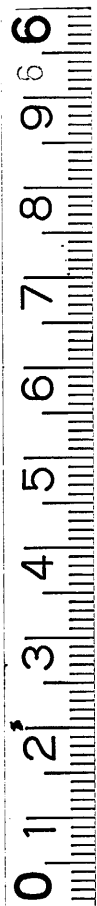


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THE  
**Weavers**  
PRETENCES  
EXAMIN'D.



(Price Three-Pence.)

THE  
WEAVERS  
PRETENCES

EXAMIN'D.

BEING

A Full and Impartial EN-  
QUIRY into the Complaints of  
their wanting Work, and the  
true Causes assign'd.

WITH SOME

Useful OBSERVATIONS on the  
Silk, Stuff, and Callicoe Trades, in  
*England, Holland, &c.*

---

By a MERCHANT.

---

LONDON:

Printed, and Sold by J. ROBERTS in  
*Warwick-Lane*; and J. HARRISON at  
*the Royal-Exchange.* 1719.



THE  
WEAVERS  
PRETENCES

EXAMIN'D, &c.



WE have the Happiness above many other Nations, to live in a Country, which, by the Fertility of its Soil, Temperature of its Climate, and especially by the Trade and Industry of its Inhabitants, affords us not only plenty of what is necessary for the support of  
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Life, but all the desirable Products of foreign Countries; those Conveniences which contribute so eminently to the rendering our Living both commodious and pleasant: For by the exporting of that part of our Produce and Manufactures, which we have not occasion for our selves, we are enabled to purchase the richest Furr of the North, the Spices, Druggs, Muslins and Callicoes of the East, the Gold and Silver of the West, and the Wine, Oil and Sugar of the warmer Climates.

But what signifies all our Riches, and that Liberty and Property that we so justly boast of; except we have the liberty of eating and drinking, or wearing what we please, and thinking or believing what we please?

As the Riches of rich People would be of no Value to them, if there were not Poor to work for them; so the Labour of the Poor would be of no Value

( 7 )

Value to them neither, if there were not Rich to pay them for it; which shews the Usefulness and Conveniency, of some degree of Superfluity and Extravagancy amongst the richer sort.

After this short Premise, I proceed directly to my Subject, *viz. The Complaints of the Weavers*, which we can know only by their Murmuring in Corners, and their Riotous Actions in the open Streets: The Complaint is, that they have not, or cannot have Work; and the Pretence is, that the Wearing of Printed Callicoe is the Reason of it.

As to the first Part of the Complaint, *viz. That they have not Work*, 'tis plain indeed that all of them have not, or are not employed in such Work as they ought to be; otherwise we should not see such Numbers of them committing such Brutish and Villainous Actions in the Streets, as would  
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be a Scandal to any civiliz'd Nation ; but as I say, though all of them have not Work, yet it does not follow that they cannot have it ; and no doubt but they might, were they but as willing as some Gentlemen are to employ them, as appears by an Advertisement in the *Gazette*, on the 13th Instant. But though I could, yet I have no Mind to cut them off short with this ; but rather chuse to examine the Matter thoroughly and impartially, so as I doubt not, but to convince any unprejudiced Reader, that their Pretences are but very ill grounded.

To the latter Part of the Complaint, *viz.* That the Wearing of Printed Callicoes is the Occasion of their wanting Work ; I answer, first, in respect to Woollen or Worsted-Weaving, it's impossible it shou'd be so ; for if it were, the undeniable Consequence wou'd be, that Wool wou'd fall much in Price, and be but a Drug at Market : But yet it is well known, that  
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norwithstanding the vast Quantities that we have Imported of late from *Ireland*, it's quite the contrary ; it having been dearer for these Two Years past, and scarcer at Market, than it had been for many Years before.

Beside, the Prices of Printed Callicoes, do so very far exceed the Prices of Woolen or Worsted-Stuffs, that they do not interfere with them ; for those that buy Stuffs, buy them for their Cheapness, which I'm sure cannot be said of those that buy Callicoes ; of which Truth our Wives make us sensible to our Cost.

And as to the Silk-Weaving, the Price of Callicoe is as much below that of Silk, that it cannot be truly said that Callicoes hinder the Wearing of Silk ; and it's very likely that many of those that buy Callicoe, wou'd not buy any Thing else instead of it, if there was

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no such Thing in being as Callicoe; being induced to buy more for the sake of Variety, than any Occasion they have for it: Besides, Silks that are wove here, may be said to be as much a Foreign Commodity, as Callicoes that are printed here; most of which, being first made in our own Colonies in the *East-Indies*, at a very small Price, which being (in the common Sense of the Word) so many times manufactured over again here, as encreases their Value to a very great Degree, and maintains Thousands of poor Families: And great Quantities are Exported to Foreign Parts, to the great Profit and Advantage of this Kingdom; and as for the Printed Linnens, the major Part of them are entirely both *British* Growth and Manufacture.

But the Silks that we Import, whether Wrought or Unwrought, we buy at dear Rates of Foreigners, either with  
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Money or Bills of Exchange, which is the same Thing in Effect to the Nation.

The Importation of *Dutch* and *Italian*, and smuggling of *French* Wrought Silks, damages the Silk-Weaving here, much more than the Callicoes; and were our Silk-Weavers as much concern'd for the Improvement of the Manufacture, as they are for their own particular Gain, no doubt but the Importations of Wrought Silks wou'd greatly diminish.

But the grand Cause of the Weavers wanting Work, is the Covetousness of both Masters and Journeymen, in taking so many Prentices for the sake of the Money they have with them; not considering whether they shall have Employment for them or not.

Then again, Journeymen-Weavers come from many Parts of *England* to  
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*London*, for the sake of easier Work, and greater Wages, so that their Numbers are, (as I'm credibly informed) near double, what they were Ten Years ago. These Things considered, 'tis no Wonder, that some of them have not Work; especially at this Juncture, when our Inland Trade hath been damp'd, by the Noise of an Invasion, and the Foreign by the late Rupture with *Spain*; but as the Publick Affairs have so good an Aspect on our Side, we may justly hope, that our Trade will soon return with uncommon Vigour.

And there's another Cause yet, which I had almost forgot, tho' common almost in every Body's Mouth, that is, when they have a Flush of Work, in the Spring or other Times, (as a Flux and Ebb is common to almost all Trades), then many of them will not Work above Three Days in the Week; running away to the Ale-Houses, drinking and gam-  
ing

ing away their Money, and what is rather worse, wasting their Time, and getting into ill Habits; so that 'tis no Wonder, that their Families may want when the Time of Ebb comes.

The many Duties on Printed Callicoe, do very much increase the Publick Revenue, and the Monies arising therefrom is appropriated by Parliament, for the Security and Reimbursing of great Numbers of Persons, who have contracted with the Government at several Times.

The Printing of Callicoes and Linnens, occasions a great Consumption of Gauls, Gums, and many Sorts of Dying Wares, to the Encouragement of the *Turkey* and *West-India* Trades.

The *East India* Trade in general, and the Importation of Callicoes in particular, does not only encrease the Wealth  
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of the Nation, but is a great Encouragement to Navigation, and to building and fitting out large Ships; and they lay in such plentiful Stores, that there's hardly any one Trade in *London* that does not receive some Benefit by the fitting out of an *East-India* Ship.

As I said before, great Quantities of printed Callicoes are exported, to our great Profit and Advantage; but there are some Trades especially, which cannot be carried on with any Success without them; as the *Guinea*, *West India* and *South-Sea*; which Trades every one must allow, to be highly beneficial to the whole Nation.

And as our own People find by Experience, that nothing will wash so well, or answer their Ends in many respects, near so well as Callicoe, is it not unjust as well as unreasonable in any Body to desire or endeavour to force it from them?

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Our Neighbours the *Dutch* are a wise People, and without doubt understand all the different Branches of Trade, and their own Interest, as well as any Nation in the World; and though they have many considerable Manufactories of their own, especially of Silk, yet they have not prohibited, or so much as laid any high Duty upon any foreign Manufactures, well knowing that excessive Duties are great Encouragements to Running; and that Prohibitions make People more eager for that which is forbid and difficult to obtain.

May not many other Trades make Pretences as well as the Weavers? May not the Maltsters and Brewers rise up against the Vintners, because they sell a foreign Commodity, which hinders the Sale of Malt Liquors? And may not the Ale-house-Keepers against the Distillers, because their Spirits, not only hinder the



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the Sale of their Beer and Ale, but enliven, heat, and fuddle People sooner and more effectually? And why mayn't the Weavers of *Norwich* and *Coventry* rise against those of *Spittle Fields*, because their Stuffs and Silks, hinder the Sale of their Crapes and Tammiés? And why not the Butchers against the Fish-Mongers? And so on to the end of the Chapter.

I believe I may venture to say, that no reasonable Man will pretend in the least to excuse those barbarous and unlawful Actions of the Weavers; such as assaulting and robbing of People, in the Streets or High-ways, and in their Houses; frightening Women and Children into Fitts, insomuch that some of them, as I'm informed, died soon after: and their assembling in such a riotous manner, in Defiance of the Government, and uttering seditious Words; so that if those that are taken

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ken, shou'd come to suffer the Punishment that's due for their Crimes, they have themselves to thank for it.

The chief End and Design of all the Governments in the civiliz'd Part of the World, is, or ought to be, to protect and defend every one in all his Rights and Properties; and were every Man at liberty to do what he thought fit, to remove whatever he might imagine to be a Grievance to him, what a miserable and savage People shou'd we be; what wou'd the Consequence be, but Famine and Desolation; for who would work, or take any Care to maintain his Family, if he cou'd not enjoy the Fruit of his Labour in Safety?

And Those who are so ready to reflect on the present Administration, for their Care and Activity in crushing those insolent Outrages of the Weavers, which, if not timely prevented, might have

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been prejudicial to the Tranquility of his Majesty's Government, and the Property of his Subjects, do but show either their Folly or Malice.

F I N I S

