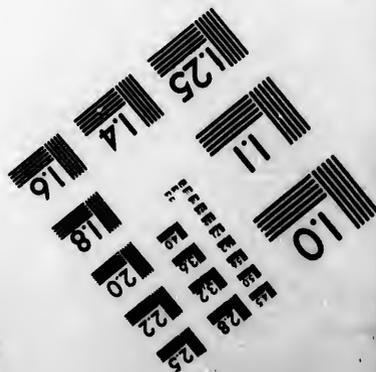
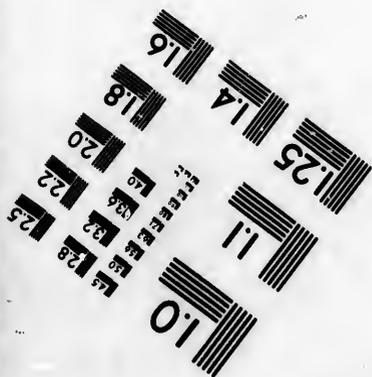
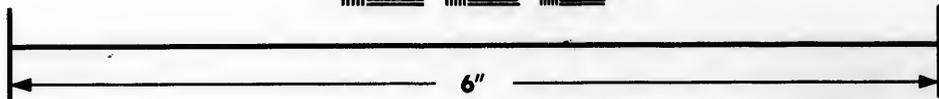
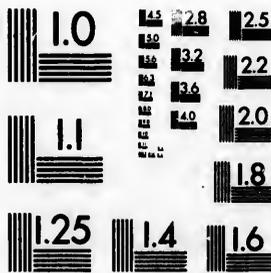


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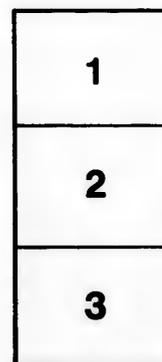
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*J. Cooper*

A  
PLAIN AND SEASONABLE  
ADDRESS  
TO THE  
FREEHOLDERS  
OF  
GREAT-BRITAIN  
ON  
The Present Posture of Affairs in  
AMERICA.

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Curse on his Virtues, they've undone his Country!—  
Such POPULAR HUMANITY is TREASON.

CATO.

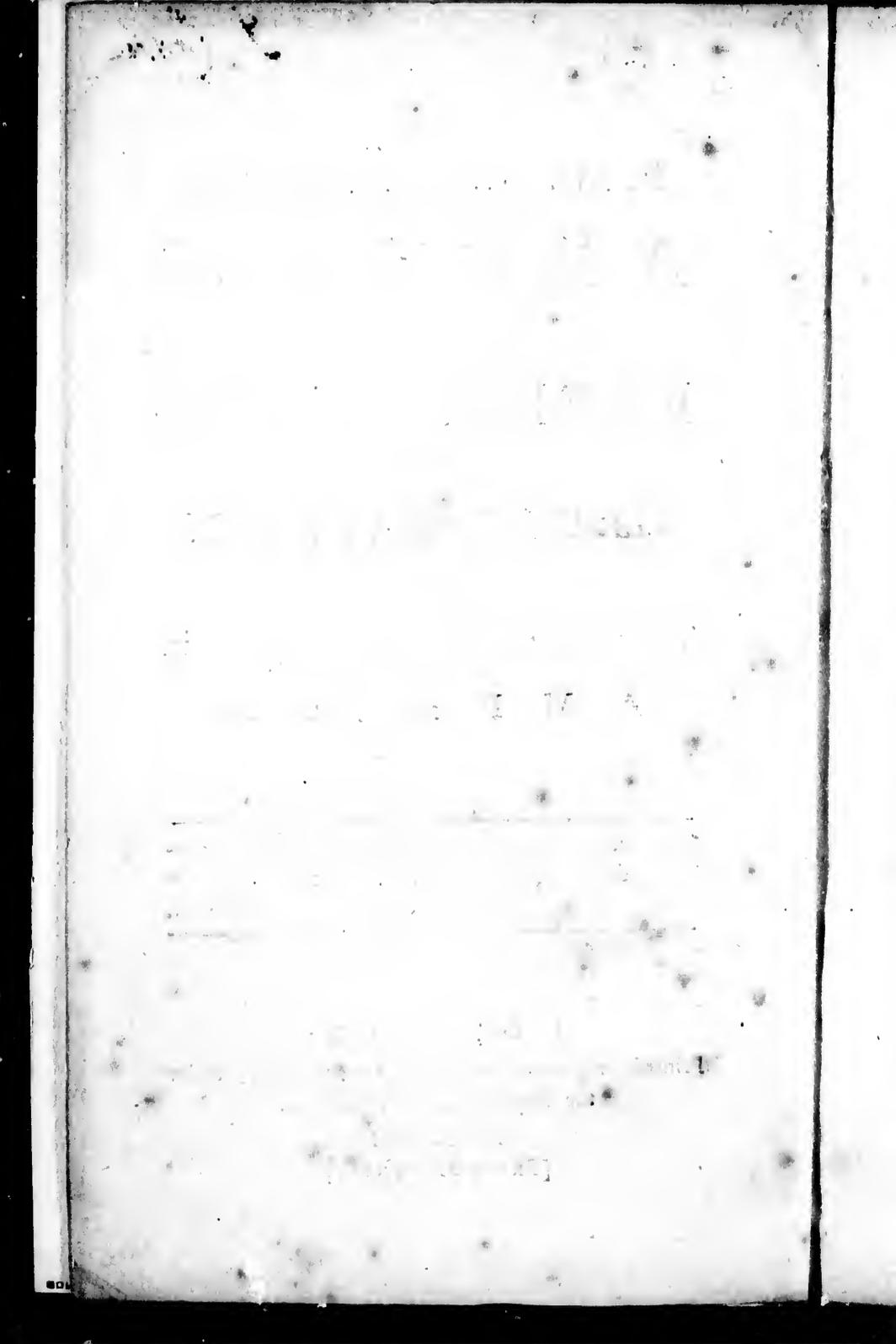
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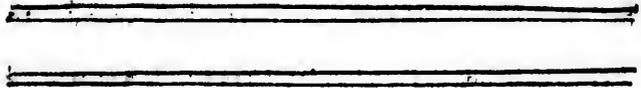
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PLAIN and SEASONABLE

A D D R E S S, &c.

**T**HERE is scarce any evil, natural or moral, but has had its admirers and advocates: even those that seem most abhorrent to human nature, such as poverty and disgrace, disease and pain, have been lavishly commended by some, and voluntarily embraced by others. How many magnificent temples have been erected of old to the several Vices? and how many Vota-

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ries are there, even at this day, ready to offer up their humble and ardent adoration to them? The most contemptible and abject of all qualities, which is Folly, can boast of a celebrated Admirer, who has adorned her in all the graces of wit and eloquence. There is but one evil under the sun, and that is Faction, in whose favour no champion has hitherto entered the lists: and this is the more extraordinary, as such a number of *ingenious* persons have, in all ages of the world, been handed up by her to the highest seat of honour and preferment. That not one of these sprightlier Wits should step forth, and vindicate his Patroness from those foul aspersions, which the duller and grosser part of mankind have thrown upon her, is the strongest proof that can be given, of the baseness and ingratitude of human nature. I do not despair, however, but that some time or other, she will have ample justice done her, and that we shall see as spirited and ingenious an encomium upon Faction, as the celebrated Erasmus has given us upon Folly. What induces me more particularly

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to this opinion is, that one of the most admired and *popular Geniuses* of the present age, has frequently been extravagant in her praises : not indeed in a plain, blunt, positive manner, for that would be fulsome and aukward ; but by strong and frequent inuendoes, which, however delicate, were too intelligible to be mistaken. As a proof of what I am now advancing, I beg leave to instance his late remarkable speech in *an illustrious assembly* ; which could be made for no other reason, but to throw every thing into confusion, and, by that means, serve the interests of Faction in the most effectual manner. I would not here be misunderstood, as if I meant to affirm, that he was desirous of serving any of those factions, which at present unhappily distract this kingdom. No !---He seems to have shaken hands fairly with them all, and they with him. Undaunted, and alone, he stands upon his own bottom ; and, like another Atlas, supports upon his shoulders the whole American world. It is a glorious sight, to see a man of his age and infirmities, strip off all little prejudices, and par-

tial affections for this or that country, and put himself at the head of a set of brave and resolute fellows, who, roused by the noble spirit of Liberty, are determined to burst asunder those artificial shackles, which human wisdom has invented, to cramp the free and generous mind, and assert the rights and privileges of nature. How uncharitable is it to impute this behaviour of his to a love of popularity, and a desire of ingrafting himself in the affections of a mob? This, it must be confessed, has hitherto been his darling passion; it has been the *polar star*, by which he has regularly steer'd his course through the voyage of life. To secure this inestimable jewel, more precious to him than the fabulous bags of wind to the provident Ulysses, how has he watch'd and toiled, ranted and roared, bullied and blustered! He has made his very diseases themselves subservient to this great end; and has either put them on, or thrown them off, as he found most convenient and necessary. Who can forget the grotesque figure that he made, when he was brought, *packed up* in flannel, to sup-  
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port the tottering liberties of his country? There never sure was a happier dress invented, for rousing the passions, and moving the pity of his audience, than this woollen wrapper; which was far more graceful, expressive, and eloquent, than the flowing robe of Tully, or the bleeding mantle of Cæsar. But though *popularity* has hitherto been the sole dear idol of his soul, I cannot help thinking that, *on a late occasion*, his views were more extensive and noble. Wild and enthusiastic as his passion for applause may be, it could never hurry him on to such amazing lengths, as those, to which he was lately transported. No!---To set at nought the laws of his country; to ridicule the whole body of statutes, as musty and obsolete; to fight one faction against another, and confound them both; to degrade the dignity of p-----, and rob the crown of its dearest jewel; to throw the whole kingdom into the utmost confusion and perplexity.---This, methinks, was the work of a master, and worthy of *Cromwell* himself. The Mighty Patriot has not yet discovered enough of his plan, for us to determine

termine exactly what he intends by such unaccountable behaviour; whether to reduce this distracted country to the last extremity of distress, and then step in as *perpetual dictator*; or to transport himself to America, and head the deluded colonists, whom he has encouraged to rebellion. If this latter is the case, I heartily wish him a safe voyage; for if Britain gives up her power of taxing the Colonies, what does it signify to whom they belong? so far from being an advantage to the Mother Country, they will become her greatest burden; as they will resemble, in the body politic, what wens and imposthumes are, in the body natural, which draw to them a disproportionate share of the blood and juices, without affording in return the least support or nourishment. Considered in this light, they are no other than excrescences; that while they belong to us, must inevitably weaken and impoverish us; and had better be cut off entirely, than retain so unnatural an union.

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The encrease of territory to Great Britain in America, since the peace, has made it necessary for seven thousand more forces to be kept up there, than were before the war; the expence of maintaining which, amounts to near *three hundred thousand pounds* a year. Add to this, the enormous sum of above *fifty millions*, expended in protecting her from the common enemy; who would have put the bit of slavery in her mouth, and have loaded her with burthens, too heavy to be borne. Besides this, she has experienced every kindness and indulgence in her manufactories and commerce, which it was possible for the most tender parent to afford. Need I mention the bounties that have been granted on Hemp, Flax, Timber, Indico, and several other Commodities? And what return has been required for all these weighty obligations? A sum not exceeding sixty thousand pounds a year, levied upon the most able and opulent, in the gentlest manner, and at the properest seasons. There might be some cause to complain (though it would even *then* be ungrateful) if the tax was either in itself,

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or in the mode of collecting it, burthensome and oppressive; if it impeded trade, if it fell upon the common necessaries of life, or was imposed on the poor and labouring part of the people. But the very reverse of this is manifest in every particular; and therefore it cannot be the tax itself that they object to, but to the *power of taxation*, which the Mother Country assumes over the Colonies. They look upon 'This as a proper opportunity to assert their independence and freedom: they know that Britain is exhausted both in men and money: that every nerve and fibre was strained, to carry on the late war; and that they cannot be stretched any further, without the utmost danger of breaking. Ungrateful America, to forget that it was upon HER account, that Britain has driven herself to this extremity of distress, to protect her in the enjoyment of her rights and privileges! The late war did not only begin in America, but it was the sole object which Britain had in view, during seven years expence of blood and treasure. How ungenerous and base is it, therefore, when her liberties are secured, and  
 peace

peace restored, to endeavour to throw off *all* obedience and subjection! It is not the *Stamp Act* which has occasioned these riots and tumults in the colonies; no---this is only a pretence or subterfuge. Bolt the matter to the bran, and you will find that the real grievance, the true and ultimate object of complaint, is, the *Act of Navigation*; and it is to rid themselves of this burden, that they are now in a state of revolt and rebellion. If they succeed in their attempt to *terrify* and *force* the legislature of Great-Britain to repeal the *Stamp Act*; the very next step they will take, and they are paving the way to it, will be to reject the *Act of Navigation*, which bounds and circumscribes their commerce. This is the true point of light, in which the seditious behaviour of the Americans ought to be considered; and considered in this light, it would be a mark of extreme infatuation or madness, to yield that to their fury, which their sober reason could neither expect, nor demand. Away with those idle, half-witted politicians, who make no more difficulty of repealing the *Stamp-Act*, than of re-

pealing the *Jew Bill*; and think that the nation would be no more affected by the one, than it was by the other! The question is not whether the kingdom would be ruined by *repealing an Act of Parliament*; but whether it is consistent with the dignity of the British legislature, or the peace, credit, and welfare of this country, to *repeal an Act*, the authority of which has been questioned, and the execution of it opposed with open force and violence. If the Americans gain their point by such tumultuous conduct, can it be imagined that they will ever submit hereafter to any other duties, or impositions, which the exigency of future times may think expedient and necessary? The right of taxation is included in the very idea of sovereignty; and it is impossible that they can resist it, with the least colour of reason, without declaring, in the most plain and direct manner, that they are determined to cast off all dependance and subjection.

Indeed, if the Mother Country has no right to tax the Colonies, her power over them is merely ideal; and every acquisition  
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of territory is, in this case, no better than the empty possession of a shadow or a phantom. Nay, one may go further, and assert, that so far from being any advantage, it is a real and a solid grievance: and all that Britain has been doing, by a long, bloody, and expensive war, was only to vindicate her right to dominions, under the burden of which she will groan and totter, as *Tarpeia* did under the weight of those very spoils and trophies, which she herself had desired. But the *Right of Taxation* cannot be seriously denied, *even by the Americans themselves*, though it may be resisted. I am aware that there are *Resolutions* of the several assemblies, which call in question the authority of the Mother Country, in this particular. But the secret and surreptitious manner in which these resolutions have been procured, for instance, at the end of a session, when the greatest part of the members were retired into the country, and those who remained, were the most raw and inexperienced; plainly proves that they do not contain the *general sense* of the Countries, from which they were sent.

There is *one*, in particular, that was carried by a majority of no more than one single voice, and that, too, when there were only thirty-nine members in the Assembly, which was scarce a third part of the complete number.

But the clear and *almost unanimous* resolution of both houses of parliament, about the *right of taxation*, makes it unnecessary to rest any longer upon this point: I shall come therefore to my original purpose, which was not so much to argue the merits of the case, as to address myself to the Landholders of Great Britain, who are more particularly concerned in the determination of this important affair. Consider, gentlemen, the present situation of this oppressed and miserable country. We are loaded with a debt of above one hundred and fifty millions; *thirty-two millions* of which were expended in the immediate and direct defence of America; and forty millions more in prosecuting the MIGHTY PATRIOT'S paradoxical scheme of *conquering America*, in Germany. To pay the interest of this enormous

mous debt, and provide for the exigencies of government, every commodity, whether of your own, or of foreign growth, every article, and necessary in life, is taxed to the very utmost farthing. The poor, and labouring part of the kingdom are scarce able, to supply the wants, and cravings of nature; they are scarce able, by the most painful industry, to procure even bread and water for their wretched families. Indeed, gentlemen, they are heavy laden, and I do not wonder that they groan under the intolerable burthen. Suffer me to call upon you to feel for Them, for Yourselfes, and for your Country!---Is it equitable, or even just, that this kingdom should pay the interest of money, which was expended in the defence of America? Will you submit to tax your *own lands*, to defray a debt, which has not been contracted upon *your own accounts*? Nay, I will go further, and ask you whether you *can* tax the land higher than at present? Will it *bear* an *additional* burden? Does not the price of every article in life, rise or fall, in proportion to the price of grain? And can you tax the land higher without encreasing that?

that? One may venture to prophecy that this country must inevitably be ruined, if an additional tax, of but *one shilling* more in the pound, be laid upon the land; and yet it *must* be laid upon the land, if ye give way to the froward Americans. There is no other alternative, you must either compel the Americans to bear their share of the burthen of government, or the whole weight must fall upon yourselves. But what reason can be assigned why they should be exempted? Do they not claim, and are they not entitled to, all the privileges of British subjects? Are they not part of the same common constitution? Do they not enjoy the benefit of our laws, and have they not experienced our favour and protection? And what? Are we to groan under the weight of seventy millions of debt contracted chiefly on *their account*; and they refuse to lend a little finger to ease us? The plain question seems to be neither more, nor less than this; whether you will enforce the Stamp-Act (which the Colonists themselves scarcely deny to be an easy, and equitable imposition) or by repealing it, give up the  
*power*

*power* of taxation. I do not mention the *right* of taxation, for of what consequence is that to this kingdom, unless it be exerted? You may talk, harangue, and swagger about it, as much as you please; but if you cannot, or dare not, enforce it, I will be bold to say, that it is ideal and visionary, and that you give up the *substance*, whilst you grasp at a mere *shadow*.

I have not patience with those gentlemen, who, through their ignorance of human nature, or an untimely timidity of disposition, talk of *ascertaining the right of taxation*, and yet are for *repealing* the Stamp-Act. Such a scheme as this is impossible, in the very nature of things; and to attempt it will be giving up both the *right* and the *power*, in as clear a manner, as *facts* are more express, and indisputable, than *words*. Is it credible that the Colonists will submit to any future imposition; when they have found, by joyful experience, that they have nothing to do, but to rise up in arms, and oppose violence to legal authority? No!---they will infallibly

bly shake off all subjection and dependance : they are now secured by our arms from foreign, as well as neighbouring enemies ; and are rich enough to live without our assistance, and believe me, gentlemen, they will shew it to our sorrow : if in the present instance, we palliate or temporize, the consequence will be, that in a very few years, perhaps in a few months, they will set aside *the act of navigation*, they will purchase what goods they please, in what markets they think proper, and trade with England, on no other terms, than those of their own imposing. Indeed, it implies an absurdity to suppose only the contrary---for who can imagine that a set of men will submit to pay five and twenty, or thirty per cent. more for goods, than they could purchase them for elsewhere, when they have nothing to do, but to deny and resist your authority ? What will it signify that by a formal resolution of the house of C-----, or by an act of parliament, you ascertain the *right of taxation* ? Your power is merely speculative, and your dominion over them exists only in theory : for as to the actual and practical part of it, you give it up, whenever

whenever you *repeal the act*; a compliance with which ought to be made the test of *their* obedience, as it is of *your* sovereignty.

Dangerous and inconsistent as the doctrine of a celebrated commoner has been, upon this occasion (and surely it is subversive of all order and government, at the same time that it is repugnant to the very principles of reason, justice, and the law of nations) I cannot help thinking it less absurd and pernicious, upon the whole, than this shuffling, prevaricating and temporizing scheme of the present ministry. To adopt Mr. PITT's idea, might be imputed, by the Colonists, to a tenderness for the rights and privileges of the people, which inclines the British legislature, in a point that carries with it the least shadow of ambiguity, rather to cede from their own power, than to trespass, in the slightest degree, upon the Liberties of the subject. Such indulgence as this might possibly (but how dangerous to put it to the trial?) work upon their gratitude, and make them, for the future, as cautious of

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offending,

offending, as they see Britain is of tyrannizing and lording it over them. But how differently will they reason, if the *Right of Taxation* is ascertained, and the Stamp-Act repealed? Is not this shewing that you have the Right, and yet are *afraid* to exert it? Is it not *passing Sentence* upon the Americans for their revolt and sedition, without *daring* to put it into execution? Have you any claim, in this case, upon their Gratitude? Certainly not: for they will think themselves as essentially aggrieved by the *Right of Taxation* being asserted, as if they had been actually taxed; and will impute it not to your *Lenity*, but to your *Fear*, that they are not.

Enough, gentlemen, has been said, to prove the *necessity* of enforcing the Stamp-Act, unless you will submit to tax *yourselves* for what has been expended upon *America*. It is plain, from the violent and licentious papers, that every day crawl from the press in their favour, that matters are carried to such a height, as to make force and power indispensably requisite. There is no *reason-*  
*ing*

ing with a spirit of sedition heated into a delirium.---You must either support your right over the Colonies by vigorous measures, or submit to lose it, by acting with tameness and timidity. This is the very crisis, that must determine the fate of America; whether she is to be subject to Great Britain, or free and independent. There is no doubt, that we have it in our power to reduce her to temper and reason, though she may, for a time, continue wayward and refractory. She cannot do without some of our commodities, when her present stock is exhausted: and though our trade may suffer for a season, by these unhappy disturbances, yet it will infallibly recover, and flourish perhaps afterwards with greater vigour. It is a fallacious argument, which some persons have advanced, that the *present decrease* of our American trade, is *entirely* owing to their resentment and indignation, on account of the *Stamp Act*. That this may have had some influence towards diminishing it, I will not deny; but that it is the sole cause, is untrue, as any one may perceive, by consulting  
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ing the Custom-House books, which prove that the decrease of our trade began, *before* the Stamp-Act was ever thought of. Indeed, there are many concurring reasons to be produced, which contribute to this disagreeable circumstance. There are at present in America fifty thousand persons fewer, and a million and an half of money less, than during the late war: her markets too are overstocked with our commodities; besides which, a shameful and illicit trade is carried on thither, from different parts of Europe. It is to extend this illicit trade, and to throw off *the Act of Navigation*, that the Colonies are now in a state of uproar and sedition. *Here* they are galled—*here* it is that the shoe pinches: let this *little* circumstance be removed, this *insignificant Act of Parliament* be repealed, and I will engage for the Americans, that they shall pay the Stamp-Duty with the utmost cheerfulness. Though they are now forward and techy, give them hopes of this, and they will be all duty and obedience. Like *Regan* and *Goneril*, they will coax their good old Parent, 'till we have given  
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the staff out of our own hands, and that they will, very probably, lay it about our shoulders. In short, while Britain asserts her privileges, and maintains her authority, she has nothing to fear from the licentious behaviour of the Colonists; but she will have reason to dread the day, when, encourag'd by her indulgence, they lay aside their subjection. Whenever that unhappy period arrives, how applicable to her will be the following words, which the Fool uses to poor old Lear, "Thou wast a pretty fellow, when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning: now thou art an O without a figure."

*F I N I S.*

