

**REFUTATION OF
ASPERSIONS ON STUART'S
THREE YEARS IN NORTH
AMERICA, PP.10-108**

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Refutation of Aspersions on Stuart's Three Years in North America, pp.10-108 by James Stuart

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JAMES STUART

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REFUTATION

OF

ASPERSIONS

ON

“STUART’S THREE YEARS

IN

NORTH AMERICA.”

BY

JAMES STUART, ESQ.



Oh! who shall say what heroes feel,
When all but life and honour's lost?

MOORE.

LONDON:

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& ROBERT CADELL, EDINBURGH.

1834.

641.

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GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

PREFACE.

IN the Edinburgh Evening Courant, a long established and respectable Journal, conducted by a literary gentleman of known prudence and experience, there appeared on the 31st of October last a letter from Major Pringle, containing a general denial of the truth of the statements in my work on North America, "in almost every instance where the operations of the British Army were described." Knowing certainly that such an assertion was unfounded, and in the face of the British official despatches, I should probably have left it uncontradicted, but for the prefatory notice with which the Editor of the Courant ushered the letter into his columns, and which, by declaring it to be distinguished by its moderation, and conclusive in its details, gave it a degree of credit which it would not otherwise have obtained from the public. As soon as I received a copy of the Courant containing Major Pringle's letter, I intimated to the Editor that it was

my intention to send him a complete and convincing vindication of those parts of my work which he and Major Pringle had impugned ; but before I had leisure to do this, Major Pringle, on the 13th and the 30th of November, published two additional letters, in the same Journal, even more objectionable in manner, and more at variance with correct narration than the first. Circumstances, to which it is unnecessary to allude, have for some weeks prevented me from devoting my time to the collection of the evidence necessary for the refutation of the calumnies which have thus been circulated on the authority of the Newspaper and of Major Pringle. The following letter to the Editor of the Courant, which contains my vindication, is necessarily, I find, of so great length, that I have no reason to expect that the whole of it could at once be conveniently introduced into the columns of a Newspaper ; and I have therefore preferred publishing it as a pamphlet, together with the remarks of the Editor of the Courant and Major Pringle's letters, to which I have referred, and also my correspondence with Sir John Lambert, of which the Editor of the Courant takes notice. Sir John Lambert did me the honour to wait upon me to thank me for the effectual steps I had taken to carry the object of his correspondence with

me into effect, and to put in my hands the last letter, which forms a part of that correspondence. Upon that occasion, he communicated to me many interesting details of the battle of New Orleans. I beg, however, that it may be distinctly understood, that no fact is stated on his authority, unless so far as corroborated by his official despatches.

I presume that such Editors of public Journals as have transferred Major Pringle's letters into their columns, will consider it due to me to publish my refutation, although it may not be in their power to insert the whole of my letter to the Editor of the Edinburgh Evening Courant in one Paper. If they cannot do this conveniently, they are at least bound to examine the evidence submitted in the following pages, and finding it (as I flatter myself they will find it) satisfactory on every point, to pronounce the refutation *complete*.

J. S.

London, January, 1834.

legislature of the United States, been in the possession of the French army ; Paris was soon after occupied by the allied armies, yet in no case was any unmilitary building destroyed, far less any valuable state papers or books. Even Louis the Fourteenth acted very differently.

3. " During his war with England, instead of returning thanks to his officers, as the British did to those who commanded at Washington for destroying a building not devoted to military purposes, he sent them to gaol. The Frenchmen had landed on the Eddystone rocks, on which the lighthouse was then erecting, and carried the workmen to France, together with their tools. While the captives lay in prison, the transaction came to the knowledge of the French monarch, who immediately ordered the prisoners to be released, and the captors, who were expecting a reward for the achievement, to be confined in their stead, declaring, that, though he was at war with England, he was not at war with mankind. He therefore directed the men to be sent back to their work with presents.

4. " The library, and a great part of the state papers of the nation, were destroyed with the public buildings. *I heard many anecdotes of this much to be regretted incursion. The commanders had directed private property to be respected, but it was impossible to restrain the soldiery. Much private property was destroyed. Mr. Elliot was with the army. His house was sacked. The destruction of Mr. Gales' printing establishment was the most pitiful of all the proceedings. His father*

had emigrated from Britain above twenty years previously, and Mr. Gales himself conducted a newspaper at Washington, devoted to the American cause. For this reason, as it was supposed, an order was issued for destroying his property by fire; but a lady, who lived in the neighbourhood, entreated that it might be recalled, because it was but too probable that her property, which adjoined, would fall a prey to the flames. Sir George Cockburn, who had issued the order, was so far moved by her entreaties, as to limit the destruction to the printing-presses, and to the establishment within the walls. It is asserted in the American history of the war, that Sir George himself overlooked this part of the work.

5. "Although the Americans had suffered much from Sir George Cockburn's piratical expeditions on the Chesapeake, and his destruction of French Town, as well as from the establishment of a rendezvous for runaway negroes, on an island of the Chesapeake, who had been armed by him and again put on shore, they were not at the time aware, that it was to Sir George Cockburn they were indebted for the visit of the British to Washington; and it was upon the brave and amiable General Ross, who afterwards fell in the attack upon Baltimore, that they intended to retaliate for the devastation at Washington. To send a fleet and an army to any part of the British isles was impossible; but it was resolved to send a fast-sailing armed vessel to the coast of Ireland, to destroy Cross Trevor, the beautiful property belonging to General Ross. A party were to land in the