

of a court, in which they were to have no voice, nor any opinion, is not only the most daring invasion of the rights of free citizens, but the grossest insult to the common sense of mankind.

For some purposes, however, it would appear, that the rights of the burgeses in head-courts are admitted, even by the magistrates themselves, to be different from that of *only bearing the accounts read*. — When it suits their views to have the taxes *advanced* for the support of streets, wells, and lamps, the authority of a Head Court of the burgeses is found necessary; and accordingly such business has been introduced repeatedly, in the course of the last thirty years. But it is evident, that while Magistrates and Counsellors are permitted to give whatever definition they please of the powers of Head Courts, so as may best suit their own particular purposes, they will only be, for the time, just what they choose to make them!

If the doctrines of the council, upon this occasion, are to be established; if, instead of having a title, in their own constitutional assembly, to propose and enforce regulations in the revenue and police of that community of which they are members, they are to be excluded from this privilege, by the mere *ipse dixit* of those who pretend to be their representatives, and who derive their authority solely from their being members of the same body; if, at the same time, they are to be told, that if injured, they may seek redress of their grievances at common law, the situation of the burgeses is, indeed, truly humiliating!

Yet this, at present, is precisely the situation of the burgeses of Aberdeen; and into this situation have they been brought by the magistrates and council!

The question then is no longer, whether the present motions, in the form of resolutions, are right or wrong; futile, or of utility? but, in plain construction, whether we are to be in a situation infinitely worse than cyphers in the community, without the smallest political consequence, and passive slaves to the arbitrary will and caprice of those, whose fixed determination is that we shall be so? Fortunately there is no necessity for such a supposition. The decent and manly spirit of the burgeses, will, without doubt, be fully equal to the extricating themselves from this degrading situation. It is now no longer a question of private privilege, but relates equally to every burges in Scotland; for were it possible to suppose that the guildry and incorporations of Aberdeen would have the tameness to crouch under these arbitrary proceedings, *their case*, who would so ill merit the name of *freemen*, would never fail to be quoted on every occasion when the rights of citizens were to be trampled on and intruded.

It has been said, that our propositions should have come in the form of a petition to the council. — Our ancestors were strangers to such doctrines, and would have blushed at such meanness in their degenerate sons. They were better judges of their own privileges, and let a higher value on the rights of burgeses,