Honorable Mr. Speaker. York Town 23d. Decem 1777. (14)

Sir

I am directed by Congress to transmit to your Honorable body, the inclosed resolutions, which the preserving wants of the army, & the arts & avarice of engrossers & extortioners have rendered indispensibly necessary to the general welfare.

It is with deep concern that Congress, after having for some time contemplated in painful silence the mischiefs, which threaten this extended continent from the growing avarice of the times, feel themselves constrained to recommend measures, which the virtue of all classes of men rendered not long since unnecessary, & which a scrupulous regard for the security of property to every citizen of these States has hitherto restrained them from adopting: but unhappy the case of America, laws unworthy the character of infant republics, are become necessary to supply the defect of public virtue; & to correct the vices of some of her sons, & she is called upon, by the grand principle of self-preservation, to guard against the parricide of those, whom she has fostered in her own bosom.

To minds, whose reflections are employed on the importance of the cause in which we are engaged, & which feel for every circumstance, which may affect the honor & safety of these States, it must give the most painful sensations to consider, that at a time when the late signal successes we have been blest with, the reduced number of the enemy, the difficulties they meet with in procuring foreign levies, & the political complexion of affairs in Europe, have deprived Britain of many of those resources, on which she has so much depended; when the numbers & improving discipline of our army, the prodigious augmentation of our military stores, the quantity of provisions with which this coun-

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