

Gentlemen of the Lower House of Assembly,

L. H. J.
Liber No. 54
Nov. 30

A sincere undissembled Solicitude for the Welfare of the People, and a generous inflexible Firmness in vindicating their constitutional Privileges, are so laudable, that I should be inclined at least, to excuse a little Excess in the Measures which a sanguine Disposition might form, and eagerly pursue for the Promotion and Stability of the general Interests, to secure Property against Rapaciousness, and protect Liberty from Violation, but so many Instances have proved this Virtue of publick Spirit does not always exist in the greatest Purity, when it is professed with the most ardent Zeal, that Caution and Hezitation in giving Credit to splendid Professions of Disinterestedness, and of Regard for the general Good, can be blamed only by the folly of Credulity, and Rashness of Inexperience. Rulers under the Visor of Tenderness, may infringe the Rights of the Subject, and Demagogues under the Guise of Patriotism, fatally seduce their Followers into a Subserviency to their most selfish Views. I wish to have the Sincerity of my Professions tried by my Actions, and that they, who have arraigned my Conduct, may be judged by the same Test. The Censure you have passed in your violent Resolves on a Measure, the Situation of the Province consequent to your own Proceedings in a late Session, rendered necessary, and Passages in my Message, at that Time, having been interwoven with the Reason of your extraordinary Address, oblige me to explain those Proceedings, and investigate the Spirit that dictated them, from which, if I am not very much deceived, it will appear to have been the great Object to excite popular Animosity, and that the Resentments you have expressed against my Proclamation, have proceeded from your Persuasion of its having been calculated to prevent Litigation and secure the Publick Peace, and your Apprehension, if left to its proper Effect, it would extinguish the Discontent you took so much Pains to kindle. They who are most impatient of the regular Controuls of an Authority to which they are subordinate, are, not seldom, eager to usurp Power, and disposed, when they expect Submission, to exercise it with haughty Rigour.

The Commitment of M.^r Steuart, the Register of his Lordship's Land Office, by the Lower House to the common Jail, to be there kept *safe and close until discharged by Order of the House*, appeared to me to be most arbitrary and oppressive; on this Occasion all the Powers, legislative, executive and judicial, were assumed by your House. [I] interposed and prorogued the Assembly, and assigned the Reasons of my Conduct in the Message to which you have alluded in your Address, and which being fully explanatory of that Transaction, I must take the Liberty to recite.

"Gentlemen,

It has been the Object of my anxious Attention, and is my very earnest Wish, to cultivate an amicable understanding with the