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F A I T H F U L

A B S T R A C T, &c..

A
FAITHFUL ABSTRACT

OF
LORD CHATHAM'S

LAST SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT,

On Tuesday, April the 7th. 1778,

The Day he was struck with the Illness which terminated in
his Death:

COPIED FROM NOTES

TAKEN WITHIN THE BAR.

L O N D O N.

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M, DCC, LXXVIII.

TO THE

Right Hon. the Earl of SHELBURNE.

MY LORD,

WERE I to assign the various reasons, on which the propriety of the present Dedication might be justified, they would be the occasion of extending it much beyond its intended limits. They would present a narrative of several matters purely personal; they would in particular, inform the Public of the very high opinion the late Lord Chatham, entertained of your Lordship's talents and integrity, and that at a period, when persons of your rank and fortune are usually immersed in scenes of vice and dissipation; or at best, being totally blind to pursuits of honour or renown, are occupied in those which consist in the mere exterior, the pomp, the vanity, and bagatelle of life. - Those reasons, if insisted upon, would shew, that when his Lordship was *deserted* by all his pretended friends, but real deceivers, men solely indebted to him for their political importance and official situations,

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situations, that you alone, had the gratitude and generosity to improve a common connexion in office, and at the council table, into a lasting *friendship* founded in affection and esteem :---They would shew, that as his Lordship's influence in the closet, in cabinet, and parliament, began to decline, or became visibly extinguished; your attachment to his person, and your open and express approbation of his opinions encreased: in fine, as every probability of his being of any *future* service to you, became every day more precarious, your deference to his judgement, and zeal for his honour and reputation, gained proportionable degree of additional strength.---- These, and many other circumstances of a similar nature, might be adduced to demonstrate, how evidently your Lordship has deviated from the vulgar line, prescribed by *modern* politics; that of never being *able* to descry a *single error* in a partizan, till he has it *no* longer in his power to serve you; that of connecting always the *inability* of the *discarded* statesman, with a *presumed incapacity* in his administration of public affairs.

There is besides, another motive, which, I may say, chiefly induced me to send the following speech into the world under the protection of your Lordship's name; and that is, the very able manner you maintained and defended the contents, the day after they were delivered, when the noble Lord himself was no longer in a capacity to vindicate his sentiments, against the objections of the noble Duke (Richmond) who endeavoured to take a

very

very *uncandid* and *unbecoming* advantage of his Lordship's infirmities:---a defence, in point of *principle*, as well as *execution*, which must stand recorded as a testimonial of your steadiness, integrity, abilities, and uniformity of public conduct; a defence, I will venture to affirm, which has effected more towards awakening the misled people of this country, from the dangerous lethargy they had been lulled into by a weak, but artful administration, than any one effort that has been made, since the commencement of the present unhappy troubles; a defence, give me leave to say, without wishing to offend your modesty, which must ever render *the name of Shelburne dear to Englishmen*.

I shall not, in the common stile of Dedicators, make any apology for prefixing your Lordship's name to the following speech.---It is the *testament*, or rather the *codicil* to the political testament of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and proves incontrovertably, that as he *lived solely* for the *honour* and *glory* of his country; so he *died* in its *service*; and that after forty four years faithful and laborious attention to the duties of a senator, and a statesman, he *closed the last scene* with an *eclat*, scarcely to be paralleled by the greatest names that have adorned the annals of ancient Greece or Rome.

I have the honour to be

My Lord, &c.

The EDITOR.

P R E F A C E.

P R E F A C E.

THE following speech, as announced in the title-page, is copied from notes taken within the bar; which it is presumed will be sufficient to establish its authenticity. As to the motives which induced the Editor to communicate it to the Public, besides those mentioned in the Dedication, it will suffice to inform the Reader, that Lord Chatham *positively* declared his *disapprobation* of consenting to restore *Gibraltar* to the *Spaniards*, or to acknowledge America independent. One of those measures is already determined upon in council; the other is *under consideration*. Lord Chatham totally disapproved of consenting to have any part of the British empire dismembered; the following speech contains the most uncontestible proofs that he died in these sentiments; which, in the opinion of the Editor, are very seasonably laid before the Public, on the eve of the meeting of a Parliament, which is to be applied to *sanction* measures, which go directly to *tarnish* the *lustre* of the *Crown*, to a surrender of some of its most *important* and *valuable* possessions; and to the ignominious sacrifice of its *honour* and *dearest* interests.

N A R R A T I V E.

A few minutes before three O'Clock, on Tuesday, April 7th, 1778, Lord Chatham came to his place; and a motion being made by the duke of Richmond, in a committee on the state of the nation, containing a recapitulation of the several facts which came out in proof in the course of the committee, tending to a relinquishment of the British sovereignty over its American Colonies; Lord Chatham rose, and made the following speech. --- The duke of Richmond replied, with some acrimony, and the noble Earl rising to answer, was taken suddenly ill, and fell down partly in the arms of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, and Lords Stamford and Thanet. He was immediately taken into the Prince's chamber, and let blood; and after languishing four weeks and six days, died at Hayes in Kent, on Monday the 10th. of May following.

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F A I T H F U L

A B S T R A C T, &c.

IT has been a great grief to me, my lords; I lament it sincerely, that a very long, painful, and unremitting illness, has for some months past rendered me totally incapable of attending my *duty* in parliament. I now heartily rejoice, that a short abatement of the severity of my pain, which has sorely afflicted me, affords an interval at this alarming crisis! a crisis, I will maintain, my lords, such as this nation never before experienced; a crisis, my lords, full of *perils* and *difficulties*. My lords, I say, I rejoice to have it in my power to submit to this house, my poor sentiments on the present state of public affairs.--- I am happy, my lords, *feeble* as I am in *body*, and *afflicted* in mind, for the *injuries* and *disgraces* heaped on this insulted and *falling* country, that I retain
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sufficient

insufficient strength, with the assistance of *these crutches*, before the *earth finally closes on this poor shattered body*, to enable me, to come to my *place* this day; and testify my *most hearty disapprobation* of so *impolitic* and *inglorious* a proposition, * as that of consenting to agree to American independance.---I must crave your lordships kind indulgence, to my feeble efforts.---I thought it my duty:---I will proceed:---I say, my lords, I must fairly confess, I would much sooner *forfeit life*, and every thing that is dear to me in this world, than I would consent to see the *lustre* of the British throne tarnished; the *dignity* of this great empire insulted and *trampled upon*, and the *glory* of the nation, *levelled with the dust*.---Sunk, never to rise again; which must be the consequence, should the British colonies be dissevered from the British empire, by force of arms, or their independency acknowledged, through the compulsive interference of a foreign foe.

My lords, such an impolitic and pusillanimous measure, surely can never be in the contemplation of ministers; weak as they are; wicked as they may be; obstinate and unrelenting as they have proved themselves; they *dare not hazard* the experiment; or if they did; surely the *spirit* of *Englishmen*; the *exalted* notion of your rank; your love for your country, your regard for your honor, your attachment to your interests; will all combine to prevent your lordships from giving a sanction, or even lending, for a single instant, your countenance to so wild, ruinous, and disgraceful a project. For one, my lords, I protest against it thus early; because, a similar measure may possibly come recommended from a quarter, much oftener used to vote in a majority, than that from which the present motion has originated.---I trust the spirit of the nation is *too high to stoop* to so shameful a surrender of what must reduce us to the lowest state of humiliation and contempt, in the opinion of every power in Europe; friends and neutrals, as well as enemies.---I hope this country, notwithstanding the fatal and rash counsels, by which it has been governed for a series of years back,

contains

Alluding to the duke of Richmond's motion, for an address to his Majesty to that purpose, just then read, as the order of the day.

contains yet too many *Anti-Bourbons*.---It abounds, I trust, with a very great majority of men, who would spurn the idea, and prefer *death to Gallic slavery!*---men, ready cheerfully to encounter every hardship, to risque every peril; and to meet every consequence which the fate of war may draw after it, or its bloodiest conflicts be productive of; before they would consent, that the crown of Great Britain should, in future, be held as a *dependancy* from the French King.---The Crown of England, my lords, has hitherto been *free and imperial*; the constitution may have been violated, and its active powers suspended for a while; but it has never been *subverted*, by any force either within or from without.---The constitution, I say, my lords, may have felt many severe shocks; but for now almost one thousand years, it has withstood and outlived those shocks.---This kingdom has withstood, my lords, the irruptions of the Danes, the inroads of the Scotch, the conquest of the Norman,---Spain, then the most formidable power in Europe, was defeated in her attempt on this kingdom, and her invincible Armada destroyed. France has hitherto been too *prudent and cautious* to try the experiment: nor has the united efforts of France and Spain leagued together, ever rose to the presumption of setting a foot on English ground, for almost two centuries, though often urged by their politics, and stimulated by their resentments and their jealousy, to engage in such an enterprize.---Shall we then *faint before the battle is begun*; or *proclaim our weakness* before a trial of our strength is made? Shall we relinquish *all* without striking a single blow; without one effort, or struggle, to resist the daring and unprovoked insult which has been offered us by a base and insidious enemy? and that for no other reason, but because this insolent and treacherous foe has commanded it? Shall we, my lords, sit motionless, with our *hands across*, while France is plotting the means of our destruction? or be led *tamely* to the *altar*, while the *priest* is preparing for the *sacrifice*?---No, my lords, I will, for one, never consent to it.---I will never give my voice, nor set my hand to any public deed or instrument, which
would

would involve consequences amounting to a *loss of national honour*, and of our *dearest national interests*.---France says, "Declare America independent. The people of that country are no longer your subjects. We have entered into a treaty of commerce with them. They *were* independent when they made that treaty; and we mean to support them in their claim." I can never approve, as a lord of parliament, of such insolent language; nor *endure* it as an *Englishman*. How would an acquiescence on our part be interpreted?---I am ready to maintain, that an acquiescence to such a direct intrusion into the internal polity of our government, would be thus explained to the whole world.--Take every thing you can ask or desire.---We *throw* ourselves at *your mercy*.---Frame *your own terms*, and *all* the return we ask, is *peace*.---Sooner than *crouch* under the indignity, I would resist such a proposition to my latest breath, and disdain so groveling and dastardly a conduct, be the consequence what it might.---If *France*, or *Spain*, or *both*, or *every branch of the house of Bourbon* united, were to thus dictate, I would nevertheless *try the issue*. If we *fell in the struggle*, we should fall *like Englishmen*; we should *fall encircled with glory*!---We *might* be vanquished in the arduous and doubtful conflict, but we would *not be disgraced*.

My lords, I do not pretend to point out the means of resenting the insult we have received, or of doing ourselves justice; nor do I know them.---I do not know the means, my lords: but should I be called upon to assist in either *devising* the means, or *directing* them to the proper ends, I will, as far as my state of health and abilities permit, cheerfully give my poor advice, weak and inadequate as it may prove. I will give it with *sincerity* and *zeal*.---How much soever it may be wanting in other respects, it will be *sincere*; it will be *honest*; it will be the *sentiments* of a man *jealous* of his country's *honour*; the preservation of which inviolate, has ever proved the *best* security of its interest and prosperity.

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The present crisis, my lords, is full of difficulties ; it abounds with perils. We are surrounded with dangers on every side. . It is such, my lords, as admits of *no medium* in either counsel or conduct ; the alternative is full of hazard ; and yet, our situation will not permit us to take the middle path. --- Were we ever so strongly inclined to tread in it ; it would be impracticable ; for in spite of our utmost caution and management, we would find ourselves at length compelled to deviate into the road we wished to avoid ; which would most certainly, in one event, lead us to disgrace and a loss of national character ; or in the other inevitably terminate in a war, under a number of *additional* disadvantages which it would not be *then* in our power to remedy. --- To meet danger with firmness and resolution, is the only means to escape it ; fly from it, and it will sooner or later overtake you. If our situation is dangerous and critical, *it is not a new one*. We should not, my lords, therefore *despond*. I remember a period, my lords, when the affairs of this country were nearly as critical as they are at present. I recollect too, that the *spirit* of the nation was then *called forth* ; that the *people* were *rouzed* from a *similar* state of *despondency* ; and what mighty things they achieved ! Our arms proved victorious in every quarter of the globe. I do not allude to that period, because I was employed by my Sovereign, and the Nation, as a poor and undeserving instrument in effecting those glorious purposes ; but merely, to shew, that spirited, vigorous and decisive measures, are the *best* in certain exigencies ; and to remind your lordships, that in moments of imminent danger, a *great deal* must be *hazarded*. --- I believe most sincerely, that the surest, and every way the most eligible means to extricate us out of our present difficulties, would be to act with resolution and vigour : --- submit and your danger may be but just beginning. --- Every concession, I am persuaded, will lay a foundation for a new claim ; and the last be followed by another, till your enemies will have *nothing to ask* ; because you will have *nothing to grant*. --- On the other hand, I am ready to acknowledge, that the events of

war are uncertain.---But, my lords, which of you can hesitate about a choice.---Certainly, in point of sound policy and national dignity, which on the present occasion it is *impossible* to separate, for they both import the *same* thing, an *hazardous*, but *honourable war*, is infinitely preferable to an *ignominious peace*.

It is with a mixture of indignation, and sorrow that I would recall to your lordships memory, the once glorious and flourishing state of this country, at the accession of his present Majesty; when we were no less the *admiration* of *surrounding nations*, than a *terror* to our *secret* and *open enemies*; when we had the united force of France and Spain to contend with.---We had then just lost a Prince of the illustrious house of Brunswick, who had reigned over us for a long series of years, with *wisdom*, *reputation* and *glory*.---He *loved* his *subjects*.---His present most gracious Majesty succeeded to his throne and virtues.---What then can be the reason, my lords, that our affairs should come to be so much changed for the worse?---My lords, I do not know; but I *fear* there is *something concealed*; some *lurking influence* which *surrounds* the *throne*; which *gives motion* to *administration*; which *thwarts* and *defeats* every *good*, and *suggests* every *bad* purpose.---My lords, I do not look or wish for employment. I do not desire any man's place. I am *unconnected* with *any party*; but I will endeavour to *serve* my country to the best of my poor abilities, if my advice is asked. I do not *oppose men*, but *measures*. I do not make *war*, my lords, on *Ministers*, but upon *unretracted error*. I care not, who is *in power*; so that *my country be saved*.

My lords, I repeat once more, that I will never agree to American independency. I will never consent, that the house of Brunswick shall be *stripped* of its inheritance. The rights of the crown of England are *inalienable*. Who then shall undertake to dispose of them?---Suppose the whole legislature should resolve to give up the dependency of America, who is it *dare* engage in his
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ministerial character, to procure a *vote* of Parliament, to dispose of the eventual inheritance of the heir apparent to the crown, of the Prince of Wales, and Bishop of Osnaburgh?---The Prince of Wales, my lords, was *born* to the *succession*: he is *entitled* to it. What power under Heaven can take upon itself to defeat that succession, in which *all* the descendants of the Princess Sophia; and her heirs being protestants, have an eventual interest?---The illustrious house of Brunswick was called to the throne of these kingdoms by the general voice of the nation. America is an appendage, or dependency of that imperial throne; and where is the man bold enough to advise an act of such notorious injustice?

My lords, I do not find myself *able* to proceed further.---I most sincerely thank your lordships for your kind indulgence; and have only now to add, my lords, that *as long* as I have *strength* to *crawl* down to this house, I will uniformly and strenuously resist every proposition, which may tend *directly* or *indirectly* to relinquish the sovereignty of this country over America: and should I stand alone in this opinion, I will testify my disapprobation of it, by leaving a *Protest* declarative of my sentiments, entered on the records of Parliament.

F I N I S.