Mr Pitt.
January 6 1791

6754

Mr Pitt humbly begs Leave to acquaint Your Majesty, that in Consequence of Your Majesty's Commands, He paid over to Him the Sum of 8010£, for which Genl Garth gave Him the Receipt which He takes the Liberty of transmitting.

Downing Street.
Thursday Night. Jan 6th 1791

Lord Hawkesbury

Whitehall 8th Jany 1791.

6755

Whitehall Jany 8th 1791

I presume to trouble your Majesty with the Inclosed Extract of a letter I have this Instant received from Mr Jenkinson dated from Nice Decr 23, as it contains a favourable, though short, account of Prince Augustus & one, that, I am confident, is impartial.

From

your Majesty's

Dutyfull Subject

Hawkesbury.

Edmund Burke to Henry Ville Jan. 1791

6756 – 67

(Copy.)

Sir,

I had the honour to receive your letter of the 17th of Novr last, in which, with some exceptions, you are pleased to consider favourably the Letter I have written on the affairs of France. I shall ever accept any mark of approbation, attended with instruction, with far more pleasure, than general & unqualified praises. The latter can serve only to flatter our vanity; the former, whilst it encourages us to proceed, may help to improve us in our progress.

Some of the errors you point out to me in my printed letter are really such. One only I find to be material. It is corrected in the Edition which I take the liberty of sending to you. As to the cavils which may be made on some part of my remarks, with regard to the gradations in your new Constitution, you observe justly, that they do not affect the substance of my objections. Whether there be a round more or less in the ladder of representation, by which your Workmen ascend from their parochial tyranny to their federal Anarchy, when the whole scale is false, appears to me of little or no importance.

I published my thoughts on that Constitution, that my Countrymen might be enabled to estimate the wisdom of the plans which were held out to their imitation. I conceived that the true Character of those plans would be best collected from the Committee appointed to prepare them.

I thought that the scheme of their building would be better comprehended in the design of the Architects than in the execution of the Masons. It was not worth my Reader's while to occupy himself with the alterations by which bungling practice corrects absurd theory. Such an investigation would be endless: because every day's past experience of impracticability has driven, & every day's future experience will drive those Men to new devices as exceptionable as the old, & which are no otherwise worthy of observation than as they give a daily proof of the delusion of their promises, & the falsehood of their professions.

professions. Had I followed all these changes my letter would have been only a Gazette of their wanderings; a Journal of their March, from error to error, thro' a dry, dreary Desart, unguided by the lights of Heaven, or by the contrivance which wisdom has invented to supply their place.

I am unalterably persuaded, that the attempt to oppress, degrade, impoverish, confiscate, & extinguish the original Gentlemen, & landed Property of an whole Nation, cannot be justified under any form it may assume. I am satisfied beyond a doubt, that the project of turning a Great Empire into a Vestry or into a collection of Vestries, & of governing it in the spirit of a parochial Administration, is senseless & absurd, in any mode, & with any qualifications. I can never be convinced that the scheme of placing the highest powers of the State in Churchwardens & Constables & other such Officers, guided by the prudence of litigious Attornies & Jew Brokers, & set in action by shameless Women of the lowest ~~description~~ condition, by Keepers of Hotels, Taverns & Brothels, by pert Apprentices, by Clerks, Shopboys, Hair dressers, Fidlers, & Dancers on the Stage; who, in such a Commonwealth as yours, will overbear, as already they have overborne, the sober incapacity of dull, uninstructed Men, of useful, but laborious occupations, can never be put into a shape, that must not be both disgraceful & destructive. The whole of this project, even if it were what it pretends to be, & was not in reality the dominion, thro' that disgraceful medium of half a dozen, or perhaps fewer, intriguing Politicians, is so mean, so low minded, & so stupid a contrivance, in point of wisdom, as well as so perfectly detestable for its wickedness, that I must always consider the correctives which might make it in any degree practicable, to be so many new objections to it.

In that wretched state of things, some are afraid, that the Authors of your Miseries may be led to precipitate their further designs by the hints they may receive from the very arguments used to expose the absurdity of their systems; & to mark the incongruity of their parts & their inconsistency with their own principles, & that they may be led to render them more consistent by rendering them more mischievous. Excuse the liberty which your

indulgence

indulgence authorises me to take, when I observe to you, that such apprehensions as these would prevent all exertion of our faculties in this great cause of Mankind.

A rash recourse to force is not to be justified in a state of real weakness. Such attempts bring on disgrace; & in their failure discountenance & discourage more rational endeavours. But reason is to be hazarded, tho' it may be perverted by craft & sophistry; for it can suffer no loss or shame nor impede any useful plan of future policy. In the unavoidale uncertainty with regard to the effect, which attends on every measure of human prudence, nothing seems a surer antidote to the poison of fraud than its detection. It is true the fraud may be swallowed after this discovery, & perhaps even swallowed the more greedily for being a detected fraud. Men sometimes make a point of honour not to be disabused, & they had rather fall into an hundred errors than confess one. But after all, when neither our principles nor our dispositions, nor our talents enable us to encounter delusion with delusion, we must use our best reason to those that ought to be reasonable Creatures, & to take our chance for the event. We ~~cannot~~ cannot act on these anomalies in the minds of Men. I dont conceive those who have contrived these things can be made much the better or the worse for any thing which can be said to them. They are reason-proof. Here & there, some Men, who were at first carried away by wild good intentions, may be led, when their first fervours are abated, to join in a sober survey of the schemes into which they have been deluded. To those only (& I am sorry to say, they are not likely to make a large description) we apply with any hope. I may speak it upon an assurance almost approaching to absolute knowlege, that nothing has been done, that has not been contrived from the begining, even before the States had assembled. Nulla nova mihi res inopinave surgit — They are the same Men & the same designs that they were from the first, tho' varied in their appearance. It was the very same Animal that crawled about in the shape of a Caterpillar, that you now see rise into the air & expand his wings to the Sun.

Proceeding

Proceeding therefore, as we are obliged to proceed, that is, upon an hypothesis that we address rational Men, can false political principles be more effectually exposed than by demonstrating that they lead to consequences directly inconsistent with, & subversive of the arrangements grounded upon them? If this kind of demonstration is not permitted, the process of reasoning called Deductio ad absurdum, which even the severity of Geometry does not reject, could not be employed at all in Legislative discussions. One of our strongest weapons against folly acting with authority would be lost.

You know Sir, that even the virtuous efforts of your patriots to prevent the ruin of your Country, have had this very turn given to them. It has been said here, & in France too, that the reigning Usurpers would not have carried their Tyranny to such destructive lengths, if they had not been stimulated & provoked to it by the acrimony of your Opposition. There is a dilemma, to which every opposition to successful iniquity must, in the nature of things, be liable. If you lie still you are considered as an Accomplice in the Measures in which you silently acquiesce; If you resist, you are accused of provoking irritable power to new excesses. The conduct of a losing party never appears right: At least it never can possess the only infallible criterion of Wisdom to vulgar Judgments, success.

The indulgence of a sort of undefined hope, an obscure confidence, that some lurking remains of Virtue, some degree of shame, might exist in the breasts of the Oppressors of France, has been amongst the causes which have helped to bring on the common ruin of King & people. There is no safety for honest Men, but by believing all possible evil of evil Men, & by acting with promptitude, decision & steadiness on that belief. I well remember, at every Epocha of this wonderful history, in every scene of this Tragic business, that when your sophistic Usurpers were laying down mischievous principles, & even applying them in direct revolutions, it was the fashion to say that they never intended to execute those declarations in their rigour. This made Men cautious in their opposition,

&

premiss in early precaution. By holding out this fallacious hope, the Impostors deluded sometimes one description of Men, & sometimes another; so that no means of resistance were provided against them, when they came to execute in cruelty, what they had planned in fraud.

There are cases in which a man would be ashamed not to have been imposed on. There is a confidence necessary to human intercourse, & without which, men are often more injured by their own suspicions than they could be by the perfidy of others. But when Men, whom we know to be wicked, impose upon us, we are something worse than Dupes. When we know them, their fair pretences become new Motives for distrust. There is one case indeed, in which it would be madness not to give the fullest credit to the most deceitful of men, that is, when they make declarations of hostility against us.

I find that some persons (& perhaps in a degree I must reckon yourself amongst them) entertain other hopes, which I confess appear more specious than those by which at first, so many were deluded & disarmed. They flatter themselves that the extreme misery brought upon the people by their folly, will at last, open the eyes of the Multitude, if not of their Leaders. Much the contrary I fear. As to the leaders in this system of imposture, You know that Cheats & deceivers never can repent. The fraudulent have no resource but in fraud. They have no other goods in their Magazine. They have no virtue or wisdom in their minds, to which in a disappointment concerning the good effects of fraud & cunning they can retreat. The wearing out of an old, serves only to put them upon the invention of a new delusion. Unluckily too, the credulity of dupes is as unexhaustible as the invention of knaves. They never give people possession; but they always keep them in hope. Your State Doctors do not so much as pretend, that any good whatsoever has hitherto been derived from their operations, or that the public has prospered in any one instance

under

under their management. The Nation is sick, very sick, by their Medicines. But the Charlatan tells them that what is past cannot be helped;— They have taken the draught, & they must wait its operation with patience;— That the first effects indeed are unpleasant; but that the very sickness is a proof that the dose is of no sluggish operation;— That ~~the~~ sickness is inevitable in all Constitutional Revolutions;— That the body must pass thro' pain to ease;— That the Prescriber is not a Practitioner who proceeds by vulgar experience, but one who grounds his practice on the sure rules of art, which cannot possibly fail. You have read Sir, the last Manifesto or Mountebank's bill, of the National Assembly. You see their presumption in their promises is not lessen'd by all their failures in the performance. Compare this with their early engagements, which not content with declaring, they solemnly deposed upon oath, swearing lustily, that if they were supported, they would make their Country glorious & happy, & then judge whether those who can write such things, or those who can bear to read them, are of themselves to be brought to any reasonable course of thought or action.

As to the people at large, when once these miserable sheep have broken the fold, & have got themselves loose, not from the restraint, but from the protection of all the principles of Natural authority, & legitimate subordination, they became the natural prey to impostors. When they have once tasted of the flattery of knaves, they can no longer endure reason, which appears to them only in the form of censure & reproach. Great distress has never hitherto taught, & whilst the World lasts, it never will teach, wise lessons to any part of Mankind. Men are as much blinded by the extremes of Misery, as by the extremes of prosperity. Desperate situations produce desperate Councils, & desperate Measures. The people of France, almost generally have been taught to look for other resources than those which can be derived from order, frugality, & Industry. They are generally armed, & they are made to expect much from the use of arms. Nihil non arrogant Armis.

Besides

Besides this, the retrograde order of Society has something flattering to the dispositions of Mankind. The life of Adventurers, Gamesters, Gipsies, Beggars, & Robbers, is not unpleasant. It requires ~~restraint~~ restraint to keep Men from falling into that habit. The shifting tides of fear & hope, the flight & pursuit, the peril & escape, the alternate famine & feast of the Savage & the Thief, after a time, render all course of slow, steady, progressive, unvaried occupation, & the prospect only of a limited mediocrity, at the end of long labour, to the last degree, tame, languid, & insipid. Those who have once been intoxicated with power, & have derived any kind of emolument from it, even tho' for but one year, never can willingly abandon it. They may be distressed in the midst of all their power; but they will never look to any thing but power, for their relief. When did distress ever oblige a Prince to abdicate his authority? And what effect will it have upon those who are made to believe themselves a people of Princes?

The more active & stirring part of the lower orders, having got Government, & the distribution of plunder into their hands, they will use its rescources in each Municipality to form a body of Adherents. These Rulers & their Adherents will be strong enough to overpower the discontents of those who have not been able to assert their share of the spoil. The unfortunate Adventurers in the cheating lottery of plunder, will probably be the least sagacious, or the most inactive & irresolute of the Gang. If, on disappointment, they should dare to stir, they will soon be suppress'd as Rebels & Mutineers, by their brother Rebels. Scantily fed for a while with the offal of plunder, they will drop off by degrees; they will be driven out of sight, & ~~out~~ out of thought, & will be left to perish obscurely, like Rats, in holes & corners.

From the forced repentance of invalid Mutineers & disbanded Thieves, you can hope for no rescource. Government itself, which ought to constrain the more bold & dextrous of these Robbers, is their Accomplice. Its arms, its treasures, its all, are in their hands. Judicature, which above all things, should awe them, is their Creature,

&

& their instrument. Nothing seems to render your internal situation more desperate than this one circumstance of the state of your Judicature. Many days are not past, since we have seen a set of Men brought forth by your Rulers for a most critical function. Your Rulers brought forth a set of Men, steaming from the sweat & drudgery, & all black with the smoak & soot of the forge of confiscation & robbery - Ardentis massæ fuligine lippos, a set of Men brought ~~[illegible]~~ forth from the trade of hammering arms of proof, offensive & defensive, for the enterprizes, & subsequent protection of Housebreakers, Murderers, Traitors & Malefactors; & having their minds season'd with theories perfectly conformable to their practice, laughing at possession & prescription, & defying all the fundamental Maxims of Jurisprudence. To the horror & stupefaction of all the honest part of this Nation, & indeed of all Nations who are Spectators we have seen, on the credit of those very practices & principles, & to carry them further into effect, these very Men are placed on the sacred seat of Justice in the Capital City of your late Kingdom. We see that in future you are to be destroy'd with more form & regularity. This is not peace; it is only the introduction of a sort of discipline in their hostility. Their Tyranny is complete in their Justice, & their lanthorne is not half so dreadful as their Court.

One would think that out of common decency, they would have given you Men, who had not been in the habit of trampling upon law & Justice in the Assembly, Neutral Men, or Men apparently neutral, for Judges who are to dispose of your lives & fortunes.

Cromwell, when he attempted to legalize his power, & to settle his conquer'd Country in a state of Order, did not look for his dispensers of Justice, in the instruments of his usurpation. Quite the contrary. He sought out with great sollicitude & selection, & even from the party most opposite to his designs, Men of weight & decorum of character, Men unstained with the violence of the times, & with hands not fouled with confiscation & sacrilege. For he chose an Hales for his Chief Justice, tho' he absolutely refused to take his civic oaths, or to make any acknowlegement whatsoever of the legality of his Government. Cromwell told this great Lawyer,

that

that since he did not approve his title all he required of him was, to administer, in a manner agreeable to his pure sentiments & unspotted Character, that Justice without which, human Society cannot subsist, that it was not his particular Government, but civil order itself, which as a Judge he wished him to support. Cromwell knew how to seperate the institutions expedient to his usurpation from the administration of the public Justice of his Country: For Cromwell was a Man in whom ambition had not ~~[illegible]~~ suppressed, but only suspended, the sentiments of Religion, & the love (as far as it could consist with his designs) of fair & honourable reputation. Accordingly we are indebted to this act of his, for the preservation of our laws, which some senseless Asertors of the rights of Men were then on the point of entirely erasing as relicks of feudality & barbarism. Besides he gave, in that act, to that age, & to all posterity, the most brilliant examples of sincere & fervent piety, exact Justice, & profound Jurisprudence. But these are not the things in which your philosophick Usurpers choose to follow Cromwell.

One would think, that after an honest & necessary Revolution, (if they had a mind that their's should pass for such) your Masters would have imitated the virtuous policy of those who have been at the head of Revolutions of that glorious character. Burnet tells us that nothing tended to reconcile the English Nation to the Government of King William, so much as the care he took to fill the vacant Bishoprics with men who had attracted the publick esteem by their learning, eloquence & piety, & above all, by their known moderation in the State. With you, in your purifying revolution, whom have you chosen to regulate the Church? Mr Mirabeau is a fine speaker, & a fine Writer, & a fine, a very fine Man; — but really nothing gave more surprize to every body here, than to find him the supreme head of your ecclesiastical affairs. The rest is of course. Your Assembly addresses a Manifesto to France, in which they tell the people with an insulting irony, that they have brought the Church to its primitive condition. In one respect their declaration is undoubtedly true; for they have brought it to a state of poverty & persecution. What can be hoped for after this? Have not Men, (if they deserve the name) under this new hope & head of the Church, been made Bishops for no other merit than having acted as Instruments

of Atheists; for no other merit than having thrown the Children's bread to dogs; & in order to gorge the whole gang of Usurers, pedlars, & itinerant Jew discounters, at the corners of Streets, starved the poor of their Christian flocks, & their own brother pastors? Have not such men been made Bishops to administer in Temples, in which, (if the patriotick donations have not already stripped of their Vessels) the Churchwardens ought to take security for the Altar plate, & not so much as to trust the Chalice in their sacrilegious hands, so long as Jews have Assignats on ecclesiastick plunder, to exchange for the Silver stolen from Churches.

I am told that the very Sons of such Jew Jobbers have been made Bishops, persons not to be suspected of any sort of Christian superstition, fit Colleagues to the holy Prelate of Autun; & bred at the feet of that Gamaliel. We know who it was that drove the Money Changers out of the Temple. We see too, who it is, that brings them in again. We have in London very respectable persons of the Jewish nation, whom we will keep. But we have of the same Tribes, others of a very description, House breakers, & receivers of stolen goods & forgers of paper currency, more than we can conveniently hang. These we can spare to France, to fill the new Episcopal thrones; men well versed in swearing; & who will scrupleno ~~the~~ oath which the fertile genius of any of your Reformers can devise.

In matters so ridiculous it is hard to be grave. On a view of their consequences it is almost inhuman to treat them lightly. To what a state of savage, stupid, servile insensibility must your people be reduced who can endure such proceedings in their Church, their State, & their Judicature, even for a moment. But the deluded people of France are like other Madmen, who, to a miracle, bear hunger, & thirst, & cold, & confinement, & the chains & lash of their keeper, whilst, all the while, they support themselves by the imagination that they are Generals of Armies, Prophets, Kings, & Emperors. As to a change of mind in these Men, who consider infamy as honour, degradation as preferment, bondage to low Tyrants as liberty, & the practical scorn & contumely of their upstart Masters as marks of respect & homage, I look upon it as absolutely impracticable. These Madmen, to be cured, must first, like other Madmen, be subdued. The sound part of the Community, which I believe to be large, but by no means the largest part, has been taken by surprize, & it is disjointed, terrified, & disarmed. That sound part of the Community, must first be put into a better condition before it can do any thing in the way of deliberation, or persuasion. This must be an act of power, as well as of wisdom; of power, in the hands of firm, determined Patriots, who can distinguish the misled

from Traitors, who will regulate the State (if such should be their fortune) with a discriminating, manly, & provident Mercy; Men who are purged of the surfeit & indigestion of systems, if ever they have been admitted into the habit of their minds; Men who will lay the foundation of a real reform, in effacing every vestige of that Philosophy which pretends to have made discoveries in the Terra Australis of morality; Men who will fix the State upon those bases of morals & of politicks, which are our old, & immemorial, & I hope will be our eternal possession.

This power to such Men must come from without. — It may be given to you in pity, for surely no Nation ever called so pathetically on the compassion of all its neighbours. It may be given by those neighbours on motives of safety to themselves. Never shall I think any Country in Europe to be secure, whilst there is established in the very center of it, a State (if so it may be called) founded on principles of Anarchy, & which is in reality a College of armed fanaticks for the propagation of the principles of assassination, robbery, rebellion, fraud, faction, oppression, & impiety. Mahomet, hid as he was for a time, in the bottom of the sands of Arabia, had his spirit & character been discover'd, would be an object of precaution to provident minds. What if he had erected his fanatick standard for the destruction of the Christian Religion in the ~~midst of the light~~ sunshine of Asia? The Princes of Europe, in the begining of this Century, did well not to suffer the Monarchy of France to swallow up the others. They ought not now, in my opinion, to suffer all the Monarchies & Commonwealths to be swallow'd up in the gulph of this polluted Anarchy. They may be tolerably safe at present, because the comparative power of France, for the present, is little: But times & occasions make dangers. Intestine troubles may arise in other Countries. There is a Power always on the watch, qualified & disposed to profit of every conjuncture, to establish their own principles & modes of mischief, wherever they can hope for success. What mercy would these Usurpers have on other Sovereigns, & on other Nations, when they treat their own King with such unparallelled indignities, & so cruelly oppress their own Countrymen?

The King of Prussia, in concurrence with us, nobly interfered to save Holland from confusion. The same power, joined with the rescued Holland, & with Great Britain, has put the Emperor in the possession of the Netherlands, & secured, under that Prince, from all arbitrary innovation, the antient hereditary Constitution of those Provinces. The Chamber of Wetzler has restored the Bishop of Liege, unjustly dispossess'd by the rebellion of his Subjects. The King of Prussia, tho' bound by no treaty, nor alliance of blood, nor having

any particular reasons for thinking the Emperor's Government would be more mischievous or more oppressive to human Nature than that of the Turk, yet on mere motives of policy, that Prince has interposed, with the threat of all his force, to snatch even the Turk from the pounces of the Imperial Eagle. If this is done in favour of a barbarous Nation, with a barbarous neglect of police, fatal to the human race, in favour of a Nation, by principle in eternal enmity with the Christian name; a Nation which will not so much as give the salutation of peace (Salam) to any of us; nor make any pact with any Christian Nation, beyond a truce.— If this be done in favour of the Turk, shall it be thought; either impolitick, or unjust, or uncharitable, to employ the same power to rescue from captivity, a virtuous Monarch (by the courtesy of Europe considerd as most Christian) who, after an intermission of 175 years, had called together the States of his Kingdom, to reform abuses, to establish a free Government, & to strengthen his Throne; a Monarch, who at the very outset, without force, even without sollicitation, had given to his people such a Magna Charta of privileges as never was given by any King to any Subjects. Is it to be tamely borne by Kings who love their Subjects, or by Subjects who love their Kings, that this Monarch in the midst of these gracious acts, was insolently & cruelly torn from his Palace by a gang of Traitors & Assassins, & kept in close prison to this very hour; whilst his royal name, & fairer character were used for the total ruin of those whom the laws had appointed him to protect.

The only offence of this unhappy Monarch towards his people, was his attempt, under a Monarchy, to give them a free Constitution. For this, by an example hitherto unheard of in the World, he has been deposed. It might well disgrace Sovereigns to take part with a deposed Tyrant. It would suppose in them a vitious sympathy. But not to make a common cause with a just Prince, dethroned by Traitors & Rebels, who proscribe, plunder, confiscate, & in every way, cruelly oppress their fellow Citizens, in my opinion, is to forget what is due to the honour & to the Rights of all virtuous & legal Government. I think the King of France to be as much an object both of policy & compassion as the Grand Seignor or his States. I do not conceive, that the total annihilation of France (if that could be effected) is a desirable thing to Europe, or even to this, its rival Nation. Provident patriots did not think it good for Rome, that even Carthage should be quite destroyed; & he was a wise Greek, wise for the general Grecian interests, as well as a brave Lacedemonian Enemy, & generous Conqueror, who did not wish, by the destruction of Athens, to pluck out the other eye of Greece.

I am not apprehensive, that in speaking freely on the subject of the King & Queen of France, I shall accelerate, (as you fear) the execution of traiterous designs against them. You are of opinion Sir, that the Usurpers may, & that they will gladly lay hold of any pretext to throw off the very name of a King.— Assuredly I do not wish ill to your King; but better for him not to live (he does not reign) than to live the passive instrument of Tyranny, & usurpation.

I certainly meant to shew to the best of my power, that the existence of such an executive Officer in such a system of Republick as theirs is absurd in the highest degree. But in demonstrating this — to them at least, I can have made no discovery. They only hold out the Royal name to catch those Frenchmen to whom the name of King is still venerable. They calculate the duration of that sentiment; & when they find it nearly expiring, they will not trouble themselves with excuses for extinguishing the name, as they have the thing. They used it as a sort of navel string to nourish their unnatural Offspring from the Bowels of Royalty itself. Now that the Monster can purvey for its own subsistence, it will only carry the mark about it, as a token of its having torn the Womb it came from. Tyrants seldom want pretexts. Fraud is the ready Minister of injustice, & whilst the currency of false pretence & sophistick reasoning was expedient to their designs, they were under no necessity of drawing upon me to furnish them with that coin. But pretexts & sophisms have had their day; & have done their work. The usurpation no longer seeks plausibility. It trusts to power.

Nothing that I can say, or that you can say, will hasten them by a single hour, in the execution of a design which they have long since entertained. In spite of their solemn declarations, their soothing addresses, & the multiplied oaths, which they have taken, & forced others to take, they will assassinate the King, when his name will no longer be necessary to their designs; but not a moment sooner. They will probably first assassinate the Queen, whenever the renew'd menace of such an assassination loses its effect upon the anxious mind of an affectionate Husband. At present, the advantage which they derive from the daily threats against her life, is her only security for preserving it. They keep their Sovereign alive for the purpose of exhibiting him, like some wild beast at a fair; as if they held a Bajazet in a cage. They choose to make Monarchy contemptible by exposing it to derision in the person of the most benevolent of their Kings.

In my opinion, their insolence appears more ~~odious~~ odious even than their crimes. The horrors of the 5th & 6th of Octr were less detestable than the festival of the 14th of July. There are situations (God forbid I should that of the 5th & 6th of Octr one of them) in which the best Men may be

be confounded with the worst, & in the darkness & confusion, in the press & medley of such extremities, it may not be so easy to discriminate the one from the other. The necessities created even by ill designs have their excuse. They may be forgotten by others, when the guilty themselves do not choose to cherish their recollection, & by ruminating their Offences, nourish themselves thro' the example of their past, to the perpetration of future crimes. It is in the relaxation of security, it is in the expansion of prosperity, it is in the hour of dilatation of the heart, & of its softening into festivity & pleasure, that the real character of men is discovered. If there is any good in them in appears then or never. Even Wolves & Tygers, when gorged with their prey are safe & gentle. It is at such times that noble minds give all the reins to their good nature. They indulge their genius even to intemperance, in kindness to the afflicted, in generosity to the conquerd; forbearing insults, forgiving injuries, overpaying benefits. Full of dignity themselves, they respect dignity in all, but they feel it sacred in the unhappy. But it is then, & basking in the Sunshine of unmerited fortune, that low, sordid, ungenerous, reptile souls, swell with their hoarded poisons; it is then that they display their odious splendour, & shine out in the full lustre of their native villainy & baseness. It is in that season that no man of sense or honour can be mistaken for one of them. It was in such a season (for them) of political ease & security, tho' their people were but just emerged from actual famine, & were ready to be plunged into a gulph of penury & beggary, that your philosophick Lords chose, with an ostentatious pomp & luxury, to feast an incredible number of idle & thoughtless people, collected with art & pains from all quarters of the World. They constructed a vast Amphitheatre in which they raised a species of* pillory. On this pillory they set their lawful King & Queen, with an insulting figure over their heads. There they exposed these objects of pity & respect to all good minds, to the derision of an unthinking & unprincipled multitude, degenerated even from the versatile tenderness which marks the irregular & capricious feelings of the populace. That their cruel insult might have nothing wanting to complete it, they chose the Anniversary of that day

* The pillory (Carcan) in England is generally made very high, like that raised for exposing the King of France.

day in which they had exposed the life of their Prince to the most imminent dangers, & the vilest indignities, just following the instant when the Assassins whom they hired without owning, first openly took up arms against their King, corrupted his Guards, surprized his Castle, butcherd some of the poor Invalids of his Garrison, murderd his Governor, & like wild beasts, tore to pieces the chief Magistrate of his Capital City, on account of his fidelity to his service.

Till the Justice of the World is awakend, such as these will go on, without admonition, & without provocation, to every extremity. Those who have made the exhibition of the 14th. of July are capable of every evil. They do not commit crimes for their designs; but they form designs that they may commit crimes. It is not their necessity, but their nature that impels them. They are modern philosophers, which, when you say of them, you express every thing that is ignoble, savage, ~~[illegible]~~ & hard hearted.

Besides the sure tokens which are given by the spirit of their particular arrangements, there are some characteristick ~~[illegible]~~ lineaments in the general policy of your tumultuous despotism which, in my opinion, indicate beyond a doubt that no revolution whatsoever in their disposition is to be expected. I mean their scheme of educating the rising generation, the principles which they intend to instil, & the sympathies which they wish to form in the mind, at the season in which it is the most susceptible. Instead of forming their young men to that docility, to that modesty, which are the grace & charm of youth, to an admiration of famous examples, & to an averseness to any thing which approaches to pride, petulance, & self conceit (distempers to which that time of life is of itself sufficiently liable) they artificially foment these evil dispositions, & even form them into springs of action. Nothing ought to be more weighed than the nature of books recommended by publick authority. So recommended they soon form the character of the age. Uncertain indeed is the efficacy, limited indeed is the extent of a virtuous institution. But if Education takes in vice as any part of its system, there is no doubt but that it will operate with abundant energy & to an extent indefinite. The Magistrate, who in favour of freedom, thinks

thinks himself obliged to suffer all sorts of publications, is under a stricter duty than any other well to consider what sort of Writers he shall authorize; & shall recommend by the strongest of all sanctions, that is, by publick honours & rewards. He ought to be cautious how he reccomends Authors of mixed or ambiguous morality. He ought to be fearful of putting into the hands of Youth, writers indulgent to the peculiarities of their own complexion; lest they should teach the humours of the Professor, rather than the principles of the Science. He ought above all to be cautious in recommending any Writer who has carried marks of a deranged understanding; for where there is no sound reason there can be no real Virtue; & malice is ever vitious & malignant.

The National Assembly proceeds on maxims the very reverse of these. The Assembly recommends to its Youth, a study of the bold Experimentors in Morality. Every body knows, that there is a great dispute amongst their Leaders, which of them is the best resemblance to Rousseau. In truth they all resemble him. His blood they transfuse into their minds, & into their manners. Him they study; him they meditate; him they turn over; in all the time they can spare from the laborious mischief of the day, or the debauches of the Night. Rousseau is their Canon of holy writ; in his life he is their Canon of Polycletus; He is their standard figure of perfection. To this Man, & to this Writer, as a pattern to Authors & to Frenchmen, the founderies of Paris are now running for Statues, with the kettles of their poor, & the bells of their Churches. If an Author had written like a great Genius, on Geometry, tho' his practical & speculative morals were vitious in the extreme, it might appear that in voting the Statue, they honour'd only the Geometrician. But Rousseau is a Moralist, or he is nothing. It is impossible therefore, putting the circumstances together, to mistake their design, in choosing the Author, with whom they have begun to recommend a course of studies.

Their great problem is to find a substitute for all the principles which hitherto have been employed to regulate the human will, & action. They find dispositions in the mind, of such force & quality, as may fit men far better than the old morality, for the purposes of such a state as theirs; & may go much further in supporting their power, & destroying their Enemies. They have therefore chosen a selfish, flattering,

seductive,

seductive, ostentatious vice, in the place of plain duty. True humility, the basis of the Christian system, is the low, but deep, & firm foundation of all real virtue. But this, as very painful in the practice, & little imposing in the appearance, they have totally discarded. Their object is to merge all natural & all social sentiment in inordinate vanity. In a small degree, & conversant in little things, vanity is of little moment. When full grown it is the worst of Vices, & the occasional mimick of them all. It makes the whole Man false. It leaves nothing sincere or trustworthy about him. His best qualities are poison'd & perverted by it, & operate exactly as the worst. When your Lords had many Writers as immoral as the object of their Statue, (such as Voltaire & others) they chose Rousseau; because in him, that peculiar vice, which they wished to erect into a ruling Virtue, was by far the most conspicuous.

We have had the great Professor & founder of the Philosophy of vanity, in England. As I had good opportunities of knowing his proceedings almost from day to day, he left no doubt in my mind, that he entertained no principle either to influence his heart, or to guide his understanding, but Vanity. With this vice he was possess'd to a degree little short of madness. It is from the same depraved eccentric vanity, that this the insane Socrates of the National Assembly, was impelled to publish a mad confession of his mad faults, & to attempt a new sort of Glory, from bringing hardily to light, the obscure & vulgar vices, which we know may sometimes be blended with eminent talents. He has not observed on the nature of vanity - Who does not know that it is omnivorous: That it has no choice in its food; - that it is fond to talk even of its own faults & vices, as what will excite surprize & draw attention, & what will pass at worst for openness & candour. It was the abuse & perversion which vanity makes even of hypocrisy, which has driven Rousseau to record a life, not so much as chequered here & there, with virtues; or even distinguish'd by a single good action. It is such a life he chooses to offer to the attention of mankind. It is such a life, that with a wild defiance, he flings in the face of his Creator, whom he acknowleges only to brave. Your Assembly knowing how much more powerful example is found than precept, has chosen this Man, (by his own account without a single virtue) for

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a model. To him they erect their first Statue. From him they commence their series of honours & distinctions.

It is that new invented virtue, which your Masters canonize, that led their moral Hero, constantly to exhaust the stores of his powerful rhetoric, in the expression of universal benevolence; whilst his heart was incapable of harbouring one spark of common parental affection. Benevolence to the whole species, & want of feeling for every Individual with whom the professors come in contact, form the character of the new philosophy. Setting up for an unsocial independence, this their Hero of vanity, refuses the just price of common labour, as well as the tribute which opulence owes to genius, & which, when paid, honours the giver & the receiver; & then he pleads his beggary as an excuse for his crimes. He melts with tenderness for those only who touch him by the remotest relation, & then, without one natural pang, casts away, as a sort of Offal & excrement the spawn of his disgustful amours, & sends his Children to the hospital of foundlings. The Bear, loves, licks, & forms her young: but Bears are not philosophers. Vanity however, finds its account in reversing the train of our natural feelings. Thousands admire the sentimental Writer; The affectionate father is hardly known in his parish.

Under this philosophic Instructor in the Ethics of vanity, they have attempted in France a regeneration of the moral constitution of man. Statesmen, like your present Rulers, exist by every thing which is spurious, fictitious, & false; by every thing which takes the Man from his house, & sets him on a Stage; which makes him up an artificial Creature, with painted theatric sentiments, fit to be seen by the glare of candle-light; & formed to be contemplated at a due distance. Vanity is but too apt to prevail with all of us, & in all Countries. To the improvement of Frenchmen, it seems not absolutely necessary that it should be taught upon System. But it is plain, that the present Rebellion was its legitimate Offspring; & it is piously fed by that Rebellion with a daily dole.

If the system of Institution, recommended by the Assembly, is false & theatrick, it is because their system of Government is of the same character. To that, & to that alone, it is strictly conformable. To understand either, we must connect the morals with

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the politicks of the Legislators. Your practical, Philosophers, systematick in every thing, have wisely began at the scource. As the relation between parents & Children is the first among the elements of vulgar, natural morality,* they erect statues to a wild, ferocious, low-minded, ~~[illegible]~~ hard-hearted father of fine general feelings; a lover of his kind, but a hater of his kindred. Your Masters reject the duties of this vulgar relation, as contrary to liberty; as not founded in the social compact; & not binding according to the rights of Men; because the relation is not of course, the result of free election; never so on the side of the Children, not always on the part of the Parents.

The next relation which they regenerate by their Statues to Rousseau is that which is next in sanctity to that of a father. They differ from those old fashiond thinkers, who considerd Pedagogues as sober & venerable characters, & allied to the parental. The moralists of the dark times Preceptorem sancti voluere parentis esse loco. In this age of light, they teach the people, that Preceptors ought to be in the place of Gallants. They systematically corrupt a very corruptible Race (for some time a growing nuisance amongst you) a set of pert, petulant Literators, to whom, instead of their proper, but severe, unostentatious duties, they assign the brilliant part of Men of wit & pleasure, of gay, young, military sparks, & danglers at Toilets. They call on the rising generation ~~of~~ in France, to take a sympathy in the adventures & fortunes, & they endeavour to engage their sensibility on the side of Pedagogues, who betray the most awful family trusts, & vitiate their female Pupils. They teach the people, that the Debauchers of Virgins, almost in the arms of their parents, may be safe Inmates in their house, & even fit Guardians of the honour of those Husbands who succeed legaley to the office the young ~~[illegible]~~ Literators had pre-occupied, without asking leave of law or conscience.

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Thus they dispose of all the family relations of Parents & Children, Husbands & Wives. Thro' this same Instructor, by whom they corrupt the morals, they corrupt the taste. Taste & elegance, tho' they are reckoned only among the smaller & secondary morals, yet are of no mean importance in the regulation of life. A moral taste is not of force to turn vice into Virtue; but it recommends Virtue with something like the blandishments of pleasure; & it infinitely abates the evils of vice. Rousseau, a writer of great force & vivacity, is totally destitute of taste, in any sense of the word. Your Masters, who are his Scholars, conceive that all refinement has an Aristocratic character. The last age had exhausted all its powers, in giving a grace & nobleness to our natural appetites, & in raising them into higher class & order than seemd justly to belong to them. Thro' Rousseau, your Masters are resolved to destroy these Aristocratick prejudices. The passion called love has so general & powerful an influence; It makes so much of the entertainment, & indeed so much the occupation of that part of life, which decides the character for ever; that the mode, & the principles on which it engages the sympathy, & strikes the imagination, becomes of the utmost importance to the morals & manners of every society. Your Rulers were well aware of this, & in their system of changing your ~~[illegible]~~ manners to accomodate them to their Politicks, they found nothing so convenient as Rousseau. Thro' him, they teach Men to love after the ~~[illegible]~~ fashion of Philosophers; that is, they teach to Men, to Frenchmen, a love without gallantry; a love without any thing of that fine flower of youthfulness & gentility, which places it, if not among the virtues, among the ornaments of life. Instead of this passion, naturally allied to graces & manners, they infuse into their youth an unfashiond, indelicate, sour, gloomy, ferocious medley of pedantry & lewdness; of Metaphysical speculations, blended with the coarsest sensuality. Such is the general morality of the passions to be found in their famous Philosopher in his famous work of philosophick gallantry, the Nouvelle Eloise.

When the fence from the gallantry of Preceptors is broken down, & your families are no longer protected by decent pride, & salutary domestick prejudice, there is but one step to a frightful corruption. The Rulers in the National Assembly are in good hopes that the females of the first families in France may become an easy prey to Dancing-Masters, Fidlers, Pattern drawers, Friseurs, & Valets de Chambre, &

other

other active Citizens of that description, who having the entry into your houses, & being half domesticated by their situation, may be blended with you by regular & irregular relations. By a law they have made these people your Equals. By adopting the sentiments of Rousseau, they have made them your Rivals. In this manner, these great Legislators complete their plan of levelling, & establish their Rights of Men on a sure foundation.

I am certain that the writings of Rousseau lead directly to this kind of shameful evil. I have often wonderd how he comes to be so much more admired & followd on the Continent than he is here. Perhaps a secret charm in the language may have its share in this extraordinary difference. We certainly perceive, & to a degree we feel in this Writer, a style glowing, animated, enthusiastic; at the same time that we find it lax, diffuse, & not in the best taste of composition; all the members of the piece being pretty equally labourd & expanded, without any due selection, or subordination of parts. He is generally too much on the stretch, & his manner has little variety. We cannot rest upon any of his works, tho' they contain observations which occasionally discover a considerable insight into human Nature. But his doctrines, on the whole, are so inapplicable to real life & manners, that we never dream of drawing from them any rule for laws or conduct, or of fortifying or illustrating any thing by a reference to his opinions. They have, with us, the fate of older paradoxes,

> cum ventum ad verum est sensus moresque repugnant,
> atque ipsa utilitas justi prope mater et æqui.

Perhaps bold speculations are more acceptable, because more new to you, than to us, who have been long since satiated with them. We continue, as in the two last ages, to read more generally than I believe is done on the Continent, the Authors of sound antiquity. These occupy our minds. They give us another taste & turn; & will not suffer us to be more than transiently amused with paradoxical morality. It is not, that I consider this Writer as wholly destitute of just notions. Amongst his irregularities, it must be reckoned that he is sometimes moral, & moral in a very sublime strain. But the general spirit & tendency of his works is mischievous, & the more mischievous

-ous for this mixture. For perfect depravity of sentiment is not reconcileable with eloquence; & the mind (tho' corruptible not complexionally vitious) would reject & throw off with disgust, a lesson of pure & unmixed evil. These writers make even virtue a pandar to vice.

However, I less consider the Author, than the system of the Assembly in perverting morality thro' his means. This I confess makes me nearly despair of any attempt upon the minds of their followers, thro' reason, honour, or conscience. The great object of your Tyrants is to destroy the Gentlemen of France, & for that purpose they destroy, to the best of their power, all the effect of those relations which may render considerable men powerful, or even safe. To destroy that order, they vitiate the whole Community. That no means may exist of confederating against their tyranny, by the false sympathies of this Nouvelle Eloise, they endeavour to subvert the principles of domestic trust & fidelity which form the discipline of social life. They propagate principles, by which every servant may think it, if not his duty, at least his privilege to betray his Master. By these principles every considerable father of a family loses the sanctuary of his house. Debet sua cuique domus esse perfugium tutissimum, says the law, which your Legislators have taken so much pains, first to decry, then to degrade. They destroy all the tranquility & security of domestic life; turning the Asylum of the house into a gloomy prison, where the father of the family may drag out a miserable existence, endangerd in proportion to the apparent means of his safety; where he is worse than solitary in a crowd of domesticks, & more apprehensive from his Servants & Inmates, than from the hired, blood-thirsty Mob, without doors, who are ready to pull him to the lanterne.

It is thus, & for the same end, that they endeavour to destroy that Tribunal of conscience which exists independently of edicts & decrees. Your Despots govern by terror. They know, that he who fears God, fears nothing else; & therefore they eradicate from the mind thro' their Voltaire, & their D'alembert, & their Helvetius, & the rest of that infamous gang, that only sort of fear which generates true courage. Their object is, that their fellow-Citizens may be under the dominion of no awe but that of their Committee of research, & of their lanterne. Having found the advantage of a assassination in the form of their Tyranny, it is the grand resource in which they trust for the support of it. Whoever opposes any of their

proceedings

proceedings, or is suspected of a design to oppose them, is to answer it with his life, or the lives of his wife & Children.

This infamous, cruel, & cowardly practice of assassination, they have the impudence to call merciful. They boast, that they have operated their usurpation rather by terror than by force; & that a few seasonable murders have prevented the blood-shed of many battles. There is no doubt but they will extend those acts of Mercy whenever they see an occasion. Dreadful however will be the consequences of their attempt to avoid the evils of war, by the merciful policy of Murders. If, by effectual punishment of the guilty, they do not wholly disavow that practice, & the threat of it too, as any part of their policy. If ever a foreign Prince enters into France, he must enter it, as into a Country of Assassins. The mode of civilized war will not be practiced: Nor are the French who act on the present system, entitled to expect it. Those whose known policy it is to assassinate every Citizen whom they suspect to be discontented by their Tyranny, & to corrupt the Soldiery of every open Enemy, must look for no modified hostility. All war which is not battle, will be military execution. This will beget acts of retaliation from you; & every retaliation will beget a new revenge. The hell-hounds of War, on all sides, will be uncoupled & unmuzzled. The new School of murder & barbarism, set up in Paris, having destroyed (so far as in it lies) all the other manners & principles, which have hitherto civilized Europe, will destroy also, the mode of civilized war, which more than any thing else, has distinguish'd the Christian World. Such is the approaching golden Age, which the Virgil of your Assembly sung to his Pollio!

In such a situation of your political, your civil, & your social morals & manners, how can you be hurt by the freedom of any discussion. Caution is for those who have something to lose. What I have said to justify myself, in not apprehending any ill consequence from a free discussion ~~from~~ of the absurd consequences which flow from the relation of the lawful King to the usurped Constitution, will apply to my vindication with regard to the exposure I have made of the state of the Army under the same sophistick usurpation. The present Tyrants want no arguments to prove, what they must daily feel,

feel, that no good Army can exist on their principles. They are in no want of a Monitor to suggest to them the policy of getting rid of the army, as well as of the King, whenever they are in a condition to effect that measure. What hopes may be entertained of your Army, for the restoration of your liberties, I know not. At present, yielding obedience to the pretended orders of a King, who they are perfectly apprised has no will, & who never can issue a mandate, which is not intended, in the first operation, or in its certain consequences, for his own destruction, your Army seems to make one of the principal links in the chain of that servitude of Anarchy, by which a cruel usurpation holds an undone People, at once in bondage & confusion.

You ask me what I think of the conduct of General Monk. How this affects your case I cannot tell. I doubt whether you possess in France any persons in a capacity to serve the French Monarchy in the same manner in which Monk served the Monarchy of England. The Army which Monk commanded, had been formed by Cromwell to a perfection of discipline, which perhaps has never been exceeded. That Army was besides of an excellent composition. The Soldiers were Men of extraordinary piety after their mode, of the greatest regularity, & even severity of manners; brave in the field, but modest, quiet, & orderly in their Quarters; Men who abhorred the idea of assassinating their Officers, or any other persons; & who (those at least who served in this Island) were firmly attached to those Generals, by whom they were well treated, & ably commanded. Such an Army once gained, might be depended on. I doubt much, if you could now find a Monk, whether a Monk could find, in France, such an Army.

I certainly agree with you, that in all probability, we owe our whole Constitution to the restoration of the English Monarchy. The state of things from which Monk relieved England, was however, by no means, at that time, so deplorable in any sense, as yours is now, & under the present sway is likely to continue. Cromwell had delivered England from Anarchy. His Government, tho' military & despotick had been regular; & under the Iron & under the yoke, the soil yielded its produce. After

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his death, the evils of Anarchy were rather dreaded, than felt. Every Man was safe in his house, & in his property. But it must be admitted that Monk freed the Nation from great & just apprehensions both of future Anarchy, & of probable Tyranny, in some form or other. The King whom he gave us, was indeed the very reverse of your benignant Sovereign, who, in reward for his attempt to bestow liberty on his subjects, now languishes himself in prison. The person given to us by Monk was a Man without any sense of his duty as a prince; without regard to the dignity of his crown; without any love to his people; dissolute, false, venal, & destitute of any positive good quality whatsoever, except a pleasant temper, & the manners of a Gentleman. Yet the restoration of our Monarchy, even in the person of such a Prince, was every thing to us; for without Monarchy in England, most certainly we never can enjoy either peace or liberty. It was under this conviction, that the very first regular step which we took on the Revolution of 1688, was to fill the Throne with a real King; & even before it could be done in due form, the Chiefs of the Nation did not attempt themselves to exercise Authority, so much as by interim. They instantly requested the Prince of Orange to take the Government on himself. The Throne was not effectively vacant for an hour.

Your fundamental laws, as well as ours, suppose a Monarchy. Your zeal Sir, in standing so firmly for it, as you have done, shews not only a sacred respect for your honour, & fidelity, but a well informed attachment to the real welfare, & true liberties of your Country. I have expressed myself ill, if I have given you cause to imagine, that I ~~have~~ preferred the conduct of those who have retired from this warfare, to your behaviour, who, with a courage & constancy, almost supernatural, have struggled against Tyranny, & kept the field to the last. You see I have corrected the exceptionable part, in the Edition which I now send you. Indeed in such extremities as yours, it is not easy to say, in a political view, what line of conduct is the most adviseable. In that state of things, I cannot bring myself severely to condemn persons who are wholly unable to bear so much as the sight of those Men in the Throne of Legislation, who are only fit to be the objects of criminal justice. If fatigue, if disgust, if an unsurmountable nausea, drive them away from such spectacles — Miseriarum pars non nimia erat, videre et aspice. I cannot blame them. He must have an heart of adamant who could hear a set of

Traitors

Traitors, puffed up with unexpected & undeserved power, obtained by an ignoble, unmanly, & perfidious Rebellion, treating their honest fellow-Citizens as Rebels, because they refused to bind themselves thro' their conscience, against the dictates of conscience itself, & had declined to swear an active compliance with their own ruin. How could a man of common flesh & blood endure that those, who but the other day had skulked unobserved in antichambers, scornfully insulting Men, illustrious in their rank, sacred in their function, & venerable in their character, now in the decline of life, & swimming on the wrecks of their fortunes, telling such Men scornfully & outrageously after they had robbed them of all their property, that it is more than enough, if they are allowed what will keep them from absolute famine, & that for the rest, they must let their grey hairs fall over the plow, to make out a scanty subsistence, with the sweat of their brow, & the labour of their hands. Last, & worst, who would endure to hear, this unnatural, insolent, & savage despotism called liberty? If at this distance, & sitting quietly by my fire, I cannot read of their decrees & speeches, without indignation, shall I condemn those who have fled from the actual sight & hearing of all these horrors? No, No. Mankind has no title to demand that we should be slaves to their guilt & insolence; or that we should serve them in spite of themselves. Minds, sore with the poignant sense of insulted Virtue, fill'd with high disdain against the pride of triumphant baseness, often have it not in their choice to stand their ground. Their complexion (which might defy the rack) cannot go thro' such a Trial. Something very high must fortify Men to that proof. But when I am driven to comparison, surely I cannot hesitate for a moment, to prefer to such Men as are common, those Heroes, who in the midst of despair, perform all the tasks of hope; Who subdue their feelings to their duties; who in the cause of humanity, liberty, & honour, abandon all the satisfactions of life, & every day incur a fresh risque of life itself. Do me the justice to believe that I never can prefer any factitious virtue (virtue still) to the unconquer'd perseverance, to the affectionate patience of those who watch day & night, by the bedside of their delirious Country, who for their love to that dear & venerable name, bear all the disgusts, & all the buffets they receive from their frantick Mother. Sir, I do look on you as true Martyrs; I regard you as Soldiers, who act far more in the spirit of our Commander in chief, & the Captain of our salvation, than those who have left you; tho' I must first very thoroughly bolt myself, & know that I could do better, before I can censure them. I assure you Sir, that when

when I consider your unconquerable fidelity to your Sovereign & to your Country, the courage, fortitude, magnanimity, & long suffering of yourself, of the Abbé Maury, & of Mr Cazales, & of many worthy persons of all orders, in your Assembly, I forget in the lustre of these great qualities, that, on your side has been displayed an eloquence, so ~~extem~~ rational, manly, & convincing, that no time, or Country, perhaps has ever excelled. But your talents disappear in my admiration of your virtues.

As to Mr Mounier & Mr Lally, I have always wished to do justice to their parts, & their eloquence, & the general purity of their motives. Indeed I saw very well from the begining, the Mischiefs which, with all these talents, & good intentions, they would do to their Country, thro' their confidence in systems. But their distemper was an Epidemic Malady. They were Young, & inexperienced; & when will young & inexperienced Men learn caution & distrust of themselves? and when will Men, young or old, if suddenly raised to far higher power, than that which absolute Kings & Emperors, commonly enjoy, learn any thing like Moderation? Monarch in general, respect some settled order of things, which they find it difficult to move from its basis, & to which they are obliged to conform themselves, even where ~~they~~ there are no positive limitations to their power. These Gentlemen conceived, that they were chosen to new model the State, & even the whole order of civil society itself. No wonder that they entertained dangerous visions, when the King's Ministers, Trustees for the sacred deposit of the Monarchy, were so infected with the contagion of project & system. (I can hardly think it black, premeditated treachery) that they publickly advertised for plans & schemes of Government, as if they were to provide for the rebuilding of an Hospital that had been burned down. What was this, but to unchain the fury of rash speculation, amongst a People, of itself but too apt to be guided by a heated imagination, & a wild spirit of adventure?

The fault of Mr Mounier, & Mr Lally was very great, but it was very general. If these Gentlemen stopped when they came to the brink of the gulph of guilt & publick misery that yawned before them in the abyss of these dark & bottomless speculations, I forgive their first error. In that they were involved with many. Their repentance

repentance was their own. They who consider, Mounier & Lally, as Deserters, must regard themselves as Murderers & as Traitors. For from what else than Murder & treason did they desert? For my part, I honour them for not having carried mistake into crime. If indeed, I thought that they were not cured by experience; that they were not made sensible that those who would reform a State, ought to assume some actual Constitution of Government which is to be reformed; if they are not at length assured that it is become a necessary preliminary to liberty in France, to commence by the re-establishment of order, & property of every kind, thro' the re-establishment of their Monarchy, & under that Monarchy, of every one of the old, habitual distinctions & classes of the state. If they do not see that these classes are not to be confounded in order to be afterwards revived & separated — If they are not convinced that the scheme of parochial & Clubb Governments takes up the State at the wrong end & is a low & senseless contrivance, as making the sole Constitution of a supreme power, I should then allow, that their early rashness ought to be remembered to the last moment of their lives.

You gently reprehend me, because in holding out the picture of your disastrous situation, I suggest no plan for a remedy. Alas! Sir, the proposition of plans, without an attention to circumstances, is the very ~~cause~~ cause of all your misfortunes; & never shall you find me aggravating by the infusion of any speculations of mine, the evils which have arisen from the speculations of others. Your malady in this respect, is a disorder of repletion. You seem to think that my keeping back my poor ideas, may arise from an indifference to the welfare of a foreign, & sometimes an hostile Nation. No, Sir, I faithfully assure you my reserve is owing to no such causes. Is this letter, swelled to a Second book, a mark of Rational antipathy or even of Rational indifference? I should act altogether in the spirit of the same caution, in a similar state of our own domestick affairs. If I were to venture any advice, in any case, it would be my best. The sacred duty of an adviser (one of the most inviolable that exists) would lead me, towards a real Enemy, to act as if my best friend were the party concerned. But I dare not risque a speculation with no better view of your affairs than at present I can command; my caution is not from disregard, but from sollicitude for your welfare. It is suggested solely from my dread of

becoming

becoming the Author of inconsiderate Counsel.

It is not, that as this strange series of actions has passed before my eyes, I have not indulged my mind in a great variety of political speculations concerning them. But compelled by no such positive duty as does not permit me to evade an opinion, — called upon by no ruling power, without authority as I am, & without confidence, I should ill answer my own ideas of what would become myself, or what would be serviceable, if I were, as a Volunteer, to obtrude any project of mine upon a Nation, to whose circumstances I could not be sure it might be applicable.

Permit me to say, that if I were as confident, as I ought to be diffident in my own loose, general ideas, I never should venture to broach them, if at but twenty leagues distance from the center of your affairs. I must see with my own eyes, I must in a manner, touch with my own hands, not only the fixed, but the momentary circumstances, before I would venture to suggest any political project whatsoever. I must know the power & disposition to accept, to execute, to persevere. I must see all the aids, & all the obstacles. I must see the means of correcting the plan, where correctives would be wanted. I must see the things; I must see the Men. Without a concurrence & adaption of these to the design, the very best speculative projects might become not only useless, but mischievous. Plans must be made for Men. We cannot think of making Men, & bending Nature to our designs. People at a distance must judge ill of Men. They do not always answer to their reputation when you approach them. Nay, the perspective varies, & shews them quite otherwise than you thought them. At a distance, if we judge uncertainly of Men, we must judge worse of opportunities, which continually vary their shapes & colours & pass away like Clouds. The Eastern Politicians never do any thing without the opinion of the Astrologers on the fortunate Moment. They are in the right, if they can do no better; for the opinion of fortune is something towards commanding it. Statesmen of a more judicious prescience, look for the fortunate moment too; But they seek it not in the conjunctions & oppositions of planets, but in the conjunctions & oppositions of Men & things. These form their Almanack.

To illustrate the mischief of a wise plan, without any attention to means & circumstances, it is not necessary to go further than to your recent history. In the condition, in which France was found three Years ago.

ago, what better system could be proposed, what less ever savouring of wild theory, what fitter to provide for all the exigencies whilst it reformed all the abuses of Government, than the convention of the States General? I think nothing better could be imagined. But I have censured, & do still presume to censure your Parliament of Paris for not having suggested to the King that this proper measure was, of all measures, the most critical & arduous; one in which the utmost circumspection, & the greatest number of precautions were the most absolutely necessary. The very confession that a Government wants either amendment in its conformation, or relief to great distress causes it to lose half its reputation, & as great a proportion of its strength as depends upon that reputation. It was therefore necessary first to put Government out of danger, whilst at its own desire, it suffered such an operation as a general reform at the hands of those who were much more filled with a sense of the disease, than provided with rational means of a cure.

It may be said, that this care, & these precautions were more naturally the duty of the King's Ministers than that of the Parliament. They were so; but every Man must answer in his estimation for the advice he gives, when he puts the conduct of his measure into hands, who he does not know will execute his plans according to his ideas. Three or four Ministers were not to be trusted with the being of the French Monarchy; of all the orders, & of all the distinctions, & all the property of the Kingdom. What must be the prudence of those who could think, in the known temper of the people of Paris, of assembling the States at a place situated as Versailles?

The Parliament of Paris did worse than to inspire this blind confidence into the King. For as if names were things, they took no notice of the Deviations which were manifest in the execution from the true antient principles of the plan which they recommended. These deviations (as Guardian of the Antient laws, usages, & Constitution of the Kingdom) the Parliament of Paris ought not to have suffered without the strongest remonstrances to the Throne. It ought to have sounded the alarm to the whole Nation, as it had often done on things of infinitely less importance. Under pretence of resuscitating the antient Constitution, the Parliament saw one of the strongest

acts of innovation, & the most leading in its consequences, carried in effect before their eyes; & an innovation thro' the medium of despotism: that is, they suffer'd the King's Ministers to new mo the whole representation of the Tiers Etat, & in a great measu that of the Clergy too, & to destroy the antient proportions of th orders. These changes unquestionably the King had no right to make; & here their Parliaments failed in their duty, & along with their Country, have perished by this failure.

What a number of faults have led to this Multitude of Misfortunes, & almost all, from this one source, that of considering certain general maxims without attending to circumstances, to times, to places, to conjunctures, & to Actors. If we do not attend scrupulously to all these, the Medicine of to day becomes the poison of to Morrow. If any measure was in the abstract better than another, it was to call the States —ea vita salus morientibus una.— Certainly it had ~~the~~ that appearance.— But see the consequences of not attendin to critical moments, of not regarding the symptoms, which discriminate diseases, & which distinguish Constitutions, complexions & humours.

—Mox fuerat hoc ipsum exitio; furiisque refecti,
ardebant; ipsique suos, jam morte sub ægra,
(
discissos nudis laniabant dentibus artus.

Thus the potion which was given to strengthen the constitution, to heal divisions, & to compose the minds of Men, becam the source of debility, phrenzy, discord & utter dissolution.

In this, perhaps, I have answerd, I think, another of your Questions. Whether the British Constitution is adapted to you circumstances? When I praised the British Constitution, & wished it to be well studied, I did not mean that its exterior form & positive arrangement should become a model for you, or for any people servilely to copy. I meant to recommend the principles from which it has grown, & the policy on which it

t has been progressively improved, from elements common to you & to us. am sure it is no visionary theory of mine. It is not an advice that bjects you to the hazard of any experiment. I believed the antient rinciples to be wise in all cases of a large Empire that would be free. thought you possessed our principles in your old forms in as great a erfection as we did originally. If your States agreed (as I think they id) with your circumstances, they were best for you. As you had a onstitution formed upon principles similar to ours, my idea was, that ou might have improved them as we have done conforming them the State & exigencies of the times, & the condition of property. your Country, having the conservation of that property, & the ubstantial basis of your Monarchy, as principal objects in all our reforms.

I dont advise an House of Lords to you. Your antient course by Representatives of the Noblesse (in your circumstances) appears to me rather a better institution. I know, that with you, a set of men of rank have betrayed their Constituents, their honour, their Trust, their King, & their Country, & levelled themselves with their Footmen, that thro' this degradation they might afterwards put themselves above their natural Equals. Some of these persons have entertain'd a project, that in reward of this their black perfidy & corruption, they may be chosen to give rise to a new order; & to establish themselves into an House of Lords. Do you think that, under the name of a British Constitution, I mean to recommend to you such Lords, made of such kind of stuff? I do not however include in this description all of those who are fond of this scheme.

If you were now to form such an House of Peers, it would bear, in my opinion, but little resemblance to ours, in its origin, character, or the purposes which it might answer, at the same time that it would destroy your true natural Nobility. But if you are not in a condition to frame an House of Lords, still less are you capable, in my opinion, of framing any thing which virtually & substantially, could be answerable (for the purposes of a stable regular Government) to our House of Commons. That House is, within itself, a much more subtle & artificial combination of parts

& powers than people are generally aware of. What knits it to the other members of the Constitution, what fits it to be, at once, the great support, & the great control of Government; what makes it of such admirable service to that Monarchy, which if it limits, it secures & strengthens, would require a long discourse, belonging to the leisure of a contemplative man; not to one whose duty it is, to join in communicating practically to the People, the blessings of such a Constitution.

Your Tiers Etat was not, in effect & substance an House of Commons. You stood in absolute need of something else to supply the manifest defects in such a body. On a sober & dispassionate view of your old Constitution, as connected with all the present circumstances, I was fully persuaded that the Crown alone, standing as things have stood, & are likely to stand, if you are to have any Monarchy at all, was & is incapable alone of holding a just balance between the two orders, & at the same time of effecting the interior & exterior purposes of a protecting Government. I, whose leading principle it is, to make use of existing materials, was of opinion that the representation of the Clergy as a separate Order was an Institution which touched all the orders more nearly than any of them touched the other, & that it was well fitted to connect them; & to hold a place in any wise ~~[illegible]~~ Monarchical Commonwealth. If I refer you to your original Constitution, & think it, as I do, substantially a good one, I do not at least, amuse in this, no more than in other things, with any inventions of mine. A certain intemperance of intellect is the disease of the time & the scource of all its other diseases. I will keep myself as untainted by it as I can. Your Architects build without a foundation. I would readily lend an helping hand to any superstructure where this is effectually secured, but first I would say

You think, Sir, & you may think rightly, upon the first

view of the theory, that to provide for the exigencies of an Empire so situated & so related as that of France, its King ought to be invested with powers very much superior to those which the King of England possesses under the letter of our Constitution. Every degree of power necessary to the State, & not destructive to the rational & moral freedom of Individuals, to that personal freedom & personal security, which contribute so much to the vigour, the prosperity, the happiness, & the dignity of a Nation, — every degree of power which does not suppose the total absence of all control, & of all responsibility on the part of Ministers, a King of France, in common sense, ought to possess. But whether the exact measure of Authority assigned by the letter of the law, to the King of Great Britain, can answer to the exterior or interior purposes of the French Monarchy, is a point which I cannot venture to judge upon. Here, both in the power given, & in its limitations, we have always cautiously felt our way. The parts of our Constitution have gradually & almost insensibly, in a long course of time, accomodated themselves to each other; & to their common, as well as to their separate purposes. But this mutual adaptation of contending parts, as it has not been in ours, so it can never be in yours or in any Country, the effect of a single instantaneous regulation, & no sound heads could ever think of doing it in that manner.

I believe, Sir, that many on the Continent altogether mistake the condition of a King of Great Britain. He is a real King, & not an executive Officer. If he will not trouble himself with contemptible details, nor wish to degrade himself by becoming a Party in little squabbles, I am far from sure, that a King of Great Britain, in whatever concerns him as a King, or indeed as a rational man, who combines his Publick Interest with his personal satisfaction does not possess a more real, solid, extensive power, than the King of France was possessed of before this ~~miserable~~ miserable revolution. The direct power of the King of England is very considerable. His indirect, & far more certain power,

is great indeed. It stands in need of nothing towards dignity; of nothing towards splendour; of nothing towards authority; of nothing at all towards consideration abroad. When was it that a King of England wanted wherewithal to make him respected, courted, or perhaps even feared in every state in Europe?

I am constantly of opinion, that your States, in three Orders, on the footing on which they stood in 1614 were capable of being brought into a proper & harmonious combination with the Royal authority. This Constitution by Estates was the natural & only just representation of France. It grew out of the habitual conditions, relations & reciprocal claims of Men. It grew out of the circumstances of the Country, & out of the state of property. The wretched scheme of your present Masters, is not to fit the Constitution to the people, but wholly to destroy conditions, to dissolve relations, to change the state of the Nation, & to subvert property, in order to fit their Country to their theory of a Constitution.

Until you could make out practically that great work, a combination of opposing forces "a work of labour long, & endless praise", the utmost caution ought to have been used in the reduction of the Royal power, which alone was capable of holding together the comparatively heterogeneous mass of your States. But at this day, all these considerations are unseasonable. To what end should be discuss the limitations of royal power? Your King is in prison. Why speculate on the measure & standard of liberty? I doubt much, very much, indeed, whether France is at all ripe for liberty upon any standard. Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own ~~appetites~~ appetites; in proportion as their love to justice is above their rapacity; in proportion as their soundness & sobriety of understanding is above their vanity & presumption in proportion as they are more disposed to listen to the Counsels of the wise & good, in preference to the flattery of

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knaves. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will & appetite be placed somewhere; & the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that Men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.

This sentence the prevalent part of your Countrymen execute on themselves. They possessed, not long since, what was next to freedom, a mild paternal Monarchy. They despised it for its weakness. They were offerd a well poised, free constitution. It did not suit their taste or their temper. They carved for themselves; they flew out, murderd, robbed, rebelled. They have succeeded & their Country is an insolent tyranny, made up of cruel & inexorable Masters; & that too of a description hitherto not known in the World. The powers & policies by which they have succeeded, are not those of great Statesmen, or great military Commanders, but the practices of Incendiaries, Assassins, Housebreakers, Robbers, spreaders of false News, & forgers of false orders from authority, & other delinquencies of which ordinary justice takes cognizance. Accordingly the spirit of their rule is exactly correspondent to the means by which they obtained it. They act more in the manner of Thieves who have got possession of an house, than of Conquerors who have subdued a Nation.

Opposed to these, in appearance, but in appearance only, is another band, who call themselves the moderate. These, if I conceive rightly of their conduct, are a set of Men who approve heartily of the whole new Constitution, but wish to lay heavy on the most ~~atr~~ atrocious of those crimes, by which this fine Constitution of theirs has been obtained. They are a sort of people, who affect to proceed as if they thought that Men may deceive without fraud, rob without injustice, & overturn every thing without violence. They are Men who would usurp the Government of their Country with decency & moderation. In fact they are nothing more or better than men with feeble minds, engaged in desperate designs. They are not honest; they are only ineffectual & unsystematick in their iniquity. They are persons who want, not the dispositions, but the energy & vigour that is necessary for great evil machinations. They find, that in such designs, they fall at best into a

secondary rank; & others take the place & lead in usurpation, which they are not qualified to obtain or hold. They envy to their Companions the natural fruit of their crimes; They join to run them down, with the hue & cry of mankind, which pursues their common offences; & then hope to mount into their places on the credit of the sobriety with which they shew themselves disposed to carry on what may seem most plausible in the ~~[illegible]~~ mischievous projects, which they pursue in common. But these Men naturally are despised by those who have heads to know, & are able to go thro' the necessary demands of bold, wicked, enterprizes. They are naturally classed below them; & will only be used by them as inferior instruments. They will be only the Fairfaxes of your Cromwells. If they mean honestly, why do they not strengthen the arms of honest men to support their legal, wise, & free Government, given to them in the spring of 1789, against the invention of craft & the theories of ignorance & folly? If they do not, they must be the shame of both parties, sometimes the tool, sometimes the incumbrance of that, whose views they approve, whose conduct they decry. These people are only made to be the sport of Tyrants. They never can obtain, or communicate freedom.

You ask me too, whether we have a Committee of research. 'No Sir — God forbid! It is the necessary instrument of Tyranny & usurpation; & therefore I do not wonder that it has had an early establishment under your present Lords. We do not want it.

Excuse my length. I have been somewhat occupied, since I was honor'd with your letter; & I should not have been able to answer it at all, but for the hollidays, which have given me means of enjoying the leisure of the Country. ~~[illegible]~~ I am called to duties which I am neither able nor willing to evade. I must soon return to my old conflict with the corruptions & oppressions which have prevailed in our Eastern dominions, I must turn myself wholly from those of France.

In England we <u>cannot</u> work so hard as Frenchmen. Frequent relaxation is necessary to us. You are naturally more intense in your application. I did not know this part of your National

character until I went into France in 1773. At prevent, this your disposition to labour is rather encreased than lessened. In your Assembly you do not allow yourselves a recess even on Sundays. We have two days in the week, besides the festivals; & besides five or six Months of the Summer & Autumn. This continued, unremitted effort of the members of your Assembly, I take to be one among the causes of the mischief they have done. They who always labour can have no true judgment. You never give yourselves time to cool. You can never survey from its proper point of sight, the work you have finished, before you decree its final execution. You can never plan the future by the past. You never go into the Country, soberly & dispassionately, to observe the effect of your measures on their objects. You cannot feel distinctly how far the people are rendered better & improved, or more miserable & depraved by what you have done. You cannot see, with your own eyes, the sufferings & afflictions you cause. You know them but at a distance, on the statements of those who always flatter the reigning power, & who, amidst their representations of the grievances, inflame your minds against those who are oppressed. These are amongst the effects of unremitted labour, when men exhaust their attention, burn out their candles, & are left in the dark. Malo meorum negligentiam, quam istorum obscuram diligentiam.

I have &c

(signed) Edmund Burke.

Beaconsfield
Jany 1791.

1791

Copy of Letter, from
Mr Burke,
to
Mons.r Menonville
Dated, Beaconsfield,
Jan.y 1791.

Ld. Grenville

6768

St James's Square Jan. 26th 1791 —
10. P.M.

It was Lord Grenville's intention to have taken the Liberty to trouble Your Majesty this morning with the inclosed Copy of a Private letter which he has received from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, on the subject of some differences which have arisen between the Lord Lieutenant and General Dillt. But upon consideration Lord Grenville thought that Your Majesty might perhaps rather choose that the letter should

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in the first instance be sent to Your Majesty, and he has for that reason now taken the liberty of transmitting it. Lord Grenville has heard nothing from General Pitt upon the subject, but if he had, he should have felt it as his duty to endeavour as far as was in his power to accomodate matters between them, without Your Majesty being troubled on the subject. But as the Lord Lieutenant seems particularly to wish that his statement of what has passed should be submitted to Your Majesty, Lord Grenville thinks that he should be wanting to the Lord Lieutenant if he did not

comply

Ld. Grenville

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comply with his wishes in that respect. Lord Grenville is under the necessity of transmitting to Your Majesty a Copy of the Letter in question as the original is written in so crowded and small a hand as to be scarcely legible, at least not without great trouble and difficulty.

Lord Grenville

January 26. 1791

Wm. Pitt

6769

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Mr. Pitt having been unavoidably detained till too late to have the honor of receiving Your Majesty's Commands yesterday at St James's, humbly begs Your Majesty's Permission to take this Mode of submitting what has occurred to Him respecting the Disposal of the

several Offices now vacant, and which He is the more desirous of doing, as if the proposed Arrangement should meet with Your Majesty's Approbation, It may be convenient that the Necessary Writs should be moved soon after the next Meeting of the House of Commons.

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Wm. Pitt

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Imagining that Lord Frederic Campbell will be willing to exchange his present Office for that of Joint Paymaster, and that Lord Leicester would exchange his for the Vice Treasurership; He conceives that Lord Hawkesbury might in that case be induced to take the Office of

29 Jan

Master of the Mint; especially if your Majesty should see no Objection to the further Suggestion of his being summoned to the Cabinet, as President of the Committee of Council for Trade. This Circumstance Mr Pitt knows would be in the highest Degree gratifying to them, and seems

6770

liable to no Inconvenience, but might on the contrary, be of considerable advantage from the great Variety of Commercial Points which are continually blended with other Transactions. This Arrangement would have the farther Advantage of opening the Chancellorship

of the Duchy, which has on a former occasion been held with a Seat in the Cabinet, and which He has Reason to believe would be extremely acceptable to the Duke of Grafton. And altho much active Assistance is not to be expected from the Duke's Habit of Life,

6770 (2)

Mr Pitt does not see any other arrangement by which so considerable an accession of strength could be procured to Government.

With respect to the other Office of Joint Paymaster, Mr Pitt is humbly of opinion that considering the Intentions and Abilities of the different Persons who

take part in the House of Commons, It
can not be so usefully employed, as by
giving it to Mr Steele, who might then
be enabled to take a more frequent
share in Debate, and who seems capable
of giving more assistance on various
points of Business, than any other Person
If Your Majesty should see no Objection

Wm. Pitt

Jan. 29 1791

6771

to this Proposal, the Person whom Mr Pitt would be inclined to think of for Secretary of the Treasury (should He be willing to undertake it) is Mr C. Long, Member for Rye, whom He has long known, and on whose Diligence and Discretion He can fully depend. The only other Office on which it is necessary

Wm. Pe

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to trouble Your Majesty, is that of Surveyor of the Woods vacant by the Death of Mr Selwyn; for which he would beg Leave to recommend Sir Adam Ferguson, who has been a steady Supporter and is capable of being a very useful Man of Business. Mr Pitt is ashamed

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Wm. Pitt

Jan. 29 1791

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of trespassing so much at length on
Your Majesty's Indulgence, but He humbly
hopes the Circumstances will plead
his Excuse.

Downing Street.
Saturday Jan. 29th 1791.

Mr. Pitt
to
29. January 1791