

L E T T E R XII.

My dear COUNTRYMEN,

SOME states have lost their liberty by *particular accidents*: But this calamity is generally owing to the *decay of virtue*. A people is travelling fast to destruction, when individuals consider *their* interests as distinct from *those of the public*. Such notions are fatal to their country, and to themselves. Yet how many are there, so *weak* and *sordid* as to *think* they perform *all the offices of life*, if they earnestly endeavor to encrease their own *wealth, power, and credit*, without the least regard for the society, under the protection of which they live; who, if they can make an *immediate profit to themselves*, by lending their assistance to those, whose projects plainly tend to the injury of their country, rejoice in their *dexterity*, and believe themselves entitled to the character of *able politicians*. Miserable men! Of whom it is hard to say, whether they ought to be most the objects of *pity* or *contempt*: But whose opinions are certainly as *detestable*, as their practices are *destructive*.

THO' I always reflect, with a high pleasure, on the integrity and understanding of my countrymen, which, joined with a pure and humble devotion to the great and gracious author of every blessing they enjoy, will, I hope, ensure to them, and their posterity, all temporal and eternal happiness; yet when I consider, that in every age and country there have been bad men, my heart, at this threatening period, is so full of apprehension, as not to permit me to believe, but that there may be some on this continent, *against whom you ought to be upon your guard*---Men, who either *
I hold,

* It is not intended by these words, to throw any reflection upon gentlemen, because they are possessed of offices: For many of them are certainly men of virtue, and lovers of their country. But supposed obligations of *gratitude*, and *honor*, may induce them to be silent. Whether these obligations *ought to be regarded* or not, is not so much to be considered by others, in the judgment they form of these gentlemen, as whether *they think* they ought to be regarded. Perhaps, therefore, we shall act in the properest manner towards them, if we neither *reproach* nor *imitate* them. The persons meant in this letter, are the *base spirited wretches*, who may endeavor to *distinguish themselves*, by their sordid zeal in defending and promoting measures, which *they know, beyond all question*, to be *destructive* to the *just rights and true interests* of their country. It is scarcely possible to speak of *these men* with any degree of *patience*---It is scarcely possible to speak of them with any degree of *propriety*---For no words can truly describe their *guilt and meanness*---But every honest bosom, on their being mentioned, will *feel* what cannot be *expressed*.

If their wickedness did not blind them, they might perceive along the coast of these colonies, many men, remarkable instances of wrecked ambition, who after *distinguishing themselves* in the support of the *Stamp-Act*, by a courageous contempt of their country, and of justice, have been left to linger out their miserable