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Junius

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Letter XXIV

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proaches and despair. But, my Lord, you may quit the field of business, though not the field of danger; and though you cannot be safe, you may cease to be ridiculous. I fear you have listened too long to the advice of those pernicious friends, with whose interests you have sordidly united your own, and for whom you have sacrificed every thing that ought to be dear to a man of honor. They are still base enough to encourage the follies of your age, as they once did the vices of your youth. As little acquainted with the rules of decorum, as with the laws of morality, they will not suffer you to profit by experience, nor even to consult the propriety of a bad character. Even now they tell you, that life is no more than a dramatic scene, in which the hero should preserve his consistency to the last, and that as you lived without virtue, you should die without repentance.

JUNIUS.

LETTER XXIV.

TO JUNIUS.

SIR,

14. September, 1769.

HAVING accidentally seen a *republication* of your letters, wherein you have been pleased to *assert*, that I had *sold* the companions of my success; I am again obliged to declare the said assertion to be

a most *infamous* and *malicious falshood*; and I again call upon you to stand forth, avow yourself, and *prove* the charge. If you can make it out to the satisfaction of any one man in the kingdom, I will be content to be thought the worst man in it; if you do not, what must the nation think of you? *Party* has nothing to do in this affair: you have made a personal attack upon my honor, defamed me by a most vile calumny, which might possibly have sunk into oblivion, had not such uncommon pains been taken to renew and perpetuate this scandal, chiefly because it has been told in good language, for I give you full credit for your elegant diction, well turned periods, and attic wit; but wit is oftentimes false, though it may appear brilliant; which is exactly the case of your *whole performance*. But, Sir, I am obliged in the most *serious* manner to accuse you of being guilty of *falsities*. You have said the thing that is *not*. To support your story, you have recourse to the following *irresistible* argument: "You *sold* the companions of your victory, because when the 16th regiment was given to you, you was *silent*." The conclusion is inevitable. I believe that such *deep* and *acute reasoning* could only come from such an extraordinary writer as *Junius*. But unfortunately for you, the *premises* as well as the *conclusion* are absolutely *false*. Many applications have been made to the ministry on the subject of the Manilla Ransom *since* the time of my being colonel of that regiment. As I have for some years quitted London, I was obliged to have recourse to the honorable Colonel Monson

and Sir Samuel Cornish to *negociate* for me; in the last autumn, I personally delivered a memorial to the Earl of Shelburne at his seat in Wiltshire. As you have told us of your importance, that you are a person of *rank* and *fortune*, and above a *common* bribe, you may in all probability be not *unknown* to his lordship, who can satisfy you of the truth of what I say. But I shall now take the liberty, Sir, to seize your battery, and turn it against yourself. If your puerile and tinsel logic could carry the least weight or conviction with it, how must you stand affected by the *inevitable conclusion*, as you are pleased to term it? According to *Junius*, *Silence is Guilt*. In many of the public papers, you have been called in the most direct and offensive terms a *liar* and a *coward*. When did you reply to these foul accusations? You have been quite *silent*; quite chop-fallen: therefore, *because* you was *silent*, the nation has a right to pronounce you to be both a liar and a coward from your own argument: but Sir, I will give you fair-play; will afford you an opportunity to wipe off the first appellation; by desiring the proofs of your charge against me. Produce them! To wipe off the last, produce *yourself*. People cannot bear any longer your *Lion's skin*, and the despicable *imposture* of the *old Roman name* which you have *affected*. For the future assume the name of some *modern* * *bravo* and *dark assassin*: let your appellation have some affinity to your practice. But if I must *perish*,

* Was *Brutus* an *ancient bravo* and *dark assassin*; or does Sir. W. D. think it criminal to stab a tyrant to the heart?

Junius, let me *perish* in the face of day; be *once* a generous and open enemy. I allow that gothic *appeals* to cold iron are no better proofs of a man's honesty and veracity than hot iron and burning ploughshares are of *female chastity*: but a soldier's honor is as delicate as a woman's; it must not be suspected; you have dared to throw more than a suspicion upon mine: you cannot but know the consequences, which even the meekness of Christianity would pardon me for, after the injury you have done me.

WILLIAM DRAPER.

LETTER XXV.

Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.

TO SIR WILLIAM DRAPER, K. B.

SIR,

25. September, 1769.

AFTER so long an interval, I did not expect to see the debate revived between us. My answer to your last letter shall be short; for I write to you with reluctance, and I hope we shall now conclude our correspondence for ever.

Had you been originally and without provocation attacked by an anonymous writer, you would have some right to demand his name. But in this cause you are a volunteer. You engaged in it with the unpremeditated gallantry of a soldier. You