

TO THE
KING's most Excellent MAJESTY
In COUNCIL,
The Hamble

PETITION

AND

MEMORIAL

OF THE

ASSEMBLY OF JAMAICA

[Voted in ASSEMBLY, on the 28th of
December, 1774.]

P H I L A D E L P H I A :

Printed by WILLIAM and THOMAS BRADFORD, at
the *London Coffee-House.*

M.DCC.LXXV.

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THE following calculation taken from a list of the Poll Tax, for the year 1767, may give the reader an idea of the importance of the Island of Jamaica, to the kingdom of Great-Britain.

| | | |
|---------|------------------------------|-------------|
| 68,160 | Hogsheads | } Sugar. |
| 7,029 | Teirces and Barrels | |
| 12,149 | Punchions of Rum. | |
| 10,545 | Piemento, | } Packages. |
| 1,947 | Cotton, | |
| 5,034 | Bags and Casks of Ginger. | |
| 15,328 | Planks of Mahogany. | |
| 3,212 | Tons of Fustick and Logwood. | |
| 190,914 | Negroes. | |
| 137,773 | Cattle. | |
| 369 | Cattle | } Mills. |
| 235 | Water | |
| 44 | Wind | |
| 647 | Sugar Plantations. | |

June 10, 1755



T O T H E

KING's most Excellent MAJESTY,

The HUMBLE PETITION and MEMORIAL of
the ASSEMBLY of JAMAICA.

Most gracious Sovereign,

WE your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Assembly of Jamaica, having taken into our consideration the present critical state of the colonies, humbly approach the throne, to assure your Majesty of our most dutiful regard to your Royal Person and Family, and our attachment to, and reliance on, our fellow-subjects in Great Britain, founded on the most solid and durable basis the continued enjoyment of our personal Rights, and the security of our Properties.

THAT weak and feeble as this Colony is from its very small number of white inhabitants, and its peculiar situation from the incumbrance of more than two hundred thousand slaves, it cannot be supposed that we now intend, or ever could have intended resistance to Great Britain.

THAT this Colony has never, by riots, or other violent measures opposed, or permitted an act of resistance against any law imposed on us by Great Britain, though always truly sensible of our just rights, and of the pernicious consequences, both to the parent and infant state, with which some of them must be attended; always relying with the most implicit confidence, on the justice and paternal tenderness of your Majesty, even to the most feeble and distant of your subjects, and depending that when your Majesty, and your Parliament should have maturely considered and deliberate on the claims of Great Britain and her Colonies, every cause of dissatisfaction would be removed.

THAT

THAT justly alarmed with the approaching horrors of an unnatural contest between Great Britain and her Colonies, in which the most dreadful calamities to this island, and the inevitable destruction of the small sugar colonies are involved; and excited by their apprehension, as well as by our affection for our fellow subjects, both in Great Britain and the Colonies, we implore your Majesty's favourable reception of this our humble petition and memorial, as well on behalf of ourselves and our constituents, the good people of this Island, as on behalf of all other your Majesty's subjects, the Colonists of America; but especially those who labour at present under the heavy weight of your Majesty's displeasure, for whom we entreat to be admitted as humble suitors; that we may not, at so important a crisis, be wanting to contribute our sincere and well meant, however small endeavours, to heal those disorders, which may otherwise terminate in the destruction of the Empire.

THAT as we conceive it necessary for this purpose to enter into the different claims of Great-Britain and her Colonies, we beg leave to place it in the royal mind as the first established principle of the constitution, that the people of England have a right to partake, and do partake of the Legislation of their country, and that no laws can affect them, but such as receive their assent, given by themselves, or their representatives; and it follows therefore, that no one part of your Majesty's English subjects, either can, or ever could legislate for any other part.

THAT the settlers of the first Colonies, but especially those of the elder Colonies of North America, as well as the Conquerors of this Island, were a part of the English people in every respect equal to them, and possessed of every Right and Privilege at the time of their emigration, which the people of England, were possessed of, and irrefragably, to that great Right of consenting to the Laws which should bind them, in all cases whatsoever; and who emigrating at first in small numbers, when they might have been oppressed; such rights and privileges were constantly guarantied
by

by the Crown, to the emigrants and conquerors, to be held and enjoyed by them in the places to which they emigrated; and were confirmed by many repeated solemn engagements, made public by proclamation, under the faith of which, they did actually emigrate and conquer: That therefore, the people of England, had no rights, power, or privilege, to give to the emigrants; as these were, at the time, of their emigration, possessed of all such rights, equally with themselves.

THAT the Peers of England were possessed of very eminent, and distinguished privileges in their own right, as a branch of Legislation, a Court of Justice in the dernier resort, for all appeals from the people, and in the first instance, for all causes instituted by the Representatives of the people; but that it does not appear that they ever considered themselves as acting in such capacities for the Colonies, the Peers having never to this day, heard or determined the causes of the Colonists in appeal, in which it ever was, and is their duty to serve the subjects within the realm.

THAT from what has been said, it appears that the Emigrants could receive nothing from either the peers or the people; the former being unable to communicate their privileges, and the latter on no more than an equal footing with themselves; but that with the king it was far otherwise; the royal prerogative as now annexed to, and belonging to the Crown, being totally independent of the people, who cannot invade, add to, or diminish it, nor restrain or invalidate those legal grants, which the prerogative hath a just right to give, and hath very liberally given for the encouragement of colonization; to some Colonies, it granted almost all the royal powers of government, which they hold and enjoy at this day; but to none of them did it grant less, than to the first conquerors of this island, in whose favour it is declared by a royal proclamation, "That they shall have the same privileges to all intents and purposes, as the free born subjects of England."

THAT

THAT to use the name, or authority of the people of the parent state, to take away, or render ineffectual, the legal grants of the Crown to the Colonists, is delusive, and destroys that confidence, which the people have ever had and ought to have, of the most solemn royal grants in their favour, and renders unstable and insecure, those very rights and priviledges which prompted their emigration.

THAT our Colonists and your Petitioners having the most implicit confidence in the royal faith pledged to them in the most solemn manner, by your Predecessors, rested satisfied with their different portions of the royal grants, and having been bred from their infancy, to venerate the name of Parliament, a word still dear to the heart of every Briton, and considered as the palladium of Liberty, and the great source from whence their own is derived, received the several Acts of Parliament of England, and Great-Britain, for the regulation of the trade of the Colonies, as the salutary precautions of a prudent Father, for the prosperity of a wide extended Family; and that in this light we received them, without a thought of questioning the right, the whole tenor of our conduct, will demonstrate, for above one hundred years.

THAT though we received these regulations of trade from our fellow subjects of England, and Great-Britain, so advantageous to us as Colonists, as Englishmen and Britons, we did not thereby confer on them a power of legislating for us, far less that of destroying us and our children, by divesting us of all rights and property.

THAT with reluctance we have been drawn from the prosecution of our internal affairs, to behold with amazement, a plan almost carried into execution, for enslaving the Colonies, founded, as we conceive, on a claim of Parliament to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever.

Your humble petitioners have for several years with deep and silent sorrow, lamented this unrestrained exercise of legislative

gislative Power ; still hoping, from the interposition of their Sovereign, to avert that last and greatest of calamities, that of being reduced to an abject state of slavery, by having an arbitrary government established in the Colonies, for the very attempting of which, a Minister of your Predecessor was impeached by a House of Commons.

WITH like sorrow do we find the Popish Religion established by Law, which by treaty was only to be tolerated.

THAT the most essential rights of the Colonies have been invaded, and their property given and granted to your Majesty, by men not entitled to such a power.

THAT the murder of the Colonists hath been encouraged by another Act, disallowing and annulling their trials by juries of the vicinage ; and that fleets and armies have been sent to enforce those dreadful laws.

WE therefore in this desperate extremity, most humbly beg leave, to approach the Throne, to declare to your Majesty, that our fellow subjects in Great-Britain, and consequently their representatives, the House of Commons, have not a right as we trust we have shewn, to legislate for the Colonies ; and that your Petitioners and the Colonists are not, nor ought to be bound by any other laws, than such as they have themselves assented to, and are not disallowed by your Majesty.

YOUR Petitioners do therefore make this claim and demand from their Sovereign, as guarantee of their just rights, on the faith and confidence of which, they have settled, and continue to reside in these distant parts of the empire, that no laws shall be made and attempted to be forced upon them, injurious to their rights as Colonists, Englishmen, or Britons.

THAT your petitioners fully sensible of the great advantages that have arisen from the regulations of trade in general, prior to the year 1760, as well to Great-Britain and her Colonies,

Colonies, as to your Petitioners in particular, and being anxiously desirous of increasing the good effects of these laws, as well as to remove an obstacle which is new in our Government, and could not have existed on the principles of our Constitution, as it hath arisen from colonization, we do declare for ourselves and the good people of this Island, that we freely consent to the operation of such Acts of the British Parliament, as are limited to the regulation of our external commerce only, and the sole object of which, is the mutual advantage of Great Britain and her Colonies.

We, your Petitioners, do therefore beseech your Majesty, that you will be pleased, as the common parent of your subjects, to become a mediator between your European and American subjects and to consider the latter, however far removed from your royal presence, as equally entitled to your protection, and the benefit of the English constitution, the deprivation of which, must dissolve that dependance on the parent state, which it is our glory to acknowledge, whilst enjoying those rights under her protection; but should this bond of union be ever destroyed, and the colonists reduced to consider themselves as tributaries to Britain, they must cease to venerate her as an affectionate parent.

We beseech your Majesty to believe, that it is our earnest prayer to Almighty Providence, to preserve your Majesty in all happiness, prosperity and honor, and that there never may be wanting one of your illustrious Line, to transmit the blessings of our excellent constitution, to the latest posterity, and to reign in the hearts of a loyal, grateful and affectionate people.

F I N I S.