

British Opinion of the Americas

Constitutional Means

FOR Rectifying the Disputes

BETWEEN

GREAT BRITAIN

AND THE

AMERICAN COLONIES.

THE two principal causes of the discontents of the Americans, on account of taxes imposed upon them by the British legislature, have been a false persuasion of an infringement of their privileges, and an apprehension of oppression from the parent state. The first of those causes has been shewn to be wholly groundless, in a most masterly and demonstrative manner, by the author of the Review of the American Controversy; but no person having yet attempted to remove the second cause, I beg leave to propose such a constitutional system of taxation for America, for the support of the defensive force of the state, as could never be attended with oppression, and consequently ought to meet with no opposition from the Americans. Besides the two principal causes of discontent above mentioned, the colonists have urged some others, which, however, may be included under the preceding heads, such as their poverty and inability, and the great impropriety of taxes being laid on people at three thousand miles distance, by those who are unacquainted with their condition and circumstances; but all these pleas are obviated by the system I shall propose; and, indeed, when they are fully examined into and explained, are far from being so conclusive as at first sight they appear to be. By the Nature of all government, the defence of the state is the first concern; and the colonists cannot deny but that they are equally bound with the subjects in Great-Britain, to contribute their proportional share to the support of that defence. But who is it that compose the state? It is certainly, with propriety, only the families, of freeholders or landholders, who have a position that cannot be removed, and upon which they depend for their subsistence either in whole or in part. All others who earn their subsistence by the ingenuity of their mind, or the labour of their body, and who could, by the same means, procure a livelihood any where, cannot so properly be called upon to defend what they do not possess, namely, land-territory, which is usually what enemies or invaders attack, and want by conquest to secure to themselves. As these last, however, while they continue subjects of any state, enjoy the protection of its laws, they are therefore also required on some occasions to give their assistance against a foreign enemy. But the history of all ages plainly shews us, that the best regulated commonwealths have ever put the chief defence of the state upon the possessors of land; and indeed, it is against the fundamental principles of every state, that the possessors of land should be mere idlers, and distinguish themselves by no other services to their country, than by spending their rents. It would surely be no very honourable privilege for them to claim to be entitled to do nothing. Let us look into the English history, and we shall find that from

the earliest times the Saxons laid the charge of defending the state upon the landholders. That elegant and instructive historian, Lord Lyttelton, tells us, "That it was a fundamental law of the Anglo-Saxons, that all the lands of the kingdom, even those which were; held by ecclesiasticks and women, were subject to three public duties, the building and repairing of forts and castles, the building and repairing of bridges, and military service for the defence of the realm." Upon the Norman conquest the military police was somewhat altered; but still the burden of defending the state remained with the landholders. The proprietors of the lands in England, we are told by the same noble author, then held their estates by knight service or military tenures ; and this establishment remained much the same from the reign of William the Conqueror, to that of Charles II. when wards and liveries, which were part of the burdens imposed upon hereditary fiefs, were abolished with those fiefs, and the revenue of the excise substituted in their place. What a wide deviation was this from the antient, and I might have said, from the fundamental laws of the kingdom ; and how materially was the constitution altered by this new law? By the feudal system, at its first origin, the land or fief was conferred with the obligation of performing military service for the defence of the state, in proportion to the extent of the fief, and notwithstanding this burden, the grant was stiled beneficium, a kindness ; and if the beneficiary neglected or refused to perform the services required of him, he forfeited his territory, which was conferred upon another, who was willing to contribute his share to the public defence. This was formerly the military system adopted by freemen all over Europe, and of late we have seen a very prudent and politic nation again having recourse to it about the very time that we were deviating from it. In the times of our ancestors, those that possessed the land, defended the state; and by the present constitution of Sweden, those that defend the state possess the land ; for about the end of the last century the military force of that kingdom was new modelled, and particular farms were allotted to both officers and men, which forms are always connected with the commissions and military path. As the maxims of liberty are no where better understood than in our own nation, we ourselves appear quickly to have been convinced of the impropriety of exempting the possessors of land from the support of the military force of the state, and at the Revolution a land-tax was instituted; which has continued at different rates ever since. By the act for abolishing military tenures, the landed gentlemen are generally supposed only to have freed themselves of the expence of wards and liveries ; but it ought to be considered, that they were by the same act exempted from personal military service, which was on many occasions very chargeable, and joined with the former, made a fixed and perpetual burden upon their estates, which at some periods exceeded six; or eight, or ten shillings in the pound. The charge was certainly immense; for at the Conquest the landholders of England, who held by military tenures, were obliged to maintain 60000 knights or horsemen, independent of the expence of wards and liveries, which last they agreed to on condition of their military tenures being made hereditary. The force thus maintained was found in afterages to be inactive and unserviceable, unless by an extraordinary exertion of expence, and by throwing the whole kingdom into commotion ; and as the military art improved, experience shewed, that a much smaller force, well disciplined, could render more effectual service, either offensively or defenively, than that great body of undisciplined militia, which was so very burdensome to the kingdom. The noble historian, above mentioned, justly remarks, "That the military tenures wanted that force of union in which consists all the energy of monarchical states; and that they were not adapted to procure that tranquility, which is the principal benefit derived to mankind, from order and government, and without which no improvement of civil society can be advanced or supported." These were certainly the chief reasons which induced the

legislature to abolish them ; but the suppression of those tenures by no means implied, that the nation was to remain without defence, or that the proprietors of land should not contribute to that defence, or rather, should not still continue to be the chief defenders. From the most early periods of our history to the suppression of the military tenure, it appears that the nation, even in time of peace, always had a standing military defence, which was not a little burdensome to it; but instead of that burdensome militia, the legislature of late years have committed the defence of the state in part to a regular disciplined army, consisting of natives, and kept embodied from year to year. The discipline of that small body of men being more exact than that of troops who are seldom or ever embodied, they thereby become more formidable to a foreign enemy, than three times their numbers would otherwise be; and in case of an actual war, can easily communicate their discipline to new levies, who quickly become fit for actual service. This small body of regular troops affords leisure to all the rest of the kingdom to pursue their civil employments unmolested, and in perfect tranquillity, so that the time which was formerly consumed in necessary weapon shewing, may now be employed in cultivating the sciences, in advancing agriculture or improving manufactures, and increasing the stock of them. This standing army, while it consists of natives, and is commanded by officers of great land-property, has no more resemblance to a mercenary army, than the present militia of Sweden, or of the Swiss Cantons, has to the Turkish Janissaries ; and we have as little reason of apprehension of danger to our liberties from such an army as the Swiss or Swedes have from theirs. I am inclined to believe, that the profession of a soldier is therefore honourable, because it implies that the officer is a man of an independent fortune, not that he is a man of superior courage ; for many who respect the officer, are conscious that they themselves would be no way inferior to him in courage; but all the world sighing for independence, the officer is regarded as a man in that situation, and a degree of superiority is therefore attributed to him. It is certainly most agreeable to our constitution, that the possessors of the land should be the defenders of the state in which case they might be constitutional soldiers, and disciplined soldiers at the same time; but it has been rather too much the practice in this country, for the younger brothers to press into the service by threes and fours, while the eldest brothers remained upon the soil to breed, and be fox-hunters, where many of them, who cultivated nothing but hard drinking, became rude, violent, unsociable, ignorant, headstrong and capricious. But exclusive of the younger brothers of landed gentlemen, who from their family connections may safely be entrusted with the arms of the state, have we not seen many of vulgar education, and of very low professions, making a pecuniary traffic of commissions, and purchasing into the service, merely to get a good annuity for their money ? Yet these last are now complaining that their half-pay will not afford to maintain them like gentlemen, that is, as they interpret it, like idlers, when, by their birth and education, they were not entitled to live in such a manner. Were there not many other professions open for them, which if pursued with diligence and industry, would have afforded them a better subsistence than their half-pay? If therefore a livelihood was what they chiefly wanted, and chiefly fought for, they ought to have chosen some other employment than that of arms. Supposing all our military officers proprietors of land, which their office and the nature of our constitution seem to require them to be, in that case, when they quitted the service, they would have their estates to retire to, and probably would not be very clamorous for an augmentation of half-pay. A preference to a life of ease; and an attention to provide heirs for their family, have perhaps, induced many of them to resign the noble office of defending the state to others who were not so constitutionally entitled to it; yet of late we have seen some of our most antient and most illustrious families not spare themselves in hazardous

times. The present Duke of Grafton was left a minor by the death of his father in the service of his country in the West Indies. Lord Percy, almost the only branch of an illustrious house, exposed himself to the fatigues and dangers of several campaigns in Germany under Prince Ferdinand. Lord Shelburne, though he has no heirs of his own body, hazarded his life several years under the same leader. Were other gentlemen of rank and fortune to imitate those examples, the army would certainly be more respectable and more constitutional, than when commanded by Officers, whose chief subsistence is their pay. If the sword is put into the hands of men of great landed property, their being subject to military subordination, imposed by act of parliament, serves only to render them a body more compact, but can never inspire them with the desire of resigning their liberties and properties, which they held in common with their fellow-subjects, and which are a prize more considerable than any that could be offered them by a prince who means to enslave them. Since the conclusion of the late peace, the administration have thought proper to station part of the army on the continent of North-America; not for the sole purpose of defending the colonists against the Indians, but as quarters for the troops, and that they may be more conveniently assembled in case of an attack in those parts from an European invader. As the colonists on that continent form part of the British state, nothing could be more reasonable than to expect that they should contribute to the support of those troops, according to their ability ; but the Americans, falsely deeming themselves exempt from national burdens, or setting themselves up as judges of the expediency of maintaining regular forces, made a difficulty of even supplying them with salt, candles, and small beer, or what is equivalent to small-beer. They have since complained grievously of oppression, on account of the taxes lately imposed upon them by the British legislature; and as some of those taxes have been taken off, from a notion of their being burdensome, and others stand justly charged with being impolitic, and prejudicial to the sale of British manufactures, I beg leave to propose another kind of tax for the colonists, which would always lay the burden upon them in the same proportion as it was imposed in Great-Britain. The tax I would propose is, a tax upon all the lands possessed by British subjects in America, ad valorem of their rents, to be for ever rated by the imposition of the land-tax in Great-Britain; so that the same act which imposes the one, should impose the other, always in the same degree. In every state the directive influence is confined to one part, and cannot consistently with the public safety, be in different parts at the same time ; and every British subject must acknowledge, that the directive influence of the British state remains with the British legislature, who are the only proper judges of what concerns the general welfare of the whole empire. It becomes every county therefore, and every province, to submit to the burdens imposed upon them in common with their fellow subjects for the defence of the state, when it appears that those burdens are imposed; not, partially, but in a just and equal proportion. But the land-tax which I have proposed, is in its very nature unoppressive, and is equally well suited to the poorest, as to the richest province of the British empire; for, supposing the rents of the lands near the capital to be five pounds an acre, in other places five shillings, and in others five pence; it is demonstrably plain, that a tax of a sixth or a tenth upon the lowest sum, is not more burdensome than a tax of the same rate upon the highest sum. A sixth of the lowest would be a penny, while a sixth of the highest would be a pound. By the very nature of government, the legislature of Great-Britain is the sole judge of the necessity of imposing taxes for the defence of the state; and by pursuing the plan I have proposed, it is plain they could not err in judging of the ability of those who were to pay them. From him who possessed little, little would be required, while the rich would pay largely in proportion to his riches; and whatever burdens the British legislature laid upon the

colonists by this tax, they would, at the same time, lay proportionally upon the subjects in Great Britain. By the plan of taxation above proposed, it is plain that the Americans could have no reason to complain of being exposed to a disproportionate tax. But we have been told, that it is impossible they should be able to pay any taxes at all, as they have no gold and silver among them. To this I answer, that though taxes are best paid by money, yet they are not raised upon money, but upon produce and manufactures ; and that North-America, though without silver and gold, is a very rich country, is demonstrably evident from this, that it doubles its number of inhabitants every twenty-five or thirty years, which no state could do, were it in misery and want. The colonists, so far from being in that situation, must possess a luxuriant abundance to be able to double their inhabitants in so short a space; and is it at all unreasonable to require a part of this luxuriant abundance to be paid as taxes to support the general establishment of the military and naval defence of the whole empire, leaving the internal wants of each colony, so far as they relate to civil and economical purposes, to be supplied by the prudence of each particular legislature ? The want of gold and silver might be most easily supplied by a justly regulated paper currency; and it appears to be the grossest solecism in politicks that has ever been committed in regard to the colonies, to deprive them of that medium of commerce. To have a vent for industry, quickens industry ; but if the daily minute transactions of domestic commerce are to be reduced to bartering or credit, all business will quickly languish ; and as taxes are but another kind of permutation, in which a part of one's substance is granted for protection promised, this last circulation for want of a medium is totally obstructed, unless we revert to the old method of levying taxes in kind. One nation may trade very largely with another without the intervention of any money at all, as bills of exchange may be made to balance bills of exchange; but the moment any province is deprived of a medium for the daily exchanges of shopkeepers, market-people, manufacturers, victuallers, &c. it were vain to expect the payment of taxes, or of any thing else, but with the utmost difficulty. Though the colonies should have no other medium of commerce but paper, that does not at all imply that the taxes raised could not be convertible into sterling money, while there is an open and extensive trade between them and the mother-country. Swift, who, though an excellent partywriter, was but a shallow and lame politician, puzzles himself prodigiously to account for Ireland's paying annually to Great-Britain a million sterling, while her whole currency in gold and silver amounted only to about 600,000 l. After some dark and perplexed reasoning, he roundly concludes, that in a few years poor Ireland would not have a brass farthing left; and having his mind possessed with this false idea, he often amuses himself with painting the imaginary future distress of his country; whereas, the truth is that since his time, the industry, wealth, opulence, and trade of Ireland have been progressively augmenting; and there is the greatest prospect: of the continuance and increase of its prosperity. If Swift had examined the writers on trade for information in this point, he would have obtained no satisfaction from them ; for they seem never to have carried their ideas beyond a mercantile balance ; but if he had considered facts with attention, he might have perceived, that though England receives a million a year, Ireland does not pay that million in money, but in money's worth ; and he might also have seen to a demonstration; what indeed is a new doctrine, that a nation may prosper and become opulent with the balance of trade annually against her, which in truth is always the case with almost every distant province in regard to the capital. If Ireland by means of her trade can pay so large a balance to Great-Britain annually, without any encroachment upon her stock of money, so also could America, whether her money were gold and silver, or paper only. And as every one allows, that the abundance of any kind of money that has a free currency, quickens and promotes

industry as much as the abundance of sap promotes vegetation, why should we expose the industry of the colonists to a kind of artificial frost, which is prejudicial both to them and us ? If the abundance of paper currency be carried to an excess, it will first of all hurt the province where it is issued, and their own feelings will direct them, better than any general laws, where, and in what manner, to apply the remedy. To prohibit them from artificial money, from an apprehension of their taking too much of it, seems equally politic and prudent, as to prescribe to them by act of parliament the quantity of meat and drink they should take, from a suspicion left they should eat to a surfeit. The very transgression would lead to moderation; and if it plainly appeared that they grew plump and fat by feeding upon the bark of their trees, why should we condemn that kind of food, if they found it to their own liking ? In the opinion of the ingenious Sir William Petty, "It is a great error in politicks to lay too great a stress upon the matter of money, which is to the whole effects of the kingdom but as I to III ;" that is, makes but 112th part of the riches of a state. Should this 112th part then be wholly artificial, where is the mighty damage; while it serves as a means of augmenting the general flock of wealth, and of enabling the inhabitants to improve their plantations; instead of consuming their capitals by ruinous credit ? It is the true spirit of Lombard Street and 'Change-alley to resolve all power into the possession of gold and silver; but however that maxim may have predominated in times past, the best acquainted with the subjects of trade and finances seem now to be convinced, both from reason and experience, that it is industry which purchafes industry; and that a defect in national industry is by no means compensated by a large stock of gold and silver. It may therefore be presumed that the colonists will soon be eased of the intolerable grievance of the suppression of paper currency, which is directly contrary to the general practice of the most commercial state in the universe; I mean Holland ; and must distress them as much in their common dealings, as if their bridges were all broke down, and they should be denied the use of ferries. On the supposition that a free course will soon again be opened for industry on the continent of America, by allowing the inhabitants to use what medium of commerce they find most convenient, I shall lay before my readers a few particulars, from which some judgement may be formed of the wealth and opulence of the American colonists. Setting aside the two Floridas, Georgia, and Nova-Scotia, it will be generally allowed that Canada is the poorest of our continental colonies, and surely not one of them was nearly so much harassed and exhausted by the late war as Canada was before it submitted to the arms of Great-Britain. Is not the climate of Canada likewise, when compared to that of the other colonies, the most unfavourable for speedily recruiting its losses ? yet Canada, as appears by the Custom-house books, notwithstanding its late sufferings, takes, of British commodities, to the value of upwards of 300,000 l. in one year. How flourishing therefore may we not conclude it to have been before the late war, which brought so many calamities upon it ! But even then, according to the account of Charlevoix, it would not bear a comparison in point of wealth with the English colonies next adjoining to it. " In New France, or Canada, he tells us, (Vol. V. edit. 1744) no rich people are to be seen. In New England, and the other provinces on the continent of America belonging to the British empire, an universal opulence prevails, which the inhabitants seem not to know how to enjoy; and in New France, a general poverty concealed under the air of easy circumstances, which seems not at all studied or affected. The English colonist heaps up wealth, and avoids all unnecessary expence; the French colonist enjoys what he has, and often makes a parade of what he has not." New England, by the French author's account, was then vastly superior in wealth to Canada ; and of late that colony seems to have been so gorged with money, as actually to have complained of having too much of it, which I believe no state ever did before. This.

appears from the following extract from the speech of the governor of Massachusetts Bay, to the assembly of that province, upon the notification of the late peace. "It will now be necessary, he says, not only to avail yourselves of every possible improvement in agriculture, fishery, and trade, but also to revive and promote a spirit of industry, frugality and economy, all of which have of late been but too much relaxed by an unusual flow of money, much exceeding what would naturally arise from the produce and manufactures of the country." This declaration of the legislature, as it may be justly called, shews the good sense of that colony, who seem to be fully convinced that national riches flow from something else than a redundancy of money, which naturally tends to increase the number of idlers, and consequently to lessen the annual stock of industry, or, in other words, the annual income of the state. Yet as this superabundant money, which they complain of, did not make its first appearance among them for nothing, it is a proof that the balance of trade had been, during the war very largely in their favour, or that of late they had had a much more extensive sale for their produce than usual; for when it is declared; that the flow of money is more than what would naturally arise from the produce and manufactures of the country, it can hardly mean any thing else than that the common and usual consumption of the produce and manufactures of the country was greatly increased. The war then it would seem, instead of exhausting them, had considerably bettered their circumstances; and all money, whether real or nominal, upon its first circulation, has the good effect of quickening and enlarging commerce, though soon after a redundancy of it may promote idleness and a relaxation of industry. This last effect the colony seem, with great prudence, to have been watchful against; and no doubt but from this early warning, great part of the redundant money was applied to the improvement of agriculture, fishery and trade, which cannot fail of having augmented the wealth and opulence of the colony. But all the riches of the colonists are not centered in Massachusetts Bay. In some other colonies there are neither cottagers, common beggars, nor parish poor; the free inhabitants being all included under three classes, gentlemen, traders, and good livers; the latter cultivating a small estate of their own, with their own hands, and the assistance of three or four negroes, and the former, owners of a large territory, with three or four or five hundred negroes. Such possessors cannot certainly be deemed indigent; and how greatly would the burdens of the inhabitants of this island be lightened, were there no parish-poor nor common beggars to be found in Great-Britain. The produce of the planters purchases for them what others buy with gold and silver; but even several of the colonists of the rank of good livers have often been seen to pay the price of a negro with gold. As instances of Virginian luxury, I have been assured, that there are few families there without some plate; and that at some entertainments, the attendants have appeared almost as numerous as the guests. But we may form a judgement of the general wealth of the colonies from their importations, which from Great-Britain alone, by their own account, amount to full three millions per annum. If we add another million for their importations from the West-Indies, and other places, it cannot be deemed exorbitant, considering their traffic with the French sugar-islands, as well as with our own, and this will make the whole of their importations four millions per annum. But they do not import their corn, their firing, their beef and mutton, their fish, their poultry, their milk, their butter, with many other articles of daily subsistence, which in every state, and in every nation, make by far the greatest part of the general consumption. Besides, there is a great deal of household industry among them; so that a considerable part of the manufactures which they wear are made by themselves; and this, added to the expence of their subsistence, must at least be double the value of all their importations. On this very

moderate computation, the value of their whole annual consumption will amount to twelve millions sterling, which is one ninth part of the consumption of the inhabitants of Great-Britain, who pay above thirteen millions sterling taxes every year, including turnpikes and the poor's rates, two articles which the colonists are exempted from. I reckon the computation moderate, when I suppose their general consumption but three times the value of their imports; for the disproportion is much greater in every nation. In Great-Britain, the value of the importations, which is one year with another about twelve millions sterling, hardly makes a ninth part of the general consumption; and probably the imports of the colonies hardly make a fourth of their general consumption; so that it would be no over estimation to state this last as sixteen millions sterling; but we shall suppose it only to amount to twelve millions. This last sum surely is a stock upon which some taxes may be raised for the general defence of the state, independent of the particular wants of each colony; and can any tax be named which can be so proportionably rated as the land-tax? for though all pay by the same law, yet none can be required to pay beyond his ability; and the fund from whence the tax is raised, is, in the colonies that are least inhabited, just as able to bear the burden imposed, as in the most populous county of Great-Britain. But the colonists complain of the high price they pay for British manufactures and some have urged that increased price as an equivalent for all other public burdens: that is, they would be content to take land from us gratuitously, but think it a grievance to be confined to take from Great Britain the manufactures which they do not make themselves. If the British manufactures are to them somewhat dearer than to the people of Great-Britain, they ought to consider that they have land much cheaper, mostly, in climates where vegetation is twice as strong as in Great-Britain. The land taken up in America already more than exceeds the extent of both Great Britain and Ireland, and fewer than 100,000 freeholders possess all this extent among them, generally by the bounty of the crown, the greatest number having paid no pecuniary equivalent for them. The lands in Great Britain and Ireland, on the other hand, are divided among a million of freeholders, most of whom have given a very high equivalent for them; an equivalent which would have procured them land any where on the surface of the globe. Besides, most of the lands in Great-Britain and Ireland are rented, and the rent is generally supposed one third of the produce, which is a tax of 33 per cent. paid by the farmer for leave to cultivate the ground, and renders provisions 33 per cent. dearer to the inhabitants than they would otherwise be. In America, on the other hand, there are very few leases; the farmer and proprietor are generally the same person, consequently he can afford to sell his produce cheaper, than he who is obliged to give away one third of it; and this added to the fertility of the soil, and the original cheapness of the land, ought to render the expence of subsistence a mere trifle in America. The rental of the lands of Great-Britain and Ireland amounts to about 22 millions; but the rental of the same extent of lands in America is not probably one million sterling. Do not the people in Great-Britain and Ireland then lie under as many difficulties in the purchase of provisions, as the Americans in the purchase of manufactures; and which country flourishes most, or is thriving safest? The difficulty of procuring provisions in Great-Britain is so great (that is, the expence of living is so high that the island is crowded with old bachelors and old maids, from whence it happens, that in the space of thirty years, millions have been prevented from being born; and its prosperity is in a manner at a stand. The Americans on the other hand, in the same space of time, have doubled their number of inhabitants by procreation alone; which is certainly not owing to any particular fecundity in the females, but to the great easiness of procuring a subsistence, which is an inducement to the establishment of new families. If the Americans then would judge with candour, they would readily acknowledge that their

brethren on this side the Atlantic lie under much more pressing burdens than themselves; and dropping their plea of inability, would cheerfully contribute their share to the public charges of the state. Were but harmony and good correspondence firmly established between European and American Britons, it would require no great depth of penetration to foretel that in a few years the burdens of both would be diminished, that manufactures would soon be bought cheaper by the latter, and provisions be easier to be purchased by the former. Join the industry and products of both together, they will even at present be found to make a stock equal to that of any European nation whatever; and as there is such room for improvements, not only on the continent of America but also in the sugar-islands and such an ardour for making new settlements in both, what may we not expect from a few years of peace ? A true family compact among Britons would soon overbalance, and keep in check, any ambitious family compact in Europe, and at the same time would add so considerably to the wealth of the British empire in every part, that the public revenues would increase, while the share paid by individuals would be lessened. But how can the colonists of North America thrive while they have no manufactures among them ? I answer, that they have hitherto thriven so astonishingly by avoiding manufacture, and that if they would wish not to check their present prosperity they ought carefully to shun manufactures, till their great population forces them upon them. In a thin peopled country, the greatest of all profits are made by cultivating an improvable fund, where nature cooperates with the industry of man and, by her never-ceasing influence, augments his riches even while she sleeps. I beg to know if the returns of any traffic on earth ever produced so many per cent. as the returns of agriculture in a fertile soil, and favourable climate. Isaac reaped an hundred fold, which is nine thousand nine hundred per cent. or a profit equivalent to near five pounds produced from one shilling. Has such a number of fortunes been raised in Great-Britain by manufactures, or in Holland by merchandising, within these hundred years past, as have been raised in North America by plantations, improvement of lands, and new settlements ? For one person that has risen to opulence by manufactures, there are ten planters who have, from almost nothing, acquired not only independence, but lordly possessions, or what at least will become lordly possessions to their sons or grandsons ; and as there is still room for others to pursue the same means of raising their fortunes, and augmenting, at the same time, the capital fund of the colonies; would it not be the height of imprudence in them to pursue a plan of industry that was less lucrative ? It may, I think, safely be concluded, that the riches of the colonists would not increase so fast, were the inhabitants to leave off enlarging their settlements and plantations, and run eagerly upon manufactures ; that is to say, supposing the number of British subjects on the continent of North America to be two millions, those two millions, in the way they are in at present, produce a greater annual amount of industry, than if one half of them, or two thirds of them, were artisans. Sir William Petty, notwithstanding his usual accuracy, is certainly in an error, when he says, that because the daily wages of a country labourer is less than that of an artisan or sailor, therefore his industry is less valuable to the state. By the same reasoning, the industry of a negro in the West-Indies, who receives no wages, is of no value. The wages of country labourers, 'tis true, are lower than those of artificers, but the superlucration arising from their industry to the state is much greater than from any other class of workmen. Twenty servants will manage a farm of 400 l. a year, which may be reckoned of 1000 l. a year value to the state, as that counts upon the whole produce, and not upon the rent only ; therefore the industry of each of those servants is worth 50 l. tho he himself may receive but 20 l. and this industry does not, like that of the manufacturer, arise from a fund paid by other people, but is actually so much created, which to us, had not existence before. If a

manufacturer earns two shillings a day, from whence does he draw that two shillings but out of the pocket of another, who gives him a full equivalent for the piece of manufacture he receives ? so that there is only an exchange of wealth; but no augmentation: but a country labourer, who earns a shilling a day, draws that shilling, and perhaps two more for his master, out of the bosom of the earth, so that by him the national wealth is augmented three shillings a day. If agriculture, in a fruitful soil and thinly peopled country, be really found to afford a greater superlucration to state than any manufacture, it would seem a great impolicy in such a county, to neglect to extend new settlements, while they can be extended to advantage. The inhabitants of crowded cities are compelled, in a manner, to prey on each other, and notwithstanding their boasted industry and perpetual toiling, what numbers of them are involved in misery ? which is a distemper that sooner or later kills the patient, or, at least totally incapacitates him from keeping up or increasing the population of the state. The inhabitants of the country on the other hand, living in a favourable climate having no rents to pay, and free from the luxurious wants of cities, seem to be placed out of the reach of poverty. With half the exertion of industry of the manufacturer, the planter can breed up a family ten times as numerous as this, and at the same time has the sweet satisfaction of feeling himself in that independent situation, which the manufacturer hardly ever attains to. Upon his death, his family have still the same stock of subsistence as before, and his loss is soon more than supplied to the state by new births ; but upon the death of the artisan, how often is his whole family deprived of bread? in consequence of which part of it perishes, or is thrown upon the public for a maintenance. He that should lay out his money at compound interest would surely provide better for the welfare of his posterity, than he who lays out all his stock in purchasing a life annuity. But how often may manufacturers be compared to the latter? while provident planters bear a strong resemblance to the former, not only in regard to their posterity, but in regard to the state. If therefore that legislature which superintends the whole, and must in the nature of things superintend the whole, undertakes to secure the planter in the quiet possession of his estate, is it at all oppressive to require of him to allot a part of the annual bounties of nature to the support of the public defence, when no greater proportion is demanded of him, than is demanded of every other land proprietor? This appears to me the fairest of all expedients for putting an end to the present disputes about taxation betwixt Great Britain and her colonies to the contentment of both parties, and of establishing such an eternal bond of union among Britons as would be the admiration of all future ages.