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**Relative to the First Acknowledgment of the
Sovereignty of the United States of America,
And the Reception of their**

**Minister Plenipotentiary, by their High Mightinesses the
States General of the United Netherlands.**

To which is prefixed, the Political Character of

JOHN ADAMS,

**Ambassador Plenipotentiary from the States of North America,
to their High Mightinesses the States General of the
United Provinces of the Netherlands.**

BY AN AMERICAN.

LIKEWISE,

AN ESSAY ON CANON AND FEUDAL LAW,

By JOHN ADAMS, Esq;

LONDON:

**Printed for JOHN FIELDING, No. 23, Pater-noster-row;
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INTRODUCTION

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AS the States General of the United Provinces have acknowledged the independency of the United States of North America, and made a treaty of commerce with them, it may not be improper to prefix a short account of John Adams, Esq; who, pursuing the interests of his country, hath brought about these important events.

Mr. Adams is descended from one of the first families which founded the colony of the Massachusetts Bay in 1630. He applied himself early to the study of the laws of his country; and no sooner entered upon the practice thereof, but he drew the attention, admiration, and esteem of his countrymen, on account of his eminent abilities and probity of character. Not satisfied with barely maintaining the rights of individuals, he soon signalized himself in the defence of his country, and mankind at large, by writing his admirable Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Laws; a work so well worth the attention of every man who is an enemy to ecclesiastical and civil tyranny, that it is here subjoined. It showed the author at an early period capable of seconding efficaciously the formation of republics on the principles of justice and virtue. Such a man became most naturally an object of Governor Barnard's seduction. The perversion of his abilities might be of use in a bad cause; the corruption of his principles might tarnish the best. But the arts of the Governor, which had succeeded with so many, were ineffectual with Mr. Adams, who openly declared he would not accept a favour, however flatteringly offered, which might in any manner connect him with the enemy of the rights of his country, or tend to embarrass him, as it had happened with too many others, in the discharge of his duty to the public. Seduction thus failing of its ends, calumny, menaces, and the height of power were made use of against him. They lost the effect proposed, but had that, which the show of baseness and violence ever produce on a mind truly virtuous. They increased his honest firmness, because they manifested, that the times required more than ordinary exertions of manliness. In consequence of this conduct, Mr. Adams obtained the highest honours which a virtuous man can receive from the good and the bad. He was honoured with the disapprobation of the Governor, who refused his admission into the council of the province; and he met with the applause of his countrymen in general, who sent him to assist at the Congress in 1774, in which he was most active, being one of the principal promoters of the famous resolution of the 4th of July, when the colonies declared themselves FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES.

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This step being taken, Mr. Adams saw the inefficacy of meeting the English Commissioners, and voted against the proposition; Congress, however, having determined to pursue this measure, sent him, together with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Rutledge, to General Howe's head quarters. These Deputies, leading with them, in a manly way, the hostages which the general had given for their security, marched to the place of conference, in the midst of twenty thousand men ranged under arms. Whether this military shew was meant to do honour to the Americans, or to give them an high idea of the English force, is not worth enquiry. If its object was to terrify the Deputies of Congress, it failed; making no more impression on them, than the sudden discovery of elephants did upon certain ambassadors of old. The utmost politeness having passed on both sides, the conference ended, as had been foreseen, without any effect.

Mr. Adams having been fifteen months one of the Commissioners of the War department, and a principal suggestor of the terms to be offered to France, for forming treaties of alliance and commerce, he was sent to the court of Versailles, as one of the Ministers Plenipotentiary of the United States. After continuing some time invested with this important trust, he returned to America; where he no sooner appeared, than he was called upon by the State of Massachusetts Bay, to assist in forming a system of government, that might establish the rights of all on clear, just, and permanent grounds. He was never employed in a business more agreeable to himself; for, the happiness of his Fellow-Citizens is his great object. He sought not honour in this arduous undertaking, but it fell ultimately upon *Him*. He has gained it all over Europe. If he endeavoured to obtain by it the esteem and love of his countrymen, he has succeeded; for they know they are chiefly indebted to him for the constitution of the State of Massachusetts Bay, as it stands at this day.

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This important business being completed to the satisfaction of all, he came back to Europe, with full powers from Congress to assist at any conferences which might be opened for the establishment of peace; and had sent him, soon after, other powers to negotiate a loan of money for the use of the United States; and to represent them, as their Minister Plenipotentiary, to their High Mightinesses the States General of the United Provinces. Such important trusts shew, in what estimation he is held by his country; and his manner of executing them, that confidence is well placed.

On his arrival in Holland, nothing could have been more unpromising to the happy execution of his mission, than were the affairs of that country. The influence of the Court of St. James's over a certain set of men, the interest that many had in the funds and commerce of England, and the dread of her power, which generally prevailed throughout the Provinces, obliged him to act with the utmost circumspection. Unknown, and at first unnoticed, (at least but by a few) he had nothing to do but to examine into the state of things, and characters of the leading men. This necessary knowledge was scarcely acquired, when the conduct of the British Ministry afforded him an opportunity of shewing himself more openly. The contempt, insult and violence, with which the whole Belgic nation was treated, gave him great advantages over the English Ambassador at the Hague. He served himself of his rivals rashness and folly with great coolness and ability; and, by consequence, became so particularly obnoxious to the prevailing party, that he did not dare to go to a village scarcely a day's journey from his residence, but with the utmost secrecy: the fate of Dorislaus was before his eyes. Having been therefore under the necessity of making himself a Burgher of Amsterdam, for protection against the malice of the times, he soon gained the good opinion of the Magistrates by his prudent conduct as a private Citizen. The bad policy of England, enabled him to step forward as a public character. As such he presented to the States General his famous Memorial, dated the 19th of April, 1781, wherein the declaration of the independency of America on the 4th of July, 1776, was justified; the unalterable resolution of the United States to abide thereby asserted; the interest that all the powers of Europe, and particularly the States General, have in maintaining it, proved; the political and natural grounds of a commercial connection between the two Republics pointed out; and information given that the Memorialist was invested with full powers from Congress to treat with their High Mightinesses for the good of both countries.

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The presenting this Memorial was a delicate step; Mr. Adams was sensible, that he alone was answerable for its consequences, it being taken not merely from his own single suggestion, but contrary to the opinion and advice of some of great weight and authority. However, maturely considering the measure, he saw it in all its lights, and boldly ventured on the undertaking. The full and immediate effect of it was not expected at once. The first object was, that the nation should consider the matter thoroughly; it being evident, that the more it was ruminated on, the more obvious would be the advantages and necessity of a connection between the two countries. When, therefore, the Memorial was taken by the States General *ad referendum*, the first point was gained; the people thought of, and reasoned on the matter set before them; many excellent writings appeared, and they made the greatest impression; a weekly paper in particular, entitled *Le Politique Hollandois*, drew the attention of all, on account of its information, the soundness of its argument, and its political judgment and patriotism. At length the time came when the work was to be completed: the generality of the people of Holland, seeing the necessity of opening a new course to their trade, which the violent aggression of England, and the commercial spirit of other nations tended to diminish, demanded an immediate connection with the United States of America, as a means of indemnifying themselves for the loss which a declared enemy had brought on them, and the rivalship of neighbouring nations might produce.

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Mr. Adams seized the occasion which the public disposition afforded him, and presented his Ulterior Address of the 9th of January, 1782; referring therein to his Memorial of the 19th of

April, 1781, and demanding a categorical answer thereto. The Towns, Cities, Quarters, and States of the several Provinces took the whole matter into immediate deliberation, and instructed their several Deputies, in the States General, to concur in the admission of Mr. Adams in quality of Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of North America. This was done by a resolution, passed by their High Mightinesses the 19th of April, 1782; and on the 22d of the same month, Mr. Adams was admitted accordingly, with all the usual ceremonies.

This event seems to have been as great a blow as any that has been given to the pride and interests of England during the war. It shewed the Dutch were no longer over-awed by the power of their enemy, for they dared to brave him to his teeth. It set an example to other nations, to partake of the commerce of those countries, which England had lost by her inconsiderate conduct. It confounded at once the English partisans in Holland, and proved that Sir Joseph Yorke was not the great minister he had hitherto been supposed to be. It gave occasion to an ambassador of one of the greatest monarchs of Europe to say to Mr. Adams: *Vous avez frappé, Monsieur, le plus grand coup de tout l' Europe. C'est le plus grand coup, qui à etè frappé dans le cause Americain. C'est vous qui à effrayé et terrasse les Anglomannes. C'est vous qui à rempli cette nation d'enthousiasme.* And then turning to another gentleman, he said, *Ce n'est pas pour faire compliment a Monsieur Adams, que je dis cela: c'est parcequ'en verité, je crois que c'est sa due.*

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This diplomatic compliment has been followed by others. I transcribe with pleasure a convivial one contained in the following lines, which an ingenious and patriotic Dutchman addressed to his excellency Mr. Adams, on drinking to him out of a large beautiful glass, which is called a *baccale*, and had inscribed round its brim, *Aurea Libertas*:

AUREA LIBERTAS! *gaude! pars altera mundi*
Vindice te renuit subdere colla jugo.
Hæc tibi legatum quem consors Belga recepit
Pectore sincero pocula plena fero.
Utraque gens nectet, mox suspicienda tyrannis,
Quæ libertati vincula sacra precor!

They who have an opportunity of knowing his Excellency Mr. Adams trace in his features the most unequivocal marks of probity and candour. He unites to that gravity, suitable to the character with which he is invested, an affability, which prejudices you in his favour. Although of a silent turn, as William the Prince of Orange was, and most great men are, who engage in important affairs, he has nevertheless a natural eloquence for the discussion of matters which are the objects of his mission, and for the recommending and enforcing the truths, measures, and systems, which are dictated by sound policy. He has neither the corrupted nor corrupting principles of Lord Chesterfield, nor the qualities of Sir Joseph Yorke, but the plain and virtuous demeanor of Sir William Temple. Like him too he is simple in negociation, where he finds candour in those who treat with him. Otherwise he has the severity of a true republican, his high idea of virtue giving him a rigidness, which makes it difficult for him to accommodate himself to those intrigues which European politics have introduced into negociation. "*Il sait que l'art de negocier n'est pas l'art d'intriguer et de tromper; quil ne consiste pas à corrompre; à se jouer des sermens et à semer les alarmes et les divisions; qu'un negociateur habile peut parvenir à son but sans ces expediens, qui sont la triste ressource des intriguans, sans avoir recours à des manœuvres detournés et extraordinaires. Il trouve dans la nature même des affaires quil négocie des incidens propres à faire réussir tous ses projets.*"

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MEMORIAL
TO THEIR
HIGH MIGHTINESSES
THE
STATES GENERAL
OF THE
United Provinces of the Low Countries.

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High and Mighty Lords;

THE Subscriber has the honour to propose to your High Mightinesses, that the United States of America, in Congress assembled, have lately thought fit to send him a commission (with full powers and instructions) to confer with your High Mightinesses concerning a treaty of amity and commerce, an authentic copy of which he has the honour to annex to this memorial.

At the times when the treaties between this Republic and the Crown of Great Britain were made, the people, who now compose the United States of America, were a part of the English nation; as such, allies of the Republic, and parties to those treaties; entitled to all their benefits, and submitting chearfully to all their obligations.

It is true, that when the British Administration, renouncing the ancient character of Englishmen

for generosity, justice, and humanity, conceived the design of subverting the political systems of the Colonies; depriving them of the rights and liberties of Englishmen, and reducing them to the worst of all forms of government; starving the people by blockading the ports, and cutting off their fisheries and commerce; sending fleets and armies to destroy every principle and sentiment of liberty, and to consume their habitations and their lives; making contracts for foreign troops, and alliances with savage nations to assist them in their enterprise; casting formally, by act of parliament, three millions of people at once out of the protection of the Crown: Then, and not till then, did the United States of America, in Congress assembled, pass that memorable act, by which they assumed an equal station among the nations.

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This immortal declaration, of the 4th of July, 1776, when America was invaded by an hundred vessels of war, and, according to estimates laid before parliament, by 55,000 of veteran troops, was not the effect of any sudden passion or enthusiasm; but a measure which had been long in deliberation among the people, maturely discussed in some hundreds of popular assemblies, and by public writings in all the states. It was a measure which Congress did not adopt, until they had received the positive instructions of their constituents in all the States: It was then unanimously adopted by Congress, subscribed by all its members, transmitted to the assemblies of the several States, and by them respectively accepted, ratified, and recorded among their archives; so that no decree, edict, statute, placart, or fundamental law of any nation was ever made with more solemnity, or with more unanimity or cordiality adopted, as the act and consent of the whole people, than this: And it has been held sacred to this day by every state, with such unshaken firmness, that not even the smallest has ever been induced to depart from it; although the English have wasted many millions, and vast fleets and armies, in the vain attempt to invalidate it. On the contrary, each of the Thirteen States has instituted a form of government for itself, under the AUTHORITY OF THE PEOPLE; has erected its legislature in the several branches; its executive authority with all its offices; its judiciary departments and judges; its army, militia, revenue, and some of them their navy: And all those departments of government have been regularly and constitutionally organized under the associated superintendency of Congress, now these five years, and have acquired a consistency, solidity, and activity equal to the oldest and most established governments. It is true, that in some speeches and writings of the English it is still contended that the people of America are still in principle and affection with them: But these assertions are made against such evident truth and demonstration, that it is surprising they should find at this day one believer in the world. One may appeal to the writings and recorded speeches of the English for the last seventeen years, to shew that similar misrepresentations have been incessantly repeated through that whole period; and that the conclusion of every year has in fact confuted the confident assertions and predictions of the beginning of it. The subscriber begs leave to say from his own knowledge of the people of America, (and he has a better right to obtain credit, because he has better opportunities to know, than any Briton whatsoever) that *they are unalterably determined to maintain their Independence*. He confesses, that, notwithstanding his confidence through his whole life in the virtuous sentiments and uniformity of character among his countrymen, their unanimity has surprised him. That all the power, arts, intrigues, and bribes which have been employed in the several States, should have seduced from the standard of virtue so contemptible a few, is more fortunate than could have been expected. This independence stands upon so broad and firm a bottom of the people's interests, honour, consciences, and affections, that it will not be affected by any successes the English may obtain either in America, or against the European powers at war, nor by any alliances they can possibly form; if indeed, in so unjust and desperate a cause they can obtain any. Nevertheless, although compelled by necessity, and warranted by the fundamental laws of the colonies, and of the British constitution, by principles avowed in the English laws, and confirmed by many examples in the English history; by principles interwoven into the history and public right of Europe, in the great examples of the Helvetic and Belgic confederacies, and many others; and frequently acknowledged and ratified by the diplomatic body; principles founded in eternal justice, and the laws of God and nature, to cut asunder for ever all the ties which had connected them with Great Britain: Yet the people of America did not consider themselves as separating from their allies, especially the Republic of the United Provinces, or departing from their connections with any of the people under their government; but, on the contrary, they preserved the same affection, esteem and respect, for the Dutch nation, in every part of the world, which they and their ancestors had ever entertained.

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When sound policy dictated to Congress the precaution of sending persons to negotiate natural alliances in Europe, it was not from a failure in respect that they did not send a minister to your High Mightinesses, with the first whom they sent abroad: but, instructed in the nature of the connections between Great Britain and the Republic, and in the system of peace and neutrality, which she had so long pursued, they thought proper to respect both so far, as not to seek to embroil her with her allies, to excite divisions in the nation, or lay embarrassments before it. But, since the British administration, uniform and persevering in injustice, despising their allies, as much as their colonists and fellow-subjects; disregarding the faith of treaties, as much as that of royal charters; violating the law of nations, as they had before done the fundamental laws of the Colonies and the inherent rights of British subjects, have arbitrarily set aside all the treaties between the Crown and the Republic, declared war and commenced hostilities, the settled intentions of which they had manifested long before; all those motives, which before restrained the Congress, cease: and an opportunity presents itself of proposing such connections, as the United States of America have a right to form, consistent with the treaties already formed with France and Spain, which they are under every obligation of duty, interest and inclination, to observe sacred and inviolate; and consistent with such other treaties, as it is their intention to

propose to other sovereigns.

If there was ever among nations a natural alliance, one may be formed between the two Republics. The first planters of the four northern States found in this country an asylum from persecution, and resided here from the year 1608 to the year 1620, twelve years preceding their migration. They ever entertained and have transmitted to posterity, a grateful remembrance of that protection and hospitality, and especially of that religious liberty they found here, having sought it in vain in England.

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The first inhabitants of two other States, New-York and New-Jersey, were immediate emigrants from this nation, and have transmitted their religion, language, customs, manners and character: And America in general, until her connections with the House of Bourbon, has ever considered this nation as her first friend in Europe, whose history, and the great characters it exhibits, in the various arts of peace, as well as achievements of war by sea and land, have been particularly studied, admired and imitated in every State.

A similitude of religion, although it is not deemed so essential in this as in former ages to the alliance of nations, is still, as it ever will be thought, a desirable circumstance. Now it may be said with truth, that there are no two nations, whose worship, doctrine and discipline, are more alike than those of the two Republics. In this particular therefore, as far as it is of weight, an alliance would be perfectly natural.

A similarity in the forms of government, is usually considered as another circumstance, which renders alliances natural: And although the constitutions of the two Republics are not perfectly alike, there is yet analogy enough between them, to make a connection easy in this respect.

In general usages, and in the liberality of sentiments in those momentous points, the freedom of enquiry, the right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience, of so much importance to be supported in the world, and imparted to all mankind, and which at this hour are in more danger from Great Britain and that intolerant spirit which is secretly fomenting there, than from any other quarter, the two nations resemble each other more than any others.

The originals of the two Republics are so much alike, that the history of one seems but a transcript from that of the other: so that every Dutchman instructed in the subject, must pronounce the American revolution just and necessary, or pass a censure upon the greatest actions of his immortal ancestors: actions which have been approved and applauded by mankind, and justified by the decision of Heaven.

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But the circumstance, which perhaps in this age has stronger influence than any other in the formation of friendships between nations, is the great and growing interest of commerce; of the whole system of which through the globe, your High Mightinesses are too perfect masters for me to say any thing that is not familiarly known. It may not, however, be amiss to hint, that the central situation of this country, her extensive navigation, her possessions in the East and West Indies, the intelligence of her merchants, the number of her capitalists, and the riches of her funds, render a connection with her very desirable to America: and, on the other hand, the abundance and variety of the productions of America, the materials of manufactures, navigation and commerce; the vast demand and consumption in America of the manufactures of Europe, of merchandises from the Baltic, and from the East Indies, and the situation of the Dutch possessions in the West Indies, cannot admit of a doubt, that a connection with the United States would be useful to this Republic. The English are so sensible of this, that notwithstanding all their professions of friendship, they have ever considered this nation as their rival in the American trade; a sentiment which dictated and maintained their severe act of navigation, as injurious to the commerce and naval power of this country, as it was both to the trade and the rights of the Colonists. There is now an opportunity offered to both, to shake off this shackle for ever. If any consideration whatever could have induced them to have avoided a war with your High Mightinesses, it would have been the apprehension of an alliance between the two Republics: and it is easy to foresee, that nothing will contribute more to oblige them to a peace, than such a connection once completely formed. It is needless to point out, particularly, what advantages might be derived to the possessions of the Republic in the West Indies from a trade opened, protected and encouraged, between them and the Continent of America; or what profits might be made by the Dutch East India Company, by carrying their effects directly to the American market; or how much even the trade of the Baltic might be secured and extended by a free intercourse with America; which has ever had so large a demand, and will have more for hemp, cordage, sail-cloth, and other articles of that commerce: how much the national navigation would be benefited by building and purchasing ships there: how much the number of seamen might be increased, or how much more advantageous it would prove to both countries, to have their ports mutually opened to their men of war and privateers, and to their prizes.

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If, therefore, an analogy of religion, government, origin, manners, and the most extensive and lasting commercial interests, can form a ground and an invitation to political connections, the subscriber flatters himself that, in all these particulars, the union is so obviously natural, that there has seldom been a more distinct designation of Providence to any two distant nations to unite themselves together.

It is further submitted to the wisdom and humanity of your High Mightinesses, whether it is not visibly for the good of mankind, that the powers of Europe, who are convinced of the justice of the American cause, (and where is one to be found that is not?) should make haste to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and form equitable treaties with them, as

the surest means of convincing Great Britain of the impracticability of her pursuits? Whether the late marine treaty concerning the rights of neutral vessels, noble and useful as it is, can be established against Great Britain, who will never adopt it, nor submit to it, but from necessity, without the independence of America? Whether the return of America, with her nurseries of seamen and magazines of materials for navigation and commerce, to the domination and monopoly of Great Britain, if that were practicable, would not put the possessions of other nations beyond seas wholly in the power of that enormous empire, which has been long governed wholly by the feeling of its own power, at least without a proportional attention to justice, humanity, or decency. When it is obvious and certain that the Americans are not inclined to submit again to the British government, on the one hand, and that the powers of Europe ought not and could not with safety consent to it, if they were so inclined, on the other; why should a source of contention be left open, for future contingencies to involve the nations of Europe in still more bloodshed, when, by one decisive step of the maritime powers, in making treaties with a nation long in possession of sovereignty by right and in fact, it might be closed?

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The example of your High Mightinesses would, it is, hoped, be followed by all the maritime powers, especially those which are parties to the late marine treaty: nor can the apprehension that the independence of America would be injurious to the trade of the Baltic, be any objection. This jealousy is so groundless that the reverse would happen. The freight and insurance in voyages across the Atlantic are so high, and the price of labour in America so dear, that tar, pitch, turpentine, and ship-timber never can be transported to Europe at so cheap a rate, as it has been and will be afforded by countries round the Baltic. This commerce was supported by the English before the revolution with difficulty, and not without large parliamentary bounties. Of hemp, cordage, and sail-cloth there will not probably be a sufficiency raised in America for her own consumption in many centuries, for the plainest of all reasons, because these articles may be imported from Amsterdam, or even from Petersburg and Archangel, cheaper than they can be raised at home. America will therefore be for ages a market for these articles of the Baltic trade.

Nor is there more solidity in another supposition, propagated by the English to prevent other nations from pursuing their true interests, that the colonies of other nations will follow the example of the United States. Those powers, who have as large possessions as any beyond seas, have already declared against England, apprehending no such consequences. Indeed there is no probability of any other power of Europe following the example of England, in attempting to change the whole system of the government of colonies, and reducing them by oppression to the necessity of governing themselves: and, without such manifest injustice and cruelty on the part of the metropolis, there is no danger of colonies attempting innovations. Established governments are founded deep in the hearts, the passions, the imaginations and understandings of the people; and without some violent change from without, to alter the temper and character of the whole people, it is not in human nature to exchange safety for danger, and certain happiness for very precarious benefits.

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It is submitted to the consideration of your High Mightinesses, whether the system of the United States, which was minutely considered and discussed, and unanimously agreed on in Congress in the year 1776, in planning the treaty they proposed to France, to form equitable commercial treaties with all the maritime powers of Europe, without being governed or monopolized by any: a system which was afterwards approved by the king, and made the foundation of the treaties with his majesty: a system to which the United States have hitherto constantly adhered, and from which they never will depart, unless compelled by some powers declaring against them, which is not expected, is not the only means of preventing this growing country from being an object of everlasting jealousies, rivalries, and wars among the nations. If this idea be just, it follows, that *it is the interest of every state in Europe to acknowledge American independency immediately*. If such benevolent policy should be adopted, the new world will be a proportional blessing to every part of the old.

The subscriber has the farther honour of informing your High Mightinesses, that the United States of America, in Congress assembled, impressed with an high sense of the wisdom and magnanimity of your High Mightinesses, and of your inviolable attachment to the rights and liberties of mankind, and being desirous of cultivating the friendship of a nation, eminent for its wisdom, justice, and moderation, have appointed the subscriber to be their minister plenipotentiary to reside near you, that he may give you more particular assurances of the great respect they entertain for your High Mightinesses; beseeching your High Mightinesses to give entire credit to every thing, which their said minister shall deliver on their part, especially when he shall assure you of the sincerity of their friendship and regard. The original letter of credence, under the seal of Congress, the subscriber is ready to deliver to your High Mightinesses, or to such persons as you shall direct to receive it. He has also a similar letter of credence to his most Serene Highness the Prince Stadtholder.

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All which is respectfully submitted to the consideration of your High Mightinesses, together with the propriety of appointing some person, or persons, to treat on the subject of his mission, by

LEYDEN
19 April 1781.

J. ADAMS.

IN the assembly of the States of Guelderland, holden in October 1781, to consider of the requisition of the king of France, of a negotiation of five millions of florins, under the warranty of the Republic, some were for an alliance with France. The Baron Nagel, Seneschal of Zutphen, avoided putting of the question, and said among other things, "That he had rather acknowledge the independence of the Americans, than contract an alliance with France."

The Baron van der Capellen de Marsch was for an alliance with France and America too. He observed, "That nothing being more natural than to act in concert with the enemies of our enemy, it was an object of serious deliberation, to see, if the interest of the Republic did not require to accept, without farther tergiversations, the invitations and offers of the Americans: that no condescension for England could hinder us, at present, from uniting ourselves against a common enemy, with a nation so brave and so virtuous: a nation, which, after our example, owes its liberty to its valour, and even at this moment is employed in defending itself from the tyranny of the enemy of the two nations: that, consequently, nothing could restrain us from acknowledging the independence of this new Republic: that our conduct differed very much from that holden by our ancestors, who allied themselves with the Portuguese, as soon as they shook off the yoke of the Spaniards: that there was no doubt, that the said alliances with the enemies of our enemy would soon restrain his fury, and operate a general peace advantageous for us."

The QUARTER of OOSTERGO.

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The Quarter of Oostergo, in the Province of Friesland, in December, 1781, was the first public Body which proposed a Connection with the United States of America in these Words.

EVERY impartial Patriot has a long time perceived that, in the direction of affairs relative to this war with England, there have been manifested an inconceivable lukewarmness and sloth; but they discover themselves still more, at this moment, by the little inclination which, in general, the Regencies of the Belgic Provinces testify to commence a treaty of commerce and friendship with the new Republic of the Thirteen United States of North America; and to contract engagements, at least during the continuance of this common war with the Crowns of France and Spain. Nevertheless, the necessity of these measures appears clearly, since, according to our judgments, nothing was more natural, nor more conformable to sound policy, founded upon the laws of the nature the most precise, than that this Republic, immediately after the formal declaration of war by the English (not being yet able to do any thing by military exploits, not being in a state of defence sufficiently respectable to dare, at sea, to oppose one fleet or squadron, to our perfidious enemy) should have commenced by acknowledging, by a public declaration, the Independence of North America. This would have been from that time the greatest step to the humiliation of England, and our own re-establishment; and by this measure, the Republic would have proved her firm resolution to act with vigour. Every one of our inhabitants, all Europe, who have their eyes fixed upon us, the whole World expected, with just reason, this measure from the Republic. It is true, that before the formal declaration of war by England, one might perhaps have alleged some plausible reason, to justify, in some degree, the backwardness in this great and interesting affair. But, as at present Great Britain is no longer our secret, but declared enemy, which dissolves all the connections between the two nations; and as it is the duty, not only of all the Regencies, but also of all the Citizens of this Republic, to reduce, by all imaginable annoyances, this enemy so unjust to reason, and to force him, if possible, to conclude an honourable peace; why should we hesitate any longer, to strike, by this measure so reasonable, the most sensible blow to the common enemy? Will not this delay occasion a suspicion that we prefer the interest of our enemy to that of our country? North America, so sensibly offended by the refusal of her offer; France and Spain, in the midst of a war supported with activity, must they not regard us as the secret friends, and favourers of their and our common enemy? Have they not reason to conclude from it, that our inaction ought to be less attributed to our weakness, than to our affection for England? Will not this opinion destroy all confidence in our nation heretofore so renowned in this respect? And our allies, at this time natural, must they not imagine, that it is better to have in us declared enemies than pretended friends? And shall we not be involved in a ruinous war, which we might have rendered advantageous, if it had been well directed? While on the other hand it is evident, that by a new connection with the States of North America, by engagements at least during this war with France and Spain, we shall obtain, not only the confidence of these formidable powers, instead of their distrust, but by this means we shall moreover place our colonies in safety against any insult; we shall have a well grounded hope, of recovering, with the aid of the allied powers, our lost possessions, if the English should make themselves masters of them; and our commerce at present neglected, and so shamefully pillaged, would reassume a new vigour; considering that in such case, as it is manifestly proved by solid reasons, this Republic would derive from this commerce the most signal advantages. But, since our interest excites us forcibly to act in concert with the enemies of our enemy; since the United States of America invited us to it long ago; since France appears inclined to concert her military operations with ours (although this power has

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infinitely less interest to ally itself with us, whose weakness manifests itself in so palpable a manner, than we have to form an alliance, the most respectable in the universe) it is indubitably the duty of every Regency, to promote it with all their forces, and with all the celerity imaginable. To this end, we have thought it our duty, to lay it before your noble Mightinesses, in the firm persuasion that the zeal of your noble Mightinesses will be as earnest as ours, to concur to the accomplishment of this point, which is for us of the greatest importance; that, consequently, your noble Mightinesses will not delay to co-operate with us, that, upon this important subject, there may be made to their High Mightinesses, a proposition so vigorous, that it may have the desired success: and that this affair, of an importance beyond all expression for our common country, may be resolved and decided by unanimous suffrages, and in preference to every particular interest.

ULTERIOUR ADDRESS.

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On the 9th January, 1782, Mr. ADAMS waited on the President VAN DEN SANDHEUVEL, and addressed him as follows.

ON the fourth of May, I had the honour of a conference with the President of their High Mightinesses, in which I informed him, that I had received from the United States of America a commission, with full powers and instructions to propose and conclude a treaty of amity and commerce, between the said United States of America and the United Provinces of the Netherlands.

At the same conference, I had the honour to demand an audience of their High Mightinesses, in order to present to them my letters of credence and full powers.

The President assured me, that he would make report of all that I had said to him to their High Mightinesses, in order that it might be transmitted to the several members of the sovereignty of this country, for their deliberations and decisions.—I have not yet been honoured with an answer. I now do myself the honour to wait on you, Sir, to demand, as I do, a categorical answer, that I may be able to transmit it to the United States of America.

GUELDERLAND.

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IN an extraordinary assembly of the county of Zutphen, held at Nimeguen the 23d of February, 1782, the following measures were taken.

After the report of the Committee of this Province to the Generality, laid this day upon the table, relative to what passed in the precedent assembly, and after the examination of an extract of the register of the resolutions of their High Mightinesses the States General of the Low Countries, of the ninth of last month, in relation to the Ulteriour Address of Mr. Adams to the President of their High Mightinesses, concerning the presentation of his letters of credence to their High Mightinesses, in behalf of the United States of America, demanding a categorical answer, whereof the Lords the Deputies of the respective Provinces have taken copies; the Baron Robert Jasper van der Capellen de Marsch, first by word of mouth, and afterwards in writing, proposed, and insisted, at the assembly of this Quarter, that, at present, and without delay, we should make a point of deliberation, and that we should make upon the table the necessary overture, conceived more at length, in the advice of this nobleman, inserted in these terms:

NOBLE AND MIGHTY LORDS!

The subscriber judges, upon good grounds, and with out fear of being contradicted, that he is able to affirm, that it is more than time that we should give a serious attention to the offer and the invitation, in every sense honourable and advantageous for this Republic, of friendship, and reciprocal connections with the Thirteen American Provinces, now become free *at the point of the sword*, in such sort, that the categorical answer demanded by their Minister Mr. Adams, may become a subject of the deliberations of your Grand Mightinesses, and that you may decide as soon as possible, concerning their respective interests. He judges, that he ought not to have any farther scruple in this regard; and that the uncertain consequences of the mediation offered by Russia cannot, when certain advantages for this Republic are in question, hinder that, out of regard for an enemy, with whom we (however salutary the views of her Imperial Majesty are represented) cannot make any Peace, at the expence of a negligence so irreparable: that a longer delay, to unite ourselves to a nation already so powerful, will have for its consequence, that our inhabitants will lose the means of extending, in a manner the most advantageous, their commerce and their prosperity: That by the vigorous prohibition to import English manufactures into America, our manufactures, by means of precautions taken in time, will rise out of their state of languor: and that, by delaying longer to satisfy the wishes of the nation, her leaders will draw upon them the reproach of having neglected and rejected the favourable offers of Providence: that, on the contrary, by adopting these measures, the essential interests of this unfortunate people will be taken to heart.

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The subscriber declaring, moreover, that he will abandon this unpardonable negligence of an opportunity favourable for the Republic, to the account of those whom it may concern; protesting against all the fatal consequences that a longer refusal of these necessary measures will certainly occasion: whereupon he demanded, that for his discharge, this note should be inserted in the registers of the Quarter.

Signed

R. J. VAN DER CAPELLEN.

This advice having been read, Mr. Jacob Adolf de Heekeren d'Enghuisen, Counsellor and first Master of Accounts in Guelderland, President at this time of the Assembly of the Quarter, represented to the said Robert Jasper van der Capellen de Marsch, that "Although he must agree to the justice of all that he had laid down, besides several other reasons, equally strong, which occurred to his mind, the deliberation upon the point in question appeared to him premature, considering that the Lords the States of Holland and West Friesland, and of Zealand, as the principal commercial Provinces, who are directly interested, had not nevertheless as yet explained themselves in this regard; consequently that it would not be so convenient for the States of this Duchy and County, who are not interested in it, but in a consequential and indirect manner, to form the first their resolutions in this respect: for this reason he proposed to consideration, whether it would not be more proper to postpone the deliberations upon this matter to a future opportunity."

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Nevertheless, the before-mentioned Robert Jasper van der Capellan de Marsch insisting, that the voices should be collected upon the proposition and advice in question, and thereupon having deliberated, their noble Mightinesses have thought fit to resolve, that although the motives alledged by this Nobleman in his advice, appear to merit a serious consideration, nevertheless, for the reasons before alledged, they judge, that they ought to suspend the decision of it, until the commercial Provinces have formed their resolutions concerning it: and that, upon the requisition of Robert Jasper van der Capellan de Marsch, there be delivered to him an extract of the present, upon one as well the other.

Signed

HERM. SCHOMAKER.

PETITION OF LEYDEN.

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TO the noble, great, and venerable Lords of the Grand Council of the city of Leyden.

The undersigned, all manufacturers, merchants, and other traders of this city, most respectfully give to understand, that it is a truth, as melancholy, as it is universally known, that the declension of manufactures, which all the well-disposed citizens have remarked with the most lively grief, from the beginning of this century, has increased more and more for several years; and that this principal branch of the subsistence of the good citizens, has fallen into such a state of languor, that our city, once so flourishing, so populous, so celebrated, on account of its commerce and of its trades, appears to be threatened with total ruin; that the diminution of its merchants houses, on the one hand, and on the other, a total loss, or the sensible decrease of several branches of commerce, furnish an evident proof of it; which the petitioners could demonstrate by several examples, if there were need of them to convince. Your noble and grand Lordships, to whom the increase of the multitude of the poor, the deplorable situation of several families, heretofore in easy circumstances, the depopulation of the city, which one cannot observe without emotion in the ruins of several streets, once neat and well inhabited, are fully known, will recollect no doubt upon this occasion, with grief, that this state of languor must appear so much the more desperate, if your noble and grand lordships will take into consideration, that in this decay of trades and manufactures, we find a new reason of their farther fall, considering, that from the time there is not continual employment, and an uninterrupted sale, the workmen desert in such manner, that when considerable commissions arrive, we cannot find capable hands, and we see ourselves entirely out of a condition to execute these orders.

That the petitioners, with all the true friends of their country, extremely affected with this alarming situation of so rich a source of the public prosperity, have indeed sought the means of a remedy, in amending some defects, from which it seemed to arise, at least in part; but that the measures taken in this view, as is well know to your noble and grand Lordships, have not had the desired effect; at least, that they have not produced a re-establishment so effectual, that we have been able to observe a sensible influence in the increase of the sales of the manufactures of Leyden, as appears most evidently, by a comparison of the pieces fabricated here, which have been heretofore carried to the divers markets of this city, with those which are carried there at this day; a comparison which a true citizen cannot of consider without regret.

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That experience has also taught the petitioners, that the principal cause of the decay of the manufactures of Holland, particularly those of Leyden, is not to be found in any internal vice, either in the capacity, or the œconomy of the inhabitants, but in circumstances which have happened abroad; and to which it is, consequently, beyond the power of the petitioners, or of any

citizen whatsoever, to provide a remedy. That we might cite, for example, the commerce of our manufactures with Dantzic; and, through that commercial city, with all Poland; a commerce which was carried on with success and advantage heretofore in our city, but is absolutely interrupted at this day, and vanished, by the revolution which has happened in that kingdom, and by the burthensome duties to which the navigation of the Vistula has been subjected. But that, without entering into a detail of similar particular shackles, of which we might reckon a great number; the principal cause of the languishing state of our manufactures consists in the jealous emulation of the neighbouring nations, or rather of all the people of Europe; considering that, in this age, the several princes and governments, enlightened in the real sources of the public prosperity, and the true interests of their subjects, attach themselves with emulation to revive in their kingdoms and states the national industry, commerce, and navigation; to encourage them, and promote them even by exclusive privileges, or by heavy impositions upon foreign merchandizes; privileges and impositions, which tend equally to the prejudice of the commerce and the manufactures of our country, as your noble and grand Lordships will easily recollect the examples in the Austrian states and elsewhere.

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That in the midst of these powers and nations, emulous or jealous, it is impossible for the citizens of our Republic, however superior their manufactures may be in quality and fineness, to resist a rivalry so universal; especially considering the dearness of labour, caused by that of the means of subsistence; which, in its turn, is a necessary consequence of the taxes and imposts which the inhabitants of this State pay in a greater number, and a higher rate, than in any other country, by reason of her natural situation, and of its means to support itself; so that by the continual operation of this principal, but irreparable cause of decline, it is to be feared, that the impoverishment and the diminution of the good citizens increasing with the want of employment, the Dutch nation, heretofore the purveyor of all Europe, will be obliged to content itself with the sale of its own productions in the interior of the country; (and how much does not even this resource suffer by the importation of foreign manufactures?) and that Leyden, lately so rich and flourishing, will exhibit desolated quarters in its declining streets; and its multitude, disgraced with want and misery; an affecting proof of the sudden fall of countries formerly overflowing with prosperity.

That, if we duly consider these motives, no citizen, whose heart is upright, (as the petitioners assure themselves) much less your noble and grand Lordships, whose good dispositions they acknowledge with gratitude, will take it amiss, that we have fixed our eyes on the present conjuncture of affairs, to enquire whether these times might not furnish them some means of reviving the languishing manufactures of Leyden; and that after a consideration well matured, they flatter themselves with the hope (a hope which unprejudiced men will not regard as a vain chimera) that in fact, by the present circumstances, there opens in their favour an issue for arriving at the re-establishment desired.

That from the time when the rupture between Great Britain and the Colonies upon the continent of North America appeared to be irreparable, every attentive spectator of this event perceived, or at least was convinced, that this rupture, by which there was born a republic, as powerful as industrious, in the new world, would have the most important consequences for commerce and navigation; and that the other commercial nations of Europe would soon share in a very considerable commerce, whereof the kingdom of Great Britain had reserved to itself, until that time, the exclusive possession by its Act of Navigation, and by the other acts of parliament prescribed to the Colonies; that in the time of it, this reflection did not escape your petitioners; and they foresaw, from that time, the advantage which might arise, in the sequel, from a revolution so important for the United Provinces in general, and for their native city in particular. But that they should have been afraid to have placed this favourable occasion before the eyes of your noble and grand Lordships, at an epoch when the relations which connected our Republic with Great Britain, her neighbour, seemed to forbid all measures of this nature, or at least ought to make them be considered as out of season.

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That, in the mean time, this reason of silence has entirely ceased, by the hostilities which the said kingdom has commenced against our Republic, under pretences, and in a manner the injustice of which has been demonstrated by the supreme government of the State, with an irrefragable evidence, in the eyes of impartial Europe; whilst the petitioners themselves, by the illegal capture of so large a number of Dutch ships, and afterwards by the absolute stagnation of navigation, and of voyages to foreign countries, have experienced in the most grievous manner, the consequences of this hostile and unforeseen attack, and feel them still every day, as is abundantly known to your noble and grand Lordships. That since that epoch, a still more considerable number of workmen must have remained without employment, and several fathers of families have quitted the city, abandoning, to the farther expense of the treasury of the poor, their wives and their children plunged in misery.

That during this rupture, which has subsisted now for fifteen months, there has occurred another circumstance, which has encouraged the petitioners still more, and which to them appears to be of such a nature, that they would be guilty of an excessive indifference, and an unpardonable negligence towards the city, towards the lower class of inhabitants, towards their own families, and towards themselves, if they should delay any longer to lay open their interests to your noble and grand Lordships, in a manner the most respectful, but the most energetic; to wit, that the United States of America have very rigorously forbidden, by a resolution of Congress, agreed to in all the Thirteen States, the importation of all English manufactures, and in general, all the merchandizes fabricated in the dominions which yet remain to Great Britain. That the effect of

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this prohibition must necessarily be a spirit of emulation between all the commercial nations to take place of the British merchants and manufacturers in this important branch of exportation, which is entirely cut off from them at this day. That nevertheless, among all the nations there is none which can entertain a hope, better founded, and more sure, in this respect, than the citizens of this free Republic, whether on account of the identity of religion, the fashion of living, and the manners, whether because of the extent of its commerce, and the convenience of its navigation, but above all, by reason of the activity and good faith, which still distinguishes (without boasting too much) the Dutch nation above all other people; qualities in consideration of which, the citizens of United America are inclined even at present, to prefer, in equal circumstances, the citizens of our free States, to every other nation.

That, nevertheless, all relations and connections of commerce between the two people, cannot but be uncertain and fluctuating, as long as their offers and reciprocal engagements are not fixed and regulated by a treaty of commerce. That at this day, if ever, (according to the respectful opinion of the petitioners) there exists a necessity the most absolute for the conclusion of a similar treaty of commerce, there, where we may say with truth, that there arises for the Republic, for our Leyden especially, a moment, which once escaped, perhaps never will return; since the national assembly of Great Britain, convinced, by a terrible and fatal experience, of the absolute impossibility of re-attaching united America to the British crown, has laid before the throne its desire to conclude a necessary peace with a people, free as this day at the price of their blood: So that if this peace should be once concluded, the Dutch nation would see itself perhaps excluded from all advantages of commerce with this new Republic, or at least would be treated by her with an indifference, which the small value which we should have put upon its friendship in former times, would seem to merit.

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That, supposing, for a moment, that a peace between England and United America were not so near as we have reason to presume, not without probability, there would be found in that case nations enough who will be jealous of acquiring, after the example of France, the earliest right to commerce with a country, which already peopled by several millions of inhabitants, augments every day in population, in a manner incredible; but, as a new people, unprovided as yet with several necessary articles, will procure a rich, even an immense outlet, for the fabricks and manufactures of Europe.

That, however manifest the interest which the petitioners and all the citizens of Leyden would have in the conclusion of such a treaty of commerce, they would however have made a scruple to lay before the paternal eyes of your noble and grand Lordships the utility, or rather the necessity of such a measure, in respect to them, if they could believe, that their particular advantage would be, in any wise, contrary to the more universal interests of all the Republic. But, as far as the petitioners may judge, as citizens, of the situation, and the political existence of their country, they are ignorant of any reasons of this kind: but, on the contrary, they dare appeal to the unanimous voice of their fellow-citizens, well intentioned, in the other cities and provinces, even of the Regents the most distinguished; since it is universally known that the Province of Friesland has already preceded the other confederates, by a resolution for opening negotiations with America; and that in other Provinces, which have an interest less direct in commerce and manufactures, celebrated Regents appear to wait merely for the example of the commercial Provinces, for taking a similar resolution.

That the petitioners will not detain the attention of your noble and grand Mightinesses by a more ample detail of their reasons and motives, since, on one hand, they assure themselves, that these reasons and motives will not escape the enlightened and attentive judgment of your grand and noble Lordships; and on the other, they know by experience, that your grand and noble Lordships are disposed not to suffer any occasion to pass for promoting the well-being of their city, for advancing the prosperity of the citizens, to render their names dear to their contemporaries, and make them blessed by posterity.

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In which firm expectation, the petitioners address themselves to this grand Council with the respectful but serious request, that it may please your noble and great Lordships, to direct, by their powerful influence, thing in such sort, that, in the Assembly highly respected of their noble and grand Mightinesses the Lords the States of Holland and West Friesland, there be opened deliberations, or if already opened, carried as speedily as possible to an effectual conclusion, such as they shall find the most proper for obtaining the lawful end, and fulfilling the desires of the petitioners, or as they shall judge conformable to the general interest.

So doing, &c.

LEYDEN.

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AN ADDRESS of Thanks, with a farther Petition.

TO the noble, great, and venerable lords, the great council of the city of Leyden,

The undersigned manufacturers, merchants, and other traders, interested in the manufactures and fabrics of this city, give respectfully to understand,

That a number of the undersigned, having taken, the 18th of March, the liberty to present to your

noble and great Lordships, a respectful request to obtain the conclusion of connections of commerce with United America, "the petitioners judge that they ought to hold it for a duty, as agreeable as indispensable, to testify their sincere gratitude, not only for the gracious manner in which your noble and great Lordships have been pleased to accept that request, but also for the patriotic resolution that your noble and great Lordships have taken upon its object; a resolution, in virtue of which the city of Leyden (as the petitioners have the best reasons to suppose) hath been one of the first cities of this province, from whose unanimous co-operation has originated the resolution of their noble and grand Mightinesses, of the date of the 28th of March last, to direct things on the part of their noble and grand Mightinesses, in the assembly of the States General, and to make there the strongest instances, to the end that Mr. Adams may be admitted and acknowledged as Minister of the United States of America."

That the petitioners regard, with all honest-hearted citizens, the present epoch as one of the most glorious in the annals of our dear country, seeing that there has been manifested, in a most signal manner, on the one hand, a confidence the most cordial of the good citizens towards their regents, and on the other hand a paternal attention and deference of the regents to the respectful but well-founded prayers of their faithful citizens; and, in general, the most exemplary unanimity throughout the whole nation, to the confusion of those who, having endeavoured to sow the seeds of discord, would have rejoiced if they could say, with truth, that a dissention so fatal had rooted itself to the ruin of the country and of the people.

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That the petitioners, feeling themselves penetrated with the most pleasing emotions, by an harmony so universal, cannot pass over in silence the reflection that your noble and great Lordships, taking a resolution the most favourable upon the said request, have discovered thereby, that they would not abandon the footsteps of their ancestors, who found, in the united sentiments of magistrates and citizens, the resources necessary to resist a powerful oppressor, who even would not have undertaken that difficult, but glorious task, if they had not been supported by the voice of the most respectable part of the nation.

That encouraged by this reflection, the petitioners assure themselves, that your noble and great Lordships will honour, with the same approbation, the step which they take to day, to recommend to your noble and great Lordships, in a manner the most respectful, but at the same time the most pressing, the prompt and efficacious execution of the aforesaid resolution of their noble and grand Mightinesses of the 28th of March last, with every thing which depends thereon; a proceeding which does not spring from a desire, on the part of the petitioners, to raise themselves above the sphere of their duties and vocations, or to interfere, indiscreetly, in the affairs of government, but only from a conviction that it cannot but be agreeable to well intentioned regents (such as your noble and great Lordships have shewn yourselves by deeds to your good citizens) to see themselves applauded in their salutary efforts and patriotic designs, and supported against the perverse views, and secret machinations of the ill-disposed, who, however small their number, are always found in a nation.

That although the petitioners may be convinced that their noble and grand Mightinesses, having taken a resolution so agreeable to all true patriots, will not neglect to employ means to carry it to an efficacious conclusion among the other confederates, and to procure to the good citizens the real enjoyment of the commerce with United America, they cannot, nevertheless, dissemble that, lately, some new reasons have arisen, which make them conceive some fears respecting the prompt consummation of this desirable affair.

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That the probability of an offer of peace, on the part of Great-Britain, to United America, whereof the petitioners made mention in their former request, having at present become a full certainty by the revolution arrived since in the British ministry, they have not learned without uneasiness the attempt made, at the same time, by the new ministers of the court of London, to involve this state in a negociation for a separate peace, the immediate consequence of which would be (as the petitioners fear) a cessation of all connections with the American Republic, whilst that in the mean time our Republic, deprived on the one hand of the advantages which it reasonably promises itself from these connections, might, on the other hand, be detained by negociations, spun out to a great length, and not effect till late, perhaps after the other belligerent powers, a separate peace with England.

That, in effect, the difficulties which oppose themselves to a like partial pacification are too multiplied for one to promise himself to see them suddenly removed, such as the restitution of the possessions taken from the state, and retaken from the English by France, a restitution which is become thereby impracticable, the indemnification of the immense losses that the unexpected and perfidious attack of England hath caused to the Dutch nation in general, to the petitioners in particular; the assurance of a free navigation for the future, upon the principles of the armed neutrality, and conformably to the law of nations; the dissolution of the bonds which, without being productive of any utility to the two nations, have been a source of contestations, always springing up, and which, in every war between Great-Britain and any other power, have threatened to involve our Republic in it, or have in effect done it; the annihilation, if possible, of the act of navigation, an act which carries too evident marks of the supremacy affected by England over all other maritime people, not to attract attention at the approaching negociation of peace; finally, the necessity of breaking the yoke that Great-Britain would impose on our flag, to make her's respected in the Northern Ocean, as the seat of her maritime empire; and other objects of this nature, which, as the petulant proceedings of the court of London have given rise to them, will certainly furnish matter for claims and negociations.

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That as, by these considerations, a speedy consummation of a separate peace with England is out of all probability, especially when one compares with them the dubious and limited manner in which it is offered; on the other hand, a general peace appears not to be so far distant, as that to obtain a more prompt reconciliation with England, the Republic hath occasion to abandon its interests relative to North America, seeing that the British government hath resolved, upon the request of the national assembly, even to discontinue offensive hostilities against the new Republic; and that, even under the present administration of the new ministers, it appears ready to acknowledge positively its independence; an acknowledgment which, in removing the principal stumbling block of a negociation of a general peace, will pave the way to a prompt explication of all the difficulties between the belligerent powers.

That the petitioners should exceed much the bounds of their plan, if they entered into a more ample detail of the reasons which might be alleged upon this subject, and which certainly will not escape the political penetration of your noble and great Lordships; among others, the engagements recently entered into with the Court of France, and which will not be violated by our Republic, which acknowledges the sanctity of its engagements, and respects them: but which will serve much rather to convince the Empress of Russia of the impossibility of entering, in the present juncture of affairs, into such a negociation as the court of London proposes, when even it will not be permitted to presume but that Sovereign will feel herself the change of circumstances which have happened with regard to America since the offer of her mediation, by the revolution in the British ministry, and that she ought even to regard a separate peace between our State and England, as the most proper mean to retard the general tranquillity, that she hath endeavoured to procure to all the commercial nations now in war.

That from these motives the petitioners respectfully hope that the aforesaid offer of England will occasion no obstacle which may prevent that the resolution of their noble and grand Mightinesses to acknowledge the independence of North America, and to conclude with that power a treaty of commerce, may not have a prompt execution, nor that even one only of the other confederates will suffer itself to be diverted thereby from the design of opening unanimously with this Province, and the others which have declared themselves conformably with Holland, negociations with the United States, and of terminating them as soon as possible.

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That the favourable resolutions already taken for this effect in Zealand, Utrecht, Overyssel, and at present (as the petitioners learn) in the Province of Groningen after the examples of Holland and Friesland, confirm them in that hope, and seem to render entirely superfluous, a request that, in every other case, the petitioners would have found themselves obliged to make with the commercial Citizens of the other Cities, to the end that, by the resistance of one Province, not immediately interested in commerce and navigation, they might not be deprived of the advantages and of the protection, that the sovereign Assembly of their proper Provinces had been disposed to procure them, without it; but that, to the end to provide for it, their noble and grand Mightinesses, and the States of the other Provinces in this respect, unanimous with them, should make use of the power which belongs to each free State of our federative Republic; at least in regard to treaties of commerce, of which there exists an example in 1649, not only in a treaty of redemption of the toll of the Sound, but also in a defensive treaty concluded with the Crown of Denmark, by the three Provinces of Guelderland, Holland, and Friesland.

But as every apprehension of a similar dissension, among the members of the confederation, appears at present absolutely unseasonable, the petitioners will confine themselves rather to another request, to wit, that after the formation of connections of commerce with North America, the effectual enjoyment of it may be assured to the commercial Citizens of this country, by a sufficient protection of their navigation; without which the conclusion even of such a treaty of commerce would be absolutely illusory. That, for a long time, especially the last year, the petitioners have tasted the bitter fruits of the defenceless state in which the Dutch flag has been incessantly found; as they have already said, conformably to the truth, in their first request, "that by the total stagnation of the navigation, and of expeditions, they have felt, in the most painful manner, the effects of the hostile and unexpected attack of Great Britain, and that they feel them still every day." That, in the mean time, this stagnation of commerce, absolutely abandoned to the rapacity of an enemy greedy of pillage, and destitute of all protection whatever, hath appeared to the petitioners, as well as to all the other commercial inhabitants; yes! even to all true Citizens, so much the more hard and afflicting, as they not only have constantly contributed, with a good heart, to all the public imports, but that, at the time even that the commerce was absolutely abandoned to itself, and deprived of all safeguard, it supported a double charge to obtain that protection which it hath never enjoyed; seeing that the hope of such a protection (the Republic not being entirely without maritime force) hath appeared indeed more than once, but always vanished in the most unexpected manner, by accidents and impediments, which, if they have given rise, perhaps wrongfully, to discontent and to distrust among the good Citizens, will not nevertheless be read and meditated by posterity without surprize.

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That, without intention to legitimate, in any manner, the suspicions arising from this failure of protection, the petitioners believe themselves, nevertheless, with all proper respect, warranted in addressing their complaints on this head, to the bosoms of your noble and great Lordships, and (seeing that the commerce with North America cannot subsist without navigation, no more than navigation without a safeguard) in reckoning upon the active direction, the useful employment, and prompt augmentation of our naval forces, in proportion to the means which shall be the most proper effectually to secure to the commerce of this Republic the fruits of its connections with United North America.

For which reasons, the petitioners, returning their solemn thanks to your noble and great Lordships, for the favourable resolution taken upon their request the 18th of March last, address themselves anew to you on this occasion, with the respectful prayer, "That it may graciously please your noble and great Lordships to be willing to effectuate by your powerful influence, whether in the illustrious assembly of their noble and grand Mightinesses, whether among the other Confederates, or elsewhere, there, and in such manner, as your noble and great Lordships shall judge most proper, that the resolution of their noble and grand Mightinesses of the date of the 28th of March last, for the admission of Mr. Adams, in quality of Minister of the United States of America, be promptly executed; and that the petitioners, with the other commercial Citizens, obtain the effectual enjoyment of a treaty of commerce with the said Republic, as well by the activity of the marine of the State, and the protection of commerce and navigation, as by all other measures, that your noble and great Lordships with the other members of the Sovereign Government of the Republic, shall judge to tend to the public good, and to serve to the prosperity of our dear country, as well as to the maintenance of its precious liberties."

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So doing, &c.

ROTTERDAM.

[Pg 41]

PETITION of the Merchants, Insurers, and Freighters of Rotterdam to the Regency of that City.

GIVE to understand, in the most respectful manner, that it is sufficiently notorious that the inhabitants of this Republic have, as well as any other nation, an interest, that they give us an opportunity to open a free communication and correspondence with the inhabitants of America, by making a treaty of commerce, as Mr. Adams has represented in his memorial; to which they add, that the advantages which must result from it, are absolutely the only means of reviving the fallen commerce of this country; for re-establishing the navigation, and for repairing the great damages which the perfidious proceedings of the English have, for so many years, caused to the commercial part of this country.

That with all due respect, they represent to the venerable Regency the danger we run, in prolonging farther the deliberations concerning the article of an alliance of commerce with North America; being moreover certain that the interposition of this State cannot add any thing more to the solidity of its independence, and that the English Ministry has even made to the Deputies of the American Congress propositions to what point they would establish a correspondence there, to our prejudice, and thereby deprive the inhabitants of this country of the certain advantages which might result from this reciprocal commerce; and that thus we ought not to delay one day, nor even one hour, to try all the efforts, that we may pursue the negotiation offered by Mr. Adams, and that we may decide finally upon it. Whereupon the petitioners represent, with all respect possible, but at the same time with the firmest confidence, to the venerable Regency of this City, that they would authorize and qualify the Lords their Deputies at the Assembly of their noble and grand Mightinesses, to the end, that they insist in a manner the most energetic, at the Assembly of their noble and grand Mightinesses, that the resolution demanded may be taken without the least delay, to the end that, on the part of this Province, it be effected, at the Assembly of the States General, that the American Minister, Mr. Adams be as soon as possible admitted to the audience which he has demanded, and that they take with him the determinations necessary to render free and open to the reciprocal inhabitants, the correspondence demanded.

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So doing, &c.

The PETITIONS of the Merchants, and Manufacturers of HAERLEM, LEIDEN, and AMSTERDAM, which have been presented, on the twentieth of March, to their HIGH MIGHTINESSES, were accompanied with another to the STATES of HOLLAND and WEST FRIESLAND, conceived in these Terms.

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THE subscribers, inhabitants of this country, merchants, manufacturers, and others, living by commerce, give with all respect to understand, that they have the honour to annex hereto a copy of a petition presented by them to their High Mightinesses, the States-General of the United Low Countries. The importance of the thing which it contains, the considerable commerce which these countries might establish in North America, the profits which we might draw from it, and the importance of industry and manufactures, by the relation which they have with commerce in general, as well as the navigation to that extensive country; all these objects have made them take the liberty to represent, in the most respectful manner, this great affair for them, and for the connections which the petitioners may have, in quality of manufacturers, with the merchants, most humbly praying your noble and grand Mightinesses, for the acquisition of these important branches of commerce, and for the advantage of all the manufactures, and other works of labour and of traffic, to be so good as to take this petition, and the reasons which it contains, into your high consideration, and to favour it with your powerful support and

protection, and by a favourable resolution, which may be taken at the Assembly of their High Mightinesses, to direct, on the part of this Province, things in such a manner, that for obtaining this commerce so desired and so necessary for this Republic, that there be concerted such efficacious measures, as the high wisdom and patriotic sentiments of your noble and grand Mightinesses may find convenient, for the well-being of so great a number of inhabitants, and for the prejudice of their enemies.

So doing, &c.

DORDRECHT.

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AT Dordrecht there has not been presented any petition. But on the twentieth of March, the merchants, convinced by redoubled proofs of the zeal, and of the efforts of their Regency, for the true interests of commerce, judged it unnecessary to present a petition after the example of the merchants of other cities. They contented themselves with testifying verbally their desire that there might be contracted connections of commerce with the United States of America: That this step had been crowned with such happy success, that the same day 20th of March, 1782, it was resolved, by the ancient Council, to authorize their deputies, at the Assembly of Holland, to concur in every manner possible, that, without delay, Mr. Adams be acknowledged in his quality of Minister Plenipotentiary; that his letters of credence be accepted; and conferences opened upon this object.

ZWOLL IN OVERYSSEL.

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THE subscribers, all merchants, manufacturers, and factors of the city of Zwoll, give respectfully to understand, that every one of them, in his private concerns, finds by experience, as well as the inhabitants of the Republic in general, the grievous effects of the decay into which commerce, and the manufactures of this country are fallen, little by little, and above all, since the hostile attack of the kingdom of England against this State; that it being their duty to their country, as well as to themselves, to make use of all the circumstances which might contribute to their re-establishment, the requisition made not long since by Mr. Adams to the Republic, to wit, to conclude a treaty of commerce with the United States of North America, could not escape their attention; an affair, the utility, advantage, and necessity of which, for these Provinces, are so evident, and have been so often proved in an incontestible manner, that the petitioners will not fatigue your noble Lordships, by placing them before you, nor the general interests of this city, nor the particular relations of the petitioners, considering that they are convinced, in the first place, that England making against the Republic the most ruinous war, and having broken every treaty with her, all kind of complaisance for that kingdom is unseasonable.

In the second place, that America, which ought to be regarded as become free at the point of the sword, and as willing, by the prohibition of all the productions and manufactures of England, to break absolutely with that kingdom; it is precisely the time, and perhaps the only time, in which we may have a favourable opportunity to enter into connection with this new and powerful Republic; a time which we cannot neglect without running the greatest risque of being irrevocably prevented by the other powers, and even by England. Thus we take the liberty respectfully to supplicate your noble Lordships, that, having shewn, for a long time, that you set a value upon the formation of alliances with powerful states, you may have the goodness, at the approaching assembly of the nobility, and of the cities forming the States of this Province, to redouble your efforts, to the end that, in the name of this country, it may be decided at the Generality, that Mr. Adams be acknowledged, and the proposed negotiations opened as soon as possible.

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So doing, &c.

PETITION OF AMSTERDAM.

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TO their High Mightinesses, the States General of the United Provinces, the undersigned, merchants, manufacturers, and others, inhabitants living by commerce in this country, give respectfully to understand:

That, although the petitioners have always relied, with entire confidence, upon the administration and the resolutions of your High Mightinesses, and it is against their inclinations to interrupt your important deliberations, they think, however, that they ought, at this time to take the liberty; and believe as well intentioned inhabitants, that it is their indispensable duty in the present moment, which is most critical for the Republic, to lay humbly before your High

Mightinesses their interests.

What good citizen in the Republic, having at heart the interest of his dear country, can dissemble, or represent to himself without dismay, the sad situation to which we are reduced by the attack, equally sudden, unjust, and perfidious of the English? Who would have dared two years ago to foretell, and, notwithstanding the dark clouds which even then began to form themselves, could even have imagined that our commerce and our navigation, with the immense affairs which depend upon them, the support and the prosperity of this Republic, could have fallen and remained in such a terrible decay? that in 1780, more than two thousands of Dutch vessels having passed the Sound, not one was found upon the list in 1781? That the ocean, heretofore covered with our vessels, should see at present scarcely any? and that we may be reduced to see our navigation, formerly so much respected and preferred by all the nations, pass entirely into the hands of other powers? It would be superfluous to endeavour to explain at length the damages, the enormous losses, which our inhabitants have sustained by the sudden invasion and the pillage of the colonies, and of their ships; disasters, which not only fall directly upon the merchant, but which have also a general influence, and make themselves felt in the most melancholy manner, even by the lowest artisans and labourers, by the languor which they occasion in commerce. But, how great soever they may be, it might, perhaps, be possible, by the aid of the paternal cares of your High Mightinesses, and by opposing a vigorous resistance to the enemy, already enervated, to repair in time all these losses, (without mentioning indemnifications) if this stagnation of commerce was only momentary, and if the industrious merchant did not see beforehand the sources of his future felicity dried up. It is this gloomy foresight which, in this moment, afflicts, in the highest degree, the petitioners; for, it would be the height of folly and inconsideration to desire still to flatter ourselves, and to remain quiet, in the expectation that, after the conclusion of the peace, the business, at present turned out of its direction, should return entirely into this country; for experience shews the contrary in a manner the most convincing; and it is most probable, that the same nations, who are actually in possession of it, will preserve, at that time, the greatest part of it. Your alarmed petitioners throw their eyes round every where, to discover new sources, capable of procuring them more success, in future. They even flatter themselves that they have found them upon the new theatre of commerce which the United States of America offer them; a commerce, of which, in this moment, but in this moment only, they believe themselves to be in a condition to be able to assure to themselves a good share; and the great importance of which, joined to the fear of seeing escape from their hands this only and last resource, has induced them to take the resolution to lay open respectfully their observations concerning this important object to your High Mightinesses, with the earnest prayer that you would consider them with a serious attention, and not interpret in ill part this measure of the petitioners, especially as their future well-being, perhaps even that of the whole Republic, depends on the decision of this affair.

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No man can call in question that England has derived her greatest forces from her commerce with America; those immense treasures, which that commerce has poured into the coffers of the state; the uncommon prosperity of several of her commercial houses, the extreme reputation of her manufactures, the consumption of which, in quantities beyond all bounds, contributes efficaciously to their perfection, are convincing proofs of it. However it may be, and notwithstanding the supposition, too lightly adopted, that we cannot imitate the British manufactures, the manufacture of painted linens of Rouen; those of wool of Amiens, of Germany, of Overysse; and the Pins of Zwoll prove visibly that all things need not be drawn from England; and that, moreover, we are as well in a condition, or shall soon be, to equal them in several respects.

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Permit us, high and mighty Lords, to the end to avoid all further digression, to request in this regard the attention of your High Mightinesses to the situation of commerce in France at the beginning of the war. Continual losses had almost ruined it altogether. Like ours, several of her merchants failed of capitals; and others wanted courage to continue their commerce; her manufactures languished; the people groaned; in one word, every thing there marked out the horrors of war. But, at present, her maritime towns, overpeopled, have occasion to be enlarged; her manufactures, having arrived at a degree of exportation unknown before, begin to perfect themselves more and more, in such a degree, that the melancholy consequences of the war are scarcely felt in that kingdom. But, since it is incontestible that this favourable alteration results almost entirely from its commerce with America, that even this has taken place in time of war; which, moreover, is ever prejudicial, we leave it to the enlightened judgment of your High Mightinesses to decide, what it is that we may expect from a commerce of this nature, even at present, but especially in time of peace. In the mean time, we have had the happiness to make a trial, of short duration it is true, but very strong in proportion to its continuance, in our colony of St. Eustatia, of the importance of the commerce, though not direct, with North America. The registers of the West India Company may furnish proofs of it very convincing to your High Mightinesses; in fact, their productions are infinitely suitable to our market; whilst, on our side, we have to send them several articles of convenience and of necessity from our own country; or from the neighbouring states of Germany. Moreover, several of our languishing manufactures, scattered in the seven United Provinces, may perhaps be restored to their former vigour, by means of bounties, or the diminution of imposts. The importance of manufactures for a country is sufficiently proved, by the considerable gratifications promised and paid by British policy for their encouragement, and by the advantages which that kingdom has procured to itself by this means, even beyond what had been expected.

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The petitioners know perfectly well the obstacles, almost insurmountable, which always oppose

themselves to the habitual use of new manufactures, although certainly better in quality; and they dare advance, without hesitation, that several of our manufactures are superior to those of the English. A moment more favourable can never offer itself than the present, when, by a resolution of Congress, the importation of all the effects of the produce of Great Britain, and of her colonies, is forbidden; which reduces the merchant and the purchaser to the necessity of recurring to other merchandises, the use of which will serve to dissipate the prejudice conceived against them. It is not only the manufactures, high and mighty Lords, which promise a permanent advantage to our Republic. The navigation will derive also great advantages; for it is very far from being true (as several would maintain) that the Americans, being once in the tranquil possession of their independence, would themselves exercise with vigour these two branches; and that in the sequel, we shall be wholly frustrated of them. Whoever has the least knowledge of the country of America, and of its vast extent, knows that the number of inhabitants is not there in proportion. That even the two banks of the Mississippi, the most beautiful tract of this country, otherwise so fertile, remain still uncultivated; and as there are wanted so many hands, it is not at all probable to presume, that they will or can occupy themselves to establish new manufactures, both because of the new charges, which they would put upon the augmentation and exportation of their productions.

It is then for these same reasons (the want of population) that they will scarcely find the hands necessary to take advantage of the fisheries, which are the property of their country; which will certainly oblige them to abandon to us the navigation of freight. There is not therefore any one of our provinces, much less any one of our cities, which cannot enjoy the advantage of this commerce: No, high and mighty Lords, the petitioners are persuaded that the utility and the benefit of it will spread itself over all the provinces and countries of the Generality. Guelderland and Overijssel cannot too much extend their manufactures of wool, of swanskin, and other things; even the shoemakers of the mayoralty, and of Langstret, will find a considerable opening; almost all the manufactures of Utrecht and of Leyden will flourish anew. Harlem will see revive its manufactures of stuffs, of laces of ribbons, of twist, at present in the lowest state of decay. Delft will see vastly augmented the sale of its earthen ware, and Gouda that of its tobacco-pipes.

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However great may be the advantages foreseen by the petitioners, from a legal commerce duly protected with America, their fear is not less, lest we should suffer to escape the happy moment of assuring to them, and to all the Republic, these advantages. The present moment must determine the whole. The English nation is weary of the war; and as that people runs easily into extremes, the petitioners are afraid, with strong probable appearances, that a compleat acknowledgment of American independence will soon take place; above all, if the English see an opportunity of being able still to draw from America some conditions favourable for them, or at least something to our disadvantage. Ah! what is it which should instigate the Americans in making peace, and renewing friendship with Great Britain, to have any regard for the interests of our republic? If England could only obtain for a condition, that we should be obliged to pay duties more burthensome for our vessels, this would be not only a continual and permanent prejudice; but would be sufficient to transmit to posterity, a lamentable proof of our excessive deference for unbridled enemies.

The petitioners dare flatter themselves that a measure so frank of this Republic, may powerfully serve for the acceleration of a general peace. A general ardour to extinguish the flames of war reigns in England; an upright and vigorous conduct, on the part of this Republic, will contribute to accelerate the accomplishment of the wishes for peace.

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We flatter ourselves, high and mighty Lords, that we have in this regard alleged sufficient reasons for an immediate decision; and that we have so visibly proved the danger of delay, that we dare to hope from the paternal equity of your High Mightinesses, a reasonable attention to the respectful proposition which we have made. It proceeds from no other motive than a sincere affection for the precious interests of our dear country; since we consider it as certain, that as soon as the step taken by us shall be known by the English, and that they shall have the least hope of preventing us, they will not fail, as soon as possible, to acknowledge American independence. Supported by all these reasons, the petitioners address themselves to your High Mightinesses, humbly requesting that it may please your High Mightinesses, after the occurrences and affairs above-mentioned, to take, for the greatest advantage of this country, as soon as possible, such resolution as your High Mightinesses shall judge most convenient.

This doing, &c.

PETITION

To the Burgomasters and Regents of AMSTERDAM:

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THE subscribers, all merchants and manufacturers of this city, with all due respect, give to understand: That the difference arisen between the kingdom of Great Britain and the United States of America, has not only given occasion for a long and violent war, but that the arms of America have covered themselves with a success so happy, that the Congress, assisted by the Courts of France and Spain, have so well established their liberty and independence, and

reduced Great Britain to extremities so critical, that the House of Commons in England, notwithstanding all the opposition of the British Ministry, have lately formed the important resolution to turn the King from an offensive war against America, with no other design than to accelerate, if it is possible, a reconciliation with America.

That to this happy revolution in the dispositions of the English in favour of the liberty and independence of America, according to all appearances, the resolution taken by the Congress, towards the end of the last year, to wit, to forbid in all America the importation of British manufactures and productions, has greatly contributed: a resolution, of which they perceive in England, too visibly, the consequences ruinous to their manufactures, trade, commerce, and navigation, to be able to remain indifferent in this regard. For all other commercial nations, who take to heart, ever so little, their own prosperity, will apply themselves ardently, to collect from it all the fruit possible. To this effect, it would be unpardonable for the business and commerce of this Republic in general, and for those of this city in particular, to suffer to escape this occasion so favourable for the encouragement of our manufactures so declined, and languishing in the interior cities, as well as that of the commerce and navigation in the maritime cities; or to suffer that other commercial nations, even with a total exclusion of the mercantile interests of this Republic, should profit of it, and this, upon an occasion, when, by reason of the war, equally unjust and ruinous, in which the kingdom of Great Britain has involved this Republic, we cannot, and ought not to have the least regard or condescension for that jealous State, being able even to oblige this arrogant neighbour, in the just fear of the consequences which a more intimate connection between this Republic and North America would undoubtedly have, to lay down the sooner her arms, and restore tranquility to all Europe.

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That the petitioners, notwithstanding the inclination they have for it, ought not nevertheless to explain themselves farther upon this object, nor make a demonstration in detail of the important advantages which this Republic may procure itself by a connection and a relation more intimate with North America; both, because that no well-informed man can easily call the thing in question, or contradict it; but also, because the States of Friesland themselves have very lately explained themselves, in a manner so remarkable, in this respect; and which is still more remarkable, because in very different circumstances, with a foresight, which posterity will celebrate by so much the more, as it is attacked in our time by ill designing citizens, the Lords your predecessors thought, four years ago, upon the means of hindering this Republic from being excluded from the business of the new world, and from falling into the disagreeable situation in which the kingdom of Portugal is at present, considering that according to the informations of your petitioners, the Congress has excluded that kingdom from all commerce and business with North America, solely, because it had perceived that it suffered itself to be too strongly directed by the influence of the British Court. This example makes us fear with reason that if the propositions made, in the name of America, by Mr. Adams to this Republic, should remain, as they still are, without an answer, or that, if, contrary to all expectation, they should be rejected, in that case the Republic ought not to expect a better treatment.

That, for these reasons and many others, the petitioners had flattered themselves that we should long ago have opened negotiations, and a closer correspondence, with the United States of America. But this important work appeared to meet with difficulties with some, as incompatible with the accession of this Republic to the armed neutrality, and, in course, with the accepted mediation; whilst that others cannot be persuaded to make this so necessary step, in the opinion that we cannot draw any advantage, or at least of much importance, from a more strict connection with America: Reasons, according to the petitioners, the frivolity of which is apparent to every one who is not filled with prejudice, without having occasion to employ many words to point it out. For, as to the first point, supposing, for a moment, that it might be made a question whether the Republic, after her accession to the armed neutrality, before the war with England, could take a step of this nature, without renouncing at the same time the advantages of the armed neutrality which it had embraced; it is at least very certain, that every difficulty concerning the competency of the Republic to take a similar step vanishes and disappears of itself at present, when it finds itself involved in a war with Great Britain, since from that moment she could not only demand the assistance and succour of all the confederates in the armed neutrality, but that thereby she finds herself authorized, for her own defence, to employ all sorts of means, violent and others, which she could not before adopt nor put in use, while she was really in the position of a neutral power which would profit of the advantages of the armed neutrality. This reasoning then proves evidently, that, in the present situation of affairs, the Republic might acknowledge the independence of America; and, notwithstanding this, claim of full right the assistance of her neutral allies, at least, if we would not maintain one of the two following absurdities: That, notwithstanding the violent aggression of England in resentment of our accession to the armed neutrality, we dare not defend ourselves, until our confederates shall think proper to come to our assistance; or, otherwise, that being attacked by the English, it should be permitted us, conformably to the rights of the armed neutrality, to resist them in arms, whether on the Doggers-bank or elsewhere, but not by contracting alliances, which certainly do no injury or harm to the convention of the armed neutrality, notwithstanding even the small hope we have of being succored by the allies of the armed confederation. The argument of the mediation is still more contrary to common sense in this, that it supposes, that the Republic, by accepting the mediation, has also renounced the employment of all the means, by the way of arms, of alliances, or otherwise, which it might judge useful or necessary to annoy her enemy: a supposition, which certainly is destitute of all foundation, and which would reduce it simply to a real suspension of hostilities on the part of the Republic only; to which the Republic can never have consented, neither directly nor indirectly.

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Besides this last argument, the petitioners ought to observe, in the first place, that by means of a good harmony and friendship with the United States of America, there will spring up, not only different sources of business for this Republic, founded solely on commerce and navigation, but in particular the manufactures and trade will assume a new activity in the interior cities; for they may consume the amount of millions of our manufactures in that new country, of so vast extent: In the second place, abstracted from all interests of commerce, the friendship or the enmity of a nation, which, after having made prisoners of two English armies, has known how to render herself respectable and formidable, if it were only in relation to the western possessions of this State, is not and cannot be in any manner indifferent for our Republic. In the last place, it is necessary that the petitioners remark farther in this respect, that several inhabitants of this Republic, in the present situation of affairs, suffer very considerable losses and damages, which at least hereafter might be wholly prevented, or in part, in case we should make with the United States of America, with relation to vessels and effects recaptured, a convention similar to that which has been made with the Crown of France the last year; for, venerable Regents, if a convention of this nature had been contracted in the beginning of this war, the inhabitants of the Republic would have already derived important advantages from it, considering that several ships and cargoes, taken by the English from the inhabitants of this State, have fallen into the hands of the Americans; among others, two vessels from the West Indies, richly loaded, and making sail for the ports of the Republic, and both estimated at more than a million of florins of Holland; which, captured by the English at the commencement of the year past, were carried into North America, where, after the capitulation of General Cornwallis, they passed from the hands of the English into others.

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That, although the petitioners are fully convinced, that the interests of the commerce of this common country, and of this city, have constantly, but especially in these last years, attracted, and still attract every day, a great part of the cares of the venerable Regency; nevertheless, having regard to the importance of the affair, the petitioners have thought that they might, and that they ought to take the liberty to address themselves with this petition to you, venerable Regents, to inform you, according to truth, that the moments are precious, that we cannot lose any time, how little soever it may be, without running the greatest risque of losing all; since, by hesitating longer, the Republic, according to all appearances, would not derive any advantage, not even more than it has derived from its accession to the armed neutrality; because that in the fear of British menaces, we did not determine to accede to it, until the opportunity of improving the advantage of it was passed.

For these causes, the petitioners address themselves to you, venerable Regents, respectfully soliciting, that your efficacious influence may condescend, at the Assembly of their noble and grand Mightinesses the States of this Province, to direct affairs in such a manner, that upon this important object there may be taken as soon as possible, and, if possible, even during the continuance of this Assembly, a final and decisive resolution, such as you, venerable Regents, and their noble and grand Mightinesses, according to their high wisdom, shall judge the most convenient: and if, contrary to all expectation, this important operation should meet with any obstacle on the part of one or more of the confederates, that in that case you, venerable Regents, in concert with the Province of Friesland, and those of the other Provinces who make no difficulty to open a negotiation with America, will condescend to consider the means, which shall be found proper and convenient to effectuate, that the commerce of this Province, as well as that of Friesland, and the other members adopting the same opinion, may not be prejudiced by any dilatory deliberations, nor too late resolved, for the conclusion of a measure as important as necessary.

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So doing, &c.

AMSTERDAM

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ADDRESS of the Merchants, &c. to their Regency.

NOBLE, GREAT, AND VENERABLE LORDS!

IT is for us a particular satisfaction to be able to offer to your noble and great lordships, as heads of the regency of this city, this well intentioned address that a multitude of our most respectable fellow-citizens have signed. It was already prepared and signed by many, when we learned, as well by the public papers as otherwise, the propositions of a particular peace, with an offer of an immediate suspension of hostilities on the part of Great-Britain, made to this state by the mediation of the Russian ambassador. This is the only reason why no immediate mention was made of it in the address itself. It is by no means the idea, that these offers would have made any impression upon the merchants; since we can, on the contrary, in truth assure your noble and great Lordships, that the unanimous sentiment nearly of the Exchange of Amsterdam, as much as that is interested in it, is entirely conformable to that which the merchants of Rotterdam have made known in so energetic a manner: that consequently we have the greatest aversion to like offers, as artful as dangerous, which, being adopted, would very probably throw this Republic into other situations very embarrassing, the immediate consequences of which would be, to ruin it totally: whereas, on the other hand, these offers shew that we have only to deal with an enemy exhausted; whom we could force to a general and durable peace in the end, by following only the

example of France, Spain, and North America; and by using the means which are in our hands.

It is improper for us, however, to enlarge farther upon this project, important as it may be, being well assured, that your noble and great Lordships see those grievous consequences more clearly than we can trace them.

The merchants continue to recommend their commerce and navigation to the constant care and protection of your noble and great Lordships, and to insist only, that in case these offers of the court of England should be, at any time, the cause that the affair of the admission of Mr. Adams, in quality of Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, should meet with any difficulty or delay on the part of the other confederates, that your noble and great lordships, conformably to the second article of our requisition, inserted in this request, would have the goodness to think upon measures which would secure this province from the ruinous consequences of such a proceeding.

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To the foregoing was joined the Address presented to the Burgomasters and the Council, which is of the following tenor.

NOBLE, GREAT, VENERABLE, AND NOBLE AND VENERABLE LORDS!

The undersigned merchants, citizens, and inhabitants of the city of Amsterdam, have learned with an inexpressible joy, the news of the resolution taken the 28th of March last by their noble and grand Mightinesses, the lords the States of Holland and West-Friesland. Their noble and grand Mightinesses have thereby not only satisfied the general wishes of the greatest and best part of the inhabitants of this province, but they have laid the foundations of ulterioir alliances and correspondencies of friendship and of good understanding with the United States of America, which promise new life to the languishing state of our commerce, navigation, and manufactures. The unanimity with which that resolution was decided in the assembly of Holland, gives us grounds to hope that the States of the other provinces will not delay to take a similar resolution; whilst the same unanimity fills with the most lively satisfaction the well intentioned inhabitants of this city, and without doubt those of the whole country, in convincing them fully that the union among the sage and venerable fathers of the country increases more and more; whilst that the promptness and activity with which it hath been concluded, make us hope, with reason, that we shall reap, in time, from a step so important and so necessary for this Republic, the desired fruits. Who then can call in question, or disavow that the moment seems to approach nearer and nearer, when this Republic shall enter into new relations with a people, who find themselves in circumstances which differ but little from those in which our ancestors found themselves two centuries ago, with a people which conciliates more and more the general affection and esteem.

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The conformity of religion and government, which is found between us and America, joined to the indubitable marks that she hath already long since given of the preference that she feels for our friendship, makes the undersigned not only suppose, but inspires them with a confidence that our connections with her will be equally solid, advantageous, and salutary to the interests of the two nations. The well-being and prosperity which will very probably result from them; the part which you noble, great, venerable, and noble and venerable lords, have had in the conclusion of a resolution so remarkable; the conviction that the venerable council of this city had of it, upon the proposition of the noble, great, and venerable Lords, almost consented to, before the request relative to this project presented not long since to you, noble, great, and venerable Lords, had come to the knowledge of the council; finally the remembrance of that which was done upon this matter in the year 1778, with the best intentions and the most laudable views, finding itself at present crowned with an approbation as public as it is general, indispensibly oblige the undersigned to approach you with this address; not only to congratulate you upon so remarkable an event, but to thank you at the same time with as much zeal as solemnity, for all those well intentioned cares, and those well concerted measures, for that inflexible attachment, and that faithful adherence to the true interests of the country in general, and of this city in particular, which manifest themselves in so striking a manner, in all the proceedings and resolutions of your noble, great, and venerable Lordships, and of the venerable council of this city, and which certainly will attract the esteem and veneration of the latest posterity, when comparing the annals and events of the present with those of former times, it shall discover that Amsterdam might still boast itself of possessing patriots who dared sacrifice generously all views of private interests, of grandeur and consideration to the sacred obligations that their country requires of them.

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We flatter ourselves, noble, great, venerable, noble and venerable Lords, that the present public demonstration of our esteem and attachment will be so much the more agreeable, as it is more rare in our republic, and perhaps even it is without example; and as it is more proper to efface all the odious impressions that the calumny and malignity of the English ministry, not long ago so servilely adored by many, but whose downfall is at present consummated, had endeavoured to spread, particularly a little before and at the beginning of this war, insinuations, which have since found partisans in the United Provinces, among those who have not been ashamed to paint the Exchange of Amsterdam (that is to say the most respectable and the most useful part of the citizens of this city, and at the same time the principal support of the well-being of the United Provinces) as if it consisted in a great part of a contemptible herd of vile interested souls, having no other object than to give loose to their avidity, and to their desire of amassing treasures, in defrauding the public revenues, and in transporting articles, against the faith of treaties; calumniators, who have had at the same time, and have still the audacity to affront the most

upright regency of the most considerable city of the Republic, and to expose it to public contempt, as if it participated by connivance, and otherwise, in so shameful a commerce; insinuations and accusations which have been spread with as much falshood as wickedness, and which ought to excite so much the more the indignation of every sensible heart, when it is considered that not only the merchants of this city, but also those of the whole Republic have so inviolably respected the faith of treaties that, to the astonishment of every impartial man, one cannot produce any proofs, at least no sufficient proofs; that there hath ever been transported from this country contraband merchandizes; whilst that the conjuncture in which imputations of this kind have been spread rendered the proceeding still more odious, seeing it has been done at an epoch when the commerce and navigation of Amsterdam, and of the whole Republic, would have experienced the first and almost the only attack of an unjust and perfidious ally, for want of necessary protection, upon which you, noble, great, venerable, and noble and venerable Lords, have so often and so seriously insisted, even before the commencement of the troubles between Great Britain and the United States of America; at an epoch, when the merchant, formed for enterprises, was obliged to see the fruit of his labour, and of his cares, the recompence of his indefatigable industry, and the patrimony destined to his posterity, ravished from his hands by foreign violence and an unbounded rapacity; at an epoch finally, when the wise and prudent politicians, who had exhausted themselves and spared no pains for the public good, saw their patriotic views dissipated, and their projects vanish.

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Receive then, noble, great, venerable, and noble and venerable Lords, this solemn testimony of our lively gratitude, as graciously as it is given sincerely on our part. Receive it as a proof of our attachment to your persons; an attachment which is not founded upon fear, nor an exterior representation of authority and grandeur, but which is founded on more noble and immoveable principles, those of esteem and respect, arising from a sentiment of true greatness and of generosity. Be assured that when contemptible discord, with its odious attendants, artifice and imposture, could effectuate nothing, absolutely nothing, at the moment when the present war broke out, to prejudice in the least the fidelity of the Citizens of the Amstel, or to shake them in the observance of their duties; the inconveniencies and the evils that a war naturally and necessarily draws after it will not produce the effect neither. Yes, we will submit more willingly to them, according as we shall perceive that the means that GOD and Nature have put into our hands are more and more employed to reduce and humble an haughty enemy. Continue then, noble, great, venerable, noble and venerable Lords, to proceed with safety in the road that you follow, the only one, which in our opinion can, under the divine benediction, tend to save the country from its present situation. Let nothing divert or intimidate you from it. You have already surmounted the greatest difficulties, and the most pointed cares. A more pleasing perspective already opens. Great Britain, not long since so proud of her forces, that she feared not to declare war against an ancient and faithful Ally, already repents of that unjust and rash proceeding; and, succumbing under the weight of a war, which becomes more and more burthensome, she sighs after peace; whilst that the harmony among the members of the supreme Government of this country increases with our arms, according as your political system, whose necessity and salutary influence were heretofore less acknowledged, gains every day more numerous imitators. The resolution lately taken by the States of Friesland, and so unanimously adopted by our Province, furnishes, among many others, one incontestible proof of it; whilst the naval combat fought the last year on Doggersbank, hath shewn to astonished Europe, that so long a peace hath not made the Republic forget the management of arms, but that, on the contrary, it nourishes in its bosom warriors who tread in the footsteps of the *Tromps* and *Ruiters*, from whose prudence and intrepidity, after a beginning so glorious, we may promise ourselves the most heroic actions; that their invincible courage, little affected with an evident superiority, will procure, one day, to our country an honourable and permanent peace, which, in eternizing their military glory, will cause the wise policy of your noble, great, venerable, and noble and venerable Lordships, to be blessed by the latest posterity.

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UTRECHT.

[Pg 65]

24th April, 1782.

TO THEIR NOBLE MIGHTINESSES, THE LORDS THE STATES OF THE COUNTRY OF UTRECHT.

THE undersigned manufacturers, merchants, and other traders of this City give, with due respect, to understand, that the petitioners, placing their confidence in the interest that your noble Mightinesses have always appeared to take in the advancement of manufactures and commerce, have not been at all scrupulous to recommend to the vigilant attention of your noble Mightinesses, the favourable occasion that offers itself in this moment, to revive the manufactures, commerce, and trades fallen into decay in this City and Province, in case that your noble Mightinesses acknowledged, in the name of this City, Mr. Adams as Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, to the end that there might be formed with them a treaty of commerce for this Republic. As the petitioners founded themselves thus upon the intimate sentiment of the execution of that which your noble Mightinesses judge proper to the advancement of the well-being of the petitioners and of their interests, the petitioners have further the satisfaction of seeing the most agreeable proofs of it, when your noble Mightinesses, in your last Assembly, resolved unanimously to consent, not only to the admission of Mr. Adams

in quality of Minister of the Congress of North America, but to authorise the Lords the Deputies of this Province at the Generality, to conform themselves in the name of this Province, to the resolutions of the Lords the States of Holland and West Friesland, and of Friesland; and, doing this, to consent to the acknowledgment and admission of Mr. Adams, as Minister of the United States of America. As that resolution furnishes the proofs the best intentioned, the most patriotic, for the advancement of that which may serve to the well-being and to the encouragement of manufactures, of commerce, and of decayed trades, as well in general, as of this City and Province in particular, and which had been so ardently desired; the petitioners think themselves indispensibly obliged to testify, in the most respectful manner, their gratitude for it to your noble Mightinesses. The petitioners find themselves absolutely unable to express, in words, the general satisfaction that this event hath caused; not only to them; but also to the great and small of this Province; joined to the confirmation of the perfect conviction in which they repose themselves, also, for the future, upon the paternal care of your noble Mightinesses, that the consummation of the desired treaty of commerce with the Americans may be soon effected. The petitioners attest by the present, before your noble Mightinesses, their solemn and well-meant gratitude, which they address at the same time to your noble Mightinesses, as the most sincere mark of veneration and respect for the persons, and the direction of public affairs, of your noble Mightinesses; praying that Almighty God may deign to bless the efforts and the councils of your noble Mightinesses, as well as those of the Confederates; that moreover this Province, and our dear country, by the propositions of an Armistice, and that which depends thereon, should not be involved in any negotiations for a particular peace with our perfidious enemy, but that we obtain no other peace than a general peace, which (as your noble Mightinesses express yourselves in your resolution) may be compatible with their honour and dignity; and serve not only for this generation, but also for the latest posterity, as a monument of glory, of eternal gratitude to, and esteem for the persons and public administration of the present time.

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FRIESLAND.

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EXTRACT from the Register-Book of the Lords the States of Friesland.

THE requisition of Mr. Adams, for presenting his letters of credence from the United States of America to their High Mightinesses, having been brought into the assembly, and put into deliberation, as also the ulterior address to the same purpose, with a demand of a categorical answer, made by him, as is more amply mentioned in the minutes of their High Mightinesses of the 4th of May, 1781, and the 9th of January, 1782; whereupon it having been taken into consideration that the said Mr. Adams would probably have some propositions to make to their High Mightinesses, and to present to them the principle articles and foundations upon which the Congress, on their part, would enter into a treaty of commerce and friendship, or other affairs to propose, in regard to which dispatch would be requisite.

It has been thought fit and resolved to authorize the Lords the Deputies of this Province at the Generality, and to instruct them to direct things, at the table of their High Mightinesses, in such a manner that the said Mr. Adams be admitted forthwith as Minister of the Congress of North America; with further order to the said Deputies that if there should be made moreover any similar propositions by the same, to inform immediately their noble Mightinesses of them. And an extract of the present resolution shall be sent them for their information, that they may conduct themselves conformably.

Thus resolved at the Province House the 26th February, 1782.

Compared with the aforesaid book to my knowledge.

Signed

A. J. V. SMINIA.

HOLLAND AND WESTFRIESLAND.

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EXTRACT of the Resolutions of the Lords the States of Holland and Westfriesland, taken in the Assembly of their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, Thursday 28th March, 1782.

DELIBERATED by resumption upon the address and the ulterior address of Mr. Adams, made the 4th of May, 1781, and the 9th of January, 1782, to the President of the States General, communicated to the Assembly the 9th May, 1781, and the 22d of last month, to present his letters of credence, in the name of the United States of America, to their High Mightinesses; by which ulterior address, the said Mr. Adams hath demanded a categorical answer, that he may acquaint his constituents thereof: deliberated also upon the petitions of a great number of merchants, manufacturers and other inhabitants of this Province, interested in

commerce to support their request presented to the States General, the twentieth current, to the end, that efficacious measures might be taken to establish a commerce between this country and North America, copy of which petitions have been given to the members, the twenty-first; it hath been thought fit and resolved that the affair shall be directed on the part of their noble and grand Mightinesses, at the assembly of the States General, and that there shall be made the strongest instances that Mr. Adams be admitted and acknowledged, as soon as possible, by their High Mightinesses, in quality of Ambassador of the United States of America. And the Counsellor Pensionary hath been charged to inform under hand the said Mr. Adams of this resolution of their noble and grand Mightinesses.

ZEALAND.

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EXTRACT *of the Resolutions of their High Mightinesses the States General of the United Provinces. Monday 8th April, 1782.*

THE Deputies of the Province of Zealand have brought to the Assembly, and have caused to be read there, the resolution of the States of the said Province, their principals, to cause to be admitted, as soon as possible, Mr. Adams in quality of Ambassador of the Congress of North America, according to the following resolution.

EXTRACT *from the Register of the Resolutions of the Lords the States of Zeeland, 4th of April, 1782.*

It hath been thought fit and ordered, that the Lords, the ordinary Deputies of this Province at the Generality, shall be authorised, as it is done by the present, to assist, in the direction of affairs at the Assembly of their High Mightinesses, in such a manner, that Mr. Adams may be acknowledged, as soon as possible, as Ambassador of the Congress of North America; that his letters of credence be accepted; and that he be admitted in that quality, according to the ordinary form; enjoining further upon the said Lords the ordinary Deputies, to take such propositions, as should be made to this Republic by the said Mr. Adams, for the information and deliberation of their High Mightinesses, to the end to transmit them here as soon as possible. And an extract of this resolution of their noble Mightinesses shall be sent to the Lords, their ordinary Deputies, to serve them as an instruction.

Signed

J. M. CHALMERS.

Upon which having deliberated, it hath been thought fit and resolved to pray, by the present, the Lords the Deputies of the Province of Guelderland, Utrecht, and Groningen and Ommelanden, who have not yet explained themselves upon the subject, to be pleased to do it as soon as possible.

OVERYSSEL.

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EXTRACT *from the Register of the Resolutions of the Equestrian Order, and of the Cities composing the States of Overysse. Zwoll, 5th April, 1782.*

MR. the Grand Bailiff of Saalland, and the other Commissioners of their noble Mightinesses for the affairs of finance, having examined, conformably to their commissarial resolution of the third of this month, the addresses of Mr. Adams, communicated to the Assembly the 4th of May, 1781, and the 22d of February, 1782, to present his letters of credence to their High Mightinesses, in the name of the United States of America; as well as the resolution of the Lords the States of Holland and Westfriesland, dated the 28th of March, 1782, carried the 29th of the same month to the Assembly of their High Mightinesses, for the admission and acknowledgment of Mr. Adams, have reported to the Assembly, that they should be of opinion, that the Lords the Deputies of this Province in the States General ought to be authorised and charged to declare in the Assembly of their High Mightinesses, that the Equestrian order and the Cities judge that it is proper to acknowledge, as soon as possible, Mr. Adams in quality of Minister of the United States of North America to their High Mightinesses. Upon which, having deliberated, the Equestrian order and the Cities have conformed themselves to the said report.

Compared with the aforesaid Register.

Signed

DERK DUNBAR.

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GRONINGEN.

EXTRACT *from the Register of the Resolutions of their noble Mightinesses, the States of Groningen and Ommelanden. Tuesday 9th April, 1782.*

THE Lords the States of Groningen and Ommelanden, having heard the report of the Lords the Commissioners for the petitions of the Council of State and the Finances of the Province, and having carefully examined the demand of Mr. Adams, to present his letters of credence from the United States of America to their High Mightinesses, have, after deliberation upon the subject, declared themselves of opinion, that in the critical circumstances in which the Republic finds itself at present, it is proper to take, without loss of time, such efficacious measures, as may not only repair the losses and damages that the kingdom of Great Britain hath caused in a manner so unjust, and against every shadow of right, to the commerce of the Republic, as well before as after the war, but particularly such as may establish the free navigation and the commerce of the Republic, for the future, upon on the most solid foundations, as may confirm and re-assure it, by the strongest bonds of reciprocal interest; and that, in consequence, the Lords the Deputies at the Assembly of their High Mightinesses ought to be authorised, on the part of the Province, as they are by the present, to admit Mr. Adams to present his letters of credence from the United States of America, and to receive the propositions which he shall make, to make report of them to the Lords the States of this Province.

Signed

E. LEWE, Secretary.

The States General, having deliberated the same day upon the resolution, have resolved, that the Deputies of this Province of Guelderland, which has not yet declared itself upon the same subject, should be requested, to be pleased to do it as soon as possible.

UTRECHT.

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EXTRACT *of the Resolutions of their noble Mightinesses, the States of the Province of Utrecht, 10 April 1782.*

HEARD the report of Mr. De Westerveld and other deputies of their noble Mightinesses for the department of war, who, in virtue of the commissarial resolutions of the 9th of May 1781, 16th January and 20th March of the present year 1782, have examined the resolutions of their High Mightinesses of the 4th of May 1781, containing an overture, that Mr. the President of the Assembly of their High Mightinesses had made, "that a person styling himself J. Adams had been with him, and had given him to understand, that he had received letters of credence for their High Mightinesses from the United States of America, with a request, that he would be pleased to communicate them to their High Mightinesses; as well as the resolution of their High Mightinesses of the 9th of January, containing an ulterior overture of Mr. the President, that the said Mr. Adams had been with him, and had insisted upon a categorical answer, whether his said letters of credence would be accepted or not; finally the resolution of their High Mightinesses of the 5th of March last, with the insertion of the resolution of Friesland, containing a proposition to admit Mr. Adams in quality of Minister of the Congress of North America."

Upon which having deliberated, and remarked that the Lords the States of Holland and West Friesland, by their resolution carried the 29th of March to the States General, have also consented to the admission of the said Mr. Adams in quality of minister of the Congress of North America, it hath been thought fit and resolved, that the Lords the Deputies of this Province in the States General should be authorised, as their noble Mightinesses authorise them by the present, to conform themselves, in the name of this Province, to the resolution of the Lords the States of Holland and Westfriesland, and of Friesland, and to consent by consequence, that Mr. Adams be acknowledged and admitted as Minister of the United States of America; their noble Mightinesses being, in the mean time, of opinion, that it would be necessary to acquaint her Majesty the Empress of Russia, and the other Neutral Powers, with the resolution to be taken by their High Mightinesses upon this subject, in communicating to them, as much as shall be necessary, the reasons which have induced their High Mightinesses to it, and giving them the strongest assurances that the intention of their High Mightinesses is by no means to prolong thereby the war, which they would have willingly prevented and terminated long since; but on the contrary, that their High Mightinesses with nothing with more ardor, than a prompt re-establishment of peace; and that they shall be always ready, on their part, to co-operate in it, in all possible ways, and with a suitable readiness, so far as that shall be any way compatible with their honour and their dignity, and for this end an extract of this shall be carried by Missive to the Lords the Deputies at the Generality.

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EXTRACT *from the Recès of the ordinary Diet, holden in the City of Nimeguen, in the Month of April 1782. Wednesday, 17 April 1782.*

THE requisition of Mr. Adams, to present his letters of credence to their High Mightinesses in the name of the United States of America, having been brought to the assembly and read, as well as an ulterieur address made upon this subject, with a demand of a categorical answer by the said Mr. Adams, more amply mentioned in the registers of their High Mightinesses of the date of the 4th of May 1781, and of the 9th of January 1782; moreover the resolutions of the Lords the States of the five other provinces, carried successively to the assembly of their High Mightinesses, and all tending to admit Mr. Adams in quality of Ambassador of the United States of America to this Republic; upon which their noble Mightinesses, after deliberation, have resolved to authorise the deputies of this Province at the States General, as they authorise them by the present, to conform themselves in the name of this Province to the resolution of the Lords the States of Holland and Westfriesland, and to consent, by consequence, that Mr. Adams may be acknowledged and admitted in quality of Ambassador of the United States of America to this Republic. In consequence, an extract of the present shall be sent to the said Deputies, to make as soon as possible the requisite overture of it to the assembly of their High Mightinesses.

In fidem extracti.

Signed

J. IN DE BETOUW.

THE STATES GENERAL.

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EXTRACT *from the Register of the Resolutions of their High Mightinesses the States General of the United Provinces. Friday 19 April, 1782.*

DELIBERATED by resumption, upon the address and the ulterieur address, made by Mr. Adams the 4th of May 1781, and the 9th of January of the current year to Mr. the President of the Assembly of their High Mightinesses, to present to their High Mightinesses his letters of credence in the name of the United States of North America; and by which ulterieur address the said Mr. Adams hath demanded a categorical answer, to the end to be able to acquaint his Constituents thereof; it hath been thought fit and resolved that Mr. Adams shall be admitted and acknowledged in quality of Ambassador of the United States of North America to their High Mightinesses, as he is admitted and acknowledged by the present.

Signed

W. BOREEL, *President.*

Lower down

Compared with the aforesaid Register.

Signed

H. FAGEL.

EXTRACT *from the Register of the Resolutions of their High Mightinesses the States General of the United Provinces, Monday, 22d April, 1782.*

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MR. BOREEL, who presided in the Assembly the last week, hath reported to their High Mightinesses, and notified to them, that Mr. John Adams, Ambassador of the United States of America, had been with him last Saturday, and presented to him a letter from the Assembly of Congress, written at Philadelphia, the first of January, 1781, containing a credence, for the said Mr. Adams, to the end to reside in quality of its Minister Plenipotentiary near their High Mightinesses: Upon which having deliberated, it hath been thought fit and resolved, to declare by the present: "That the said Mr. Adams is agreeable to their High Mightinesses; that he shall be acknowledged in quality of Minister Plenipotentiary; and that there shall be granted to him an audience, or assigned Commissioners, when he shall demand it." Information of the above shall be given to the said Mr. Adams, by the Agent van der Burch de Spieringshoek.

Signed

W. VAN CITTERS, *President.*

Lower down

Compared with the aforesaid Register.

MEDAL.

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TO THE NOBLE AND MIGHTY LORDS, THE STATES OF FRIESLAND,

THE Society of Citizens, established at Leeuwarden, under the motto, "By Liberty and Zeal," most humbly represents, that it desires to have an opportunity of testifying publicly, by facts, to your noble Mightinesses, the most lively, but, at the same time, the most respectful sentiments of gratitude, which not only animate them, but also, as they assure themselves, all the well intentioned Citizens, especially, with relation to the resolutions equally important, and full of wisdom; which your noble Mightinesses have taken upon all the points, in regard to which the critical circumstances, in which our dear country finds itself plunged, have furnished to your noble Mightinesses, objects equally numerous and disagreeable, particularly, at the ordinary Diet of the year 1782, and at the extraordinary Diet holden in the month of April last; resolutions which bear not only the characters of wisdom, but also those of the best intentioned solicitude, and the purest love of our country; and which prove, in the most convincing manner, that your noble Mightinesses have no greater ambition than its universal prosperity; assiduously proposing to yourselves, as the most important object of your attention, of your enterprises, and of your attachment, the rule, *Salus Populi suprema Lex esto*; resolutions, in fine, which ought perfectly to re-assure the good Citizens of this Province, and encourage them to persevere in that full and tranquil confidence which has hindered them from representing to your noble Mightinesses the true interests of the country, and to exhort them, at the same time, by their supplications, to act with courage, and to fulfil their duties; considering that the said resolutions have fully assured them, that their possessions, with that which is above all things dear to them, their Liberty (that right which is more precious to them than their lives; to which the smallest injury cannot be done, without doing wrong and dishonour to humanity; a right, nevertheless, which, if we consider the world in general, has been, alas! almost every where equally violated) are deposited in safety, under the vigilant eye of your noble Mightinesses.

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The Society has thought that it might accomplish its wishes, in the most convenient and decent manner, in causing to be stricken, at its expence, a Medal of silver, which may remain to posterity a durable monument of the perfect harmony which at the present dangerous epoch has reigned between the government and the people. It has conceived, for this purpose, a sketch or project, as yet incomplete, according to which one of the sides of the Medal should bear the Arms of Friesland, held by an hand, which descends from the clouds, with an inscription in the following terms: *To the States of Friesland, in grateful Memory of the Diets of February and of April, 1782, dedicated by the Society LIBERTY AND ZEAL.* An inscription, which would thus contain a general applause of all the resolutions taken in these two Diets; whilst upon the reverse, one should distinguish, more particularly, the two events which interest the most our common country, in regard of which your noble Mightinesses have given the example to the States of the other Provinces, and which merit, for this reason, as placed in the foremost situation, to shew itself the most clearly to the fight: to wit, "The admission of Mr. Adams in quality of Minister of the United States of America to this Republic; and the refusal of a separate peace with Great Britain." Events which should be represented symbolically by a Frisian, dressed according to the ancient characteristic custom of the Frisians, holding out his right-hand to an inhabitant of North America, in token of friendship and brotherly love; whilst with the left-hand he rejects the peace which England offers him. The whole with such convenient additions, and symbolical ornaments, which the Society, perhaps, would do well to leave to the invention of the medalist, &c.

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[*The remainder of this request relates to other subjects.*]

Done at Leeuwarden the 8th May, 1782.
The Society "BY LIBERTY AND ZEAL."

Signed at its request

W. WOPKENS,
in the absence of the Secretary.

**AN
ESSAY
ON
CANON AND FEUDAL LAW.**

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By JOHN ADAMS,

AMBASSADOR PLENIPOTENTIARY

FROM THE

UNITED AND INDEPENDENT STATES OF
NORTH AMERICA,

TO THEIR

HIGH MIGHTINESS THE STATES GENERAL OF THE UNITED PROVINCES OF HOLLAND.

AN
ESSAY
ON
CANON AND FEUDAL LAW.

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"IGNORANCE and inconsideration, are the two great causes of the ruin of mankind."—This is an observation of Dr. *Tillotson*, with relation to the interest of his fellow-men, in a future and immortal state: But it is of equal truth and importance, if applied to the happiness of men in society, on this side the grave.—In the earliest ages of the world, *absolute Monarchy* seems to have been the universal form of government.—Kings, and a few of their great counsellors and captains, exercised a cruel tyranny over the people who held a rank in the scale of intelligence, in those days, but little higher than the camels and elephants, that carried them and their engines to war.

By what causes it was brought to pass, that the people in the middle ages, became more *intelligent* in general, would not perhaps be possible in these days to discover: But the fact is certain, and wherever a general knowledge and sensibility have prevailed among the people, arbitrary government and every kind of oppression have lessened and disappeared in proportion.—Man has certainly an exalted soul! and the same principle in human nature; that aspiring noble principle, founded in benevolence and cherished by knowledge; I mean the love of power, which has been so often the cause of *slavery*, has, whenever freedom has existed, been the cause of freedom. If it is this principle, that has always prompted the princes and nobles of the earth, by every species of fraud and violence, to shake off all the limitations of their power; it is the same that has always stimulated the common people to aspire at independency, and to endeavour at confining the power of the great, within the limits of equity and reason.

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The poor people, it is true, have been much less successful than the great—They have seldom found either leisure or opportunity to form an union and exert their strength—ignorant as they were of arts and letters, they have seldom been able to frame and support a regular opposition. This, however, has been known, by the great, to be the temper of mankind, and they have accordingly laboured, in all ages, to wrest from the populace, as they are contemptuously called, the knowledge of their rights and wrongs, and the power to assert the former or redress the latter. I say RIGHTS, for such they have, undoubtedly, antecedent to all earthly government—*Rights*, that cannot be repealed or restrained by human laws—*Rights*, derived from the great Legislator of the universe.

Since the promulgation of christianity, the two greatest systems of tyranny, that have sprung from this original, are the *cannon* and the *feudal* law—The desire of dominion, that great principle by which we have attempted to account for so much good, and so much evil, is, when properly restrained, a very useful and noble movement in the human mind: but when such restraints are taken off, it becomes an encroaching, grasping, restless and ungovernable power. Numberless have been the systems of iniquity, contrived by the great, for the gratification of this passion in themselves: but in none of them were they ever more successful, than in the invention and establishment of the *canon* and the *feudal* law.

By the former of these, the most refined, sublime, extensive, and astonishing constitution of policy, that ever was conceived by the mind of man, was framed by the Romish clergy for the aggrandisement of their own order. All the epithets I have here given to the Romish policy are just; and will be allowed to be so, when it is considered, that they even persuaded mankind to believe, faithfully and undoubtingly, that GOD ALMIGHTY had intrusted them with the keys of heaven, whose gates they might open and close at pleasure—with a power of dispensation over all the rules and obligations of morality—with authority to license all sorts of sins and crimes—with a power of deposing princes, and absolving subjects from allegiance—with a power of procuring or withholding the rain of heaven, and the beams of the sun—with the management of

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earthquakes, pestilence and famine.—Nay, with the mysterious, awful, incomprehensible power of creating out of bread and wine, the flesh and blood of God himself.—All these opinions they were enabled to spread and rivet among the people, by reducing their minds to a state of sordid ignorance and staring timidity; and by infusing into them a *religious* horror of letters and knowledge. Thus was human nature chained fast for ages, in a cruel, shameful, and deplorable servitude, to him and his subordinate tyrants; who, it was foretold, would exalt himself above all that was called God, and that was worshipped.—

In the latter we find another system similar in many respects to the former; which, although it was originally formed perhaps for the necessary defence of a barbarous people, against the inroads and invasions of her neighbouring nations; yet, for the same purposes of tyranny, cruelty and lust, which had dictated the *canon* law, it was soon adopted by almost all the Princes of Europe, and wrought into the constitutions of their government.—It was originally a code of laws, for a vast army in a perpetual encampment.—The general was invested with the sovereign propriety of all the lands within the territory.—Of him, his servants and vassals, the first rank of his great officers held the lands; and in the same manner, the other subordinate officers held of them; and all ranks and degrees, held their lands, by a variety of duties and services, all tending to bind the chains the faster, on every order of mankind. In this manner, the common people were holden together, in herds and clans, in a state of servile dependance on their Lords; bound, even by the tenure of their lands to follow them, whenever they commanded, to their wars; and in a state of total ignorance of every thing divine and human, excepting the use of arms, and the culture of their lands.

But, another event still more calamitous to human liberty, was a wicked confederacy, between the two systems of tyranny above described.—It seems to have been even stipulated between them, that the temporal grandees should contribute every thing in their power to maintain the ascendancy of the priesthood; and that the spiritual grandees, in, their turn, should employ that ascendancy over the consciences of the people, in impressing on their minds, a blind, implicit obedience to civil magistracy.—

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Thus, as long as this confederacy lasted, and the people were held in ignorance; Liberty, and with her, knowledge, and virtue too, seem to have deserted the earth; and one age of darkness succeeded another, till God, in his benign Providence, raised up the champions, who began and conducted the Reformation.—From the time of the Reformation, to the first settlement of America, knowledge gradually spread in Europe, but especially in England; and in proportion as that increased and spread among the people, ecclesiastical and civil tyranny, which I use as synonymous expressions, for the *canon* and *feudal* laws, seem to have lost their strength and weight. The people grew more and more sensible of the wrong that was done them, by these systems; more and more impatient under it; and determined at all hazards to rid themselves of it; till, at last, under the execrable race of the Stuarts, the struggle between the people and the confederacy aforesaid of temporal and spiritual tyranny, became formidable, violent and bloody.

It was this great struggle that peopled America.—It was not religion alone, as is commonly supposed; but it was a love of *universal* liberty, and an hatred, a dread, an horror of the infernal confederacy before described, that projected, conducted, and accomplished the settlement of America.—

It was a resolution formed by a sensible people, I mean the *Puritans* almost in despair. They had become intelligent in general, and many of them learned.—For this fact I have the testimony of Archbishop *King* himself, who observed of that people, that they were more intelligent, and better read than even the members of the church whom he censures warmly for that reason.—This people had been so vexed, and tortured by the powers of those days, for no other crime than their knowledge, and their freedom of enquiry and examination; and they had so much reason to despair of deliverance from those miseries on that side the ocean, that they at last resolved to fly to the *wilderness* for refuge, from the temporal and spiritual principalities and powers, and plagues, and scourges of their native country.

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After their arrival here, they began their settlement, and formed their plan both of ecclesiastical and civil government, in direst opposition to the *canon* and the *feudal* systems.—The leading men among them, both of the clergy and the laity were men of sense and learning: To many of them, the historians, orators, poets and philosophers of Greece and Rome were quite familiar: and some of them have left libraries that are still in being, consisting chiefly of volumes, in which the wisdom of the most enlightened ages and nations is deposited, written however in languages, which their great grandsons, *though educated in European Universities*, can scarcely read.

Thus accomplished were many of the first planters of these colonies.—It may be thought polite and fashionable, by many modern fine gentlemen, perhaps, to deride the characters of these persons as enthusiastical, superstitious and republican: But such ridicule is founded in nothing but foppery and affectation, and is grossly injurious and false.—Religious to some degree of enthusiasm, it may be admitted they were; but this can be no peculiar derogation from their character, because it was at that time almost the universal character, not only of England but of Christendom. Had this however been otherwise, their enthusiasm, considering the principles in which it was founded, and the ends to which it was directed, far from being a reproach to them, was greatly to their honour: for I believe it will be found universally true, that no great enterprize, for the honour or happiness of mankind, was ever atchieved without a large mixture of that noble infirmity. Whatever imperfections may be justly ascribed to them, which however

are as few as any mortals have discovered, their judgment in framing their policy was founded in wise, humane and benevolent principles. It was founded in revelation and in reason too: It was consistent with the principles of the best, and greatest, and wisest legeslators of antiquity.— Tyranny in every form, shape and appearance, was their disdain and abhorrence; no fear of punishment, nor even of death itself, in exquisite tortures, had been sufficient to conquer that steady, manly, pertinacious spirit, with which they had opposed the tyrants of those days, in church and state. They were very far from being enemies to monarchy; and they knew as well as any men, the just regard and honour that is due to the character of a dispenser of the mysteries of the gospel of grace: But they saw clearly, that popular powers must be placed as a guard, a controul, a balance, to the powers of the monarch and the priest in every government; or else it would soon become the man of sin, the whore of Babylon, the mystery of iniquity, a great and detestable system of fraud, violence and usurpation. Their greatest concern seems to have been to establish a government of the church more consistent with the Scriptures, and a government of the state more agreeable to the dignity of human nature, than any they had seen in Europe: and to transmit such a government down to their posterity, with the means of securing and preserving it for ever. To render the popular power in their new government as great and wise as their principles of theory, i. e. as human nature and the christian religion require it should be, they endeavoured to remove from it as many of the feudal inequalities and dependencies as could be spared, consistently with the preservation of a mild limited monarchy. And in this they discovered the depth of their wisdom, and the warmth of their friendship to human nature.—But the first place is due to religion.—They saw clearly, that of all the nonsense and delusion which had ever passed through the mind of man, none had ever been more extravagant than the notions of absolutions, indelible characters, uninterrupted successions, and the rest of those fantastical ideas, derived from the canon law, which had thrown such a glare of mystery, sanctity, reverence and right, reverend eminence, and holiness around the idea of a priest, as no mortal could deserve and as always must, from the constitution of human nature, be dangerous in society. For this reason, they demolished the whole system of Diocesan episcopacy, and deriding, as all reasonable and impartial men must do, the ridiculous fancies of sanctified effluvia from episcopal fingers, they established sacerdotal ordination on the foundation of the Bible and common sense. —This conduct at once imposed an obligation on the whole body of the clergy, to industry, virtue, piety and learning; and rendered that whole body infinitely more independent on the civil powers, in all respects, than they could be where they were formed into a scale of subordination, from a Pope down to Priests and friars and confessors, necessarily and essentially, a sordid, stupid, and wretched herd; or than they could be in any other country, where an archbishop held the place of an universal bishop, and the vicars and curates that of the ignorant, dependent, miserable rabble aforesaid; and infinitely more sensible and learned than they could be in either. —This subject has been seen in the same light by many illustrious patriots, who have lived in America, since the days of our forefathers, and who have adored their memory for the same reason.—And methinks there has not appeared in New England, a stronger veneration for their memory, a more penetrating insight into the grounds and principles and spirit of their policy, nor a more earnest desire of perpetuating the blessings of it to posterity, than that fine institution of the late Chief Justice Dudley, of a lecture against popery, and on the validity of presbyterian ordination. This was certainly intended by that wise and excellent man, as an eternal memento of the wisdom and goodness of the very principles that settled America. But I must again return to the feudal law.—The adventurers so often mentioned, had an utter contempt of all that dark ribaldry of hereditary indefeasible right,—the Lord's anointed,—and the divine miraculous original of government, with which the priesthood had enveloped the feudal monarch in clouds and mysteries, and from whence they had deduced the most mischievous of all doctrines, that of passive obedience and non-resistance. They knew that government was a plain, simple, intelligible thing, founded in nature and reason, and quite comprehensible by common sense.— They detested all the base services, and servile dependencies of the feudal system.—They knew that no such unworthy dependencies took place in the ancient seats of liberty, the republic of Greece and Rome: and they thought all such slavish subordinations were equally inconsistent with the constitution of human nature, and that religious liberty with which Jesus had made them free. This was certainly the opinion they had formed, and they were far from being singular or extravagant in thinking so.—Many celebrated modern writers in Europe have espoused the same sentiments.—Lord Kaims, a Scottish writer of great reputation, whose authority in this case ought to have the more weight, as his countrymen have not the most worthy ideas of liberty, speaking of the feudal law, says, "A constitution so contradictory to all the principles which govern mankind, can never be brought about, one should imagine, but by foreign conquest or native usurpations." Brit. Ant. p. 2.—Rousseau speaking of the same system, calls it, "That most iniquitous and absurd form of government, by which human nature was so shamefully degraded." Social compact, Page 164.—It would be easy to multiply authorities; but it must be needless, because as the original of this form of government was among savages, as the spirit of it is military and despotic, every writer, who would allow the people to have any right to life or property or freedom, more than the beasts of the field, and who was not hired or inlisted under arbitrary lawless power, has been always willing to admit the feudal system to be inconsistent with liberty and the rights of mankind.

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To have holden their lands allodially, or for every man to have been the sovereign lord and proprietor of the ground he occupied, would have constituted a government, too nearly like a commonwealth.—They were contented, therefore, to hold their lands of their King, as their sovereign lord, and to him they were willing to render homage: but to no mesne and subordinate lords, nor were they willing to submit to any of the baser services.—In all this they were so strenuous, that they have even transmitted to their posterity, a very general contempt and

detestation of holdings by quit rents: As they have also an hereditary ardour for liberty, and thirst for knowledge.—

They were convinced by their knowledge of human nature derived from history and their own experience, that nothing could preserve their posterity from the encroachments of the two systems of tyranny, in opposition to which, as has been observed already, they erected their government in church and state, but knowledge diffused generally through the whole body of the people.—Their civil and religious principles, therefore, conspired to prompt them to use every measure, and take every precaution in their power to propagate and perpetuate knowledge. For this purpose they laid very early the foundations of colleges, and invested them with ample privileges and emoluments; and it is remarkable, that they have left among their posterity, so universal an affection and veneration for those seminaries, and for liberal education, that the meanest of the people contribute cheerfully to the support and maintenance of them every year, and that nothing is more generally popular than productions for the honour, reputation, and advantage of those seats of learning. But the wisdom and benevolence of our fathers rested not here. They made an early provision by law, that every town, consisting of so many families, should be always furnished with a grammar school.—They made it a crime for such a town to be destitute of a grammar school-master for a few months, and subjected it to an heavy penalty.—So that the education of all ranks of people was made the care and expence of the public in a manner, that I believe has been unknown to any other people ancient or modern.

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The consequences of these establishments we see and feel every day.—A native of America who cannot read and write, is as rare an appearance as a Jacobite, or a Roman Catholic, i. e. as rare as a comet or an earthquake.—It has been observed, that we are all of us lawyers, divines, politicians, and philosophers.—And I have good authorities to say, that all candid foreigners who have passed through this country, and conversed freely with all sorts of people here, will allow, that they have never seen so much knowledge and civility among the common people in any part or the world.—It is true there has been among us a party for some years, consisting chiefly, not of the descendants of the first settlers of this country, but of high churchmen and high statesmen, imported since, who affect to censure this provision for the education of our youth as a needless expence, and an imposition upon the rich in favour of the poor;—and as an institution productive of idleness and vain speculation among the people, whose time and attention, it is said, ought to be devoted to labour, and not to public affairs, or to examination into the conduct of their superiors. And certain officers of the crown, and certain other missionaries of ignorance, foppery, servility, and slavery, have been most inclined to countenance and encrease the same party.—Be it remembered, however, that liberty must at all hazards be supported. *We have a right to it, derived from our MAKER!* But if we had not, our fathers have earned and bought it for us at the expence of their ease, their estates, their pleasure, and their blood.—And Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people, who have a right, from the frame of their nature, to knowledge, as their great CREATOR, who does nothing in vain, has given them understandings and a desire to know; but besides this they have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right, to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean of the characters and conduct of their rulers. *Rulers are no more than attornies, agents, and trustees for the people:* and if the cause, the interest, and trust are insidiously betrayed, or wantonly trifled away, the people have a right to revoke the authority that they themselves have deputed, and to constitute abler and better agents, attornies, and trustees. And the preservation of the means of knowledge, among the lowest rank, is of more importance to the public, than all the property of all the rich men in the country. It is even of more consequence to the rich themselves, and to their posterity.—The only question is, whether it is a public emolument? and if it is, the rich ought undoubtedly to contribute in the same proportion as to all other public burdens, i. e. in proportion to their wealth, which is secured by public expences.—But none of the means of information are more sacred, or have been cherished with more tenderness and care by the settlers of America, than the press. Care has been taken that the art of printing should be encouraged, and that it should be easy and cheap, and safe for any person to communicate his thoughts to the Public.—And you, Messieurs Printers, whatever the tyrants of the earth may say of your Paper, have done important service to your country, by your readiness and freedom in publishing the speculations of the curious. The stale, impudent insinuations of slander and sedition, with which the gormandizers of power have endeavoured to discredit your Paper, are so much the more to your honour; for the jaws of power are always opened to devour, and her arm is always stretched out, if possible to destroy, the freedom of thinking, speaking, and writing.—And if the public interest, liberty and happiness have been in danger, from the ambition or avarice of any great man, or number of great men, whatever may be their politeness, address, learning, ingenuity, and in other respects integrity and humanity, you have done yourselves honour, and your country service, by publishing and pointing out that avarice and ambition.—These views are so much the more dangerous and pernicious, for the virtues with which they may be accompanied in the same character, and with so much the more watchful jealousy to be guarded against.

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"Curse on such virtues, they've undone their country."

Be not intimidated, therefore, by any terrors, from publishing, with the utmost freedom whatever can be warranted by the laws of your country; nor suffer yourselves to be wheedled out of your liberty by any pretences of politeness, delicacy, or decency. These, as they are often used, are but three different names for hypocrisy, chicanery, and cowardice. Much less, I presume, will you be discouraged by any pretences, that malignants on this side the water^[A] will represent your Paper as facetious and seditious, or that the Great on the other side the water will take offence at them.

This dread of representation has had for a long time in this province effects very similar to what the physicians call an *hydrophobia*, or dread of water.—It has made us delirious—and we have rushed headlong into the water, till we are almost drowned, out of simple or phrensical fear of it. Believe me, the character of this country has suffered more in Britain, by the pusillanimity with which we have borne many insults and indignities from the creatures of power at home, and the creatures of those creatures here, than it ever did, or ever will by the freedom and spirit that has been or will be discovered in writing or action. Believe me, my countrymen, they have imbibed an opinion on the other side the water, that we are an ignorant, a timid, and a stupid people; nay, their tools on this side have often the impudence to dispute your bravery.—But I hope in God the time is near at hand, when they will be fully convinced of your understanding, integrity, and courage. But can any thing be more ridiculous, were it not too provoking to be laughed at, than to pretend that offence should be taken at home for writings here?—Pray let them look at home. Is not the human understanding exhausted there? Are not reason, imaginations, wit, passion, senses and all, tortured to find out satire and invective against the characters of the vile and futile fellows who sometimes get into place and power?—The most exceptionable paper that ever I saw here is perfect prudence and modesty, in comparison of multitudes of their applauded writings. Yet the high regard they have for the freedom of the Press, indulges all.—I must and will repeat it, Newspapers deserve the patronage of every friend to his country. And whether the defamers of them are arrayed in robes of scarlet or sable, whether they lurk and skulk in an insurance office, whether they assume the venerable character of a priest, the sly one of a scrivener, or the dirty, infamous, abandoned one of an informer, they are all the creatures and tools of the lust of domination.—

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The true source of our sufferings, has been our timidity.

We have been afraid to think.—We have felt a reluctance to examining into the grounds of our privileges, and the extent in which we have an indisputable right to demand them, against all the power and authority on earth.—And many who have not scrupled to examine for themselves, have yet, for certain prudent reasons, been cautious, and diffident of declaring the result of their enquiries.

The cause of this timidity is perhaps hereditary, and to be traced back in history, as far as the cruel treatment the first settlers of this country received, before their embarkation for America, from the government at home.—Every body knows how dangerous it was, to speak or write in favour of any thing, in those days, but the triumphant system of religion and politicks. And our fathers were, particularly, the objects of the persecutions and proscriptions of the times.—It is not unlikely therefore, that, although they were inflexibly steady in refusing their positive assent to any thing against their principles, they might have contracted habits of reserve, and a cautious diffidence of asserting their opinions publicly.—These habits they probably brought with them to America, and have transmitted down to us.—Or, we may possibly account for this appearance, by the great affection and veneration, Americans have always entertained for the country from whence they sprang—or by the quiet temper for which they have been remarkable, no country having been less disposed to discontent than this—or by a sense they have that it is their duty to acquiesce under the administration of government, even when in many smaller matters grievous to them, and until the essentials of the great compact are destroyed or invaded. These peculiar causes might operate upon them; but without these, we all know, that human nature itself, from indolence, modesty, humanity or fear, has always too much reluctance to a manly assertion of its rights. Hence perhaps it has happened, that nine-tenths of the species, are groaning and gasping in misery and servitude.

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But whatever the cause has been, the fact is certain, we have been excessively cautious of giving offence by complaining of grievances.—And it is as certain, that American governors, and their friends, and all the crown officers, have availed themselves of this disposition in the people.—They have prevailed on us to consent to many things, which were grossly injurious to us, and to surrender many others with voluntary tameness, to which we had the clearest right. Have we not been treated formerly, with abominable insolence, by officers of the navy?—I mean no insinuation against any gentleman now on this station, having heard no complaint of any one of them to his dishonour.—Have not some generals, from England, treated us like servants, nay, more like slaves than like Britons?—Have we not been under the most ignominious contribution, the most abject submission, the most supercilious insults of some custom-house officers? Have we not been trifled with, browbeaten, and trampled on, by former governors, in a manner which no King of England since James the Second has dared to indulge towards his subjects? Have we not raised up one family, placed in them an unlimited confidence, and been soothed, and flattered, and intimidated by their influence, into a great part of this infamous tameness and submission?—"These are serious and alarming questions, and deserve a dispassionate consideration."—

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This disposition has been the great wheel and the main spring in the American machine of court politics.—We have been told, that "the word *Rights* is an offensive expression." That "the King, his Ministry, and Parliament, will not endure to hear Americans talk of their *Rights*." That "Britain is the mother and we the children, that a filial duty and submission is due from us to her," and that "we ought to doubt our own judgment, and presume that she is right, even when she seems to us to shake the foundations of government." That "Britain is immensely rich, and great, and powerful, has fleets and armies at her command, which have been the dread and terror of the universe, and that she will force her own judgment into execution, right or wrong." But let me intreat you, Sir, to pause—Do you consider yourself as a missionary of loyalty or of

rebellion? Are you not representing your King, his Ministry and Parliament, as tyrants, imperious, unrelenting tyrants, by such reasoning as this?—Is not this representing your most gracious Sovereign, as endeavouring to destroy the foundations of his own throne?—Are you not representing every Member of Parliament as renouncing the transactions at *Runyn Mead*; [the meadow, near Windsor, where *Magna Charta* was signed,] and as repealing in effect the bill of rights, when the Lords and Commons asserted and vindicated the rights of the people and their own rights, and insisted on the King's assent to that assertion and vindication? Do you not represent them, as forgetting that the Prince of Orange was created King William by the People, on purpose that their rights might be eternal and inviolable?—Is there not something extremely fallacious, in the common place images of mother country and children colonies? Are we the children of Great Britain, any more than the cities of London, Exeter and Bath? Are we not brethren and fellow-subjects, with those in Britain, only under a somewhat different method of legislation, and a totally different method of taxation? But admitting we are children, have not children a right to complain when their parents are attempting to break their limbs, to administer poison, or to sell them to enemies for slaves? Let me intreat you to consider, will the mother be pleased, when you represent her as deaf to the cries of her children? When you compare her to the infamous miscreant, who lately stood on the gallows for starving her child? When you resemble her to Lady Macbeth in Shakespear, (I cannot think of it without horror)

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Who "had given suck, and knew
"How tender 'twas to love the babe that milk'd her."
But yet, who could
"Even while 'twas smiling in her face,
"Have pluck'd her nipple from the boneless gums,
"And dash'd the brains out."

Let us banish for ever from our minds, my countrymen, all such unworthy ideas of the King, his Ministry, and Parliament. Let us not suppose, that all are become luxurious, effeminate and unreasonable, on the other side the water, as many designing persons would insinuate. Let us presume, what is in fact true, that the spirit of liberty is as ardent as ever among the body of the nation, though a few individuals may be corrupted.—Let us take it for granted, that the same great spirit, which once gave Cæsar so warm a reception; which denounced hostilities against John, 'till *Magna Charta* was signed; which severed the head of Charles the First from his body, and drove James the Second from his kingdom; the same great spirit (MAY HEAVEN PRESERVE IT TILL THE EARTH SHALL BE NO MORE!) which first seated the great grandfather of his present most gracious Majesty on the throne of Britain, is still alive and active, and warm in England; and that the same spirit in America, instead of provoking the inhabitants of that country, will endear us to them for ever, and secure their good-will.

This spirit, however, without knowledge, would be little better than a brutal rage.—Let us tenderly and kindly cherish therefore the means of knowledge. Let us dare to read, think, speak and write.—Let every order and degree among the people rouse their attention and animate their resolution.—Let them all become attentive to the grounds and principles of government, ecclesiastical and civil.—Let us study the law of nature; search into the spirit of the British constitution; read the histories of ancient ages; contemplate the great examples of Greece and Rome; set before us the conduct of our own British ancestors, who have defended, for *us*, the inherent rights of mankind against foreign and domestic tyrants and usurpers, against arbitrary kings and cruel priests, in short against the gates of earth and hell.—Let us read and recollect, and impress upon our souls the views and ends of our own more immediate forefathers, in exchanging their native country for a dreary, inhospitable wilderness. Let us examine into the nature of that power, and the cruelty of that oppression which drove them from their homes. Recollect their amazing fortitude, their bitter sufferings! The hunger, the nakedness, the cold, which they patiently endured! The severe labours of clearing their grounds, building their houses, raising their provisions, amidst dangers from wild beasts and savage men, before they had time or money, or materials for commerce! Recollect the civil and religious principles, and hopes, and expectations, which constantly supported and carried them through all hardships, with patience and resignation! Let us recollect it was liberty! The hope of liberty for themselves and us and ours, which conquered all discouragements, dangers and trials!—In such researches as these, let us all in our several departments cheerfully engage! But especially the proper patrons and supporters of law, learning and religion.

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Let the pulpit resound with the doctrines and sentiments of religious liberty.—Let us hear the danger of thralldom to our consciences, from ignorance, extream poverty and dependance, in short from civil and political slavery.—Let us see delineated before us, the true map of man. Let us hear the dignity of his nature, and the noble rank he holds among the works of GOD! that consenting to slavery is a sacrilegious breach of trust, as offensive in the sight of GOD, as it is derogatory from our own honour, or interest or happiness; and that GOD ALMIGHTY has promulgated from heaven, liberty, peace, and good-will to man!—

Let the Bar proclaim, "the laws, the rights, the generous plan of power," delivered down from remote antiquity; inform the world of the mighty struggles, and numberless sacrifices, made by our ancestors, in the defence of freedom.—Let it be known, that British liberties are not the grants of princes or parliaments, but original rights, conditions of original contracts, co-equal with prerogative, and co-equal with government.—That many of our rights are inherent and essential, agreed on as maxims and established as preliminaries, even before a parliament existed.—Let them search for the foundation of British laws and government in the frame of

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human nature, in the constitution of the intellectual and moral world.—There let us see, that truth, liberty, justice, and benevolence, are its everlasting basis; and if these could be removed, the superstructure is overthrown of course.—

Let the colleges join their harmony, in the same delightful concert.—Let every declamation turn upon the beauty of liberty and virtue, and the deformity, turpitude and malignity of slavery and vice.—Let the public disputations become researches into the grounds and nature and ends of government, and the means of preserving the good and demolishing the evil.—Let the dialogues and all the exercises become the instruments of impressing on the tender mind, and of spreading and distributing, far and wide, the ideas of right and the sensations of freedom.

In a word, let every sluice of knowledge be opened and set a flowing. The encroachments upon liberty, in the reigns of the first James and the first Charles, by turning the general attention of learned men to government, are said to have produced the greatest number of consummate statesmen, which has ever been seen in any age, or nation. The Brooke's, Hamden's, Falkland's, Vane's, Milton's, Nedham's, Harrington's, Neville's, Sydney's, Locke's, are all said to have owed their eminence in political knowledge, to the tyrannies of those reigns. The prospect, now before us, in America, ought, in the same manner, to engage the attention of every man of learning to matters of power and of right, that we may be neither led nor driven blindfolded to irretrievable destruction.—*Nothing less than this seems to have been meditated for us, by somebody or other in Great Britain.* There seems to be a direct and formal design on foot, to enslave all America.—This however must be done by degrees.—The first step that is intended seems to be an entire subversion of the whole system of our Fathers, by the introduction of the canon and feudal law, into America.—The canon and feudal systems though greatly mutilated in England, are not yet destroyed. Like the temples and palaces, in which the great contrivers of them were once worshiped and inhabited, they exist in ruins; and much of the domineering spirit of them still remains.—The designs and labours of a certain society, to introduce the former of them into America, have been well exposed to the public by a writer of great abilities; and the further attempts to the same purpose that may be made by that society, or by the ministry or parliament, I leave to the conjectures of the thoughtful.—But it seems very manifest from the Stamp Act itself, that a design is formed to strip us in a great measure of the means of knowledge, by loading the Press, the Colleges, and even an Almanack and a News-Paper, with restraints and duties; and to introduce the inequalities and dependencies of the feudal system, by taking from the poorer sort of people all their little subsistence, and conferring it on a set of stamp officers, distributors and their deputies.—But I must proceed no farther at present.—The sequel, whenever I shall find health and leisure to pursue it, will be a "disquisition of the policy of the stamp act."—In the mean time, however, let me add, These are not the vapours of a melancholy mind, nor the effusions of envy, disappointed ambition, nor of a spirit of opposition to government: but the emanations of an heart that burns for its country's welfare. No one of any feeling, born and educated in this once happy country, can consider the numerous distresses, the gross indignities, the barbarous ignorance, the haughty usurpations, that we have reason to fear are meditating for ourselves, our children, our neighbours, in short for all our countrymen, and all their posterity, without the utmost agonies of heart, and many tears.

[Pg 100]

[A] Boston in America.

FINIS.

Transcriber's Notes

1. 18th Century English typography has been modernized for ease of reading, for example: "himself" has been changed to "himself." Spelling conventions of the times have been maintained.
2. Several misprints and punctuation errors corrected. Hover over underlined word in the text to see the corrections made.

Corrections

[Page 7](#), Added close quotes to end of quotation.
[Page 13](#), "achievements" spelled "atchievements" Left as is.
[Page 26](#), Added close quotes to end of quotation.
[Page 43](#), "necessay" changed to "necessary".
[Page 77](#), "extrardinary" changed to "extraordinary".
[Page 87](#), "achieved" spelled "atchieved" Left as is.

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