

their complaint:—The facts are these, <sup>v</sup>—In the year, 1776, it was thought advisable to promise a provision of half-pay for life, to such officers as might thereafter be wounded in the service of the United States, not only as a humane and necessary support, but as an encouragement to such as might possibly be deterred from encountering the dangers of a military life, from the dread of being rendered unable to secure a future maintenance.

It was afterwards resolved that half-pay should be granted to officers in general, without the necessity of a wound to entitle them to it.

It is a circumstance generally known, that the officers made a commutation with Congress, and agreed to take five years full pay, instead of the half pay which they had a claim to.

Application was made for the five years pay to the commissioner appointed by Congress, by those officers who had been wounded and were entitled to half-pay from the continent through the hands of this State.

The commissioner conceived that he was not justifiable in complying with their demands from the spirit of the resolve.

Let us see upon what principles this discrimination was founded.—The wounded officers were certainly entitled to half-pay under the first resolve of Congress. I conceive that they were entitled to it separately and distinctly from the other officers, and by a distinction which they had dearly purchased.

But another resolve follows, by which all who served to a particular period, were entitled to this reward.

Can it be inferred from this, that the first was superseded, or that the benefit of one only could be claimed by those who were entitled to both?—If such was the intention, let us observe what would be the real language in which it should be conveyed.—“Resolved, that as an encouragement to the officers of the army to exert themselves in the hour of danger, those who may unfortunately be wounded, shall receive the same reward, which is extended to other officers, and consequently, shall be as well provided for, as if they had encountered no such evil.”

This appears sufficiently injurious, yet if we consider the extent of the resolve, we shall find that those who might have