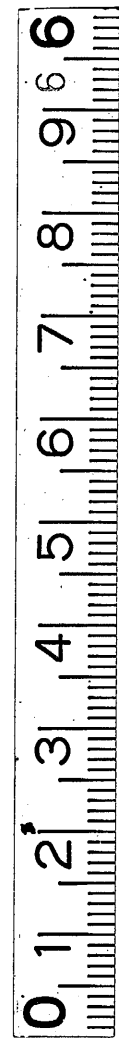


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LETTER ⁿ

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir RICHARD BROCAS,

Lord Mayor of London.

By a CITIZEN.



LONDON: 7

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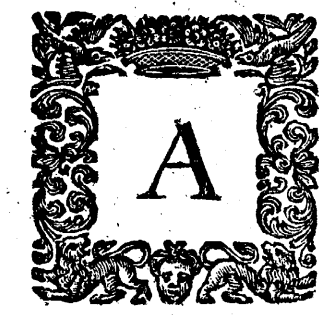
A
LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir Richard Brocas, &c.

MY LORD,



T a Time when Politicks are so much in Fashion, and the Humour of Talking and Writing upon Publick Affairs prevails so universally, 'tis somewhat surprizing, that a Subject, in which the Interest of this City, and consequently of the Kingdom, is nearly concern'd, should be pass'd over in Silence. 'Tis in vain to dispute

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about securing or extending our Commerce abroad; about the Expediency of involving ourselves in a War, or the Advantages of a Peace to a trading Nation, if we take no Care at home to have our *Manufactures* wrought in the cheapest and most workman-like Manner; or, which is the same thing, if those very *Artificers*, who are to furnish us with Goods for foreign Markets, are suffered to become *extravagant* in their Expences, and are led into Idleness and Luxury. The Charge that is committed to your Lordship, as Father and Guardian of this great City, naturally directed me to address the following Pages to the Lord Mayor of *London*; as a proper Judge of the Justness of the Arguments; and a proper Person to redress the Grievance therein complained of, if it shall appear to need Redress.

Your Lordship, I am confident, will rather enquire if Trade, in general, or the *City of London*, in particular, do really suffer, than endeavour to find Excuses for not removing the Injury; even tho' the *Cause* of it should happen to be a few Steps beyond the Limits of your proper Jurisdiction.

The Evil I complain of, and which may be thought proper for your Lordship's Attention, is, the erecting a *New Play-House* in *Goodman's Fields*. I can easily apprehend that the mentioning this as an Evil so dangerous as to awaken the Regard of the Magistrates of the *City of London*, will be laught at, as a particular Whim of some precise or peevish Fellow, who has no Taste for the elegant Pleasures of Life, and is envious and uneasy at those that have. This, or some such Construction will, no Doubt, be put upon the present Attempt; those who find their

their particular Account in this new *Diversion* will load it with heavier *Reproaches*; but that will not give me the least *Uneasiness*, if the Reasons, that are urged against this *Playhouse*, shall so far convince your Lordship, the Aldermen and Common-Council of the *City*, as to prevail with you, by the most proper and effectual Measures, to put it down.

Before I give the Reasons why such a Step should be taken, I must beg leave to declare, that I am an absolute Stranger, both to the Gentleman under whose Authority the Actors are said to perform, and to every Person concern'd in the *Affair*; in which I am no Way interested, directly or indirectly, any farther than as it affects the *Publick*. I am not enough acquainted with the *Law*, to say whether the Power of the *Master of the Revels* reaches so far *beyond the Verge of the Court*, as to rival and oppose that of the Lord Chamberlain himself; or, whether, when the King has appointed Servants of his own, the *Master of the Revels* can, by his proper Authority, without the Knowledge or Permission of his Majesty, constitute others for the same Purposes. If I might be allowed to add any thing upon this Head, it should be, that since the *Case* is doubtful, at best, no Inconvenience would arise, if an *Inhibition* was to go out against this *Playhouse*, till the Matter is finally determined.

As to Plays in general, I make no Scruple to declare, that I am far from thinking all *Theatrical Representations* criminal; or that a virtuous Man may not be innocently entertained with a *Play*; and if the Reasons I have to offer against this *Playhouse* are thought weak and frivolous, let the People go on with an

innocent

innocent Diversion (for I would, by no Means, deprive them of any that is so) and I hope your Lordship's Goodness will pardon this Trouble, which proceeded from an honest, tho', upon that Supposition, a mistaken Zeal. No doubt, Vice and Folly *may* be so exposed upon the Stage, as to prevent their being thought genteel and becoming; Virtue and good Manners so handsomely recommended, as to make them appear decent and agreeable. But, my Lord, the Question is not, what may be done, or upon what Maxims useful Plays might be wrote? but, what *is* the usual Effect of our modern Plays? of what Kind they *really are?* and what the *natural Tendency* of frequenting such Entertainments, to a *trading* or *working* People. I speak of these People chiefly, because among such this Play-house is erected. I shall enquire into the Effects of it, upon some very important Articles; their Morals, their Health, their Labour and Industry, and their Usefulness to the Publick.

'Tis needless to ransack into the Filth of the Stage, for Instances; not of single Passages only, but of whole Scenes and Plays, that have a direct Tendency to *debauch* and corrupt the *Morals* of the People. Thus for Instance; when the Minds of an Audience are worked up to a Pitch of Lewdness and Lust, by the loosest and most obscene Songs and Representations, how are these vehement Passions to be satisfy'd? How is this Fire to be quenched, which these wicked Arts have kindled, but by Practices as wicked? 'Tis in this Place, that *Matrimony* is so frequently painted in the most *ridiculous Colours*; scarce a Play but has some insolent Reflection upon the

the married State. And no Wonder if the Audience look upon *that*, as a weak and foolish Method of qualifying their Appetites, when it is the Aversion and the Banter of the fine Gentleman, they see so much applauded upon the Stage. In Imitation of him they easily become Men of Pleasure in their Turn; and as so many *lewd Women* commonly frequent *Play-houses*, or live about them, they soon find an Opportunity of executing their wicked Purposes, and too easily fall into Habits of Debauchery. I am afraid this is too true a Representation of the Case. Many *Parents* and *Masters* have had the Misfortune to see their *Children* and *Servants* suffer great Inconveniences, if not entirely *ruined* by this Means. And it is past Dispute, that many *Families* have been made miserable in the same Way. The Wife and Children have thus been deprived of the Means of their Subsistence, from whence they could only expect it, their Husband and Father; and tho' this does not happen to all that go there, yet if it happen to some; nay, if it be certainly the Case of *many*, it is an Evil that justly calls for our Regard. The most raging Pestilence never destroyed every Individual; but yet it is allowed an Act of Prudence to keep out a Plague, when great Numbers must run a Hazard by it. 'Tis the same in the present Case: I mention the Discouragement that is given to Marriage, and the Contempt with which it is treated on the Stage, as a double Injury to the Publick. First, as this naturally leads an Audience to gratify their Inclinations in a lewd and unlawful Way; as it debauches the People and takes their Minds from Business, employs their Time and Thoughts,

Thoughts, and gives them a greater Turn to *Idleness* and *Pleasure*, than is fit for Persons who are to *subsist* by *Labour* and *Industry*, and who benefit the Publick in Proportion as they are diligent, careful, and industrious. The other Injury is, as it becomes a real *Hinderance* to the *Propagation* of the *Species*, and the *Increase* of *useful* and *laborious* *Subjects*. Such Treatment of the conjugal State, not only Occasions in married Men a Coldness and Dislike of their Wives; but excites in the Unmarried a Contempt of, and Aversion to a married Condition. And if *Matrimony* is thus discouraged and discountenanced among the labouring People, and they learn to gratify themselves another Way, the Nation will certainly suffer in Proportion as these People delay their Marriage, or don't marry at all, or till their Constitution is vitiated. It is not, I believe, enough considered, that every *working Subject* is a real *Advantage* and a real *Treasure* to the Kingdom; and whatever is done to hinder the Increase of these, is a real Detriment to the Publick. Let the unthinking, useless, profligate Gentleman, continue his Debaucheries, till it is out of his Power to give Being to Wretches like himself. The Race, 'tis to be hoped, will be the sooner extinct, the World eased of one Grievance, and his private Vices thus become in some Sort a publick Benefit. But whatever become of such Persons, for our Country's Sake, let not the useful, the laborious Part of the People, who are the Glory, the Strength, and the Riches of a Kingdom, be any way diminished by the fatal Enticements of Pleasure and Debauchery.— For my own Part, I see no great Difference as to the Publick, whether

whether by Vice and Lewdness you *prevent* the Birth of a Thousand useful Subjects, or *Murder* them after they are born; and yet one is looked upon with Horror, while the other is only thought an innocent Diversion and a gay Amusement. It cannot be denied that many Passages upon the Stage tend to discountenance *Matrimony*, and to encourage Whoring; nor is it less certain that the Play-house it self, and the Avenues to it, abound with lewd wicked Women, who are ready to entice and debauch the Spectators, whom the Play it self has rendered but too well disposed to their wicked Sollicitations. And who, my Lord, are the Persons to be thus debauched by Means of this new Play-house erected in your Neighbourhood?— None, but the most *Useful*, the most necessary Part of the People; those whose Thoughts should be wholly employed upon Trade and Business; whose Minds should be least of all intoxicated with gay Ideas, or filled with Notions of Grandeur, Pomp, and Pleasure; who can have little Occasion to learn the Arts of Gallantry, or to commence fine Gentlemen. Those, who without doubt, should be taught and encouraged in the frugal Arts of Diligence, Temperance and Industry; and who should be led, by all possible Inducements, to marry and *bring up* a Race of *Children* in the same useful and industrious Way. Persons who sustain such a Part in the Commonwealth, should, by no Means, learn to be Sharpers, Bullies, or Whore-masters, or become acquainted with those loose and abandoned Characters which are so frequent upon the Stage. I repeat it again, that in all good Policy the labouring, and the trading Part of the People

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should

should be engaged by every possible Inducement, to marry, and educate a Race of healthy and laborious Children. By this Means there will be *more Work* done, as there are *more Hands* to perform it; and consequently the *Manufactures* will be *cheaper*; we shall make *greater Exports*, and gain more at foreign Markets. But the Number of working Hands will not only be encreased, by these Marriages, but the married Men themselves will do more Work, and be more constant and diligent in their Business than single Men usually are; because the Demands upon the former are more numerous, and the necessary Expences of maintaining a Family oblige them to greater Constancy in their Labour.

Think then with yourself, my Lord, if the debauched Representations of a wicked Stage are proper to form the Minds of People, that ought to be wholly employ'd in Trade; and with such, we know, this new Play-house is surrounded. Was there any Occasion thus to give Wings to that fatal Corruption, which was before advancing to us, with hasty Steps? Are not the common People, the working and trading Part of the Kingdom, already sufficiently debauched in their Morals? Was there the least Necessity to bring Lewdness and Debauchery home to their Doors, into their very Shops and Work-rooms? Are loose Strumpets, and profligate Stage-Players, fit Tutors for the Sons and Daughters, or the Servants of Tradesmen and Merchants? Will they be more obedient to their Parents? more faithful to their Masters! and more submissive to their Superiors! Will their Behaviour be more regular, virtuous, and orderly, under such Discipline, and by the Influence

ence of such Examples? Will these young People be less liable to be debauch'd, less prone to conceal a Villainy, or break their Trust, less inclined to defraud their Parents, or rob their Masters, when they are thus intimate with People who are most likely to put them upon it; and will lead them into Expences that, in some Measure, make it necessary; and by several Representations upon the Stage, soften the Guilt of it, and teach them to do it in the most secure and cunning Way?

But I go a Step farther; not only their Morals are in the greatest Danger of being corrupted, but the Representations of the Stage, and the Company that is to be met with there, have a direct Tendency to *destroy all Notions of Religion*, and spread Prophaneness and Infidelity, and a total Disregard for every thing serious or sacred. I will not trouble your Lordship with a shocking Repetition of those prophane Passages, with which too many Plays abound. The Contempt and Blasphemy with which Almighty God himself is treated; that Ridicule of the most important Parts of Religion; that Defiance of a future Judgment; those ludicrous Applications of the Holy Scriptures, which are so very frequent, even in some of the favourite Plays, cannot but lessen and destroy the awful Regard which is due to the Divine Being, and to those sacred Writings which he has published to the World. You, my Lord, and every honest Man that has a due Concern for his Country, will think of such a Consequence with Horror! Can a more dreadful State of Affairs be supposed, than for the People to be set loose from all the Restraints of Religion? No Dread of the supreme Powers!

No Fear of a future Judgment! And consequently, no Dread of *Perjury* within the Law; nor Fear of committing any *Villainy* that is too *secret* for a Discovery! Your Lordship well knows, that the Security of the Government, the Distribution of Justice, the Lives, the Property, the Safety of all the Subjects depend upon the *Regard* that is paid to an *Oath*. If the Bulk of the People once come to think contemptibly of Religion, we shall soon find, by fatal Experience, that they will have but little Reverence for an *Appeal* to that *God* whose *Authority* and *Revelation* they have learned to *despise*. In such a Case, it will be as vain to make Oaths, the Test of Truth, as it will be difficult, when that is destroy'd, to find another equally strong and binding. A Disregard for the Obligations of Religion has already spread too far; but, for God's Sake, and for the Sake of our Country, let us, in our several Stations, exert our best Endeavours to prevent its farther Progress. I venture to recommend this, as highly advantageous to the Publick; notwithstanding the Opinion of several Gentlemen, who imagine, that the *meer Notions of Honour and Virtue*, unsupported by the powerful Arguments of Religion, are sufficient to keep the World in Awe. A Project that has never yet been try'd! The first Experiment, I hope, will not begin with us. This is not said from any Disregard, or even Slight Opinion of Honour and Virtue; they undoubtedly deserve Esteem, where-ever they are, and I always thought it highly improper to derogate from any Notions that can influence the Morals of Mankind, or any Part of them. 'Tis, however, no Crime to wish that the
Power

Power of these was much greater, more certain, and more visible; I say more *visible*, because it is very plain that we see almost every Day as many *pitiful Arts of Villainy*, as much little poultry *Cunning*, as much *Treachery* to *Friends*, or even *Abuse* of their *Beds*, practis'd by Persons, who *talk aloud* of Virtue and Honour, as ever were committed by the demurest *Hypocrites*, cloathed in the most sanctified Dress of Religion. The Truth of the Case is, that neither Religion nor Virtue are blameable upon this Account; because wicked Men make an ill Use of the *Name*, or of the *Appearance* of them. The first, indeed, is grown a stale Device; and therefore Men put on the other, as the newer, the more fashionable, and, perhaps, somewhat less suspected Disguise. But the Eyes of Mankind are opened, and they begin as much to distrust a Person that is continually talking against Religion, and in Favour of Virtue and Honour, as ever they did those that made the greatest Pretensions to Sanctification and Grace. And, in Truth, *both* these Counterfeits are exactly the *same Stamp* with your common *Bullies*, that, with a great deal of Noise, make large Pretensions to Courage, and are upon all Occasions roaring about Quarrels, Fighting, Blood and Death; whereas Gentlemen that know the World, find these *boisterous* Fellows very different from what they appear, *meer Cowards* at the Bottom; for when they meet with a cool and steady Opposition, they are the most tame, harmless and submissive Creatures, upon Earth. The Religion of Hypocrites, and the Virtue of profest Infidels, is altogether as genuine as the Courage of these *Bravadoes*.

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But, my Lord, let the Principles of Virtue and Honour be never so powerful (and rightly understood, they are very powerful) and let the Pretences to them be what they will; yet I must beg leave to enquire, if it is in the least fitting or advantageous, that any Men, whatever Capacity they are of, or whatever Character they sustain, should be discharged from the Ties of Religion? and, in particular, whether it is at all proper that the trading and working Part of the Nation (since we are, at present, chiefly considering them) should be set free from all Obligations of this Sort, all Awe of a divine Being, and Dread of a future State, meerly in Hopes they may possibly, some time or other, fall into some Notions of Virtue and Honour? Can there be a more strong, compendious, and intelligible Way of influencing the *whole* Behaviour of all Mankind, than by convincing, and inculcating upon them, that if they commit any Act of Villainy; if they cheat, lie, or forswear themselves; if they neglect the proper Duties of their Station; in short, if they are not honest Men, and useful Subjects, they will *suffer* the everlasting Displeasure of an *Almighty and All-knowing God*, who, by an *Express Revelation*, has assured them, they must give an Account to him of all their Behaviour, our publick as well as private! What are the refined Maxims of Honour? What the curious, but often intricate Notions of Virtue, if compared with this plain, obvious, and affecting Argument?

And here it seems very proper to ask, who are to lead the People, the mechanical, labouring, and trading People, into these applauded Notions

Notions of Virtue and Honour? Are they to leave these from themselves, or to have publick *Tutors*, for that Purpose? It will hardly, I believe, be thought proper to leave them without any Discipline or Instruction at all; and therefore it is probable the Method of Publick Teachers is to take Place. But is not this introducing a *new Order of Priests*, and establishing a *new Priest-craft*, under a different Name? Perhaps it is for this Reason that the Christian Ministry is so much vilified by some Gentlemen. The great Pains they take, shews a very earnest Desire to demolish that Order, in *Hopes* of being at the Top of a *new one*. For which they endeavour to qualify themselves, by learning to *harangue in Coffee Houses*, and other publick Places, upon their favourite Schemes of Infidelity and Irreligion. This they do in the most insolent and dictating Manner; which I must take the Freedom to tell them, is but a poor, borrow'd Device, borrow'd from the worst of the Men they exclaim against, some of whom they may have seen insult Mankind, and, with meer Noise, and assumed Authority, bear down all Argument or Contradiction. Hence our modern Infidels have taken the Hint; and, under Pretence of railing at Priests and Priest-craft, treat their Hearers with more Contempt, speak with a more saucy and decisive Air, than e'er a Priest in Christendom. This they would pass upon us as an Instance of their Penetration and great Concern for Mankind. The World, however, begins to do them Justice, and have an equal Esteem for their *Sagacity*, their *Virtue*, and their *Modesty*.

In short, my Lord, the Case stand thus—
 The Principles of the *Christian Religion*, and
 the Motives it proposes, are of the greatest
Importance to Mankind, and most conducive to
 their present and future Happiness— The
Plays which are acted among Crouds of
 Tradesmen, in this new Theatre, have a direct
 Tendency to *lessen their Regard for Religion*,
 and to take off that Awe and Reverence which
 ought to be upon the Minds of Men, for the
 Great Governour of the Universe, and for that
 Revelation which he has published to the
 World—— No Body, I believe, can justly
 deny either of these Assertions; and if they be
 true, your Lordship, and the City of *London*
 will consider what is to be done, to prevent
 so great an Evil.

Herein you have the *greatest Example* to
 direct you; for it has seem'd good to the
Wisdom of the Nation, at publick Expence,
 to *erect a Church in this Part of the Town*, as
 rightly judging such an Edifice, subservient to
 the valuable Purposes of Religion and Virtue,
 would be conducive to the Welfare and Ad-
 vantage of these People. While, on the con-
 trary, it has the Appearance of a real Insult
 upon publick Authority (tho', perhaps, not
 intended by the Persons concerned) to build a
Play-house so near, which must have the most
 pernicious Effects, and directly contradict the
 useful Intentions of the whole Legislature.

I must beg your Lordship's Patience, for I
 have not yet done; this new Project of a
 Play-house, where such Plays are acted, in such
 a Place, is full of Mischief. I should be very
 sorry to aggravate the Case, and lay more to
 the Charge of any Invention than properly
 belongs

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 belongs to it; but the Nature of the Enter-
 tainment, and the Company that frequents, or
 surrounds such Places, must, as was observed,
 have a fatal Influence upon the Religion and
 Morals of the Audience; and the more so, because
 they are chiefly *working People*, who have *not*
Time, some of them *not Capacity*, to consider
 enough the Foundation upon which Religion
 stands, and by Reflection take off the ill Im-
 pressions that have been made upon them: If
 they could *all* do so, yet, no doubt, your Lord-
 ship will think it very ill Policy to administer
 unnecessary *Poison* meerly because an *Antidote*
 may *possibly* be had. But, besides the Influence
 this unhappy Project has upon their Religion
 and Morals, I am afraid it will be attended
 with very uncomfortable Effects upon their
Health, their *Labour* and *Industry*; I will add,
 as they are to *live by Working*, upon their
Frugality too. I do the rather mention these
 Considerations, because the Gentlemen, who
 profess the greatest Disregard for Religion,
 will allow some Weight in Arguments of this
 Kind; and I should be glad, by any lawful
 Means, to put an End to a Project which is so
 highly *prejudicial* to the *Trade* and *Morals* of
 the *City* and *Suburbs* of *London*.

As to their *Health*, 'tis too plain that the
 young Men, after criminal Intercourse with
lewd Women, who, like Weeds upon a Dung-
 hill, abound where Play-houses are, often con-
 tract *Distempers* that are very prejudicial; and
 as their common Recourse is to *Quacks* and
 unskillful Practitioners, for a Cure, it is with
Difficulty and *Hazard* they are restored, and
 very frequently not at all. The *greater* their
 Indisposition is, by being neglected at first, or
 stifled

stified for Fear of the Discovery of their Masters; and the longer they continue under it, or the more imperfectly they are cured, they will be *less fit for Labour*; and, consequently, so much *less Work* will be performed; which is, evidently, a *Prejudice* to their *Masters*, or their own *Families*, if they are married; as well as to the *Nation* in general. Besides, the *late and unseasonable Hours*, which these *labouring People* must run into, if they frequent this Play-house, are highly *improper* for them, both as they *injure* their *Healths*, and *lessen* their *Work*. Gentlemen, who have no Employment, may sleep whole Days, and riot whole Nights; their Time is of no Importance to the Publick; they are already as useless as they can be. If they are disordered, by their Debauchery, and laid up, for a Month, with a Distemper; if they ruin their Constitutions, and shorten their Days, by their Vices, they only compleat their Wick- edness and Folly; as to the *Nation*, they seem pretty near as *useful* when they are groaning in a Chamber, as when they are roaring in a Tavern. But the Case is vastly different with the laborious Part of the Nation; every *working Hand* that is *taken off*, either in Whole or in Part, is so far a Loss to the Publick; and therefore it is obvious enough, that such a Play-house cannot be a proper Diversion for working People, not only as it brings them too much acquainted with that kind of Life, and those Ways of acting, which are above their Sphere, and therefore improper for their Knowledge; not only as it gives them Notions of Greatness and Pleasure, unfit for their Employments and Stations, in the World, or as it may occasion great Injuries to their Health; but also

as it is a Diversion that interferes with their Work, and *breaks* in upon their *Hours of Labour*; for tho' it don't begin 'till the Evening, yet, as it lasts for so long a Time, it will oblige them to *sit up later* at Nights, and consequently, lie longer in the Morning, or rise less fit for the Business of a *whole Day*. Compare the Life of a *careful honest Man*, who is industrious all the Day at his Trade, with a chearful Mind, intent upon his Business only, and when the Labour of the Day is over, and his Work compleat, spends the Evening in innocent Mirth, with his Family; or perhaps with his Neighbours or Brother Tradesmen; sometimes sits an Hour or two at an Alehouse; from thence goes to Bed, by Ten, and is at Work again by Five or Six; compare this, I say, with your *Mechanick of Pleasure*, who is to frequent the Theatre: If he is not obliged to do a set Quantity of Work, in a Day, he will perform *the less* upon that Account; and if he has a fixt Task, he will slubber it over in a hasty, flight, and careless Manner; so that the Work will be worse performed. He must (being a fine Gentleman) *leave his Work by Five* at the farthest (perhaps sooner) that he may be drest and at the Play-house by Six, where he continues 'till *Ten*; and then adjourns to a *publick House*, with Fellows as idle as himself, or perhaps with a *Whore*; how long it will be before they part, is not easy to say; there are too many Instances where they have *continued all Night*, at such a Rendezvous; and still more where they have staid *past Midnight*. And what is such a Man fit for *next Day*, when his *Body* must be *disordered*, and his *Mind* fill'd with *Scraps of a Play*, and

with the gawdy *Pomp* and *Nonsense* of the Stage? These he can hardly forget in a Week, when it is likely, he will *return* for new Improvement; and thus, by a very little Pains, in a Month or two, finish himself a *conceited Coxcomb*, above his Business, and begins, no doubt, to think he was born for greater Things than mechanical Exercise, and constant Labour. I need say no more upon these *different Characters*; the bare Representation leaves no Room to ask which is the most useful and beneficial, both to private Families and to the Publick.

I have only insisted upon the Damage that is done to our Manufactures, and those employed in the inferior Trades; but the Injury that is likewise done to our Merchants and better kind of Tradesmen, is too considerable to be omitted. Vast Numbers of such, and some of them very considerable, live within the Reach of this hurtful Project, reckoning only from *Thames Street*, up to *Leaden-Hall Street*, and so to *Goodman's Fields*; which is a Space of Ground that contains a great many of the most considerable Traders. Both the Masters themselves, their Clerks and Prentices must receive great Damage in the several Instances I have already mentioned; nor can I imagine that the *Tide-waiters* and *other Officers*, concern'd in the *Revenue* at the Custom-House, or in the other Offices, will be at all *improved*, either in their *Diligence* or their *Integrity*, from any *Instructions* they receive at this new *Play-house*, that lies so near them.

But, my Lord, to put this Matter beyond all Dispute, and to shew how *heavy a Tax* this *Play-house* is upon the *Nation*: I will attempt a *Calculation* of the *annual Loss* that is sustain-

ed by it. And to obviate all Objections, will make this Calculation as low as possible. Your Lordship knows, that the *Labour* of Mechanical working People is as much a Treasure, and as *real Riches* to any Community, as Money it self. Thus for Instance, if twenty Pounds of *Wool* which is not worth above *ten Shillings*, can be worked into twenty Yards of *Cloth* that will sell for *ten Pound* at a Foreign Market, the Nation is as much a Gainer of nine Pound ten Shillings (supposing no other Expences attended the making the Cloth) as if that Money had been dug out of a Mine and given to us. And in general, whatever the Value of Goods when made, *exceeds* the Value of the unwrought Materials, we acquire so much by the Labour and Industry of the Workmen; and we are so much richer than we should have been, had not that Work been performed: For so much as the finished Work will sell for more than the Materials of which it is made, so much is the Treasure of the Nation really and evidently encreased. This appears from the Calculations that are made every Day of the Value of the Stock of single Tradesmen; and the Value of the whole national Stock is only an Aggregate of the several Particulars belonging to private Persons. I doubt not but it will surprize every Body that has not considered the Matter in this Light, when they are told, that upon the very lowest Calculations, *this single Play-house costs the Kingdom a great deal above 300,000 l. a Year*, by the Loss that is sustained in the Work and Labour of the Artificers, and other Spectators that fill it. I won't now reckon the Misapplication of the Money that is paid for their

their Places, and the other concomitant Expences, as this is not directly lost *to the Kingdom*; but confine my self to the great Loss sustained by the Hinderance this Play-house occasions to the Business of the labouring People, which is a real and certain Damage to the Nation. I have observed how it *interferes* with their *Hours of Work*, how it gives them a Turn to *Idleness, Pleasure, and Debauchery*; how it often *injures* their *Health*, and *breaks* in upon *whole Days* of Labour; and takes off some Hands intirely. Let us compute how much we suffer by these Means.

'Tis with a real Concern I am obliged to mention, in the first Place, the *Weavers and Throwsters*, Persons employed in a Business of so much Importance as the *Silk Manufactures*. But these being most *numerous*, and living *nearest*, are most subject to the fatal Influence of this pernicious Project. It will, I believe, be thought a very low Calculation, if we suppose the Silken Manufactures, in this Part of the Town, amount to no more than two Millions a Year, which Sum they exceeded, even before Callicoes were prohibited. But, to avoid Cavils, I will raise it no higher; but admit that they produce only two Millions in a Year, *i. e.* in three hundred Days (allowing for *Sundays*, and other Holidays, sixty five Days; which are very necessary and sufficient for the Ease and Refreshment of labouring People; and would be still more useful if they were duly employed for keeping up a Sense of Religion and Virtue) and, upon this Calculation, the Labour of each Day amounts to very near seven thousand Pounds. If these People are hindred only twenty Days in a Year, that will occasion

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a real annual Loss of one hundred and forty thousand Pounds to the Nation. I say only twenty, because I am unwilling to over-rate the Account, yet it is to be feared, that, all Circumstances considered, thirty Days had been nearer the Truth. But were the Loss the Publick sustains, in this single Branch of Trade, not to exceed one hundred thousand Pounds (which it certainly does) yet even that is a prodigious Sum to lose every Year among one Set of Mechanics, when there are so many other Trades that are greatly affected by this *extensive* Mischief. Your Lordship will please to remember that the *Minories, Towerhill, East-Smithfield, Wapping, Whitechappel*, and all the *populous* Suburbs on that Side of London, crouded with People employed in the several *Manufactures*, or what are called *Handicrafts* of the Kingdom, are to be taken into the Account with *Goodman's Fields, Spittle Fields*, and the Parts adjacent. I must add to this long Catalogue all that *large Part of the City*, which lies between *Aldgate* and *St. Paul's*, which already is, and will be, daily, more affected, by having the Prentices and Workmen drawn to this new Play-house. 'Tis very difficult to form a Calculation of the Loss we sustain from the Damage our Merchants and superior Tradesmen receive from this unnecessary and unsuitable Diversion; but sure it must be considerable, when there are so many within the Reach of it, and with respect to them it should be remembered, that whatever they, or their *Wives and Children* foolishly spend in this Way, is taken out of Trade, and so the more disadvantageous to the Publick. And as to the inferior People,

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 it would be too troublesome, I fear, to detain your Lordship with tedious and particular Calculations upon the *vast Variety* of Tradesmen and Mechanicks of different Employments; many Thousands of them employed in *Manufactures* of the *greatest Importance*, some of them *absolutely necessary* for *fitting out our Ships*, and for *the military Service*. How great must be the Loss that the Kingdom sustains, when the *Labour* of *such Numbers* of different Workmen is thus interrupted! Were I to reckon this at *three hundred thousand Pounds* per Ann. it might, at first View, be thought an extravagant Computation; but if any Gentleman will take the Pains to make a Calculation of the Loss the Publick sustains, by being deprived of so much Labour in the several Trade and Employments, and let this Calculation be founded upon Experience, and the Maxims of Trade, he will find even that large Sum greatly exceeded. But to obviate all Objections, I will suppose only *two hundred thousand Pounds* a Year real Loss, from the Hindrance that is given to labouring People, by Means of this Play-house; besides what we suffer in our Merchants and better Tradesmen, and their Servants; besides one hundred thousand Pounds, at least, that we lose in our Silk Manufactures, and besides many other Inconveniencies and Mischiefs that attend it.

As to the *Weavers, Throwsters, &c.* concerned in the Manufacture last mentioned, 'tis very obvious, that of all Trades we ought to take Care *they* don't run into *unnecessary Expences*, or *mispend* their Time; because we thereby not only suffer, immediately, a very considerable annual Loss, but run the greatest Hazard

Hazard of *entirely* losing that valuable Branch of Trade. Some Productions are almost peculiar to ourselves, where we are in little Danger from Competitors: But, in the *Silk Manufactures*, we have the most dangerous *Rivals*. Here we are, if possible, to work cheaper and better than the *French*, who have been long engaged in the same Business; who import their *Italian* and *Levant* raw Silk upon much easier Terms than we; besides having great Quantities of their own in *Provence, Languedoc*, and other Places; and as they have their Materials at a lower Price, so the Labour of their Workmen is much cheaper; who, in a manner, maintain themselves upon Onions and Herbs, with Bread and Water, or Beverage, which is Water past thro' the Husks of Grapes, after the Wine is drawn off. 'Tis therefore, in a particular Manner, the *Interest of our Country*, that effectual Care be taken, that those concerned in the making of *Silks* should be *constant* in their Labour, and do as much Work as can be done; that they should *live as cheap* as conveniently they can; and that their *Expences* should be as *small* as possible. But notwithstanding this, shall we carry *Idleness, Debauchery, and expensive Diversions* into that *Quarter of the Town* which is concerned in this very Trade! Because, already, they can't work so cheap as our Rival Neighbours, shall we teach them *new Arts* of Extravagance and Luxury; mispend their valuable Time, and debauch their Morals, only to throw them at a *greater Distance*!

If there be any considerable Magistrate of the City of *London*, that is lately arrived from *France*, and now makes it his Business to encourage and support this new Play-house, I would charitably hope, his Inducements for so doing

doing were not found in that Country: And as he is certainly not engaged, by any *Present* that he has received *there*, to do the *French* this signal Piece of *Service*, I doubt not but he will soon endeavour to take the People off from so pernicious a Diversion; and, for several Reasons, encourage them rather to entertain themselves of an Evening with some of the *best Beer* that's brew'd in *England*.

I am sensible it may be said, that the Age we live in is very wicked, and the common People debauched already; so that the corrupting them is not to be charged on this Play-house. I don't deny that the Town is bad enough, without this new Project; but 'tis too plain they will be worse by the Continuance of it. And if the labouring Part of the Nation is already sufficiently idle and debauched, there is but little Occasion, and as little Policy, to make them more so.

I hope I shall not be thought to overload the Charge against this hurtful Contrivance, 'tis what I don't in the least intend; tho' perhaps it will be said, why should all these heavy Accusations be brought against this *single* Play-house, when there are so many others already, that do the same Mischief? In Answer to this, I do readily acknowledge, that the other Play-houses are a Disadvantage to the Publick, upon several of the Articles I have mentioned, and should be very glad to see any Contrivance to regulate them, in such a Manner as would render them less prejudicial. I shall mention one that is attended with very little Difficulty, that is, the heightening *all* the Prices considerably, especially of the Galleries, which are now cheapest, and are commonly filled with inferior Tradesmen and Merchants; and, if it did not look too much like a Projector, I would add, that the *Government* might

might receive no inconsiderable Advantage by a *Tax* upon every Play-house Ticket, no Person being allowed to see a Play without one. This Tax could only *affect* what properly comes under the Article of *Luxury*, and it would not be thought a Hardship, to require every such Ticket to be stamped with a Treble Six-penny Stamp, which is no more than is paid for every common Bond, so necessary for carrying on the *Business* of the *Nation*. Besides, this is a Tax that would be paid at the Stamp-Office, with very little *Burthen* to the *Subject*, and very little, if any *Expence*, to *collect* it.

If I am not misinformed, something not unlike this has been practised abroad, with very good Success. Tho' this Alteration of the Price would not take away all the Mischief, it would make it less extensive, and keep out great Numbers of working People, who can't possibly reap the least Benefit from such Entertainments, but may receive much Damage, and would make the Publick some Amends for the Injury they suffer from these Play-houses. I rather mention this Expedient, because I hope it may be embraced by those who have the Direction or an Interest in the Play-house, since upon the Whole it will in all probability turn to their Advantage, as it will bring Spectators of better Fashion who now stay away, because there is an Audience partly made up of the Dregs of the People, and they are unwilling to mix in so promiscuous a Company. Suppose too, that the Actors were to perform seldomer, if each Night proved trebly beneficial, I don't see the Inconvenience to them, or the Publick. The Success of the Opera-House will justify what I say, both as to heightening the Prices, and acting less frequently. I will only add, that the universal Complaint

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 plaint of the *Badness of Servants*, seems to be in some Measure owing to the Liberty they enjoy at the Play-houses; for I can't help thinking, that if they had not the Privilege of the Footmens Gallery, they would be as little conceited and as sober as they are at present. But to return to that Play-house, which is the Subject of our present Consideration, as it more immediately affects the trading Subjects. The Diversions of the common People used to be more robust and proper, such as kept up the national Courage, and by suitable Exercise encreased their bodily Strength. 'Tis but of late Years that the Play-house has been the Entertainment of Tradesmen, Journeymen and Prentices; and the sooner it ceases to be so, the better. I believe, too many of this Rank frequent the other Play-house; but at this new Theatre there can hardly be any others, and those not the Shop-keepers, or Merchants only; but which makes it still worse, the mechanical, the working Part of the People; and the Prices are made much lower at this House than at the others, on purpose to draw in such labouring Persons: Besides, the other Houses are at too great a Distance, as well as too high Prices, to induce them often to resort thither, from these remote Parts of the Town. This is, I own, only one Play-house more; and for that Reason, I contend against it, because it is *one more*, when those we have already are more than are sufficient, or beneficial, as they are managed. 'Tis beyond all Dispute, one more than enough; besides, it is situated in the most pernicious Place, from whence such Diversions should be removed at the greatest Distance. And as this new House has *succeeded* so well, if that should continue unmolested, we shall in all likelihood, soon see it followed
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 by *many more*. The Success of this promises a large Increase; for if I am rightly informed, tho' their Expences don't exceed Sixteen Pounds, yet they have never acted one Night under Fifty Pounds, usually above Sixty. What a numerous Audience of working People chiefly must there be, to make up that Sum at such low Prices? and to what a prodigious Sum will it amount only in one Year that is spent upon a useless, idle, pernicious Diversion, and which might with so much more Advantage be employed in Trade, and to other useful Purposes? A Connivance at this, will very probably produce more in the Suburbs of *London*, (for I dare say, they will never be allowed to come within the City) as it must be thought a beneficial Employment, and so more Hands that might be better employed, will be taken from useful Labour, and become Actors. When they have gone so far, 'tis no unlikely thing that this pernicious Diversion may *spread*, as drinking of Gin has done, all *over the Kingdom*. But how fatal must it be to the Nation, if such Places as *Norwich, Coventry, Leeds, &c.* whose Labour and Industry, are so beneficial, should be debauched and corrupted by Stage-Players and their constant Attendants, lewd Strumpets? And yet we may venture to assert, that a Play-house might be erected with less Detriment to the Publick in any Town in *England*, than in that fatal Place in which this new Theatre is built. One Play-house that is capable of containing such an Audience of labouring People, and is surrounded with such vast Numbers of them, will in a little Time spread Idleness and Debauchery to such a Degree, as will render it difficult to reclaim them. An industrious People may soon be corrupted; but it is very difficult, hardly possible, by human
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 man Endeavours, to render a loose and profligate Race of Men sober and diligent. If there could be any Reasons, (which I think no Body can deny) for putting down twenty such Places, if there were so many, the same Reasons will, I hope, prevail to put a speedy End to this. Gentlemen may dispute as long as they please; but sure nothing can be more evident, than that *shutting up this House* can't possibly occasion any *one Disadvantage* to the Publick, whereas the continuing such a Diversion must be attended with very many and very great Losses, Hazards, and Inconveniences to private Persons, to whole Families, and to the Nation in general. Bad as the Town is, yet all Endeavours to prevent its growing worse have not failed of Success. It is with great Pleasure I reflect upon the happy Stop that was put to the Attempt of introducing Masquerades among the *common People* in the City and *Suburbs* of London. There cannot be the least Doubt, that the Endeavours of your Lordship, the Aldermen, and Common Council of the City, will be attended with the like good Success in the present Case. That able and vigilant Prelate the Bishop of this Diocese, will, no Doubt, if it should be necessary, assist you in so good a Design, and in his Station, express the same laudable Zeal against this pernicious Contrivance, as he did upon the Occasion I just now mention; tho' one was attended with Difficulties the other is free of.

I flatter my self, it will hardly be objected by any wise or sober Man, that this Play-house does not properly belong to the Cognizance of the City, because it is not in your *immediate Jurisdiction*, but lies a little (and a very little it is) beyond the Liberties. If Goods infected with the *Plague* had been

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 lodged at a much greater *Distance* than *Goodman's-Fields*, would the Magistrates of the City have been unconcerned about it, and used no Endeavours to have had them immediately burnt? The Mischief now complained of, which will spread like a Contagion farther and farther, does not less demand their Attention and Regard. The proper honest Question is, not *where* this Play-house stands, but whether it is *prejudicial* to the Trade, and the Inhabitants of the *City of LONDON*? If so, the City has an undoubted Right to the warmest Endeavours of her Magistrates, to get it entirely removed, stand where it will, or whoever pretends to support it. As great Numbers of Citizens, their Wives, Children, and Servants, to their great Prejudice, frequent this Place; as it is in many other Respects highly detrimental to the Interest of the City; I doubt not but your Lordship and those who are *Guardians* of the *City's Welfare*, and the great *Patrons* of *Trade*, will endeavour, by the most vigorous and proper Methods, to put a speedy End to this hurtful Contrivance. You are the best Judges what these Methods are, which are most likely to be attended with Success, and whether the *Laws in Being* are sufficient for that Purpose, or if it be necessary to apply, in a proper Place, for further Provisions; but however that Case stands, your zealous Interposition, will, no doubt, be a great Means to free the City from this dangerous Project. As the Evil will *increase*, so it will gather *Strength* by *Time*; and if you suffer it to stand this Winter, it will not only transmit the Names of those who have permitted; *i. e.* encouraged such an Evil, in the most disadvantageous Light to Posterity, but render them obnoxious to the just
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 Complaints of that Great City, which has
trusted its Safety and Welfare to their Hands.
 I beg Pardon for my Confidence in venturing
 to add, that I am fully persuaded your Lord-
 ship will never permit it to be said, that when
 Sir *Richard Brocas* was Lord Mayor of *London*,
 that most pernicious Project of a new Play-
 house, attended with the very worst Circum-
 stances, was suffered to go on without any
 Molestation, and to *gain Strength* by his Indiffe-
 rence. No, my Lord, the chief Magistrate
 of the greatest City in the World will exert
 himself, for the Security and Welfare of the
 Citizens committed to his Care; and there-
 fore I can make no doubt, but, in a very little
 Time, your Lordship will, to your great Ho-
 nour and Credit, and to the Joy of many, ve-
 ry many worthy Citizens! take the most effectua-
 l Methods to put an End to a Project that is
 so *entirely unnecessary*, and without *one* single
 Advantage to recommend it. A Project big
 with so many Evils! Fatal to the Religion,
 Virtue and Morals of vast Multitudes of useful
 Subjects! Destructive of one of the most im-
 portant Manufactures we have, and highly pre-
 judicial to many more! A Project! contrived
 to wound us in the most *sensible* and *dangerous*
 Part, not only by hindering the Increase and
 proper Education of Artificers of every Kind,
 but also by taking off from their Business ma-
 ny of the most useful, at a Time of Life when
 they are best able to work. A Project! that
 after all the other numerous Mischiefs and
 needless Expences it occasions, loads the Mer-
 chants and trading Part of the Kingdom, with
 a heavy Tax of more than Three Hundred
 Thousand Pounds a Year. I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's, &c.

A CITIZEN.