

with Britain, or that we can be more secure in any other connection (and the time which will enable us to judge of this cannot be very remote) the author of these letters shall not then slip a word against whatever measures the sense of the majority of this country, fairly taken, shall adopt for the common good; and will be ready to give his best assistance for carrying them into execution. But he must ever bear his testimony against being surprised into public decisions, by misrepresentations, ungrounded suggestions, and delusive arguments; too evidently proceeding from prejudice, or predetermination of a question, in which the happiness of a great continent is involved.

C A T O.

To Messrs. DIXON and HUNTER, printers of the Virginia Gazette.

GENTLEMEN, IN times of distraction and trouble, it may naturally be expected that the prints will be filled with advice to the multitude how to act in a situation so dangerous and difficult. At such a season, to mislead the unwary, or misinform the ignorant, ought to be regarded as the highest crime. During some months your papers have teemed with exhortations to independence, war, defiance, free trade, and foreign alliances. It appears, the writers were often too sanguine, and that they more frequently proceeded on mistaken principles; yet I bore all with some degree of patience, till I lately met with a piece signed a Planter. This writer promises such exorbitant gain from a free trade as might readily engage the people to aim at it by every means in their power, and to scorn an accommodation with Great-Britain, as the highest injustice and oppression. It is necessary they should be undeceived, and I shall endeavour briefly to do it. The first assertion in which the Planter seems wrong is this; that the British merchants have it in their power to impose what prices they please on their own commodities and ours. This is in some measure the case, but it may easily be shewn that we cannot be much injured by it. The trade from Britain to America is general, and not confined to any particular class or company. Where extravagant profits are expected, numbers will naturally engage in the same pursuit, and the rivalry natural to all men employed in one business will induce every merchant, or company of merchants, to go a step beyond their opponents, in favour of those with whom they deal; and by these means the price of commodities on both sides must soon be fixed at such a rate as will afford a moderate advantage to both. I am confident the Virginia trade, during many years, has been conducted in a manner which can raise no reasonable complaint against the merchants settled amongst us. We have been chiefly hurt by their great expedient to make themselves popular, allowing long and extensive credit; and if we do not comply with our engagements, and pay our debts, they are not to blame. What the Planter affirms, concerning the price of British commodities in the northern colonies, is too ridiculous to be listened to, and cannot be true. He considers it as a mighty evil that all our merchants are not natives. If we have not industry or ability to conduct our own commerce, we are certainly obliged to those who will; and we are surely not prohibited from being traders for ourselves, and carrying our commodities where we please, after touching at England! Besides, it appears evident that we are not yet prepared for an extensive commerce. The first and most natural employment of men, in a new country, is agriculture. Manufactures of any kind are seldom carried to any degree of perfection till the number of people exceeds what is necessary to cultivate the land. The same may be said of all mechanical trades. We always find, whenever a tradesman can afford to purchase a spot of ground, he quits his business, and turns farmer. Whilst this disposition, so natural to all men, continues to prevail among us, we cannot expect that such numbers as the Planter imagines will be employed in ship-building, sail-making, or manufactures of any kind.

The Planter next proceeds to reckon all the profits of the British merchants as so much clear loss to us, because it frequently happens that factors, after having saved a competent fortune, remove to England, and there live upon it. We need give ourselves little concern about this, since they do not carry with them our fields, our people, and seldom our money. Nor have we any right to complain, for if our trade is productive of such immense advantages, we can certainly as well afford to send factors to manage it in England as the English can afford to send them here, and it is our own fault if we do not. With a due degree of industry and enterprise, we might, by these means, reap all the profits which now fall to their share, if we did not think that we could employ ourselves to more advantage at home.

What the Planter affirms concerning the price of our staple in foreign markets is more insufferable than all his other assertions, and fully as void of foundation. He gravely tells us, that tobacco pays a duty of sevenpence halfpenny per pound, when it is landed in England, all clear loss to us. This affirmation must either proceed from wilful misrepresentation, or the most shameful ignorance. Every one, with the least knowledge of trade, knows, that when tobacco is exported from England to other countries, the duty of sevenpence halfpenny per pound is drawn back. I have conversed with many sensible merchants, who could have no interest in deceiving me, and was always told that twopence halfpenny or three-pence per pound from the French agents was reckoned an excellent price. Particular circumstances may sometimes raise it higher, and it very often sinks lower. It is notorious, that in the year 1772, after many bankruptcies had happened in Britain, the French were with difficulty prevailed on to give two-pence. The case is nearly the same in exportations to Spain, Portugal, Italy, Holland, and Germany.

The Planter seems to think we lie under great disadvantages in the sale of our wheat and flour. He certainly knows that we have not hitherto been obliged to send either directly to England. For the most part they have been disposed of in the West-Indies, or on the continent of Europe. If our account for sales some years past is impartially examined, we shall perhaps find that we could not much have mended it by going any where else. The Planter mentions hemp and flax likewise, as articles from the culture of which we must reap an extravagant profit. The management of the flax is now well understood in some parts of the colony; and

situation, and a bounty (till lately) upon it from England, we never yet could afford to undersell the Russians. How then can we expect to do it in opposition to Great-Britain, and when we must be at the charge of protecting our own trade? The raising of flax is in a great measure untried, and no good opinion can yet be formed of what may reasonably be expected from it. It must, gentlemen, appear plain to my countrymen that the Planter is wrong in all his calculations, and what must be heavier upon us, in case of a separation from Britain, he takes not the least notice of. If we declare ourselves an independent state, the practice of other nations will lay us under a necessity of keeping a standing army and a powerful fleet. It is ridiculous to expect that other powers will undertake to protect us without being paid for it. If we employ them for that purpose, we tacitly resign ourselves to their direction, and come within their power. How far France and Spain (countries under the most despotic government in church and state) may heartily or effectually aid us in our present glorious struggle for liberty, let others determine. Such as are well acquainted with human nature, and the maxims of nations, might readily guess; and I heartily wish we may not trust them too far. If we must support our fleets and armies ourselves, I am not sufficiently acquainted with those matters to know what the expence must amount to; but I am greatly mistaken, was a fair calculation to be made on that side, if it would not overbalance the profits of commerce fixed by the Planter, admitting they are true. I have no intention, gentlemen, of entering the lists as a controversial writer; I only wish to put facts into a true point of view, which have been plainly misrepresented. Whether or not it may be necessary to break off all connection with Great-Britain, must soon appear from the deliberations of those wise and respectable assemblies, our congress and conventions. I should deem it an insult my offering advice to bodies of such worthy and capable men. I cannot conclude without declaring, that I have felt the utmost satisfaction in perusing a late piece in your paper, signed Cato. It is perspicuous, elegant, and forcible. I wait with impatience to see his other letters.

I am, gentlemen,  
Your most obedient servant,  
A VIRGINIAN.

W A T E R T O W N, April 22.

The schooner —, capt. Cleveland, which sailed from Salem for Winyam, in North-Carolina, the beginning of January last, was taken on her passage by the Scarborough man of war, and sent to Georgia, where after lading with rum, sugar, &c. she proceeded for Boston, when on last Friday evening (not knowing the ministerial fleet and army had evacuated that place) meeting with a heavy gale of wind, the put into the Vineyard, where she was properly taken care of by some boats from thence. One Marsh, the master's mate, and a son of commodore Loring, as prize masters, with two passengers on board, were brought to town for examination on Saturday last.

B O S T O N, April 25.

A letter from the West-Indies, dated March 1, says, "A very barrel of provision has been bought in the Windward Islands to be sent to Boston. A transport of 26 guns, well manned, and commanded by a lieutenant of one of the ships of war, arrived at Barbados for provisions; the inhabitants refused to let them have it, but he seized upon a ship that accidentally came in, belonging to Lancaster, but last from Ireland, and obliged him to sell his cargo. This day all the transports sailed from Antigua for Boston, but I hope the provincial cruisers among the islands will give a good account of them."

The master of a vessel lately from St. Eustatia, informs, that the ministerial fleet, which was blown off the coast last fall, consisted of 25 sail of transports, under convoy of a 50 and a 20 gun ship, were to sail to this place on or about the first instant.

P R O V I D E N C E, April 20.

We hear from Plymouth, that a schooner arrived there on Saturday last from a harbour near Halifax after a passage of six days, the master of which informs that the first division of the ministerial fleet from Boston, consisting of between 70 and 80 sail, had arrived at Halifax; that they were in much distress for want of fresh provisions, as all that could be spared from Halifax had been sent them while at Boston; and that they were so badly provided with barracks and lodgings, that most of the officers were obliged to lye in tents.

It is reported that the Phoenix, of 44 guns and the Savage sloop, have joined Wallace's fleet, near Long-Island.

N E W P O R T, April 22.

Last Thursday the brig Cabot, of 14 6 pounders, capt Hymnan, arrived here from New-London, and brought a number of heavy cannon, &c. for the defence of this place, being part of the stores lately taken from New-Providence. The next day the Fly tender to admiral Hopkin's fleet came from New-London, sailed through this harbour, and returned the ensuing night. This tender sails remarkably swift.

A ship was seen several days last week standing off and on between this harbour and Block-Island; and by a person who left that island yesterday, we are informed that said ship is the Scarborough; that she, and a 24 gun brig, with a small tender, watered there on Saturday; that the ship's people said capt. Wallace was gone for a larger force, and would return in 3 or 4 days; and that there were no other ships to be seen off.

A schooner, from the West-Indies, loaded with rum, sugar, &c. bound to Boston, was taken by some boats last week, and carried into Dartmouth.

Last Monday arrived in this colony, in 3 days from South-Carolina, the sloop Charlotte, capt. John Joy, who, in lat. 34. 30. was chased by an English man of war.

Mr. John Read, who came passenger with capt. Joy, informs, that the ship Clarissa, of this port, of which he was mate, was taken into the custody of the Raven sloop of war at Georgia, and that he made his escape with capt. John Dennis, who had been taken in a sloop from this place some time before, that the Georgians are very spirited in the present glorious contest; that

bour of Charles-town is detoured by near 200 cannon, and several vessels of force.

N E W - L O N D O N, April 19.

Talk Sunday capt. Biddle, in one of the continental brigs, returned here from a cruise, in which he retook and has brought in a schooner, which a few days before had been taken by the Scarborough man of war, and was then bound into Newport. The people had been all taken out of the schooner and put on board the Scarborough. By various circumstances it appears that the said schooner was bound into this port from the West-Indies, commanded by Daniel Dehon. She is deep laden with West-India goods, and some powder.

Extra of a letter from Boston, April 22.

"They are fortifying and putting the harbour, &c. in the best posture of defence they can. To-morrow they talk of sinking hulks by the castle, and erecting a battery at Camp-hill, on Noddie's Island: there was a fleet of the enemy, about 20 sail, lay at Nantasket last week, but they are all gone from thence except the Raven: our small privateers run in and out by Pulling's Point, without any regard to the enemy."

April 26. During the last and beginning of this week, several of the men of war have been cruising in the of-fing.

We hear that it is the determination of the continental congress to fortify New-London harbour in the best and most effectual manner; it being judged a good and convenient rendezvous for the continental fleet.

N E W - Y O R K, April 29.

Brigadier general Sullivan, with 6 regiments now here, are to set out for Canada in a day or two; and we hear, the remainder of the army will encamp this week near the city.

May 1. A letter from Edinburgh, dated Dec. 25, to a gentleman in this city, says, "business of all kinds is quite at a stand here; and to add to our misfortune a petulant diltemper rages with great violence among us, which has carried off great numbers, and has thrown the country in general into the utmost consternation."

Ship Duques of Gordon, Sandy-Hook, April 16, 1776.

"S I R,  
"As the commander of his majesty's ships of war on this station, found it expedient for his majesty's service to burn down the pilot house at the Hook, I am to acquaint you, all possible care has been taken of Mr. Adam Dobbs, and his property, and that if you will send down a sloop to the Hook it will be suffered to bring up to New-York Mr. Dobbs, his servants, and effects. I am with regard, sir, your most obedient servant.  
WILLIAM TRYON.  
"To David Mathews, Esq; mayor of the city of New-York."

By his excellency GEORGE WASHINGTON, Esq; general and commander in chief of the army of the united colonies.

Whereas an intercourse and correspondence with the ships of war, and other vessels belonging to, and in the service of the king of Great-Britain, is highly detrimental to the rights and liberties of the said colonies: And whereas the committee of safety of the colony of New-York, taking the same under their consideration, on the eighteenth inst. did resolve and order, "that no inhabitant of the said colony on any pretence, or for any purpose whatsoever, either in person or in writing, should directly or indirectly presume to have, or maintain any intercourse whatsoever, with any ship belonging to, or employed in the service of the said king, or with any of his officers or ministers, or with any person or persons on board the same, on pain of being dealt with in the severest manner." Notwithstanding which, there is reason to believe that sundry base and wicked persons, preferring their own present private emolument to their country's weal, have continued to carry on the same, particularly some who under pretence of coming to the market of this city by water, have put themselves, their vessels and effects in the way of the said ships of war, for the purposes of giving intelligence and furnishing them with supplies of provision, and have been taken; to the end that such evil and pernicious practices may be remedied and prevented in future, I hereby publish and declare, that if any person or persons shall hereafter presume to have, hold, or to continue to carry on such intercourse, or any kind of correspondence whatsoever, or furnish or supply the said ships of war, and other vessels in such service, with provisions and necessaries of any kind, that he or they, so offending, will be deemed and considered as an enemy or enemies to the rights of the said colonies, and if apprehended will be treated accordingly.

And I do hereby will and require all officers and soldiers in the army under my command, and most earnestly intreat all persons well attached to the interests of the said colonies, to use their utmost care and diligence for preventing the same; and apprehending and securing all persons who shall be guilty thereof.

Given under my hand, at head quarters, in the city of New-York, this twenty-ninth of April, Anno Domini, 1776.

G. WASHINGTON.

Extra of a letter from a gentleman in the continental army before Quebec, dated April 6.

"Our battery at Point Levy has been firing some days; the mortar battery on the heights is not quite finished, and in two days we will have another battery at the Little River. We have had a prodigious quantity of snow this winter; the tops of the fences just begin to appear, and I suppose that in a few days the roads will be impassable. I shall continue as long as there is a probability of the town's being taken. We are discouraged at gen. Lee's not coming; however, gen. Wooster is arrived. We ought to have at least 10,000 men more here in case of troops arriving; otherwise, the Canadians who have assisted us will be ruined. This province is the key of America."

P H I L A D E L P H I A, May 1.

Yesterday, according to the law passed last session for increasing the number of representatives in the assembly, the election was held for four burgesses for the city, which did not finish before midnight. The following

gentlemen were returned, it stood as follows: Drew Allen, 923; Wilcox, 921; Kuhl, 904; Owen, dead, 290.

An express, which the capes, informs that ship, with two sloops in the Hoarkill road.

By letters from the 15th of March, we learn they had lately taken a gun battery at Point Blain of Abraham.

From the same source, it is found that our people under the command of troops, to endeavour to find means to discover Dr. Lawrence.

We farther learn, had found means to discover Dr. Lawrence, fifteen or twenty more had collected four or a party of one hundred about two hundred of them.

Extra of a letter

"A few days past capt. Wright (the reception at Hampton guns commanded by Adrel John Goodrich, more and company province, and took ten gun sloop went prizes. The wind sloop and the other Twenty-three men, jamin Bonner of boarded the old pir and possessed them with a tolerable care retook the two prizes captain, George B ment of blacks, and are among the prizes arrived safe at Blair, the soldiers miles of Halifax ja

In CON

The committee of the committee of city and liberties of congress, whether of the power of re instances than this port, which being to; whereupon

Resolved, That which enjoined the to sell goods and respectively been at then last past, was respecting the goods are nearly consumed tained at an extrar rea'onable that ad prospect of gain a incurred in the imp opened from the world, except the Great-Britain, & Resolved, That t and observation, to ther instances that cease.

In COM

WHEREAS attend the suffering the inhabitants of Resolved, I hat no, mitted to purcha sioned officer, or goods, clothing, &c. such non-commissi a certificate; sign regiment or compa sicer or soldier be permitted to be fol every person presu ing or effects, co autified thereof, s ties of America, a mtees of the feve lony are enjoined solution.

PEOP

BRETHREN; CO REMEMBER interested advo; Bishop of St. Alav "The endeavor colonies from that with the indignat ous men; who wi of their country, dney, which has which for their laved, the old a present happiness and security, the brotherly equal mother country,