

L E T T E R II.

My dear COUNTRYMEN,

THERE is another late act of parliament, which appears to me to be unconstitutional, and as destructive to the liberty of these colonies, as that mentioned in my last letter; that is, the act for granting the duties on paper, glass, &c.

THE parliament unquestionably possesses a legal authority to regulate the trade of *Great-Britain*, and all her colonies. Such an authority is essential to the relation between a mother country and her colonies; and necessary for the common good of all. He, who considers these provinces as states distinct from the *British Empire*, has very slender notions of justice, or of their interests. We are but parts of a whole; and therefore there must exist a power somewhere to preside, and preserve the connection in due order. This power is lodged in the parliament; and we are as much dependent on *Great-Britain*, as a perfectly free people can be on another.

I HAVE looked over every statute relating to these colonies, from their first settlement to this time; and I find every one of them founded on this principle, till the *Stamp-Act* administration *. All before,

* For the satisfaction of the reader, recitals from the former acts of parliament relating to these colonies are added. By comparing these with the modern acts, he will perceive their great difference in expression and intention.

The 12th *Cba.* Chap. 18, which forms the foundation of the laws relating to our trade, by enacting that certain productions of the colonies should be carried to *England* only, and that no goods shall be imported from the plantations but in ships belonging to *England, Ireland, Wales, Berwick, or the Plantations, &c.* begins thus: "For the increase of shipping, and encouragement of the navigation of this nation, wherein, under the good providence and protection of GOD, the wealth, safety, and strength of this kingdom is so much concerned," &c.

The 15th *Cba.* II. Chap. 7, enforcing the same regulation, assigns these reasons for it. "In regard his Majesty's plantations, beyond the seas, are inhabited and peopled by his subjects of this his kingdom of *England*; for the maintaining a greater correspondence and kindness between them, and keeping them in a firmer dependence upon it, and rendering them yet more beneficial and advantageous unto it, in the further employment and increase of English shipping and seamen, vent of English woollen, and other manufactures and commodities, rendering the navigation to and from the same more safe and cheap, and making this kingdom a staple, not only of the commodities of those plantations, but also of the commodities of other countries and places for the supplying of them; and it being the usage of other nations to keep their plantations trade to themselves," &c.

The 25th *Cba.* II. Chap. 7, made expressly "for the better securing the plantation trade," which imposes duties on certain commodities exported from one colony to another, mentions this cause for imposing them: "Whereas by one act, passed in the 12th year of your Majesty's reign, intitled, An act for encouragement of shipping and navigation, and by several other laws, passed since that