

other reasons why England would give up any point for the sake of reconciliation; and before this point is settled, you must convince us, that the people of England are not *gainers* by our *withdrawing trade* to the West-Indies; for as the large quantities of rum and sugar which we *import* from the islands, will now be sent to England, the price to the consumer there will be considerably abated; of course the quantity used by the lower class of people, will be increased, and as these articles pay very high duties, the *revenue* will be capably enlarged; and it may be supposed to have this further effect; the great tracts of ground hitherto occupied in England, for raising grain, purely to distil spirits, will in a great measure be deprived of their object, by the plenty of rum carried in from the West-Indies; and as a total stop is put to the exportation of tea, it may probably fall so low in England as, together with the low price of sugar, to make it a very general diet, morning and night, for the lower class of people; thus drinking foreign spirit, and making part of their meal of foreign produce, the land which was before employed in these services may be spared for raising provisions to ship to the West-Indies, where they will be sure to come to a good market, as long as we withhold our trade thither;—therefore you must shew some substantial reason for your opinion that it is the interest of England to wish our trade with the West-Indies restored to its old state; for if England can now buy her sugar and rum cheaper, and sell her rum higher than formerly, why should she wish to re-unite with us on this score? A full reply to this suggestion is expected. You must also prove that England, on a re-union, would grant us such a protection as would secure our property in any part of the world; and that on our complaining to their court of seizures or detainer of our vessels, by the Dutch, French, Swedes, Danes, Hamburgers, Dutch, French, Portuguese, Spaniards, the states of Medina, Lucany, Venice, Rome, Geneva, Courland, Grecian, Turkish, or piratical states &c. that they would demand instant satisfaction and restitution for us as is usual with their own ships, and all this without bringing us in for any share of the expences. Business of this kind took up a great deal of the attention of the *Commonwealth* of England; their vessels being frequently detained and *injured*, but by the spirited conduct of the Protector, justice was always obtained.—It is therefore your part to shew, that, on a re-union, the king of Great-Britain would take as ample care of the Americans, in such cases, as Cromwell did of British property; or if a re-union should not take place, you are to point out sufficient reasons to justify you in the supposition, that America has not, or may not, have a naval power competent to the task of doing herself justice. You must also shew, in case of a re-union that England would not call on us for a share of the expences attending a compact with Russia or other European princes, in order to keep up the balance of the potent power against the Roman Catholic states, thereby preventing popery from overrunning the world. And you must lastly shew, that by a reconciliation on constitutional principles we shall return to the *free-money-getting trade* we formerly enjoyed, and that we shall have it enlarged to us upon a grand national scale, without any regard to the private emolument of this or that party; but upon principles of the general interest of the whole empire, without our paying any taxes for the support of government, more than what we have been used to (the debt arising from the present dispute only excepted.) I hat the administration of justice, and security of property will be as upright and safe as heretofore; and that the present happiness and future liberty of America would be as well maintained in a re-union as by a separation.

These are heads, which I would wish to see separately, and largely discussed; and I treat you gentlemen, to pursue the subject with calmness and temper. Stick to the matter, and neglect the man; it imports not who is the writer, but all are eventually concerned in the cause. I shall read your controversy with great attention, and so will thousands besides me; and if, upon an impartial hearing, it shall appear to be for the real interest of America, to cut the gordian knot and establish independence—I declare, with the utmost sincerity and solemnity, that I will give it my hearty concurrence.

Should curiosity (agreeable to the fashion of the times) tempt some readers to desire a knowledge of the writer of this essay, they may be informed, that his fortune, his connexions, and every thing he holds dear give him a deep interest in the happiness of America; that his abilities to serve his country, rise no higher than to occupy the station of an honest man and quiet citizen, and most happily for him, he has never been prompted by ambition to quit his post; being simply and truly

A COMMON MAN.

LETTER I. TO CATO.

TO be nobly wrong is more manly than to be meanly right. Only let the error be disinterested—let it wear, not the mask, but the mark of principle, and 'tis pardonable. It is on this large and liberal ground, that we distinguish between men and their tenets, and generously preserve our friendship for the one, while we combat with every prejudice of the other. But let not Cato take this compliment to himself; he stands excluded from the benefit of the distinction; he deserves it not—and if the sincerity of disdain can add a cubit to the stature of my sentiments, it shall not be wanting.

It is indifferent to me who the writer of Cato's letters is, and sufficient for me to know, that they are gorged with absurdity, confusion, contradiction, and the most notorious and wilful falsehoods. Let Cato and his faction be against independence and welcome; their consequence will not now turn the scale; but let them have regard to justice, and pay some attention to the plain doctrine of reason. Where these are wanting, the sacred cause of truth applauds our anger, and dignifies it with the name of virtue.

Four letters have already appeared under the specious name of Cato. What pretensions the writer of them can have to the signature, the public will best determine; while on my own part, I prophetically content myself with contemplating the similarity of their exits. The first of those letters promised a second, the second a third, the third a fourth, the fourth hath since made its appearance, and fill the writer keeps wide of the question. Why doth he thus loiter in the suburbs of the dispute? Why hath he not shewn us what the numerous

blessings of reconciliation are, and proved them practicable? but he cunningly avoids the point. He cannot but discover the rock he is driving on. The fate of the Roman Cato is before his eyes: and that the public may be prepared for his funeral, and for his funeral oration, I will venture to predict the time and the manner of his exit. The moment he explains his terms of reconciliation the typographical Cato dies. If they be calculated to please the cabinet, they will not go down with the colonies; and if they be suited to the colonies, they will be rejected by the cabinet: the line of no-variation is yet untound; and, like the philosophers stone, doth not exist. "I am bold," says Cato, "to declare, and yet hope to make it evident to every honest man, that the true interest of America lies in reconciliation with Great-Britain on constitutional principles."

This is a curious way of lamping the business indeed! And Cato may as well attempt to catch lions in a mousetrap as to hope to allure the public with such general and unexplained expressions. It is now a mere bug-bear to talk of reconciliation on constitutional principles, unless the terms of the first be produced and sense of the other be defined; and unless he does this he does nothing.

To follow Cato through every absurdity and fallshood in the compass of a letter is impossible; neither is it now necessary. Cassandra (and I thank him) hath saved me much trouble; there is a spirit in his remarks which honesty only can inspire, and a uniformity in the conduct of his letter which the want of principal can never arrive at. Mark that Cato.

One observation which I cannot help making on Cato's letters, is, that they are addressed "To the People of Pennsylvania" only: in almost any other writer this might have passed unnoticed, but we know it hath mischief in its meaning. The particular circumstance of a convention is undoubtedly provincial, but the great business of the day is continental. And he who dares to endeavour to withdraw this province from the glorious union by which all are supported, deserves the reprobation of all men. It is the true interest of the whole to go hand in hand; and dismal in every instance would be the fate of that colony which should retreat from the protection of the rest.

The first of Cato's letters is insipid in its style, language and substance: crowded with personal and private invectives, and directly levelled against "the majesty of the people of Pennsylvania." The committee could only call, propose, or recommend a convention; but like all other public measures, it still rested with the people at large whether they would approve it or not; and Cato's reasoning on the right or wrong of that choice is contemptible; be aule, if the body of the people had thought, or should think, that the assembly (or any of the representatives in congress) by sitting under the embaumment of oaths, and entangled with government and governors, are not so perfectly free as they ought to be, they undoubtedly had, and still have, both the right and power to place even the whole authority of the assembly in any body of men they please; and whoever is hardy enough to say to the contrary is an enemy to mankind. The constitution of Pennsylvania hath been twice changed through the cunning of former proprietors; surely, the people, whose right, power and property is greater than that of any single man, may make such alterations in their mode of government, as the change of times and things require. Cato is exceedingly fond of impressing us with the importance of our chartered constitution. Alas! we are not now, Sir, to be led away by the jingle of a phrase. Had we framed our conduct by the contents of the present charters, we had, ere now, been in a state of helpless misery. What very assiduously you mention hath broken it, and been obliged to break it, in almost every instance of their proceedings. Hold it up to the public and it is transparent with holes, pierced with as many deadly wounds as the body of M. Cleod. Disturb not its remains, Cato, nor dishonour it with another funeral oration.

(To be concluded in our next.)

TO THE PEOPLE OF PENNSYLVANIA. LETTER V.

IN my fourth letter, some notice was taken of the dangerous proposition held up to us by the armor of *Common Sense*, for having recourse to foreign assistance, and mixing the virtuous cause of these colonies with the ambitious views of France and Spain, even allowing that they are either able, or that we could make it their interest to enter into a war with Great-Britain and her allies, on our account. History will scarce give us an example of any people that ever recurred to an expedient of this kind, without having their allies at last for their masters. The fatal consequences of hasty resolutions, in great questions, might be well illustrated by the conduct of the foolish Danes; who, to avenge themselves of their nobility, in one dreadful moment, made an irretrievable surrender of their own liberty, and that of their posterity, into the hands of a tyrant. And had I been disposed to work upon the passions, rather than address the reason of my readers, the mention which was made in my last of the arbitrary governments of France and Spain, their bloody massacres and unrelenting persecutions, gave me an opportunity of entering into descriptions which would have "harrowed up the very souls" of Protestants and Freemen!

The administration of Great-Britain itself, daring as they seem to be, have not yet dared to recur to the desperate measure of calling in foreign aid. But some of our best friends intimate that an example of this kind, on either side, would justify the like conduct on the other. A great majority of the patriotic freeholders of the county of Berks in England, nobly supporting our cause before the throne, compliment us upon this—that we have not thrown ourselves into the arms of other powers, and that "our petitions have yet appeared before no throne but that of Britain. Let not England (say they) set an example, which is but too easily copied, by drawing into a free country the insidious and mercenary aid of foreign forces, trained to the support of barbarous despotism. The moment that a great army of such, or of any foreigners, shall enter your territories, the liberties of your people are at an end.—Strenuous as we are for the honour of our country, we cannot be forgetful of its peace and concord: It is therefore we abhor the idea of encouraging foreigners to make a prey of this nation, and its dependencies, under

* The writer intended at first to have contained his remarks in one letter.

the miserable and uncovered pretext of discourteasing, faction and sedition among ourselves."

It is but too reasonable, then, to conclude, that whichever side, Great-Britain or America, shall first call in foreign assistance, will but force the other into the same desperate measure. In either case, this devoted land would become one field of blood and carnage for a length of years; which, at last, it is apprehended, would only be dreadfully closed in our perpetual subjection and slavery to the victorious side, whether allies or foes! It is, indeed, impossible to describe the miseries of that country which is once made the seat of foreign wars. Torn in pieces by contending armies, subjected to the alternate ravages and oppressions of rival powers; the merchant, the farmer, the peasant, has nothing to call his own. Even the wife of his bosom, and the daughter of his affection, are not safe from the unholly violence of mercenary soldiery, rioting through every corner of a land not their own, insolent in victory, and barbarous in defeat.

Although we now sadly bleed under the cruel hand of an unjust administration, who have kindled up a most unnatural war among brethren in their own land; yet (God be thanked) that war hath not reached, and I trust will never be able to reach, much farther than our sea-shores. A nation cannot long continue totally blind to all its most essential interests. Our own virtue and virtue have always gone a great way to convince our oppressors of the inanity, as well as the impracticability, of their schemes to govern a great and distant country by force. Perseverance, on our side, will speedily accomplish the rest. Our friends in Britain, unbought by us, and uncorrupted by our foes, are yet of more worth to us than whole nations of foreigners, drawn in to our assistance by mercenary or interested views. If, by no precipitate or unnecessary measures, we forfeit the esteem of the former, and make them also enemies, we shall prevail by our united strength. The devices of those, who, for ambitious purposes, strive to divide a house against itself, will be finally confounded; and the whole family of Britons, on both sides of the Atlantic, may yet be bound together, by fresh ties of mutual love and interest—for many generations!

But, I repeat it once more—by the former measure of calling in foreigners to decide our quarrels, we shall bleed, not in a few parts only, but at every pore; and the present generation will not probably see the end of the contest. Would to heaven, that they who profess such a measure, as being preferable to a reconciliation with our ancient friends, upon whatever terms, could but behold the face of Poland, and visit the scenes of havoc and desolation which mark the late footsteps of contending foreign powers in that country; or read the accounts of the like scenes in many parts of Germany! They would not then continue to urge such a measure, till they could clearly prove that the last necessity was come.

Let it not be said that I am here drawing a horrible picture to frighten this country into an absolute submission to Great-Britain. No, I persevere in my belief, that on our present plan of resistance, Britain can never force us either into submission or reconciliation, but upon such terms as the united wisdom of the colonies shall deem safe and honourable. But upon the other plan, it is much to be feared, that submission, as well as ruin, might be our lot; and were I disposed to give bad names to any persons, who may perhaps be honestly enquiring after our true interest in this contest, they who advise such a plan, and not Cato, might be called inimical to these colonies. Nor let it be said, that the wish for assistance is not that of armies, but of fleets for trade and commercial protection. Even supposing that to be the case, will the fleets of any power, who can look those of Britain in the face, be content just to take a peep at our fruitful shores, give us their protection, and then return quietly home? But the author of *Common Sense* (and 'tis him I am now answering) makes no such distinction; and speaks of the assistance of France and Spain generally—and that for the purposes of a total separation from Great-Britain—His words are these—

"It is unreasonable to suppose that France or Spain will give us any kind of assistance, if we mean only to make use of that assistance for the purpose of repairing the breach, and strengthening the connection, between Britain and America." That the assistance here meant is not confined to mere naval assistance, in the idea of some who are great advocates for this author's pamphlet, might have been easily gathered from their expressions, when we received the late accounts of the arrival of unusual numbers of troops in the neighbouring French West-Indies.

But this only alarmed others the more; and I am well persuaded that this writer's idea is not yet adopted by many persons of much consideration in this country, much less by any public bodies. I consider it only as thrown out to collect the sentiments of America upon it, although I cannot but think it a dangerous as well as unseasonable question at this time, and could have been content that it had not been brought before the public. But since it hath been made a question, it ought now to be fairly discussed, for whatever we have left, worthy our attention as freemen, is all involved in this stake; and when important questions are put upon the footing, that if they are not answered, they are to be taken for granted, it becomes absolutely necessary to examine them.

For my part, the more I consider the matter (and I have long considered it impartially) the more I am persuaded that our political salvation can only be worked out by our own united virtue, and upon our own foundation. When it shall clearly appear that we can no longer stand upon this ground; when we shall be generally convinced, by better arguments than declamation, and the abuse of things venerable and ancient, that future connection with Great-Britain is neither possible nor safe; then we shall be fully united and prepared, at every risk, to pursue whatever measures the sense of the community, fairly collected, shall think necessary to adopt. But even then, before we launch forth, many domestic concerns are to be adjusted.

Under what form of government are we to continue? How much of our ancient constitutions is to be preserved? Who is to settle our clashing territorial claims? In what cases are the jurisdiction and expences of these colonies to be joint or separate? On what terms are we to engage foreign alliances, and yet to secure our liberties in connection with them? Are the colonies to vote equally in determining these grand concerns? or is a new representation to be formed, in proportion to numbers and consequence?

I might propose—upon the necessity of common sense, and we must take of AMERICAN desert but with my life of Common Sense, which is already come, offering much satisfaction, however, that in he has levelled the English with all our arms, formed on similar mode as fast the Russian, he more readily follow his plans he may offer. and having dispatched each, which he foundance, I proceed to work.

His first sections on monarchy, appear to beencies and contradictions, referred to the common sense only to mislead those tent to believe as they of a writer's doctrine is

"Society, says he, is government by our wicked happiness positively, by negatively, by restraint, diets, is the badge of kings are built on the

If the author meant men were perfectly virtuous of right reason, human unnecessary, then I could have paid him a truth in a spruce metaphor that monarchies were a paradise than republic himself to have shewn pulled from paradise, they were "four or five tolerable dwelling in erecting some sort of that, after this examination, in the first ag such things. On the manner of peopling ment out of the state of us with is that of a pu

Some convenient under the branches of sensible to deliberate ceed, as their number tion, and devise cl form to themselves an—On these checks ("dignity is the strength governed."

How can this be rec thor has told us that but a necessary evil, by restraining (viz. ch his early republic, he but "virtuousness") that no "power" God." Thus, by his to do with the power as nice forms. But I forget themselves, and tion,—that "the pa ruins of paradise; I it with the authority the early ages of the the Devil himself, in a fellow; and that, alth his most prosperous in "stry," he was a long s but a poor complim ing a king himself fr bit upon it sooner. His own apology to his i councils; for I have them.

It is sufficient to *Common Sense*, at the first doctrine, and pro of palaces for kings, built on the ruins of ruins in the case of years tossed up and do well converted into-misrepresented our words will shew. away, from the Mosai Jews, under a nation then, their form of g nary cases, where the of republic," &c.

He proceeds, in th is as well at quainted devices of Hell, con. er ment; and that the "most prosperous in and vengeance against for their ingratitude them by any other hu never was a greater pe thor has been guilty o part of his argument, standing, who has h perceive.

The bounds prescr me, at present, to poi to shew how he set plain letter of scriptu and holy men of eve my principles to say e right of Kings; nor o have said in its favour been said concerning any other human formation is, whether God of them? For my par ample of examining— find any modern king; but MOUNTEUR the 15th chapter of Ezek who is to deeply ver