

The AMERICAN CRISIS. Number III, By the Author of COMMON SENSE.

From the Pamphlet from April, 1777: American Crisis I – III

In the progress of politics, as in the common occurrences of life, we are not only apt to forget the ground we have travelled over, but frequently neglect to gather up experience as we go. We expend, if I may so say, the knowledge of every day on the circumstances that produce it, and journey on in search of new matter and new refinements: but as it is pleasant, and sometimes useful, to look back, even to the first periods of infancy, and trace the turns and windings through which we have passed, so we may likewise derive many advantages by halting a while in our political career, and taking a review of the wondrous complicated labyrinth of little more than yesterday.

Truly, may we say, that never did men grow old in so short a time! We have crowded the business of an age into the compass of a few months, and have been driven through such a rapid succession of things, that, for the want of leisure to think, we unavoidably wasted knowledge as we came, and have left nearly as much behind us as we brought with us: But the road is yet rich with the fragments, and, before we finally lose sight of them, will repay us for the trouble of stopping to pick them up.

Were a man to be totally deprived of memory, he would be incapable of forming any just opinion; every thing about him would seem a chaos: he would have even his own history to ask from every one; and by not knowing how the world went in his absence, he would be at a loss to know how it ought to go on when he recovered, or rather, returned to it again. In like manner, tho' in a less degree, a too great inattention to past occurrences retards and bewilders our judgement in everything; while, on the contrary, by comparing what is past with what is present, we frequently hit on the true character of both, and become wise with very little trouble. It is a kind of countermarch, by which we get into the rear of Time, and mark the movements and meaning of things as we make our return. There are certain circumstances, which, at the time of their happening, are a kind of riddles, and as every riddle is to be followed by its answer, so those kind of circumstances will be followed by their events, and those events are always the true solution. A considerable space of time may lapse between, and unless we continue our observations from the one to the other, the harmony of them will pass away unnoticed: But the misfortune is, that partly from the pressing necessity of some instant things, and partly from the impatience of our own tempers, we are frequently in such a hurry to make out the meaning of everything as fast as it happens, that we thereby never truly understand it; and not only start new difficulties to ourselves by so doing, but, as it were, embarrass Providence in her good designs.

I have been civil in stating this fault on a large scale, for, as it now stands, it does not appear to be levelled against any particular set of men; but were it to be refined a little further, it might afterwards be applied to the Tories with a degree of striking propriety: Those men have been remarkable for drawing sudden conclusions from single facts. The least apparent mishap on our side, or the least seeming advantage on the part of the enemy,

have determined with them the fate of a whole campaign. By this hasty judgment they have converted a retreat into a defeat; mistook generalship for error, while every little advantage purposely given the enemy, either to weaken their strength by dividing it, embarrass their councils by multiplying their objects, or to secure a greater post by the surrender of a less, has been instantly magnified into a conquest. Thus, by quartering ill policy upon ill principles, they have frequently promoted the cause they designed to injure, and injured that which they intended to promote.

It is probable the campaign may open before this Number comes from the press. The enemy have long lain idle, and amused themselves with carrying on the war by proclamations only. While they continue their delay our strength encreases, and were they to move to action now, it is a circumstantial proof that they have no reinforcement coming; wherefore, in either case, the comparative advantage will be ours. Like a wounded disabled whale, they want only time and room to die in; and though in the agony of their exit, it may be unsafe to live within the flapping of their tail, yet every hour shortens their date, and lessens their power of mischief. If any thing happens while this Number is in the press, it will afford me a subject for the last pages of it. At present I am tired of waiting; and as neither the enemy, nor the state of politics have yet produced any thing new, I am thereby left in the field of general matter undirected by any striking or particular object. This Crisis, therefore, will be made up rather of variety than novelty, and consist more of things useful than things wonderful.

The success of the cause, the union of the people, and the means of supporting and securing both, are points which cannot be too much attended to. He who doubts of the former is a desponding coward, and he who wilfully disturbs the latter is a traitor. Their characters are easily fixed, and under these short descriptions I leave them for the present.

One of the greatest degrees of sentimental union which America ever knew, was in denying the right of the British parliament "to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever." The declaration is, in its form an almighty one, and is the loftiest stretch of arbitrary power that ever one set of men or one country claimed over another. Taxation was nothing more than the putting the declared right into practice; and this failing, recourse was had to arms, as a means to establish both the right and the practice, or to answer a worse purpose, which will be mentioned in the course of this Number. And in order to repay themselves the expense of an army, and to profit by their own injustice, the Colonies were, by another law declared to be in a state of actual rebellion, and of consequence all property therein would fall to the conquerors.

The colonies, on their part, FIRST denied the right; SECONDLY, they suspended the use of taxable articles, and petitioned against the practice of taxation: and these failing, they, THIRDLY, defended their property by force, as soon as it was forcibly invaded, and, in answer to the declaration of rebellion and non-protection published their declaration of Independence and right of self-protection.

These, in a few words, are the different stages of the quarrel; and the parts are so intimately and necessarily connected with each other as to admit of no separation. A person, to use a trite phrase, must be a Whig or a Tory in the lump. His feelings, as a man, may be wounded; his charity, as a Christian may be moved; but his political principles must go through all the cases on one side or the other. He cannot be a Whig in this stage, and a Tory in that.

If he says he is against the United Independence of the Continent, he is to all intents and purposes against her in all the rest; because THIS LAST comprehends the whole. And he may just as well say, that Britain was right in declaring us rebels; right in taxing us, and right in declaring her "right to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever." It signifies nothing what neutral ground, of his own creating, he may skulk upon for shelter, for the quarrel in no stage of it hath afforded any such ground; and either we or Britain are absolutely right or absolutely wrong through the whole.

Britain, like a gamester nearly ruined, hath now put all her losses into one bet, and is playing a desperate game for the total. If she wins it, she wins from me my life; she wins the Continent as the forfeited property of rebels, the right of taxing those that are left as reduced subjects; and the power of binding them slaves: And the single die which determines this unparalleled event is, Whether we support our Independence or she overturn it. This is coming to the point at once. Here is the touchstone to try men by. He that is not a supporter of the Independent States of America in the same degree that his religious and political principles would suffer him to support the government of any other country, of which he called himself a subject, is, in the American sense of the word, A TORY; and the instant that he endeavours to bring his toryism into practice, he becomes A TRAITOR. The first can only be detected by a general test, and the law hath already provided for the latter.

It is unnatural and impolitic to admit men who would root up our Independence to have any share in our legislation, either as electors or representatives; because the support of our Independence rests, in a great measure, on the vigour and purity of our public bodies. Would Britain, even in time of peace, much less in war, suffer an election to be carried by men who professed themselves to be not her subjects, or allow such to sit in Parliament? Certainly not.

But there are a certain species of Tories with whom conscience or principle has nothing to do, and who are so from avarice only. — Some of the first fortunes on the Continent, on the part of the Whigs, are staked on the issue of our present measures. And shall disaffection only be rewarded with security? Can any thing be a greater inducement to a miserly man, than the hope of making his mammon safe? And though the scheme be fraught with every character of folly, yet, so long as he supposes, that by doing nothing materially criminal against America on one part, and by expressing his private disapprobation against Independence, as palliative with the enemy on the other part, he stands in a safe line between both, while, I say, this ground be suffered to remain, craft and the spirit of avarice,

will point it out, and men will not be wanting to fill up this most contemptible of all characters.

These men, ashamed to own the sordid cause from whence their disaffection springs, add thereby meanness to meanness, by endeavouring to shelter themselves under the mask of hypocrisy; that is, they had rather be thought to be Tories from some kind of principle, than Tories by having no principle at all.

But till such time as they can show some real reason, natural, political, or conscientious, on which their objections to Independence are founded, we are not obliged to give them credit for being Tories of the first stamp, but must set them down as Tories of the last.

In the second number of the Crisis I endeavored to show the impossibility of the enemy making any conquest of America, that nothing was wanting on our part but patience and perseverance, and that, with these virtues, our success, as far as human speculation could discern, seemed as certain as fate. But as there are many among us, who, influenced by others, have regularly gone back from the principles they once held, in proportion as we have gone forward; and as it is the unfortunate lot of many a good man to live within the neighbourhood of disaffected ones; I shall therefore, for the sake of confirming the one and recovering the other, endeavour, in the space of a page or two, to go over some of the leading principles in support of Independence. It is a much pleasanter task to prevent vice than to punish it; and however our tempers may be gratified by resentment, or our national expences eased by forfeited estates, harmony and friendship is, nevertheless, the happiest condition a country can be blessed with.

The principal arguments in support of Independence may be comprehended under the four following heads,

FIRST, The natural right of the continent to Independence.

SECONDLY, — Her interest in being independent.

THIRDLY, — The necessity, — And,

FOURTHLY, — The moral advantages arising therefrom.

I. THE NATURAL RIGHT of the Continent to Independence, is a point which never yet was called in question. It will not even admit of a debate. To deny such a right, would be a kind of atheism against nature: And the best answer to such an objection would be, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

II. THE INTEREST of the Continent in being independent is a point as clearly right as the former. America, by her own internal industry, and unknown to all the powers of Europe, was at the beginning of the dispute, arrived at a pitch of greatness, trade and population,

beyond which it was the interest of Britain not to suffer her to pass, lest she should grow too powerful to be kept subordinate. She began to view this country with the same uneasy malicious eye, with which a covetous guardian would view his ward, whose estate he had been enriching himself by for twenty years, and saw him just arriving at manhood. And America owes no more to Britain for her present maturity, than the ward would to the guardian for being twenty-one years of age. That America hath flourished at the time she was under the government of Britain, is true; but there is every natural reason to believe, that had she been an independent country from the first settlement thereof, uncontroled by any foreign power, free to make her own laws, regulate and encourage her own commerce, she had by this time been of much greater worth than now. The case is simply this, The first settlers in the different Colonies were left to shift for themselves, unnoticed and unsupported by any European government; but as the tyranny and persecution of the old world daily drove numbers to the new, and, as by the favor of Heaven, on their industry and perseverance, they grew into importance, so, in a like degree, they became an object of profit to the greedy eyes of Europe. It was impossible, in this state of infancy, however thriving and promising, that they could resist the power of any armed invader that should seek to bring them under his authority. In this situation, Britain thought it worth her while to claim them, and the Continent received and acknowledged the claimer. It was, in reality, of no very great importance who was her master, seeing, that from the force and ambition of the different powers of Europe, she must, till she acquired strength enough to assert her own right, acknowledge some one. As well, perhaps, Britain as another; and it might have been as well to have been under the states of Holland as any. The same hopes of engrossing and profiting by her trade, by not oppressing it too much, would have operated alike with any master, and produced to the Colonies the same effects. The clamor of protection, likewise, was all a farce; because, in order to make that protection necessary, she must first, by her own quarrels create us enemies. Hard terms, indeed!

To know whether it be the interest of the Continent to be independent, we need only ask this easy, simple question: Is it the interest of a man to be a boy all his life? The answer to one will be the answer to both. America hath been one continued scene of legislative contention from the first king's representative to the last; and this was unavoidably founded in the natural opposition of interest between the old country and the new. A governor sent from England, or receiving his authority therefrom, ought never to have been considered in any other light than that of a genteel commissioned spy, whose private business was information, and his public business a kind of civilized oppression. In the first of these characters he was to watch the temper, sentiments, and disposition of the people, the growth of trade, and the increase of private fortunes; and, in the latter, to suppress all such acts of the Assembly, however beneficial to the people, which did not directly or indirectly throw some encrease of power or profit into the hands of those that sent him.

America, till now, could never be called a free country, because her legislation depended on the will of a man three thousand miles distant, whose interest was in opposition to ours, and who, by a single "NO," could forbid what law he pleased.

The freedom of trade, likewise, is, to a trading country, an article of such importance, that the principal source of wealth depends upon it, and it is impossible that any country can flourish, as it otherwise might do, whose commerce is engrossed, cramped and fettered by the laws and mandates of another — yet these evils, and more than I can here enumerate, the Continent has suffered by being under the government of Great-Britain. By an Independence we clear the whole at once — put an end to the business of unanswered petitions and fruitless remonstrances — exchange Britain for Europe — shake hands with the world — live at peace with the world — and trade to any market where we can buy and sell.

III. The necessity, likewise, of being independent, even before it was declared, became so evident and important, that the Continent ran the risk of being ruined every day that she delayed it. There were reasons to believe that Britain would endeavour to make an European matter of it, and, rather than lose the whole, would dismember it like Poland, and dispose of her several claims to the highest bidder. Genoa failing in her attempts to reduce Corsica, made a sale of it to the French, and such traffics have been common in the old world. We had at that time no Ambassador in any part of Europe, to counteract her negotiations, and by that means she had the range of every foreign Court uncontradicted on our part. We even knew nothing of the treaty for the Hessians, till it was concluded, and the troops ready to embark. Had we been independent before, we had probably prevented her obtaining them. We had no credit abroad, because of our rebellious dependency. Our ships could claim no protection in foreign ports, because we afforded them no justifiable reason for granting it to us. The calling ourselves subjects, and at the same time fighting against the power which we acknowledged, was a dangerous precedent to all Europe. If the grievances justified the taking up arms, they justified our separation; if they did not justify our separation, neither could they justify our taking up arms. All Europe was interested in reducing us as rebels, and all Europe (or the greatest part at least) is interested in supporting us as Independent States. At home our condition was still worse: our currency had no foundation, and the fall of it would have ruined Whig and Tory alike. We had no other law than a kind of moderated passion; no other civil power than an honest mob; and no other protection than the temporary attachment of one man to another. Had Independence been delayed a few months longer, this Continent would have been plunged into irrecoverable confusion: some violent for it, some against it, till, in the general cabal, the rich would have been ruined, and the poor destroyed. It is to Independence that every Tory owes the present safety which he lives in; for by that, and that only, we emerged from a state of dangerous suspense, and became a regular people.

The necessity likewise of being independent, had there been no rupture between Britain and America, would in a little time have brought one on. The encreasing importance of commerce, the weight and perplexity of legislation, and the entangled state of European politics, would daily have shown to the Continent the impossibility of continuing subordinate; for, after the coolest reflections on the matter, this must be allowed, that Britain was too jealous of America, to govern it justly; too ignorant of it, to govern it well; and too far distant from it, to govern it at all.

IV. But, what weigh most with all men of serious reflection, are the MORAL ADVANTAGES arising from Independence: — War and desolation have become the trade of the old world; and America neither could, nor can be under the government of Britain, without becoming a sharer of her guilt, and a partner in all the dismal commerce of death. The spirit of duelling, extended on a national scale, is a proper character for European wars. They have seldom any other motive than pride, or any other object than fame. The conquerors and the conquered are generally ruined alike, and the chief difference at last is, that the one marches home with his honours, and the other without them. 'Tis the natural temper of the English to fight for a feather, if they suppose that feather to be an affront; and America, without the right of asking why, must have abetted in every quarrel, and abided by its fate. It is a shocking situation to live in, that one country must be brought into all the wars of another, whether the measure are right or wrong, or whether she will or not; yet this, in the fullest extent, was, and ever would be, the unavoidable consequence of the connection. Surely the Quakers forgot their own principles when, in their late testimony, they called this connection with these military and miserable appendages hanging to it, "The happy constitution."

Britain, for centuries past, has been nearly fifty years out of every hundred at war with some power or other. It certainly ought to be a conscientious as well political consideration with America, not to dip her hands in the bloody work of Europe. Our situation affords us a retreat from their cabals, and the present happy union of the States bids fair for extirpating the future use of arms from one quarter of the world; yet such have been the irreligious politics of the present leaders of the Quakers, that, for the sake of they scarce know what, they would cut off every hope of such a blessing by tying this Continent to Britain, like Hector to the chariot-wheel of Achilles, to be dragged through all the miseries of endless European wars.

The connection, viewed from this ground, is distressing to every man who has the feelings of humanity. By having Britain for our master, we became enemies to the greatest part of Europe, and they to us; and the consequence was war inevitable. By being our own masters, independent of any foreign one, we have Europe for our friends, and the prospect of an endless peace among ourselves. Those who were advocates for the British government over these Colonies, were obliged to limit both their arguments and their ideas to the period of an European peace only: The moment Britain became plunged in war, every supposed convenience to us vanished away, and all we could hope for was not to be ruined. Could this be a desirable condition for a young country to be in?

Had the French pursued their fortune immediately after the defeat of Braddock, last war, this city and province had then experienced the woeful calamities of being a British subject. A scene of the same kind might happen again; for America, considered as a subject to the crown of Britain, would ever have been the seat of war and the bone of contention between the two powers.

On the whole, if the future expulsion of arms from one quarter of the world would be a desirable object to a peaceable man; — if the freedom of trade to every part of it can engage the attention of a man of business; — if the support or fall of millions of currency can affect our interests; — if the entire possession of estates, by cutting off the lordly claims of Britain over the soil, deserves the regard of landed property; — and if the right of making our own laws, uncontrouled by royal or ministerial spies or mandates, be worthy our care as freemen; — then are all men interested in the support of Independence, and may he that supports it not, be driven from the blessing, and live unpitied beneath the servile sufferings of scandalous subjection!

We have been amused with the tales of ancient wonders; we have read, and wept over, the histories of other nations; applauded, censured, or pitied, as their cases affected us. — The fortitude and patience of the sufferers — the justness of their cause — the weight of their oppressions and oppressors — the object to be saved or lost — with all the consequences of a defeat or a conquest — have, in the hour of sympathy, bewitched our hearts and chained it to their fate: But where is the power that ever made war upon petitioners? Or where is the war on which a world was staked till now?

We may not, perhaps, be wise enough to make all the advantages we ought of our Independence, but they are, nevertheless, marked and presented to us with every character of GREAT and GOOD, and worthy the hand of HIM who sent them. I look through the present trouble to a time of tranquillity, when we shall have it in our power to set an example of peace to all the world. Were the Quakers really impressed and influenced by the quiet principles they profess to hold, they would, however they might disapprove the means, be the first of all men to approve of INDEPENDENCE, because, by separating ourselves from the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, it affords an opportunity never given to man before of carrying their favourite principle of peace into general practice, by establishing governments that shall hereafter exist without wars. Oh ye fallen, cringing, priest and Pemberton-ridden people! what more can we say of ye than that a religious Quaker is a valuable character, and a political Quaker, a real Jesuit.

Having thus gone over some of the principal points in support of Independence, I must now request the reader to return back with me to the period when it first began to be a public doctrine, and to examine the progress it has made among the various classes of men. The area I mean to begin at, is the breaking out of hostilities, April 19th, 1775. Until this event happened, the Continent seemed to view the dispute as a kind of lawsuit for a matter of right, litigating between the old country and the new; and she felt the same kind and degree of horror, as if she had seen an oppressive plaintiff, at the head of a band of ruffians, enter the court, while the cause was before it, and put the judge, the jury, the defendant and his council to the sword. Perhaps a more heart-felt convulsion never reached a country with the same degree of power and rapidity before, and never may again. Pity for the sufferers, mixed with indignation at the violence, and heightened with apprehensions of undergoing the same fate, made the affair of Lexington the affair of the Continent. Every part of it felt the shock, and all vibrated together. A general promotion of sentiment took place: Those

who had drank deeply into Whiggish principles, that is, the right and necessity not only of opposing, but wholly setting aside the power of the crown as soon as it became practically dangerous (for in theory it was always so) stepped into the first stage of Independence; while another class of Whigs, equally sound in principle, but not so sanguine in enterprize, attached themselves the stronger to the cause, and fell close in with the rear of the former; their partition was a mere point. Numbers of the moderate men, whose chief fault, at that time, arose from entertaining a better opinion of Britain than she deserved, convinced now of their mistake, gave her up, and publicly declared themselves good Whigs. While the Tories, seeing it was no longer a laughing matter, either sank into silent obscurity, or contented themselves with coming forth and abusing General Gage: Not a single advocate appeared to justify the action of that day; it seemed to appear to every one with the same magnitude, struck every one with the same force, and created in every one the same abhorrence. From this period we may date the growth of Independence.

If the many circumstances which happened at this memorable time, be taken in one view, and compared with each other, they will justify a conclusion which seems not to have been attended to; I mean a fixt design in the king and ministry of driving America into arms, in order that they might be furnished with a pretence for seizing the whole Continent, as the immediate property of the Crown. A noble plunder for hungry courtiers!

It ought to be remembered, that the first petition from the Congress, was at this time unanswered on the part of the British king. That the motion, called Lord North's motion, of the 20th of February, 1775, arrived in America the latter end of March. This motion was to be laid, by the several governors then in being, before the Assembly of each province; and the first Assembly before which it was laid, was the Assembly of Pennsylvania, in May following. This being a just state of the case, I then ask, why were hostilities commenced between the time of passing the resolve in the House of Commons, of the 20th of February, and the time of the Assemblies meeting to deliberate upon it? Degrading and famous as that motion was, there is nevertheless reason to believe, that the king and his adherents were afraid the Colonies would agree to it, and lest they should, took effectual care they should not, by provoking them with hostilities in the interim. They had not the least doubt at that time of conquering America at one blow; and what they expected to get by a conquest being infinitely greater than any thing they could hope to get either by taxation or accommodation, they seemed determined to prevent even the possibility of hearing each other, lest America should disappoint their greedy hopes of the whole, by listening even to their own terms. On the one hand they refused to hear the petition of the Continent, and on the other hand took effectual care the Continent should not hear them.

That the motion of the 20th February and the orders for commencing hostilities were both concerted by the same PERSON or persons, and not the latter by General Gage, as was falsely imagined at first, is evident from an extract of a letter of his to the administration, read among other papers in the House of Commons; in which he informs his masters, That though their idea of his disarming certain counties was a right one, yet it required him to be master of the country, in order to enable him to execute it. This was prior to the

commencement of hostilities, and consequently before the motion of the 20th February could be deliberated on by the several assemblies.

Perhaps it may be asked, why was the motion past, if there was at the same time a plan to aggravate the Americans not to listen to it? Lord North assigned one reason himself, which was, a hope of dividing them. This was publicly tempting them to reject it; that if, in case, the injury of arms should fail in provoking them sufficiently, the insult of such a declaration might fill it up. But by passing the motion and getting it afterwards rejected in America, it enabled them, in their wicked idea of politics, among other things, to hold up the Colonies to foreign powers, with every possible mark of disobedience and rebellion. They had applied to those powers not to supply the continent with arms, ammunition, &c. and it was necessary they should incense them against us, by assigning on their own part some seeming reputable reason why. By dividing, it had a tendency to weaken the States, and likewise to perplex the adherents of America in England. But the principal scheme, and that which has marked their character in every part of their conduct, was a design of precipitating the Colonies into a state which they might afterwards deem rebellion, and under that pretence, put an end to all future complaints, petitions and remonstrances, by seizing the whole at once. They have ravaged one part of the globe, till it could glut them no longer; their prodigality required new plunder, and through the East-India article TEA, they hoped to transfer their rapine from that quarter of the world to this. Every designed quarrel had its pretence, and the same barbarian avarice accompanied the Plant to America, which ruined the country that produced it.

That men never turn rogues without turning fools, is a maxim, sooner or later, universally true. The commencement of hostilities, being in the beginning of April, was, of all times, the worst chosen: The Congress were to meet the tenth of May following, and the distress the continent felt at this unparalleled outrage gave a stability to That Body, which no other circumstance could have done. It suppressed too all inferior debates and bound them together by a necessitous affection, without giving them time to differ upon trifles. The suffering likewise, softened the whole body of the people into a degree of pliability, which laid the principal foundation stone of union, order and government; and which, at any other time, might only have fretted and then faded away unnoticed and unimproved. But Providence, who best knows how to time her misfortunes as well as her immediate favours, chose this to be the time: And who dare dispute it?

It did not seem the disposition of the people at this crisis to heap petition upon petition, while the former remained unanswered: The measure, however, was carried in Congress, and a second petition was sent; of which I shall only remark, that it was submissive even to a dangerous fault, because the prayer of it appealed solely to, what it called, the prerogative of the Crown, while the matter in dispute was confessedly constitutional. But even this Petition flattering as it was, was still not so harmonious as the chink of cash, and consequently not sufficiently grateful to the tyrant and his ministry. From every circumstance it is evident, that it was the determination of the British court to have nothing to do with America but to conquer her fully and absolutely. They were certain of success,

and the field of battle was the only place of treaty. I am confident there are thousands and tens of thousands in America who wonder now that they should ever have thought otherwise; but the sin of that day was the sin of civility, yet it operated against our present good in the same manner that a civil opinion of the devil would against our future peace.

Independence was a doctrine scarce and rare, even towards the conclusion of the year Seventy-five: All our politics had been founded on the hope or expectation of making the matter up — a hope, which, though general on the side of America, had never entered the head or heart of the British court. Their hope was conquest and confiscation. Good heavens! what volumes of thanks does America owe to Britain! What infinite obligation to the fool that fills, with paradoxical vacancy, the throne! Nothing but the sharpest essence of villany, compounded with the strongest distillation of folly, could have produced a menstruum that would have effected a separation. — The Congress in Seventy-four administered an abortive medicine to Independence, by prohibiting the importation of goods, and the succeeding Congress rendered the dose still more dangerous by continuing it. Had Independence been a settled system with America, (as Britain has advanced) she ought to have doubled her importation, and prohibited in some degree her exportation. And this single circumstance is sufficient to acquit America before any jury of nations of having a Continental plan of independency in view: A charge, which had it been true, would have been honorable, but is so grossly false, that either the amazing ignorance, or the wilful dishonesty, of the British court is effectually proved by it.

The second petition like the first produced no answer; it was scarcely acknowledged to have been received; the British court were too determined in their villainy even to act it artfully, and in their rage for conquest neglected the necessary subtleties for obtaining it. They might have divided, distracted and played a thousand tricks with us had they been as cunning as they were cruel.

This last indignity gave a new spring to Independence. Those who knew the savage obstinacy of the king and the jobbing, gambling spirit of the court predicted the fate of the petition as soon as it was sent from America; for the men being known, their measures were easily foreseen. As politicians we ought not so much to ground our hopes on the reasonableness of the thing we ask, as on the reasonableness of the person of whom we ask it: who would expect discretion from a fool, candour from a tyrant, or justice from a villain?

As every prospect of accommodation seemed now to fail fast, men began to think seriously on the matter; and their reason being thus stript of the false hope which had long encompassed it, became approachable by fair debate; yet still the bulk of the people hesitated; they startled at the novelty of Independence, without once considering that our getting into arms at first was a more extraordinary novelty, and that all other nations had gone through the work of Independence before us. They doubted, likewise, the ability of the continent to support it, without reflecting, that it required the same force to obtain an accommodation by arms as an Independence. If the one was acquirable, the other was the

same; because to accomplish either, it was necessary that our strength should be too great for Britain to subdue; and it was too unreasonable to suppose, that with the power of being masters, we should submit to be servants. (See Note) Their caution at this time was exceedingly misplaced; for if they were able to defend their property and maintain their rights by arms, they consequently were able to defend and support their Independence; and in proportion as these men saw the necessity and correctness of the measure, they honestly and openly declared and adopted it, and the part that they had acted since has done them honour, and fully established their characters. Error in opinion has this peculiar advantage with it, that the foremost point of the contrary ground may at any time be reached by the sudden exertion of a thought; and it frequently happens in sentimental differences that some striking circumstance, or some forcible reason, quickly conceived, will effect in an instant what neither argument nor example could produce in an age.

Note: In this state of political suspense the pamphlet *Common Sense* *made its appearance, and the success it met with does not become me to mention. Dr. Franklin, Mr. Samuel and John Adams, were severally spoken of as the supposed author. I had not, at that time, the pleasure either of personally knowing or being known to the two last gentlemen. The favor of Dr. Franklin's friendship I possessed in England, and my introduction to this part of the world was through his patronage. I happened, when a school-boy, to pick up a pleasing natural history of Virginia, and my inclination from that day of seeing the western side of the Atlantic never left me. In October, 1775, Dr. Franklin proposed giving me such materials as were in his hands, towards completing a history of the present transactions, and seemed desirous of having the first volume out the next Spring. I had then formed the outlines of *Common Sense*, and finished nearly the first part; and as I supposed the doctor's design in getting out a history was to open the new year with a new system, I expected to surprise him with a production on that subject, much earlier than he thought of; and without informing him what I was doing, got it ready for the press as fast as I conveniently could, and sent him the first pamphlet that was printed off.

I find it impossible in the small compass I am limited to, to trace out the progress which Independence has made on the minds of the different classes of men, and the several reasons by which they were moved. With some, it was a passionate abhorrence against the king of England and his ministry as a set of savages and brutes; and these men, governed by the agony of a wounded mind, were for trusting every thing to hope and Heaven and bidding defiance at once. With others, it was a growing conviction that the scheme of the British court was to create, ferment and drive on a quarrel, for the sake of confiscated plunder: and men of this class, ripened into Independence in proportion as the evidence encreased. While a third class, conceived it was the true interest of America, internally and externally, to be her own master, give their support to Independence, step by step, as they saw her abilities to maintain it enlarge. With many it was a compound of all these reasons; while those, who were too callous to be reached by neither, remained, and still remain Tories.

The legal necessity of being independent with several collateral reasons, is pointed out in an elegant masterly manner, in a charge to the grand jury for the district of Charleston, by the Honorable WILLIAM HENRY DRAYTON, Esq: Chief Justice of South Carolina. This performance, and the ADDRESS of the CONVENTION of New-York, are pieces, in my humble opinion, of the first rank in America.

The principal causes why Independence has not been so universally supported as it ought, are fear and indolence, and the causes why it has been opposed, are, avarice, downright villany, and lust of personal power. There is not such a Being in America as a Tory from conscience: Some secret defect or other is interwoven in the character of all those, be they men or women, who can look with patience on the brutality, luxury and debauchery of the British court, and the violations of their army here. A woman's virtue must sit very lightly on her who can even hint a favorable sentiment in their behalf. It is remarkable that the whole race of prostitutes in New-York were Tories; and the schemes for supporting the Tory cause, in this city, for which several are now in jail, and one hanged, were concerted and carried on in common bawdy-houses, assisted by those who kept them.

The connection between vice and meanness is a fit subject for satire, but when the satire is a fact, it cuts with the irresistible power of a diamond. If a Quaker, in defence of his just rights, his property, and the chastity of his house, takes up a musket, he is expelled the meeting; but the present king of England, who seduced and took into keeping a sister of their society, is revered and supported by repeated testimonies, while the friendly noble from whom she was taken (and who is now in this city) continues a drudge in the service of his rival, as if proud of being cuckolded by a creature called a king.

Our support and success depend on such a variety of men and circumstances, that every one who does but wish well, is of some use: There are men who have a strange awkwardness to arms, yet have hearts to risque every shilling in the cause, or in support of those who have better talents for defending it. Nature, in the arrangement of mankind, has fitted some for every service in life: Were all soldiers, all would starve and go naked, and were none soldiers, all would be slaves. As disaffection to Independence is the badge of a Tory, so affection to it is the mark of a Whig; and the different services of the Whigs down from those who nobly contribute every thing, to those, who have nothing to render but their wishes, tend all to the same centre, though with different degrees of merit and ability. The larger we make the circle, the more we shall harmonize, and the stronger we shall be. All we want to shut out is disaffection, and that excluded, we must accept from each other such duties as we are best fitted to bestow. A narrow system of politics, like a narrow system of religion, is calculated only to sour the temper, and be at variance with mankind.

All we want to know in America is simply this, Who is for Independence and who is not? Those who are for it, will support it, and the remainder will undoubtedly see the reasonableness of paying the charges; while those who oppose, or seek to betray it, must expect the more rigid fate of the jail and the gibbet. There is a kind of bastard generosity, which, being extended to all men, is as fatal to society, on one hand, as the want of true

generosity is on the other. A lax manner of administering justice, falsely termed moderation, has a tendency both to dispirit public virtue, and promote the growth of public evils. Had the late Committee of safety taken cognizance of the last testimony of the Quakers, and proceeded against such delinquents as were concerned therein, they, had probably, prevented the treasonable plans which have been concerted since. When one villain is suffered to escape, it encourages another to proceed, either from a hope of escaping likewise, or an apprehension that we dare not punish. It has been a matter of general surprize, that no notice was taken of the incendiary publication of the Quakers, of the 20th of November last: a publication evidently intended to promote sedition and treason, and encourage the enemy who were then within a day's march of this city, to proceed on and possess it. I here present the reader with a memorial, which was laid before the board of safety a few days after the testimony appeared. Not a member of that board, that I conversed with but expressed the highest detestation of the perverted principles and conduct of the Quaker junto, and that the board would take the matter up; notwithstanding which, it was suffered to pass away unnoticed, to the encouragement of new acts of treason, the general danger of the cause and the disgrace of the state.

To the HONOURABLE the COUNCIL of SAFETY of the State of Pennsylvania.

*At a meeting of a reputable number of the inhabitants of the city of Philadelphia, impressed with a proper sense of the justice of the cause which this Continent is engaged in, and animated with a generous fervor for supporting the same, it was resolved, that the following be laid before the Board of Safety:

"We profess liberality of sentiment to all men; with this distinction only, that those who do not deserve it, would become wise and seek to deserve it. We hold the pure doctrines of universal liberty of conscience, and conceive it our duty to endeavour to secure that sacred right to others, as well as to defend it for ourselves; for we undertake not to judge of the religious rectitude of tenets, but leave the whole matter to Him who made us.

"We persecute no man, neither will we abet in the persecution of any man for religion sake; our common relation to others being that of fellow-citizens and fellow subjects of one civil community; and in this line of connection we hold out the right hand of fellowship to all men. But we should conceive ourselves to be unworthy members of the FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES OF AMERICA, were we unconcernedly to see or to suffer any treasonable wound, public or private, directly or indirectly, to be given against the peace and safety of the same. We inquire not into the rank of the offenders, nor into their religious persuasion; we have no business with either, our part being only to find them out and exhibit them to justice.

"A printed paper, dated the 20th of November, and signed 'John Pemberton,' whom we suppose to be an inhabitant of this city, has lately been dispersed abroad, a copy of which accompanies this. Had the framers and publishers of that paper conceived it their duty to exhort the youth, and others, of their society: to a patient submission under the present

trying visitations, and humbly to wait the event of Heaven towards them, they had therein shown a Christian temper, and we had been silent; but the anger and political virulence with which their instructions are given, and the abuse with which they stigmatize all ranks of men, not thinking like themselves, leave no doubt on our minds from what spirit their publication proceeded: And it is disgraceful to the pure cause of truth, that men can dally with words of the most sacred import, and play them off as mechanically as if religion consisted only in contrivance. We know of no instance, in which the Quakers have been compelled to bear arms, or to do any thing which might strain their conscience; wherefore their advice, 'to withstand and refuse to submit to the arbitrary instructions and ordinances of men,' appear to us a false alarm, and could only be treasonably calculated to gain favor with our enemy's, when they are seemingly on the brink of invading this State, or, what is still worse, to weaken the hands of our defence, that their entrance into this city might be made practicable and easy.

"We disclaim all tumult and disorder in the punishment of offenders; and wish to be governed, not by temper but by reason, in the manner of treating them. We are sensible that our cause has suffered by the two following errors: first, by ill-judged lenity to traitorous persons in some cases; and, secondly, by only a passionate treatment of them in others. For the future we disown both, and wish to be steady in our proceedings, and serious in our punishments.

"Every State in America has, by the repeated voice of its inhabitants, directed and authorized the Continental Congress to publish a formal Declaration of Independence of, and Separation from the oppressive king and parliament of Great-Britain; and we look on every man as an enemy, who does not in some line or other, give his assistance towards supporting the same; at the same time we consider the offence to be heightened to a degree of unpardonable guilt, when such persons, under the shew of religion, endeavour, either by writing, speaking, or otherwise, to subvert, overturn, or bring reproach upon the Independence of this Continent as declared by Congress.

"The publishers of the paper signed 'John Pemberton,' have called in a loud manner to their friends and connections, to 'withstand or refuse' obedience to whatever 'instructions or ordinances' may be published, not warranted by (what they call) 'THAT HAPPY CONSTITUTION UNDER WHICH THEY AND OTHERS LONG ENJOYED TRANQUILITY AND PEACE.' If this be not treason, we know not what may properly be called by that name.

"To us it is a matter of surprize and astonishment, that men with the word 'peace, peace,' continually on their lips, should be so fond of living under and supporting a government, and at the same time calling it 'happy,' which is never better pleased than when a war — that has filled India with carnage and famine — Africa with slavery — and tampered with Indians and Negroes to cut the throats of the freemen of America. We conceive it a disgrace to this State to harbour or wink at such palpable hypocrisy. But as we seek not to hurt the hair of any man's head, when we can make ourselves safe without, we wish such persons to restore peace to themselves and us, by removing themselves to some part of

the king of Great Britain's dominions, as by that means they may live unmolested by us and we by them; for our fixed opinion is, that those who do not deserve a place among us, ought not to have one.

"We conclude with requesting the Council of Safety to take into consideration the paper signed 'John Pemberton,' and if it shall appear to them to be of a dangerous tendency, or of a treasonable nature, that they would commit the signer, together with such other persons as they can discover were concerned therein, into custody, until such time as some mode of trial shall ascertain the full degree of their guilt and punishment; in the doing of which, we wish their judges, whoever they may be, to disregard the man, his connections, interest, riches, poverty, or principles of religion, and to attend to the nature of his offence only."

The most cavilling sectarian cannot accuse the foregoing with containing the least ingredient of persecution. The free spirit on which the American cause is founded, disdains to mix with such an impurity, and leaves it as rubbish fit only for narrow and suspicious minds to grovel in: Suspicion and persecution are weeds of the same dunghill, and flourish together. Had the Quakers minded their religion and their business, they might have lived through this dispute in enviable ease, and none would have molested them. The common phrase with these people is, "Our principles are peace." To which may be replied, and your practices are the reverse; for never did the conduct of men oppose their own doctrine more notoriously than the present race of the Quakers. They have artfully changed themselves into a different sort of people to what they used to be, and yet have the address to persuade each other that they are not altered; like antiquated virgins, they see not the havoc deformity has made upon them, but pleasantly mistaking wrinkles for dimples, conceive themselves yet lovely, and wonder at the stupid world for not admiring them.

Did no injury arise to the public by this apostacy of the Quakers from themselves, the public would have nothing to do with it; but as both the design and consequences are pointed against a cause in which the whole community are interested, it is therefore no longer a subject confined to the cognizance of the meeting only: but comes as a matter of criminality before the authority either of the particular State in which it is acted, or of the Continent against which it operates. Every attempt now to support the authority of the king and parliament of Great-Britain over America, is treason against every State; therefore it is impossible that any one can pardon or screen from punishment an offender against all.

But to proceed: While the infatuated Tories of this and other States were last spring talking of commissioners, accommodation, making the matter up, and the Lord knows what stuff and nonsense, their good king and ministry were glutting themselves with the revenge of reducing America to unconditional submission, and solacing each other with the certainty of conquering it in one campaign.

The following quotations are from the Parliamentary Register of the debate's of the House of Lords, March 5th, 1776.

"The Americans," says Lord Talbot,* (See Note) "have been obstinate, undutiful, and ungovernable from the very beginning, from their first early and infant settlements; and I am every day more and more convinced that this people never will be brought back to their duty, and the subordinate relation they stand in to this country, till reduced to unconditional, effectual submission; no concession on our part, no lenity, no endurance, will have any other effect but that of increasing their insolence."

Note: Steward of the king's household.

"The struggle," says Lord Townsend, (See Note) "is now a struggle for power; the die is cast, and the ONLY POINT which now remains to be determined is, in what manner the war can be most effectually prosecuted and speedily finished, in order to procure that unconditional submission, which has been so ably stated by the noble Earl with the white staff" (meaning Lord Talbot); "and I have no reason to doubt that the measures now pursuing will put an end to the war in the course of a SINGLE CAMPAIGN." "Should it linger longer, we shall then have reason to expect that some foreign power will interfere, and take advantage of our domestic troubles and civil distractions."

Note: Formerly General Townsend, at Quebec, and late lord-lieutenant of Ireland.

Lord Littleton, "My sentiments are pretty well known. I shall only observe now that lenient measures have had no other effect than to produce insult after insult; that the more we conceded, the higher America rose in her demands, and the more insolent she has grown. It is for this reason that I am now for the most effective and decisive measures; and am of opinion that no alternative is left us, but to relinquish America for ever, or finally determine to compel her to acknowledge the legislative authority of this country; and it is the principle of an unconditional submission I would be for maintaining."

Can words be more expressive than these? Surely the Tories will believe the Tory lords! The truth is, they do believe them and know as fully as any Whig on the Continent knows, that the king and ministry never had the least design of an accommodation with America, but an absolute, unconditional conquest. And the part which the Tories were to act, was, by downright lying, to endeavor to put the Continent off its guard, and to divide and sow discontent in the minds of such Whigs as they might gain an influence over. In short, to keep up a distraction here, that the force sent from England might be able to conquer in "one campaign." They and the ministry were, by a different game, playing into each other's hands. The cry of the Tories in England was, "no reconciliation, no accommodation," in order to obtain the greater military force; while those in America were crying nothing but "reconciliation and accommodation," that the force sent might conquer with the less resistance.

But this "single campaign" is over, and America not conquered. The whole work is yet to do, and the force much less to do it with. Their condition is both despicable and deplorable: Out of cash — out of heart — and out of hope. A country furnished with arms and

ammunition as America now is, with three millions of inhabitants, and three thousand miles distant from the nearest enemy that can approach her, is able to look and laugh them in the face.

Howe appears to have two objects in view, either to go up the North-River, or come to Philadelphia.

By going up the North -river, he secures a retreat for his army thro' Canada, but the ships must return if they return at all, the same way they went; as our army would be in the rear, the safety of their passage down is a doubtful matter. By such a motion he shuts himself from all supplies from Europe, but thro' Canada, and exposes his army and navy to the danger of perishing. The idea of his cutting off the communication between the eastern and southern States, by means of the North-river, is merely visionary. He cannot do it by his shipping; because no ship can lay long at anchor in any river within reach of the shore; a single gun would drive a first rate from such a station. This was fully proved last October at forts Washington and Lee, where one gun only, on each side of the river, obliged two frigates to cut and be towed off in an hour's time. Neither can he cut it off by his army; because the several posts they must occupy would divide them almost to nothing, and expose them to be picked up by ours like pebbles on a river's bank; but admitting that he could, where is the injury? because, while his whole force is cantoned out, as sentries over the water, they will be very innocently employed, and the moment they march into the country the communication opens.

The most probable object is Philadelphia, and the reasons are many. Howe's business is to conquer it, and in proportion as he finds himself unable to the task, he will employ his strength to distress women and weak minds, in order to accomplish through their fears what he cannot accomplish by his own force. His coming or attempting to come to Philadelphia is a circumstance that proves his weakness: For no general that felt himself able to take the field and attack his antagonist would think of bringing his army into a city in the summer time; and this mere shifting the scene from place to place, without effecting any thing, has feebleness and cowardice on the face of it, and holds him up in a contemptible light to all who can reason justly and firmly. By several informations from New-York, it appears that their army in general, both officers and men, have given up the expectation of conquering America; their eye now is fixed upon the spoil. They suppose Philadelphia to be rich with stores, and as they think to get more by robbing a town than by attacking an army, their movement towards this city is probable. We are not now contending against an army of soldiers, but against a band of thieves, who had rather plunder than fight, and have no other hope of conquest than by cruelty.

They expect to get a mighty booty, and strike another general panic, by making a sudden movement and getting possession of this city; but unless they can march out as well as in, or get the entire command of the river, to remove off their plunder, they may probably be stopped with the stolen goods upon them. They have never yet succeeded wherever they have been opposed, but at fort Washington. At Charleston their defeat was effectual. At

Ticonderoga they ran away. In every skirmish at Kingsbridge and the White Plains they were obliged to retreat, and the instant that our arms were turned upon them in the Jerseys, they turned likewise, and those that turned not were taken.

The necessity of always fitting our internal police to the circumstances of the times we live in, is something so strikingly obvious that no sufficient objection can be made against it. The safety of all societies depends upon it; and where this point is not attended to, the consequences will either be a general languor or a tumult. The encouragement and protection of the good subjects of any state, and the suppression and punishment of bad ones, are the principal objects for which all authority is instituted, and the line in which it ought to operate. We have in this city a strange variety of men and characters, and the circumstances of the times require that they should be publicly known; it is not the number of Tories that hurt us, so much, as the not finding out who they are; men must now take one side or the other, and abide by the consequences: The Quakers, trusting to their short sighted sagacity, have, most unluckily for them, made their declaration in their last testimony, and we ought now to take them at their word. They have involuntarily read themselves out of the Continental meeting, and cannot hope to be restored to it again but by payment and penitence. Men whose political principles are founded on avarice, are beyond the reach of reason, and the only cure of Toryism of this cast, is to tax it. A substantial good drawn from a real evil, is of the same benefit to society, as if drawn from a virtue; and where men have not public spirit to render themselves serviceable, it ought to be the study of government to draw the best use possible from their vices. When the governing passion of any man or set of men is once known, the method of managing them is easy; for even misers, whom no public virtue can impress, would become generous, could a heavy tax be laid upon covetousness.

The Tories have endeavoured to insure their property with the enemy, by forfeiting their reputation with us; from which may be justly inferred, that their governing passion is avarice. Make them as much afraid of losing on one side as on the other, and you stagger their Toryism; make them more so, and you reclaim them; for their principle is to worship the power which they are most afraid of.

This method of considering men and things together, opens into a large field for speculation, and affords me an opportunity of offering some observations on the state of our currency, so as to make the support of it go hand in hand with the suppression of disaffection and the encouragement of public spirit.

The thing which first presents itself in inspecting the state of the currency, is, that we have too much of it, and that there is a necessity of reducing the quantity, in order to increase the value. Men are daily growing poor by the very means that they take to get rich; for in the same proportion that the prices of all goods on hand are raised, the value of all money laid by is reduced. A simple case will make this clear; let a man have one hundred pounds cash, and as many goods on hand as will to-day sell for £20, but not content with the present market price, he raises them to 40, and by so doing, obliges others, in their own

defence to raise cent per cent likewise; in this case it is evident that his hundred pounds laid by, is reduced fifty pounds in value; whereas, had the market lowered cent per cent, his goods would have sold but for ten, but his hundred pounds would have risen in value to two hundred; because it would then purchase as many goods again, or support his family as long again as before. And, strange as it may seem, he is one hundred and fifty pounds the poorer for raising his goods, to what he would have been had he lowered them; because the forty pounds which his goods sold for, is, by the general raise of the market cent per cent, rendered of no more value than the ten pounds would be had the market fallen in the same proportion; and, consequently, the whole difference of gain or loss is on the difference in value of the hundred pounds laid by, viz. from fifty to two hundred. This rage for raising goods is for several reasons much more the fault of the Tories than the Whigs; and yet the Tories (to their shame and confusion ought they to be told of it) are by far the most noisy and discontented. The greatest part of the Whigs, by being now either in the army or employed in some public service, are buyers only and not sellers, and as this evil has its origin in trade, it cannot be charged on those who are out of it.

But the grievance has now become too general to be remedied by partial methods, and the only effectual cure is to reduce the quantity of money: with half the quantity we should be richer than we are now, because the value of it would be doubled, and consequently our attachment to it increased; for it is not the number of dollars that a man has, but how far they will go, that makes him either rich or poor. These two points being admitted, viz. that the quantity of money is too great, and that the prices of goods can only be effectually reduced by, reducing the quantity of the money, the next point to be considered is, the method how to reduce it?

The circumstances of the times, as before observed, require that the public characters of all men should now be fully understood, and the only general method of ascertaining it is by an oath or affirmation, renouncing all allegiance to the king of Great-Britain, and to support the Independency of the United States, as declared by Congress. Let, at the same time, a tax of ten, fifteen, or twenty per cent. per annum, to be collected quarterly, be levied on all property. These alternatives, by being perfectly voluntary, will take in all sorts of people. Here is the test; here is the tax. He who takes the former, conscientiously proves his affection to the cause, and binds himself to pay his quota by the best services in his power, and is thereby justly exempt from the latter; and those who chuse the latter, pay their quota in money, to be excused from the former, or rather, it is the price paid to us for their supposed, though mistaken, insurance with the enemy.

But this is only a part of the advantage which would arise by knowing the different characters of men. The Whigs stake everything on the issue of their arms, while the Tories, by their disaffection, are sapping and undermining their strength; and, of consequence, the property of the Whigs is the more exposed thereby; and whatever injury their estates may sustain by the movements of the enemy, must either be borne by themselves, who have done everything which has yet been done, or by the Tories, who have not only done nothing, but have, by their disaffection, invited the enemy on.

In the present crisis we ought to know, square by square and house by house, who are in real allegiance with the United Independent States, and who are not. Let but the line be made clear and distinct, and all men will then know what they are to trust to. It would not only be good policy but strict justice, to raise fifty or one hundred thousand pounds, or more, if it is necessary, out of the estates and property of the king of England's votaries, resident in Philadelphia, to be distributed, as a reward to those inhabitants of the city and State, who should turn out and repulse the enemy, should they attempt to march this way; and likewise, to bind the property of all such persons to make good the damages which that of the Whigs might sustain. In the undistinguishable mode of conducting a war, we frequently make reprisals at sea, on the vessels of persons in England, who are friends to our cause compared with the resident Tories among us.

In every former publication of mine, from Common Sense down to the last Crisis, I have generally gone on the charitable supposition, that the Tories were rather a mistaken than a criminal people, and have applied argument after argument, with all the candour and temper which I was capable of, in order to set every part of the case clearly and fairly before them, and if possible to reclaim them from ruin to reason. I have done my duty by them, and have now done with that doctrine, taking it for granted, that those who yet hold their disaffection are either a set of avaricious miscreants, who would sacrifice the Continent to save themselves, or a banditti of hungry traitors, who are hoping for a division of the spoil. To which may be added, a list of Crown or Proprietary dependants, who, rather than go without a Portion of power, would be content to share it with the devil. Of such men there is no hope; and their obedience will only be according to the danger set before them, and the power that is exercised over them.

A time will shortly arrive in which by ascertaining the characters of persons now, we shall be guarded against their mischiefs then; for in proportion as the enemy despair of conquest, they will be trying the arts of seduction and the force of fear by all the mischiefs which they can inflict. But in war we may be certain of these two things, viz. that cruelty in an enemy, and motions made with more than usual parade, are always signs of weakness. He that can conquer, finds his mind too free and pleasant to be brutish; and he that intends to conquer, never makes too much show of his strength.

We now know the enemy we have to do with. While drunk with the certainty of victory, they disdained to be civil; and in proportion as disappointment makes them sober, and their apprehensions of an European war alarm them, they will become cringing and artful; honest they cannot be. But our answer to them, in either condition they may be in, is short and full, "As Free and Independent States we are willing to make peace with you to-morrow, but we neither can hear nor reply in any other character."

If Britain cannot conquer us, it proves that she is neither able to govern nor protect us, and our particular situation now is such, that any connection with her would be unwisely exchanging a half defeated enemy for two powerful ones. Europe, by every appearance, is

now on the eve, nay, on the morning twilight of a war, and any alliance with George the Third brings France and Spain upon our backs; a separation from him attaches them to our side; therefore, the only road to Peace, Honor and Commerce is INDEPENDENCE.

COMMON SENSE.

Philadelphia, April 19, 1777.

Written this fourth year of the UNION, which GOD preserve!