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A
LETTER
TO
HENRY GRIFFITHS, Esq.

OF
BEAUMONT LODGE;

FROM
GEORGE CUMBERLAND.

A
LETTER 2.

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OF

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FROM

GEORGE CUMBERLAND.

“ A passionate Man, upon the review of his day, will have
“ very few gratifications to offer to his Pride, when he has
“ considered how his outrages were caused, why they were
“ born, and in what they are likely to end at last.”

Rambler, v. 1. p. 60.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may be thought, by many readers, that the Author of this concise Epistle, has been too sparing of the inferences which might be drawn from so dangerous an accusation as occasioned it; but the fact is, he chose to be so, that the acts alone, might speak for themselves to thinking minds.

His motive, after self defence, is purely social; having been an eye witness of the horrors produced by similar beginnings in France, at the commencement of their Revolution, he feels, that such a propensity to designate particular persons, cannot be too early repressed; more particularly, when it springs from malicious motives, and is attempted to be used as an engine of power, and that at a time like this, when we have occasion for the TRUE SPIRIT OF SAVING UNION; when those, whose information, or sagacity, warned them early of the danger of this unfortunate war, should prove their title to parts and feeling, by cordially forgetting all political animosities; and those who have all along differed from
them

ADVERTISEMENT.

them in opinion, should, reflecting that there can be but one mind where the safety of the Country is at stake, submit to events, and as cordially co-operate with those, whom perhaps they have thought too harshly of, sincerely uniting for the general good.—
When a vessel is drove among breakers, by the errors of the pilot, or the accidents of fate, it would be madness in the crew not to be all of one mind to right and save her, BY A PULL ALL TOGETHER.



A
LETTER,

Éc. Éc. Éc.

S I R,

AS your unjust and unprincipled attack on me, was made suddenly and publicly, a sense of what is due to my own character demands that my reply should be dictated in the same manner; neither does it less concern many other persons, than myself; for if there exists a being in this neighbourhood, capable of making use of the lowest of political engines, in an attempt to overawe those whom his consequence cannot

A 3

reach

reach in any other manner; it becomes a duty to the public, early to unmask so nefarious a disposition.

It seems, Sir, that some trifling acts of Charity, to two extremely poor individuals, with large families, who, by I know not what act of theirs, had incurred your high and mighty displeasure, (for of those poor people I know nothing, but that they are poor and miserable);—it seems, Sir, that this is, in your New Code, a crime which none, with impunity, shall dare to commit.—You therefore, without deeming any preface necessary, charged me, on *Saturday* last, in the Coffee-Room, at *Windsor*, with Three *curious Offences*.—First. Having abbetted one *NORTH* in settling on the waste, who, with a wife and eight children, was obliged to quit his Cottage, during the coldest Frost of this Winter, when the Snow lay deep on the Ground, and took shelter in a Hut, raised in one night, of about thirteen feet by seven, with no other covering but open Pantiles—no other Bed than Straw—no other Floor than the bare Sod!

THUS

THUS situated, you do not deny that you attempted, with your own hands, to throw his house down; and I know that you was not contented with that, and loading these poor creatures with abuse, but that you came another time, tore up two Fruit Trees which the Man had planted, but not enclosed; and, instead of putting your hand to that store, which, perhaps if you had examined your own heart, you less deserve than some of these humble objects; finding only the wife at home, you renewed your execrations against the sacred head of Poverty, and told her she was a Fool, an Idiot, and only fit for the Work-house; with other expressions of wild rage, not worth while to enumerate.

Now my conduct, I confess, was the reverse; having with difficulty reached their Cottage, through the Snow, though only a quarter of a mile from my house, induced by a report, which I could scarcely credit, that such a family existed so near me;—I entered, and found them, on Christmas Day, in a Hut that could scarcely contain their
bodies,

bodies, sitting round a dish of Potatoes on the Ground, chiefly warmed by the smoke that surrounded them; the Woman with a child at her breast; and their bed, for they had but one for all, a scanty Bag of Straw.

AFTER adding some Beer to their humble meal, which I cannot think amounts to an act of Charity, for who *could* have gone home at such a season with any appetite to his own dinner, and not have discharged such a duty? I promised them some coals, gave them some money, a few tiles, a log to sit on, and ended with blaming them for having fixed there without giving some notice to the inhabitants, recommending sobriety and good behaviour, and advising them, when convenient, to remove to some spot which would be less obnoxious to a very worthy Lady, whose garden they were rather too near to, to be agreeable; but after what they related, and which I knew to be true, of the conduct of Mr. GRIFFITHS, whose house is situated *near a mile below them*, and quite out of sight, I certainly did advise them not to be removed at his sole mandate,

to

to a damp spot in the neighbourhood, which he had proposed, without consulting any of us.

THUS, Sir, I have cleared myself of your first and principal *Charge of Charity*; and I own I cannot but be surpris'd, that on ascending from the damp clays which your pondrous Mansion so remarkably oppresses, to the finer air of our delightful Hill, you were not inspir'd with purer sentiments.

You say they are bad characters; I am not undertaking their defence; but this I must say, (except from your lips) I have heard nothing to their prejudice; but are their helpless children so?

THE second *Charge* was, that I had set on foot a subscription for a poor Mole-Catcher, who had been burned out of his Cottage; by means of which, you said, "that instead of the Parish getting rid of a Poacher, he had got a new house, and cannot now be removed."

To

To this again I plead, *Not Guilty of Charity*, for I certainly did not begin the subscription, but a very humane neighbour, Mr. JOHNSTONE; I gave my half-guinea, with others, notwithstanding the man had behaved ill to me, because he had an industrious wife, *with nine Children*. The calamity of Fire, demands from the hardest heart, at least the semblance of humanity; an affliction that the proudest seats are equally destined to share with the humblest cottage, as the adjoining county not long since with tenderness beheld, when the noble Palace of CLIFDEN fell; the which having so recently happened, should, I think, at least have taught you to respect the *intentions* of your neighbours; and have restrained you from censuring that act, as you did in the Coffee-Room, as the act of *mere Fools*: if this indeed be folly, may I never partake of Mr. GRIFFITHS'S wisdom!

THE Third I think was, that I had suffered another poor family to settle on the waste, near my grounds; and “that I should
 “soon get a neighbourhood of them about
 “me,

“ me, but that you would MARK ME, I might
 “ depend on it, to Government, for thus encou-
 “ raging the poor to be insolent, and as A
 “ PROMOTER OF DEMOCRACY, yes, I should
 “ see the danger of offending you, I should be
 “ marked, I should see you were deter-
 “ mined!”

THUS then finding you are no longer of
 any consequence at Vestries, which you have
 long disturbed, I hear, by your overbearing
 spirit, you have adopted a new System of
 Terror to enable you to procure an ascend-
 ancy in the Parish, to which you are neither
 entitled by talent, or temper; and to the
 possible fears of your personal prowess, is to
 be united the just apprehensions of your
 professed malignity.

SIR, I neither know, nor ever before heard
 of a gentleman, whose lust of parochial influ-
 ence was attempted to be gained by such *base*
 means; a gentleman, Sir, never attempts to
 dragoon his independant Neighbours, out of
 their just privileges of supporting whom
 they please, and if I *had* abetted the Man in
 coming

coming to settle, at near a Mile from your house, (which it is well known I did not, as I never saw him till he was settled there, and then saw it with anxiety; not on your account but that of my most respectable neighbour) yet still my privilege to do so was indisputable, and with equal propriety might you threaten the Lord of the Manor with impeachment for not removing him at your bidding.

THE fact is, I believe, that neither you, nor I have any power to dislodge him after inhabiting, and I feel at a loss, which to admire most in this transaction, your bad Address, your new System of Terror, or your Tyrannical desires.

SINCE when has Mr. GRIFFITHS been patented to dictate to me what conduct I shall pursue? Since when have I made him a judge of my political opinions?—To my society he has never been invited, nor ever will be; I have always known how to respect him as my equal, but never acknowledged him as a Superior:—what his wealth may be, has not been even a subject of my enquiry, I
know

know I am wealthy enough to be quite independant of all mankind, and richer no wise Man would desire to be: That independance, and the employment in private life of my humble talents, not I hope unusefully, constitutes my real riches; and it will never be in the power of any man to bully me out of that peace, which they so cordially bestow, far indeed in my confined estimation beyond all the treasures of the East.

BUT although I will not detail my political creed to oblige a rude intruder, yet, for the sake of that honest reputation, which I should be sorry to forfeit among my neighbours, I will take this opportunity of declaring that my sentiments are as near as any man's, those of that exalted Statesman, Mr. Fox: I love, revere, and will ever to the utmost of my poor powers support the Constitution, but I must forever deplore the cause and conduct of this, in my opinion (and I have had some opportunities of forming it) unnecessary War.

IF to lament, unuseful bloodshed, to fight for peace, and the returning prosperity of this
glorious

glorious Island; if in my writings to have had no other view than to benefit my Country; if to wish to see the fate of the poor man ameliorated by the Laws;— if these traits characterise a *Democrat*, I am bound to bear the charge, but I must say, I think you have taken a very unhappy moment to blame such a disposition as tends to conciliate our poor and virtuous brethren, when every day and every hour we may have occasion to call upon them for their services, to protect from a vindictive foe, that Property and Credit, on which we all depend.

Thus, Sir, I think I have gently repelled your calumny, a task which the close retirement in which I live, demanded, for if I had been silent under your public and revengeful imputation, I should have armed you against myself; and as I rarely quit my beloved and quiet abode, where I learn what is passing chiefly by the Press, you might easily, in Times like these, while I was cultivating my little Garden, have, by your threatened denunciations, made me to be looked upon, as a Man that was disturbing the Spirit of the County.

I am

I AM not a young Man, and this is now the first time I have had occasion to take this method, to do myself justice, which, by your refusal to answer my demand of it, made ever since the day after your attack, I see you are inclined to deny me ; *I am therefore justified*, for, if the part you act, be, by insolence to drive men to desperate remedies on every trifling occasion, or to submit their just rights to your absolute controul, it would, if successful, put it in the power of any man, to disturb the peace of private families, at a very small risk, and to lay in ruins the independant privileges of every sober Member of Society.

I am,

Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

Bishopsgate,

Wednesday 20th Feb. 1797.

G. CUMBERLAND.

N. B. The Hutt in question is a miserable single room, which NORTH, a Bricklayer, took shelter in some time, I know not when

B

this

this winter, at the end of the row of houses at BISHOPSGATE, and on the opposite side of the road from the very extremity of Mr. GRIFFITHS'S ground.---There, the curious in encroachments, may find them still, without any enclosure, and with a roof lower than the Park paling, exposed to the coldest Eastern blasts; a sight, which, when seen, will call forth very different sentiments from rage, as it has already, in the bosoms of some kinder beings than their distant neighbour, but whom I will not name, lest they should likewise fall under Mr. GRIFFITHS'S censure of Democracy.

COPY of a LETTER, sent in an envelope, on SUNDAY Morning, the 17th, the day after the malignant Threat had been held out in the WHITE HART Coffee Room, and to which no answer whatever was returned.

TO HENRY GRIFFITHS, Esq.

BEAUMONT LODGE.

“ SIR,

“ I Can have no doubt, that on mature
 “ reflection, on the unprecedented, and
 “ unjust attack, which you made on me
 “ Yesterday, that you are inclined, as a
 “ Gentleman, to make a suitable apology ;
 “ and if any of the severe retorts which
 “ your manner drew from me, shall be
 “ judged

“ judged by those who heard them, to de-
“ mand the like, I am ready to be guided
“ by their decision. When you have done
“ me Justice, on my part all will be buried
“ in oblivion.

“ I am,

“ Sir,

“ Your most obedient

“ humble Servant,

“ G. CUMBERLAND.”

Bishopsgate,

Sunday Morning, 17th Feb. 1797.

