

A
L E T T E R
T O A
MEMBER of PARLIAMENT,
On the IMPORTANCE of the
American Colonies,
AND THE
BEST MEANS of making them most Useful to
the MOTHER COUNTRY.



L O N D O N :
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TO A
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT,

On the Importance of the
American Colonies.

S I R,

I AM much obliged for your last Favour,
touching the Operations for the ensu-
ing Summer, and sincerely wish we
may heartily unite, in Defence of our Co-
lonies, in a seasonable Supply of Troops
and Ships, which would re-animate our
brave *Americans*, and give fresh Spirits to
our Soldiers and Sailors, who wish for no-
thing more than an Opportunity to convince

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our perfidious Enemy, BRITONS are as brave as ever.

I COULD wish to be excused the Task you request, and extremely pleased you could have met with some Friend better acquainted with our *American Colonies*, for your Information of their Importance, and the best Means of making them most useful to their Mother Country. And though they are under the best of Kings, the best System of Government, and in the Enjoyment of as many Advantages, perhaps, as any People in the World, the Benefits received from them (though great) are very small, to what they might be, was their Country better peopled and improved; it abounding with valuable Iron Mines, Mafts, and Timber of various Sorts, for various Uses; Pitch, Tar, Turpentine, Furs, &c. a fine Cod and Whale Fishery, large Navigation, of which they annually build several hundred Ships, and load with their own Produce for *Spain, Portugal, and Italy, Virginia, Carolina, the West-Indies, and the Bay*, from whence they are freighted to *Great Britain*, with Tobacco,

co, Rice, Naval Stores, Furs, Sugar, Log-wood, &c, in return for *British* Manufactures.

YET, notwithstanding all these evident Advantages, and notwithstanding the very Being of our Sugar Islands (from whence we draw immense Riches) depends upon the Supplies they receive from the *Northern* Colonies, we have not, as yet, pursued the best Measures to promote them, as other Nations, who justly esteem the Riches of their Plantations their own, and do all they can to extend and make them as useful as their Situation and Produce will admit. I am sorry we have been wanting in the pursuit of these Rules and Maxims, as I am for the Insensibility of those, who grumble at the Expence of *Nova Scotia*; a Settlement of as much Importance to the *American*, as *Gibraltar* is to the *Mediterranean* Trade, and infinitely more beneficial, from its Situation, and Conveniency for the Fishery, and Consumption of *English* Manufactures; as necessary for the Inhabitants, as they are conducive to the Increase of our Trade and Navigation.

THAT

THAT there are many valuable Iron Mines already discovered and improved in *North America*; and that they have imported as good Bar Iron, for general, and better for particular Uses, is well known to many in *London*, who have worked it. So glaring an Infatuation, for such it must be, that a free Importation of this interesting Staple is not permitted into every *British* Port, is greatly marvellous to those who have computed the immense Sums of Money, every Year, paid to Foreigners for that Article: It is urged, as I have been informed, the general Importation of Bar Iron, from the Colonies, would hurt the Proprietors of the *British* Iron Mines; which cannot be, until they import more than *England* with her own consumes; and whenever that is the Case, it will be reasonable to check it; for I would by no Means urge an Indulgence to the Prejudice of our Mother Country, wherefore, until this valuable Staple super-abounds, it is most heartily wished the general Good of the Nation may prevail in an unrestrained Importation; and it may not be improper to lay a higher Duty on foreign Iron, as we advance towards the Maturity of our own.

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THE advanced Price on Deals, begins to shew how very interesting they are to this Nation, and the Prohibition, in some Parts of the Northern Countries, ought to teach us the Necessity of promoting the Importation from our own Colonies, and the more we import, the more we shall be convinced of their Utility; and the sooner a Bounty is given, the sooner we shall enjoy the Benefits which have too long been given to Strangers; and the vast Number of Ships employed in the Deal Trade, one would have thought sufficient to discover the Necessity and Importance to a Nation whose Security and Navigation depends so much on the Increase of Sailors; which this bulky Commodity would create, and which might be effected by a small Bounty on our own, or Duty on foreign Deals, sufficient to yield the Adventurer his first Cost and Freight at the *British* Market, and of Course not only enable the *Americans* to pay for more of our *English* Manufactures, but such a Saving it would be of our *English* Oak, as
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ought in Point of Prudence to be preserved for the Use of the ROYAL NAVY.

ANOTHER necessary and costly Staple for which several Hundred Thousands in ready Cash is paid every Year to Strangers, might be saved by a Bounty on Hemp raised in *America*, their Soil being as fit for that Produce, as the Soil of any Country in *Europe*, and if once become their Staple, would introduce great Numbers of industrious People, bred to that Manufacture, who would gladly exchange the Hardship of their Northern Climes for the plentiful Country of *America*, where in the Course of forty or fifty Years, they might raise Hemp sufficient for the *British* Navigation.

POT-ASH made in our Colonies, would greatly increase our Trade and Navigation; which, from some late Experiments, we may rest assured of the Certainty of its Maturity, by a small Bounty that would yield this Nation good Profit, and save them large Sums now paid to Foreigners for it.

FOR

FOR Iron, Deals, Hemp and Pot-Ash, the Ballance against *Great-Britain* is computed a Million Sterling in Cash, one Year with another, an immense Sum indeed, which may be saved and paid for, with our own Produce, increase our Trade and Navigation, multiply our Sailors, and other useful Subjects, in one of the best Countries in the World, though at a distant, yet important Part, evidently the Aim and Envy of the *French* Nation.

NAVAL Stores is the clearest Evidence of the vast Utility of Bounties on our Plantation Produce, and proves besides the Benefits arising from the Employment of many Ships, besides the Advantage of Payment with *British* Manufactures ; and besides settling, clearing and fitting the Lands for Agriculture.

TAR that was formerly purchased with Money of the *Swedes* at 3 *l.* per Barrel, has been since fold on a Medium, under 10 *s.* per Barrel, and often much lower, that with the Bounty, after deducting Freight, Commission,

miffion, &c. barely yields the Importer his first Coft, a Demonftration the falutary Ends propofed by the Bounty, is answered in the Maturity of it, and now become fo natural to the People in *Carolina*, &c. that the Advantages alone of clearing their Lands, will for ever oblige them to make a Sufficiency for the *Britifh* Confumption; and an Exchange of the Bounty, will lead them to the raifing of Hemp and making of Pot-Afh, until thofe Staples become as plenty as Pitch and Tar.

THESE important Movements are with the BRITISH PARLIAMENT, the very Being and Spirit of the BRITISH EMPIRE, we have every Thing to hope that may be thought conducive to their Welfare, the Removal of every Impediment to their Growth, and the Encouragement of their Produce by Bounties or otherwife, on the aforefaid Articles, or others that may merit Attention; and whether an Expulfion of that Clause in the Act for promoting the Whale Fishery, obliging all Ships built and fitted out in *North America*, to make their Oil in some
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Part of *Great-Britain*, would not more effectually promote the Increase of our Navigation, intended by the Bounty; seems worthy of Consideration. That Impediment removed, and the *American* Whalers at Liberty to make their Oil at Home, would not only enable them to give their Ships a full Freight, and ship other Sailors to bring their Oil to the *British* Market, but they would be at Hand to improve the Season for killing Whales on their own Coasts, without being exposed to a *European* Voyage, which they dread from the Terrors of the Small Pox, an Indulgence this, in my Apprehension, without Risque of Imposition, to be prevented by Certificate of their Voyage, sworn before the Governor and Council, as in the Plantation Bounty on Tar, where and when the Whales were killed, and when and where the Oil, &c. was made.

THE foregoing Impediments to an important Branch of our Navigation, has led me to the Consideration of the pernicious Duty on *foreign Melasses*, in my Judgment,

one of the greatest Impediments to the Increase of the Northern Colonies. Melasses being an Article of such general Use, the People cannot cultivate their Lands or carry on their Fishery without it; Facts well known to many in this Island, who have felt the Extremities of the Seasons in that Country, and can attest, that to the Husbandman in Summer, it is Death to drink Beer or Water in the Field; and without a Mixture of Rum in the Winter, it is impossible to endure the Cold: Sure then we may humbly hope the Abatement of a Duty on an Article so necessary and useful, and that tends so much to the Well-being of the Inhabitants from *Georgia* to *Newfoundland*, at least 2000 Miles, and that more or less affects every Man who consumes, or that is in any Shape concerned with the *North American* Produce, without any Advantage at all, save to a few *West India* Gentlemen, who have made great Fortunes by running and distilling *French* Melasses into Rum, not only to the Prejudice of the *North Americans*, but of the Islanders, who cannot subsist if the *Northern* Colonies are not supported. Wherefore it is most heartily

heartily wish'd the Trade of all the *Americans* may be put on such an Establishment, as shall best promote their mutual Welfare, and most conduce to the general Good of their Mother Country, which cannot be, whilst any of them enjoy Benefits to the Prejudice of the other, as the Islanders have done ever since the Year 1733, the *North* Colonies having scarce had any Melasses from our own Islands, except from *Jamaica*, since the Commencement of the Act; and I am confident of a chearful Obedience in the *North Americans*, to a reasonable Duty on foreign Sugars, and an absolute Prohibition on all foreign distill'd Spirits; and I sincerely wish a perpetual Prohibition to the *French* Trade, which I am convinced has ever been rather prejudicial than beneficial to the Colonies, Melasses the only Article that can help them, they can get but little of, and what they do get, Brandy, Wine, and Silks are tack'd to it, which they had much much better be without, than supply an avow'd Enemy with Bread, Flour, and other Necessaries, 50 *per Cent* cheaper than they could be supplied from *Old France*, to
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the Hurt of our Fishery, and *Indian Trade* ; of which they not only rival us, but they gain such an Ascendency over them, as make them Enemies at pleasure. A Matter that has long groan'd for *Britain's* Interposition, though never more than at the present critical Conjunction, to guard against Supplies from her own unnatural Children, whose Thirst of Gain doubles the Danger of a perfidious Enemy, from whom we should not have much to fear, if we were honest and true to ourselves. I hope these Hints will not be slighted, however opposite to the Doctrine industriously propagated by *French* Advocates, that we had better supply them with Provisions, &c. than let others ; a Doctrine somewhat more unnatural than insuring their Ships, that leads so direct to their Escape. And which shall lead me to another Consideration little thought of, tending to the further Improvement and Security of our Colonies, as well as the Ease of this Metropolis, in the Removal of the Crouds of troublesome Beggars that throng the Streets, some through perverse Obstinacy, and others through Idleness abuse the Humanity
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of the most charitable City in the World, by making themselves, but are not the Objects they appear to be, whilst another Set of unhappy Men, confined in Gaols by their cruel Creditors, would gladly give their last Farthing to obtain their Liberty, and for ever thank the Government for a Passage to *America*, where they would soon become useful to the Community; and if Beggars would not willingly embark, they should be compelled to earn their Bread; thus would our Streets be cleared of Vagabonds, and the Prisons emptied of unfortunate Debtors, by whose Settlement on the Borders of our Colonies, we might expect a favourable Turn to the *Indians*, who, by Nature sagacious, when they saw the *English* so near them, and superior in Numbers, would court our Alliance against the *French*.

· ANOTHER unhappy set of Men, who by their Atrocities have made themselves obnoxious, and by their Crimes forfeited their Lives; though by the frequency of Executions, the Terrors of Death are so far lost as not to answer the End proposed by it. Yet they
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are not altogether unworthy of our Thoughts, and if some other Punishment (as there are Punishments more dreadful to bad Men than Death) could be inflicted, whereby the Publick may be satisfied, and the Loss of Life prevented, by some Mark that no Art could efface, and condemn'd for Life to work on the publick Roads, or Transported to attend on those who guard the frontier Settlements in *America*. And be thereby rendred useful to the Publick, in the Ease and Security of the Husbandman, and others expos'd by their Employments, to the Innovations of the Indians; for it is a melancholy Reflection, that some Method or other has not been discovered for the Salvation of Numbers that ought, in good Policy and Humanity, to be saved.

AMONGST others, though seemingly distant, the following Consideration immediately concerns the Welfare of the Colonies, and supplicates Redress from the Mother Country; even allowing the general Character of the People, that they are closely enough attached to their Interest; yet it is
evident

evident they have long criminally neglected the Cultivation of their Lands, to the Surprise of their Friends, and Joy of their Enemies; a Fatality having hitherto attended every Effort tending to the right Improvement of their Country, in a great Degree owing to a wretched Infensibility, especially in *New England*, that has prevailed in imaginary Riches, of vast Tracts of waste Lands, from being really so in their Improvement; and to this Day they remain obstinate, having obtained them for a Trifle, they hold the Terms of Settlement so very high, that the Industrious, who would improve them, dare not undertake it. An Impediment this, the the greatest that can happen to a Country in its Minority; and, though of the last Importance, without the Interposition of Parliament, it is probable may never be removed. It is, therefore, greatly wished, *a Penny Sterling, per Acre, may be levied on all waste Lands in America*, where the Proprietor shall not conform to the Terms fixed by the Legislature, and the Tax applied as a Bounty on Hemp, to be paid in Proportion to the Quantity raised; though it is probable

bable such as would stupidly continue in their Error, will say, it is needless for the *British* Parliament to intermeddle with an Affair that lies more properly with the Government to which the Lands appertain; but such Objection must vanish, when it is known the major Part of the Proprietors are Members of their General Court, who have hitherto opposed this salutary Tax, as most affected by it. This is a tender Point I own. The *British* Parliament, to their lasting Honour, have never interfered with Charter Governments, but when absolutely necessary for the public Utility; and here, without the Gift of Prophecy, a Man may affirm, without some Check or other to the Monopoly of Lands, the Province of the *Massachusetts Bay* will never be peopled nor improved as it should be. But before we quit this Subject, I must beg your Attention to the Report of the Day, touching the Supplies for *North America*, whither any Thing more than Coffee-House News I cannot advise you; if with any Foundation I am sorry for it; to me it appears a Matter of such Moment, as ought to be well thought of at this critical Conjunction,

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ture ; especially if any Regard is to be had to the Distresses of the People, that are but too evident to admit a Thought of any additional Burdens ; wherefore, however plausible such a Project may at first View appear, upon a second, I am persuaded, it must be esteemed very ill timed to talk of new Taxes upon a People whose Country is invaded by enterprising cruel Enemies, and for whose immediate Assistance, the united Prayers of the Nation surround the Throne, is whimsical enough : No, let us rather exert our utmost Efforts to rid them of their troublesome Enemies ; *for the present Question is not about Taxes, but it is whether England or France shall be Master of North America.* And as this is the Case, I cannot think we can be at any Loss to determine which is most probable to decide it, new Taxes, or repealing an old one that has been so long grievous to the People ; for, if I am rightly informed, the Sixpence a Gallon Duty on foreign Melasses (seldom or ever paid) is to be reduced to one Penny, and therewith the Custom-House Officers, &c. (now paid at home) are to be paid in the Plantations, and the Drawback on Exportation of

reign Produce from *London*, to be taken off, and a Duty of Ten *per Cent.* paid on their Importation into the Colonies ; however feasible these Alterations may appear in Times of Peace, they appear unseasonable in Time of War ; and if, hereafter, any such Tax should be thought eligible, it ought, even then, to be so cautiously framed, as not to burden the Fishery (that rich Nursery for Sailors) or any other Staple that needs nursing ; lest for an imaginary Good, we create a real Evil, and, perhaps, a Tax on Superfluities, &c. the only Tax that ought, in point of Prudence, to operate at all, may meet with some Opposition. Suppose it were *India* Goods, and the Drawback not only taken off, but a Duty paid in the Plantations, what would become of the Trade of the *India Company*? wherefore, if any such Scheme has been planned, it is to be hoped, it will be laid aside for the Present ; and, instead of new Taxes, let us study until we find out every Impediment to the Growth of our Colonies, and let us not forget the most Infant Settlement of *Nova Scotia*, and the Necessity of the same established Form of Govern-
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ment there, as in the other Provinces around them, the most effectual Means to revive and establish the Fishery, for which the Place is the best formed, by Nature, of any in *America*, and, of Course, must thrive best under a Civil, *Annapolis Royal* being a melancholy Proof of the Impracticability of establishing a Colony under a military Government ; and, when a good Plan is settled, let us not forget the Government that is best administered is best, in a proper Care to appoint such Officers as will faithfully execute the Laws, and punish those that neglect their Duty. And if it be, as some have hinted, there are too many People in Office, let their Numbers be reduced, and a strict Examination made into their Law Proceedings, which, it is likewise said, are numerous and excessive ; and it may not be amiss to examine the Conduct of those who make the Place an Asylum toward their necessitous Debtors, and if, as some complain, they exercise Cruelty towards them, they should forfeit their Protection.

SUCH Reforms must give an agreeable Turn to the Place, and engage new Settlers

to come amongst them; and I think it would not be ill judged to prevent the Increase of Lawyers, which are not esteemed the best Friends to an infant Settlement, nor, indeed, to any Settlements at all; therefore the Wish and Prayer of every Friend to the *British* Empire. Their Number may be limited (at least) in the Colonies, as they were in *England*, in the Reign of King *Edward III*. The Judges and their Salaries equal to their Dignity and Importance, and a Time fixed for the Definitive Judgment of all Causes. Such salutary Institutions would reconcile jarring Interests, banish litigious Members, or make them become peaceable, and introduce honest, industrious Inhabitants, the best Security and truest Riches of a Country.

THE foregoing Considerations, however distasteful to those who envy *Britain* her valuable Possessions in *America*, are as evidently conducive to her true Riches and Security, as they are to the Growth and Improvement of her Colonies, and both as necessary to be pursued, as it is to eradicate the unnatural Suspicion of their becoming
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one Time or other independent; with as much Reason, a Man may refuse to build or repair a valuable House, &c. for fear of its being burned; an Absurdity to which there is too much Reason to impute former Neglects, which ought now to be banished from our Minds, lest the Dregs of it should fatally impede the Pursuit, or abate the Ardour of the present Measures to rid that important Country of its perfidious Enemy, the Sense and Spirit of every honest Man in the Nation.

I HAVE, notwithstanding the Brevity of my Remarks, by the Importance of my Subject, been unavoidably led beyond the Bounds of a Letter, which I am sure you will not only excuse, but pardon every Defect, as well as accept an honest Intention for your Information of the Importance of our Colonies; the best Methods to remove the Impediments to their Prosperity; and multiply the Benefits derived, and others we may derive from them, that have enabled us to increase our Navy, and make the most considerable Figure in the Mercantile World; that the
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Produce of the Colonies do not, and if we pursue the foregoing Hints, never will interfere with the Produce or Manufactures of their Mother Country ; whose Interest it is to obtain a thorough Knowledge of what they are capable of producing, and by Bounties or otherwise, promote such Staples as she is obliged to purchase with Money of Strangers, which will discover to her, many Benefits too long neglected by an ill-grounded Jealousy, the Cause of *French* Encroachments, and the Calamities of the present Day ; and by a hearty Pursuit, and right Improvement of the foregoing Staples, a Repeal of the *Melasses* Act, a Tax on their waste Land, laying aside the Thoughts of any other Tax at present, and exerting our Strength in their Defence, BRITAIN may soon enjoy that Independency, which they are justly entitled to from the innumerable Benefits derived from her COLONIES.

F I N I S.

