau, to march without oppoſition, to Virginia ;—Or, laſtly, That when the Count de Graſſe, took his whole force to the Northward, ſeveral Britiſh ſhips of the line, would ſtill remain in the Weſt-Indies, and thereby give the French fleet, a ſuperiority to the Britiſh.——As no one of theſe events could be rationally expected, or hoped for at that time, and, as without a concurrence of all of them, Lord Cornwallis's army would not have been captured, and the campain of 1781, muſt have terminated as much againſt the United States, as by this ſingular concurrence, of improbable events, it ended in our favour ; it may with great juſtice be ſaid, that the affairs of the United States, never were at any period, in a more critical, and dangerous ſituation, and every one who reads the whole of thoſe letters, will ſee, that the mind of the writer, was deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of the impending dangers, and anxiouſly ſolicitous, with his countrymen, to take ſuch meaſures, as appeared to him, the beſt calculated, to avoid them.

The Britiſh nation has fallen into errors equally great; would to God this great tragedy of errors, could have a happy cataſtrophe! It is in vain to blame our public managers, but it is wiſe in us to examine our preſent ſituation, and to weigh the probability of future conſequences. Experience has ſhewn us that France is either unable or unwilling to aſſiſt us effectually, ſo as to drive the Britiſh forces out of our country; judging from appearances, here I might conclude, that France is unwilling, as appearances warrant ſuch a concluſion, but when the conduct of men, or of a nation is capable of two conſtructions, I would willingly adopt the moſt favourable—I know the inability of the nation, to aſſiſt us effectually, and they ſay, they are not unwilling. I ought to believe them, though I know it is certainly inconſiſtent with their intereſts, and with the ſafety of their foreign poſſeſſions, to remove the war from our continent. But to which ever of theſe cauſes we impute the continuance of the war in our country, the conſequences will be found equally pernicious to us. If Great Britain is determined in no circumſtances to admit the independency of America; then ſo long as both parties remain inflexible, we ſhall continue to weaken, exhauſt and ruin each other, and who will eventually be the gainers? It is, I think time

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time for us to enquire how our account will ſtand on a cloſe; Let the conteſt cloſe, when and in what manner it may—Will independent ſovereignty, in the hands of a democracy, be a government under which our perſons and properties will be better ſecured than they were before this unhappy conteſt began?—Will our commerce flouriſh more under independency, than it did whilſt we were connected with Great Britain? This I know is generally believed. it is even relied on, as a principal ſource from which we ſhall reimburſe our preſent expences.—The ſubject however merits an examination.—If the reſtraints formerly laid on our trade were overbalanced by the protection and encouragement given to it. If in a ſtate of independence, that protection and encouragement muſt neceſſarily be withdrawn and our commerce with Great Britain and its poſſeſſions, become ſubject to all the duties and prohibitions laid on the commerce of other aliens and ſtrangers. If our commerce with France and other foreign nations, muſt be ſubject to the conditions and reſtraints which they ſhall ſee fit to impoſe, (as muſt be the caſe,) it deſerves enquiry whether we in our commerce ſhall become gainers or not. I have examined the queſtion as thoroughly as I am capable, and am convinced we muſt be loſers. We complained of England, for including America in

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the Navigation Act, and other acts of trade, but if the naval force of that nation rose in consequence of those acts, into a power sufficient to protect the trade of the whole empire; if the trade of America was protected thereby, could it be unreasonable that the trade of America should submit to those acts and regulations which were the source of its protection and security? We complained that acts of Parliament prohibited us from carrying certain articles of our produce to foreign markets, and thereby gave England a monoply advantageous to her and injurious to us; but it must at the same time be acknowledged, that British subjects were generally restrained from purchasing and importing the same articles from other countries; so that if England made a monoply of certain articles of our produce, she gave us in return a monoply of her market, and liberty of re-exporting our goods if a better market afforded elsewhere; in this, the advantage lay evidently with us; a great part of the articles thus monopolized by England. were such as could have been, and were formerly supplied by foreigners at as low or lower rate than we could afford them. But the system of Great Britain being as you know to promote the commerce of her own empire in every part of it, not only restraints and duties were laid on foreign importations, but bounties given to en-

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courage the growth and importation of many of our productions, which otherwise would not have found their way to Europe; another complaint was, that we were prohibited the taking from foreigners, articles, which we wanted though not the growth or fabric of England; but it is well known that those articles concerning which so much has been said, formed but a very inconsiderable part of our commerce. Every one who has had an opportunity of comparing the manufactures of one nation in Europe with another, of observing the different modes and principles of transacting business, will at once give England and her merchants the preference. All the more solid, substantial, and useful articles are made better, and afforded cheaper there, than any where else, certain linens from Russia and Silesia excepted—and even those as well as the less important foreign articles, came to us, considering the drawbacks in England on exportation, nearly, if not quite as cheap, as we could have imported them directly. But it has been also objected, that foreigners were not admitted to bring their produce and merchandize into our ports, and trade with us; of all the complaints made by us on the subject of commerce, this appears to me the most absurd and groundless. The exclusion of foreigners from being the carriers for England is the corner stone on which its commerce and maritime power arose, and the princi-

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pal cauſe of the increaſe of our commerce and navigation; and if ever we ſhould be independent, and at peace and ſhould neglect to paſs acts to exclude foreigners from being our carriers, we ſhall never be either a maritime or commercial nation. The Parliamentary regulations, and reſtrictions on our commerce were a principal cauſe of the unhappy conteſt between the two countries, and we were impatient under them, becauſe we were apprehenſive, that they were part of a ſyſtem to enſlave us entirely, and thus thinking, it was natural that we ſhould exaggerate their hardſhips, and in all our deliberations on the ſubject, turn our attention to the reſtraints laid on our trade, without conſidering the encouragement and protection given to it; I do not mean to call in queſtion the views or deſigns of any one at that period. I believe that others, as well as myſelf, had at that time but partially examined the ſubject, and in in truth we know that too many of our leading patriots had little or no knowledge of commerce, its intereſts and dependencies.—I confeſs that on a more extenſive view, and impartial examination of the ſubject, I think it evident that the reſtrictions which were laid on our commerce previous to the preſent diſpute, were over-balanced by the protection, and various encouragements afforded to it by Great-Britain, but ſuppoſing that at the cloſe of the war America remain independent, what muſt be the

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future ſituation of our commerce? Will independency at the reſtoration of of peace, give commerce ſuch a ſpring, procure for it ſuch new ſources and encouragements, as are neceſſary, not only to revive it from the ruined ſtate in which it now is, but to raiſe it ſtill higher than it has been at any former period? Or will independency prove prejudicial to the commerce of America? This is a ſerious queſtion, and the importance of it muſt apologize for the length of my letter. I know that I am writing to the firſt commercial character in America, but I alſo know your candour and love of truth, and therefore I venture to communicate to you my thoughts on the ſubject, which if juſt you will approve, if erroneous youwill correct. America left at liberty will, I am perſuaded, take, at the leaſt, three-fourths of all the European articles ſhe wants from Great-Britain. The ſuperiority of the Britiſh manufactures, their conformity to our taſte and habits; the generoſity and ſtrict punctuality of her merchants, and above all the credit which they can give, and which no other nation can, or will give, muſt ſecure to that nation, as great a ſhare of our trade as I have mentioned. But how are we to pay for thoſe purchaſes? Whilſt we were part of the empire, Great-Britain gave a preference to our iron, naval ſtores, pot aſh, flax ſeed, timber, &c. &c. and encouraged the importation of them by the bounties and by

laying heavy duties on the ſame articles from foreign nations. This will no longer be the caſe; we have no reaſon to expect to be even amongſt the moſt favoured foreign nations in the Britiſh ports. We have imagined that Great Britain could not ſupport its commerce, and manufactures, without our productions, and without our markets for a conſumption of theirs; this has been aſſerted, in harangues and publications, many thouſands of times, within ſeven years paſt, I confeſs, that I once believed it—but obſervation, and experience have convinced me, that we have been greatly miſtaken.—Of all the articles furniſhed by us to Great-Britain, I know but two, tobacco and rice, which cannot be obtained as good, and as cheap from other countries. the conſumption of Rice in Great-Britain, is very inconſiderable; and that of tobacco does not exceed twenty thouſand hogſheads annually, on an average.—Other countries, indeed, can produce both theſe articles, at as low a price as America can, but the preference given to them, from America by Great Britain, has formerly prevented their being cultivated to any extent.—It is well known that the Iſland of Cuba, the Coaſt of Brazil, and many other countries, produce tobacco of a quality ſuperior to ours.—That the Ukraine is capable of ſupplying all Europe with that article: its cultivation, it is true, is not yet carried to perfection there,

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but as it is, Ruſſia at this time exports large quantities of tobacco to France, and to other nations —The ſame may be ſaid of many other countries reſpecting rice. Indigo is produced in the Southern parts of America, and in the iſlands, every way ſuperior to ours. The productions of Ruſſia, Denmark and Sweden, &c. are the ſame with ours, and in exchange for them, thoſe kingdoms take the ſame kind of merchandize from England, as we formerly took; at beſt, therefore, we ſhall meet with rivals in the Britiſh markets on our arrival with our produce, and rivals in the purchaſes we wiſh to make there—But we are ſuppoſed to be Independent, and can therefore go where we pleaſe, but we cannot find purchaſers where we pleaſe, and the nations among whom we find them may lay what impoſitions they pleaſe on our ſales—The Northern powers in Europe, cannot become purchaſers, for they have the ſame articles to ſell—France wants but a very ſmall part of our productions; it wants neither our iron, pot-aſh, flax-ſeed, fiſh, oil, or, in ſhort, ſcarcely any thing except about 24000 hogſheads of our tobacco annually—and ſome of our timber, and naval ſtores; and for the two latter articles, we ſhall find the ſame rivals in the ports of France, as in England; and in regard to the firſt, the moſt important article of all, the cultivation of it, advances ſo rapidly in Flanders, and in the Ukraine,

that thoſe countries may ſoon rival us in the quality of their tobacco, and from the cheapneſs of labour, be able at all times to underſell us in France, and in all the Northern ports of Europe —We have no promiſe of a preference in the markets of France—nor the leaſt ground to expect it—Spain and Portugal, it is true, may want our flour and our fiſh, if, contrary to all appearance, we ſhould have any, of the latter, but they will want little or nothing elſe, and our trade, be it whatever it may, to the Southern parts of Europe, and into the Mediterranean, muſt at all times be expoſed to the Corſairs of Barbary— Thoſe piratical ſtates, who pay little or no reſpect to the flags of the firſt maritime nations in Europe, further than they are paid for it, will hardly pay any to the flag of a nation, which they have ſcarcely ſo much as heard of, and of which, if they come to know any thing, they will know that they can in no caſe, have any thing to hope or fear from—We have proteſted againſt the African trade, but if we relax, or reſcind our reſolutions on that ſubject, without a marine to protect our commerce there, and without either forts, or factories on the coaſt, we can have no ſhare of it—We cannot flatter ourſelves, that we ſhall be able to reduce either Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Canada, or the Floridas; and if Great-Britain be obliged at the cloſe of the war, to ſubmit to the loſs of thir-

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teen colonies, it is natural to ſuppoſe that ſhe will exert herſelf, to make the moſt of thoſe which are left her—We neither have nor wiſh for poſſeſſions in the Weſt-Indies—We formerly had a great and increaſing trade there, but how much of it ſhall we retain as an independent nation? If any part of the globe be dependent on us for our produce it muſt be the Weſt-Indies—Five years ago we rated our importance ſo high, as to believe that from a ſuſpenſion of trade with us, all the manufacturing towns in England would riſe, or, at leaſt, clamour loudly in our favour, through the want of employment; that Ireland would be ruined only for the want of our flax-ſeed; and that the Britiſh Weſt-India iſlands, muſt periſh by famine, from the want of our productions—But the experience of ſix years ought certainly to correct ſuch erroneous ideas of our own importance, or we muſt have become incorrigible, even by experience itſelf—Not one manufacturing town in Great-Britain has complained for want of employ; Ireland has has been ſupplied with flax-ſeed at (nearly) as cheap or cheaper rate than formerly, and has found ſufficient markets for her linens—The Weſt-Indies may have ſuffered but little diminution. Theſe facts ought to convince us, that the world is not ſo dependent on us, as we have imagined, and by purſuing our enquiries we ſhall find that we are as much, or more dependent

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on our neighbours than they are on us—I am not writing to one that declaims againſt luxury, without any conception of its effects, nor to one of thoſe, who talk a great deal about commerce, and of its benefits, or of its diſſervices to a country, without having the leaſt idea of its nature, or of the extent of its influence, and power: I therefore may, without reaſoning on the ſubject, venture to ſay, that the productions of the Weſt-Indies, are eſſentially neceſſary to us, and that we can do no better without their ſugar, rum, coffee, cocoa, cotton, &c. &c. than they without our flour, beef, lumber, &c. &c. Formerly as Britiſh ſubjects, we had the right of ſupplying the Britiſh iſlands with whatever they wanted, and taking in exchange whatever they had to diſpoſe of—We paid no more duties, than our other fellow ſubjects paid, either upon importation, or exportation—We had a right of carrying to the French, Dutch, and other foreign poſſeſſions in the Weſt-Indies, all our productions, tobacco excepted, and of receiving in exchange from them, whatever they could afford, rum and a few other articles excepted—The articles we received from them, were indeed ſubject to a certain duty on importation into America. But how was it then, and how is it now with the French, Dutch, and other foreigners, as to our commerce with their Weſt-India poſſeſſions? It is true we were admitted into

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their ports, but our flour, was a prohibited article, and only admitted openly, in times of ſcarcity. Many principal articles of our produce were in the ſame predicament: France, by prohibiting the free entry of our flour, into her iſlands, ſhews that ſhe was in no fear of their ſtarving without ſupplies from us. But what articles of their produce were we permitted to purchaſe and export openly in exchange? Molaſſes, or the wretched liquor which they diſtilled from it, only; all others, ſuch as coffee, cotton, ſugar, indigo, &c. we brought away as by ſtealth, and by the purchaſed connivance of their officers—Has France bound herſelf by treaty to give us more freedom of trade, with her iſlands than formerly? By no means—We are to be treated as the moſt favoured nation is treated; and the ſubjects of the moſt favoured nation were never better treated, than in the manner I have deſcribed—This favorite article of my countrymen, molaſſes, the only one of any importance, which we were at liberty to import from the French iſlands, was taken care of by Congreſs, in their firſt propoſal to France, for a treaty. I ſaw the importance of it at that time, and flattered myſelf we had ſecured it, without any real ſacrifice on our part, but Congreſs afterwards thought differently, and gave it up. We have not, therefore, at this day, any ſecurity even for this ſingle article—Every thing reſts on the general and vague

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terms of *reciprocity*, and of *being treated in the same way, and in the same manner, as any, even the most favoured nation shall be treated.* But it may be said, that the necessity in which the islands must be, for our produce, will at all times bring them to our terms, or at least to just and reasonable ones. Let us examine the subject attentively—The French islands can be under no necessity, of taking from us flour, or salted provisions of any kind; on the contrary, it is the policy of France, to prohibit them doing it, if so disposed; for by supplying her islands, with flour of her own growth and manufacture, and with all kinds of salted provisions purchased in Europe, with her brandies, wines, &c. she encourages the agriculture and commerce of her subjects in Europe, which is a prime object of every wise nation; as to fresh provisions, her windward islands only, can ever be in want of them, and at most, the demand is inconsiderable, and the business of supplying never was, in the best of times, a profitable branch of commerce; Great-Britain in possession of Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Floridas, can from those colonies supply her islands with every thing they want, at as low or lower rate than we can; wheat, lumber, fish, horses, and other articles, have for many years since, and before the war, been cheaper in Canada than with us, and West-India goods of every kind have been dearer; Great-Britain therefore

fore naturally muſt, and will ſhut her ports againſt us, as a foreign independent nation; her iſlands will want nothing from us, which they cannot be ſupplied with, from her own colonies on the continent, and thoſe iſlands produce nothing, which is not wanted either in Great-Britain, or in thoſe colonies; good policy muſt therefore lead her totally to exclude us from all trade with them. Our commerce in this moſt important branch of it, muſt therefore be confined to the ſupplying the French, Dutch, and other foreign iſlands, and ſettlements, with ſuch articles as they will conſent to take from us, and to receiving in return, molaſſes (openly ſo long as they ſhall think proper to afford it to us, free of duty) and ſuch other productions as they may be pleaſed to connive at our ſmuggling.—Thus in Europe, we ſhall be either excluded from our ancient and certain markets, or at leaſt rivalled in them, and we ſhall have no certainty of new ones, nor any ſecurity againſt heavy duties, and impoſitions in ſuch, as we may be able to obtain.—New channels have been opened, for ſupplying Great-Britain, with the commodities we formerly furniſhed to that nation, and for conſuming the manufactures, we formerly took from her. It was the intereſt and policy of Great-Britain, to promote our commerce, and fiſheries, whilſt we were a part of the empire; accordingly ſhe encouraged our ſhip-building by the purchaſe

of our ſhips, or by giving them freight; but being independent, the reverſe will become both her intereſt, and her policy towards us; her ports will be entirely ſhut againſt us, in the Weſt-Indies, for the reaſons already given, and our commerce in that important branch confined, as I have ſhewn, to the furniſhing the French, Dutch, and other foreign ſettlements, with ſuch articles as they ſhall conſent to receive, and under ſuch conditions as they ſhall ſee fit to impoſe, and in return they will give us molaſſes, if they pleaſe, free of duty. But their ſugar, coffee, cotton, &c. will ever remain prohibited articles, ſo long as thoſe nations are intereſted to make a monopoly of theſe articles in Europe, both on account of commerce and revenue, and it is impoſſible they can be intereſted to do otherwiſe; when France was in poſſeſſion of Canada, Louiſburg, &c. the government did not permit thoſe colonies to receive ſugar, coffee, or any of the productions of thoſe iſlands, directly from them, but obliged thoſe colonies to take them from France, charged with double freights, duties, &c. and can we expect that France will do for us what ſhe ever refuſed to do for her own ſubjects? That ſhe will grant us privileges which ſhe never granted to any other nation? Can we expect that Great-Britain, reſentful on account of her loſſes, and deſirous of encouraging the colonies, which may remain to her in America, and

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which will be able to ſupply her iſlands with every thing, can we expect that ſhe will permit us, to trade with thoſe iſlands on any terms? It is repugnant to common ſenſe to ſuppoſe it. Congreſs, you may remember, ſpent ſome months in debate about the fiſheries, they acted the parts of the hunters, who quarrelled about the bear-ſkin—for England in the mean time drove our Allies, as well as us, entirely out of them; nor can France regain any intereſt in the fiſheries, but by the ſacrifice of ſome advantage which ſhe has, or may hereafter gain. But how are we to come in for any ſhare in them? It will be to no purpoſe to plead, that our local ſituation gives us a natural right to participate, and that we enjoyed that right from our firſt ſettlement, &c.—That we enjoyed that right with others, as ſubjects, and part of the Britiſh empire, is true, but we have ſeparated from it, and appealed to the ſword; the ſword has decided againſt us on that ſubject, and ſhall we at the peace, have any thing to give, or to reſtore to Great-Britain, equal to the purchaſe of what that nation is almoſt as jealous of, as Spain is of her mines? Will France after having regained a ſhare in the fiſheries for herſelf, go ſtill farther to obtain an intereſt for them in us? Look into the treaty between us, and you will find France and we acted a little like the hunter I have referred to, in our diviſion of Newfoundland, and the fiſheries; but

it was made on condition of a conquest of them, by either, or both of us; that failing, France is under no obligation to guaranty any part of them to us; and what puts the matter out of all question is, that it is not for their interest that America have any share in the fisheries.—Deprived of these, and of almost all the West-India trade, wholly excluded from that of Africa, as well as from the benefit of selling our iron, pot-ash, flax-seed, timber, naval stores, indigo, &c. advantageously in Great-Britain and Ireland, with few or no markets opened for those commodities, what resources will be left for our Commerce? No nation in Europe except Great-Britain, will give a price for our indigo, which will answer, Ireland can be supplied with flax-seed, and lumber, from the North, at nearly as cheap a rate as we can afford those articles. Sweden and Russia can at all times undersell us, in the article of iron, timber, ships, naval stores of every kind, pot-ash, &c. The bounties on tar, turpentine, &c. being taken off, we cannot send those articles to Europe, without an insupportable loss, and we cannot expect that any nation (like England) will give us bounties on those articles. In taking a view of the West-India commerce, I have said nothing in particular of the Spanish, Portuguese, or Danish settlements in America. I think you will agree with me, that as the two former

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have ever been, and moſt probably will remain ſhut againſt all ſtrangers, nothing can be expected from thence, and that as to the latter, they are oo inconſiderable to merit particular attention, even were they not nearly in the ſame predicament, with thoſe of France and Holland, which you know them in truth to be.

Theſe external difficulties, appear to me to be of themſelves inſurmountable, but they are not all we ſhall have to encounter, if we ſhould, contrary to all probability, continue independent—— Without a marine force, our commerce would be every where expoſed to impoſition, and inſult, and we ſhall not probably be able to ſupport a marine. In truth, neither our friends, nor our foes, can wiſh to ſee us a maritime power, but there will ariſe at the peace, and in a ſtate of independency, other embarraſſments, and burdens on our commerce. Our national debt, conſidering our ability, will be immenſe, and we ſhall not eaſily agree in apportioning of it, to the ſeveral ſtates. This, and a multitude of other cauſes for diſpute, are ſo certain, and ſo likely to be productive, that it will be miraculous, if we can avoid a civil war with each other, as ſoon as we ſhall be freed from foreign enemies. Heavy taxes muſt at leaſt be laid, to pay even the intereſt of our public debts in the exhauſted ſtate, in which the peace will find us. We cannot think of leſſening the principal,

until

until the Continent ſhall have had ſome time to recover itſelf. But the intereſt of our public debt, and the expences of government in each ſtate will (though they muſt prove heavy) not be the whole of our burthens. The civil liſt of Congreſs, including the expences of their foreign miniſters, conſuls, &c. will exceed all our former expences, public and private, under our ancient government. Commerce therefore will neceſſarily become the ſubject of heavy taxes, becauſe the landholders who are naturally jealous of commerce, and not the merchants, will predominate in making our laws, and impoſing our taxes, a large ſhare of the taxes muſt however fall on the landholder, which will oblige him to raiſe the price of his productions, and this with the taxes on trade, will encreaſe it to ſuch a height, that we ſhall find no market in which we ſhall not be underſold by foreigners. You, who are perfectly acquainted with the diſpoſition of thoſe, who form the Congreſs, and the Aſſemblies of the ſeveral ſtates, know that it is very far from being favourable to commerce; their views are ſo contracted, that they never have ſeen, that agriculture and commerce mutually depend on, and ſupport each other. The reſolutions of Congreſs, in almoſt every inſtance, demonſtrate their ignorance of the principles and effects of commerce; the non-exportation agreement (for which I muſt blame myſelf

ſelf as well as others) was a fatal meaſure; it laid the ax to the root of our commerce, and our agriculture fell with it; that reſolution ſhews what extravagant ideas we then had of our importance, we flattered ourſelves that by ſhutting our ports, we ſhould diſtreſs Great-Britain and Ireland, and ſtarve the Weſt-Indies, ſo far as to effect our purpoſes, but the operation of that reſolve well nigh ſtarved our army, and the poorer people, and brought diſtreſs to the doors of every order; unhappily but too many of our leaders are ſtill buoyed up with the ſame wild, and groundleſs ideas, and when I hear men, reputed as the wiſeſt and moſt enlightened of American patriots, advance that commerce is rather injurious, than beneficial, and that it would be better to have foreigners who want our produce, to come and purchaſe it, than for us to carry it to them; That the whole attention of America as an independent nation, ſhould be turned to agriculture, and the manufacturing of articles of the firſt neceſſity.—When I hear ſuch doctrines advanced, and by men whom America has been taught to look up to, and revere, and reviewing at the ſame time, the other circumſtances which I have touched on, I become doubtful, whether our commerce would not ſuffer as greatly from internal checks, and embarraſſments, as from external ones—but, my dear friend, we are very far from the peaceable eſtabliſhment of independency, ſo far, that I candidly

didly tell you, that I think there is not any probability of its ever taking place, at leaſt in our days, The nations of Europe, France excepted, are all of them againſt it, and none more ſo than Spain. France becomes every day more indifferent to it, but ſo long as we can be made their inſtruments for humbling Great-Britain, Spain will temporize, and France will appear to be in earneſt on the ſubject; we are certainly the cheapeſt inſtruments they can find, to employ full one half of the forces of Great-Britain; forces, which, if left at liberty to fall on their foreign poſſeſſions, would ſoon reduce them, to the ſtate they were in in 1762. But how dearly do we pay, for the ſervices we are performing?

The powers of Europe, hitherto neuter, appear at this time far from being indifferent to the fate of Great-Britain, ſhould any of them take part with her, the war will aſſume a different appearance, and our fate will become from that moment determined. I think there is a probability of ſuch an event taking place ſoon, but my wiſh and prayer is for peace, and the re-eſtabliſhment of America in her original rights. The preſent moment is unqueſtionably the moſt important, America has ever ſeen, we are now of more weight in the general ſcale, than we can poſſibly expect to be hereafter, ſhould the powers of Europe, once agree, on the terms of peace, our aſſent will hardly be aſked, and we ſhould find it neceſſary

to

to acquiesce in the terms imposed on us. The present opportunity ought therefore to be improved; England, it is true, has a formidable league at this time against her, but we find in ancient as well as modern times, that nations less able to resist, have been successful, against leagues still more formidable; I do not, indeed, recollect any one league, that ever came off victorious, over the single power leagued against. The cause is in the nature of men, and nations; it must therefore still exist in a certain degree, and I know not why it should not even in its full force. You will call this a political letter, against which we have often protested, I intended it only as a commercial one, but I could not examine the future probable state of our commerce under independency, without entering on politics, and I have tired you so effectually by this time, that I will take my leave with requesting, that I will make my most respectful compliments to Mrs. Morris, and by assuring you, that I am ever, with the most sincere esteem, and attachment,

Dear SIR,

your most obedient,

and very humble servant,

S. DEANE.

Hon. Robert Morris, Esq. Philadelphia.

A great part of the obſervations, contained in the foregoing letter, on the ſituation, of the commerce of the United States, under independent ſovereignty, have been, already verified by experience; and it is worthy of remark, that as the firſt uneaſineſs in America, with the Government of Great-Britain, aroſe on account of the reſtrictions, laid by Parliament on commerce; ſo almoſt the only obſtacle, which at this day remains, to prevent a reſtoration of the moſt perfect friendſhip, between the ſubjects, of both countries, is their jealouſy, or different views of this object.—Neither party appears, as yet, fully to realize the ſtate, in which their ſeparation has actually placed them, with reſpect to each other; nor indeed can it be expected, that men, ſo lately *connected by the ſame bonds of law, loyalty, faith, and blood*, ſhould at once bring themſelves, to regard each other, in the light of aliens, ſtrangers, and foreigners, whoſe future connections, and intercourſe, are to be regulated, and governed by intereſt only; and that they have no longer, any rightful claim on each other, for commercial privileges, or advantages of any kind, or nature whatſoever.—Hence it is, that the proclamation, reſtricting the commerce between the United States, and the Britiſh Weſt-Indies, to Britiſh ſubjects, and Britiſh ſhips, has been regarded in America, as an act of partiality, and even of injuſtice, though without that

act,

act, no commerce could have taken place, between the two countries, in the ſtate, in which, their final ſeparation, neceſſarily left them; And in which, (like as with individuals, who are ſtrangers to, and unconnected with each other,) their trade and intercourſe, muſt originate, ſolely from the wants, the ſuperfluities, and the intereſts of both parties.—Several publications, have appeared within the laſt twelvemonths, on the trade of Great-Britain, and her Weſt-India Iſlands, with the United States, and on the terms, and conditions, by which it ought to be regulated, and able writers have taken oppoſite ſides, on the queſtion, but it appears to me, that it has not been placed in its true point of light, or juſtly, and impartially ſtated, by any of them, though the public are indebted to their diſcuſſion, for much, and uſeful information, on this important ſubject; the principal arguments of both parties, have been too much in this ſtile, *we can better diſpenſe, with your trade, and commerce, than you can do without ours.*— But commerce between individuals, or nations, is not to be regulated, by a principle, or motive, like this, but by apparent, or real mutual intereſts. The principal queſtions on this ſubject, appear to me, to be; How far it is for the intereſts of Great-Britain, to indulge the United States, with their former privileges of trade, with the Britiſh Weſt-Indies, and to permit ſhips built, and owned in

the United States, to be purchaſed or freighted, by Britiſh ſubjects, in Britiſh ports; there are indeed, ſeveral other points in queſtion, but theſe two are the moſt important, and on them, oppoſite opinions, have been advanced. On the one hand, the ſtrenuous ſupporters, of the navigation act, ſay, that no alteration, or repeal of any part of it, ought to take place, and conſequently, that the ſubjects of the United States cannot, conſiſtently with the intereſts of Great Britain, be permitted to trade, with her Weſt-India iſlands, or with any of her foreign poſſeſſions, in their own ſhips; and that ſhips built, or owned in the United States, ſhall not be admitted for ſale, or freight, in any of the Britiſh ports; on the other, it is ſaid, by thoſe, intereſted in the Weſt-India plantations, and in that trade, and by many who are engaged in, or acquainted with, the commerce between Great-Britain, and the United States, that the local ſituation, and circumſtances of the Weſt-India iſlands, are ſuch, as to render it eſſentially, for their intereſt, and ultimately, for the intereſt of the whole empire, to grant to the United States, a free, and unreſtricted commerce with them; and that to permit ſhips, built, or owned in the United States, to be purchaſed, or freighted, in Britiſh ports, will not prejudice, but greatly promote, the commercial intereſts of this nation. The facts adduced, and the arguments urged, in the ſupport

of

of their different opinions, are before the public, and it is not my intention, to attempt, to an examination of them, but only to make a few obſervations, which may lead to the adopting of a mean, between theſe two extremes. And it ought to be obſerved, that in a negotiation, for regulating the commercial intercourſe, of the two countries, (the Britiſh dominions, and the United States), one party, has no claim whatever, on the other, and that intereſt alone, muſt dictate; and, therefore, that previous to the forming of any deciſive opinion, or to the coming, to any final reſolution, on the ſubject, the particular, as well as the general ſituation, and intereſts, of both, ought to be impartially examined, and ſtated. It is well known, that the United States, produce a ſurplus of proviſions, of every kind, as alſo of horſes, lumber, and a variety of other articles, for which, no market can be found, equally near, and favorable, with that, which the Weſt India iſlands afford, and that in return, the United States, are in want of the production of the iſlands, to the full amount of their exports to them, and in particular, of rum from the Britiſh Weſt-Indies, which article is not to be had, at preſent, in any quantity, and of a tolerable quality, from any other quarter; And although it has been aſſerted, that the Britiſh Weſt-Indies, may be ſupplied, with the articles, formerly furniſhed by the United States, from

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Great-Britain, Ireland, and the remaining Britiſh colonies; yet it has not been denied, by any writer on the ſubject, that the Weſt-India iſlands, by means of a free trade with the United States, for proviſions, horſes, cattle, lumber, &c. will be much more regularly, and conſtantly ſupplied, and at a cheaper rate, than what they can be, if that trade is prohibited, or too cloſely reſtricted; nor has it been pretended by any one, that the Weſt India iſlands, can find in any other country, ſo extenſive, and advantageous a market, for their rum, as in the United States.— Thus far, mutual wants, and mutual advantages, in ſupplying the demands, of each other, are indiſputably in favour, of as free a commercial intercourſe, between the United States, and the Britiſh Weſt-Indies, as can be permitted by Great-Britain, conſiſtent with the general intereſt, of the nation. But beſides the articles of the produce, of the United States, wanted in the iſlands, they have alſo raw materials, to a large amount, which in the preſent ſtate, of the population, of the Continent, cannot be manufactured by them, to advantage; a foreign market is therefore to be ſought for, and this can be found, only in manufacturing countries;—In return, the United States, are in want, of the manufactures, of foreign countries, to a much larger amount, than the value of the raw materials, which they have to

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ſend abroad; their demand is nearly for the value of two millions ſterling annually, and this demand is increaſing. Great-Britain, being the firſt manufacturing, and commercial nation in the world, can give the United States, the beſt market, for their raw materials, and ſupply them on the beſt terms, with the foreign merchandize, and manufactures wanted by them; and experience ſhews that the Americans prefer the Britiſh markets, and manufactures to all others; and on the part of Great-Britain, every foreign market, for her manufactures, is of importance, in proportion to its demand, and to the value of the raw materials received in return; theſe circumſtances naturally lead to the eſtabliſhing of a trade between the two countries, on the moſt rational and permanent principle, that of mutual intereſt. It is undoubtedly true, that Great Britain, and her Weſt-India iſlands may, by adopting of certain meaſures, and ſuffering ſome temporary inconveniencies, be ſupplied with the articles formerly received from the United States, from other countries, and to permit the United States, to ſupply them with thoſe articles, in their own ſhips, and to enjoy a certain part of the commercial privileges, formerly enjoyed by them, under the Britiſh Government, will be a violation of the navigation act, and of ſome other acts of Parliament;—but it is equally certain, that without ſome privileges of commerce,

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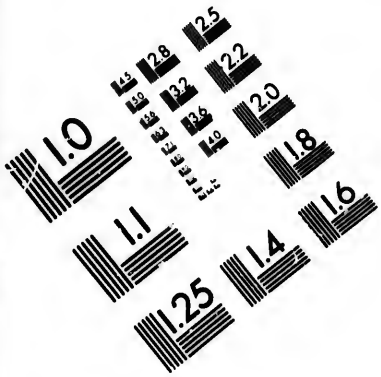

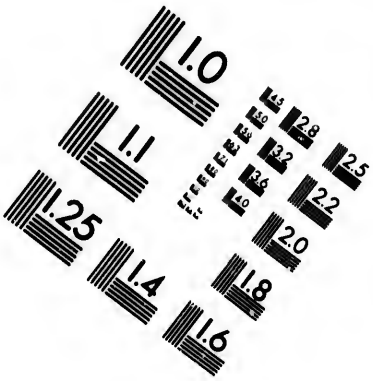

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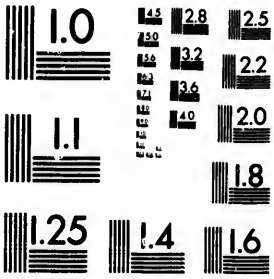

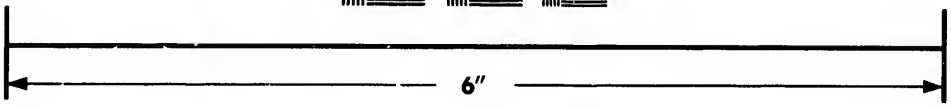

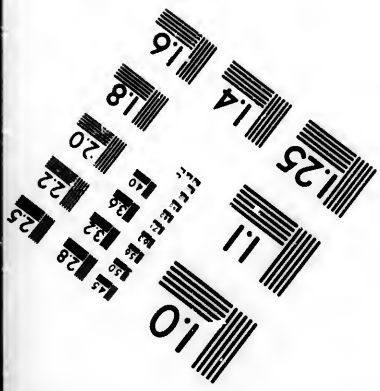

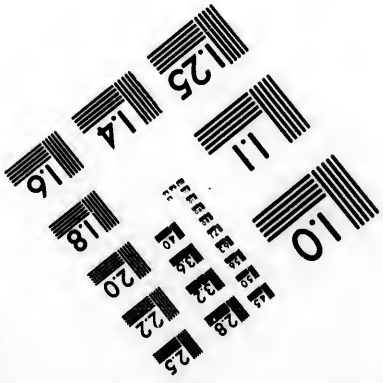

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with Great-Britain, and with her Weſt-India Iſlands, the United States cannot pay for this amount of Britiſh goods, and manufactures, and although they prefer them, to thoſe of any other country, yet without the means of paying for them, they muſt diſcontinue, or greatly leſſen their conſumption. But is it not for the intereſt of Great-Britain, to retain a market, which annually calls for near two millions, in value, of her manufactures?—It has been ſaid, that there is no danger on this account, for that other markets may be found, but is it not good policy, for a manufacturing country, to increaſe the number of its markets, rather than ſimply to exchange one, for another, of equal importance?—The ſuperior quality of moſt of the Britiſh manufactures, may command a market for them in every country, which has the means of paying for them, but it is but too probable, if the preſent reſtrictions are continued, that the merchants in the United States, will not be able, for ſome years to come, to pay even for the goods imported by them during the laſt twelve months only;—If the Britiſh Weſt-Indies can be ſupplied from Great-Britain, and Ireland, and the remaining Britiſh poſſeſſions, in America, or indeed from any other country, with the articles, formerly ſent them, from the United States, as regularly, and at as cheap a rate, as they heretofore had them;—and if thoſe who

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ſupply them, will take in exchange, that quantity of rum, formerly conſumed in the United States, it is evident, that the Weſt-India planters, and merchants, can have nothing to complain of on this ſubject; but theſe are queſtions not yet decided, and the ſituation of the Weſt-India eſtates, is ſuch, as to render the experiment extremely hazardous. On the part of the United States, it is urged, that, as Britiſh ſhips are permitted; to enter their ports, with the produce, manufactures, and merchandize of Great-Britain, and of Ireland, their ſhips have an equitable claim, to the ſame privileges, in the Britiſh, and that the ſame intercourſe ought to be permitted between them, and the Britiſh Weſt-India iſlands;—the navigation act directly, and wholly forbids this, but the late proclamations, ſuſpending in part, the operation of that act, with reſpect to the United States, admits the firſt part of this demand, in every article, except that of oil only, and rejects the latter, by confining the trade, between the United States and the Britiſh Weſt-Indies, to Britiſh built ſhips, owned, and navigated as the act preſcribes, by Britiſh ſubjects.—On the part of Great-Britain, the queſtion appears to me, to be, if it is not more for the intereſt, of her commerce, and manufactures, to permit the Americans, to be their own carriers, to and from the Weſt-India iſlands, and every other part of her European and

American dominions, and to fell their ſhips, or to take freights, in Britiſh ports, than by a rigid adherence, to the letter of the navigation act, to expoſe her Weſt India ſubjects to great inconveniencies, and real loſſes, and deprive her merchants, and manufacturers, of a great part at leaſt of a large, and increaſing demand, for their goods. It has been repeatedly demanded, what the United States can give, in return, to Great-Britain, for ſuch a relaxation of the navigation act, in their favor, and it muſt be acknowledged, that the United States, by their treaties with France, and Holland, cannot grant to Great-Britain, or to any other nation, any excluſive privileges; But the ſubjects of the United States, being at liberty, to prefer the markets, and manufactures, of one country, to thoſe of another, and as they naturally will give the preference, to the Britiſh, if they are not prevented by acts, and laws, from carrying their produce freely to thoſe markets, and thereby become deprived of a great part of the means of paying for thoſe manufactures, the queſtion then comes to this, if the relaxation of the navigation act, or the privileges urged for, by the Americans, will not ultimately be, as much for the intereſt of Great Britain, as for that of the United States, and if on examination, this ſhall, (as I think it will) be found to be the caſe, then it is clear, that Great-Britain can have no demand, upon the Americans, for any

thing

thing in return, for meaſures, as much for her intereſt as for theirs. It would require a large volume to diſcuſs this ſubject, as fully as it merits, I ſhall therefore only obſerve, that as in the management and regulation of the trade, and commercial intercourſe of the two countries, with each other, motives of intereſt alone muſt govern, ſo each of them, ought to examine, with the utmoſt attention, and impartiality, what on the whole is moſt for the general intereſt, of their reſpective countries, and not to confine themſelves, to particular branches, or to partial views.

If on the enquiry, it appear to be inconſiſtent with the general intereſt of Great Britain to permit the Americans to purchaſe, and export from her Weſt Indies certain articles of their produce, for inſtance, ſugar, or cotton, or indigo, they will be excepted, in the general permiſſion, and the ſame principle, muſt neceſſarily be adopted by the United States.—This can afford no juſt grounds for complaint, on either ſide. Sugar, cotton, and indigo, are almoſt the only articles of Weſt India produce, which Great Britain can wiſh to make a monopoly of—the United States are in no want of indigo, and their conſumption of cotton, has ever been inconſiderable, and it is agreed by all the writers, on this ſubject, that the Americans can purchaſe ſugar much cheaper in the French, Dutch

and Daniſh Iſlands, than in thoſe of the Engliſh. The articles of ſalted, beef, butter, tallow, and candles, may be ſent to the Weſt Indies, at a lower rate from Ireland, than from the United States; hence it appears to me, that if an entirely free, and unlimited commerce between the United States, and thoſe Iſlands cannot be permitted, conſiſtent with the general intereſt of Great Britain, yet it is not a very difficult taſk to regulate it, in ſuch a manner, as to be agreeable, and advantageous, to both countries.

The principal objection to ſuch a ſyſtem, is, that hereby Great Britain, muſt looſe, and the United States gain, in the carrying buſineſs; On this Lord Sheffield has forcibly argued, in his *Obſervations, on the Commerce of the American States.* Though I muſt candidly declare, that, as far as my knowledge extends, the facts advanced by his Lordſhip, in that publication, relative to the imports, and exports of the United States, are juſtly ſtated, yet I can by no means ſubſcribe to all the inferences, and concluſions, which he draws from them. But were I to enter on this ſubject, I ſhould ſwell, what is deſigned to be but a ſmall pamphlet publiſhed in my perſonal vindication, into a large volume; I ſhall therefore only obſerve generally here, what I have repeatedly urged in converſation with the noble Lord, that there is not the leaſt danger, of the United States, becom-

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ing the rivals, of Great Britain, in the carrying trade, or in a marine;—That although building ſhips for ſale, and for carrying the goods of other countries, and for the fiſheries, was the principal reſource of one, or two, (at moſt,) of the northern ſtates, yet the United States collectively, never were their own carriers; for though the New England States, carried their own produce, in ſhips built and navigated by their own people, and in ſome inſtances, became carriers for other countries; yet that was not the caſe, with any of the middle, or of the ſouthern States. The tobacco, naval ſtores, rice, indigo, lumber, and other productions of the middle, and ſouthern States, required by three times more tons of ſhipping, than was ever owned by them, or that could, at any period, have been put into that buſineſs, by the northern States; and that it is not poſſible, at leaſt in the natural courſe of things, that the ſouthern States, can for ages, if ever, become carriers even of their own produce; and that it muſt require ſome ſpace of time, for the northern States, to have a ſufficiency of ſhipping, even to anſwer this demand;—farther I have urged, that, as every one, who has wares, or merchandize to be tranſported to market, will naturally prefer the moſt cheap, and direct conveyance, and as the purchaſers will attend only to the quality, and price of them, this branch of commerce, like all others, muſt, and will, regulate itſelf by the

infallible

infallible principle, of intereſt, rightly underſtood; and it may be worthy of obſervation, that if the United States are not permitted to be their own carriers between them, and the Weſt-Indies, on the preſumption, that this would encourage the carrying trade, and encreaſe the marine of the northern States, to the prejudice of that of Great-Britain; The conſequence will be, that the New England States, will turn their attention, to the carrying buſineſs of Maryland, Virginia, and of the other ſouthern States, and by engroſſing of it, more than make themſelves amends, for their loſs of freight to, and from the Britiſh Weſt-Indies.

I may be told, that my preſent obſervations, are in part of them, different from thoſe contained in the foregoing letter, for that I then gave it, as my opinion, that in conſequence of the confirmation, of the independence of the United States, and of their final ſeparation from Great-Britain, Great-Britain would neceſſarily exclude the ſhips of the United States from her Weſt-India ports; but it ought to be remembered, that at the date of that letter, it was univerſally expected, that at the cloſe of the war, the two Florida's, and Eaſt Louiſiana, would be confirmed to Great-Britain; and that the reſigning of thoſe countries to Spain, makes the caſe extremely different, from what it would have been, had Great-Britain retained

tained them; and that I meant, in writing to Mr. Morris, to lay before him, not only, what would be, for the intereſt of Great-Britain, but alſo what would be in her power to do, reſpecting the commerce of the United States.

FINIS.

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