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VEXAT CENSURA COLUMBAS.

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I HAVE exhibited to you my countrymen, some of the indefeasible doctrines of our popular leaders, together with the absurd, arbitrary, and tyrannical measures they have taken in support of what they call liberty, all which have hitherto been attended with answerable effects, such as are subversive of what we call our civil rights. I should leave my plan unfinished, if I did not point out to you the natural tendency which their pressing the Clergy into the service and engaging them in our political disputes has towards the subversion of the ecclesiastical constitution of the country. It were to be wished that there were none of the Order, volunteers in the cause; but while some of them have engaged in it with a zeal which would have been truly laudable had it been exerted in the cause of their Master; others, there is reason to fear, have temporised, against their own judgments, in compliance with the prejudices of their people: Thus much is certain that one way or other they have too many of them acquired the reputation of being partizans in the cause. It is a hard case with those who are not at liberty to speak their own minds: I pity them under their wretched state of dependence. A worthy Divine, in more easy circumstances of life, has been of late publicly insulted in the news-papers and told that he would soon be left to preach to naked walls: His fault is, he did not see fit to dispute the orders of government agreeable to the imperious dictates of its professed opposers. These men while they are aiming at independence themselves, cannot bear to see any man independent of them. They have much to answer to our common Master for using means to seduce his Ministers and

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Servants from their duty, and to inlist them into a foreign service; and much also I fear to the abused publick for the consequences which may attend it.

THE benevolent Founder of the Christian religion sent forth his disciples when he parted with them, to proselyte all nations to the faith, with this short and comprehensive commission, to baptize and teach the people to observe all things which HE had commanded them. From this commission his Ministers at this day derive their authority: Their own good sense will lead them to discover and I am sure the business of their profession leads them to consider; whether they have any authority from their Master to make themselves parties in late affairs. When they take a part against government and display upon these things in the pulpit, unless they produce their Lord's *command or example* to authorize them, many of the Laity who are of opinion that they are, *both* against them, will be inclined to think they are *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*. While they are contending for their ecclesiastical constitution such a conduct has a direct tendency to weaken it, and to make way for the building up another on its ruins. The times appear to be now more than ever critical with them. The Clergy have enemies enough, such as are disposed not only to expose their foibles, but to pervert innocent and indifferent actions and pronounce them foibles and faults. An attack upon them in *Edes and Gill's* last Monday's Gazette, a paper which has been much countenanced and encouraged by some of them, looks like a wound given in the house of a friend; and is enough surely to make them cry out of treachery. If after all, they will be accessaries to their own undoing, the Laity will be apt to look on with the more indifference.

BUT I may not conclude without resuming my subject and considering it as it more immediately concerns the *state*, for this was what first of all engaged my thoughts upon it.

IN the constitution of all governments among civilized nations it is necessary there should be a supreme power lodged somewhere. The British government is constituted of three branches, *King, Lords, and Commons*, all of them free in their respective departments in the legislature, yet mutual checks upon each other, so that no acts of legislation can be completed without the concurrence of all three. If either branch had such a check upon another as to prevent its acting freely in the passing of acts or laws, that branch which had such a check upon it would cease to be a part of the supreme power. These are the great outlines of the British constitution, being a mixed Monarchy, a constitution approaching so near to perfection that Tacitus imagined such

such a form of government to be capable of existing only in idea : And such, upon a superficial view of the case, we generally imagine our provincial constitution to be ; but if we consider the matter with attention we shall find a wide difference between them.

THE grants made at the accession of a Prince for the support of the civil list for life, renders the King independent and free. The first branch of our provincial legislature answering to the monarchical part of that of Great Britain can by no means be said to be free, while under the check of annual grants for its support. The Lords when once intitled to sit in the House of Peers are not removeable at the pleasure of the King or of the Commons ; they are then independent of both for their seats, and to all intents and purposes free : The second branch of our provincial legislature answering to this aristocratical part of that of Great Britain is much less free than our first, having a double check upon it ; for they are annually elected by joint ballot of the two Houses, and after that, subject to the negative of the Governor. The third branch being possessed of all these checks without being checked by either of the other two, except as in Great Britain, by being liable in common with the others to a suspension of their legislative power by a dissolution in virtue of the King's prerogative, where the nature of the constitution requires that this power should be lodged : * The third branch I say, is the only branch that can be said to be free upon the plan of the British constitution ; and being possessed of those superadded checks our provincial government, while upon the establishment we contend for, instead of being monarchical like that of Great Britain, is rather democratical. This may answer for a subordinate government while we act upon virtuous principles and acknowledge a supreme power elsewhere : But were we to set up for independency, as some of our writers give out, we must recur to some other system, or submit to the *Dominatio Plebis*—the *Rule of the Multitude*. “ Under such a system in Rome. (as a † noted writer observes) the whole government fell into
“ anarchy

* A Parliament might become perpetual, if the voice of all the three branches was necessary to cause a dissolution. In May 1642 King Charles I. passed a bill for the continuing the Parliament that it should not be dissolved without their own consent. The House of Commons that then was, having voted the House of Lords useless and dangerous continued their own existence until Cromwell dissolved them in April 1653. This is called the long Parliament. They were invited to return to the exercise of their authority in May 1659 and met accordingly. This skeleton of the long Parliament is commonly distinguished by the appellation of the Rump Parliament. They were afterwards joined by the members who had been excluded in 1648 and dissolved themselves in March 1659, 60 near eighteen years after the King had entrusted them with his prerogative ; and issued writs for a free Parliament to meet 25 April 1650 who concurred in bringing in his son King Charles II.

† Hume's Essays.

“ anarchy, and the greatest happiness which the Romans could look for, was the despotic power of the CÆSARS. The virtue and good intentions of CATO and BRUTUS are highly laudable, but to what purpose did their zeal serve? To nothing but to hasten the fatal period of the Roman government, and render its convulsions and dying agonies more violent and painful.”

You have not, my countrymen, such men as CATO and BRUTUS to head the opposition to the present government in this country. Withdraw then your confidence in time from the artful demagogue and listen to the voice of the prudent and virtuous citizen; then you may soon hope to have your peace established, unless the late insults offered to our most gracious Sovereign and the whole British government shall have before-hand sealed our doom.

WHILE every neighbour colony behaves with respect and decency to the parent state, the British government will find less difficulty in correcting one froward child. Our news-papers are continually upbraiding them with their imbecillity, and threatening them with throwing off all dependence; one has notified the proposed publication of a system of government for the united provinces—another talks of putting ourselves under the protection of some foreign power.—While such things pass unnoticed here, it will not be strange, if government at home should take it to be a settled plan of the people to throw off their dependence; and accordingly take measures to prevent it. It is to be hoped however that such plans are suggested merely to intimidate; for this has been the constant practice of the party. Be it so, what an insult is this on a power which hath so lately humbled the pride of two of the greatest powers in Europe united in close compact?

YOUR Governor, my countrymen, I verily believe wishes to see good order and social happiness restored in this once happy community: If any one disbelieves this, he must suppose him regardless of his own peace and quiet; and the honour of his administration: The King's Ministers wish it no less: And what is more, our most gracious Sovereign wishes to see all his subjects happy, and the blessings of good government extended to his remotest dominions. There is nothing then wanting but that you yourselves co-operate with their good wishes.