

Hints on the Regency

(See also No. 38381-3)

38348-9

Doc. 20th 1788

What I mentioned, yesterday, has actually turned out to be the Case. Mr. Pitt declared, in the House, last night, that it is his intention, to propose, that the two Houses of Parliament shall appoint Commissioners, under the Great Seal, in the King's name, to open the Session: That, as soon as the Session is so opened, a Bill shall be brought in, appointing a Regent and specifying such portions of the Royal authority, as shall be proper to be conferred, on such Regent. I privately understand, that the Act will be limited, in point of time, to one year. ... This mode of resuscitating the Royal authority is, in consequence of the Opinion of Counsellor Hargrave, a Connoisseur in mosty records and Old Seals.

Unprecedented, as this manner of holding parliaments may be, the getting possession of a Right, which is held from one, by force, would induce me to overlook forms. When once power is obtained matters may be legalized and irregularities be rectified. The business of Monday will, in my opinion, require much circumspection. A motion was made, not by one of the soundest heads, that the latter words of Pitt's

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Pth's ^{third} ~~second~~ motion should be left out, and others nomi:
nating the Prince of Wales — Regent be inserted. Is there not
much danger in this precipitate mode of proceeding? ... Are the
troops numerous enough to come, at once, to the decisive
battle, on which the fate of a kingdom depends? ... Will
not the losing such a question be attended with fatal
Consequences? ... Will Pth if he finds he has a Majority,
suffer it to be withdrawn? — Are they not all on the
watch, for precipitation, error or imprudence? — What,
if some understrapper should amend the amendment
by inserting the Q^r's, instead of the P^{ce}'s name?
Would Mr D^r permit Mr Pth, notwithstanding
he is pledged to nominate the P^{ce}, in his own way, to
oppose such amendment. If it should be put and carried
— de Republica actum foret.

What would, in such case remain to be done? The
People, though generally Right, in the end are slow, in
comprehension. An appeal to them, in the present state
of Opinions, would be vain and fruitless! ... Had even the
Prince of Orange appealed to the people, when the House
of Commons appeared hostile, amusing themselves, with
idle declamations on abstract Questions, he would have
found them deaf to his Remonstrances. He must have
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either have returned, like a good, peaceable man to Holland, or ^{have} mounted the throne, as autocrat, at the head of his Dutch and Scotch guards. He was too wise to do any such thing. He complained of the Conduct of the two Houses: But he had resolved, in private, to accept the boon they were to give, in their own way. He knew, that authority gathers power, in its progress; and increases in its size, like a snow ball, the further it is rolled along, the bigger it grows.

I would let M. P. proceed, in his own way. He is pledged to nominate the Prince. Let me once have that nomination ex Septo dentium; and I will combat with him ~~every~~ ^{his} limitations and ~~every~~ ^{negative} all that is necessary of them, with a high hand. Until the nomination is made, many ^{will} fear the uncertainty of the times. But once it is made, they will come over like a flock of Sheep. My advice would be to let the Question alone — if they will consent to its being withdrawn. If they will not — I would not divide upon it — if they will insist upon a division, to shew their friends, with out doors, their strength, I would have some capital friends of the P. vote with them; to shew that this is not a trial of the force of Parties.

Parties.

I was told, by one of the other side, that the Lords
boggled about imposing limitations. This may be a
fetch to mislead. But be that, as it may, if the
P^{ower} is once nominated, the limitations will
be so trifling, that they may be easily borne.

I may, perhaps, have written much nonsense, upon
the matter. But, as these thoughts occurred to my mind,
I could not avoid committing them to paper.

O D^{ominus} plays the whole game, like a
Gambler, at his last Stake! Beware of every
thing — Sic notus Ulysses!... Beware of a certain
quarter: No assurances of non-acceptance are
a thorough security: There is some thing so dazzling
in Power, that even a woman's firmness cannot
with stand the temptation. Accept and shut the
door at once. The ἰσχυρισμός τῆς ἀνάγκης... Maximum rerum
Tempus will do every thing.

With respect
to your
objection