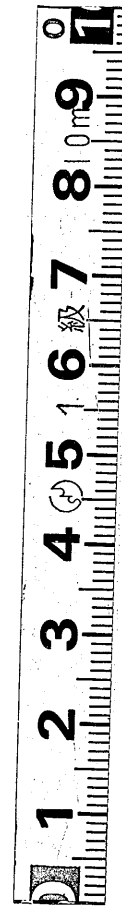


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0080

AN INFALLIBLE
SCHEME
To pay the
PUBLICK DEBT
OF THIS
NATION
In Six Months.

Humbly offered to the Consideration of the present P——t.

By D——n S——T.

*As in a Ship, by Tempests tost,
When all is yielded up for lost,
When thro' the leaky Sides, the Sea
Resistless, raging, bursts it's Way,
Despair sets ev'ry Head a thinking
How to preserve the Ship from sinking;
Thus Men of each Degree and Station,
Concur to save a sinking Nation.*

Hudibras.

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A

AN INFALLIBLE
SCHEME, &c.

THE great Distress of this unhappy *Country*, is too visible to all, except those who have Power to redress it.

We may observe thro' the whole Nation, one universal Complaint of the Decay of Trade, the Oppression of Landlords, and the Deficiency of Money; and yet I cannot find among all the Schemes proposed to lessen these Evils, any one in particular, which seems likely to succeed.

But what is still an Addition to this melancholy Prospect of Affairs, is the unbounded *Luxury* and *Extravagance*, both in Apparel and Entertainments, which Persons of all Ranks and Degrees run into at present, tho' in general we

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labour under such Hardships and Poverty.

We are affected in a quite different Manner from all the Nations upon Earth; for, with others, *Wealth* is the Mother of *Luxury*, but with us *Poverty* has the very same Effect: With others, *Scarcity* is the Parent of Industry, but with us it is the Nurse of *Idleness* and *Vice*,

We labour to imitate our neighbouring Kingdoms in nothing but their Extravagance, without having the same plentiful Aids of *Commerce*, or applying our selves to the Study of *Fair-dealing* to maintain it. So that, in short, by our own ill Management, we are brought to so low an Ebb of Wealth and Credit, that our Condition seems incapable of any Relief.

But, as I have the Interest of this misguided People very much at Heart, I do not intend this Essay as a Detection of their present Grievances, but as a Remedy against them. And for that Purpose,

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Purpose, I have labour'd to find out such a *Scheme* as will discharge our Publick Debt, with all possible Ease and Pleasure to the Subject, and in so short a Time, that we may neither complain of being oppress'd with long-continu'd Taxes, (as some unreasonable People often presume to do,) nor quite despair of being once more in a thriving Condition.

Let us consider what those *Vices* are, which at present prevail most among us; and I believe, upon Enquiry, they will be found *Perjury, Fornication, Drunkenness, Swearing, Slander, Infidelity, Fraud, Blasphemy*, and many others; wou'd it not then be worthy of our Consideration, whether a moderate Tax upon every particular *Vice*, instead of laying an additional Duty upon *Wine, Hops*, and other Commodities, wou'd not supply us with a sufficient Sum in a very short Time? Such a Tax must of Necessity yield a vast Revenue, and prove the most infallible,
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and indeed the only Scheme for our Prosperity, if it shall be thought proper to be continued.

But, before I proceed to Particulars, it may not be amiss to premise, that this Tax is not designed for any one County or Province in this Kingdom, but to extend itself universally over the whole Nation; because different Vices may flourish in different Counties, as different Plants in their different Soils; as *Perjury* in one, *Theft* in another, *Dissimulation* and *Flattery* in another, *Rapine* in another, and so of the Rest: However, I take *Theft* to be our peculiar *staple Vice*.

And lest any Disputes may hereafter arise, about the Nature of *Perjury*, the Intention of the *Act* in this Particular, or what Persons are to be subject to this Tax, I must here also premise, that every *Lye* confirmed by an Oath, is undoubtedly *Perjury*, whether before a
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Magistrate, or behind a *Counter*. And, therefore, we do not doubt, but the trading Part of our People, will be great Benefactors to the Publick, in this particular Article, as well as in many others.

These two things being premis'd, let us suppose that in this large Country, 5000 Persons are guilty of this Infirmity each Day: Which Computation must be allow'd very moderate, if we recollect, that this Number is not above a four hundredth Part of the Inhabitants of this Kingdom, who are generally computed to amount to *Two Millions*. And if we further consider, what strong Inducements our Natives have to practice it, from its being often so exceedingly beneficial; if we consider the great Use made of it in all Sorts of *Traffick*; the great Demands for it in *Law-suits*; the great Advantage of it in *Elections*, and the undeniable Profit

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fit of it in all Prosecutions, we shall think the Number of 5000 still more reasonable.

Let us then suppose every one of this Number to be perjurd, only once every Day, (which is a very favourable Supposition) and subject only to a Tax of Six-pence for each Offence ; for which Sum, perhaps, he may procure either the Death of an Enemy, an Estate for his Friend, or a Fortune for himself, (all which are esteemed very desirable) the Tax will be too inconsiderable to make any one murmur, and yet will yield the Sum of 125 *l.* per Day, towards discharging our National Debt.

Besides, this Tax, tho' very low, may in Reality be very profitable to Mankind ; for *Attornies, Sollicitors, Usurers, Butchers,* and other honest Traders, will scarce think it answerable to the Expence of Time, to forswear themselves for any Profit from One Penny to Six Pence, inclusive,

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clusive, (as now Customary,) but will at least, for every Transgression, expect to gain sufficient to defray the Tax.

However, I wou'd have all sworn *Constables*, and all *Collectors* of this and many other Taxes, entirely exempted from any Penalty, as privileged Persons ; because, by that Means they will be enabled to be very serviceable in their several Stations.

Fornication, as the World is at present, wou'd furnish the Publick with a large Sum, even at a very moderate Tax ; for it is now made an Essential Part of the polite Gentleman's Character, and he that has prevail'd on the greatest Number, proportionably rises in Reputation.

Let us then compute, that in the several Parts of this Nation, 5000 per Day were liable to be taxed for this general Vice, only at two Shillings : The Sum arising from this

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to the publick Good, will amount to 500 *l.* per Day, and in Six Months to almost one Third of our National Debt.

I know it may be here objected, that I have computed upon too small a Number, and that I might justly account rather upon Twenty or Thirty Thousand *per* Day, in the several Counties of this Kingdom: But, tho' I own this Objection to be very strong, if we were to consider the Opportunities of *Wakes, Patron-Days, Hay-making Seasons, May-Days, Religious Pilgrimages to Holy Wells, Balls* publick and private, and many other commodious Scenes for that kind of Entertainment; yet I would rather chuse to err on the right Side, in too small, than to great a Computation.

I know the *Popish Clergy* will make strong Remonstrances against this Tax; and plead, that it is design'd to

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to oppress them; that all Nations of the Earth allow them a *Toleration* in this particular Point, as they are *frail* Mortals, and sworn to *Celibacy*; and what is still worse, that such a Tax would be the most effectual Means to drain them of their whole Revenues; but as I would not have such pious Persons justly complain of the least Rigour, I shall readily agree to their being exempted.

Drunkennes I would only tax at Six-Pence, because it might be prejudicial to his Majesty's Revenue, to discourage it, and consequently subject the Proposer to Penalties.

Let us then compute, that only Twenty Thousand Persons, (which is but one hundredth Part of the People in this Kingdom) were daily liable to be tax'd, the amount would be 500 *l.* per Day. And how extremely moderate this Computation is, may appear to any one who

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confiders, that besides the usual Opportunities of *Taverns* and *private Houses*, there are *Elections*, *Fairs*, *Mayors Feasts*, *University Treats*, *Corporation Dinners*, *Christmas Regales*, *Weddings* and *Christnings*, both in Town and Country, and many other irresistible Inducements to this manly Vice, which would, perhaps, if nicely Calculated, daily furnish us with two Thirds more than our computed Number, and by that Means greatly conduce to the Publick Good.

But, however, I would, by all Means, exempt all Country *Justices of the Peace*, whether *Squires* or *Parsons*; because it would be unseemly to see such honourable and reverend Personages insulted by meaner Officers, as often as they might be discovered in such a Condition.

SWEARING would be a most universal Benefit in this Case; because
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at present, it serves to season the Discourse of all Ranks and Degrees of Men. It is the principal Ingredient and Decoration of all modern *Jokes*, *Gibes*, *Quarrels*, *Love-Speeches*, *Disputes*, *Threats* and *Promises*, and consequently capable of affording an incredible Revenue.

However, let us suppose 40 thousand Persons *per Day*, liable to the Tax of 6 Pence only, for each Offence of this Kind; which, considering the great Number of *Markets*, *Coffee-Houses*, *Shambles*, *Bar-racks* and *Gaming-Houses*, in this Kingdom, is a very inconsiderable Number; yet even this Article will furnish us with 1000 *l. per Day*, which would amount to near two Thirds of the Publick Debt.

Our Laws have amerced each Offence in this way at one Shilling, ordering one half to the Informer, and the other to the Poor, which in my humble Opinion, was very ill concerted; for

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for if the *Legislature* did really intend that this Law should be punctually enforced, they ought to have divided the whole *Mulct* between the *Informer* and the *Justice*, without any regard to the Poor, and then, they might be assured, it would be vigorously executed.

I am already apprehensive, that all military Persons will expect an Exemption from Taxes on this Account; because they may plead Precedents for many Generations, may alledge the Power of Custom, the Decency and Comeliness of it, when properly mingled with other Discourse, or that the censorious World, would perhaps suspect, they knew nothing of *God* at all, if they did not sometimes mention his Name; and many other Reasons of equal Weight: But tho' these Remonstrances are very just, yet as this is the only Means by which our Standing Army can possibly conduce to the National

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tional Good, it will be hard to exempt them.

However, as the military Power would infallibly be liable to this Tax in all its Branches, by which Means they might be utterly impoverish'd, I believe it may not be improper to allow all *Foot-Soldiers* and *Field Officers*, all young *Ensigns*, spruce *Cornets*, naval *Captains*, *Cabin-Boys* and *Quarter-Masters*, 40 or 50 Oaths a Day, entirely free from any Tax or Penalty.

As for *Slander*, supposing only 20 Thousand *per* Day, taxed at 6 Pence for every Offence, this Article would daily afford the Publick (at the lowest reasonable Computation) 500l.

And as this is a favourite Talent, we might have ventur'd to Tax it much higher; but I would not seem to discourage so charitable a Disposition, especially where it may promote the Interest of my Country.

As to the *Ladies*, I have been always too great an Admirer of theirs,
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to desire any Restriction should be laid on their Pleasure, either Private or Publick; and therefore I would have them tax'd only half as much as the Men for every little Error of this Kind; because *Slander*, in Men, is a Talent unnatural and acquired, and generally Practic'd to ingratiate themselves with the opposite Sex; whereas this gentle Failing in *Females*, is innate, and impossible to be restrain'd; which is a Case that demands our utmost Compassion.

I think all *Drawing-Rooms*, *Assemblies*, and all Places of publick Resort for Ladies, ought to be exempt from any Penalty, because it is so material a Part of the Discourse and Amusement of those Places, that to Tax them for each Offence, would be in Effect, to enjoin them perpetual Silence; which, if it were possible, would be too great a Misfortune, both to themselves, and the World, to be exacted from them.

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Infidelity and *Blasphemy* would furnish us with a considerable Sum; and as they are not originally of our own Growth, but annually imported from neighbouring Kingdoms, they ought to be subject to some Duty, which in few Years would probably be a vast Addition to the publick Revenue. Yet as this Traffick is principally carried on by young *Lawyers*, and *travelling Squires*, any Attempt to tax it would certainly meet with too vigorous an Opposition. But on condition it might pass into a Law, I would gladly exempt both *Lawyers* of all Ages, *Subaltern* and *Field-Officers*, *young Heirs*, *Dancing-Masters*, *Pick-pockets*, and *Players*.

Let us now only consider the several Sums arising from the Tax on our *Vices*, as we have before computed them, and the Justness and

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Infallibility of this Scheme must appear demonfrably.

The Publick Debt of }
 this Nation is about } 300,000 l.

And the Tax

For Perjury	— —	125 l.	} Per Day
Fornication	— —	500 l.	
Drunkenness	— —	500 l.	
Swearing	— —	1000 l.	
Slander	— —	500 l.	
Total per Day			2625 l.

Which in 182 Days, or half a Year, will amount to 477,750 l. which is considerably more than our National Debt.

But left by the universal Poverty of our People, which is much to be fear'd, or by their growing more virtuous, which never can be reasonably apprehended, this daily Income should

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should fall short of what we have computed, I must humbly beg leave to offer some other Improvements, of this Scheme, which will undoubtedly answer all Deficiencies.

And for this Purpose, what if a severe Tax was laid on all manner of Persons who presum'd to Marry till they were full 40 Years old. If any should prove Fool-hardy enough to transgress a Law so calculated for the Happiness of Men, each Offence would be of signal Benefit to the Publick; and if Providentially it should prove an effectual Restraint, there must of necessity be fewer Children in each Family, and of Consequence the Number of Beggars and Wretches in this Kingdom, must proportionably Decrease. And what would still be more material, perhaps in one Age, if this beneficial Act should be continued, the greatest Part of this Country would require

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to be new Peopled from *E-----d*; a Circumstance greatly to be wish'd; because such an Accident wou'd probably cure that Nation of its inveterate Antipathy to the Inhabitants of this, at least for some Generations.

As for the Scheme to tax Batchelors, which has lately been propos'd to the House, by one of its Honourable Members, I must beg leave to think it highly improper; because Batchelors of all Ranks and Degrees, are real Benefactors to the Publick, by not furnishing it either with *Beggars*, or *Oppressors of Beggars*, one of which must infallibly be the Consequence of Marriage in this Country.

I would also earnestly request, that all young *Clergymen*, who, with more Passion than Prudence, shall dare to Marry before they are benefic'd, may be liable to a most severe Tax, equal to a Prohibition; because such Of-

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fenders must inevitably multiply *Beggars*, live in *Contempt*, and die in *Poverty*.

These and many other Expedients, might easily be found upon any Emergency to furnish considerable Sums for the National Debt.

But as there will remain about 177,750 l. over and above our Publick Debt, I will allow one hundred thousand Pounds of it for Sallaries, to such Persons as shall be appointed Collectors, and I hope this will be a reasonable Provision, tho' generally above one half of every Tax is expended in paying proper Officers to collect it. The Overplus may be deposited in the Treasury for any other pious Use.

And if this Scheme shou'd be so fortunate as to succeed, as I have no Reason to doubt, from the present Disposition of the H—— of C——s, all those Noblemen who shall be

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be appointed Commissioners, will have excellent Opportunities of promoting their *Nephews, Cousins, Footmen, Fosterers, Valets*, and other valuable Dependents to good Incomes, and Places of Trust and Credit. But I wou'd, by all Means, have none but *Englishmen* nominated to be Tax-gatherers; because we may rationally suppose, that they will be intirely free from Prejudice, in favour of the Natives of this Kingdom.

Thus wou'd a moderate Tax upon our *Vices* apparently contribute to save this Nation from utter Ruin. Many Persons who have not the least Excuse for their Irregularities at present (except the commendable Publick-spirited Contempt for Religion) might then plead in their own Defence, that their Immoralities had preserv'd their Country. And by this Means we might be furnish'd with

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with a Multitude of *Patriots*, who probably wou'd never prove so in any other respect.

But I must humbly beg leave to dissent from that religious Gentleman, the admired Author of the *Fable of the Bees*; tho', perhaps, such a Particularity of Opinion may injure my Character with several of my Lay-brethren of most Professions; and I must publicly declare, that there can be no other Method, half so good as mine, to make *Private Vices Publick Benefits*.

F I N I S.



The first of these is the
 fact that the British
 had a long history of
 expansion and conquest
 in the Americas. This
 was not only in terms
 of territory but also
 in terms of the
 population. The British
 had a large and growing
 population in North
 America, and this was
 a major factor in their
 expansion. The British
 also had a strong
 economy, and this was
 another factor in their
 expansion. The British
 had a strong navy, and
 this was another factor
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 British had a strong
 military, and this was
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 expansion. The British
 had a strong culture, and
 this was another factor
 in their expansion. The
 British had a strong
 religion, and this was
 another factor in their
 expansion. The British
 had a strong government,
 and this was another
 factor in their expansion.

F I M I T

1754

1526

1754