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FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE.

Freemasons' Tavern, Saturday, May 25, 1793.

AT an Extraordinary and Numerous MEETING of the SOCIETY of the FRIENDS of the PEOPLE, associated for the Purpose of obtaining PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, held THIS DAY,

E. B. CLIVE, Esq. in the Chair.

RESOLVED,

That the following Address to the People of Great Britain, be printed and published:—

THE immediate duty of this Society is to state briefly to the People of the kingdom, for whose benefit we have acted, in what situation the Cause of Reform, and they who are engaged in it, are left by the late transaction in Parliament. In so good a cause, it is honourable to have contended, and with a firm conviction that on its success depend the happiness and liberties of the nation, we can never suffer ourselves to despair. We are not deterred or disappointed by the present decision of the House of Commons, for neither is this decision final, nor is it a question, in which we were particularly entitled to expect, that truth and reason would be supported by superior numbers. We are not discouraged by this defeat. It would, indeed, be a ground of discouragement to us, if we could believe that the People of England were really unwilling to promote a change in the Construction of the House of Commons, or indifferent about it. Such, however, is the conclusion drawn by our opponents, from the silence of the principal cities and counties on the present occasion. We trust that we shall be furnished with a practical answer to this objection by numerous and strong Declarations and Petitions from a great majority of the kingdom. These are the means, and the only means by which we expect or desire to succeed. If the country in general will unite with us in demanding a Reform of Parliament, we have no doubt of its being obtained in a regular Parliamentary way, without a hazard of any kind. If, on the contrary, it should appear, after a fair and sufficient trial of the disposition of the country, that the measure has utterly lost its popularity, and that the Nation, whether adverse or indifferent, will not take an active part in support of it, then indeed it will become us to abandon all thoughts of a useless vexatious perseverance in so deserted a cause; and having appealed to the Highest Tribunal, by which a National Question can be determined, that of the People themselves, we must submit with patience to their ultimate decision. Individuals may adhere to their principles, but it will be in vain for them to persist in their endeavours. The duty that survives

hope will never be performed with energy or effect.—On the other hand, some circumstances encourage us to persevere. We have reason to believe that the intervention of the war with France, and the alarms, whether well or ill founded, which have prevailed throughout England, during the last winter, and which we have no doubt were excited and inflamed for the special purpose of checking the disposition of the country in favour of a Reform, and of calumniating the characters of those who promoted it. These, we believe, are the true causes of that silence and inactivity on the part of the Nation which have been objected to us in Parliament.

We are therefore of opinion, that the sense of the country has not yet been declared on this great question, and that their final decision of it has not been given. The temper of the House of Commons is evidently moderated since the subject was agitated last year. The Members, who stand for the Public on this occasion, are treated, as in all cases the representatives of a great popular interest, and of the popular will ought to be, with some degree of decorum. Declarations made by persons of great authority in the House, tho' ambiguous or unfavourable, suppose and admit the possibility, at least, of their reverting hereafter to former professions, and of their concurring with us at some future uncertain period. When such men keep the opinions they deliver, within the reach of recall, it is to be presumed that others who have no opinions at all, will see the imprudence of binding themselves by unqualified declarations which they may not be able to abandon or retract, however careless of character and consistency, and though urged to it hereafter by the only motives that ever influence their conduct.

The ground we have gained by the reception of our Petition, appears to us to be important, and the station it gives us impregnable. It is not a circumstance of little moment to the cause of Reform, that a Petition stating to the House of Commons itself, such facts and such arguments, with a direct offer on the part of the Petitioners, to establish every one of their allegations by sufficient evidence, should be received without dispute, and recorded for ever on the Votes and Journals of the

he House. No objection was made to the form or terms of the Petition. No part of its contents was denied, or even questioned. The motion to bring up the Petition was not opposed by any man. The House heard it distinctly read. They ordered it to lie on their table; and after a debate of two days, refused to appoint a Committee to take it into consideration. We state the fact to the world, and leave it without any further observation.

In the conduct of this business hitherto, we are not conscious of having omitted any thing that could be expected from the efforts of a

few individuals, to rouse and engage the attention of the people to their own essential interest. They who think we have been deficient in any part of our duty, or that we ought still to proceed with activity and vigour, are bound to instruct us by their example, or at least, to strengthen us by their assistance. We have taken our station, and we shall not abandon it. The Nation shall at all times find us at our post alert, prepared, and determined, whenever we are called upon by the public voice to renew and to continue our efforts.

In name, and by order

of the Society,

(Signed)

E. B. CLIVE, Chairman.

### JUST PUBLISHED.

REPORT on the STATE of the REPRESENTATION, delivered by their Committee to the Society of the Friends of the People.

Printed, by Order of the Society, for D. STUART, at the Rooms of their Committee, No. 52, Frith-street, Soho; and to be had of all the Bookfellers in Town and Country, price One Shilling.

PROCEEDINGS of the Society of the Friends of the People, price One Shilling. Published by R. H. Wefley, opposite St. Clement's Church, Strand.

AUTHENTIC COPY of the Petition, praying for a Reform of Parliament, presented to the House of Commons, on the 6th of May, 1793, by CHARLES GRAY, Esq. and signed only by Members of the Society of the Friends of the People, is published, price Threepence, by D. Stuart, No. 52, Frith-street, Soho; and a smaller Edition of it is also published, price only One Penny, by M. Gurney, No. 128, Holborn-hill; R. H. Wefley, No. 201, Strand; T. Spence, No. 8, Little Turnstile; and may be had of all the Bookfellers.