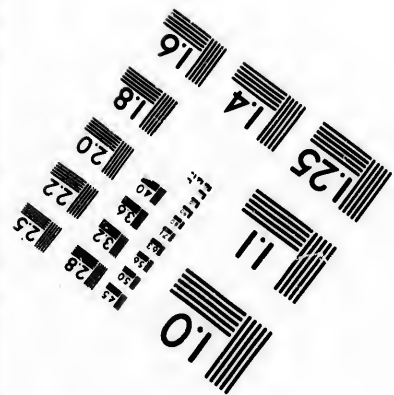
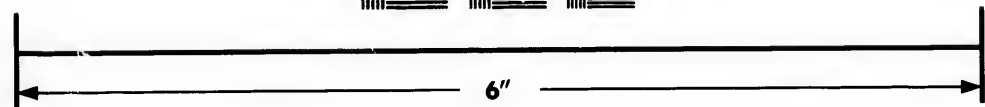
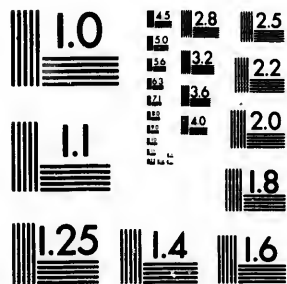


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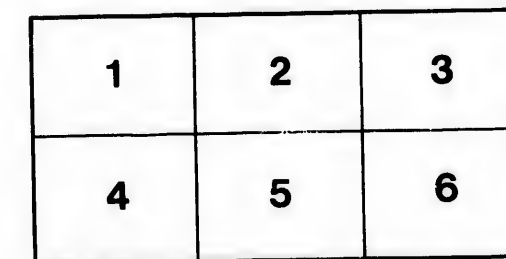
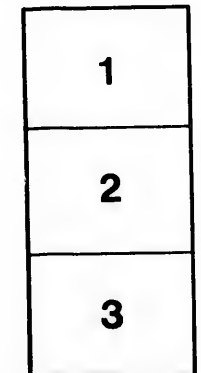
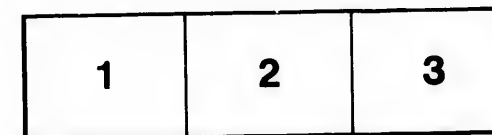
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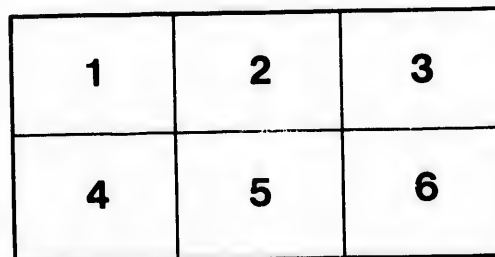
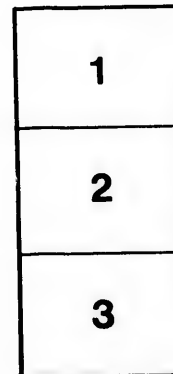
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H O U S E S o f P A R L I A M E N T.

The Colonies of every popular, mixed, and free Government,
preserving their Duty, have a Right to be free.

Mr. CANNING's Letter to the Earl of HILLSBOROUGH.

..... Dare do all that may become Men,
Who dare do more, are none.....

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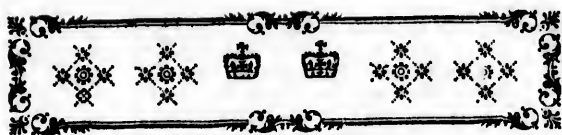
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THE
CASE OF
GREAT-BRITAIN
AND
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THE affairs of Great-Britain and her Colonies are at a crisis. If our justice or our moderation dictate to us the making any concessions, they should be made whilst they can yet be *imputed* to our moderation or our justice. The present Session of Parliament should determine upon some permanent system in this point. Great Britain should fix the Pretensions which she will never relinquish, and the Colonies should have certain information of those claims which they must submit to. Until such a system be resolved upon, there will be irresolution on the one side, and repugnance on the other; and no system can be stable that is not founded upon equity and wisdom.

It is the resolution, of the present Ministry, it is said, to impose taxes upon the Colonies, by the authority of the British Parliament, and to *compel* the Colonies to submission. To examine the justice and the policy of those measures, and to suggest others, which appear to me less exceptionable, in each of those particulars, is my object.

THE Colonies, by their respective Charters, have not uniformly the same privileges, or the same constitution. But though they differ in many particulars, they are alike in the following; namely, That the inhabitants of every one of them have a right to tax themselves by their representatives, in their provincial assemblies;

A 2 and

that none of them vote for representatives in the British Parliament; and that all of them are to enjoy the freedom of British subjects. In the search for arguments against the Americans, the validity of those charters has not passed unquestioned. I shall say, however, but a little in their support, as the attacks have been very weak and very few. From the earliest times down to the present, the disposition of foreign territory belonging to Great-Britain has always been vested in the Executive. It is a power which the Restoration and the Revolution have left unshaken. From the cession of Tangier to that of Guadaloupe, how frequently has it been exercised? And in the particular instance of Gibraltar, it was necessary to pass a law to restrain it. * If then the Crown, at the time when it granted the charters, could have ceded the territory of America to a foreign power, could it not have fixed the terms on which its present and future inhabitants should continue the subjects of Great-Britain? Where it could have relinquished *all* the authority possessed by Great-Britain, certainly it could relinquish a *part* of that authority. Where it could make a *total alienation* to enemies even, surely it could make a *modified grant* to subjects. But suppose that the Crown had not been legally possessed of that power, is there not a term after which uninterrupted possession confers a right? Have not the Colonists possessed their charters much longer than that term? Have they not dedicated their lives and fortunes to the improvement of that country, from a dependence upon the validity of their title? Have not the British Parliament seen and acquiesced in their doing so? Has not Great-Britain, in her exclusive trade, received a valuable consideration? Surely then it would be monstrous injustice to deprive them of rights so purchased and so confirmed. It has also been urged by some, that the Parliament can *revoke* these charters when it shall think proper; for that it can take away from any city or corporate town, in England, its charter, notwithstanding any length of time it may have enjoined it. I answer, that if an English city or corporate town had so purchased their charter, as the Colonists have purchased theirs, and had so long possessed it, it would be unjust in the Parliament to rescind or violate it. But the comparison is totally unfair; for the charter of an English city or corporate town, and those of the Colonies, besides other material differences, have this essential one, that the former give a Right of representation in the British Parliament and that the latter do not. If therefore the charter of a British city or borough be rescinded by Parliament, it is rescinded in an assembly which is the representative of that city or borough. Where a part of England only is concerned, the legislature of England may claim unlimited power, as a body to which all the rights of Englishmen are made over and entrusted. But the charters of America are agreements made between England on the one part, and the Colonies on the other.

The

* At present it is unalienable from Great-Britain.

The House of Commons of England is the representative of one of the contracting parties only, namely England; and therefore cannot act for both. They have none of them any share in electing it; it cannot therefore legislate for them. It is a party, and cannot therefore be a judge.

THE opponents of the Americans admit, that they are intitled to the privileges of British subjects; that they are a free people. Could we determine what these privileges are, and what this freedom, the dispute would be at an end. The American asserts, that he is deprived of the most essential privilege of a Briton, and a free man, if the colony to which he belongs can be taxed by an assembly in which it is not represented. The advocate for administration, answers, that there are many natives of Great-Britain herself who are not represented; for that there are many who have not votes in the choice of representatives, and that the Colonists have no cause to complain, when they are in the same condition as many of the natives of Great-Britain. Would a Colony pretend to a better constitution than the mother country, from whence she derives it? As this argument has been frequently repeated, I suppose it to be a favourite one with administration; and as it is the only method that has been tried to reconcile their assertion, that "the British Parliament has a right to tax the Colonies," with their concessions, that the Colonists have the privileges of Britons, and are a free people; let us listen to an American pleading his own cause, in answer to this argument; "I do not claim a better constitution than my mother country: you have misrepresented my claims. I have said that a right of suffrage in the choice of our representatives is the most essential of British privileges; but I have *not* said, that every Briton enjoys that Right; nor do I require that every Colonist should enjoy it. There are many Britons who have no vote in the election of the House of Commons, so are there many Colonists who have no vote in the election of our provincial representatives; alledge, if you will, that in being taxed by your Parliament, you are taxed by an imperfect representative; in being taxed by our provincial assemblies, we are taxed by a representative as imperfect. Our freedom therefore, in point of taxation, when we are taxed by our own assemblies, is not greater than yours; it is only equal to it; our constitution is an image of yours. But if we are to be taxed by your Parliament, our constitution no longer resembles yours, and our freedom is annihilated. If there be many Britons who have *not* a vote in the choice of their representatives, there are also many that *have*. The possession of a 40 s. freehold, in Britain, confers the privilege of a vote: the possession of the whole continent of America, does not confer that privilege. Do you not know the infinite difference between a nation where all have *not* the power of voting for their representatives, and a nation where *none* have that power? The former is your condition,

the British Parliament; of British subjects. cans, the validity of shall say, however, have been very weak a to the present, the Great-Britain has al- power which the Re- on. From the cession equently has it been Gibraltar, it was ne- en the Crown, at the eceded the territory ve fixed the terms on ld continue the sub- relinquished all the y it could relinquish a ce a total alienation to sed grant to subjects. ally possessed of that ninterrupted possession ossessed their charters t dedicated their lives ntry, from a depend- not the British Parlia- ? Has not Great-Bri- aluable consideration? ce to deprive them of as also been urged by harters when it shall n any city or corporate ding any length of time n English city or cor- as the Colonists have t, it would be unjust But the comparison is lish city or corporate ter material differences, a Right of representa- the latter do not. If ough be rescinded by which is the represen- art of England only is claim unlimited power, men are made over and agreements made be- Colonies on the other. The

Great-Britain.

tion, and therefore you are a free people; the former is what we claim; the latter is the condition of slaves, and that is what you offer. We claim the right of suffrage, as the privileges of Britons, and you tell us we have it, because we are like those Britons who have it *not*! We claim the same constitution as Great-Britain, and you offer us only the *defect* of that constitution, but deny us its *advantages*. England cannot be taxed, but by an assembly, where her land is represented by Knights, her monied interest by Citizens and Burgesses, and therefore she is a free nation. Is then America on a par with England, in point of Freedom? If she can be taxed by an Assembly, to which her freeholders send *no* Knights, and her cities *no* Citizens. You say that your right of suffrage is partially distributed, in Britain; give us then a right of suffrage *as* partially distributed in America. For this representation, partial and imperfect as you call it, your Magna Chartas have been demanded, your patriots have bled, and your monarchs have been dethroned. Was this for nothing? yet this you deny to the Americans, though you say to us, Ye have the privileges of Britons."

"But there is yet another defect in your argument. For it is not true that we are in *as good* a condition as those Britons whom you call unrepresented, and who are not electors: for even *they* have this great advantage, that both the representative and the electors pay a part of the tax, as well as those who have no suffrage: whereas if the House of Commons of England should tax the Americans, neither the representatives nor the electors would pay any proportion of what they imposed upon us; they would not tax, but *untax* themselves. The condition therefore of an Englishman who has no suffrage, when taxed by the British legislature, and of an American taxed by the same authority, are totally dissimilar. Place them in situations which bear *any* similitude, and it will shew in the strongest light, the injustice of the present measures. Suppose then that the Parliament of Britain should impose a tax, from which themselves and those who voted for them should be exempted, and which should be paid entirely by those who had no suffrages; this would bear *some* resemblance to their taxing the Americans; and would not this be unparalleled injustice? But if even this (unjust as you must esteem it) were the practice of your Parliament, the condition of a non-voting Englishman would still be infinitely preferable to ours; for even such a tax as I have stated, would fall upon the relations, the friends, the dependants, the tenants, the manufacturers, the labourers of British legislators. The legislator would feel its effects, almost instantaneously, he would find his own interest immediately concerned; he would therefore use some moderation. Besides, he is an eye-witness of their condition, he can judge of their abilities, he can be wounded at the sight of their distresses. But he can-

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" not see our misery, he cannot judge of our abilities; and his
 " tenants and his manufacturers will feel the *immediate* effects of
 " our ruin, not in their distress, but in their exoneration. If
 " therefore the legislature of Britain should adopt such a system of
 " unparalleled injustice, with respect to the non-voting inhabi-
 " tants of Britain, yet, even the sufferers by, and the objects of
 " that injustice, would be happy, in comparison of us. Suppose,
 " for a moment, if you can bear the thought, suppose for a mo-
 " ment, that your House of Commons were not elected by you,
 " that they were an hereditary body, in no wise indebted to your
 " choice; would you not be an enslaved and an unhappy people:
 " but even then you would be happier than we are. A body of
 " 500 men, situated in the midst of seven millions, and taxing
 " those seven millions, would surely be more bound to modera-
 " tion, by fear, if not by principle, than the same body, assisted
 " and supported by those seven millions, in taxing two millions
 " who are at a distance. To oppress, in one instance, would at
 " least be infamy, if it would not be punishment; in the other
 " they might find it popularity, they might think it patriotism.
 " Mr. P——t said, (if I mistake not) that every man in England
 " could huzza at an election: even that method of expressing
 " one's wishes, is some satisfaction, and has some influence; the
 " shoutings of the people have had great effects; and the very
 " murmurs of Englishmen, had perhaps more share in the repeal
 " of the stamp-act, than the united voice of America. We cannot
 " even *huzz.* at a British election!

" THE right of presenting petitions to parliament was deemed
 " of so much importance, that it was inserted in the Bill of Rights.
 " In this fundamental right, the bulwark against parliamentary op-
 " pression, as well as every other, under what disadvantages should
 " we labour, if you were to make laws for us? How different is
 " the effect of a petition presented by the hands of the injured,
 " enforced by their assiduity, and recommended by their tears,
 " from that of our paper-representations? They are subject to be
 " misrepresented in a thousand ways.

" THEY come cold, and you do not feel them; often too late,
 " and you cannot comply with them; and what was done by you
 " through inattention and mistake, must be maintained *for dignity*;
 " in a word, they do not strike home, either upon your caution
 " or your kindness, your affections or your fears. In this parti-
 " cular, the very women and children of England, have an in-
 " fluence upon parliament, of which the Americans are destitute.
 " How different is your lot from ours! In the character of an
 " American, to the people of England I speak. Your frequent
 " elections are a valuable privilege to you; what privilege are
 " they to us? At the close of a parliament, you expect popular
 " measures, from the fears and the hopes of your representatives.
 " But

" But who will find it his interest to be a friend to America? They
 " will wish to gain the favour of their countrymen, and therefore
 " will burthen America, in order to disburthen England. What
 " to you is a valuable privilege, will be to us a source of repeated
 " oppression. We are worse even than your Papists. In being
 " excluded from the right of suffrage, they are like us; and as
 " they pay double land-tax, in that *additional* payment the refer-
 " ence continues; for it is a tax imposed by men whom they
 " had no share in electing, and it is a tax which those who im-
 " pose it do not pay. But this disability in point of suffrage, and
 " this *additional* payment, are penalties inflicted on your Papists;
 " and why? Allegiance as by law required is a quality essential to
 " being a subject. Your Papists are defective in that quality.
 " They are considered as not completely subjects, and, as such,
 " penalties are inflicted on them. Your only justification for in-
 " flicting these penalties on them, is that you doubt their being
 " subjects. Your only pretence for inflicting the same penalties
 " on us, is that we are subjects. *Same* penalties, did I say, nay
 " worse; for as they are inflicted on us, without offence, we
 " cannot by a discontinuation of offence, exempt ourselves from
 " these grievances. The Papist, by becoming a Protestant, can
 " free himself from this disability, and this double taxation: but
 " we cannot free ourselves from this misery, but by ceasing to be
 " Americans. Besides, in every other case, except that addition
 " of land-tax, your Papists are in as good a situation as any of
 " the rest of your inhabitants who have not votes: but in *every*
 " tax you lay upon us, we are in as bad a situation as your Papists
 " are in that one. Besides, your Papists are connected with their
 " legislators, by relationship, friendship, neighbourhood, or de-
 " pendence. Their possessions too are British, and they must have
 " influence, tho' they have not votes. And the great right of
 " petitioning, they possess, with all its advantages, and can en-
 " force their petitions by their presence, their assiduity, their
 " numbers, and their tears. In how much worse a situation are
 " we than your Papists, whom for their obstinacy in an unconsti-
 " tutional and persecuting religion, you have made the outcasts
 " of legislation. What then is the freedom, and what are those
 " British privileges, to which you confess we are entitled? What
 " are those rights which we have possessed above an hundred
 " years, which we derived from solemn compact, which we have
 " purchased by an unshaken allegiance, and by the profits of our
 " trade?"

In this reply, which I have put into the mouth of a Colonist, I
 have examined, pretty minutely, the real extent of American li-
 berty, under the present measures. I have shewn the *dissimilarity*
 of their condition to our own, and to that of a free people. I shall
 now shew the similarity of their condition to that of those nations
 whom we call slaves. The author of the Letter to Lord Hillsbó-
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rough, says, " *Libertas recipit magis et minus, that there are degrees of freedom.*" I allow it. In what does perfect political liberty consist? Some authors define it to be, " the power of doing what the laws permit." If I do not mistake the meaning of this definition, it is clearly erroneous. To do what the laws of Turkey permit, certainly is *not* liberty. Perfect political liberty consists rather,--in the not being subject to any laws, but such as we have consented to by ourselves, or by our representatives. If Britain is but imperfectly represented, it has but an imperfect freedom. But considering the imperfection of every thing human, it may well boast of the excellence of its constitution. There are other nations, the lives and fortunes of whose inhabitants are dependant upon the will of some person whom they do not elect, and whom they cannot remove; or upon some other country, in the government of which they have no share, France, Spain, and Turkey are instances of the first; Corsica, while it was under the yoke of Genoa, of the second. All such governments are absolute or despotic, and the people subject to them we call enslaved. Between their situation and our own, there are indeed many degrees. But I defy the author of the letter to Lord Hillsborough, to shew, that any of those degrees would be enjoyed by the Americans, if measures should be carried to the extremes which we now hear of. I do not say that there is *not* a medium, between a good constitution, and simple despotism; but I say the Americans would not *possess* that medium. He objects to the advocates for America, their asserting, " That if dependance be enforced in any the least degree, the Colonists are slaves." Let him not object it to me; my assertion is that they are slaves, if the British Parliament assumes unlimited power over them, *in every particular whatsoever.* If a people can be deprived of their lives and their property, by another person, or another nation, is it not evident that such a people is not free? whether it be by a nation, or by a monarch, is not material. The masters indeed are different, but the *government* is equally despotic. The Helots of Sparta were as much slaves, as the subjects of the Grand Signior. Now I defy any person to mention one single power, which the Spartan Republic assumed over the Helots, which England does not assume over her Colonies. I would not insinuate that Great-Britain will not govern with greater humanity: but if her power be mildly administered, it will indeed be a *milder* despotism, but it will not therefore be *the less* a despotism. Should we thus address ourselves to a colony of France or Spain: You live under an absolute government; transfer your allegiance to us, and you shall enjoy those privileges which Great-Britain diffuses through all her dominions. Might it not answer us in these words; " I am not burthened with taxes in near so great a proportion as your Colonists, but I would consent to pay more than I do, if I were to enjoy a greater degree of freedom. What then are those privileges which you offer to me? We might say to them, One of the principal privileges shall be this,

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that you shall not be taxed, except by your own representatives, or else by the parliament of Britain. Might they not then reply to us? I find then that my representatives are not to be a part of that British Parliament which is to tax me; were I subject to the absolute dominion of an assembly elected by the provinces and cities in France, should I be one whit more free, than in being subject to the absolute dominion of its monarch? When you spoke to me of privileges, I imagined that you meant that right of suffrage, which is the boast of the British constitution. You give it to me indeed, in one place, but you will tax me in a place where you will not give it to me. When our own Sovereign has taxed his subjects as much as he thinks proper, he will scarcely refuse them the privilege of taxing themselves again, in any manner they please. If you can demonstrate to me that our monarch assumes one single power over us, which you do not assume over your colonies, I will hearken to your proposals, but if you cannot, your government is as arbitrary as that of France, we are less taxed, and as free as your Colonies.

HAVING examined the real condition of the Colonists, under the present supposed measures, with as much attention as I am capable of, I can find in it no circumstance, which should prevent my asserting that they would be as destitute of freedom, as any nation ever was, or ever can be: now whatever those rights and privileges may consist in, which confessedly belong to the Americans, they certainly do *not* consist in *slavery*, which is the want of every right, and the deprivation of every privilege.

I HAVE shewn that the comparison between the Americans and those Britons who have no suffrages, is false; and that if it were true, it would not be argumentative. I have shewn what the freedom of the Americans does *not* consist in, and I will now endeavour to shew what *are* those privileges which for our own sakes we must allow them. I cannot help observing in this place, that every one who has written against them, has confined his endeavours to the proving which of the British privileges they ought *not* to possess; but not one of them has mentioned those privileges which they *ought* to enjoy. It is a little suspicious that those authors whose professed design is to convince and to conciliate the Colonists, have never once enumerated those advantages which they are still to enjoy under parliamentary government. Surely nothing would be so likely to pacify them, as a recital of the blessings which are still to remain to them.

BUT to return; in order that the Americans should enjoy British freedom, it is not sufficient that they should adopt *that part only* of our constitution, which *departs* from the principles of British liberty. They must possess that part which is excellent, as well as that part which is defective, or their liberty is not an image of ours.

ours. It is not therefore sufficient that an American land-holder should be on a par with a Briton who has no landed property, or with a British Papist. But that an American *freeholder* should have the same power over his *own* property, as a *British* freeholder has over *his own*. If any man shall object to me, that I have placed the Colonists in a situation *too* equal to their mother-country; I answer him, that I have done so, only with respect to their *own vested and acquired* property *; and that Americans have as much right to the property of America, when once *acquired and vested*, as Britons have to the property of *Great-Britain*.

IN order that taxation and representation may not be united in America, the adversaries of America deny that they were united in Britain. And attempts have been made to produce instances of their disunion, taken from different periods of the British constitution. It is not material to my cause, to examine whether those attempts have succeeded. If America be entitled to English privileges, the English constitution, she is entitled to that constitution, as it stood at the *time* when the colonies were planted. She is not to have the constitution that existed in the time of William the Conqueror, or of the Saxon heptarchies, or of the Roman government. If England communicated to America her constitution and her privileges, we communicated them such as she herself at that time enjoyed. It was the constitution of England at that period, that every man possessed of 40 *s.* a year, by that free tenure which we call a freehold, should have a vote in electing a member of that assembly which alone could tax his property; besides certain persons invested with privileges in cities and boroughs. This was and is the bulwark of English liberty; without this we should be slaves. This then is the constitution which is communicated to America: let not therefore *her* property be taxed, except in an assembly to which *her* freeholders and electors send a representative. In the Saxon constitution, the privilege of voting was diffused much more universally; it belonged to all who held by a free tenure; that is, to all the *subjects* of England; for those who hold by other tenures were not subjects, but vilani, or slaves. So entire was the union at that time, between representation and taxation: but to this constitution the Colonists have no pretension, as it was not the constitution of England at the time of their establishment. By the 8th of Hen. VI. the right of voting was confined to such freeholders as had 40 *s.* a year, and thus the more opulent freeholders were entrusted with the rights of *all* the rest. It appears to me that England by this change had *two* kinds of representatives. The richer freeholders represented the *others*, and the

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* The Americans must relinquish many rights of property; that is, many rights of *acquiring* property; for they must be subject to British navigation laws, and trade-regulations: but the right of *granting* property already acquired and vested, should be sacred. This should be theirs *safe and entire*.

House of Commons represented *them*. Thus the opulent freeholders were *representatives of election* constituted by their circumstances; and the knights were *representatives of legislation*, appointed by suffrage. If there be any justice in this opinion, all the *subjects* of England were either actually or virtually represented. But if there be not, and if it be admitted that England was and is *partially* represented—Give a representation *as partial* to her Colonies. If Britain be imperfectly represented, she has but an *imperfect* freedom; but if the Colonies have *no* representation, they have *no* freedom at all. If Britain has *not* the *best* constitution, which human invention could have suggested; is it a reason that America should have the *worst*?

IN the memorable contest with the H——e of P——rs about the right of originating taxes, the C——ns urged with great force their exclusive right to that privilege. They thought it unreasonable, even that any part of the taxes should be encreased or diminished, or that the rates should be examined by the P——rs, “whose proportion in all taxes, in comparison to what the commonalty pay, is very inconsiderable.” I believe the same assembly think these words to contain good sense at this day; and it is undoubtedly very reasonable, that those who give the most, should have the greatest share in modelling the gift. Such were the maxims that were formerly adopted by that great assembly, and such were the reasonings on which their greatest privilege is established. Why then do they *now* think it reasonable, that those who pay not an *inconsiderable*, but *no* proportion, should not only originate a tax, but pass it into a law. Compare the spirit of their former maxims, with that of their present. “It is unjust in you, my L——ds, to *begin* a taxation, of which you pay only a small proportion.” Yet we will *impose* a tax upon America, of which we pay no proportion at all. “It is unjust that you, my L——ds, should even *originate* a tax upon men, of whom you are but the lesser number, though the rest may afterwards refuse it if they please.” But is it just for us to enact a tax-law for the Colonists, which they shall *not* have a power to refuse, although we are not any part of them? “The right of proposing taxes belongs to us as representatives of the people who pay them, and yet we will tax a people of whom we are *not* representatives.” Bills of supply are looked upon, not only as laws, but as free gifts; and, on account of this difference in their natures, they are subject to different forms. The lords cannot originate them, although they also are *legislators*. And it is not the royal *assent*, which is given, but the royal *thanks*. The 9th of Henry 7th, enacts, that the King shall *thank* both Lords and Commons; but if our Parliament shall tax the Colonists, to whom are the r———l thanks to be addressed? Is he to thank his *British* subjects, for giving him the property of the *Colonists*? Is he to thank the English, for money which they do

do not pay, or the Americans, for a *free gift*, wrested from them against their will? Which of these mockeries would be most unworthy the great scene on which they are to be acted?

MUCH declamation has been used, on both sides. The English speak of the blood and treasure they have expended. The Americans, that they have encountered an inhospitable climate for the purposes of Great Britain, and have dedicated their lives and fortunes, to her service. There is no weight in any of these declamations. Whatever was done by either of them, was done for their own advantage. If Britain has protected the property of America, it does not constitute her the owner of that property. She has, for her own sake, protected in their turns, almost every country in Europe, but that does not make her the proprietor of those countries, or give her a power of taxation over them. If America, in pursuing her own interest, has advantaged Britain, we owe her no obligation. Whilst we each possess those benefits for which we expended our treasure, and for which they encountered that climate, we owe nothing to each other but reciprocal affection. To extend their commerce, our ancestors encouraged the emigration of British subjects. Their industry abroad was thought more advantageous, than their residence in Britain. As an inducement to forego those privileges which they possessed, or might acquire at home, it was agreed that they should carry English privileges along with them. And as an inducement to become the carriers, and the labourers of England, they were endowed with a desert territory, useful only by the industry they should bestow upon it, and this was given to them, as their *wages*. Let not a compact, founded in our interest, purchased by their labour, and confirmed by time, suffer any violation. Let us be content with our commercial advantages, and those superiorities which they willingly submit to. Let us make them labour for us; but let us not take from them their *wages*, also.

HAVING considered the justice of the present measures; let us now examine their policy; and in this examination, let our sentiments of equity forget to operate. Let us forget that they have rights, or that we have humanity. Let us suppose ourselves entering into an agreement, with a *free* and a *considerable* people, and settling the terms of an everlasting union. Or if any one should be of opinion, that neither of these circumstances is applicable to the Colonies; let us suppose them in their numbers inconsiderable, unaccustomed to liberty, overawed by fear, or humiliated by conquest, and ready to receive any constitution, we please to impose upon them. In such a situation, what reflections should our own interest suggest to us? Though this people be weak, at present, their strength and their numbers may increase †; though we ourselves

† It is whimsical that Mr. Canning mentions the probable increase of the Americans, as an argument for measures, that must exasperate them.

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selves are strong, our strength may decline; though their spirit is depressed, it may revive. They are placed at a great distance from us. We have formidable enemies. Their affections therefore, are of the utmost importance, and there is no method so certain of securing their affections, as the making it their *interest* to be our friends. We ourselves have a free constitution: if we grant liberty to them, they will be steady to us, because they cannot change for the better; if we assume unlimited and absolute authority, they will wish to change, because they cannot change for the worse. The tyranny of a despotic commonwealth is infinitely worse than that of a despotic prince. But it is vain to endeavour to deceive them; though they never have tasted liberty, they will soon become acquainted with its nature. They will perceive the *misery* of their situation, by the happiness of *ours*. While their garrisons are filled with our soldiers, their harbours with our fleets, and their employments with officers of our appointment, and while they derive from us a degree of freedom, we shall be secure, both by our own power, and by their affections. They are weak, by their circumstances, let us not make them strong, by their despair. The gradual increase of numbers and of opulence, may add to their force, but that force will sleep, unless it be awakened by injury: and while we retain an absolute power over their trade, that very increase will depend upon our regulations. Whilst they are happy under our government, their strength and their opulence will be strength and opulence to us; but, if we oppress them, they will be our weakness, and our danger. The numbers of a people are not so formidable, as their union, their hatred, their fury. If there ever should come a time when they shall be able to shake off our sovereignty, it will pass unheeded, by a grateful and happy people. But if our dominion be founded *only* in *our* strength, it will subsist no longer than *their* weakness. It is therefore evident that we shall hold America, by a better security, if we do not enslave it. But will it afford us as much present emolument? This surely is a consideration, much inferior to the other; it may have more weight with a short-lived and a short-sighted administration; but can never have so much with a thinking nation. Yet let even this be considered; we know that this nation has paid considerable taxes, without any compulsion; and we know that free nations can support greater burdens, than nations equally opulent, that are enslaved. No power, no management, has ever succeeded to tax the latter, as highly as the first; and the efforts of despotism have produced only depopulation or rebellion. Thus it is by no means certain, that even our present emoluments would be the less, if we extort nothing from them against their own consent*. Besides, with how much less *expence* can we secure the allegiance of the willing, than of the unwilling. Amongst the first, a militia would be

* In the last war they incurred a debt of 2,600,000l. Would they have done this, for an oppressor?

be serviceable; amongst the latter, it would be formidable to ourselves. Let us also consider with how much greater eagerness our manufactures will be purchased, by a grateful, than by an exasperated people. We are now at peace with the world; the most rigorous measures may succeed, for the present; but such measures are not the most eligible in themselves, when conducive neither to present advantage, nor future security. The greatest man of his age has told us, that two millions of fellow subjects, deprived of their liberty, would be fit instruments to make slaves of the rest. Surely there is justice in his observation; those whom we reduce to *slavery*, cannot wish well to our *freedom*. Let us also consider that without assuming that despotic authority, which is intolerable to human nature, we may yet retain a power amazingly extensive. A power over the commerce of a nation, affects the merchant, the landholder, and the manufacturer. Though we cannot dive into their purses, to wrest from them what they have *already* acquired, we can prevent their *future* acquisitions. Nay, we can do more; we can make what they possess already, less valuable by its stagnation. Though the power of *granting*, belongs solely to themselves, they will yet have but little power to *refuse*. Let this content us: that the sea, the common benefit of mankind, may be denied them, that the labour of their hands, the strength and the ingenuity which nature has bestowed upon them, shall be converted to our purposes; but, for our own sakes, let us not discourage that industry which is to benefit ourselves: what we permit them to acquire, let that be their own.

Thus, on every present, and every future consideration, I should think myself an enemy to Great-Britain, should I propose to give worse terms to a people unendeared by former connections, unacquainted with liberty, and destitute of any claim upon our justice, than those which are demanded for our *fellow subjects*. But it must not therefore be forgotten, that they have long been our friends and brothers; and that another system cannot be established, without a violation of national faith, a departure from our justice, and, at one time perhaps, the shedding of their blood. We should be well assured of the rectitude of our cause, we should advance to the utmost limits of negotiation, before we draw the sword, against our brothers. We shall prevail, with certainty, indeed, but we may not prevail, without a contest. And though the force of terror only, may give temporary establishment to our authority, the sword and the executioner only, must maintain it. From men deprived of every thing that they hold most dear, and deprived of it by their friends, what may not be expected? Any thing should be expected, except their submission. What then are the ultimate objects of the most oppressive laws, and most sanguinary councils? Will they restore us to that brotherly affection, which infused the same soul into every part of our empire, or procure us an certain quiet, a disaffected submission? Let France expect

pect *such* a submission, from Corsica; by our supineness she will obtain it, and she may well be contented with it. She is accustomed to govern by fear; and over a people where heretofore she had not authority, even that influence will become acquisition. But neither her numerous armies, nor her mighty power, nor her vicinity to that devoted island, nor the paucity of its inhabitants, can insure to her a quiet and an useful possession, while she finds an enemy in the hearts of the people. But by us, if possible, still less is to be expected: with less disproportioned force, we may encounter a more rooted antipathy. The Corsicans never tasted freedom, under a French administration; she has only *prevented* their emancipation from the tyranny of Genoa, and will receive them under a milder oppression. But the Americans will be *deprived* of a liberty which they have already possessed many years, under the tutelage of Great-Britain. A more violent change, a more intolerable perdition. And are these measures *wise*, whose very success has but this for their object; and whose failure is ruin? Are these the principles, by which free men should govern free men? Is this that invincible union, and that firm establishment, by which Britain shall hold the West Indies, in her right hand, and the East, in her left! Or is this the wisdom which must heal public credit of a thousand wounds, and support the weight of a tottering empire? There may come a time when the distresses of Great-Britain may require the utmost efforts of a grateful people, and our posterity may find, by a fatal experience, that the sword was but an ill interpreter of charters; and that the characters of freedom, will not be less indelible in the breasts of the Americans, if they be written in the blood of their forefathers. What shall I say of these measures? That they are so impolitic, that we should reject them, though justice did not condemn them; that they are so unjust, that we should reject them, were they ever so politic.

THESE considerations I have presumed to dedicate to the greatest assembly in the world, and to the best of princes. If they carry any conviction along with them, the consequences naturally follow. First, that we should leave the Americans to tax themselves: Secondly, that we should retain to the British Parliament, every power that is not inconsistent with our justice and their liberty: That a law should be passed, immediately, repealing every act, that taxes the Colonies. I do not propose that it should contain any counter-declarations, or that the power should, in terms, be disclaimed. It will be sufficient that they be repealed, and that we do not revive the claim. † *Let it be buried in oblivion; let it hang between the constitutions of both countries, as belonging to neither. Let it be suspended, like the sword of the murderer, in the Grecian law, which was deposited in their temples, as unfit to be handled; and consecrated, as it were, not for its merit, but offence.* And left
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† These words were made use of, upon a different occasion, by Mr. Flood, the brightest ornament of the Irish Parliament.

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at any time hereafter, it may be disputed where the line is drawn, between American liberty and British jurisdiction, perhaps it might not be improper to declare, in the same law, the supremacy of Britain, and its absolute dominion over navigation and commerce. Can we assert the dependency of the Colonists, in stronger terms than those of Mr. Otis, a Gentleman who is certainly well informed of their sentiments, and who has probably a considerable share in forming them, "That the Parliament of Great-Britain has undoubted power, and lawful authority, to make acts for the general good, which by naming the Colonies, shall, and ought to be equally binding, as upon the subjects of Great-Britain within the realm." Should the Colonists complain, that if this power be reserved, they have not the same degree of freedom, or all the privileges that are possessed by their British Brethren, I shall readily confess that they have not: but it was not intended, by their original compact, that they should. If Britain does not reserve to herself an absolute authority, over the trade of her Colonies, not one of the ends will be answered, for which those Colonies were planted: they will not be subservient to the commerce of their mother-country; they will rival and destroy it. And surely we shall not be deemed enemies of their freedom, in adopting the sentiments of its able and interested defender. The power of regulating their commerce, and the right of prohibition, have indeed a most extensive dominion, over the wealth and prosperity of America; and those demands must be exorbitant, indeed, which can be refused to an assembly possessed of so mighty a prerogative. But there is a material difference, between stopping the acquisition of riches, and the taking away what is already acquired. They have all but a bitter alternative; but bitter as it is, *they have an alternative*, says Mr. Otis, in the true spirit of liberty, "I had rather see this (right of prohibition) carried with a high hand, to the utmost rigour, than have a tax of one shilling, taken from me, without my consent."

It is so much the interest of Britain, to promote the commercial welfare of her Colonies, that they may form a reasonable expectation, that these interests are safely deposited. But on this self-interest, on the wisdom and equity of the British legislature, and on the conciliating moderation of their own conduct, much, very much, of their prosperity will depend. Of this moderation we have as yet made no trial. When we desisted from *actual* oppression, we laid its *future* foundations, and the repeal of the Stamp-Act, was attended with the strongest assertions, of our *right* of taxation; assertions which an upright administration never intended to carry into experiment, but an unhappy compliment, which wisdom and virtue paid to the temporization and prejudice. If impressed with a conviction of their freedom, the Americans have a sense of injury, let not Britons resent the sentiments they have communicated. Let us maturely consider whether we our-
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elves were not the aggressors. If force is justifiable in destroying those rights, which are derived from time, from compact, and from nature; what is not justifiable for their maintainance and support? If the cause of the Americans be just, their firmness is virtue.

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