

Item: Letter from Edmund Burke

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Additional Notes:

A two-page letter from Edmund Burke to unnamed correspondent, dated February 17, 1776.

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Orig. Lett<sup>r</sup> of Edmund Burke, to unmentioned correspondent  
N. P. Sunday, Feb 17, 1776, 2 p. 4to - hca. 1938. WIM. Coll.  
Re Nova Scotiae. as penal colony &c.

Dear Sir

I am heartily obliged to you for your Communication  
of a plan proposed upon such humane & equitable principles. I  
shall read the Bill with attention, & communicate to you any  
remarks upon it that may occur to me; though the persons most  
likely to be useful to you on the occasion, are those who are most  
conversant in the details of the execution of municipal Justice  
& provincial economy. As to the principle itself, of penal  
labour, I confess, (whatever it may do in other Countries, with  
whose polity I am not acquainted) I have no extraordinary opinion  
of it in England. It is indeed an happy exchange, if there be no  
other, for the Butchery which we call justice. Transportation always  
seem'd to me to be a good expedient for preventing the cruelty of capi-  
:tal Punishments, the danger of letting wicked people loose upon  
the publick, or the infinite charge & difficulty of making them useful,  
whose disposition it is to be mischievous. If Nova Scotia, the Glou-  
:das, or Newfoundland are not adapted for the reception of these  
unhappy wretches, to be sure, some censure of this kind will  
become

become necessary at whatever cost or trouble. I am glad to find the business  
in the hands of the Author of the Penal Laws, & that Ministry supports it.  
I am with great Esteem & regard

Dear Sir

Your most faithful

Obd<sup>t</sup> humble serv<sup>t</sup>

John Ashke

Sunday. Feb. 17. 1776.