

IV.

IN consequence of a conference with the committees of correspondence for the towns in the vicinity of Boston, November 23, 1773. and with their advice, the following letter is addressed.

GENTLEMEN,

THE present posture of affairs, engages the attention of all the friends of the happy constitution which our fathers framed and for many years supported with such wisdom and fortitude as rendered them the admiration of the age in which they lived, and must make their memory glorious in all future times. Our rights have been for several years invaded by cruel and remorseless enemies; sometimes they have acted with open violence, at other times they have endeavoured by wicked artifice to undermine our constitution. Our fears are now excited by the expectation of the immediate arrival of the tea shipped for the port of Boston, on account of the East India company, the landing and selling of which must be attended with consequences the most fatal to our liberties. We know that great dependance is placed upon this master-piece of policy for accomplishing the purpose of enslaving us, the East-India company have for some years felt the disadvantages arising from the duty laid on tea as it has in a great measure prevented the Americans from importing that article from England; they have applied to administration for the repeal of that act, and so great is their influence, that the ministry found themselves under a necessity of contriving some method of giving them satisfaction: that they might do this, without repealing their darling act imposing a duty upon tea for the purpose of raising a revenue in America, they procured an act to be made in the last session of parliament, whereby the East-India company are allowed to export tea to America upon their own account. Now gentlemen if the East-India company are prevented from reaping the advantages which they expected from the liberty granted them of sending tea to America upon their own account, they must still be obliged to insist upon the total repeal of that unrighteous act; and we are convinced that administration must comply with the demand, and at least take off one heavy burthen from us, and we shall defeat the intention of those who are plotting to introduce in this crafty manner an arbitrary power of taking from the Americans their dearly acquired property without their consent. But if we are prevailed upon implicitly to acknowledge a right to tax us, by receiving and consuming teas loaded with a tax imposed by the British parliament, we may be assured that in a very short time, taxes of the like or a more grievous nature, will be laid on every article exported from Great Britain, which our necessity may require, or our shameful luxury may betray us into the use of, and when once they have found the way to rob us, their avarice will never be satisfied until our own manufactures, and even our land, purchased and cultivated by our hard labouring ancestors are taxed to support the extravagance and vices of wretches, whose vileness ought to banish them from the society of men. We think therefore gentlemen, that we are in duty bound to use our most strenuous endeavours to ward off the impending evil, and we are sure that upon a fair and cool inquiry into the nature and tendency of this ministerial plan; you will think this tea now coming to us, more to be dreaded than plague or pestilence, for these can only destroy our mortal bodies, but we never knew a country enslaved without the destruction of their virtue, the loss of which every good man must esteem infinitely greater than the loss of life. And we earnestly request, that after having carefully considered this important matter, you would impress upon the minds of your friends, neighbours, and fellow townsmen, the necessity of exerting themselves in a most zealous and determined manner, to save the present and future generations from temporal and (we think we may with seriousness say) eternal destruction.

*We are Gentlemen, with great Esteem, your Friends,
and Humble Servants.*

By Order of the Committee of Boston.

William Cooper Junr. Clerk

P. S. As the foregoing letter was draughted in presence of a collected body of committees from the several adjacent towns, some particulars respecting the evil consequences of admitting the East-India company's tea into this and the other colonies, were not fully treated. The committee of this town have thought proper to make some further observations. When this and the other capital places upon the continent fully understood the plan upon which the India company are sending out their teas, they highly resented so black a design upon their liberties, and resolved, that to suffer these teas to be landed and sold among them will so add to their chains and spread the net so broad, that neither they nor their children will be able to cast them off: For it is considered that they will not only collect 30,000. sterling a year at least, into the revenue chest, a pretty sum to divide among our task-masters, but drain the colonies of one million six hundred thousand dollars annually, to pay for the tea, the India company having a constant demand for silver, and nothing else that this country produces to make their remittances to the East Indies, this will in a short time so affect our currency as to be sensibly felt by every individual. Tea is the only article in the British trade that calls for our cash, for we can assure the public that little or no money has been sent to Great Britain by private merchants for several years past, they having made their remittances in the produce of the country: the only present drain of our cash that way, is the custom house who frequently send large quantities of dollars extorted from the trade, which is finally paid by the consumer to support our enemies on this and the other side of the water in luxury and debauchery. We also foresee that should these consignees fully establish themselves, which Heaven forbid, to the exclusion of all others, we may depend upon their raising tea to what ever price they please, presuming that this people will mortgage their very lands rather than go without tea; upon these considerations, and those mentioned in the above letter this town had a meeting the 5th instant, and by a respectable committee requested the consignees to renounce their commission, and not persist to ruin their country, but they then declined; giving for reason that they could not yet tell what conditions the tea would come out on till further advices from England, we then waited until the 18th instant, when a vessel arrived in a short passage with one of the consignees on board, and the town was again assembled and renewed their former request, but still we are refused, for reasons you will see in the inclosed proceedings of the town, which we are directed to forward to all the towns through the colony. Now brethren we are reduced to this dilemma, either to sit down quiet under this, and every other burthen that our enemies shall see fit to lay upon us, as good natured slaves, or rise and resist this and every plan laid for our destruction as becomes wise freemen. In this extremity we earnestly request your advice, and that you would give us the earliest intelligence of the sense your several towns have, of the present gloomy situation of our public affairs

W.C.

