

NORTH-CAROLINA GAZETTE.

With the latest Advices, Foreign and Domestick

SEMPER PRO LIBERTATE, ET BONO PUBLICO.

The SPEECH of the Right Honourable the Earl of CHATHAM, in the House of Lords, Jan. 20, 1775, on the following Motion made by his Lordship.

That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, most humbly to advise and beseech him, that in order to open a Way towards an happy Settlement of the dangerous Troubles in America, by beginning to allay Ferments and soften Animosities there; and above all, for preventing in the mean Time, any sudden and fatal Catastrophe at Boston, now suffering under the daily Irritation of an Army before their Eyes, and posted in their Town. It may graciously please his Majesty, that immediate Orders be dispatched to General Gage for removing his Majesty's Forces from the Town of Boston, as soon as the Rigour of the Season, and other Circumstances indispensible to the Safety and Accommodation of the said Troops, may render the same practicable."

My Lords,

RISE with vast Astonishment to see these Papers* brought to your Table in so late a Period of this Business; Papers, I am sure, the Contents of which are already known, not only to every Lord in the House, but almost to every Person in the Kingdom, who has made American Affairs in the least an Object of Enquiry; yet now, in the very Tail of this Business, when Measures should be long since determined on, we are furnished with an empty Parade of Paragraphs—to tell us what?—Why, what all the World knew before—that the Americans, sore under Injuries, and irritated by Wrongs, stript of their inborn Rights and dearest Privileges, have resisted, and entered into Associations for the Preservation of that Blessing to which Life and Property are but secondary Considerations.

Give me Leave to ask you, my Lords, how these Associations have been formed? Has the Tide of Opposition yet flowed in upon their Elections? Have those Delegates been returned? Or have great Interest, great Power, or great Threats been used (as is too much the Case in this our boasted Mother Country) to crayon out what Conduct they should adopt? No—nothing like this has appeared; the Electors seem to be prompted by no other Motive than that glorious and exalted one, the Preservation of their common Liberties; and under this Idea they have been induced to appoint Men competent to so great an Undertaking; Men of tried and sound Principles, embarked in the same great Cause, and, from similar Sentiments, taught to pity the Miseries of the Whole.

Invested then with this Right (the Choice of a free People) these Delegates have deliberated with Prudence, Wisdom and Spirit; and, in Consequence of their Deliberations, have addressed the Justice and Honour of this Country. This is their Fault—this is their Crime; petitioning for that, without which a free People cannot possibly exist; yet, for asking this Boon, the unalienable Privilege of Englishmen, are they reprobated, and stigmatized with the Epithets of Ingrates—Traitors—and Rebels.

Had the early Situation of the People of Boston been attended to, Things would not have come to this—but the infant Complaints of Boston were literally treated like the capricious Squalls of a Child, who, it was said, did not know whether it was aggrieved or not.—But full well I knew, at that Time, that this Child, if not redressed, would soon resume the Courage and Voice of a Man. The Bostonians did not then complain upon slight, or temporary Evil; but on an Evil which sapped the very Vitals of their Constitution, and reduced all the great Blessings of Life to Chance, Equivocation and Insecurity. Full well I knew, that the Sons of Ancestors born under the same free Constitution, and once breathing the same liberal Air as Englishmen, Ancestors, who even quitted this Land of Liberty, the Moment it became the Land of Oppression, and, in Resistance to bigoted Councils, and oppressive Measures, tore themselves from their dearest Connections; I say, full well I knew, that the Offspring of such Ancestors would resist upon the same Principles, and on the same Occasions.

It has, however, gone abroad, that the Resolutions and Petitions of the Congress, are not the real

Resolutions and Petitions of the sober, respectable and dispassionate; but the very Dregs and Refuse of the People; and to circulate this Report the better, Letters are handed about from some very respectable Merchants (as they are called) from the different Provinces. But well I know how to describe such Merchants—little paltry, peddling Fellows, Venders of two Penny Wares, and Fallshoods, who under the Idea of Liberty, tell every Thing in their Power—Honour, Truth and Conscience.

These Fellows (for such is the Lot of Humanity) are ever to be found in all Countries—and are always in great plenty when their Country is at Stake, who, without ever regarding Consequences, and that general Ruin might ensue, press forward to the Goal of Lucre, and cut out the shortest Passage to their own Interest.

Yet these are the Men who are held out to us to take a true State of the Country from; Men who act upon the most illiberal Principles, Children of the World; who have no fixed Residence—no Attachments, but to the Shrine of Mammon. But it is not such that ever speak the Voice of a People,—it is the Proprietors and Tillers of the Ground—Men who have a permanent, natural Right in the Place—and who from being nursed in the Bosom of Cultivation, form strong and honourable Attachments to their Country;—it is to these Credit and Authority are to be given, and from these our best Informations are to be drawn.

Much, my Lords, has been said about the Authority of Parliament in these Cases, and when Men are driven for Want of Argument, they fly to this as their last Resource—"Acts of Parliament (say their Advocates) are sacred, and should be implicitly submitted to—for if the supreme Power does not lodge somewhere, operatively and effectively, there must be an End of all Legislation!"—But, my Lords, they who argue, or rather dogmatize in this Manner, do not see the Whole of this Question in a just, or liberal Ground; for in all free States the Constitution is fixed, and all legislative Power and Authority, wherever placed, either in collective Bodies, or individually, must derive under that Constitution who framed them.—Acts of Legislation therefore, however strong and effective they may be, when they are framed in the Spirit of this Constitution, yet when they resist—they attack their own Foundation; for it is the Constitution, and it alone, that limits both Sovereignty and Allegiance.

This Doctrine, my Lords, is no temporary Doctrine, taken up on particular Occasions to answer particular Purposes—it is involved in no metaphysical Doubts and Intricacies—but clear, precise and determined—it is recorded in all our Law Books; it is written in the great Volume of Nature—it is the essential, unalterable Right of Englishmen—it accords with all the Principles of Justice and civil Policy, which neither armed Force on the one Side, nor Submission on the other, can, upon any Occasion whatever, eradicate.

It was this Doctrine that was the great Guide and Spirit to the Frames of the Bill of Rights at the Period of the glorious Revolution—Men of the greatest Accuracy, Wisdom and Honesty; and, without any Disparagement to the present Day, few such Counsellors are now to be seen. Recollect, my Lords, for a Moment the Arguments used by these Men—and see how wise, liberal, and constitutional they were; turn then to their Opponents, and how flimsy, thin, and unpromised they appear! If then we applaud our Ancestors for obtaining such Liberties for us, at a Time when all the Rights of Englishmen were trampled upon, and Despotism had trodden down the Laws, surely we cannot, in Reason, deny that Portion of Liberty (so hardly and honourably obtained) to our own Brethren—Brethren by the same common Parent, and who are unquestionable Heirs of the same glorious Inheritance.

The Facts being then, as I have stated them, what has Government done? They have sent an armed Force, consisting of above seventeen Thousand Men, to dragoon the Bostonians into what is called their Duty, and for the chastisement of a small Rabble, consisting of the necessitous and characterless in doing an unlawful Act, have involved above thirty Thousand Inhabitants in the greatest Difficulty, Oppression and Consternation. Is this the Way to win Men to their Duty, and recover in them the Principles of Affection and British Allegiance? Do you think, that Men who could be roused to forego

their Profits, their Pleasures, and the peaceable Enjoyment of their dearest Connections—all for the Sake of Liberty, will be whipped into Vassalage like Slaves? Why, my Lords, this Conduct in Government is so fantastical and aerial in Practice, that it by far exceeds the boldest Wing of Poetry; for Poetry has often read pleasing, as well as instructive Lessons to Mankind; and though it sometimes amuses herself in Fiction, that Fiction, to please, should be founded on Verisimilitude. But in this wise System there is nothing like Truth, nothing like Policy, nothing like Justice, Experience, or common Sense.

But, my Lords, Government so far from once turning its Eyes to the Policy and destructive Consequence of this Scheme, are constantly sending out more Troops, and we are told, in the Language of Menace, that, if seventeen Thousand Men would do, fifty Thousand shall. 'Tis true, my Lords, with this Force they may ravage the Country, waste and destroy as they march; but in the Progress of seventeen Hundred Miles, can they occupy the Places they have passed? Will not a Country, which can produce three Millions of People, wronged and insulted as they are, start up like Hydras in every Corner, and gather fresh Strength from fresh Opposition? What Dependance can you have upon the Soldiery, the unhappy Engines of your Wrath? They are Englishmen, and melt feel for Englishmen; and their carrying Muskets and Bayonets about them, surely, does not exclude them from the Pale of civil Community. Do you think that these Men, then, can turn their Arms against their Brethren?—Surely no—a Victory must be to them a Defeat—Carnage—a Sacrifice.

But it is not merely three Millions of People, the Produce of America, we have to combat with in this unnatural Struggle; many more are on their Side, dispersed over the Face of this wide Empire. Every Whig in this Country is for them—Ireland is with them, and every Englishman, even those Englishmen, who may now be temperally inactive, when they once come to be roused to a Sense of Recollection, when they come to weigh the great Line of Right, for which their Brethren in America are contending, the Sense of their own Danger will instruct them to range themselves on their Side.

Who then, in the Name of Heaven, could advise this Measure? Or who can continue to give this strange and unconstitutional Advice? I do not mean to level at one Man, or any particular Set of Men—but thus much I will declare, that if his Majesty continues to hear such Counsellors, he will not only be badly advised, but undone.—He may wear his Crown, indeed, it is true, but it will not be worth his wearing; robbed of so principal a Jewel as America, it will lose its Lustre, and no longer beam that Effulgence which should irradiate the Brow of Majesty. What then is to become of this boasted Country of England, once so renowned in Arts, as well as Arms? What is become of her Constitution, that has hitherto been the Wonder, as well as the Envy of surrounding Nations? Has she changed her civil Power, and salutary Laws for a military Code? Or has she transferred her Seat of Empire to Constantinople?—Has she, who has often shed her dearest Blood in the manly Resistance of Despotism, now not only tamely submitted to it, but sat down herself to forge the arbitrary Chains?

But our present Governors, alas! think so little of this Matter, that I hear General Gage has been thought to have acted too tardy in this Business—that he has not been swift enough to execute Vengeance, and sheathe the Sword in the Bowels of his Countrymen. I really pity the unfortunate Situation of that Gentleman, who has approved himself on many Occasions a gallant Soldier, and humane Man; for what? From being under the disagreeable Predicament of doing his Duty on the one Side, and his own Feelings of Justice and Policy on the other; what a Conflict must he have! His Situation, my Lords, puts me in mind of a similar Transaction in the civil Wars of France, when the great Condé on one Side, and Marshal Turenne on the other, commanded different Armies; the latter conscious what terrible Consequences a Victory must produce to himself and Country, though often in his Power, avoided Blows as much as possible. After the Affair was over, the Marshal was thus reprimanded at Court for not at least taking the Prince; *Pourquoi ne l'avez vous pas pris?* But that General very sensibly replied, *Parceque, Sire, si je l'avois fait, tout Paris, en revenge, m'auroit pris.*

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* The whole of the American Papers just then delivered in at the Table by Lord Dartmouth, at the Command of his Majesty.