

removed, without considering the constitution and laws as things without meaning or efficacy.

The principle of your bill is also unjustifiable, in as much as it divests of their property, without notice, that class of persons, who resided before the commencement of hostilities, between these states and Great-Britain, in some of those parts of the British dominions which were not in the union with us. These persons had fairly, legally, and for a valuable consideration, acquired private rights, under the faith of the same laws and government, from which our rights of property are derived. What crime have they committed deserving of so severe a punishment? Was it criminal in them to remain in Great-Britain, or place of their nativity, and long residence, at that period of time, when they could neither foresee, or even apprehend a severance between these states and Great-Britain? Was it not rather their misfortune, than crime, to be confined from their birth, their business, or connections, to a country ruled by a king thirsting after arbitrary power, and aided in his designs by a profligate ministry, and more profligate parliament, at a time when those mad and wicked designs were carrying into execution? The difficulty and danger, real or apprehended, of quitting a country in time of war, and resorting to its enemy, must occur to every man capable of the smallest reflection. Hope too that disappointments, disgrace and defeats, would at length open the understanding of a wicked, or misguided prince, and discover the folly of his projects, and incline him to restore peace to his distracted dominions, before the breach became incurable, and a coalition between the two countries impracticable, might have induced them to continue in the usual place of their residence, especially as no public order was ever issued, commanding their repairing to the state, under the penalty of forfeiting their property in case of disobedience. Such is the force of equity and justice, that the human heart, even in opposition to apparent interests, must silently at least approve of arguments flowing from such pure sources; natural equity dictates that no man should be condemned, and punished unheard; that every man ought to be presumed innocent, till proved guilty. These are truths, which no subtleties, no resentments, no misconceived utility can ever eradicate from the human breast,