

*Containing the freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic.*

TUESDAY, June 30, 1747.

*(The Remainder of the Letter begun in our last.)*

IS Lordship, as I have heard, pursuing the Plan of an Act of Assembly that before exilitea, but which was then expired, published a Proclamation some Years ago requiring his Officers not to take greater Fees than are there mentioned. But I never understood before that any one looked upon it as a legal Restraint on the Justices from taxing or on the other Officers from charging higher or lower than it directs. Common Sense informs us there ought to be one uniform Rule for regulating Costs, which the several County-Courts could not have all fallen upon, unless this Proclamation had issued, or some general Direction of the like Kind, as there was no Law in Force at the Time for that Purpose. Yet as the Justices, both in the Provincial Court and the Inferior Jurisdictions, were generally Gentlemen of the best Fortunes and Characters in the Colony, and upon their Oath to be impartial, it was a strange Want of Charity to presume they would have taxed the Fees according to the Proclamation, unless they had thought it reasonable, and not, as this Author has insinuated, a great Imposition on the People. Litigious Persons whom I never pitied, and whose quarrelsome Humours I should be always glad to see restrained, are only affected by it. They may indeed think it heavy now, when their whole Produce is not sufficient to cloath them with the coarsest Manufactures, and yet before the War, it was very light, when, after making a comfortable yearly Provision for their Families, they had half their Crops left to spend or go to Law with as their Inclinations lead them. As to the Fees of the other Officers, tho' they are not equally bound, as was before observed, from charging more than is directed by the Proclamation, yet in Gratitude they are obliged to observe it; so that it appears his Lordship intended it as a wholesome Restraint on his Officers, and to prevent them from running into Exorbitances. But the Inhabitants were nevertheless as much at Liberty to dispute such Charges, if they imagined them to be too much, as they are in any common Case. Therefore it was absurd to allege that either Sort of Fees are taken without Law, and still more so to assert that the latter are taken without Contract; for every one knows if he employs another to do him any Kind of Service, he implicitly agrees to pay him as much as it is worth, tho' he does not expressly contract for the Price.

ADMITTING the Proclamation had been faulty in some Particulars; for the best human Regulations are not without their Defects, and will require frequent Amendments; yet was this a Time to libel the Government on that Account, when it discovers the greatest Disposition to reform the Abuses that may have crept into it, and which it was impossible for his Lordship at such a Distance to prevent? At this Time I say when his Excellency has been pleased to declare in the most solemn Manner, that he will make it his constant Rule never to propose any Thing as a Governor, that he would not approve as a Planter. No Man could have been guilty of such a wicked desperate Attempt; that was not ready and willing to sacrifice the Prosperity of a whole Province, to his own selfish, paughty, bye Ends.

ALL just Power is originally derived from the People, and given by them for their Protection. And therefore, Gentlemen, as one of your Constituents, I hope you will for OUR SAKES support It with all your Faculties, since we have the strongest Assurances that it will be exercised for our Benefit; and then you will act the Part of true Patriots, and yet very conscientiously support that Character, if at any Time hereafter you should find yourselves reduced to the unhappy Necessity of opposing It when misapplied.

It is a Contradiction in Terms to assert there can be a good Government without good Officers. But how can we expect to have such, if the Fees annexed to Offices should be so small, that none but needy and ignorant Persons should think it worth their While to accept of them? In such a Case, instead of be-

ing protected in our Rights, and redressed from Wrongs, both would be confounded, and we should be overwhelmed with Floods of Knavery and Nonsense. Besides, such Sort of Men when placed in Offices, from the strong Temptations they would be then under, which they had never before been accustomed to resist, or taught to subdue, would hardly fail to exert every Kind of low Craft to stir up Suits and revive antiquated Claims; and raise and soment Contentions amongst Neighbours; whereby that Spirit of Benevolence, without which no Society can long subsist, as those Philosophers who have seen farthest into the Composition of human Nature have observed, would be very much weakened, if not quite extinguished. Nor should we save any Thing by this seeming Frugality; for the Multiplicity of Actions would increase the Fees much higher than would satisfy Gentlemen of Fortune and Reputation, who would not be liable to the same Temptations as the others must inevitably be subject to; and besides they would be restrained by a Sense of Honour or Shame from pursuing any vile Practices. And if any of them should, the rest we might hope would join in having the Offender punished. But in the other Case they would always be sure to screen one another, and we could never expect to see any of them brought to Justice, - however flagrant their Extortions and Oppressions might appear.

THE Enemies to an Inspecting Law, having been shamefully beat out of all their lurking Holes and Corners, have now no other Method left to deprive us of it than to persuade our Representatives to reduce the Fees, that are to be contained in the same Bill, so low, as to oblige his Excellency to reject it. But then let them not tell us afterwards that such a Reduction was necessary for our Sakes, unless they can prove to us at the same Time, that for our Sakes all Government should be trampled under Foot.

THO' we may lose the Law this Year, I make no Question of our obtaining it the next. When any Thing is proposed that has a Tendency to promote the real Interest of the People, the more it is consider'd and debated, the more Ground it will gain amongst them; for we are not such Fools as some Persons imagine us to be. But in the mean Time many of us will be ruined thro' the Want of such a Regulation. I must beg Leave, Gentlemen, to lay my Case before you, which may be easily applied to the Circumstances of others. I now owe about five thousand Weight of Tobacco, which is the Crop I usually make clear of Trash, which I cannot pay before the next Year. If an Inspecting Law passes, I hope to discharge my Debt with four Hogheads, and then I shall have one left, which with another that I may have Credit for, will furnish me with as many Necessaries as I can now buy for five. But if the Law should not take place this Year, and I can have Credit the next, I shall probably then, as Goods will be always rising upon us, be six Hogheads in Debt; and therefore the Loss of the Bill this Sessions will be a Loss to me of five thousand Weight of Tobacco at least, supposing the Merchant who is not pressing now for his Debt, as he expects to receive it inspected, does not put my Judgment Bond in Suit, which, under the present Scarcity of Goods, I was obliged to give him; for if he should I must sell one of my Slaves, who is half the Support of my Family. I am, with the greatest Respect,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

A PLANTER.

BRUSSELS, April 23, 1747.

WE are ignorant of what is to be done with the large train of artillery, no less than 150 pieces of battering cannon and 100 mortars being expected here to day or tomorrow from Douay. The designs both of marshal Saxe and the duke of Cumberland are kept inviolably secret; but we soon expect some Enterprize of Importance. The Allies, who say they