

WILLIAMSBURG, June 29.

This day PATRICK HENRY Esq; was chosen governor of this country, and a committee appointed to acquire it in the most equitable manner, to which is returned the following answer to the convention

To the honorable the president and house of convention.

GENTLEMEN

THE vote of this day, appointing me governor of this commonwealth, has been notified to me in the most polite and obliging manner, by George Mason, Henry Lee, Dudley Digges, John Blair, and Bartholomew Landridge, Esqs.

A sense of the high and unmerited honour conferred upon me by the convention fills my heart with gratitude, which I trust my whole life will manifest. I take the earliest opportunity to express my thanks, which I wish to convey to you gentlemen, in the strongest terms of affection and esteem.

It is to be regretted that the tyranny of the British king and parliament hath kindled a formidable war, now raging throughout this wide extended continent, and in the operations of which this commonwealth must bear its share; and that, from the events of this war, the human species will finally perish; that, in order to preserve his commonwealth from anarchy, and its attendant ruin, and to give vigour to our councils, and extend to all our measures, government hath been necessarily assumed and new moulded; that it is exposed to numerous hazards and perils in its infant state; that it can never attain to maturity, or ripen into firmness, unless it is guarded by affectionate assiduity, and managed by great abilities; lament my want of talents; I am daily afflicted with anxiety and uneasiness to find myself unequal to the duties of that important station, at this truly critical conjuncture. The errors of my conduct shall be atoned for, so far as I am able, by unremitting endeavours to secure the freedom and happiness of our common country.

I shall enter upon the duties of my office whenever you gentlemen shall be pleased to direct; relying upon the known wisdom and virtue of your honourable house to supply my defects, and to give permanency and success to that system of government which you have formed, and which is so wisely calculated to secure equal liberty, and advance human happiness.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen your most obedient, And very humble servant,

Williamsburg, June 29, 1776. P. HENRY, jun.

THE CONSTITUTION, or FORM of GOVERNMENT, agreed to and resolved upon by the delegates and representatives of the several counties and corporations of VIRGINIA.

WHEREAS George the third, king of Great-Britain and Ireland, and elector of Hanover, hitherto intrusted with the exercise of the royal office in this government hath endeavoured to pervert the same into a detestable and insupportable tyranny, by putting his negative on laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good:

By denying his governors permission to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent, and when so suspended, neglecting to attend to them for many years.

By refusing to pass certain other laws, unless the persons to be benefited by them would relinquish the inestimable right of representation in the legislature.

By dissolving legislative assemblies repeatedly and continually, for opposing with many firmness, his invasions of the rights of the people.

When dissolved, by refusing to call others for a long space of time, thereby leaving the political system without any legislative head.

By endeavouring to prevent the population of our country, and for that purpose, obstructing the laws for the naturalization of foreigners.

By keeping among us, in times of peace, standing armies and ships of war.

By affecting to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.

By combining with others to subject us to a foreign jurisdiction, giving his assent to their pretended acts of legislation.

By quartering large bodies of armed troops among us.

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world.

For imposing taxes on us without our consent.

For depriving us of the benefits of trial by jury.

For transporting us beyond seas, to be tried for pretended offences.

For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

By plundering our seas, ravaging our coasts, burning our towns and destroying the lives of our people.

By inciting insurrections of our fellow-subjects with the allurements of forfeiture and confiscation.

By prompting our negroes to rise in arms among us, those very negroes whom, by an inhuman use of his negative, he hath refused his permission to exclude by law.

By endeavouring to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions of existence.

By transporting, at this time, a large army of foreign mercenaries, to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

By answering our repeated petitions for redress with a repetition of injuries.

And finally, by abolishing the helm of government, and declaring us out of his allegiance and protection.

By which several acts of insult, the government of this country, as formerly exercised under the crown of Great-Britain, is TOTALLY DISSOLVED.

We, therefore, the delegates and representatives of the good people of Virginia, having maturely considered the premises, and viewing with great concern the deplorable condition to which this once happy country must be reduced, unless some regular adequate mode of civil polity is speedily adopted, and, in compliance with a recommendation of the general congress, do ordain and declare the future form of government of Virginia to be as follows.

The legislative, executive, and judiciary departments,

shall be separate and distinct, so that neither exercise the powers properly belonging to the other; nor shall any person exercise the powers of more than one of them at the same time, except that the justices of the county courts shall be eligible to either house of assembly.

The legislative shall be formed of two distinct branches who, together, shall be a complete legislature. They shall meet once, or oftener, every year, and shall be called the GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA.

One of these shall be called the HOUSE OF DELEGATES, and consist of two representatives to be chosen for each county, and for the district of West Augusta, annually, of such men as actually reside in and are freeholders of the same, or duly qualified according to law, and also of one delegate or representative to be chosen annually for the city of Williamsburg, and one for the borough of Norfolk, and a representative for each of such other cities and boroughs as may hereafter be allowed particular representation by the legislature; but when any city or borough shall so decrease as that the number of persons having right of suffrage therein shall have been, for the space of seven years successively, less than half the number of voters in some one county in Virginia, such city or borough thenceforward shall cease to send a delegate or representative to the assembly.

The other shall be called the SENATE, and consist of twenty-four members, of whom thirteen shall constitute a house to proceed on business, for whose election the different counties shall be divided into twenty-four districts, and each county of the respective district, at the time of the election of its delegates, shall vote for one senator, who is actually a resident and freeholder within the district or duly qualified according to law, and is upwards of twenty five years of age; and the sheriffs of each county, within five days at farthest after the last county election in the district shall meet at some convenient place, and from the poll to taken in their respective counties return as a senator the man who shall have the greatest number of votes in the whole district. To keep up this assembly by rotation, the districts shall be equally divided into four classes, and numbered by lot. At the end of one year after the general election, the six members elected by the first division shall be displaced, and the vacancies thereby occasioned supplied from such class or division, by new election, in the manner aforesaid. This rotation shall be applied to each division, according to its number, and continued in due order annually.

The right of suffrage in the election of members for both houses shall remain as exercised at present, and each house shall chuse its own speaker, appoint its own officers, settle its own rules of proceeding, and direct writs of election for supplying intermediate vacancies. (To be concluded in our next.)

ANNAPOLIS, July 18.

A LETTER from Williamsburg, July 13, 1776. By EXPRESS.

AS the enemy's fleet has been driven from their station, and their forces obliged to abandon Gwyn's island, and we are informed they will endeavour to possess themselves of some place on the Eastern shore of Maryland, we have thought it prudent to give you the earliest intimation thereof: A battery of two 18 pounders played on their ships, and in a few rounds forced them to retire: Four 9 pounders silenced their batteries, raked their camp, and threw them into the greatest confusion, on which our men, as soon as boats could be procured, passed over to the island, which the enemy abandoned with precipitation, carrying with them all their cannon, except one; two of their tenders fell into our hands; the ship Dunmore was so much damaged that, it is said, she was burnt the night after the cannonade; they were obliged to destroy two other vessels. We congratulate you on the success of the American arms in South-Carolina. By this express you will be fully informed of Sir Peter Parker's repulse.

Extract of a letter from South-Carolina, July 3, 1776. By EXPRESS.

Narrative by Thomas Bennett, of Col. Darnison's Massachusetts regiment-- Daniel Hawkins, of Boston, Robert Scot and Edmund Alston of New-Hampshire--and James Scot, of Virginia, deserters from the fleet which attacked and were beaten off by the brave garrison in Fort Sullivan, under the command of col. Montague on Friday the 28th of June, 1776. They are all Americans, and had been taken by the enemy at sea; Bennett, Hawkins, and Scot, in the ship Sally; Hamilton and Alston, in the brigantine Friendship.

The Bristol of 50 guns, commanded by Sir Peter Parker, is greatly damaged in her hull, large knees and timbers shot through and smashed. If the water had not been very smooth, it would have been impossible to have kept her from sinking--all the carpenters in the fleet had been called to her assistance. Her main-mast shot away, main-mast badly wounded by three several shot, fore-mast by two; rigging, sails and yard much damaged. The captain of the commodore lost his left arm above the elbow; he was sent yesterday, June 30, to England in a brig. The commodore's breeches torn off; his backside laid bare; his thigh and knee wounded; walks only when supported by two men. 44 men killed, 30 wounded among whom were many midshipmen and petty officers; 20 of the wounded dead since the action. It was talked in the fleet, that the two large ships would go over the bar again, and proceed to English Harbour in Antigua to be repaired. The Bristol, when lightened as much as possible, draws 18 feet 7 inches water.

Experiment, of 50 guns on two decks, all twelve pounders; a slighter vessel than the Bristol, exceedingly damaged in her hull; several ports beat in one; her main-mast hurt, but uncertain of particular; killed 57, of whom the captain was one; wounded 30, several since dead; draws when lightest 17 feet water. The general opinion is, that neither of those large ships will go safely over the bar again. Solebay, 28 guns, 2 men killed; 4 wounded; Ac-

ton, 28, lieutenant killed, 4 wounded; Acton, 28, Sphynx, 20, Siren, 28, all got aground, the first in coming up, the two latter in running away. The Sphynx cut away her bowsprit; the Siren got off. The Acton, by the assistance of a friendly English seaman, remained fast, burnt and blown up by her own people. While she was on fire, Mr. Millegan, one of our marine officers, and a party of men, boarded her, brought off her colours, the ship's bell, and as many sails and stores as three boats could contain. The Thunder bomb lay at a considerable distance, throwing shells at the fort, and by over-charging had shattered the beds and damaged the ship so much as to render it necessary for her to go into dock before she can act again. The Friendship, a hired armed vessel of 26 guns of various sizes, covered the bomb, as did the Siren, who also fired very briskly at the fort. The whole fleet badly manned and tickly, particularly the Siren's crew, at two-thirds short allowance of provisions and water. They have had no fresh provisions since their arrival, the first of June.

Lord William Campbell had been very anxious for the attack, and proposed taking all the forts with only the Siren and Solebay. Lord Cornwallis has the chief command of the land forces; he and general Clinton are both ashore with the troops at Long Island. His lordship had some time ago urged Sir Peter Parker to attack on the sea side, otherwise he would march up, attack and take the fort, and complain of Sir Peter's tardiness; the commodore replied, lord Cornwallis might march his troops when he pleased, but the fleet required a fair wind; the first that happened he would proceed against the fort. The general at that time believed we had no troops out of garrison; but he was soon better informed, being since repulsed and drove back with loss. He remained quiet and left the commodore to enjoy the glory of being defeated alone. This must be a mistake from lord Cornwallis's having had the command when the fleet left Ireland. The negro pilot Sampson, who is exceedingly carested, was on board the commodore, and put down with the doctors out of harm's way. When the fleet sailed from Ireland the number of troops was about 4000, but 11 transports had separated from the rest and not since been heard of.

The former deserters from on board the Ranger floop, who had seen all the land forces, said the amount was from 1300 to 2000 at most. Between 9 and 10 o'clock the Acton, the commodore, and other ships, began to steal away. They made no piping, nor waited to heave up their anchors, but slipped their cables. The commodore has only one anchor and cable left. About 2 o'clock on Friday, when the fort was waiting for a supply of powder, some of the men of war's men mistaking the unavoidable silence for surrender; cried out the Yankees had done fighting; others replied, by God we are glad of it, for we never had such a drubbing in our lives; we had been told the Yankees would not stand two fires, but we never saw better fellows. All the common men in the fleet spoke loudly in praise of the garrison. Brave fine fellows. The seamen in general are desirous of getting on shore to join the Americans. One M'Neal, a deserter from col. Gadsden's regiment, had informed the commodore, that before he left Fort Johnston he had spiked up all the cannon, and that the fort might be easily taken.

A report in the fleet, that no quarter would be given to the Americans, and that 6,500 had been offered for general Lee.

TO THE PEOPLE OF MARYLAND.

YOU are now with your consent, by the unanimous voice of America, declared a free and independent state. It is your duty, it is your interest to adopt the most effectual measures to carry this declaration into execution. The important day approaches on which you are to exercise the greatest characteristic of freemen. On the first day of August, you are to elect delegates to frame a government under which you and your posterity are to enjoy the inestimable blessings of liberty, or to suffer the complicated miseries of slavery. How sacred the trust the most honourable, the most important a people can bestow. You are bound in duty to your God, your country, and your posterity, to exercise this right, with honour, courage, wisdom, and integrity. When called to give your voice, examine with impartiality the pretensions of each candidate; reflect upon the qualifications he ought to possess, and remember that on a single vote may depend the happiness or misery of millions. One voice may make a majority for the candidate, his vote may elect the deputy to Congress, whose opinion may determine the councils of America. Reason and judgment alone should influence your choice. Private friendship personal attachment should be discarded; all prejudices quarrels and animosities should cease. The strictest probity, a manly firmness of mind, an inflexibility of temper, an obstinate persevering resolution, and an undoubted attachment to America and her present measure are essentials; no man of whom the least doubt can be justly entertained as to either, is worthy of your confidence. Permit me to say that you have been too inattentive, too careless in the choice of your delegates. Instances may be given where you have elected men who never manifested themselves friends to liberty. The supporters of the proprietary government in acts of oppression; the favourers of the proclamation to tax you without your consent; the open opposers of the measures of America; persons who have broke the association; and strangers (who have since discovered their inimical principles) have been deemed worthy of a seat in your Conventions. A few questions will readily discover the merit of the candidate. Is he a man of integrity and courage? his general character will gratify the enquiry. Is he a warm friend to the liberties and independence of America, and a zealous advocate for the present measures adopted by the Congress? to resolve this question, take a view of the whole tenor of his con-

dust in life: and connection in the struggle for liberty, and the clergy in their opposition or support of the measures of the place of profit his principles reflect on his trace his behavior Ask whether his position, contribute to the association, consider seriously conduct, that you can trust port the measure I have already mentioned. A view in our public debates have been individually, and gress have been your directions reduced the chance to occur in unanimous. The time or policy some, and other nutes before, nion and the made at the late of the people a of taxables to gain the number The principle ed, and yet to place, and yet to preferatives to 75,000 taxables, or 200,000 on the two thirds of have 44, and Is this an equal done to the large now adopted. supported by against the sup dices of men government can may reasonably ters of less con not be obtained learned Dr. Prfect degree, can every member, or of being ch becomes numer a diminution state, all the i mitted to an legislation an these powers by seatatives. In be still free or les so in proport represented." to a fair and equal equal repr as far as this is from the princ oppressive." It thing more on den, and if ev reasoning would refused an equ at the next Co be established w government: t from the people to be intructed In my first p man to power, trusting it long that your Conve an abuse of pow one half of the each succeeding ed, that they conduct in D ion. No go ance of it at a No state can lon variable adheren all Convention, ate Council of s eave to enquir why this repea their resolutions themselves; I a continuing the beration. If th one branch, a branches shall b of may be propo of they should had a governo rates should be o them, that th our confidence the first officers e given to them remains with yo power; be caus every man to a know what he d es in governm all knowledge of our disapprobat The writing of reloom will ha eries of his ad seems it crimin about 50 out ters in our mil