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SOME OBSERVATIONS

ON THE Rise, Progress, and present Decay OF THE

Woollen Manufactories:

WITH

An Estimate of this Valuable TRADE fairly stated, and the great Proportion given yearly to Foreigners, by suffering the Illegal Exportation of our British and Irish Wool and Woollen Goods throughly manufactur'd in Ireland to Foreigners.

To which is Added, Heads of a BILL to put a Stop to this matchless Evil so injurious to both King and Country.

Humbly address'd to the Parliament of GREAT-BRITAIN, without putting His Majesty to a Penny Charge for Officers, or any Imposition upon the Publick: but, on the contrary, humbly petition'd for, and will with all Thanks be receiv'd, and defray'd by the TRADE, except such Commissioners as his Majesty may appoint, to be paid by him for examining our Register-Accompts, as by our SCHEME to be laid before the Hon. House of COMMONS, being proper to be perus'd by Landlords, Tenants, Merchants and Manufacturers, plainly shewing how many Persons are employ'd in working up three Packs of WOOL in Broad Cloths, Narrow Works, and Hose, viz. 336, earning each Week 88 l. 9 s. 6d.

It is also necessary to take Notice of some other Branches of our Foreign Trade influenc'd by our Woollen Manufactures, particularly from Turkey and Italy, of Raw-Silk and Cotton-Wool, in making Garments, Ribbons, Stockings, Handkerchiefs, &c. 100 lb. of Silk for Garments employs Persons, earning every Week Ditto in Silk Stockings, employs 175 Persons, earning every Week 65 l.

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SOME
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
Rise, Progress, and present Decay
OF OUR
Woollen Manufactories, &c.

QUR Native Merchandise chiefly consists of Wool, Butter, Cheese, Hides, Tallow, Tin, Lead and Iron; and our wise Ancestors would not suffer the best of these (Wool) to be carried out in the Infancy of its being manufactured: how much stronger are the Reasons now for keeping it to be manufactured at home, when we are thus improv'd in it; and being Masters of the Sea, have it in our Power, from a peculiar Growth of Wool all other Nations stand in need of to be the only Manufacturers in the World, and engross to Ourselves the whole Trade of foreign Markets: for we are ready to make appear no Nation under the Sun besides have enough to cloathe themselves for several Assortments, without the Help
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of our *British*, and *Irish* Wool; for their Wool is so coarse and hairy that it will not make them Assortments by itself: which, if we keep our Wool from them, what can they make of Woollen Goods to outrival us in foreign Markets? instead thereof, they will be glad to take off the Prohibition of our *English* Manufactures, and buy their own Cloathing of us, and at our own Price: and tho' some have inconsiderably enough, or otherwise, as being Enemies to their King and Country, made this Allegation to refuse selling our Wool to Foreigners, they must lower the Price.

The more Buyers there are the better Price Wool must bear; (which is a false Suggestion) for, will *England's* manufacturing her own Wool prevent Foreigners wearing Cloaths? and we will ask where else can they furnish themselves? and have we not Men bred in the Woollen Manufacture of Abilities to buy up and pay for all the Wool which grows in *Great Britain* and *Ireland*? and have we not Labourers enough likewise bred up in it, many having been forced to travel in foreign Parts for want of Employ at home, and teach Foreigners our Trade?

By this pernicious Practice of illegal exporting our Wool, many more are become burthensome in their respective Parishes, which otherwise would be of the most Use of any other Tradesmen, and enrich the State, even from the King to the lowest State of Mankind in this his Majesty's Dominions.

Another Allegation is raised by *England's* Enemies, viz. That there is a greater Call for Goods than we can supply, *English* Labour being so much dearer than that of Foreigners: and besides, if we keep all our Wool to be manufactured at home, we shall not have the Manufacturers to work without greater Wages; and how shall we find Vent then
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either for our Wool or Labour? This is answered before with any thinking Man, who is not prejudiced against *England's* Welfare and Happiness; the high Price Lands bear with the numerous and burthensome Taxes, make the working our Manufactories twenty-five or thirty *per Cent.* dearer than any other Nation or Commonwealth: but, if we keep our Wool to be manufactured at home, what have they to make Goods of, or undersell us in foreign Markets? But *England* will have the Markets of the known World for their Woollen Manufactures, and their own Price; and who pays it but those Foreigners: and what Harm can this do the Subjects of *England*, that the Labourers in the Manufactories should constantly be employ'd, and have good Wages, will they not lay it out for Rent and Provisions, and will not this add Power and Riches to the Nation? for when such great and useful Numbers were employ'd they would have wherewith to go to Market, which now they cannot, as cheap as Provision now is, because they want Employment; but then it would continue, if not raise the Price of Flesh, Bread, Butter and Cheese, and all manner of Provisions; for it is those vast Numbers consume such Provisions: and will not this enrich the Landlords and Tenants, all Ranks reaping Benefit from it? and as aforesaid, Foreigners must pay, or else be without Cloathing; therefore this must raise the Price of Wool the next Year, when the Foreigners are out of what Stock they have had from us this Year.

To compleat this great Work would be fatal not only to neighbouring but even distant Powers, who may be, one time or other, most desirous of our Ruin, by making us a more formidable and richer People than an Acquisition of Mines equal to those of *Peru* and *Mexico*, and at the same time bring immortal Honour to his Majesty, and that Ministry and Parliament, that would guard and secure this National
Blessing

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Blessing until manufactured. The Merchants have a large Share and just Right to the Profits arising thereby in exporting our Goods when manufactur'd, and it would bring home large Customs to his Majesty in the Returns.

In a Word, there's not a good Subject in *England*, from the highest to the lowest Rank of Mankind, but what have a Right and Share therein, and would reap a Benefit thereby; for the Cloathing of the known World would be drawn into this narrow Compass of *England*: for, as before, where can they be furnish'd else? And from that great Demand we shall not only ease our Parishes of much Charge, but keep our Labourers and Poor employ'd, raise the Price of our Wool; and who is to pay for it but those Foreigners. We have an Instance for this of the Rise of our *Bordeaux* Clarets, from the Demand, to the Knowledge of those who dealt that Way some Years since, sold at 4*l.* 5*s.* a Hogshead, that are now sold at 17 and 18*l.* a Hogshead; an Increase of near 400*l.* *per Cent.* so much wiser are the *French* in promoting the true Interest of their Country.

A Scheme, with all Submission, humbly offer'd to the Parliament of *Great Britain*, to prevent that matchless Evil of exporting our Wool unmanufactured to Foreigners; which Loss appears by examining if we lose in three Packs of Wool, at twelve score Pounds *per Pack*, and employing each Week Persons; what vast Sums do we give up to Foreigners yearly, when the Custom-house Books of the Importation of Wool to *England* from *Ireland* made appear in the Year 1729, that from *Ireland* was illegally exported to Foreigners 286,791 Stones of Wool, at 18*l.* besides, perhaps, as much more from *England*, which we cannot accompt, but will inform ourselves.

WHEREAS

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S C H E M E

Humbly offer'd to the Honourable

HOUSE of COMMONS.

WHEREAS the Manufacturers in the Wool-combing Trade, and their Dependants, consisting of no less than Six hundred Thousand, petition'd his most Sacred MAJESTY, to prevent this matchless Evil of exporting our *British* and *Irish* Wool, and for obtaining of a Charter throughout his Majesty's Dominions of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, Town of *Berwick* upon *Tweed*, Dominion of *Wales*, the Islands of *Guernsey*, *Jersey*, and the Isle of *Wight*, therein and throughout, including all in the Branches of the Woollen Manufactories, who have not heretofore been granted and incorporated, of what Branch soever, with Deputations deriving Authority equal to the Persons nam'd, or to be nam'd, and intrusted in the Grant for such Charter;

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ter; and whereas We, the Petitioners, have propos'd not to put his Majesty to a Penny Charge for Officers to effect the same, except such Commissioners as his Majesty is pleas'd to appoint to receive the Register's Accompts, to be paid by his Majesty, or Imposition on the Publick: but, on the contrary, humbly petition'd for, and will thankfully be accepted and defray'd by the TRADE with our Quarterage, as by Precedents of other Charters, as hereafter follows; and whereas his Majesty, in his great Wisdom and Care for the Welfare of his People, has already recommended it to the Honourable Sir *Philip York*, his Majesty's Attorney-General, to report and form, and we to divide ourselves into Companies and Fellowships, as in Precedents of Charters formerly granted the STOCKING-FRAME-KNITTERS and TOBACCO-PIPE-MAKERS, by the Names of *Master, Wardens and Fellowships*, &c. and to give Deputations throughout as most convenient, with as full Power as ourselves, for the well Government thereof to the Good and Benefit of the Publick in Cities, Towns, Boroughs, Hundreds and Parishes, as shall be most needful, as by Precedent of the *Stocking-Frame-Knitters* Charter, Page 7.

And whereas the Honourable Sir *Philip York* told us, for effecting it, we must first obtain an Act of Parliament; and We, the Masters and Labourers in the Woollen Manufactories throughout *England*, most humbly beg Leave to petition our several Representatives from all Parts, that such Bill may pass in Parliament, that we may obtain such Charter by its Authority, that every such Master, for the Time being, shall keep a Register-Office within his Liberty, and likewise to all throughout his Majesty's Dominions, as far as the said Charter extends, for the Year he serves Master, and to their Successors for ever; and any Persons in the Trade duly elected to serve Master or
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Wardens for the ensuing Year, on Refusal of the said Office, shall forfeit to his Majesty and Successors the Sum of Fifty Pounds *Sterl.* and at the End of every Year every such Master and Register deliver a true Accompt to a proper Commissioner for that Purpose, nominated by his Majesty, of all Wool grown, bought in, sold, manufactur'd, and how dispos'd of, throughout all and every of their Liberties; that all Sheep-Masters in *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, and Dominion of *Wales*, &c. shall, upon Oath, some time the first Week in *May* every Year, give a just and true Accompt into the Register-Office appointed for that Parish or Hundred wherein he keeps a Flock or Flocks of Sheep, of every Sheep and Lamb he hath of his own or any other Person's that grazes on the Lands he holds, on Pain of paying Ten Shillings for every such Sheep or Lamb not register'd as aforesaid; and that to be forfeited and paid to the Register of the said Office for the Time being, for his Diligence and Encouragement, to be recover'd by due Proof upon Oath before one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace by Distress or otherwise without farther Law-suit.

This may seem troublesome at first sight to Sheep-Masters; but, if they would spare Time to think what a general Good this will bring to the Nation, and themselves in particular: for at the next sheering the Rise he'll have on his Wool will well pay for the Trouble, and such Register-Officer comes not to collect any thing of him, but continue to him his Property, taking an Account of his sheering once a Year, and the Weight of his Wool, without disturbing his House.

Again, every Sheep-Master, who sells Parcels of fat Sheep or Lambs to Graiers or Butchers, shall, before the Property is alter'd, register them in the Office for the Parish or Hundred wherein they were
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fed, and so take them off the Account of the former Proprietor, and place them to the Buyer's Account, and this under a certain Penalty, which is humbly submitted also.

Again, all Sheep-Masters slaughtering Sheep, or what may die by Rot, red Water, or otherwise, all such Skins to be register'd in the said Office before they are sold, or the Wool drawn off, or dispos'd of, under a certain Penalty, which is humbly submitted likewise.

All Butchers slaughtering Sheep or Lambs shall, under a certain Penalty, which is submitted also, register what Skins are dispos'd of before the Property is alter'd, or the Wool drawn off, in the Register-Office, and taken off the Account of the former Proprietor, and placed to the Account of the Person in whose Custody the Wool is.

All Skinners, or others, buying Sheep-Skins or Lamb-Skins, as soon as they are pull'd or drawn, and the Wool dry, shall send for the Register to weigh the Wool, and take an Account of the Number of Skins it came off, placing it to such Person, with a Duty of Five Shillings *per* Pound (16 Ounces) to put it out of the Power of Owers or Smuglers till sold to another Person, and placed to the Account of the Buyer, when they shall, under a certain Penalty, enter it in the Office, placing it with the Duty to his Majesty of five Shillings *per* Pound, as aforesaid, to the Account of the Buyer, discharging the former Proprietor, and so from Hand to Hand, till it shall be made appear it is thoroughly manufactur'd, and the said Duty discharged.

The better to know the Weight of all Wool growing in *Great-Britain, Ireland, and Dominion of Wales,*
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Et. every one keeping Sheep, as soon as he sheers them, shall send to the Master or Register for the Town, Parish or Hundred where they are shorn, to take Account of the Number of Fleeces, and Weight thereof, to be enter'd in the Register-Book to the Sheep-Master's Account, with his Majesty's Duty as aforesaid, and so from Hand to Hand till it is fully manufactur'd, and the said Duty discharged.

But whereas *Ireland* is incapable to manufacture thoroughly any more fairly and honestly than for their Home Consumption, making the same Laws for that Kingdom to register their Wool, Worsted and Woollen-Yarn, with the aforesaid, chargeable to those in whose Hands it is till thoroughly manufactur'd for their Home Consumption, and then the said Duty to be discharged.

And for the Encouragement of his Majesty's good Subjects in *Ireland*, to promote their Trade, and help *England*, by making it a Spinning-House for them, it is humbly submitted they may be encouraged to make Worsted and Woollen-Yarn, and register it from Hand to Hand, with a Duty of five Shillings *per* Pound, charged to Account in the Register Office to those in whose Custody it shall appear to be the same as in *England* till shipp'd on board a Register-Ship, as hereafter set forth, to be surely brought to *England*, and there to be fully discharged, and then such Register-Ship to be charged in our Register-Book with all such Wool, Worsted or Woollen-Yarn, as shall be receiv'd on board, and register'd, with a Duty of five Shillings *per* Pound to his Majesty, as aforesaid.

The Charge of registering, weighing, and Permits for each Pack of Wool, Worsted or Woollen-Yarn, to the Buyer to help Clerkage, is humbly submitted likewise.

N. B.

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N. B. No Foreigner to buy Wool, Worsted or Woollen-Yarn, till thoroughly manufactured, except he be an Inhabitant in his Majesty's Dominions, and a Subject to his Majesty, on Pain of such Foreigners forfeiting such Goods, and Imprisonment for Life.

That whereas *Ireland* has Spinning cheaper than *England*, they don't make so good Worsted and Woollen-Yarn; and that they may not harm our Worsted and Yarn-Makers in *England*, it is humbly offer'd to lay such a reasonable Duty on the *Irish* Worsted and Woollen-Yarn, to bring it on an Average with our *English* Worsted and Woollen-Yarn, so as not to prejudice the *English* Makers.

N. B. Whereas several Worsted-Makers, who for Frame-work Knitting, and four Thread-Worsted for Knitting, and Woollen-Yarn for Stockings and Caps, sells much of it by retail for mending Stockings, &c. frequently by Pennyworths, &c. and to register such Mens Woollen Goods in this Way of dealing would be endless; for the greatest Dealer in this Way seldom makes a Dozen of any one Colour, but oftener a single Pound: 'tis humbly submitted whether every such Maker's Oath once in every three Months before the Master of the Registry for the Time being, that, to the best of his Knowledge, none of that Wool he buys or register'd, or Goods he made for this time, was, or is to be exported till thoroughly manufactured.

Again,

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Again, every Port in *England* to be open'd for exporting or importing Wool, Worsted or Woollen-Yarn, to encourage Trade by an easy Carriage; but no Ship, Vessel, Sloop or Boat on the Water to take or freight with Wool, Worsted or Woollen-Yarn, on pain of being forfeited, and Penalties and Punishments inflicted, as if illegally exporting it, except first register'd with Security well known for Fortune and Character in one or more of his Majesty's Custom Houses, or Commissioners appointed by his Majesty for that purpose: the Masters of such Ships, as well as their Security, to be Inhabitants of *England* or *Ireland* of honest Report, well known for Character and Fortune before admitted to register their Ships for the honest discharging all such Wool, Worsted, and Woollen-Yarn they shall freight with, as they take Licence, Cocket and Clearance, for all such Wool, Worsted and Woolen-Yarn shipp'd on board they shall enter in the Charter's Register-Book, and made accountable with the Duty of five Shillings for every Pound, discharging the former Proprietor, and there remain till an Account arrives from such Registry it is imported to, and then such Register is to place it to the Account of those it is consign'd to, with the Duty aforesaid to his Majesty, and so from Hand to Hand till it is thoroughly manufactured; and then, as afore, the said Duty to be fully discharged, as in the Case aforesaid, an Account to be sent the last Day of every Month to every Port to the Collectors where such Goods were exported from, the Ship's Master and Merchants Names, with just Returns of their Bills of Lading, which, by comparing the importing with the Custom-house Books from whence such Goods were exported, it will be found, if any Sum, allowing a reasonable Time for performing the Voyage, which is humbly submitted. Any Ship missing the Rail, he who register'd her shall be pro-

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prosecuted at his Majesty's Charge, except it plainly appears the Ship was wreck'd at Sea; which, if it should happen on any Shore out of his Majesty's Dominions they shall not break Bulk: but, if they cannot save the Vessel, or bring her off, if it can be done with the Safety of their Lives, and none of his Majesty's Subjects Ships are nigh to succour her, then they shall set Fire to it, and not suffer it to fall into the Hands of Foreigners, on pain of being prosecuted for exporting it illegally.

Boats on Rivers for easy Carriage shall first be register'd, and then freighted with Wool, Worsted and Woollen-Yarn, to be placed to their Account, with the Duty as aforesaid, till discharged by delivering it by Permit, and register'd in that Office where consigned to.

Any Boat, Vessel or Float on the Water not first register'd, if found with Wool, Worsted or Woollen Yarn, shall be seiz'd and forfeited, and the Persons found on Board shall be prosecuted at his Majesty's Charge, as if they were really exporting it illegally Abroad,

We Tradeimen could best discover our Grievances in our own Dialect; and as his Majesty was pleased to accept and favour us in our Address in the same Stile and Hand, we humbly beg our Representatives may in these plain Truths, without the Falshood or Insinuations of Solicitors.

It is humbly conceived it may seem difficult at first to think how it is possible for us by our Charter to wade through the Trouble and Charge which must attend this Register-Office. It is answer'd, It will be troublesome and chargeable, but we consider the great Number of Persons employ'd in the Manufac-

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nufactories, and how they are spread over *Great-Britain, Ireland,* and the Dominion of *Wales,* in one Branch or other; which we hope, by the Wisdom of a true *British* Parliament, we shall be enabled to effect: we must divide our selves into more Companies and Fellowships to make the Work the easier; he never knew the Sweet of Trade before Foreigners came to steal our Wool and Trade from us: when *Dutch* and *Spanish* Merchants (as I have seen) forced Eight hundred or a Thousand Pounds to secure what Serges he could for the Season. Wool gave then Thirteen Pounds *per* Pack. I must say, as before, he never tasted the Sweets of Trade who would refuse to spend one Year of his Time to accomplish so great a Good to the Nation in general, retrieving it from the sinking and deplorable Condition it has so long labour'd under; and not only so, but himself in particular, if he is not an Idler: for then he need no more hawk about, *Will you buy my Goods?* but, on the contrary, *Have you any Goods to sell?* will be the Cry.



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