A LETTER to the Right Hon. the Earl of Shelburne, one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State.

Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, Jan. 15, 1768.

My Lord,

THE Houses of Representatives of this his Majesty's Province, having had experience of your Lordship's generous sentiments of his Majesty's most loyal tho' remote subjects in America, and of your noble exertion in their behalf in the late time of their distress, beg leave to lay before your Lordship's view, the new scenes of difficulty which are again opened upon us, and to implore your *repeated* intercession.

Your Lordship is intuitively sensible that our forefathers were in an unhappy Religious state into this wilderness by the hand of power; at their own expence they crossed an ocean of three thousand miles; and purchased an inheritance for themselves and their posterity, with a view of propagating the Christian religion and enlarging the English dominion in this distant part of the Earth. Thro' the indulgent smiles of Heaven upon them, tho' not without hardship and fatigue, unexperienced, and perhaps hardly to be conceived by their children not fellow subjects in their native land; and with the constant peril of their lives, from a numerous race of men, as barbarous and cruel, and yet as warlike as any people upon the face of the earth, they increased in their numbers and enlarged their settlement --They obtained a Charter from King Charles the first, wherein his Majesty was pleased to recognize to them a liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience; a blessing which in those unhappy times was denied to them in their own country; and the rights, liberties, privileges and immunities of his natural born subjects within the realm. This Charter they enjoyed, having punctually fulfilled the conditions of it, till it was vacated, as we conceive arbitrarily, in the reign of King Charles the second. After the revolution, that grand era of British liberty, when King William and Queen Mary of glorious and blessed memory were established on your Throne, the inhabitants of this Province obtained another Charter; in which the most essential Rights and Privileges contained in the former were restored to them. Thus blessed with the liberties of Englishmen, they continued to increase and multiply, till as your Lordship knows, a dreary wilderness is become a fruitful field, and a grand source of national wealth and glory.

By the common law, and wise and salutary Acts of Parliament from the Reign of Edward the third, the children of his Majesty's natural born subjects, born passing and repassing the seas, are intitled to all the rights and privileges of his natural subjects born within the realm. From hence the conclusion appears to be indisputable, that the descendents of his Majesty's subjects in the realm, who migrated with the consent of the nation, and purchased a settlement with their own treasure and blood, without any aid from the nation; who early acknowledged their allegiance to the Crown of England; and have always approved themselves faithful subjects, and in many instances given signal proofs of their loyalty to the King, and the firm attachment and affection to their Mother Country: The conclusion is strong, that exclusive of any consideration of their Charter, they are intitled to the Rights and Privileges of the British constitution in common with their fellow subjects in Britain. And it is very remarkably the sense of the British nation that they are; so it appears by an Act of Parliament made in the 13th of his late Majesty King George the second. The preamble of that Act plainly presupposes it; and the purview of the same Act enables and directs the Superior Court of Judicature of this Province, a Court erected by the authority of the General Court, to naturalize foreigners under certain conditions; which it is presumed the wisdom of the Parliament would not have empowered any people to do, who were not *themselves* deemed natural born subjects.

The spirit of the law of nature and nations supposes that all the free subjects of any Kingdom, are justified equally to all the Rights of the Constitution; for it appears unnatural and unreasonable to assign that local or any other circumstances can justly deprive any part of the subjects of the same Prince of the enjoyment of the original rights of Government, upon which the Government itself is formed, and which sovereignty and allegiance are ascertained and limited. But your Lordship is so thoroughly acquainted with the extent of the rights of men and subjects, as to render it altogether improper to take up any more of your time on this head.

There are, my Lord, fundamental parts of the Constitution, which it is humbly presumed, neither the supreme legislative nor the supreme executive can alter. In all free States the Constitution is fixed: It is from thence that the legislative derives its authority; *therefore* it cannot change the Constitution without destroying its own foundation. If then the Constitution of Great Britain is the common right of all British subjects, it is humbly referred to your Lordship's judgment, whether the supreme legislative of the Empire may rightly keep the sources of its the exercise of power over the subjects in America, any more than those in Britain.

When mention is made of the Rights of American subjects and the interest they have in the British constitution in common with all other British subjects, your Lordship is so candid and just in your sentiments to suppose that the House have the most distant thought of an independency on Great-Britain --They are not insensible of their fealty and allegiance, of their connection with and dependence on the Mother State. These, my Lord, are the sentiments of the House and of their constituents; and they have reason to believe they are the sentiments of all the Colonies: Those who are industriously propagating in the nation a different opinion of the Colonies, are not only doing the greatest injustice to them, but an irreparable injury to the nation itself.

It is the glory of the British constitution that it hasits foundation in the law of God and Nature: It is essentially a natural Right, that a man shall quietly enjoy, and have the *sole* disposal of his own property: This Right is ingrafted into the British constitution and is familiar to the American subjects: And your Lordship will judge, whether any necessity can render it just and equitable in the nature of things, that the supreme legislative of the Empire, should impose duties, subsidies, tallages and taxes, internal or external, for the sole purpose of raising a revenue, upon subjects who are not represented in Parliament, by local circumstances, by any possibility be equally represented, and consequently, whose content cannot be had in Parliament.

The security of Right and Property is the great end of Government. Surely then such measures as tend to render Right and Property precarious, tend to destroy both Property and Government; for these must stand or fall together----Property is admitted to have an existence in the savage State of nature: And if it is necessary for the support of savage life, it by no means becomes less so in civil society. The House intreat your Lordship to consider, whither a Colonist can be conceived to have any Property which he may call his own, if it may be granted away by any other body without his own consent: And they submit to your Lordship's judgment whether this was not actually done, when the Act for granting to his Majesty certain duties on Paper, Glass and other Articles, for the sole and expreß purpose of raising a revenue in America was made. It is the judgment of Lord Cooke that the Parliament of Great-Britain cannot tax Ireland "*quia milites ad Parliamentum non mittant.*" And Sir William Jones, an eminent jurist, declared it as his opinion, to King Charles the second, that he could no more grant a commission to levy money in Jamaica, without their consent by an Assembly, than they could discharge themselves from the allegiance to the crown.---Your Lordship will be pleased to consider Ireland and Jamaica were both conquered; which cannot be said of any of the Colonies, Canada excepted; the argument therefore is stronger in favour of the Colonies.

Our ancestors, when oppressed in the unfortunate reign of James the second, found relief by the interposition of the Parliament; But it is the misfortune of the Colonies at present, that by the intervention of that power they are taxed; and they can appeal for relief from their first decision, to no power on earth.

In such an case, there is no appeal from the Parliament but to the language of reason, and it is the opinion of the greatest writers on the law of nature and nations, that if the Parliament should make any considerable change in the constitution, and the nation should be voluntarily silent upon it, this would be considered as a tacit consent of the act.

But the House beg leave to represent to your Lordship, that altho' the right of the Parliament to impose taxes on the Colonies without a representation there, were indisputable, we humbly conceive it may be made fully to appear to be unequal that they should, at least at present. Your Lordship will be pleased to remember that by the Act of Parliament, the Colonies are prohibited from importing commodities and manufactures of the growth of Europe, but from Great-Britain, except from Great-Britain. This prohibition not only occasions a much greater demand upon the mother-country for her manufactures, but gives the manufacturers there the advantage of their own price; and can it be questioned, my Lord, but the Colonies are obliged by means of this policy, to purchase the British manufactures at a much dearer rate, than the like manufactures would be purchased at, if they were allowed to go to foreign markets? It is a loss to the Colonies, and an equal gain to Great-Britain. The same reasoning holds good with respect to the many articles of their produce, which the Colonies are restrained by Act of Parliament from sending to foreign ports. This is in reality a tax, tho' an indirect one, on the Colonies; besides the duties of excise and customs laid on the manufactures in Great-Britain. We celebrated British writer on trade, computes the annual value arising from these restrictions, to be not less than fifty per cent. Your Lordship will then form an estimate of the part that is paid by the Colonies upon the importation into America, which is generally said to be at least the value of two millions sterling.

The House is not at this time complaining of this policy of the mother state; but beg your Lordship's impartial and candid consideration, whether it is not grievous to the Colonies to be additionally taxed upon the commodities of Great-Britain here; and to be solely charged with the defending and securing his Majesty's Colonies after they have chearfully borne their full proportion of maintaining his Majesty's rights, in this part of his dominions, and reducing his enemies to terms of peace.

Your Lordship will allow the House to express their fears that the Colonies have been misrepresented to his Majesty's Ministers, and the Parliament, as manifesting a disposition disaffected to his Majesty, and a dissatisfaction to the mother-kingdom. It has till a few years past, been the utmost for his Majesty's requisitions to be laid before the Representatives of his people in America. And we may venture to appeal to *your Lordship* that the People of this Province have been ready to afford their utmost aid for his Majesty's service. It would be grievous to his most faithful subjects, to be called upon for aid in any instance, which implies a mistrust or a five and chearful compliance: And the House intreat your Lordship's consideration whether our enemies at least, would not infer a want of duty and loyalty in us, when the Parliament have judged it necessary to compel us by laws *first* that purpose; as by the late Acts for raising a revenue in America, and the Act for preventing mutiny and desertion; in the latter of which the Governor and Council are directed to supply the King's troops with necessary articles, and the people are required to pay the expence. But besides, your Lordship will judge whether the execution of this Act can compart with the existence of a free legislative in America.

It is unnatural to expect, that the supreme executive power can long exist, if the supreme legislative should be depressed and destroyed. In order therefore, to support the supreme executive of his Majesty on this part of his dominions, in the person of his governors, judges and other executive officers, it seems necessary that there should be a legislative in America as perfectly free, as can consist with a subordination to the supreme legislative of the whole Empire. Since a legislative is constituted by the royal Charter of this Province: In this Charter, my Lord, the King, for himself, his heirs and successors, grants to the General-Assembly, full power and authority to make, ordain, levy proportionable and reasonable assessments, rates and taxes upon the estates and persons of the inhabitants, to be sued and disposed of, by warrant under the hand of the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Council, for the service of his Majesty, in the necessary defence and support of his government of the province, and the protection and preservation of the inhabitants, according to such Acts, as are or shall be in force within this Province. And House are humbly of opinion, that the legislative powers in the form of Colonies in America, were originally erected upon conviction, that the subjects there, could not be represented in the supreme legislative, and consequently that there was a necessity that such powers should be erected.

It is by no means, my Lord, a disposition in the house to dispute the just authority of the supreme legislative of the nation, that induces them thus to address your Lordship; but a warm sense of loyalty to their Prince, and they humbly apprehend a just concern for their natural and constitutional rights. They beg your Lordship would excuse their trespassing upon your time, and attention to the great affairs of the State: They apply to you, as a friend to mankind and of British subjects. As *Americans* they implore your Lordship's patronage, and beseech you to represent their grievances to the King our Sovereign, and employ your happy influence for their relief. Signed by the Speaker.

BOSTON, March 28.

Capt. Purbeck, from North-Carolina, on the 8th inst. about ten leagues east of Cape-Cod, came ashore a body lying on her beam ends, full of water; he judged her to be about 400 tons, flat and black waist and quarters, her stern painted blue and cabbin windows white.

We hear from Salem, that a vessel which arrived there the beginning of last week, saw off Cape Anne, a large vessel, supposed about 200 tons, mostly under water, and a dead man in her mainchains; and some fishermen belonging to Charlestown, on Wednesday last, saw two schooners towing a wreck into Cape-Anne: They were about two miles and an half from the wreck.

PHILADELPHIA, March 28.

On Saturday last at a Meeting of the Merchants and Traders of this City, at the London-Coffee-House, to consider of a Letter from the Merchants in Boston, the following Piece was read.

To the *Merchants* and *Traders* of the City of Philadelphia.

THE worthy and patriotic Writer of the Farmer's Letters has clearly demonstrated, that the Liberties of the *British* Colonies in *America*, have been most cruelly violated, by the late parliamentary Impositions on Paper, &c. *for the sole Purpose of raising a Revenue upon us without our Consent.* Every Lover of his Country must therefore rejoice in seeing those Measures taken, which are most likely to obtain Redress of our present Grievances.

The Merchants of Boston have unanimously resolved to suspend the Importation of Goods from *Great-Britain* during 12 Months, provided the Colonies of *New-York, Pennsylvania, &c.* think proper to adopt the same Measure, and the act, so justly complained of, be not repealed. The Efficacy of such a Resolution has been most happily experienced by the late Abolition of the *Stamp-Act*, and cannot if now agreed upon by us, fail of obtaining a speedy and effectual Relief from *this Grievance.* Our Prudence and Virtue had all the Success then that could be expected; nor is there a single Circumstance against us now, that did not militate against us *then.* On the other Hand, we have many Reasons to embrace our Present Severance in asserting our just Rights, that did not exhibit at that Time.

In the first Place, we have the happy Example. Secondly, We have the two most popular Men in the Kingdom, Lord *Chatham*, and Lord *Camden*, *on our Side, who have repeatedly declared, that we should not be taxed without our Consent.* Thirdly, the Efforts we lately made, evidently prove, that we cannot suffer any great Incroachment from agreeing to the above Measures; but rather, that such Determination will be universally beneficial, by inclining us to be more frugal, affording our Merchants Time to collect their Debts and enabling them to discharge those they owe to the Mother Country.

But suppose that a few Individuals might suffer a present Disadvantage by a Prosecution of this Measure; will any Man offer that as a Plea for not subscribing to a Proposal, evidently calculated to promote his Country's Good? Dare he bring Self-Interest in the opposite Scale, and by so doing, ratify the Charge of *Selfish Infamy* and *Mischief* on himself, his Posterity, and his Country?---The Opinion I have always had of my Countrymen, obliges me to think we have no such foeoid Spirits among us, but that every one will lend a willing Hand to perfect what *Boston* has begun.

If we do not exert ourselves *now*, when taxed by Parliament, under the exploded Notion of *virtual Representation*, when shall we ever ourselves? Is there any Thing in the *Name* of the *Stamp Act*, that ought to make it more reasonable to oppose *that*, than to oppose *this*? The Merchants of this City are now called upon by their vigilant Neighbours, to unite with them in a Measure which sagreatly consistent with our Safety, and particularly well adapted to our Circumstances! Let us not, therefore, by Lukewarmness, Self-Interest, or Disaffection to the public Weal, destroy the noble and necessary Zeal that is now spreading from Province to Province, and give Occasion to future Ages of lamenting our too submissive and pusillanimous Conduct.

I am clearly of Opinion, that the Fate of the late Act wholly depends on the Conduct of the Merchants in this City at this Crisis. If they enter, as I doubt not they will, into the same spirited and unanimous Resolutions they did two years past, the exemplary Behaviour of so respectful a Body, will be followed by every other Colony, which has not already embraced the same Measure.

The influence of such a general Conduct upon the Merchants, Traders and Manufacturers in *Great-Britain*, will indubitably be as great, as we can wish; and if *they* are *properly* affected by this Conduct, we know of a Certainty how the rest of the Nation will *think* and *act*.

On the other Hand, if the Merchants of this Town will not join with our Brethren of *Boston* in their Resolution, the other Colonies will grow languid in the Cause, and we may think ourselves so for the present, and every future Earthen our inexcusable *Sleepiness* may encourage the present, or any future *Grenville* to lay upon our Backs.

Captain Scott, from St. Augustine, in 17 Days, informs, that a Schooner from New-York, with some Families on board, going to settle there, was lost the Day he sailed.

Captain Mansfield, from Salem, in New-England, on the 22d Instant, off Long-Island, spoke a Schooner, Captain Talbot, from Virginia for Salem. He says, he was informed by a Cape-May Pilot, that off the Five Fathom Bank, he saw floating the Quarter Deck entire, and also Part of the Bows of a Vessel, which he thought to have been a Brig; the Quarter Deck was clean scraped, supposed to be inward bound.

NEW-YORK, April 4.

Wednesday last arrived here, the Brig Diamond, Capt. Crawford, from Cowes, (which he left the 12th of December) and last from Teneriff.

On the 31st of December, about two o'Clock in the Morning, about 150 Leagues W. from Madeira, being the Watch of Gilbert Blair, (the Mate) Daniel Denny, Gabriel Birch, and William Johnson; Denny being at the Helm, and the Mate sitting on the Deck, Birch or Johnson Johnson spilt his Scull with the Axe, and threw him overboard; when Johnson running down into the Cabin, called out to the Capt. (seemingly in a relenting Manner) that Birch had killed the Mate. Birch immediately followed with the Ax, said that it was Johnson who had killed the Mate, made several Strokes with the Ax at him, and also at the Capt. both of whom he wounded; Johnson he cut in a terrible Manner on the Head and in several other Places, declar'd that it was thought he could not live 24 Hours, but the Captain received only a light Cut on the Arm. He endeavoured to get his Sword, but perceived it had been taken away, and it was afterwards found upon the Deck. In the Scuffle, which began immediately after Johnson and Birch entered the Cabin, the Captain was soon assisted by a Gentleman Passenger who lay in the Mate's Bed, by whole Help the two Murderers were at last overpowered and secured till Morning, when the Capt. put them on board the long Boat, with a Supply of Biscuit and Water, a Compass and two Oars, after they were on board the Boat, he likewise obliged another of the Men (John Grub) to accompany them. The Captain discover'd that this Man knew of the Sword's having been taken from the Cabin and brought upon Deck, and from that and several other Circumstances, had Reason to conclude he was privy to the whole Conspiracy.

The Weather proved favourable for many Days afterwards, so that it is probable the People have been taken up by some Vessel, or got to Madeira, except Johnson, who was thought to be mortally wounded.

"There was no other Reason to suspect Denny (the Man at the Helm when the Murder was committed) to be concern'd in the Plot, but only that he was Cousin to the Captain, gave him no Assistance, nor could give a satisfactory Account of his Conduct, when he was taxed with it. He seemed continually troubled and uneasy, and in a few Days after was taken ill and died the same Day; so that there is now no Witness of the Murder. There was then only the Capt. the Passenger and a Boy to navigate the Vessel, but on the 27th January, Lat. 31, Long. 45, spoke the Ship St. Domingo, Capt. Stevenson from Liverpool, bound to Cape Fear, (all well) who supplied him with a Hand. And on the 15th spoke the Betsy, Capt. Lightburn, of this Port, 35 Leagues distant; all well.

The Sloop Live-Oak, Capt. Hammond, arrived here last Wednesday Afternoon, in 24 Days from Pensacola, but left from the Havannah, where, he says, the Spaniards were very busy in erecting many new Fortifications; that many Spanish Vessels had lately been at Pensacola, and several others daily expected; that Captain M'Minn, sailed from thence about two Months since, for London, with a Cargo of Furs and Peltry to the amount of about £ 28,000 Sterling; That Capt. James Chambers, in a Sloop of this Port, sailed from that Place for the Musquito-Shore, about 30 Days ago; That Capt. Taylor, in a Schooner, sailed for Philadelphia three Days before Capt. Hammond, and that a Brig was just arrived at Pensacola from Philadelphia.

Wednesday Night Capt. Brooks came up from the Bay of Honduras, in 37 Days, where he says, Wood was very plenty and Provisions scarce. He left about 12 Sail of Vessels in the Bay, and among them the following, viz. Capts. Joseph Lawrence, Quill, Webb and Coffin, from this Port; Law and Hague, from Philadelphia; and most of the others belonged to the Eastward.

Captain ---in a Brig, of and for this Port, sailed from the Bay three Days before Capt. Brooks, and may be hourly expected.

Between four and five o'Clock last Friday Afternoon, a Fire broke out in the Stable of the Revd. Mr. Green, on Golden-Hill, which burnt great Part of the same before it could be extinguished. It was