

NORTH-CAROLINA GAZETTE.

With the latest Advices, Foreign and Domestick.

SEMPER PRO LIBERTATE, ET BONO PUBLICO.

GOVERNOR JOHNSTONE'S SPEECH, on the Question for RE-COMMITTING the Address, declaring the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay in Rebellion.

Mr. SPEAKER,

BEFORE you pronounce this dreadful Sentence upon a MERITORIOUS, SOBER, INDUSTRIOUS People, I hope the House will indulge me with a few Minutes in Discharge of the Duty I owe myself, and likewise with a View of transmitting my Character fair to Posterity, when those BLACK Scenes shall be examined without Prejudice.

The real Question before us is, upon the proper Measures to be pursued respecting our fellow Subjects in America. In order to judge of this we must consider the REAL CAUSE of Dispute: I say the substantial Difference turns on the RIGHT OF TAXATION. Most of the Advocates on the other Side have endeavoured to flur this Point, and alledge, "that the Claims of the Americans extend far beyond this Article, and that the Act of Navigation itself is in Danger."—But it is impossible for a judicious Mind to read the material Papers, and not to see that this is ILLUSORY. The Congress has already told us, "that the Colonies are bound to those Laws which relate to us the Majesty of their Trade, as necessary in the mutual Connexion;" and the Instructions from Philadelphia, on which the Proceedings of the Congress are chiefly formed, avow THESE DOCTRINES in more full and explicit Terms. This Method of condemning Men by INFERENCE and CONJECTURE, contrary to their repeated Declarations, I cannot approve: I shall therefore bend the whole Force of my Argument to the original Cause of Quarrel—TAXATION.

The great and only Secret yet found out for preserving the Liberties of Mankind from the Encroachments of that Power which is necessary for the Administration of Justice, is the POWER OF THE PURSE. This was the Subject of Contention in the civil Wars of Charles the First: It is this Privilege alone which makes the House of Commons respectable: This was the Point which HAMPDEN obtained for us! And I leave every one acquainted with the History of those memorable Times, to determine in his own Mind, "whether we should ever have enjoyed this Blessing, if he had tamely paid the Tax, and had not RESISTED?"—From this Power we derive the Certainty of assembling the Representatives of the People; by this Redress of Grievances may PRECEDE Supplies; and the Security that the Exercise will not be abused is derived from hence, "that the House cannot impose on others, what they are not to feel themselves. By the Principles of the Constitution, every Man should be represented; but the Deviation from a Rule, too nice for Practice, is safely borne, because the Interest of every particular Member remains as a Pledge, that no Individual can be overburthened: When this Security is removed, there is no longer Safety for those to whom the Fact does not apply. What is the Case respecting the Americans? Does any Member feel himself affected by the Impositions he shall lay on them? Nay, does not the CONTRARY PRINCIPLE prevail? The more he shall BURTHEN America, the more he will RELIEVE himself.—JUDGE HOBBERT says, "If an Act of Parliament was made, constituting a Man a Judge in his own Cause, it would be void by the Law of Nature." Yet such is the precise Situation in which we contend we ought to be placed respecting the Americans, and for the Denial of which we are ready to condemn our fellow Subjects to all the Tortures enacted by the Laws of Treason.

Let us look round, and view the Fate of different States that have yielded or preserved the Privileges for which the Americans contend. So soon as the CORTES lost this Power, their Slavery was complete. PORTUGAL has now no Vestige of this Palladium.—Here is Tyranny supreme! In FRANCE, where the Traces are left (as in the *Pays d'etat*) their Happiness is distinguishable from the Misery of other Parts. In Britain we are yet free, because we retain it. In HOLLAND, SWITZERLAND, and the other States of Europe, they are more or less so as they preserve it.

What are the Circumstances that distinguish and protect the BRITISH Colonies from those of OTHER Nations? The Representatives of the Peo-

ple met in GENERAL ASSEMBLY, and the TRIAL BY JURY.—If the System of Taxation by the Parliament of Great-Britain takes place, what Being can be so credulous as to expect the Assemblies of the People will ever meet; and it is confessed that Admiralty Courts, disclaiming Trials by Jury, are necessary to enforce this Species of Taxation. Here then are all the essential Privileges of an Englishman, and the Liberty of the Subject, and the real Interest of the State is no way concerned in the contrary Scale, since the Prosperity of the Colonies must ever prove the Riches and Glory of England.—Nothing but the ABSURD PRIDE, or NARROW IGNORANCE of the PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, can be thrown into it.—When once this System takes place, we shall then feel the Tyranny and Oppression of Governors, with all their Train of Dependents, as in the Provinces of ROME, which are now quoted as an Example.

Thus much supposing the Americans RIGHT in the Dispute (as I believe they are); but supposing them WRONG, I shall now state their Excuse, and see what Heart can condemn them, and retain any Claims to Humanity.

The Question concerning the RIGHT to tax the Colonies, though clear to those who are accustomed to think merely on the Principles of the Government, is difficult to common Apprehensions.—MONTESQUIEU has observed, "that in Despotism every Thing ought to depend on two or three Ideas." As for Instance, Is there any Thing so fit to solve this Dispute as the UNITY of the British Empire—the SUPREMACY of the Legislative Authority of Great-Britain—the OMNIPOTENCE of Parliament? Is there any Man so ignorant, after having heard those SOUNDING Words, as not clearly to comprehend the whole of the Controversy? Pleading, thinking Creatures, who are accustomed to consider the complicated Privileges in a free Government, from whence the Principles of Liberty spring, may be puzzled; but Men who have never disturbed their Repose with such dry Considerations can have no Doubt on this Matter. Be that as it may, certain it is, that the Discussion of this most important Question was debated in this Assembly by the GREATEST ABILITIES, after the FULLEST INFORMATION, that ever accompanied any political Questions. The Decision was IN FAVOUR of the Americans; the Stamp Act was repealed. I admit that "Principles of EXPEDIENCY" are alledged to the REASON, in the Preamble of the Bill; but the Men who boldly DENIED during this Discussion, the Power of taxing the Colonies, as constitutionally existing in the Commons of Great-Britain; namely, LORD CHATHAM and LORD CAMDEN, (Men of as extraordinary Talents as ever adorned Society) the one was made Prime Minister, the other was treated a Peer, and Lord High Chancellor of Great-Britain, the Keeper of the King's Conscience! What American could have retained any Doubt of his Cause in the Mind of his Majesty, or the Nation, after such a Decision? The compromising Act soon followed (for the sake of gratifying a Party) violating all the Principles of Commerce and Policy in the lump-giving Drawbacks here, exacting Duties there, committing the Power and Authority of the Nation on Subjects which never could produce any effectual Revenue, and this in a Manner that all Men of Sense must ever condemn.

When the Americans, law, by this Act of Parliament, that the great Question was likely again to return upon them, in the Progress of Time, through the Creed, Ignorance, or Caprice of Statesmen, they meet the Position in fly, circuitous, questionable Shape; they recurred to their old Principles; they revolted against the Preamble; they transmitted Petitions; and all failing, they entered into Non-Importation Agreements. This produced LORD HILLSBOROUGH's circular Letter, which I will repeat again and again, till a contrary Conduct is pursued; for no satisfactory Answer can be given about it, while the present Doctrines are avowed.—The Americans, thus FORTIFIED in their Opinions concerning the Points of Taxation, are unanimous AGAINST our Power, from NOVA SCOTIA TO GEORGIA. If there be any Doubt on this Fact, why not call GOVERNOR EDEN? We are told he lately arrived: It would have been becoming to have produced him. But I call on his Relations, Friends, or any Man, to contradict me in this Assertion,

that the Americans are unanimous against this Power of Taxation, as lodged in the British Parliament." They are resolved to resist; and since you have placed them in a Situation where they must either be Rebels or Slaves, the Blame must lie with those who have drove them to this Dilemma.

In discussing the Question of RESISTANCE, the Gentlemen on the other Side, have alledged, "that the Colonies are bound to those Laws which relate to us the Majesty of their Trade, as necessary in the mutual Connexion;" and the Instructions from Philadelphia, on which the Proceedings of the Congress are chiefly formed, avow THESE DOCTRINES in more full and explicit Terms. This Method of condemning Men by INFERENCE and CONJECTURE, contrary to their repeated Declarations, I cannot approve: I shall therefore bend the whole Force of my Argument to the original Cause of Quarrel—TAXATION.

I have now stated the Arguments which should induce you to pause at least before you take this irretrievable Step. I shall examine next the Consequences.

Suppose we should SUCCEED in subduing the Americans, is it not clear from henceforward that we must govern them by MILITARY FORCE? Must not our Army be increased in Proportion? While his Majesty retains the Power of moving his Troops from one Part of his Dominions to another, can there be any Safety for the Liberties of THIS Country? If the Mortification begins at the EXTREMITIES, will it not soon communicate to the CENTRE? Every Man acquainted with the History of Nations, must foresee the Consequences. If we FAIL in the Attempt, which is the happiest Event that can occur, what Difficulties may not disgust, Irritations and all the Horrors of civil War, engender? While the Justice and Moderation of this Country are blotted from the Face of the Earth, and the accumulated Expence, when the Springs of Riches cut off, must SHAKE PUBLIC CREDIT to the very Centre.

The noble Lord has hinted, "if repealing the Tea Tax would do, he would yield that," and he speaks even FAINTLY on the Power of Taxation. If these are his Principles we are yet more inexcusable. We are going to punish Men for MAINTAINING what we are ready to YIELD, and to engage the Nation in endless Expence for the Sake of a QUIDDITY. Since whether renounced on the Principles of Expediency or Right, the Satisfaction must be equally complete to the Americans.

But the noble Lord alledges, "that yielding the Point of Taxation would not now do." This is Conjecture on his Part: But at least it would produce this good Effect,—we would divide the Americans; we should unite Men in this Country, and go to the Contest with better Hopes of Success.—The Proofs the noble Lord gives for his Opinion are several INDISCRETE Acts of different Meetings since the last Confusion in America. Such Detail never affects me. I think no Conclusion can be drawn from them. In all civil Wars, when the People are let loose to reason on Government, a Thousand absurd Doctrines are broached. Let us apply this to our own Country—let us remember all the ridiculous Circumstances which HUDIBRAS has painted better than I can. But should the GREAT CAUSE OF LIBERTY, in which our