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A
REPRESENTATION
CONCERNING THE
Knowledge of Commerce
AS A
NATIONAL CONCERN;
POINTING OUT THE
PROPER MEANS
OF
PROMOTING SUCH KNOWLEDGE
IN THIS
K I N G D O M.

By *J. Massie.*

L O N D O N :

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TO

HIS GRACE

The DUKE of NEWCASTLE,

First Lord Commissioner of His Majesty's Treasury, &c.

AND TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The EARL of LINCOLN,

Auditor of His Majesty's Exchequer, &c.

MY LORDS,

THE Representation that I have here presumed to address to your Grace and to your Lordship, is humbly intended to point out the proper Means of promoting the Knowledge of Commerce *as a national Concern*; for though a great Number of Books have already been professedly written for that Purpose, the Branch of Knowledge they were intended to promote, still continues at a very low Ebb in this Kingdom.

And after considering the Nature and Extent of the Subject, as well as the irregular and broken Manner in which it hath been treated of by commercial Writers, I do not see how any better Consequence could be expected; for no general Partition of commercial

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mercial Knowledge hath been yet established, nor can the Means of acquiring it be come at, without collecting and reading more than a Thousand Books and Pamphlets.

Some Writers have considered Commerce as a *Science*, and endeavoured to deduce the Knowledge of it from Axioms, Maxims, &c. while many others have treated it as a Branch of *History*, and given Narratives of Transactions, Occurrences, &c. but the former have made only light Effays on the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge, and the latter have given only Scraps of a commercial History, or at most, have compiled only small Parts of it.

So that a Man cannot by their Writings discover, whether the Knowledge he is inquiring after be scientific, or historical, or both, nor is he thereby enabled to study and understand the Subject in either Point of View; and as to the Generality of commercial Writers, they have not considered Commerce either as a *Science*, or as a Branch of *History*, but have mixed *personal* with *national* Affairs, and blended *Principles*, *History*, and *Practice* together.

Under these Circumstances, it is impossible to generally promote the Knowledge of Commerce as a national Concern; for such Knowledge cannot be acquired until the necessary Means are not only ascertained, but properly collected together; and they should have been ascertained at the first, because a general Partition of commercial Knowledge would have followed of Course, and the many Difficulties now attending the Subject, might have been thereby avoided.

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For as in founding of Cities, the Streets and Fortifications thereof are first marked out; so in establishing of Sciences, or any widely extended Branches of Knowledge, the Divisions and Boundaries of each should be first settled; and the Consequences of not beginning with those fundamental Regulations are much alike in both Cases, for the Error cannot be rectified in either, without pulling down what hath been built, and rebuilding upon a right Plan.

Nor will an Increase in the Number of Books be otherwise serviceable in such Cases, than by furnishing out more Materials to rebuild with, and that only in Proportion to the Quantity of new and useful Matter therein contained; for repeating the same Things a Hundred Times over, as hath been done in commercial Books, serves only to *increase Labour* and *retard Knowledge*; and that is one Reason why commercial Knowledge hath not increased as those Books have been multiplied.

So much do the acquiring and promoting of Knowledge depend upon the Out-lines of Sciences being truly drawn, that no great Mistake or Omission therein can be remedied by all the Ingenuity or Labour which it is possible to bestow on their interior Parts; for painting Ten Times over a distorted and ill-marked Picture, will not rectify the false Ideas it at first gave of the Person represented, nor will reprinting of irregular and defective Treatises any more promote commercial Knowledge.

For Books are Paintings of Sciences, as Pictures are of Persons; and the Picture of a Science must not only be well drawn, but the Whole thereof be exhibited

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bited together, before the Persons who study it can have a clear Idea and complete Knowledge of such Science; or if it consists of so many extensive Branches, that the Whole cannot be generally and particularly considered at one View, a Miniature or general Abstract thereof should be first presented, and the several Branches be particularly treated of afterwards.

In Books of Geography, a general Map of the World, and a Description of its greater constituent Parts, are the first Things which Readers are made acquainted with; and when they have acquired a general Idea and Knowledge of the Whole, their Minds are properly prepared for taking a distinct View of each Part, upon a larger Scale; because they are then satisfied as to the Extent of the Subject, and find the Parts thereof so divided, that they can cultivate some and neglect others, without confusing their general Knowledge of the Whole.

By this Method of Procedure, Persons of moderate Capacity are enabled to acquire a Knowledge of the relative Magnitude, Situation, Figure, &c. of the exterior Parts of the terraqueous Globe; and Lord Bacon hath established a Sort of intellectual Geography, in order to promote all Branches of liberal Knowledge; for his *Partition of Sciences*, may properly enough be called a general Map of the intellectual World, wherein the greater Branches of Knowledge answer to Continents, Empires, Oceans, Seas, &c. in a general Map of the material World.

Nor is it a Map made up of the Out-lines and Names of Sciences only; for there is so much useful Information annexed to each of them, that a Reader
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finds out their several Natures and different Degrees of Culture, with much the same Facility as he finds out the Nature and Culture of Land in different Countries, by reading geographical, &c. Descriptions of them; and thus by a natural Assemblage and Partition of Sciences hath the Knowledge of them been more promoted, than by half the Books which had been written on them.

For by those Means, ingenious Men have not only been shewn the Connection of the whole intellectual System, and directed to the particular Sciences which suited with their several Inclinations; but they have also been guided to such Parts thereof as remained to be cultivated, and, at the same Time, restrained to a natural Method of Culture; without which, Men may labour all their Lives in unimproved Sciences, and not acquire Knowledge enough to compensate for the Difficulties and Uncertainties they remain under.

Which Matters are strongly exemplified, by the present confused Method of cultivating the Knowledge of Commerce as a national Concern, and by the many Difficulties and Uncertainties which have hitherto attended that Branch of Knowledge; for the Subject neither is so complicated nor so extensive as not to be comprehensible by Men of plain good Understanding; but it must appear *that commercial Writers fully understand the Subject*, before *commercial Readers can fully comprehend it*.

And the contrary thereof, in relation to commercial Writers, is so strongly indicated by the irregular and broken Manner in which they have treated of Com-
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DEDICATION.

merce, that it matters not, in regard to what I am now speaking of, which of them did, or did not, fully understand the Subject; because the Determination in this Case is not to be made by what any one or more of those Writers knew of Commerce, but by what their Writings have contributed to inform other People of it, and that hath been found by commercial Readers to be but little in Proportion to the Whole.

The Causes whereof are, their not having either the *Elements of commercial Knowledge* to inform them of the Rules of Right and Wrong therein, or a proper *commercial History* to inform them of the past and present States, &c. of the several Branches of *British* Manufactury and Commerce; by which Means, they have been kept under the same Sort of Uncertainty as Mariners would be, in long Voyages, without either *Compass* or *Quadrant*; for they neither could know what Course to steer, nor how to avoid being retarded and tossed about by the Winds of contrary Opinion.

Certainly it is not easy for a Man to figure to himself a literary Pursuit more disagreeable than is the Study of Commerce as a national Concern, under all the various Difficulties and Uncertainties which have hitherto been found therein; but since it plainly enough appears, that the Whole of them arise from an irregular, confused, and broken Manner of treating the Subject, and not from the Nature of the Subject itself, the Practicability of removing them cannot reasonably be doubted of, though it will be a Work of great Labour.

And

DEDICATION.

And the Knowledge of Commerce *as a national Concern*, is so very interesting to all Ranks and Degrees of People in *Great Britain*, that it is quite unnecessary to specify in this Place, the several Reasons why all proper Endeavours should be used to facilitate the Acquisition of such Knowledge; for the Rich *know* and the Poor *feel* that their Welfare depends upon the Prosperity of Commerce, which is the strongest general Reason imaginable for promoting the Knowledge of it as a national Concern.

But this desirable End cannot be attained without the Sanction of public Authority and the Aid of public Support; for a considerable Part of the necessary Materials are not obtainable without the former, nor can the Expences of the whole Undertaking be borne without the latter; of both which Things it is expedient to make mention in this Address, that your Grace and your Lordship may be duly apprized of the national Reasons which there are to supplicate such high Protection.

And those Reasons receive additional Weight from Two most desirable Circumstances in Favour of the Subject here treated of: — First, from the strong Connection it hath with the *public Revenues* of this Kingdom, which are principally and generally under the Direction and Superintendance of your Grace and your Lordship: — Secondly, from it being *a Branch of liberal Knowledge*, which naturally comes under your Grace's Protection, as authoritative and real Patron of One of the greatest Seminaries of Learning in the World.

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DEDICATION.

It is not for a Man in my humble Station to expatiate upon your Grace's having devoted your whole Life and Fortune to the Service of your most gracious Sovereign, and of the Public; but I cannot help observing, that when there were eccentric Movements in the political System of *Great Britain*, the wonted Regularity was not restored, until your Grace returned to the Centre and gave Stability to the Whole.

Permit me to remain, with very great Deference and Respect,

MY LORDS,

Your GRACE's and Your LORDSHIP's

Most obedient and most humble Servant,

Westminster,
31st May 1769.

J. Massie.



A

REPRESENTATION

CONCERNING

Commercial Knowledge.

I THINK it expedient to represent, that I have been above Twelve Years collecting Materials for an historical Account of the several Branches of Manufactory and Trade belonging to this Kingdom; and also for another Treatise, wherein I shall endeavour to establish upon fixed Principles, that Branch of commercial Knowledge which may properly be called elementary, because it is deducible from self-evident Truths, and not at all connected with either the historical or the practical Branches.

Commercial Writers have indeed generally blended those Three Branches of Knowledge together, in a very confused piece-meal Manner; and that is the chief Reason why Trade cannot be well understood as a national Concern, without having Recourse to a great Number of Books, and submitting to read Fifty Times more than is to the Purpose; for the valuable Part of what hath been written concerning the *Commerce, Coin, and Colonies of Great Britain*, is not now to be come at without collecting Fifteen Hundred, or more, Books and Pamphlets on those Subjects.

That Number I have collected, at a considerable Expence, and yet I do not know where to look for a satisfactory Account of any one Branch of *British* Manufactory or Trade; nor have I met with any but very imperfect Essays on the Elements of Commerce; for Nine in Ten of those Books and Pamphlets being written upon particular Occasions, they give a Reader no better Ideas of the Nature and State of

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Commerce, than he would have of the Rivers and Counties in *England* by seeing a Map of it upon a Thousand or Fifteen Hundred separate Sheets of Paper.

In other Branches of scientific Knowledge, the great Care hath been, to establish them upon self-evident Principles, and to arrange the several Parts of each Branch in such Order as best shews their Connection, and leads the Mind from Truth to Truth; but this Method of Procedure hath been very much neglected in the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge, for I know of only Three or Four *English* Writers who have professedly treated on that Branch; and Mr. *Locke* hath furnished more as well as better Materials for it than all of them, at least in my Opinion.

As to an historical Account of the various Branches of *British* Manufacture and Trade, any Person may easily discover the Want of it, by considering how confused and imperfect our Knowledge of the civil, military, or naval Transactions of this Nation would be, if it was to be picked out of Fifteen Hundred Books and Pamphlets, which could not be collected in less than Ten or Twelve Years, and in which there was not only Fifty Times as much said, as it was necessary for the Reader to know, but a great Number of Things unfairly represented.

Under such Discouragements as these, not One Person in a Hundred of those who now read History would concern themselves with it; because the Knowledge thereby acquired would not make amends for the Time, Money, and Vexation it cost; but those Discouragements to the studying of civil, military, naval, &c. History, have been from Time to Time removed by a Succession of learned or ingenious Men, who have taken Care to select from Annals, Memoirs, State-Papers, &c. whatever is worth knowing, and to digest the whole in proper Order.

By these Means, those Branches of History have been freed from the Heaps of Rubbish with which they would otherwise have been incumbered, and the Study of them hath been made pleasant as it is profitable; for any Person may read what Interest or Inclination lead him to know, without being interrupted by the Interposition of great Numbers of Things which are foreign to the Purpose, and he can readily find what he searches for, without being at much Expence.

How it comes to pass, that commercial Knowledge hath been so much neglected by the ingenious Men of this Nation, I cannot certainly tell, but I think it may be in some Measure accounted for, by Two very prevailing Opinions in regard to Commerce; for it is generally thought that the Nature of Trade as a national Concern, cannot be understood without first practising some Branch of Trade as a Profession; and this undoubtedly hath induced Men of Learning to think that such Knowledge is illiberal.

But I must beg Leave to say, that neither of these two Opinions are just; for it is not necessary to learn Trade as a Profession in order to understand

understand it nationally, nor is the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern less liberal than other Branches of Policy; and since a general Belief of the contrary seems to have hitherto prevented commercial Knowledge from being promoted and established in a Manner suitable to the Importance it is of to the *British* Nation, there is a Necessity for shewing that those Opinions are ill founded.

If it be requisite to learn Trade as a Profession in order to understand it as a national Concern, those Merchants or other trading People who have written upon the different Branches of our Commerce, should agree in their Sentiments about the proper Means of regulating Trade to the best Advantage; but the Merchants and other trading People of this Kingdom have been so far from thinking alike in such Matters, that most of the commercial Regulations which have from Time to Time been made by the Legislature, were prayed for by some Merchants or Traders, and petitioned against by others.

Almost every Session of Parliament produceth Instances of such Opposition between Merchants or other Persons concerned in Trade; and since the one or the other of such contending Parties certainly must be in the wrong, it may with Reason be said that the erring Party do not understand Trade as a national Concern; but this Matter is more plainly made appear by that Superiority which one or a few Persons in each Branch of Trade are allowed, by other Persons of the same Profession, to have in judging of what is proper to be represented or done, when a Branch of Trade is under national Consideration; for that Superiority consists in Judgment and not of Practice, though longer Practice happens sometimes to accompany it.

So that nothing more can in general and with Certainty be deduced from such Opposition between trading People, than that Numbers of them do not understand Trade as a national Concern, though they know very well how to gain Wealth by their Skill in those particular Branches which they follow; and, on the other Hand, it is certain, that many Persons who did not at all understand Trade as a Profession, were very well acquainted with the Nature of it as a national Concern; of which Number were Sir *William Temple*, Sir *William Petty*, Mr. *Locke*, Dr. *Davenant*, &c.

Here then is a double Proof, that the Knowledge of Trade as a Profession and as a national Concern, are Two distinct and independent Branches of Knowledge; for great Numbers of Persons acquire the former without the latter, and other Persons have acquired the latter without the former: so that though there undoubtedly are many *British* Merchants who very well understand the Nature of Trade as a national Concern, yet they did not acquire that Knowledge by their Experience in Trade as a Profession, but by a liberal Exercise of sound and extensive Judgment.

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For trading People neither have nor can be expected to have any other commercial Point in View, than that of gaining as much Money in their several Professions as they justly can, by carrying on Trade according to the Laws of their Country; and those Merchants who chiefly employ their Thoughts and Judgment in finding out Ways to gain Wealth for themselves, are thereby rendered less capable of understanding Trade as a national Concern; because they generally acquire contracted Notions of it, and reason upon the Principles whereby they themselves have thriven.

This is the chief Cause of that Diversity of Opinions which there constantly hath been among Merchants and other trading People, in regard to the Regulation of Commerce; for contracted Notions of Trade, like Prejudices of Education, stick by the Generality of Men as long as they live; and it requires more than common Strength of Judgment to follow the Example of Sir *Josiah Child*, in this respect, who hath shewn much of the Minister but very little of the Merchant, in his commercial Writings, though he was a Merchant by Profession, and continued in Trade the greatest Part of his Life.

The various Branches of our Manufactory and Trade, when nationally considered, may aptly enough be compared to one vast Piece of Machinery, wherein there are various Setts of Movements which have some Dependence on each other, and yet are moved by seemingly independent Classes of People; for those of one Class are apt to think that they can go on well without the others, and that their Knowledge of the Sett of Wheels which they move or superintend, discovers to them the Connection and Dependence which each Part of this vast moving System hath upon the others, and suggests proper Means for preventing or remedying Disorders therein.

But most of those Classes of People have at different Times found to their Cost, that when one of them suffers the others are sure to feel it, though they may not easily discover the real Cause of such suffering; for great Men have sometimes mistaken the Root of a Disease that a whole Nation laboured under; and as to any of those Classes of People discovering the Connection and Dependence which each Part hath upon the others, particular Men among them *who study the whole System* may understand it, but those who chiefly confine themselves to *their own particular Parts* cannot have a Knowledge of the *Whole*.

Watch-making is divided into Twenty, or more, different Branches of Manufactory, and each Branch is well known to the Persons who practise it, but none of them have the like Knowledge of every Branch, nor is it probable that One in a Hundred of them understands the Connection and Dependence of all the Parts in a Watch; for that is a Sort of Knowledge far above the Art of making Wheels or Springs, as the Knowledge of Architecture is superior to the Art of making Doors or Windows; and such is the Difference between *scientific Composition*

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position and *mechanic Execution*, that a Hundred Men succeed well in the latter for One who arrives at Perfection in the former; because the latter is *mere Imitation*, wherein Boys sometimes are more expert than Men, but the former is founded upon *Principles* which require great Judgment to understand.

And agreeable to this we find, that a whole Age scarcely produces such an Architect as Sir *Christopher Wren*, such a Portrait-Painter as *Vandyke*, such a Composer of Music as Mr. *Handel*, or such a Watch-maker as Mr. *Graham*; though there are at all Times many ingenious Artists in most Branches of Science, Art, Manufactory, &c. and from hence I shall take Occasion to say, that neither a practical Knowledge of Trade, nor reading about the Coins, Weights and Measures of different Countries, or about the Laws and Customs of Merchants, in regard to Bills of Exchange, shipping of Goods, &c. are of any real Use to a Man who would understand the Nature of Trade as a national Concern; but on the contrary, are very prejudicial in that respect; because they do not only take up much Time to no Purpose, but, *what is far worse*, they give a wrong Bias to Judgment.

Acquiring a Knowledge of those Things in order to understand Trade nationally, is much the same as learning to build *Houses* or *Ships* in order to understand *Geometry*; or as learning to make *Telescopes* and *Prisms* in order to understand *Optics* and *the Doctrine of Light and Colours*: but such Men as want to acquire those Branches of scientific Knowledge, do not first learn to build *Houses* or *Ships*, nor to make *Telescopes* or *Prisms*; because it is very well known, that the Elements of those Sciences constitute Branches of Knowledge distinct from, and independent of, the mechanic Arts whereunto they are applied.

And the Elements of Commerce, as a national Concern, are quite as distinct from, and independent of, the various Branches into which Trade is divided as a Profession; although the mean Opinion that was formerly entertained of Trade and trading People, hath prevented ingenious Men from employing their Time in making this appear: For if a practical Knowledge of Trade as a Profession had been necessary to understand it as a national Concern, no Man could have acquired the latter without the former, nor would Merchants, &c. have differed very frequently in their Opinions concerning Trade; but there are many Proofs to the contrary of each, and therefore it is needless to offer any thing farther on this Head.

The next Thing to be considered, is, *Whether the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern be illiberal?*—And this will not require much Consideration; since it is easy to discover by what I have already mentioned, that such Knowledge is intirely speculative, and consists of Judgment; for Men who speak or write about the *British* Woollen Manufactory as a national Concern, do not say how any Sort of Woollen Cloth or Stuff is made, but confine themselves to the national Advan-

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tages arising from that Manufactory; or to the Effects which, in their Opinions, any Matter or Thing hath had, or will have upon it.

Because, none but *Woollen Manufactuurers* are interested in knowing by what Methods Woollen Cloth or Stuff is wrought, but *the whole Nation* is interested in those Advantages which arise from the Woollen Manufactory, and consequently, in every Thing that hath injured, or is likely to injure it: So that the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern, wholly consists in being able to trace out the Advantages or Disadvantages which each Branch of Manufactory or Trade brings to a Nation; and also, the good or bad Effects which any Law or other Matter hath had, or is likely to have, upon each Branch of Manufactory or Trade.

This being the Case, no Person who considers Things farther than their Names, can well say *that such Knowledge is illiberal*; since it evidently consists of Ability to trace out Consequences, and to make Deductions from Facts, or from self-evident Principles, which Operations must be performed by Judgment, or not at all; and as every Sort of Knowledge acquired by Judgment is equally liberal in Nature, though not alike useful, nor attainable with equal Facility; I am persuaded that no judicious Man will make any Difficulty of admitting that the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern is *perfectly liberal*.

And that Sort of commercial Knowledge is not only liberal in Nature, but at the same Time so dignified by the great Good arising therefrom, that it is justly intitled to Pre-eminence over many Branches of liberal Knowledge, and yields Precedency to very few; which Truths, the People of *Great Britain* have all imaginable Reason to acknowledge; for, under Providence, they owe to Commerce, the Enjoyment of their *Religion, Liberty and Property*; and yet, most strange it is, that very Sort of Knowledge to which they owe these greatest of Obligations, is *generally neglected and thought mean*.

Of late Years, several Men of Letters have indeed applied themselves to the Study of Commerce as a national Concern, for they have the Example of *Sir William Temple, Mr. Locke, &c.* to keep them in Countenance, which is a Matter to be considered in all new Undertakings: And those vast Losses which the Landholders of *England* suffered by the bad commercial Measures which were pursued during the Reigns of King *Charles the Second* and his Successor, have undoubtedly induced a Number of Landholders to turn their Thoughts to Commerce, which, as *Mr. Locke* hath justly observed, is more interesting to them than to Merchants.

Other principal Landholders do likewise study Commerce nationally, from a Desire of understanding the Nature of all public Affairs which come under their Consideration as Legislators; so that partly by one Means, and partly by another, commercial Knowledge hath made some Progress: But the Avenues which lead to it, still continue so over-run with Briars and Brambles, and so choaked with Rubbish, that it requires

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requires more Patience, Perseverance, and Labour to force a Way through those Obstacles, than any Man can spare for such Purpose, who doth not make the Study of Trade as a national Concern, the principal Business of his Life.

That is the chief Reason why this valuable Branch of Knowledge hath hitherto continued in so fluctuating and obscure a State; for as to the Subject itself, I am fully persuaded that one Time or other the liberal Part of commercial Knowledge will be established upon fixed Principles, and be acquirable by regular Study; but so long as *Principles, History, and Practice* continue blended together, and *Maxims of particular Use* are made *Foundations for general Reasoning*, the liberal Part of commercial Knowledge must of Necessity continue mysterious or uncertain, as several other Branches of certain Knowledge now would be, if they had been as miserably mutilated.

To collect the scattered Parts of this mangled Subject, and to arrange them in their natural Order, probably is too great a Work for one Man to perform; but when the Foundation of a very useful Undertaking is laid, and a Progress made therein, other Persons are induced to finish it; for many Men take a Pleasure in improving or adding to a Plan, who will not submit to the Labour requisite to form one; and when the Works here spoken of, are performed in a rough and imperfect Manner, great Numbers of ingenious Persons will then be in a Capacity of finishing what is roughly done, or of supplying Defects therein.

But as Matters now stand, such Persons are prevented from contributing their Assistance to an Undertaking of this Sort, by there not being any Part of it performed; for they cannot tell wherein their Judgment, or any Materials in their Possession might be serviceable, till the Want of them appears; and since this cannot be shewn till a Progress is made in the Work, some Person or other must lay down the Plan, and execute a considerable Part of it, before other Persons will be in a Capacity of promoting the Design; which cannot fail of going on successfully, when a Number of ingenious Men contribute to forward it.

And as to the Inducements which such Men will have to employ their Time in a Branch of Knowledge that hitherto hath generally been thought dry and mean, I am persuaded they will soon find Reason to entertain very different Sentiments of it, when they consider Trade nationally; of which, they may be in some Measure satisfied beforehand, by considering that *Sir William Temple* and *Mr. Locke*, whose commercial Writings are highly esteemed, were Men of great Ability in other Respects, and are universally allowed to have been such; or, if that should not be sufficient, a very little Attention to the national Effects of Commerce will remove all reasonable Doubts concerning what I have here mentioned.

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For it is extremely well known in this Country, that Commerce is capable of making a Nation either *rich and powerful*, or *poor and weak*, according as it is *well* or *ill* regulated; the Certainty whereof may well induce any sensible Man to believe, that the Nature of a Thing which is capable of producing such vast and opposite Effects, by a Succession of many intermediate Causes, must be well worth inquiring into; and since neither national Prosperity, nor national Ruin, when effected by Commerce, do come all on a sudden, but commonly by slow Degrees, a thinking Man may easily perceive, that the Influence which different Branches of Manufactory and Trade have upon the *Health, Manners,* and *Property* of a Nation, must afford ample Entertainment for the Learned and Judicious.

Or if it be considered, that the Trade of this Kingdom hath of late Years been Three Times as great as it was in the Reign of King *Charles* the Second, though Three Times as much Money is now annually paid in Taxes as was paid for Taxes at that Time, it must be allowed that there is something very surprizing in those Things; for according to common Opinion, Taxes are highly detrimental to Trade, and yet our Trade hath extended as Taxes have been unavoidably increased by a Succession of expensive Wars; so that the Influence which different Taxes have upon Trade, is worth the Attention of ingenious Men, and necessarily must be attended to by Ministers of State.

Or if it be considered that the Good arising to a Nation from Trade, depends much upon a proper Regulation of their Trade with other Nations, and that the commercial Interests of different Countries do naturally clash or agree, according to their relative Situations and Productions, there will appear Reason for saying that such Matters deserve Consideration: and when ingenious Men have attended to the Matters here hinted at, I am persuaded they will acknowledge that the Nature of Trade as a national Concern, is so far from being a dry and mean Study, that on the contrary, there are several extensive Branches of liberal, pleasing, and profitable Knowledge belonging to it.

Those Branches of Knowledge do not indeed at present appear to be either extensive or pleasing; but a Tree is not the shorter for being half concealed with Rubbish, nor are the Leaves, Flowers or Fruit of it naturally less pleasing for being covered with Dust, because such Covering doth not alter but conceal their Natures: so that ingenious Men should not form a Judgment of commercial Knowledge by the many tedious and perplexing Books which have been written upon the Subject; but rather direct their Attentions to the Nature of those Things which compose the Matter of it, and then they will find the Scene to be extensive, diversified, and pleasing.

Two Centuries ago, Philosophy was a dry, perplexing, and unprofitable Study; because the Professors of it chiefly employed themselves in forming Hypotheses according to their several Fancies, and in coining hard

hard Words to gain serious Attention to systematical Fiction; which vain Pursuits gave Rise to numberless Doubts and Controversies, without bringing any Increase of natural Knowledge: but from the Time that Lord *Bacon* laid the Foundation of another Sort of Philosophy, ingenious Men have continually been acquiring Knowledge of the Nature and Properties of Bodies; for they do not now wholly employ themselves in fancying how natural Operations are effected, but examine by Experiment in what Manner Nature acts.

By these Means, Judgment hath got some Foundation to build upon; for *Experiments*, or Facts, and *Reason* going Hand-in-Hand, they help each other in Philosophy, as well as in other Branches of Knowledge and in the common Concerns of Life; since by knowing how some Things are, we can judge how similar Things may be: and when proper Facts have been as closely pursued in Commerce as Experiments have been regarded in Philosophy, I am persuaded that such Pursuit will be attended with much greater Success; for in the former, both Causes and Effects are discoverable to the Mind; but in the latter, there are many Things quite above human Comprehension.

There must have been a Time when geometrical Knowledge was as unsettled as commercial Knowledge now is, and yet, the Principles of the former have been long established upon a firm Foundation; so that I cannot see any Reason why the Principles of the latter may not be established in the same Manner: for all commercial Measures are either good or bad to the Nation which takes them; and since, in most Instances, it is either very plain, or can be demonstrated by a Chain of Reasoning founded on Facts or on self-evident Principles, whether a Measure of that Sort is or will be good or bad, commercial Knowledge certainly may be established upon a firm Foundation.

The various Migrations of Commerce do indeed give some Reason for thinking that the Knowledge of it cannot be reduced to fixed Principles; but the Force of that Reason will disappear, when it is considered that neither the productive Laws of Nature nor the Principles of Arts and Sciences are at all affected by the Removal or Decay of those Things to which they give Being or Form; for the Laws of Vegetation are still the same, though Millions of Trees, Shrubs, and Flowers die every Year; and the Principles of Government remain unaltered, though many mighty Kingdoms have been overthrown.

Temperance and Exercise still are as conducive to Health and long Life as they were in the early Ages of the World, though great Numbers of People who lived temperately are long since dead; the Principles of Geometry are the same as they were when first discovered, though many stately Edifices which were built by geometrical Rules are now crumbled into Ruins; and the same commercial Laws which brought Wealth and Naval Power to *Egypt, Greece,* and *Carthage*, Two or Three Thousand Years ago, would, under the like Circumstances, bring Wealth and Naval Power to the present Inhabitants of those Countries.

For Commerce doth not remove from one Country to another by *Chance*, but in consequence of great Events or adequate Causes; such as the Calamities of War, oppressive Government, &c. in the Countries where it was feated; or greater natural Advantages, greater Protection from Government, new Discoveries, &c. in the Countries to which it removes; and agreeable to this we find, that the *Chinese* and *East-Indian* Nations, which are said to have been some of the most ancient Traders, do still carry on a vast Trade, though the present Inhabitants of *Egypt*, *Greece*, and the *African* Territory of *Carthage*, have but little Trade.

All which Matters being considered, there appears to me to be very great Reason for asserting, that the Migrations of Commerce neither prove nor indicate any thing against the Practicability of establishing commercial Knowledge upon fixed Principles; and the Continuance of a vast Trade in *China*, *East-India*, &c. from the early Ages of the World to this Time, may very well pass for a Proof of there not being any inbred Principle of Migration in Commerce; more especially as History will warrant my saying that the Removals of Commerce from *Egypt* and *Carthage*, to *Greece* and *Rome*, &c. were owing to *Conquest*, *Oppression* or *Barbarism*.

So that there is a double Security against those Difficulties which the various Migrations of Commerce seem to throw in the Way; for the longest Course of national Experience recorded in History, declares against there being any inbred Principle of Migration in Commerce; and the Four analagous Cases which I have mentioned here, do plainly shew that such a Principle, if it exists in Commerce, cannot affect either the Stability of commercial Knowledge, or the Practicability of reducing it to fixed Principles; for the productive Laws of Nature and Rules of Art, neither are nor can be affected by the Mutation or Dissolution of the Things thereby produced.

But there are other Sorts of Mutation which give somewhat more Reason for thinking that commercial Knowledge cannot be reduced to fixed Principles, because they enforce Alterations in commercial Measures; for such is the Constitution of Human Affairs, that they never continue long in the same Situation, but do as it were keep moving in the Round of *Peace*, *War*, *Prosperity*, and *Adversity*; according as they are propelled by the Wills of Princes, the Administration of Government, the Dispositions of Nations, &c. and from hence ariseth a Necessity of sometimes altering commercial Measures, which should ever be accommodated to those superior Mutations.

For it was wisely observed by Sir *William Temple*, that Trade cannot grow or thrive to any Degree without a Confidence both of public and private Safety; and it is equally true, that Trade cannot grow or thrive to any Degree without a Retaliation both of unfriendly and friendly commercial Measures; because, the Ability of one Nation to carry on Trade with other Nations doth chiefly and in general depend, upon
nearly

nearly as great Quantities of the Commodities and Manufactures of such one Nation being consumed by the People of other Nations, as that Nation consumes of their Commodities and Manufactures.

All the Mines in *Peru*, *Mexico*, and *Brazil* do not annually yield *Gold* and *Silver* sufficient to pay for the foreign Commodities and Manufactures which yearly are consumed by the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese*; and as to the other *European* Nations, which have scarcely any other *Gold* or *Silver* than what was extracted from those Mines, and gained by them in a long Course of Trade, it is manifest that they cannot for a Continuance maintain their foreign Trade upon any other Terms than those of exchanging Commodities and Manufactures with each other; although they can bear to lose by some Branches of Trade, so long as they gain proportionably by others.

This being the Case, it is evident that Princes and States are under a Necessity of permitting their Subjects to consume the Commodities and Manufactures of other Countries wherein the Consumption of their Commodities and Manufactures is in like Manner permitted; and that Princes are also under a Necessity of retaliating upon an unfriendly Nation, whatever Injuries their Subjects suffer in consequence of Prohibitions or high Duties being laid upon the Commodities and Manufactures which those Subjects send to such unfriendly Nation; or at least, to retaliate so far as the Circumstances of Affairs will permit.

These Matters being premised, it is now to be inquired, whether or not such Changes of commercial Measures as are made necessary by the Establishment of *commercial Friendship* between Princes who were before in a State of *commercial Enmity*, do, or can, in the ordinary Course of Things, make it impracticable to establish commercial Knowledge upon fixed Principles? — And upon this Occasion, I must again observe, that neither the productive Laws of Nature, nor the Principles of Arts and Sciences are in the least altered by applying them to other Matter, Persons, or Things, nor do they in such Cases produce any other than their wonted Effects.

The productive Laws of Nature are not altered by the sowing of Corn in other Land, for *English Wheat* sown in *North America*, and *North American Wheat* sown in *England*, will both produce *Wheat*, though perhaps somewhat different in Goodness, according to the Difference of Seasons and the differing Qualities of the Soil where grown; the Principles of Government are alike, whether the People thereby governed live in *Europe* or *Asia*; Temperance and Exercise are as conducive to Health and long Life in *New England* as in *Old England*; geometrical Rules retain the same Efficacy in supporting Houses, so far as depends upon Form, whether they are built of *Stone* or of *Brick*; and by Parity of Reasoning, the Principles of commercial Knowledge, whatever they are, must retain their Nature and Efficacy in all Changes of Application.

But

But after removing these Foundations for Doubt, many Persons probably will imagine that there must be some latent and insuperable Obstacle to the Establishment of commercial Knowledge upon fixed Principles, or otherwise the Thing would have been done before this Time; and if it had not been well known that *Right* and *Wrong* are demonstrable in many commercial Measures, though not without vast Difficulty in some Cases as Matters now stand, there might have been Reason for suspecting that there must be some such latent Obstacle; but since the fundamental Principles of Right and Wrong in commercial Matters are generally agreed upon, and have led to the Discovery of Right and Wrong in several intricate Cases, there cannot be much Foundation for such Suspicion.

Neither the *Greeks* nor the *Romans* knew any thing of the Art of *Letter-printing*; and yet, now the Discovery is made, any Man who hath seen the Process of such Printing may well wonder, how an Art *so plain in Nature* and *so great in Use*, could escape being discovered by two such learned Nations.—Nor did Men know to what Causes the Colours *Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Violet, Indigo*, and their Compounds were owing; till Sir *Isaac Newton* demonstrated by Experiments, &c. that Light consists of Particles of Matter endowed with colorific Properties, and that the *Redness* of Roses, the *Greenness* of Leaves, &c. are caused by their reflecting only the *red* and *green-making* Particles of Light, and retaining all the others.

But this is far from being the Case in regard to the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge; for the fundamental Maxims already settled, the Analogy of Things, and that natural Continuity of Parts which ever exists, *whether discovered or not*, and conducts the Mind from the Root to the several Branches of each Sort of scientific Knowledge; these, I say, do altogether give Evidence so copious as to the Matter of it, and yet so clearly and strongly to the same Point; that I think no Man, after considering the whole, can, without doing Violence to his Judgment, doubt of it being practicable *to establish upon fixed Principles the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge*.

It is however to be remembered, that Men in search of scientific Knowledge are, in Point of Progress, but as the scarcely visible Insects which imperceptibly creep upon the Bodies, Branches and Leaves of Trees; for the human Mind cannot ascend to the Summit of acquirable Knowledge, by any other Means than setting out from the Foundation, and traversing over all the intermediate Parts; and when it is considered what vast Improvements have from Time to Time been made in several Arts and Sciences, since the first Discovery thereof, the Labours of each Improver will seem but as the Travels of an Insect, whose Period of Existence is measured by a Summer's Day.

This is indeed a mortifying Consideration, and yet it may be of much Use in the present Case, by keeping the Mind in a proper Temperament

perament between the Extremes of Despair and impatient Desire; for it is necessary to be satisfied that the Undertaking is practicable, and at the same Time, to be so armed against Disappointment, that no slight Foil may discourage a Man from returning to the Charge; for Sciences unknown are not to be considered as *Rivers*, whose Courses and Branchings may easily be found out by *sailing* or *rowing* up them; but as *Mines of Silver*, the Form and Extent whereof cannot be discovered otherwise than by *removing the Earth* or *digging out the Ore*.

No Wonder then, if there should be many *Mines of Silver* and of *Knowledge* which Men are totally ignorant of, though every Age and each civilized Nation hath produced a Succession of diligent Inquirers after both; or that a seeming Poverty in the Ore of some *Mines of Science* hath prevented Mankind from knowing much more of them, than that there are such *Mines*; or that the working of other *Mines* which are of Value, should have been discontinued for Want of Protection, or of Means to proceed therein; or that later Ages have discovered new Veins in those *Mines of Knowledge*, which till then were thought to have been quite exhausted and worked out, many Ages before.

Nor can it, after reading what is already mentioned here, be a Wonder, that neither the Form nor Extent of the Mine of liberal commercial Knowledge are at this Time known, though a very great Part of the Ore hath been dug out; for, to continue the Metaphor, the Pieces of extracted Ore have not been placed together again in the Order they were found, but so promiscuously jumbled and intermixed with such vast Quantities of Earth, that the natural Form and Extent of the seemingly explored Parts, cannot, without great Labour and Patience, be really discovered in such a Chaos of Matter, although it should happen to contain all the Ore that hath been extracted.—

Having Possession of most of the commercial Books and Pamphlets which can be met with, doth indeed seem to be a vast Step toward establishing upon fixed Principles the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge; and yet it amounts to no more in that Respect, than purchasing the Ruins of a vast Edifice amounts to in regard to acquiring a certain Knowledge of the Form, Attitude, and Size of some Statue that is not only broken into many Hundred Pieces, but those Pieces scattered under the Ruins, and promiscuously jumbled with the several Parts of other mutilated Statues; and how little that is, every Statuary and any Man of common Understanding may very easily comprehend.

For it is evident that no Man, who did not see such Statue before it was broken, &c. possibly can have a perfect and complete Knowledge of the *Form, Attitude, and Size* of it; until those Ruins are not only turned over and removed, but all the broken Parts of the Statue collected together, and the whole thereof placed in their natural Order:—

nor can the Want of any considerable Parts be fitly supplied by a Statuary, unless he is so well acquainted with the Principles of muscular Motion in the Human Body, as to discover by the Action of the Muscles, &c. in the remaining Parts of the Statue, what the Attitude, &c. of the wanting Parts must have been.

And even this doth not quite convey an Idea of all the Labour and Difficulties which now attend the acquiring a Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern; for a Man must first collect Fifteen Hundred, or more, commercial Books and Pamphlets, and then begin to turn over the Ruins, &c. as before mentioned; or if he reads such Books and Pamphlets as he collects them, it probably will be Twelve Years before all the scattered Materials can be collected and placed in proper Order; for my commercial Collection was above Twelve Years in making, though I resided in *London*, and was not sparing of either Time or Money to enlarge it.

And I thought the Undertaking was in great Forwardness when I had collected so many Materials, and placed them in such Order that, by the Help of a Catalogue, any one Book or Pamphlet might be immediately found, and all which were written upon any Branch of Manufactory or Trade be soon selected; but when I came to examine what Materials I had relating to the *Leather-Trade*, the *Silk-Trade*, and the *Sugar-Trade*, upon which Three Branches I have already written, there appeared such a Want of useful Matter, that I found it difficult to treat of those Three Branches of Trade, with any tolerable Degree of Satisfaction.

And yet, there is no other Way to acquire a satisfactory Knowledge of the State, &c. of the Manufactures and Trade of this Kingdom, than by treating of each Branch separately, and so that their Increase, Decrease, Influence, &c. may appear; for every Part must be distinctly known, or the Whole cannot be well understood: but it is not to be expected that One Gentleman in a Hundred will employ several Months Time in rummaging over Books, Pamphlets, and Parliamentary Cases, in order to find out the State of any Branch of Trade; nor is it by any Means right, that such valuable Knowledge should be so difficult to come at.

I think it expedient to mention these Things, because they fully explain how it comes to pass, that the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern hath hitherto been kept at a very low Ebb, and not been well understood by Men who had Abilities to learn all that is acquirable; but such Men cannot with Justice to themselves, their Families, or their Country, sacrifice half their Time in going through all the Drudgery mentioned here; and until the End can be obtained without submitting to such disagreeable Means, the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern will continue very imperfect and be confined to a few Persons.

If

If Gentlemen could learn the *Elements of Commerce*, as soon as they can learn the *Elements of Geometry*, or can go through a Course of experimental Philosophy, I am persuaded that the elementary Part of commercial Knowledge would soon be considered as a Branch of liberal Education; because, the chief Reason why many *British* Gentlemen study the Laws and Constitution of this Kingdom, is, that they may the better know how to preserve *Liberty* and *Property*; and since Commerce may be so managed as to either secure or destroy both, such Gentlemen would not fail of giving due Attention to a Matter of so much Importance to them, when they were enabled to understand it in a reasonable Time.

Or if, when any Branch of Manufactory or Trade is to come under national Consideration, those Gentlemen to whom the Cognizance of such Matters belongs, could turn to an historical Account of that Branch of Manufactory or Trade, and in a few Hours inform themselves of the principal Facts and national Matters relative to the same; there would not be so much room for Controversy, nor such frequent Necessity for consulting other Persons; because many more Gentlemen would then know *what was to the Purpose* and *what not*, which is of very great Importance upon such Occasions.

For notwithstanding the vast Numbers of Books and Pamphlets which have been written concerning the *Commerce*, *Coin*, and *Colonies* of this Kingdom, I much doubt, whether the national and valuable Part of the commercial Matter in them, will more than fill One Folio Volume of the larger Sort: but since many other Materials should be collected for a commercial History, besides what have been printed; it is probable that such a Work, together with the *Elements of Commerce* illustrated by Applications, may make Two Volumes in Folio, and I am persuaded that they cannot necessarily be extended farther.

A learned Gentleman hath indeed filled Two Quarto Volumes with an historical, &c. Account of our *Woollen Manufactory*; and considering that it is the grand Concern of this Kingdom, the Subject ought to be amply treated of; but a commercial History upon so large a Plan will not much promote the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern, though some Persons would like it better; for if other Branches of Manufactory and Trade were to be so copiously treated of, a commercial History of *Great Britain* and the *British* Dominions, would fill at least Ten Volumes in Folio; and as few People would buy, and fewer read, so large a Work, commercial Knowledge could not be much promoted by it.

Those Persons who are not satisfied with knowing all that is nationally interesting in a Branch of Trade, but like also to be informed of minute Facts, or Circumstances, and to be acquainted with the various Controversies which there have been concerning such Branch of Trade, may find many of those lesser Matters carefully inserted in that History of

of

of our Woollen Manufactory, for these are what swell it to so great a Bulk; but the Number of such Readers is very small in Comparison to the Number of those Persons who desire to be informed of the *Nature* and *State* of Commerce, in as few Words, and at as little Expence as may be; and the Things which should be inserted in a commercial History will make it extensive enough.

So that Facts, Circumstances, and Controversies, which either never were nationally interesting in themselves, or have been rendered useless in that respect by Length of Time, should not be inserted in a general Work that is intended to promote commercial Knowledge: for there ought to be a Keeping of Proportion in Books as well as in Pictures; and the several Parts of a Subject should be so treated of, that the Mind may discover which are the principal Objects therein, as the Eye is enabled to distinguish the principal Figures in an historical Picture.

In the Battle-Pieces of *John Duke of Marlborough*, that illustrious Hero is represented in the Fore-ground of the Picture, and the contending Armies in the Back-ground; which, according to the Rules of Perspective, makes him appear as large as some Thousands of the Men in his victorious Army; and by these Means, both the Eye and the Mind are led to view and contemplate that Object in the Picture which was the greatest in Nature; for as to the Battallions and Squadrons of Soldiers which are represented beyond their General, those, being properly diminished in Perspective, are considered only as the Instruments which executed what his Greatness planned.

Now though it may not be possible, in writing upon Commerce, or any other Subject, to shew the various Degrees of Importance which different Branches, or the Parts of them, are naturally of; yet, a Keeping certainly ought to be so far preserved, as to prevent Trifles from being mistaken for Matters of Importance; but such Mistakes are not likely to be prevented, when the *Minutiae* of a Subject have Ten Times more Pages allotted to them, than are bestowed upon the principal Objects; because that is like representing *Giants* as *Pigmies*, and *Pigmies* as *Giants*; which inverted Representation must necessarily confound Ideas of Proportion, and the Knowledge of Things thereon depending.

For these Reasons, I should like One-Fourth Part of that History of our Woollen Manufactory much better than I like the whole, if such One-Fourth Part was separated from the other Three, and properly digested; because I should then be exempted from the Trouble of reading more than is generally interesting; for I think it is a valuable Work, though not properly compiled for the Purpose before mentioned; and if a Man who writes upon Trade as a national Concern, doth not say more of it than the Generality of Readers are interested in knowing, I am persuaded that all he can offer concerning our *Woollen Manufactory*, may be

be comprized in One-Fourth Part of the Compass which that History is extended to.

An historical Account of the different Branches of Manufactory and Trade belonging to *Great Britain*, should consist of only those Facts, Specifications of Numbers, Quantities and Values; Calculations, national Reasoning and Observations, which will contribute to promote the Knowledge of Trade as a national Concern; and I think it expedient to mention what Sorts of Facts, Specifications, &c. will, in my humble Opinion, best promote such Knowledge; because the Plan of a Work wherein this Nation is so deeply interested, ought to be very well considered before it is put in Execution.

The principal Matters proposed to be inserted in an historical Account of a Branch of Manufactory.

- 1st, The Time when, and the Means whereby such Manufactory was first established in *England*.
- 2^d, The Time when it was extensive enough to supply home Consumption.
- 3^d, The Time when it began to be farther extended by Exportation.
- 4th, The Names of the Counties, Towns, &c. wherein such Manufactory was first set up.
- 5th, The Names of the Counties, Towns, &c. wherein it was carried on, at different Periods of Time.
- 6th, The Numbers of People who were employed therein, at those different Periods.
- 7th, The Names of the Countries, Provinces, or Counties, wherein the Materials for such Manufactory are produced.
- 8th, The Prices of such Materials from Year to Year, distinguishing the principal Species thereof.
- 9th, The common Rates of Wages paid, from Time to Time, to Men, Women, and Children employed in such Manufactory.
- 10th, Calculations shewing what Proportion the Value of their Labour bears to the Value of the Materials wrought by them.
- 11th, Calculations shewing what Proportion, the Numbers of Men, Women, and Children employed, bear to each other.
- 12th, Calculations shewing how long a Time the proper Numbers of Men, Women, and Children are employed in making a Piece, or other rateable Quantity of the Manufactory, and specifying the Length and Breadth, or the Weight, of such Piece or rateable Quantity.
- 13th, Accounts of the Quantities which have annually and from Time to Time been exported of such Manufactory; expressing the Value thereof at the Time, and shewing the medium annual Export, by Periods of Five or Ten Years.

- 14th, A brief Recital of the Causes of every considerable Increase, Decrease, and Disorder in such Manufactory, or among the Manufacturers, from Time to Time.
- 15th, National Reasoning and Remarks which particularly relate to such Branch of Manufactory; shewing wherein it promotes or clashes with other Branches of Manufactory, Trade, the Landed Interest, Naval Power, &c. of this Kingdom.
- 16th, Physical and political Observations relating to the Effects which such Branch of Manufactory hath upon the Health, Strength, Manners, &c. of the People employed therein.
- Miscellaneous Matters, not properly reducible under any of the preceding Heads.

These Sixteen Heads seem to me to include all that is generally interesting in regard to any Branch of Manufactory, as a national Concern; and when a Branch of Manufactory is treated of according to this Plan, the Matter of such Treatise cannot take up much room; nor can a Man who is fit for the Undertaking, either insert Things which are foreign to the Purpose, or repeat the same Thing, without discovering such Insertion or Repetition; because all that he mentions must appear under its proper Head, and in such particular Part thereof as either Chronology or the Thread of Argument point out.

It is likewise certain, that an historical Account of the several Branches of Manufactory and Trade belonging to *Great Britain*, may be first compiled in an imperfect Manner, and the Defects therein be afterwards supplied by other Persons, who shall have proper Materials for that Purpose; because, not only the Compiler, but every Reader who is at all acquainted with the Subject will easily find out such Defects, when the Matter of that History is distributed under separate Heads, and arranged in proper Order; for a Defect therein will then be near as perceptible to the Mind, as the Want of a Brick or a Stone is to the Eye.

And if, after such History hath been compiled, there shall appear to be national Reasons for considering all or any of our Branches of Manufactory or Trade, in some Point of View which was not before attended to, that may be done without affecting what was before written; for in such Case, nothing more will be necessary than to make additional Heads or Chapters to the History, or to those Branches thereof which require them, and to collect under the same, whatever nationally interesting Facts, Calculations, Reasoning, Remarks, &c. shall have any Relation thereto.

Or if false Facts, erroneous Calculations, &c. should be inserted in the proposed Work, which is very likely to happen in a Case where Truth and Accuracy must depend upon many People, any such rotten Materials may easily be taken out, and replaced by others which are
found;

found; because most of those Facts, Calculations, &c. will be either true or false in themselves, and not in consequence of many other preceding ones being true or false; so that the Falsity of one or a few of them cannot have a worse Effect there, than a few rotten Planks have in a Ship, which may at any Time be repaired by inserting sound Timber in the decayed Parts thereof.

I think it necessary to say thus much concerning the Practicability of compiling a commercial History, and the Facility of making Additions or Alterations in it afterwards; because those Three Things ought to be very plainly made appear in regard to a Work that cannot be completed by one Man, though it may be made sufficiently complete by the joint Labours of many; and as to the Utility of such a History, I have already inserted so many Proofs of it, that there cannot be much if any Occasion for increasing their Number; especially as those Persons who are acquainted with the Subject, may easily discover that a History compiled upon the preceding Plan, will shew more in *one Day* than can now be come at in *a Year*.

And when the nationally interesting Part of what hath been written concerning the *Commerce, Coin, and Colonies* of this Kingdom, is collected and disposed in some such Manner as I have described, any Person of common Understanding may very easily find what he wants to know of it; for an Index will inform him where each Branch of Manufactory or Commerce is treated of, and he may there see all that is nationally valuable in regard to any such Branch; or if there be a Defect of Matter, he may be assured that the Things which are wanting cannot be met with in any other printed Work.

So that there would not then be any Occasion to employ Year after Year in collecting commercial Books and Pamphlets at a great Expence, nor to glean from Fifty of them what might be contained in One; neither would the Mind be embarrassed with foreign or with trifling Matter, nor be tired out with Repetitions; for the whole might then be purchased at once; each Part be read when Interest or Inclination lead to it; the best Information concerning each Matter or Thing be immediately obtained; and the Wisdom or Judgment of many able Men be so preserved upon Record, that neither would appear unreasonably, and yet always be found when wanted.

Upon these two Circumstances, the Progress of Knowledge chiefly depends; for Men who read to improve themselves, do not often take up Books at Random, but generally in Conformity to some previous Determination which suits with the present Disposition of the Mind; and if the Book referred to, contains the necessary Means for acquiring such Sort of Knowledge as the Mind is then inclined to, it will be sure to make a great Progress therein; but if there is a Want of Means to carry the Mind forward in that chosen Path, or many Obstructions met with therein, *Attention will soon tire and Judgment sleep.*

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For though most Men bear Disappointments in Reading much better than in Feeding, yet, the Mind loses as much Improvement by the one, as the Body loses of Nourishment by the other; and a Man may as reasonably expect to preserve Health by eating when he is thirsty and drinking when he is hungry, as hope to much improve his Mind by jumbled and cross-purposed Reading: of which Matter there needs not a stronger Proof, than the low Ebb of commercial Knowledge, and the small Number of Inquirers after it, in this Kingdom; for the Subject hath been so treated of, as to thwart and disappoint the Minds of most Men who have applied to it, and therefore they have given over the Pursuit.

I am persuaded it will be needless to dwell any longer upon these Matters; because any Person may easily perceive how it hath come to pass, that only a few People have hitherto well understood the Nature of Trade as a national Concern, or been properly acquainted with the Manufactures and Trade of this Kingdom; and since I have specified what Sorts of Facts, Calculations, Reasoning, Observations, &c. will, in my humble Opinion, best establish and promote commercial Knowledge; as well as shewn the Practicability and Facility of compiling a commercial History; I shall now examine some Objections which may be made against such a Compilation.

For several respectable Persons probably will say, that it is not proper to publish some of those Sorts of Facts which are mentioned in the preceding Sketch of a Plan; because the disclosing of so many Secrets concerning our Manufactures and Trade, may be productive of ill Consequences to this Nation; and therefore it will be expedient to consider what ill Consequences can attend the Publication of such of the said Facts as are at present either wholly or in a great Measure kept secret; for if the Preservation of any Part of our Manufactures or Trade really depends upon such Secrecy, it undoubtedly ought to be still preserved.

As to the Preservation of the several Branches of Manufacture belonging to *Great Britain*; that doth fundamentally and chiefly depend upon one or other of the Four after-named Causes:

1st, Possession of the Materials, or of more or better Materials, than are produced in other Countries.

2^d, Natural Advantages in regard to Labour and Navigation; such as Exemption from the Extremes of Heat and Cold, Plenty of cheap and good Firing, a Number of navigable Rivers, and easy Access from all Parts to the Sea.

3^d, Superior Skill in the Art of manufacturing such Materials.

4th, Protection from foreign Manufactures; either by express Prohibitions to import them into this Kingdom, or by laying such Duties thereon at Importation, as make those foreign Manufactures dearer here than

than the like Sorts of *British* Manufactures are; or by granting Bounties on the latter, when exported to other Countries.

To the First, Second, and Fourth of these Causes, we owe the Preservation of our *Woollen Manufactures*; for *England* produceth the most useful Sorts of *Wool* in the greatest Abundance; it likewise is stored with greater Plenty of cheap and good Firing, and is more exempted from Extremes of *Heat* and *Cold*, than any foreign Country in *Europe*; so that this Nation hath a very great Superiority of Advantages over all other Nations, in regard to the *Materials* and the *Manufactory*; and these being secured by wise Laws, which prohibit the Exportation of *Wool* and of *Fullers Earth*, as also, the Importation of *foreign Woollen Manufactures*; nothing but the Repeal or Violation of those wise Laws, or taking other bad Measures, can deprive the *British* Nation of their *Woollen Manufactures*.

The Preservation of the *British* and *Irish Linen Manufactures*, is owing to the Second and Fourth Causes; for *temperate Air* and *Plenty of Firing* are great Advantages in themselves; and yet these would signify but little, in regard to our *Linen Manufactures*, if considerable Duties were not laid on *foreign Linens* imported, and Bounties allowed on *British Linens* when exported; because the low Prices of Labour in several other Countries where *Linens* are made, do enable the People thereof to sell theirs cheaper than ours could be afforded without Bounties, although the Air is more temperate, and the Plenty of Firing greater in these Kingdoms than in those Countries; especially as several Nations have Advantages over us in regard to *Materials*, and in the Art of manufacturing some Sorts of *Linen*.

The Preservation of our *Silk Manufactures* is chiefly owing to the same Causes as secure our *Linen Manufactures*; and partly to some wise Regulations in regard to different Sorts of *raw Silk*, *foreign thrown Silk*, and *foreign wrought Silks*.

The Preservation of our *Metallic Manufactures*, is, in some Instances owing to one of those Four Causes, and in some Instances to the others; but in general, our *Lead*, *Tin*, and *Copper* Mines, together with *temperate Air*, greater Plenty of *Coals*, *substantial Fare*; and a *general Disposition to excel in Workmanship*, are the Causes of these Manufactures increasing so rapidly as they have done since the Beginning of the Reign of King *William* and *Queen Mary*; before which Time, great Quantities of *foreign Metallic Manufactures* were imported into *England*:—And, to sum up the whole of these Matters in a few Words, the Preservation of the **BRITISH MANUFACTURIES** is fundamentally and almost wholly owing to a great Superiority of natural Advantages, to that Spirit which the secure Enjoyment of **LIBERTY** AND **PROPERTY** infuses into Men, and to wise commercial Laws.

This being the Case, I do not see how the Publication of those several Sorts of Facts, &c. which are mentioned in the proposed Sketch for

a commercial History, can be prejudicial to the Manufactures of this Kingdom; for such Publication neither will alter the Laws of Nature, nor repeal the Laws of this Country, nor reveal any Secrets in our Manufactures; since nothing can properly be deemed a Secret therein, but the Art of making some Manufacture or other in a better or less expensive Manner than the like Kind of Manufacture is made in other Countries; and not a Word of this Sort is either proposed or wanted to be published.

As to our *foreign Trade*, it is to be considered in the first Place, that every Branch thereof doth fundamentally and chiefly depend upon our *Manufactures*; for the general Reason why the People of other Nations buy such vast Quantities of our *Woollen Manufactures*, is, their being the best, or the cheapest to those Nations; and since I cannot comprehend how the Goodness or the Prices of our *Woollen, Linen, Silk, Metallic, &c. Manufactures* either will or can be affected by the Publication of those Sorts of Facts, I am quite at a Loss to find out any one ill Consequence that can result therefrom, to the *foreign Trade* of this Kingdom.

I know it may be said, that such Publication would induce other Nations to attend more to the Improvement of their own Trade, which must in the End be prejudicial to this Kingdom; and that Objection might have had much Weight with some Persons a Century ago, when the *English* and *Dutch* had most of the Trade in *Europe*; but since that Time, all the Princes and States in this Quarter of the World have turned their Attention to the Improvement of Manufactures and Trade in their respective Countries; so that the Reason of such Objection hath long since disappeared, at least with regard to the Trade of *Great Britain*.

For those Improvements in the Manufactures and Trade of various *European* Nations, have chiefly been made at the Expence of the Republics of *Holland* and of *Venice*, whose former great Trade was not founded upon domestic Means of theirs, but upon the Negligence of other Nations, and therefore the one sunk as the other decreased; but neither the *French*, nor no other *European* Nations have, by any commercial Improvements of theirs, been able to sink the general Trade of *Great Britain*, although in particular Instances they have, by wrong Proceedings here, been enabled to gain upon us; for notwithstanding all that other Nations have done, our annual Exports of *Woollen Manufactures* have of late Years been near Three Times as great, as the like Sort of Exports were a Hundred Years ago.

This Fact is well known to most of those Persons who have employed much Time in commercial Inquiries; and it may very well serve to shew, that *Great Britain* hath not any thing to apprehend from a Publication of the several Sorts of Facts before mentioned, since in it there is summed up the Experience of a Hundred Years; during which

which long Interval, the Trade of *England* must have decreased, as the Trade of *Holland* and of *Venice* have done, if, like the others, it had been founded upon *foreign Means*, and held by the *Negligence of various Powers*; but the Trade of *England* is founded upon the *Laws of Nature*, and therefore cannot be taken away by the *Laws of other Nations*.

Lesser Ebbings and Flowings must however be expected in the Trade of this Nation, according as other Nations enjoy Peace or suffer by War; but as to taking away Trade from *England*, in the Manner that Trade hath been taken away from *Holland* and from *Venice*, that cannot be effected by other Nations, unless ruinous Measures or Conduct be pursued here; for let them make what commercial Laws they will, their Countries will not have more or less *Heat, Cold, Rain, Snow, Metals, Minerals, Rivers, Sea-Coast, or Sea-Fish*, than Nature hath allotted; nor will they be able to breed and feed such numerous Herds and Flocks of *Cattle* and *Sheep* as are in *England*; because they have not the *natural Means of doing it*.

Some Persons probably will say, that though the People of other Countries cannot alter the Course of Nature, they can nevertheless make much greater Improvements in their Lands than have hitherto been made, and therefore we ought not to rely upon past Experience in this respect; but such Persons should consider that the more Improvements other Nations make, the greater will their Wants be; for there are no People who, in Proportion to their Numbers, want so few foreign Commodities and Manufactures as the savage *Indians* and *Africans*, nor no People who consume so much foreign Produce as the *English* Nation.

During the Reigns of King *James* the First, and King *Charles* the First, the annual Consumption of foreign Commodities and Manufactures in *England*, amounted to about TWO Millions of Pounds *Sterling* in Value; but the Improvements since made here, have increased such Consumption to FIVE or SIX Millions of Pounds: and the Improvements made by other Nations, have in like Manner increased their Want of *English Woollen Manufactures*; for they have annually consumed near Three Times as many of late Years, as were annually exported a Century ago; although the *French* were not then able to supply themselves with *Woollen Manufactures*, and have of late exported great Quantities.

Certainly these Matters do most clearly shew, that the *British* Nation hath not any thing to fear, but much to hope for, from commercial Improvements being made in other Countries; and therefore, I am humbly of Opinion, that, on this account only, the aforesaid Facts ought rather to be published than concealed: and as to any particular Objections which may be made against publishing Accounts of the Commodities and Manufactures annually exported from this Kingdom, and of Commodities and Manufactures annually imported into it, I

humbly

humbly apprehend that the main Force of such Objections is already taken away.

It is likewise to be considered, that Accounts of Exports and of Imports are kept in other Countries, as well as in this; so that whenever the Ministers of State, in *Spain, Portugal, France, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, &c.* want to know how their Trade with *Great Britain* stands, their own Accounts will shew them; or if the Ministers of one Nation want to know what Trade some other Nation carries on with a Third Nation, that Knowledge undoubtedly may be gained by the Ambassador or the Consul of such first Nation residing in one or other of those Two Nations, either from public Accounts, or by other good Information.

So that if the Accounts of our Exports and Imports were published, other Nations would not discover more thereby, than either their own Accounts do inform them of, or their Ambassadors or Consuls residing in other Countries can find out, whenever there is Occasion for knowing it; and since various Parts of the Accounts of our Exports and Imports have not only been published upon different Occasions, but those for the Port of *London*, which make about Two Thirds of the Whole, may be come at by the weekly printed Papers of Exports and Imports, it is in vain to think of keeping such Things secret from other Nations.

But I fear that Accidents will one Time or other deprive this Nation of all or a great Part of their Accounts of *Exports, Imports, Shipping, Seamen, &c.* if the various Matters therein contained be not annually stated, and general Abstracts thereof deposited in Two or Three different Places of Record; and considering that such Abstracts would be of very great present Use to the Ministry, by shewing to them the commercial State of *Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Colonies*, in a clear and concise Manner, I cannot help thinking that such a System of political Anatomy should annually be compiled.

For many Irregularities in Trade, which now escape Notice, would then be discovered; and there would not be Occasion to call for any of those Accounts long before they will be wanted; nor to postpone pressing Business depending thereon, till necessary Information shall be sent for and received from *America, &c.* neither would there be such Confusion, nor so many Chasms, in our commercial Records, as have at different Times been manifested, in Reports from the Board of Trade, from *Dr. Davenant, &c.* for if any Person employed in those Matters, shall omit to perform the Duties of his Office, such Omission would soon be discovered.

By those Means the Bench might be properly raised above the Bar, in commercial Proceedings; for nothing more would be wanted from Persons in Trade, than a Declaration of such particular Facts as shall relate to the Affair under Consideration, so that their Business would be to give *Evidence* and not *Judgment*; the latter whereof is ever most graceful

graceful when she appears in the Seat of Determination; for Authority suffers much by the Chairman of an honourable Committee being obliged to ask the Captain of a trading Ship, whether the Ballance of our Trade with a *British* Colony is in favour of or against this Kingdom.

All Accounts of the public Revenues and Expences are made up every Year, so as to shew the State of each in a small Compass; and it is easy to perceive, that the Means of supporting both, have a natural Claim to at least the same Degree of Attention that is paid to the others; for the principal Landholders of *England* do not content themselves with examining their Stewards Accounts of *Money* received and paid, but occasionally inquire how their *Lands* are used, what *Stock* there is upon them, and how their *Tenants* live; well knowing, that those are the Sources from whence their Revenues flow.

Every considerable Ebbing in any Branch of our Manufacture or Trade would then be directly notified to the Ministry, and proper Inquiry might be made into the Causes thereof, before it brought Thousands of Families to Distress by a numerous Poor, or broke out into Clamour and Tumult; so that the Parties aggrieved would find the Cause removed when they came to make known its ill Effects, or that proper Measures were taking for their Relief; either of which Things must necessarily be productive of the happiest Consequences; not only by promoting the Welfare of this Nation, but by making less thorny and burthenome the Administration of Government.—

I have now most humbly represented, all that appears to me to be necessary in regard to the present State of commercial Knowledge in this Kingdom, and to the Expediency as well as the Means of promoting the same; and if it shall be thought that the Matters herein proposed are Objects of public Protection and Support, I shall esteem it a very great Honour to be employed in forming for public Service *the Elements of Commerce, and an historical Account of the British Manufactures and Trade*, wherein I have already been at a very considerable Expence.

All which is most humbly submitted by

J. Massie.

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