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TWO LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO A

BRITISH MERCHANT,

A SHORT TIME BEFORE THE EXPECTED MEETING
OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT IN 1796 ;

AND

SUGGESTING THE NECESSITY AND FACILITY OF
PROVIDING FOR THE PUBLIC EXIGENCIES,
WITHOUT ANY AUGMENTATION OF DEBT,
OR ACCUMULATION OF BURDENS.

LONDON:

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M.DCC.XCVI.

LETTER I.

*A General View of the Dangers to which we are exposed,
with some brief Remarks on the Question of Aggres-
sion.*

LETTER II.

*The Necessity of Union pointed out—and the Measure
of a General Contribution recommended.*

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

I N requesting your attention for a short time upon subjects of inexpressible importance, and intimately connected with the welfare, and indeed the existence, not only of this Country, but of all civilized Society, I pledge myself to encroach as little as possible on your time. My object is neither to deal in declamation, nor to engage in controversy. I shall not suffer an unavailing retrospect of the past to usurp the place of a more useful consideration of the present, or of a still more important attention to the future; but, refraining from all unprofitable topics, I shall inquire, with deference and candour, what are the most efficacious and practicable means of extricating ourselves from a situation, the most awful and alarming that this Country has ever experienced, and of guarding against evils, which it requires all our wisdom, fortitude and energy, to avert.

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I shall not, however, I trust, be thought to deviate from this purpose, if I introduce the important inquiry, by requesting you to reflect for a moment on the magnitude of the dangers we are called upon to provide against; dangers which threaten nothing less than the entire destruction of the long-established system of Europe, of the independence of its respective States, and consequently of that Balance of Power which our Ancestors felt it their duty to preserve at the expence of their blood and treasure—the sacrifice of all the advantages we have derived from the gradual progress of civilization, which, under the benign influence of the pure and mild spirit of Christianity, has softened the manners and refined the morals of mankind, and brought society to a much higher degree of perfection than it had ever before attained—the loss of all the protection conferred by regular Government, social Order, and established Laws; and, particularly, by that happy and inimitable frame of Government which has contributed, more than any thing else, to promote the felicity and greatness of the British People,—and the establishment of a system of unbridled licentiousness and ferocious anarchy—a system of incessant revolutions and popular outrage—of moral depravity,

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depravity, and of dissoluteness and brutality of manners—of wanton bloodshed, and worse than savage cruelty—of impiety and atheism—a system which would bring, as subordinate evils in its train, the destruction of commerce, the annihilation of credit, the extinction of arts and manufactures, and all the horrors of indigence, famine and disease—a system, in short, which would render earth a hell, and existence a curse.

The possibility of the prevalence of such a system would not be credited, had it not been exemplified before our eyes in a neighbouring Country. But having seen an example which proves that I do not exaggerate in the description, can we doubt that if France were to succeed in gaining that entire preponderance over Europe, which she is exerting all her endeavours to obtain, and towards the attainment of which she has made a most alarming progress, she would avail herself of that preponderance, by communicating her own system to other Countries? This, indeed, she would find necessary, in order to preserve the ascendancy she had acquired, as well as to relieve herself, in some degree, from the miseries of Anarchy; which,

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which, though it would certainly fix the Throne of its Empire in France, would be obliged to seek its principal subsistence by preying on the vitals of other Countries. The introduction and establishment of the above system would be greatly facilitated by the new influence, which the principles that led to such a state of things in France, would acquire. For although those principles have in their result excited universal horror and detestation, the fascinating effect of success would counteract those salutary impressions, and dispose mankind to forget the recent effect and the ruinous tendency of principles, which had been vindicated by the conquest of Europe.

These preliminary observations, which I am obliged to pass over with a rapidity little suited, indeed, to the importance of the subject, but prescribed by the nature and extent of my plan, derive, unfortunately, but too much force from the events of the War. The astonishing and gigantic successes of France cannot and ought not to fail to excite a serious alarm, lest the dangers I have presented to your view, should be fully realized: and although the occurrences of the War, as they distinctly regard Great Britain

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tain and the Continental Powers, exhibit a perfect contrast—although we have been as successful as our Allies have been unfortunate, yet we cannot depend for security upon our successes, great as they are, unless we avail ourselves of them to repress the unbounded ambition, and the destructive projects of the French Republic—projects infinitely more vast in their extent, and more ruinous in their tendency, than any ever formed by the French Monarchy. The essential interests of Great Britain are so inseparably interwoven in the general system of European Policy, that it is impossible they should long survive its destruction. I am sure it is unnecessary to employ any time in convincing you of this important truth, or in pointing out the effect it ought to produce. Should it produce its due effect, it may perhaps be the glorious lot of this Country to serve as a barrier to the overwhelming mischief; to stop the furious torrent, and to repair its ravages, by restoring the dykes and mounds of Civil Society. Perhaps it may be destined for us, even at the last extremity, to preserve from extinction the sacred fire of social life; as, sometimes, when the body seems deprived of animal life, the vital flame has only retired to some noble

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noble part, from whence it again returns, spreads over the frame, and revivifies the whole system.

It is not any part of my plan to enter into a discussion respecting the causes and origin of the War; or the much agitated question of Aggression; not that I have any wish to shrink from the controversy; but, besides that such a discussion would occupy the time which may be much more usefully employed, it would produce on my part no more than a repetition of arguments urged over and over again, both in and out of Parliament, and which have never received any other answer than evasion;—arguments by which it has been incontrovertibly proved that France was the aggressor in hostilities, in the most complete sense of the term Aggression; not only by having actually commenced the attack, but also by having furnished the cause of complaint; and that it was absolutely out of our power to delay the War, even for a moment, without suffering her to pursue and carry into effect her design of destroying the independence of Europe, of annulling the most sacred Treaties by her own arbitrary will, of subverting all established Governments, and of introducing every where her own

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own wild and destructive system of Liberty and Equality. A design which was undoubtedly meant to extend to Great Britain, as was apparent, not only from the universality of the expression used in the Decree of the 19th Nov. 1792, "*all People*," but from the direct and open communications which the Convention had with the disaffected of this Country, in one of which the President actually expressed his expectation of having soon to communicate with a National Convention of Great Britain. Because we would not submit tamely to such pretensions, such insults, and such injuries, and accept, with blind deference, such explanations as France thought proper to give, and which in fact amounted to an aggravation of the original wrong, by maintaining the obnoxious and inadmissible principle of interfering in the affairs of other Countries, we were driven into the War. Such is the result of proofs which every one has within his reach, and which it is therefore unnecessary to detail.

Indeed it has always appeared to me astonishing, that any one could be found bold enough, in the face of such facts, to ascribe the War to a design of invading the Liberties of France, when

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when it was so evidently commenced by France, with a view of subverting the Liberties and Independence of Europe. The System adopted and avowed by France, was in itself the most violent and flagrant aggression, and would have completely justified the Combined Powers in attacking France, to compel her to renounce it. And if those Powers are subject to any censure, it is for having suffered that System to proceed so far, and to gain so much ground, without endeavouring to crush it by force. They doubtless indulged the vain hope, that it would meet with sufficient internal obstacles to its progress and establishment, or, perhaps, that it would destroy itself. Events have shewn how unfounded those hopes were, and how impolitic it was to indulge them; but certain it is, that the French Revolutionary System was, *ab initio*, a just cause for alarm to all the Sovereigns of Europe, and in effect a Conspiracy against their peace and independence: and that the concert which some of them were, at length, obliged to form, was dictated by a sense of their danger, and was, in the strictest sense, a Defensive Alliance;—nay, that it would have been so if it had been directed to offensive operations. But instead of that, they refrained from

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from hostilities with a forbearance which it is impossible to justify, and at length they were themselves successively attacked by France, in pursuance of her designs, and in the expectation that War would be auxiliary to Insurrection, and enable her, with more facility, to effect her unjustifiable projects against the Rights and Independence of every State.

To such solid grounds, on which the War rests for its justification, proving it to be not only just and necessary, but absolutely unavoidable, there is but one answer attempted to be made—that we did not acknowledge the new Republic, in order to try whether we could not, by Negotiation, obtain satisfaction and redress for those wrongs which are not denied, even by the persons who advance this answer, to have had existence: for it is acknowledged by Mr. Fox, that the Decree of the 19th of November 1792, was “a just cause of complaint*,” nay, it has been admitted by BRISSOT, that *that* Decree “could not fail to excite uneasiness in Foreign Cabinets †.” I cannot help observing, that in allowing this Answer its full force,

* House of Commons, May 10, 1796.

† Letter to his Constituents.

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it falls infinitely short of proving that we were aggressors in the War. Nothing can be more unfair in reasoning, than to take it absolutely for granted, that if a specific measure had been tried, it would have produced a given effect. At best, it is but matter of conjecture, what consequences would have resulted from a recognition of the French Republic. But it seems the height of absurdity to infer, that it would have had the effect of inducing that Republic to give up its system, and to change its nature. The probable and natural effect of such a measure, would have been an encouragement to that Republic to pursue its plans. It would, besides, have been the extreme of folly and madness to make a precipitate acknowledgment of a power founded on those principles, avowing those objects, and pursuing those destructive measures which marked and characterized the first moments of the French Republic, and which were evidently derived, by strict hereditary descent, from the known disposition of the Revolutionary Parent that gave it birth; a Republic which, to say nothing of the murders and massacres by which it was ushered into the world, was professedly hostile to all the Governments of Europe, which
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declared its intention of subverting all Thrones and all social establishments, and began its career with an endeavour to carry those intentions into effect, by exciting the People of all States to revolt, and to accept of the proffered, but poisoned boon, of French Liberty. To have recognized a Republic, which was proved by such unquestionable evidence to be incompatible with the tranquillity of other Countries, with the security of Regular Government, and with the existence of Social Order, would have been an act of political suicide, and for which a Minister would have justly deserved to lose his head. The case is not to be compared with that of an insult or aggression proceeding from an established Power, which has long formed a part of the general system, and been proved by experience to be susceptible of the relations which bind States together with reciprocal advantage. But here was a new Power, of an unprecedented kind, portentous and terrific in its appearance; unjust, violent, ferocious and anti-social in its principles; bursting into being with an explosion that shook all Europe, and even Civil Society itself to its very foundations. It was surely not only just, but prescribed by the most common and obvious policy, to re-
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frain from confirming such a Power, by acknowledging its title to be valid, and its existence legitimate.

Our conduct is certainly to be judged of according to its own justice and propriety, and not by a reference to that of other States.—But it is evident, that our refusal to acknowledge the French Republic was in no respect a cause of the War, as that Republic was not acknowledged by several States, which have not been at war with France. But the matter is placed beyond all doubt, by the circumstance that our omission to make such recognition did not produce the effect to which the War is ascribed, by preventing a Negotiation between England and France respecting the matters in dispute—a Negotiation, in which we shewed a disposition to Peace, by bringing forward into discussion our various grounds of complaint, and which produced from France the following haughty, but explicit refusal of satisfaction, delivered by M. CHAUVELIN in his Letter to Lord GRENVILLE, dated Jan. 13, 1793:—
“ If the Explanations of France appear insufficient, and if we are obliged to hear a haughty language; if hostile preparations are continued in

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in the English Ports, after having exhausted every means to preserve Peace, we will declare for War:” So that the only chance we had to prevent hostilities, was to accept, as satisfactory, Explanations which amounted in effect (as I said before) to an aggravation of the original offence*; to submit without complaining, to

* The explanations given by France, of her obnoxious Decrees, though inadmissible, because they maintain the principle on which those Decrees were founded, were, nevertheless, in the true stile of French hypocrisy, accompanied by professions evidently calculated to lull our suspicion, while France might gain time for the advancement of her designs. We were not dupes, even at the moment, of this artifice. But demonstration has since been obtained, that those professions were dictated and accompanied by the grossest perfidy. We are indebted to the industry of Mr. GIFFORD, for such evidence on this subject, as would even induce an English Jury to pronounce a Verdict of Guilty. That Gentleman, in his admirable Letter to Lord LAUDERDALE, has made it appear, by incontrovertible documents, that on the *very day* (the 8th of January 1793) that M. LE BRUN, in a paper transmitted to Lord GRENVILLE, assured that Nobleman that France “ *knew how to respect other Governments, and that she did not wish to impose Laws upon any one* ;” the Executive Council, and that very M. LE BRUN, who was a Member of it, signed instructions to the National Commissioners in the Netherlands, prescribing the manner in which these Commissioners should execute the Decree of the 15th of December 1792. In reference to the 11th Article of that Decree, by which the French Nation declares, “ *that she will*

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to all the causes of provocation we had received, or might receive, from the new Republic,

will treat as Enemies, the People, who, refusing or renouncing Liberty and Equality, are desirous of preserving, recalling, or entering into an accommodation with their Prince and Privileged Casts;" the said instructions contained the following important commentary, amounting, as Mr. GIFFORD observes, to an explicit and unequivocal acknowledgment, that the object of the War, on the part of France, was the extirpation of every existing Government in Europe. "It is evident that a People so fond of their chains, so obstinately wedded to their degradation, as to refuse to be restored to all their Rights, are the accomplices not only of their own Despots, but even of all the Crowned Usurpers, who divide among themselves the dominion of the earth and of its inhabitants; that so servile a People are the declared Enemies not only of the French Republic, but also of every other Nation: that thus the distinction so justly established by us between the Governments and the People, ought not to be observed in favour of such a People; in a word, that the right of natural defence, the duty of securing the preservation of our Liberty, and the success of our arms, the universal interest of restoring to Europe a Peace, which she cannot obtain but by the annihilation of the Despots and their Satellites (Anglicè, as Mr. GIFFORD translates it, Kings and Nobles), every thing imposes on us the obligation of exercising towards such a People, all the rigours of War and the rights of Conquest; and, consequently, of depriving them of all their resources, which, if left in their hands, would sooner or later be rendered subservient to the hostile views of those Powers who now wage War against us."—Letter to Lord LAUDERDALE, p. 68-72.

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lic, and to neglect the indispensable precaution of putting ourselves in a posture of defence, while France was over-running the Netherlands, menacing Holland, and invading the Rights and Security of every Independent State.

Unwilling as I am to detain you longer on this subject, I cannot refrain from noticing the extreme absurdity they fall into, who ascribe the horrid effects, internal and external, of the French Revolutionary System, to the conduct of Foreign Powers. That System had its own original distinctive character, and it is no less absurd to impute the nature of its effects to the operation of external causes, than it would be to attribute the *specific* quality of a harvest to the influence of the seasons. The seed that is thrown into the ground determines the nature of the crop: and although that crop may be early or late, scanty or abundant, as the season is more or less favourable, yet no man in his senses would expect to reap a harvest of wheat where he had sown nothing but tares. The principles on which the French Revolution was founded, were the seeds, which, in a natural course of social vegetation, have produced that abundant crop of misery and desolation, which

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which has not only covered France, but has spread over a great part of Europe. And it may now be considered as an experimental truth, that those principles will produce similar effects wherever they are suffered to take root.

How very unfounded, then, is the assertion which we hear advanced almost every day, that the War has for its object a desire of molesting France in the exercise of the Right, essential to the Independence of every Sovereign State, of regulating its own domestic concerns. The solid ground on which the War stands, and on which it will appear to the end of time to have been, on our part, a War of Defence, is, that it has for its grand and important object, the preservation of the above sacred right, an infringement of which, is the most atrocious injury that can occur in the intercourse of States. The audacious and unwarrantable pretension of France, to deprive other Countries of that privilege, by interfering in their domestic concerns, and even of dictating to them what Government they should have, was the *true cause* of the War. That pretension was openly avowed and persisted in before we were engaged in hostilities; and it was sufficiently indicated, from

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from the very commencement of the Revolution, by the spirit of proselytism which was the characteristic feature of that event, as it affected other Countries, and which soon displayed itself in a furious desire of communicating to the whole world the new system of Liberty without Order—of Equality without Participation—of Fraternity without Regard—of Philosophy without Wisdom—of Happiness without Virtue—and of Society without Religion, Morals, and Subordination.

But I should wander from my purpose, were I to pursue any farther, a question which I should not have touched upon, but with a view of suggesting to you on what very clear and incontrovertible grounds it has been made to appear, that we were not the Aggressors in the War. That question has, indeed, been superseded by the recent refusal of France to accede to the proposal made by us, through the medium of Mr. WICKHAM, to submit all subsisting differences to a settlement by Negotiation, by referring them to the discussion of a Congress; the ancient and accustomed, as well as the most efficacious, mode of effecting a Treaty, which must arrange the multifarious
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and complicated demands and interests of a variety of Belligerent Powers. By that refusal, France would in effect have become the Aggressor, if she had not been so in the first instance; and the continuance of the War, whatever may be thought of its origin, must of course be charged to her account.

The Government of this Country, which, after the Continental War had broken out, had invariably manifested a sincere disposition to maintain a strict Neutrality, and which continued to evince that disposition even after the Republican Anarchy had reared its head, did not delay one moment, after the Ruling Powers in France had, by professing to adopt a Constitution, assumed something like a distinct form, and without considering what that form was, to declare that all obstacles to Negotiation were at an end. In conformity to that declaration, it made the first overture, in the manner above-mentioned. To that overture France not only returned a direct, haughty and arrogant refusal to comply with the conciliatory proposal, but accompanied that refusal with an intimation of the extravagant terms she intended to dictate, whenever she would

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condescend to think of Peace—Terms no less extravagant than the cession of our Conquests, and the retention of hers. But that was not the worst.—She pretended to retain the immense acquisitions she had made in a War, which she had insidiously begun with an express renunciation of all views of Conquest, upon a principle still more obnoxious and inadmissible than even the extent of her demands; namely, that the Constitution she had thought proper to frame had inseparably annexed the Territories so acquired to France. A principle, that involves the arrogant pretension of disposing by her sovereign will, by her acts of universal legislation, of the Dominions of other States. Upon the same principle, she would be entitled to dispose of the whole Territories of Europe, and to dictate Laws to the whole World. If that principle were once admitted, every country would hold its possessions at her sufferance, and we should have only to acknowledge her moderation, in not having thought proper to decree to herself the Colonies, and even the Soil and Population, of Great Britain.

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It remains to be seen, what will be the result of those farther advances towards a Negotiation, which the British Government, determined not be disheartened by the failure of its past endeavours to put an end to the miseries of War, is supposed to be about to make; advances which, considering the state of our Navy, and the importance of our Successes, are not less dignified, than they are expressive of an ardent desire to restore to mankind the invaluable blessings of Peace.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING, in my former Letter, cleared the preliminary ground, I come to the main object I have in view, and on which I trust that no difference of opinion, nor of feeling, can possibly arise. Whatever may be thought on other points, all must agree that there exists an imperious and indispensable necessity of doing every thing in our power to avert the impending danger; to escape the furious storm, which, having been so long gathering, seems ready to burst on our heads; and to defeat the designs of an implacable Enemy, bent on our destruction, which there is too much reason to fear he will effect, unless opposed by all the energy we can command, and all the spirit we can exert.

No one who contemplates our situation, can deny, that it calls for the utmost exertion of our united strength. The difficulties we have to encounter,

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encounter, and the evils we have to guard against, require us to lay aside, for the moment, all other objects, and to exert ourselves, with cordiality and unanimity, in providing for our common safety. The vessel is in a most perilous storm. Let not bickerings and divisions be suffered to impede and distract our efforts for her preservation. Let us not forget, that if she perish, we must *all* perish too. Let us, for God's sake, while the storm lasts, suspend all party differences—let us adjourn all political animosities, and join, hand and heart, in a vigorous endeavour to extricate her from the danger, and to preserve the common object of our attachment and solicitude. Of all things, let us beware of embarrassing those whose duty it is to steer the ship through so many perils and difficulties. Far from us be the base and execrable idea of taking advantage of the bustle and alarm, to contend for the possession of the Helm, or in any respect to promote our own private advantage. But in the situations in which we respectively find ourselves, let us afford all the assistance in our power, maintain the strictest order and discipline, and encourage each other to persevere in exertion, and, I will answer for it, all will do well. When the peril shall be over,

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over, we will resume our private views and party disputes. Whig and Tory—the supporters of Government, and the rivals of Administration—the bold Reformer, and the cautious enemy to Innovation, shall all meet again in the field of Controversy, and again indulge with fresh vigour and alacrity in their argumentative warfare. But the juncture admits but of one distinction—that of the friends of the Constitution, and its foes. All who will not, at such a time, suspend their projects of ambition, their political antipathies and party prejudices, must consent to be classed with the latter description. And should that destruction happen, which they would not endeavour to avert, they will be morally chargeable with the catastrophe; and their portion of the general calamity will be aggravated by the reflection of having, at least, contributed to produce it—while those who act a different part, will ensure the enviable consolation which arises from a consciousness of an adherence to duty. That choice alleviation of the bitterest adversity, every wise and honest man will determine to secure.

To some it may appear a wild and visionary speculation, to expect to see a free People united,
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on any occasion, in one sentiment, and suspending not merely the virulence, but even the distinction of Party. This is, indeed, so unusual and so improbable an event, that nothing but the unprecedented and inexpressible awfulness of the moment could warrant the supposition. But it will, I trust, be deemed pardonable at least to indulge the idea, that the People of England have sufficient virtue to unite, when their union is necessary for the preservation of the Constitution. Is it, besides, so totally irrational to suppose, that they will display the same common prudence which, instinctively actuates all bodies of men, however slightly or accidentally connected, to provide for their common safety? When a fire breaks out in the midst of a village, do not all the inhabitants, whether friends or enemies, whether they have lived in harmony or discord, combine their exertions, and reciprocate their assistance, to preserve their dwellings from destruction? That a like co-operation is called for by the circumstances of the Country, those who are most backward to co-operate, will not attempt to deny. It cannot, indeed, be expected that those (if any such there be) who wish to see the Constitution overthrown, the Monarchy subverted, and the wild
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and licentious system of French Liberty and Equality substituted in the place of the venerable and harmonious system of English Law and Liberty, should stand forth for the preservation of what they wickedly seek to destroy. The incendiaries will not be found working at the engines which play upon the flames. Such persons must be watched with unusual and unabating vigilance, that they may be prevented from seizing a favourable opportunity for the accomplishment of their mischievous designs. With such men an alliance is not to be expected, nor even desired. It would only expose us to treachery. But it is to be expected, as well as desired, that those who really wish to preserve for themselves, and to secure for posterity, the Constitution transmitted to them by their ancestors, will choose rather an alliance with those who have the same general object, whatever differences may exist between them on particular points, than with the known and determined enemies of the System which is the object of their regard and veneration.

A time of War has ever been found extremely favourable to Opposition, by affording them an opportunity of pursuing with peculiar
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advantage their constant object—the removal of Ministers, and the acquisition of power; for, at the best, War is an irksome state, and becomes more and more so in a constantly increasing ratio, so long as it lasts. Hence the People, ever more disposed to consult their feelings than their judgment, when they begin to find their patience exhausted, are ready to listen to censures, however unfounded. They are easily led to impute all the distresses they suffer to the fault of those who have the management of public affairs, and to condemn, as unjust, a War which they entered into with a full conviction of its justice and necessity. Of this, the Opposition never fail to take advantage, by raising a clamour against Ministers, by inflaming the public discontent, and by harassing and clogging the operations of Government, to whom they are sure to attribute every failure, though actually produced by obstacles interposed by themselves. Thus, that indignation which would be usefully directed against the Enemy, is excited against Administration; and the War, deprived of support in proportion as its occasion for it increases, has not a reasonable chance for success, nor have those who conduct it a fair opportunity of bringing it to a prosperous

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prosperous issue. As my object is expostulation, rather than recrimination, instead of making any application of these remarks, I shall *at present* content myself with observing, that unless the Party now existing, under the title of Opposition, are destitute of every spark of honour and patriotism—unless they would renounce the character and feelings of Englishmen, and abandon all hope of ever possessing the least credit with their Country, they will abstain from such practices, at a moment when every thing that is valuable in society depends upon the success of the War in which we are engaged. They will be far from encouraging the senseless notion, which seems unaccountably to have found its way into the heads of some men, that because a Minister happened to be at the head of affairs when the Country was driven into a War, he should be incapable of restoring to it the blessings of Peace; nor will they favour the degrading idea, that the Enemy shall at least ensure a victory over an essential part of the Constitution, the Prerogative of the Crown, by dictating to the Sovereign the choice of his Ministers, on the insolent pretence of not being willing to treat with those in whom he thinks proper to repose his confidence.

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I do not mean to insinuate, that if Mr. Fox were Minister, he would betray his trust, by sacrificing the Honour of the Country : I am convinced he would not, and that he would spurn at the idea of an inglorious Peace, though he seems to have no objection to see such a Peace concluded by a rival. But surely they are the fittest Ministers to treat for the Country, with whom the Enemy would most dislike to negotiate.

I therefore do not hesitate to say, that the present moment should furnish the singular instance of an exception to the general rule, that an Opposition necessarily grows out of a free Constitution ; and that the Public are entitled not only to expect, but to demand such an exception, and to consign to execration all who refuse at such a time to give their support to Government. In saying thus much, I do not mean to contend for a blind and undiscerning confidence. All who are in public stations should ever be regarded with an eye of watchfulness, and *that* in proportion to the importance of the concerns they have to transact. If Administration, either in the aggregate, or in any particular department, were to be chargeable

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able with remissness or inactivity, it would be incumbent upon every one, according to his opportunities, to hold up such unpardonable crimes to notice and indignation. In that sense, and for such purposes, I would myself be an active and vigilant Member of Opposition. But, in the exercise of incessant vigilance, I should also feel it to be my duty to afford that liberal confidence which is, *à priori*, due to those who are in situations of trust, until they can be proved to have forfeited their claim to confidence ; without which it would be impossible for them beneficially to discharge their trust. A confidence which is peculiarly called for now that the duties of Government are rendered, by extraordinary circumstances, more arduous than they were ever known to be in the History of this Country. The compatibility of such vigilance and such confidence is too evident to need any illustration ; nor can it be necessary to distinguish the proper union of both (which forms, in my mind, the perfection of a public character unconnected with Administration), from a systematic and indiscriminate Opposition. The Public can never be at a loss to judge between those who afford and those who refuse a manly, liberal, and patriotic support to Government,

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It is not, however, by a *listless* unanimity that we shall discharge the duties of the moment. We are called upon by the solemn occasion, for that *active* and *zealous* co-operation which is best calculated to give effect to our strength and resources. Every situation, at all arduous, has its own peculiar difficulties, and requires, of course, a *judicious* application of the means in our power to encounter them. Nor does it require any degree of sagacity to discover, in what manner we should meet the embarrassment we have to contend with. The peculiar nature of the War—the objects it has in view—the manner in which it is carried on by the Enemy, and every circumstance of his and of our own situation—all these things concur, not only in suggesting the necessity of such extraordinary exertions, as were never before called for, and, in all probability, will never be called for again, but in pointing out the precise nature of those exertions. In particular, the specific measure suited to the occasion must occur to every man who reflects for a moment. It forces itself upon the mind with instant and irresistible evidence of its aptness, as well as of its necessity. It brings at the same time the most consolatory conviction

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tion of its probable and almost certain efficacy. No one who feels any anxiety for the prosperity of his Country, for the success of its arms, for the preservation of its Constitution, and for the establishment of an honourable, secure, and permanent Peace, but must, the moment such a measure is suggested, breathe an ardent wish that it should be instantly tried. There remains, then, but one question—is it practicable—is it in our power? Yes, thank God!—we can command it. It is perfectly within our reach. It is not more desirable than easy of accomplishment. No great resolution is necessary to put it in practice. It would, in fact, be accompanied with but a trifling sacrifice, although it would secure interests beyond appreciation.

You have doubtless long since anticipated me, in the idea of a General and Voluntary Contribution of a part of our Property for the preservation—I was going to say—of the rest—but in fact—for the preservation of our National Independence—of our own Constitutional Freedom—of our Domestic Happiness—of our Commercial Prosperity—of every thing dear to us as Men or as Britons—of every thing that was
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prized by our ancestors, that is valued by ourselves, and that is worth transmitting to posterity.

Such a measure is plainly indicated by the nature of the conflict in which we are engaged. Whatever opinions may be formed on other points, no one can deny that the War is *now*, at least, a War for the security of Property. It is, indeed, undoubtedly true, that the security of the right of Property involves in it that of all other rights; and that Property, being the basis of Society, cannot be brought into danger, without the rights of persons of every description being exposed to destruction. It suffices, however, for the present purpose, to consider the War, as it undoubtedly is, a War for the preservation of Property, in an *absolute* sense. And in that view it is alike the interest and the duty of Proprietors to contribute a part of what Providence has blessed them with, to secure the rest, and thereby to repel a danger no less alarming, if properly understood, to the lowest class of Society than to the highest.

Should it be said that Proprietors have contributed largely to the support of the War—that

that Loan after Loan has been raised to carry it on—that Property has been taxed until it is become very difficult, if not impossible, to find new sources of taxation.—I admit all this to be true, and recognize in the cheerfulness with which the Country has supported its aggravated burthens, its firm conviction of the justice of the cause and the importance of the objects for which it was contending. But I beg you to recollect, that these burthens have not been uselessly imposed—that by the aid of those Loans and those Taxes, we have maintained, and, as far as we were separately concerned, with unparalleled success, the most arduous conflict in which this Country was ever engaged—that we have gained the inestimable advantage, an advantage of which no former War could boast—the complete humiliation, and almost the total annihilation of the Navy of France—that we have deprived the Enemy of his trade and fisheries, appropriated to ourselves almost the whole of his Colonies in every part of the world, and made immense acquisitions of a like nature from the Dutch, since that people, degenerated from those ancestors who acquired and maintained their independence, have suffered themselves to become tributary
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to France; that, in short, we have reduced France to such a state of exhausture, Treaty of Peace with the Republic is no longer that formidable thing which it would have been at any previous period of the War; when it would have served only to confirm and extend her principles, and to have given her fresh hopes of being able to effectuate her designs against Europe. But now, whenever she shall be brought to such terms as FRANCE, whether Monarchy or Republic, must, on principles of ancient, general, and indispensable policy, be made to submit to, instead of being terrible to other Countries, she will exhibit, and for a long time, a wretched spectacle of misery and weakness, and will, were it not for a recollection of her crimes, be an object of pity rather than of fear.

It should also be remembered, that although we have not had it in our power to enable our Allies to boast of similar success, nor indeed to preserve them from very great disasters, (which, however, have been chiefly owing to their want of spirit, union, and in perhaps some instances, of fidelity) yet the aid we have afforded them, the distress which our Naval Exploits

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Exploits have produced in France, are in all probability the cause that they are not completely overwhelmed, that the whole Continent of Europe is not entirely over-run, and that some of them yet make a noble stand, and by a most useful diversion, occupy those immense Armies, which would otherwise be seeking for opportunities to elude our vigilance, and to pour into this Country; while on the other hand, the efforts which we have encouraged, and, in a great degree, enabled them to make, have reciprocally operated in facilitating the glorious successes to which we are indebted for our present safety and for our future hopes. Nor should it be forgotten, that while we have carried on the War by the aid of our Revenues, the French have been exhausting their substance—that by Loans *voluntarily* advanced, and by Taxes *legally* imposed and chearfully borne, we have been contending with the entire capital and the whole physical force of France, both of which have been brought into action by a system of murder, robbery, requisition, and terror, of which, if it had not been actually realized, it would have been impossible to have formed an idea, and which could never have been carried into practice, but under the imposing

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imposing name of Liberty. We surely have hitherto no reason to complain of the comparative result of a struggle that has exhausted the Capital of the Enemy, destroyed his Commerce and his Navy, annihilated his Credit, and dried up his every source of supply; while our Navy is more formidable than it was ever known to be in any period of our History, and our Commerce and Revenues are flourishing beyond all example in time of War, and above any average standard of prosperity in time of Peace.

This advantageous comparison, though a rational ground of satisfaction and hope, should not, however, be permitted to inspire us with a rash confidence; nor should it, by blinding our eyes to the desperation of the Enemy, careless of his own ruin, if he can, even by his last convulsive agony, involve us in a similar fate, preclude us from adapting our exertions to a struggle with such a foe. Reduced to a state of compleat bankruptcy, and having found every attempt to restore their Finances totally abortive, the French, ever formidable from their numbers and situation, are become an Armed Nation, and abandoning all other objects, subsist only by Predatory War. Animated by a prospect

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prospect of plunder, they fight with a desperation which is ever inspired by the idea of having much to gain and nothing to lose. They are the Freebooters of Europe, and maintain themselves only by depredation. Those who admire the brilliancy of their exploits, cannot refuse a like admiration to the Eastern hordes which fall upon the travelling Caravan, and stimulated by the prospect of booty, attack and defeat numbers greatly superior to their own. France is such a horde, only upon a larger scale—a Nation, instead of a tribe of robbers; and with this difference in her favour, that she has hitherto been enabled by her immense population, to pour into the field Armies much more numerous than those they have had to contend with. This brutalized People having divested themselves of all sense of Religion, Virtue, Honour and Humanity; having familiarized themselves to crimes and to blood; having acquired an indifference to life, which their experience of its little value is calculated to produce, and a contempt for death, which accords with their new doctrine, that it is but an eternal sleep; their character has acquired a ferocity which is infinitely more to be dreaded than that of Savages, because it is united to military discipline,

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scipline, and to all the arts and inventions of civilization. By such means do they extend their ravages from State to State, and endeavour by plunder, contribution and terror, to make one part of Europe subservient to the subjugation of the rest.

Against such an Enemy, the supply afforded by Loans and Taxes cannot long be expected to maintain an equal contest. A more effectual mode should be adopted of bringing the strength of the Country to bear. We cannot, indeed, nor if we could, would policy allow us to follow his example, by making all our force and all our property effective, by confiscation, requisition and terror. Such means cannot be resorted to by a regular Government, which having a permanent interest in a Country, is compelled by the strongest motive to consult its welfare; while those men, who by violence and crime, have obtained a momentary possession of the reins of Power, care not what sacrifices they require, what injuries they inflict, provided they can prolong, for a while, their ill-gotten and precarious Authority, and retard that justice which they fear will sooner or later overtake them.

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We are not, however, called upon to have recourse to such means, nor could we enforce them even for the purpose of defence.—France herself could not have employed them, if she had possessed one spark, or even one correct notion of that Liberty, about which she raises such an incessant outcry—or rather, if she had not been subjected to the most violent, cruel, and rapacious despotism that ever established its dominion upon earth. We have no occasion for any means but such as are compatible with honour and justice;—such as are consistent with our freedom, as they are essential to our security—such as would become a great and a free People, determined to display themselves in an extraordinary manner, to preserve themselves from an extraordinary danger—and such as present the most fair and rational prospect of success. If those States which now exhibit the disgraceful spectacle of receiving the Law from France, had, even in their exposed situation, and with their inferiority of resources, resorted to such means, they would still have enjoyed their national independence and their political consequence; they would at this moment have been in a state of security, and in the full enjoyment of that property, with which they are
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now obliged to feed the rapacity of their insatiable conquerors.

But without the aid of those awful and instructive examples, with which Europe abounds, of the fatal effects of supineness and pusillanimity, and of a want of union and energy in the defence of every thing valuable in society, a sense of our own danger is surely sufficient to excite us to every possible exertion; while a view of our own situation, compared with that of the Enemy, encourages to hope for the speedy and complete success of our endeavours, and urges us, in the strongest manner, to the choice of that expedient which it is my principal object to recommend.

Different as the present War is from all former Wars, still, in some sense, the old maxim applies, and the longest purse has decidedly the advantage. The question is still a question of Finance—not, indeed, whether the Finances of France or those of England shall triumph—The former are long since exhausted. Every prediction that has been advanced of the ruinous effects of those monstrous efforts, which have been made at the expence of all the wealth and resources

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resources of the Country, has been completely verified; and France, incapable of raising any internal supplies, having nothing left at home even to pillage, must have yielded to the force opposed to her, but for the aid of that external rapine and plunder, by which she has not only maintained her Armies, but also drawn considerable (though, as appears by the late declaration of the Directory, very inadequate) supplies for domestic purposes. The only question therefore is, whether the Finances of Great Britain, or the spoils of these National Bucca-neers, shall hold out longest? But as the booty of robbers is always dissipated as soon as it is gotten; as it is impossible to derive more than a momentary relief from such means, and still more so to replenish in that way the resources of an exhausted Country, we certainly have no occasion to contemplate that question with alarm; particularly if we can, as I undertake to demonstrate, sustain and invigorate our own resources by those very exertions that are most suited to the emergency. And as, on the other hand, France has entirely drained the countries conquered by her, and on the most exorbitant terms, prescribed by her own necessities, compelled most of the others with which she

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was at War, to purchase Peace, she has no chance left, while the EMPEROR and the KING of NAPLES are able to resist her farther progress, but to demand fresh sums for a confirmation of her pacific bargains—a demand with which, as she has taken care to make those States pay a price fully adequate to their ability, they could not comply, and which, besides, it would be dangerous for her to advance. The very Treaties, therefore, on which France principally relied to effect her purpose, will probably prove obstacles to her final success. Not that she would hesitate to break through her engagements, or to violate any rights which she herself has recognized; as has been fully proved by her conduct to the GRAND DUKE of TUSCANY. If any proof had been wanting of her being totally destitute of faith and principle, it would have been supplied by her invasion of the Territory of that Prince, and her violation of his Neutrality. But by covering her conduct in that instance, under the pretext, equally false and insolent, of reprisals on the English, and by confining her depredations to *their* property remaining at Leghorn, she evinced a fear of rousing him, and with him the other Powers who had purchased their Peace,

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to a resistance prompted by desperation. Acting in this respect upon the principle, that though intimidation may produce a tacit compromise with injuries to a certain extent, it cannot enforce submission to those extreme injuries, which leave nothing either to enjoyment or to hope. If therefore the EMPEROR and the KING of NAPLES continue to display that fortitude, with which they seem determined to defend their Territories, it is difficult to discover by what means France can keep up that force with which she endeavours to subjugate those Princes, or at least to reduce them to that state, which would leave them no other resource than to purchase, in their turn, a dear and ignominious Peace, and thereby enable her to make a last effort for the destruction of this Country—without which all her successes will be of no avail. But at all events, supposing the worst that is likely to happen, the moment her sources of plunder shall be dried up, provided that moment happen, as, I hope, it undoubtedly will—before our resources and our spirit shall give way, she will instantly sink into that state of languor and debility, which would be at once the natural consequence, and the just punishment of her violent efforts, and her criminal

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excesses, and from which it would be impossible for her to recover, *should she ever recover*, but by the slow operation of ages*.

While this statement, which I challenge all the world to controvert, of the resources of the Enemy, and of our *relative* situation, is calculated to excite us at once to hope and exertion, a view of our *distinct* situation, and of the means by which France chiefly endeavours, and on which she principally depends, to effect our destruction, cannot fail to recommend a general and Voluntary Contribution by Proprietors, as

* Should it be said, that I do not in this account give credit to France for the advantages she may derive from her new Alliance, *Offensive and Defensive*, with Spain, I answer, that I consider that Alliance as much more likely to injure Spain than to benefit France, or to do us any material prejudice. *The surviving Branch of the House of Bourbon* cannot be a willing, nor a serviceable Ally to the *French Republic*. But she may contribute to secure us that indemnity which France in her reduced state is scarcely able to give us, for her wanton continuation of so expensive a War. As far as Spain is separately concerned, it is impossible to consider this monstrous and unnatural Alliance, in any other light than that of an Animate Body, in a situation which requires the constant use of antiputrescents, consenting to be tied to a body in a state of complete putrefaction.

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precisely that measure which is the best adapted to defeat her purpose. It is plain, that amidst all the rage and fury displayed by her in this most desperate War, her wrath and vengeance are principally directed against this Country. All the rays of her hatred and indignation are collected, as in a focus, to consume, if possible, the much envied, much detested fabric of British Glory and Prosperity. *She* has nothing left to sacrifice, nothing new to suffer, that can befall a Nation; but to accomplish our ruin, she would cheerfully make any sacrifice, and endure every suffering. The ancient spirit of rivalry which has long distinguished the two Countries, and which, by the natural operation of an emulative principle, has contributed much to their mutual greatness, is now, on her part, converted into a settled, implacable and inveterate malice; a malice, that in reality extends itself to whatever is *English*. In vain would those degenerate Sons of Britain (for some such, incredible as it may seem, I fear there are) who have suppressed that Antigallian spirit, which is innate in the breasts of all Englishmen; and that at a time when the People against whom it has for centuries been directed, have rendered themselves deserving of

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of universal execration, by a sacrifice of all principle, a renunciation of all honour, virtue, and religion, and an uninterrupted series of crimes and atrocities, the very recital of which makes human nature to recoil;—in vain would those persons place any dependence on French gratitude, for having undertaken to defend the horrid cause. They are ENGLISHMEN, and that would suffice to involve them in one indiscriminate destruction, if ever the dreadful moment should arrive, when they should have to depend only on the forbearance of this bitter and perfidious Enemy. They might even be exposed to particular resentment in consequence of the failure of those assurances of a prevailing disposition to revolt, by which they encouraged France to declare against us that War, which has involved her in so many calamities—that War which, when it was much less unfortunate than it has since proved, was made a substantive charge on the Trial of BRISOT, who suffered himself to listen too eagerly to those assurances. The *imposition* of the deceiver would scarcely meet with more favour than the *credulity* of the deceived.

Although, God knows, the people of this Country have never, during the whole Revolution,

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lution, wished France any greater misfortune than that of being prevented from destroying the independence and security of Europe, it cannot be denied, that, judging upon her newly assumed principles, we have done much to excite her resentment. We have been the chief obstacle in the way of her favourite projects. We have not only defeated her beneficent intentions in favour of ourselves, by refusing that “ENTIRE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REPUBLIC, destined us by CONDORCET *; but we have furnished the principal impediment to the execution of that still grander design, avowed by BRISOT, “the UNIVERSAL REVOLUTION OF MANKIND †.” We have had a principal share in preserving Europe from that “GENERAL EXPLOSION,” of which ST. JUST informs us the moment was actually appointed ‡, and from being ENTIRELY “DISORGANIZED AND PURGED OF ITS TYRANTS,” which CAMILLE DES MOULINS declares to have been the object of the Convention §. In saving ourselves,

* Chronicle of Paris, Nov. 23, 1792, in a Paper signed CONDORCET.

† Address to his Constituents.

‡ Report to the Committee of Public Safety, May 1794.

§ History of the Brissotines.

Europe,

Europe, and the World, from such disasters, we have also by our valour, done France more injury than all the rest of the Combined Powers together. In that War which she provoked in order to effect the above purposes, her Arms, which have elsewhere been almost uniformly triumphant, have experienced from us nothing but disgrace and defeat. We alone have checked her career, and by the irreparable mischiefs that we have heaped upon her, we have more than counterbalanced the whole value of her successes against our Allies. She is also aware, that while we continue to oppose those views of ambition and aggrandizement, which have succeeded to her more insidious, but not less destructive schemes of Universal Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, the former have no chance of being realized; and that although she should be able to triumph over every other Power, yet, while she has to contend with the Strength, Spirit, and Resources of Great Britain, she will never be secure from the danger of being compelled to submit to such terms as may be consistent with the general security of Europe—terms which would be fatal to the system she pursues in respect of other Countries, and, in all probability, to that which she has established in her own.

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Thus every consideration of the past, the present, and the future, conspires to inflame the animosity of France (that is, of the Faction that conducts, and of the Factions that aspire to conduct her affairs), against *us*. Resentment, revenge, envy, and fear, all contribute to make our destruction the grand object of her wishes and of her efforts. Finding this object unattainable by the manly exertions of open force, she pursues it by base and indirect means; and not daring to face us on our native element, she seeks to undermine our credit and resources. She will, indeed, in all probability attempt an Invasion of our Island; an attempt which she will be induced to make, rather by a view to those effects which the alarm of such an event may possibly produce, or by the necessity of disincumbering herself of some of those numerous Armies which a Continental Peace may leave in a state of dangerous inactivity, than by any real expectation of its ultimate success. All experiments, however desperate, are in her situation worth the trial, and no means should, on our part, be neglected to guard against them; but should the one in question be resorted to, I cannot suffer myself to doubt that every individual who drew
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his natal breath in this Country, will perceive in his breast some latent spark of patriotism, some (at least), involuntary impulse, to remind him that he is an ENGLISHMAN.

Conscious, however, that their best, and indeed, only chance of doing us an essential injury, is to wound us in our vital part, our Credit, our Enemies employ all their arts and stratagems to divert or obstruct those supplies on which we depend, in a great measure, for a punctual adherence to our extensive engagements. Having obtained violent possession of a great part of Europe, and established a dangerous ascendancy over much of the remainder, they endeavour to avail themselves of the force they possess, and of the terror they inspire, to cut off some of the fairest branches of our Commerce. In pursuit of this object they do not scruple to violate the Laws of Nations, the Rights of Neutral States, nor even their own express engagements. Thus did they, in defiance of their Treaty with the GRAND DUKE of TUSCANY, the first of the Combined Powers who sought their Alliance and Amity, invade his Dominions, without pretending a cause of complaint against him, seize his principal Port,

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garrison it with French Troops, insolently command him to punish the Governor, who had done no more than his duty, and with unparalleled audacity, prohibit him to trade with us, while by the Laws of Nations, and according to the Rights of Neutrality, he was entitled to the full benefit of free Commerce with all the World. In like manner they are endeavouring to shut against us all the Italian Ports, and to deprive us of our trade with Portugal. But not confining themselves to single acts of such flagrant and atrocious injustice, they have at length attacked the aggregate rights of all Neutral Nations, by announcing their determination to seize all vessels bound to or from this Country.

I mention these flagitious attempts merely to point out the means on which these determined Enemies place their chief reliance, in order to attain their grand object, the ruin of this Country, and not from the least apprehension that they will be able to effect their purpose. Unless, indeed, they can deprive us of our decided Naval Superiority, that bulwark not only of our Coasts but of our Commerce—unless they can rob us of our Honour and

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Reputation, and of our other numberless advantages as a Commercial People—unless they can controul the Laws of Nature, or prevent Trade from maintaining its level and its connection with the sources from whence it flows, I am persuaded their malice will be as impotent as it is implacable and diabolical. But as nothing should be omitted on our part to frustrate their projects, so we should shape our defensive efforts in such a manner as may be best suited to the nature of the assault, and direct them so as best to cover the part that is principally attacked. For that purpose, our main object should be to maintain the credit of the Country in the most flourishing state possible. That credit is too well founded to be in any danger of failing. The only point of view in which this subject can excite the least alarm is, when we contemplate it in relation to the increasing magnitude of our National Debt; which, though perfectly within the compass of our ability to support, cannot fail in time of War, when it is in a progressive state of increase, to be a matter of very serious import. Effectual provision has been made for the gradual reduction of this Debt to more practicable bounds; and *that* not only by the system adopted

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adopted some years since, appropriating for that purpose an Annual Million, with its accumulations (a system which, in experience, has more than answered the most sanguine expectations), but also by the wise auxiliary measure, first introduced into practice in the present War, of securing out of the Taxes imposed to pay the interest of every fresh Loan, the sum of one per cent. towards the liquidation of the Capital. But notwithstanding the consolatory views which these salutary provisions will afford us, when once we shall have effected our main object of securing Peace on stable and honourable grounds, it is impossible, without uneasiness, to look forward to any farther additions to the extent of our Debt.

Every fresh Loan not only postpones the return of the happy season of decreasing burdens, but also relaxes the springs of our Credit, by exciting an apprehension, whether founded or not, of the approach of that period when we may be unable to sustain our actual incumbrances. Every new tax tends to create discontent and impatience, under those exertions which are indispensable to our security. Every accumulation of debt, by increasing the mass, diminishes

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diminishes the value of the security, and of course lowers the price of funded property. The consequence is, that every fresh negotiation with the money-holder is attended with increasing difficulty, and the terms upon which each additional supply is obtained, are more and more unfavourable for the Public: and although we have hitherto, during the present War, been able to procure that supply upon conditions remarkably advantageous, the recent depreciation of the Funds (produced chiefly by the difficulty of obtaining even a glimpse of returning tranquillity), must render all farther pecuniary transactions, for the relief of our exigencies, extremely arduous and embarrassing.

But while the State is thus struggling with difficulties, that tend greatly to impede the vigour and effect of its exertions, the Country is wealthy and prosperous almost beyond example. Every wind that blows wafts an influx of riches into our ports. The seas are covered with our ships, laden with the produce of every clime of which our extensive Colonies, and the confidence that is exclusively due to our commercial character, secures us the consignment—and with the productions of our own art and industry,

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try, which their superior and unrivalled excellence induce the whole world to covet. These Fleets ride secure under the protection of a Navy which is superior to any that this Country could ever boast of; and which, having completely triumphed over the maritime force of the Enemy, has now little occupation but to protect our floating wealth. Every hand that can labour, may find full employment in contributing at once to private and public prosperity; while Providence has kindly relieved our apprehensions of famine, by graciously bestowing on us a harvest profusely abundant.

In like manner private wealth corresponds with that of the public, and, while both have disappeared together in France, individuals continue to enjoy as much as ever, in this favoured Isle, all possible security for their property, and unbounded opportunities for its accumulation. If, with such advantages in our power, and such resources at our command, we should fail, it would be our own fault. Like the Miser, who does not know the true use of his possessions, we should starve in the midst of plenty—Nothing is wanting but a reasonable and judicious application of the wealth of the Country,

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Country, in relief of the exigences of the State, at a time when every thing we hold dear is at stake—when the contest is not for a Colony, or a branch of Trade, but for our all—when the object is to defend our Constitution, our Laws, our Religion, our Property, our Independence, nay, our very existence as a Nation—and to escape, not merely subjection to a Foreign Power, but all the miseries and horrors of that state of anarchy in which our Enemies would rejoice to involve us.—At such a time, the resources of the Country should be applied for the general preservation; not in the debilitating and impoverishing mode of funding, but upon the manly and provident principle of meeting the exigencies of the Public Service by adequate supplies, furnished out of that immense stock, the *Capital* of the National Wealth. It is deserving of such a cause and such a moment, to impel the Proprietors of the Country to resolve, that they will not suffer the State to be incumbered with more Loans, nor the People to be burthened with fresh Taxes, but that *they* will meet the emergency, and provide, *by a voluntary and general Contribution*, for the protection and security of the invaluable interests which *all* have at stake, and which are in danger of being lost for ever.

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The advantages of such a measure would be great beyond expression: it would instantaneously infuse new life and vigour into Public Credit, and thus deprive our Enemies of their chief hope and their only chance to effect our ruin. For it is *there* alone that we have any thing to fear. It is *there* alone that we are vulnerable. The National Debt restrained from any farther increase, would instantly experience a progressive diminution by the aid of those wise provisions that have been made for that purpose; and thus, in the midst of a War, we should be daily gaining ground on our incumbrances. Confidence would instantly revive, and our strength, released as it were from the restraints which clog and impede its exertion, and relieved from the disheartening apprehension of a failure of means, would display itself with all its native energy. Terror and dismay would seize the Foe, upon finding that, when he thought us nearly exhausted, we were ready, with renovated vigour, to repel his attacks.—Our Allies, our well-wishers, and all the friends of social order throughout the world, would take courage, and would look with admiration upon this Island as the impregnable fortress of Civil Society. Thus should we avail ourselves

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of all the advantages of our relative situation, by opposing our genuine strength, our unimpaired wealth, our undiminished resources, to an Enemy whose wealth is totally exhausted, whose efforts are those of desperation (not less terrible indeed for being so), whose only resource is robbery and spoliation, and whose only hope is, that he shall be able, by such means, which can last but for the moment, to overpower us while we are struggling with the difficulties which the magnitude of our Debt, and the fear of adding to its unwieldy bulk, unavoidably produce. But let us change our system—let us say to our Debt, thus far—but no farther—let us determine that the Supplies necessary for our defence and security, shall flow in direct and genuine streams, from the sources of our strength and prosperity, and not through the circuitous and wasteful channel of borrowing. We shall then feel, and make our Enemies feel too, our real superiority;—the superiority of wealth over indigence, of virtue over vice, of honour over perfidy, of unsullied reputation over indelible infamy; the superiority, in short, which cannot but result from a system of public and private faith, of reverence for Religion—and of respect to Property—to Laws—to

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to Treaties—to the rights of Individuals and of States—and to the real and permanent interests of Society; when put in competition with a system, founded upon a contempt for all such considerations, and upon a violation of every principle that is essential both to general and individual prosperity, and to the peace and harmony of mankind.

Should it be objected, that at a time like the present, of great *pecuniary* distress, the measure of a General Contribution, at all adequate to the public exigencies, would be attended with insuperable difficulties, I answer, that the very scarcity of Money of which we complain, operates strongly in recommendation of such a measure, in preference to that of a Loan. It is impossible to deny, or even to doubt for a moment, that the wealth of this Country is fully competent to satisfy all the demands of the Public Service, and *that* without bearing hard upon individuals. Nay, it is clear that it must satisfy those demands, or we must give up the cause in despair, and submit ourselves to the mercy of those whose tenderest mercies are cruelty in the extreme. The only question, then, respects the mode of obtaining the necessary

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cessary Supply—whether by a Public Loan, of which the Capital is to be secured by being incorporated with the National Debt, and the Interest by an appropriation of fresh Taxes, or by a Public Contribution to be furnished by the general mass of Proprietors? Supposing, in each case, the sum supplied to be the same, it must, in some shape or other, be raised from these Proprietors; and it will hardly be said, that *that* sum can be more easily advanced by *a few*, as in the case of a Loan, than by the many, as in that of General Contribution.—

I am now merely adverting to the difficulty of finding the Money, without any reference to the motives of making the advance, and therefore I beg you to leave out of the consideration, at least for the moment, the inducement of gain, which may urge the Capitalists to provide for that advance by way of Loan, and to suppose that other motives, at least equally urgent, may induce the Proprietors at large to come forward for the preservation of all they hold dear.—

Laying aside all considerations of that nature, it is obvious that the latter mode has greatly the advantage of the other, in reference to that very scarcity of Money, which is so much, and to a certain extent justly, the subject of complaint.

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plaint. That scarcity, produced in a great measure by the operation of Loans, is increased by the expectation of another Loan being near at hand. For the increasing price of Public Securities, the necessary consequence of their increasing extent, affords a high rate of interest (which in some instances is now enormous), and thereby renders it, in proportion, more difficult to procure Money on Private Securities, the interest of which is limited by Law. The consequence is, that to the real scarcity, which cannot be denied to exist, is added an artificial scarcity, which is augmented by the most distant prospect of another Money Negotiation with Government, and still more so by the diminution of confidence, which unavoidably attends every augmentation of debt. The mode therefore of raising the necessary Supply by way of Loan, tends greatly, and in a variety of ways, to enhance the difficulty of procuring that Supply, and particularly as it is calculated to increase a scarcity of Money where it does, and to create it where it does not exist. It is also subject to all the other inconveniencies attending the Funding System, when arrived at a certain extent—of which, one of the greatest, as well as the most obvious, is the tendency of every

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every new Tax to lessen the consumption of the article on which it is laid, and thereby not only to produce less than it was calculated at, but also to endanger the previous Revenue, if the article was before an object of taxation; which almost every taxable article now is, and that as much as it can bear; and thus the Commerce of the Country, that sheet anchor of our resources, may be impaired when mostly wanted to be flourishing and prosperous.

On the other hand, the measure of a General Contribution would have a contrary effect. It would remove the artificial scarcity, and even relieve that which is real. Instead of depreciating the Funds, it would raise their value, not only by rescuing them from the impending pressure of farther accumulation, but by affording an opportunity for the actual and immediate diminution of the National Debt. It would dispel those fears and apprehensions which ever congeal and check the circulating currents; and by imparting fresh confidence, it would make our wealth flow freely through a thousand channels which had been obstructed. Nor is it a trifling consideration, that the Public would save to the full extent of those advantages, by which

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which alone Monied Men can be induced (or, indeed, reasonably expected to be so) to lend their property: and as those advantages must ever be proportioned to the risk, or to the idea of risk, and to the lowness of the Funds, they would render a Money Negotiation peculiarly embarrassing and injurious to the Public, at this moment of alarm and depreciation.

After all, notwithstanding the immense advantages of the measure in question, and the facility of its accomplishment, supposing the great body of Proprietors to be willing to carry it into effect, I am aware that it is an extraordinary measure, suited only to a crisis like the present, and absolutely impracticable without the aid of that *stimulus*, which nothing but a general sense of extreme danger can excite. I know, that in ordinary Wars, where the *existence* of a Country is not at stake, the ordinary mode of supply, by Borrowing, Funding, and Taxes, can alone be resorted to, until the accumulated weight of burdens induces a disposition for Peace; in which disposition the Enemy, under the influence of a like motive, is almost sure to participate: and thus, by mutual concessions, the most valuable of blessings

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is restored to Society ; or if the events of the War, and our consequent situation, were to be so unfavourable as to oblige us to concede the original point in dispute (which was the case in the War with America), still our existence as a People, and our honour and independence as a State, being preserved, we may hope to compensate for the sacrifice, by availing ourselves of our remaining advantages. But by what sacrifices can we now purchase the sweets of repose ? What is now the point in dispute, and from which the Enemy seems determined not to recede ? What ! but whether we shall be involved in the ruin which he seeks to bring on all Civilized Society ! Even in the present War, although it was from the very beginning, and felt to be so by the Nation at large, a War which had for its object the defence and preservation of all those invaluable interests, which are now exposed to *imminent* destruction, yet it required the occurrence of the almost incredible events that have happened, and that inexpressibly alarming posture of affairs in Europe, which strikes us with equal horror and amazement, to give effect to, or even to authorize the proposal, of calling forth the resources of this Country in a manner which, however

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however necessary and practicable; is altogether unprecedented.

I cannot suffer myself to doubt, that the People of this Country, of every class, description, and party, will be eager to stand forth at such a moment, according to their respective abilities, in support of the common cause. I cannot suffer myself to doubt, that every arm will be ready, as occasion may offer, to repel the malignant and destructive designs of our Enemies; and that every purse will be alike ready to support the Credit of the Nation, and thereby to enable the National Force to operate with the greatest energy and effect. To suppose that the Proprietors could hesitate one moment in availing themselves of their best, if not their only means of preservation, would be to suppose them under the influence of that infatuation, which in a time of danger is the most alarming symptom of approaching ruin. Their spirit, their virtue, their honour, their patriotism, will certainly preserve them from so destructive an apathy, so fatal a remissness. But without appealing to such elevated sentiments, which I trust can never be eradicated from English bosoms, a mere instinctive sense of in-

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terest must surely suffice to stimulate them to a measure, on the adoption of which their interest as *Proprietors*, as well as every other interest dear to them as men, as Englishmen, as members of families, and of society, essentially depends. And what is the sacrifice they are called upon to make? I doubt whether even in a pecuniary sense—whether in the most narrow compass in which the subject can be viewed, and independently of those high and paramount considerations that ought to supersede all others, they would not find their *present* account in listening to the call that is addressed to them. It has already been observed, that the Supplies necessary to meet the exigencies of the time, must in one shape or other be drawn from their wealth. It has also been shewn, that the difference would be immense in respect of the State (a difference, perhaps, on which the issue of the contest, and of course the fate of the British Empire, and of Europe, may depend), whether those Supplies be furnished by way of Loan, or by General Contribution. But besides such cogent and irresistible reasons in favour of the latter measure, it is recommended by its comparative advantages in respect of the pecuniary interests of individual Proprietors.—

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It would, by its natural, and probably *immediate* operation, and by causes already explained, *increase the value of their property* (to say nothing of its security) in a degree more than adequate to the amount of any advance they should make. It would, besides, fully repay them, by exempting their property from the otherwise necessary incumbrance of fresh burdens, and operate as a very cheap purchase of that exemption. It is not part of my plan, nor is it at all necessary, to go into any minute calculations; but I would put the case hypothetically, of a Proprietor, who, on the supposition that fresh Taxes were to be imposed to pay the interest of a new Loan, would be liable to the annual charge of five pounds, as the amount of that portion of such Taxes which would fall upon him; and a person would be in a very restricted situation, in point of expence, who should not feel, to a greater extent, the effect of a Loan at all adequate to the public necessities, although, on account of the variety of the articles on which the Taxes might be charged, and of those Taxes being blended in the price of commodities, he might not be aware of the actual extent of his additional burthens:—Would not that person act wisely,

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upon a dry unfeeling calculation of profit and loss, if he were to exempt himself from such an addition to his annual charges, by an immediate advance of forty pounds, which would be but a payment of eight years purchase to redeem himself, his family, and all who should inherit his property, from an incumbrance of an indefinite duration?—I state this merely, by way of suggesting the idea, that if the Public were only to advance the amount of a fair price of an exemption from farther Taxes, they would have an immediate compensation for what they should contribute.

But, God forbid! that I should by any rule of rigid computation, presume in *any* case, and particularly in *such* a one, to set bounds to the feelings and liberality of Englishmen. One of the excellencies of the proposed plan, would be to relieve those who are in straight circumstances, though I believe there are few who would not be eager to contribute their mite on such an occasion. But the wealthy and affluent would, I am confident, exert themselves and emulate one another, in giving solid proofs of their attachment to their native soil. From persons of that description, I own I have great expectations :

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expectations : they would not change their nature, and do violence to their disposition, because it is their *Country* that calls assistance. There is no proposal of beneficence to which they are not accustomed to accede, with an alacrity and cheerfulness, that prove humanity to be a native virtue in their hearts. In whatever shape distress presents itself to their view, it is sure to meet with ready relief. Can it be thought that they would be insensible *only* to the distresses of their Country? That they would turn a deaf ear *only* to the calls of the State that gave them birth? Divesting themselves (if possible) of local and patriotic feelings, can they forget, that in contributing to rescue their Country from the evils with which it is menaced, they would exercise the truest benevolence towards the distressed of every description, by securing to themselves the power of affording relief? If their property be swallowed up (as it inevitably would) in the general wreck, what will then become of the necessitous? Where will the wretched and the indigent find pity and relief? Where shall those look for assistance who will then be reduced, by such means, from a state of ease and plenty, to penury and want? This Country has done itself immortal

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immortal honour, by holding out the hand of liberality to the distressed Exiles of France, driven by the most merciless persecution to seek refuge in a foreign clime; proving thereby, that its benevolence is superior to all prejudices, however ancient, and however rooted. But, will it not take the necessary means, will it not exert its liberality to preserve its own Children from a worse misfortune? Will not the Nobles, the Clergy, and the affluent Proprietors of every description, make one effort to save themselves from the fate which has befallen those classes in France? A fate which would be much more severe and cruel to *them*, as it would leave them without *any* resource—without the chance of finding *any* asylum, where the kindness they have shewn to others might be returned to themselves.

But I am by these apparent doubts, by these unnatural suppositions, doing injustice to the British Character, and I most sincerely solicit pardon for so doing. I am convinced, not only by the well-known disposition of Britons, but by recent observation, that they are ready and desirous to make their property subservient to the most comprehensive benevolence that ever did,

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did, or ever can, call forth their feelings, under the guidance of the soundest wisdom that ever directed or can direct those feelings. Scarcely a day, for some time past, but I have met with persons who have expressed an impatience to lay down a part of their fortune to preserve the rest. This disposition, which I believe to be general, is an undeniable proof both of the expediency and the urgency of the measure, and affords a consolatory assurance that it will, when once proposed in a proper manner, be immediately and universally adopted. Those undoubtedly will be the foremost, and the most active in promoting its success, who, like Mr. MORGAN, view our Finances in the most gloomy light, and who contemplate the *actual* extent of our Debt, as well as the prospect of its farther increase, with the most lively apprehensions. But very few who have it in their power to contribute any thing, would suffer their names to be omitted in the honourable and truly Patriotic List. If there should be any (a thing almost incredible), on whom the *proper* motives could produce no effect; whom neither an anxiety for the fate of themselves or their Country, nor a sense of justice, could restrain from withholding what they

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they feel themselves competent to supply, still a fear of disgrace, an unwillingness to appear totally regardless of the public welfare, would extort even from such persons a reluctant dole; while a spirit of emulation, and even enthusiasm, would generally display itself, with a zeal and fervour suited to the occasion, and demonstrate that the British People will never be backward in giving *any* proofs that may be wanted, of their loyalty to their King, and their attachment to their Constitution. Nor should I be at all surprized to see even the Youth of the Country partaking of the noble fervour; and anxious to have their Names enrolled and their Contributions received, in testimony of their indignation against the audacious designs of the *ancient* Enemies of their Country. Contributions which, though perhaps but of small amount, yet when considered in their true light, would be by no means the least valuable; for they would afford a happy presage, that the *ancient, genuine, free, and manly* Spirit of Englishmen will ever be proof against the *flippant, fawning, perfidious, blood-thirsty* system of French Fraternity.

It should not however be forgotten, that the measure of Voluntary Contribution, though calculated

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calculated to be general, is proposed to derive its chief effect from the wealthy and affluent. From them an exertion may fairly be expected suited to the emergency, and in some degree proportionate to the value of the property they have at stake. Such persons would have only to consider what portion of their income they would advance in defence of their capital, and as that portion would depend upon feelings, opportunities for œconomy, and a variety of other circumstances, it would be subject to no general rule, and of course it would afford no clue, whereby to judge of the fortunes of individuals. It is here deserving of observation, that a material difference exists, in respect of the facility of making a sudden advance, between those who, having their property permanently invested, live upon their income without any prospect of its being increased, except by the savings of œconomy; and those whose capitals are frequently passing through their hands, and with constantly returning profits, by the channels of commerce and manufacture. It might therefore be of great importance, to devise some mode of assisting the former description of Proprietors, to gratify their public spirit with the least possible inconvenience to themselves.—

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This might perhaps be effected by accepting engagements on their property, to be periodically discharged. For instance, an individual who should resolve to contribute one half of his income, though he might not be able to advance, with convenience, the whole sum at once, might with facility pay down by advance one-fourth of that amount *instantly*, and engage to furnish the remainder by two or three yearly payments, for which a little foresight would enable him to provide. I submit whether such a mode (of which Proprietors of every description might be free to avail themselves), would not, while it relieved individuals, tend to augment the aggregate of public benefit, and at the same time anticipate the possibility of future difficulties, by providing a Fund which might hereafter be of unspeakable value, considering the unsettled state of Europe, and the hazard of fresh attempts on the part of the French to invade the general tranquillity, even should they be now reduced to reasonable terms of Peace. One thing is indisputable, that nothing can tend more to prevent or repress such attempts, or to preserve as well as *restore* the blessing of general tranquillity, than the financial prosperity of Great Britain.

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I am not fearful of being charged with placing too sanguine a reliance on the spirit, the zeal, and the provident wisdom of the People of this Country, at so critical a juncture. Such a charge would be a libel on that People, which, I trust, no one will have the temerity to advance. Nor am I apprehensive, on the other hand, of being accused of any distrust of the public liberality, when I say, that I feel such a conviction of the suitableness of the measure I propose to the circumstances and objects of the Country, that were I to address Government on the subject, I should with confidence submit, that no other principle *ought* to be resorted to in providing the necessary Supplies, until the Enemy can be brought to consent to fair and reasonable terms. It is undoubtedly the duty of Government to avail itself of the public resources for all necessary purposes, in the least burthensome and most efficacious manner. All that I have said, therefore, would apply with equal force, if addressed to those whose situation imposes on them that indispensable duty; and would warrant me in urging the necessity of renouncing all idea of farther Loans and Taxes, during the inevitably remaining, but, I hope, short period of the present War. When

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it would be impossible to borrow Money at less than 180l. per cent. perhaps not even at that rate, and when it would be necessary to find Taxes for almost double the sum actually received into the public coffers, it is surely high time to adopt another plan of Finance; and to determine to raise, within the year, and from the Capital of the Country, the Supplies wanted for the current service. A resolution so manly, so spirited, and so provident, would command respect, admiration, and support. It would relieve us from all the disadvantages attending a continued use of the Funding System, and make every farthing advanced by the Public available. It would, in every point of view, assist the Credit and Finances of the Country, maintain its Commerce, Manufactures, and Agriculture in a prosperous state, and preserve the Subject of every rank from the much-dreaded weight of additional burdens; while it would, by its singularity, denote the inexpressible importance of the objects for which we are contending; and by manifesting our determination never to abandon those objects, as well as our ability to enforce their attainment, it would give the death-blow to the hopes and projects of our Enemies.

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I do not therefore hesitate to say, that it would be incumbent on Government to adopt some such measure in providing for the public exigencies. They will, I doubt not, be anticipated by the zeal, spirit, and prudence of the Nation, ever ready to discern, to feel, and to pursue its own real interests. But in a matter of such magnitude, and at the same time of such novelty, it may be impossible to attain the desired effect without the assistance of Parliament; which, without setting any bounds to the liberality and public spirit of individuals, would be necessary to produce that uniformity of system, on which the success of every measure of general operation must essentially depend. But in thus giving its aid, Parliament would but second the disposition, and give scope and effect to the wishes of the Nation—and I hope before Parliament shall assemble, to see solid and convincing proofs that the Nation are desirous of obtaining its assistance to enable them to carry into execution so salutary a measure, with the greatest promptitude and advantage; and of shewing to the world, that they are determined to make their preservation their own voluntary act.

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I shall not presume to prescribe the mode by which the Public might best testify their decided approbation of the measure now submitted to their consideration, their readiness to carry it into effect, and their wish to have the necessary assistance of Parliament for that purpose. It is in every respect desirable that the call should come from them. With that view, County or Parochial Meetings might perhaps be proper, and particularly as they might not only serve to express the sense of the Country, but also conduce to that state of union and co-operation which its situation so loudly demands. Large bodies of men who happen to be connected by ties of another description, as the Merchants and Traders of great Commercial Towns, would perhaps do well to act together in that character, and even to take the lead; a station which seems on such an occasion properly to belong to them, not merely on account of their great opulence, and of the facility with which, from their mutual relations, they can communicate together, but also because *it is through the sides of the Commerce of the Country that the Enemy aims a mortal blow at its Credit and Resources.*

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Of those wealthy and respectable bodies, no one will dispute that it belongs to the Merchants of London, the Capital not only of the British Empire, but of the Commercial World, to set the example—an example which would speedily be followed by the Proprietors of every description throughout the Kingdom; who, with alacrity and confidence, would hasten to declare their readiness to present their loyal and patriotic Contributions to the disposition of the British Parliament.

Such are the means by which this Country may, by the favour of Providence, escape unhurt from the most awful crisis it has ever experienced in any period of its History. Thus may it re-animate its hopes, invigorate its efforts, and inspire the Enemy with terror and dismay. Thus may it accelerate the return of Peace, which is the ardent wish of every friend to his Country, and to Humanity; and every Contribution would in effect be a peace-offering, and conduce to the repose and security of mankind. Those invaluable blessings are scarcely more desirable than, under the present circumstances, difficult to be attained. It requires all our energy, wisdom, and vigilance, to

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to procure them. To call out for Peace without taking the necessary means to obtain it, would be to resemble the Countryman who called upon HERCULES to extricate his team from the rut in which it stuck fast. The answer he received applies equally to us: We must put our shoulders to the wheel, and assist ourselves. How near or how distant Peace may be, Heaven only knows. But it is clear, that the most likely way to hasten its arrival, is to shew ourselves armed at all points, and prepared in the best possible manner for a continuance of the War. For that purpose, our situation in other respects happily relieves us from all solicitude, but that of providing for our pecuniary demands, without loading either the State, or the Subject, with additional burdens. This important object has, I trust, been shewn to be completely within our power. If we neglect to avail ourselves of so great, so inestimable an advantage, which seems bestowed on us, not merely for our own benefit, but for that of all mankind, our folly and our guilt will deserve any misfortune that can possibly ensue. We must, in that case, look to Peace and War with equal anxiety and apprehension; for it will be impossible to say, which of those events, supposing

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supposing we had the option, would most conduce to bring about the mischiefs which it is our grand object to prevent. But if we wisely avail ourselves of the means in our power, we may look forward towards futurity with rational and well-grounded confidence. For then, if Peace continue to elude our hopes, we shall be in a condition to prosecute the War with a degree of vigour that will, in all human probability, ensure its final success; or, if the season of Negotiation be at hand, we shall then be entitled to demand, and able to enforce, such terms as it will become Britons to propose or to accept; terms which may be compatible with the DIGNITY of the BRITISH CROWN, with the SECURITY of the BRITISH CONSTITUTION, and with the HONOUR, WELFARE and PERMANENT TRANQUILLITY of the BRITISH PEOPLE.

I am, &c.

Sept. 13, 1796.

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P O S T S C R I P T.

WITH inexpressible satisfaction I congratulate you upon the recent and brilliant Success which has crowned the Arms of our brave Ally, the EMPEROR, in *Germany*. I rejoice with you, that the fortitude, perseverance, and fidelity, which have almost exclusively distinguished this Ally, the worthy descendant of MARIA THERESA, seem likely to be properly rewarded. I must, however, take this opportunity of observing, that any success would be a misfortune, if it were to make us deviate from that line of conduct which is prescribed by an attention to our own situation, and a regard to our own interests. It would, indeed, be the height of folly, nay it would be to fly in the face of experience, if in a War so eventful and so variable, in which the tide of Success has been in a constant course of flux and reflux—in which the cause, on the event of which our own destiny depends, has repeatedly been plunged from the pinnacle of hope almost into the gulph of despair—if in such a War, we were to suffer any thing to induce us to relax our efforts, or to

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vary our measures. The only effect of Success, should be to stimulate and encourage us to persevere in our exertions, in order to secure and realize the benefits of such Success, and to make it conduce to the great object of general security, of which we should not suffer ourselves for a single moment to lose sight. Nothing, therefore, that I have said, in the foregoing pages, is in the least invalidated by the recent Victories, which make our hearts to rejoice, or can be invalidated by any *Victories* whatsoever. The dangers we have to provide against, are still the same as before, though they may appear less imminent; and the only safe rule for us to adopt is, in all events, to depend principally on ourselves. And it should be remembered, that the measure which it has been my chief object to recommend, is calculated upon a reference to our own circumstances, which will equally require its adoption, whatever events may happen during the War, and which will be infinitely benefited by that adoption, whenever it shall be our happiness to witness a return of Peace.

Sept. 17.

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