

ARTICLE SIGNED “A CHATTERER.”

[Boston Gazette, December 3, 1770.]

We should all remember that British America was well affected to the nation till MINISTERIAL INNOVATIONS occasion'd these Difficulties. Anon.

Instead of submitting to MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE, they seem so far led away by common Sense, and their Regard for the common Welfare, that they have no Reverence for the INSTRUCTIONS and REFINEMENTS of our Ministers. Ibid.

Messieurs PRINTERS,

Some time ago I took the liberty of making a few remarks in my poor manner, upon a SPEECH deliver'd at the close of a session of the General Assembly: I then thought, and still think that I had good right and lawful authority so to do, notwithstanding the rebuke which the VENERABLE Mr. Probusⁱ then “thought fit” to give me. In imitation of some of my BRETHREN, I solemnly warned my readers, by way of applications, of the danger of certain INSTRUCTIONS, or as they were term'd, “MINISTERIAL MANDATES” we had about that time been told of; which appear'd to me to be equal to that of REVENUE ACTS, or STANDING ARMIES to ENFORCE them: I little thought that these instructions, or mandates, call them what you will, would in their effects have made so rapid a progress, in so short a time, as I find they have since THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION began: For I perceive that our house of representatives have plainly told the Lt. Governor that “merely in obedience to INSTRUCTIONS, he has made an ABSOLUTE SURRENDER of Castle William to his Majesty's forces, with a MOST EXPRESS RESIGNATION of his POWER OF GARRISONING the same to Lt. Col. Dalrymple”: and to prove it they recite his Honor's orders UNDER HIS OWN HAND, to Capt. Phillips, to deliver that Fort into the hands of the commanding officer of his Majesty's regular forces then upon the island, TO BE GARRISON'D by such detachment as HE SHOULD ORDER! To this indeed his honor says, “There is nothing in the orders which I gave to Capt. Phillips, which does not perfectly consist with my retaining the command of the Castle, and my right to exchange the present garrison for the former or any other, as I shall think proper”: But I must confess, it is mysterious to me, how his Honor can retain the Right to dismiss Col. Dalrymple and his detachment, WHEN HE PLEASES, or exchange the present garrison for any other AS HE SHALL THINK PROPER, after having delivered the fort without any reservation, into the hands of Col. Dalrymple, in consequence of EXPRESS ORDERS from another, to be garrison'd by such detachment AS HE SHALL

ORDER. I am not so certain that his Honor, who pays a sacred regard to instructions, will easily be persuaded to exchange the present garrison for the former, or any other, however necessary such exchange may be, without first having leave from the right Hon. the Earl of Hillsborough, as full and EXPRESS as the orders he receiv'd from his lordship to place the present garrison there—Others may reconcile an absolute delegation of power without any reserve, by the express orders of a superior, with a right retain'd in the person who is THUS ORDER'D to delegate, to exercise the same power when he pleases; I have not that INTUITIVE knowledge which some men are said to be bless'd with, and therefore it will not be thought strange if I do not see clearly through this mystery in POLITICS.—The house further observe, that “as his Honor has heretofore repeatedly declared that he has no authority over the King’s troops in the province,”² it was absurd to suppose he COULD have the command of a fort, thus unreservedly surrendered to, and in full possession of such troops”: Which appears to be a just conclusion; for can any one believe that Col. Dalrymple will hold himself oblig’d to march the King’s troops under his command out of that fort, in obedience to the orders of one who has no authority over them? Think not, Mess. Printers, that I am now finding fault: For if his Honor has “in this instance divested himself of a power of governing which is vested in him by the Charter FOR THE SAFETY of the province”, as wiser heads than mine have determin’d, who WILL DARE to find fault? It was done by virtue of instructions; and we are told that instructions from a minister of state come MEDIATELY from the K——, and his Honor knows that instructions, whatever “coarse epithet” may have been bestow’d upon them, are “founded in very wise reasons”, and ought not to be treated with contempt—HOLT, SOMERS and others, who near eighty years ago laid their heads together to form our Charter, were certainly wise and great men; and King William who gave it was as certainly a wise and good King: But does not the wisdom of my Lord of H——h far exceed theirs? Pray, does not every measure which he has advis’d, fully evince this to the conviction of all but a few factious fellows here and there. The FRIENDS OF GOVERNMENT are willing to submit WHAT JUDGEMENT THEY HAVE to such profound wisdom; and what if our OLD FASHION Charter should be pared down by INSTRUCTIONS, and a power or two of the G——r, vested in him FOR THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE, should even be annihilated by them, we are only to BELIEVE there are very wise reasons for it, and we shall find that all is for the best.

But it is said that “Mr. Hall the late chaplain (whose deposition was also taken) has not only not given the House the form of words in which his Honor

committed the CUSTODY of the Castle “according to the Charter” to Col. Dalrymple, but has substituted words which carry a very different meaning.” — It is strange that Mr. Hall, whom his Honor directed to attend him—I suppose as a witness—should so grosly mistake the meaning of the words. But whatever he may lack in comprehension, memory or VERACITY, he shall, IF HE LIKES IT, be touch’d up with the reputation of a very MODEST KIND OF GENTLEMAN; “he has with GREAT MODESTY declared that he COULD NOT RECOLLECT THE WORDS”—Mr. Hall’s expression is, “PERHAPS I MAY not recollect the words EXACTLY”;—and “could ONLY recollect the impression they made upon his mind”—Here again we find Mr. Hall’s expression to be, “This as far as I can recollect is the impression they made upon my mind.” He spoke upon memory, and if he delivered the SUBSTANCE of what he heard, his not being certain that he recollected the words EXACTLY, is not material—What then is the substance as deliver’d by Mr. Hall UNDER OATH, who has the character both of an honest and a sensible man, altho’ it is said that he substituted words which convey a very different meaning? It is this; “By virtue of authority deriv’d from his Majesty to govern this province, and in consequence of EXPRESS ORDERS from the Right Hon. the Earl of Hillsborough to deliver this fort into the hands of the commanding officer of the King’s troops now upon the island to be garrison’d by such detachment or detachments as HE SHALL THINK PROPER I deliver these keys to you as commanding officer”. If his Honor has a copy of the EXACT FORM OF WORDS, and will favor the publick with it, we shall be able to judge where the difference is, and whether “in our opinion” it is MATERIAL. Perhaps the words “according to the Charter” which I observe are comma’d in his Honor’s reply as emphatical, are omitted by Mr. Hall: But if THEY are a part of the FORM OF WORDS, the house seem to have fully taken them up by affirming that his Honor has no authority either BY THE CHARTER or his commission to delegate the power of garrisoning the Castle to any other person: And “that the SHEW of the authority of the Governor thus held up serv’d only to make the surrender the more solemn and formal.” If then he had no such authority to do it either by Charter or Commission, how could he do it by virtue of the authority deriv’d from his Majesty to govern the province? unless that authority is deriv’d to him to govern, SOLELY by the “EXPRESS ORDERS from the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Hillsborough”—If so, where indeed “is the freedom of the Governor of this province”: I desire to know, how his Honor in delivering the keys of the Castle and the power of garrisoning it to Col. Dalrymple, can be suppos’d to have exercis’d HIS OWN judgment and election, when he declares he did it in consequence of EXPRESS ORDERS from another? And that

other does not appear to be his Majesty, but the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Hillsborough —The whole matter that could exercise his judgment, as it appears to me, must have been whether he should deliver the fort to Col. Dalrymple to be garrison'd by such detachment of the regular forces as he should think proper, in obedience to the EXPRESS ORDERS of Lord Hillsborough, or retain the Right of committing the custody and government thereof to such person or persons as to him should seem meet, by virtue of the authority deriv'd from his Majesty to govern the province according to the EXPRESS TERMS of the Charter.

I may venture to say, there has not been an instance of this kind since the date of our Charter; and in the opinion of judicious and unprejudiced persons, it is a matter of very great moment. Our enemies may now have the pleasure of seeing the principal fort & key of the province in the hands of persons who have not the least dependance upon it; the capital environ'd with ships of war; the General Assembly removed from its ancient seat, into the country; and the College, which has been liberally supported by the people for the education of our youth, has been made a seat of government, under a pretence, as it is said, of a prerogative in the Crown, to take up any public buildings;—All by virtue of instructions, which we are implicitly to believe are founded in wise reasons; while the people thro'out the province, whether they are sensible of it or not, are every day contributing to a revenue rais'd by the act of a legislature in which they are not and cannot be represented, and against their most earnest petitions and warmest remonstrances! Surely these are not the blessings of adm——n for which we are this week to return to Almighty God our unfeigned thanks.

When the public observe that the House had ordered Mr. Hall's deposition to be published at large, and that his Honor was DULY NOTIFIED TO BE PRESENT at the caption, perhaps it may be thought that the mention that is made of the "care INDUSTRIOUSLY taken by the House to omit the reserve" Mr. Hall had made, because it "did not suit their purpose", might have been spared. Its not suiting their purpose, might be a sufficient reason for their omitting it: But possibly his Honor's manner of introducing it, may be taken be some "to convey a very different meaning."

As to "the formality of delivering the keys of the fort," I suppose it to have been in much the same FORM OF WORDS, as is used, when a governor who is recalled, delivers them to another who is to succeed him in the government of the province by his Majesty's appointment. —Col. Dalrymple accepted them "in consequence of orders from General Gage," without recognizing any

subordination to his Honor. Whether he will ever deliver them to any person, but such as may claim more authority over the King's troops in the province than the Lieutenant Governor has, I very much doubt.—You shall hear from me again.—

In the mean while, I am yours,

A CHATTERER.

- i See above, p. 43.
- ii The identical words used by that warm friend to this province, the colonies, the nation and all men but himself, Sir F. B. of Nettleham, Baronet.