

India ; that their conduct deserved the judicial cognizance of the nation, that the character of public justice in this country is absolutely at stake, that the Supreme government of Bengal, especially under the direction of Warren Hastings, held your authority in defiance and contempt, and that his official deportment was fraught with such instances of maladministration as render the present investigation at once solemn and indispensable.

It is utterly impossible for any language to place the subject in a more affecting, momentous, and urgent point of view, than your own proceedings have done. And how are these proceedings interpreted by the public and the world at large? You are considered as under the strongest and most direct stipulations to bring this flagrant and pointed case to an immediate issue, to apply the mass of information you have collected with so much trouble for the purposes of general utility, to give effect to the several  
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acts of the Legislature, that they may be no longer regarded as so much waste paper in the statute books, and to hold up an emphatic and secure example of official depravity to persons in responsible situations, that turpitude, however high, that venality however screened, that motives of insatiable cruelty, however coloured by the stale pretexts of duty, may receive that odium, that execration, that punishment which is undoubtedly their due. How are you to satisfy the universal curiosity which your deliberations in Parliament have excited, the feelings of solicitude for the rescue of a character loaded with imputation, or the condemnation of crimes which challenge you to enquiry without determining on the evidence before you, and reducing the various resolutions you have formed to rules of conduct. A paper, signed Warren Hastings, has been just put into my hand, which he probably means as a second defence of his proceedings against the Princesses of Oude. It does not contain a  
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statement which is not already before the House, but it discovers a very strong propensity to disguise and misrepresent facts known and established. How far such a clandestine mode of pre-possessing your judgment, is regular or calculated to inspire a favourable opinion of his cause, the Committee must decide. Neither am I apprehensive you can in any degree be affected by the artful insinuations so industriously circulated without doors, that following up the charges of High Crimes and Misdemeanours against Mr. Hastings is an intrusion on the business of Parliament, and that the French commercial treaty and other matters equally pressing, ought, in compliance with public expectation and solicitude, to have at least the preference. Such suggestions betray their origin, and are certain indications of despondency, in a cause incapable of better defence. This House knows its own dignity too well and the propriety of sustaining that dignity by giving effect to its own

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resolutions, to admit, for a moment, that any subject can be more important or more urgent than establishing the responsibility of office. And you will permit me to ask, can we be better employed than in rescuing millions of innocent and helpless people from the savage grasp of despotism, than in restoring the credit of the British name from the odium it has incurred by the rapacity of the Company's servants in India, than in giving a strong and adequate example of that justice, in deciding on over-acts of power, which has generally characterized the liberality and equality of our happy constitution? To the honour of this House the world is already satisfied that we are in earnest. To the honour of Parliament the process goes on. To the honour of the Committee, in which I now stand, you have, in one of the charges against the late Governour General of all India, pronounced your solemn award, that he deserves to be impeached. To the honour of the Right  
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Hon. Gentleman \* he avowed his convictions of the crimes alledged, and manfully agreed with the resolution of the Committee. The monstrous argument set up against all this, that delinquencies of office were to be compounded, and that the important services of Mr. Hastings ought to be sustained as an apology for his misconduct, was reprobated by a vote, which records the equity of our decisions. Where is the abettor of Indian delinquency, who dare now assert that though Committees reports addresses and acts, King, Lords, and Commons, were against Mr. Hastings, he was not to be assailed, he was the Saviour of India, his conduct was great, irreproachable, and meritorious, and he had the thanks of his constituents formally awarded to him in a general court of the Proprietors in his pocket. The whole of your proceedings, Sir, establish this great manly and constitutional maxim, that such instances of personal outrage, were acts which no political necessity could justify,

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\* Mr. Pitt.

and that Mr. Hastings's treatment of the unfortunate Cheit Sing was an act of that description. And I adopt from my heart the words of the Right Hon. Gentleman \* on that occasion. They were, that the Committee, in the administration of Mr. Hastings found "*Acts of strong injustice, of grinding oppression, and unprovoked severity.*"

The Committe in this memorable decision have done honour to the character and principles of my Right Honourable Friend † whose conduct has been foully aspersed by the slanderous tongues of ignorance and perversion. The facts established give the lie to all the indignities of detraction and all the fabrications of malignity. Your vote on that great question declares that the man who brought the charges, at whose influence the prosecution has been instituted, is no false accuser, that he is not influenced by pique or envy, that he is instigated by no  
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\* Mr. Pitt. † Mr. Burke.

The Committee have done more. What is the sentence you have pronounced but a solemn pledge to India of your concern for her welfare, of the deep interest you take in her government, of your serious determination to protect her rights. You have said to her, in a tone that even now inspires her with hope, that you do not mean to insult her distress by any farther expedients only temporary and incompetent. You shall have no more remedial acts. You shall no longer be seduced by the delusions of a moment or be amused by a titled governour or a vapouring set of resolutions. No. You shall see an immediate end to your grievances and have the substantial consolation of beholding the relentless author of your injuries called to a strict and severe account. This will bind your dependences in every part of the globe by ties so much the stronger as their confidence in your integrity is strengthened. You have set up a beacon or mark not only for a guide to your own  
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conduct, but for an example to all the nations on earth. And Great Britain has the glory of towering above her surrounding neighbours as much for the impartial administration of justice as for her political pre-eminence and power. And I make no doubt but in your manly and firm determination to go through the whole of this complicated business with the same steady attention to equity and fact in which you have begun, you may safely challenge the whole universe to observe and judge of you by the result.

If ever there was a question on which enquiry has been full, deliberate, dispassionate, and correct, it is certainly the present. Not an influence of temerity can be attached to any page or part of the prosecutions. There undoubtedly are many party questions on which a partial conviction may be supposed a matter of easy acquisition. But if this is to be considered merely as a bone of contention between political parties,  
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an account ; statesmen occupied in doing the business of a tipstaff; Generals made auctioneers; a truncheon contrasted with the implements of a counting-house; and the British Government exhibited in every part of Indostan, holding a bloody sceptre in one hand, and picking pockets with the other.\*

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\* The Orator here went into a very long and accurate statement of facts, in which he proved to a demonstration, by a variety of documents, chiefly from Mr. Hastings's own minutes and correspondence, that the Begums, instead of being the ancient disturbers of Government, had always given it their cordial support; that they had not stirred up the Jagheerdars to resist the Nabob, as the Jagheerdars never had been in a state of resistance; and that the jagheerdars, or landholders, did not even resist the resumption of their own jagheers, though, as these were confirmed to them by solemn treaty, Mr. Sheridan vindicated their right of defending them on that ground. But he contended, there was not a single charge against them; and that the Nabob himself, with all the load of obloquy which he incurred, had not once imputed to them the crime of fomenting the least opposition to his authority.

Through this intricate discussion, no human recollection could do him any thing like justice; and we shall content ourselves, in winding up the Speech, with giving, as correctly as possible, such passages only as made the most powerful impression on the House.

no longer on the patience of the Committee. Mr. Middleton complains in several places, of the perturbed and hesitating conduct of the Nabob.—A son who was about to raise his hand against his mother, might surely be allowed time to ruminate, before he resolved to devote her to destruction.—Mr. Middleton might have been permitted to declare himself to that effect, without being accused of tardiness or a reluctant acquiescence with the obvious tendency of his orders.

The justice of the East, as exercised by Mr. Hastings and Sir Elijah Impey, is of the most infamous kind; but I hope that the Committee, by their vote of this night, will rescue the British character from the odium into which it has fallen.

The legal proceedings of the East, are libels against justice, and every act which they have passed, is a libel against the Committees who were appointed to investigate the conduct of the East India Company and  
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