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Westminster, January 17.

HIS Majesty came this Day to the House of Peers, and being in his Royal Robes seated on the Throne, with the usual Solemnity; Sir William Sanderfon, Gentleman-Usher of the Black-Rod, was sent with a Message from His Majesty to the House of Commons, commanding their Attendance in the House of Peers; the Commons being come thither accordingly, His Majesty was pleased to make the following most gracious Speech to both Houses.

My Lords and Gentlemen,
I Acquainted you last Year with the Treaties of Peace and Commerce concluded between the Emperour and the King of Spain; as that sudden and unaccountable Conjunction gave, at the first Appearance, just Grounds of Jealousy and Apprehension to the neighbouring Powers of Europe, the subsequent Proceedings and Transactions in those two Courts, and the secret and offensive Alliances concluded between them about the same Time, have laid the Foundations of a most exorbitant and formidable Power, and are so directly levelled against the most valuable and darling Interests and Privileges of this Nation, that we must determine either tamely to submit to the peremptory and unjust Demands of the King of Spain, in giving up Gibraltar, and patiently to acquiesce in the Emperour's usurp'd and extended Exercise of Trade and Commerce, or must resolve to be in a Condition to do ourselves Justice, and to defend our undoubted Rights against these reciprocal Engagements entred into, in Defiance and Violation of all national Faith, and the most solemn Treaties.

I have likewise received Informations from different Parts, on which I can entirely depend, that the placing the Pretender upon the Throne of this Kingdom is one of the Articles of the secret Engagements; and, if Time shall evince, that the giving up the Trade of this Nation to one Power, and Gibraltar and Port Mahon to another, is made the Price and Reward of imposing upon this Kingdom a Popish Pretender, what an Indignation must this raise in the Breast of every Protestant Briton?

Nor were these fatal Combinations confined to these Parts of the World alone, but they extended themselves into Russia; and had not the Designs of that Court, against some of their Neighbours, been prevented by the seasonable Arrival of our Fleet in those Seas, a Way had been opened for invading these Kingdoms, and giving a powerful Assistance to any Attempt to be made from other Quarters.

Such Circumstances would not suffer Me, and My Allies, among whom there has been, and is the most perfect Harmony, Union and Concert, to be idle Spectators, and regardless of our own Safety; and the Common Cause of Europe, for which Purpose, his most Christian Majesty has been at a great Expence; this last Year, in augmenting his Forces, and the States General sensible of the imminent Danger, have not only acceded to the Defensive Alliance concluded at Ha-

never, but have come to strong and seasonable Resolutions for an extraordinary Augmentation of their Forces, both by Sea and Land. The Accession of the Crown of Sweden is in such a Forwardness, and the Negotiations with the Crown of Denmark are so far advanced, that we may reasonably depend upon the Success and good Effect of them.

This short View of the present Posture of Affairs, will, I am confident, not only secure to Me the Support and Assistance of my Parliament, in carrying on this great and necessary Work, in Conjunction with my Allies; but justify the Measures hitherto taken, and the Expences already made.

The Confidence you reposed in Me last Year, has been made use of for the Benefit of the Publick; and as the chief Article of Exceeding has, by My equipping and sending to Sea three considerable Squadrons, fallen upon the Head of the Navy, I am persuaded the Necessity of the Services, and the Security, Advantage and Glory that has accrued to this Nation from those Squadrons, will sufficiently speak for themselves, as long as both Friends and Foes, with Joy or Concern, confess, they have seen and felt the Effects of the Naval Power of Great Britain.

It is not to be wondered at, that the Princes engaged in these Enterprizes are very much disturbed to see their Projects render'd abortive: The King of Spain, impatient of the Disappointments he has met with, can no longer disguise that Enmity to us, which for some Time he has only waited for a favourable Opportunity to declare: He has now ordered his Minister residing here to depart immediately from this Country; leaving a Memorial that is little short of a Declaration of War, wherein he again demands and insists upon the Restoration of Gibraltar: He does not himself deny the Offensive Alliance, nor his Engagements to support the Offend Company: He makes My recalling those Squadrons, which his Conduct had put Me under a Necessity of sending to the West-Indies, and the Coasts of Spain, the Condition of any further Correspondence between the two Crowns; and supposing the Continuance of my Fleets abroad to be actual Hostilities, threatens to repel them with Force to the utmost of his Power.

But not content with these Menaces, Insults, and Infractions of Treaties, his Catholick Majesty is now making Preparations to attack and besiege Gibraltar; and, in order to carry on that Service, or to cover another Design, has assembled a great Body of Troops in that Neighbourhood; but as the present State and Condition of that Garrison, with the Reinforcements I have ordered thither, give Me little Cause to apprehend, or my Enemies to hope for Success in that Undertaking; the certain and undoubted Intelligence I have, that it is now resolv'd to attempt an Invasion upon these Kingdoms in Favour of the Pretender, by an Imbarcation from the Coasts of Spain, gives me Reason to believe, that the Siege of Gibraltar may probably be undertaken, the publick, avow'd and immense Preparations made for that Purpose, are chiefly calculated to amuse the World, and to disguise the intended Invasion, which I am surely informed, has been for some time agreed to be the first Step and Beginning of the long premeditated Rupture.

Gentlemen

