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A
L E T T E R

To a Worthy
Member of Parliament,

On the Necessary
Support and Encouragement

O F
T R A D E.

With *Some PROPOSALS* to that End.

By a True ENGLISHMAN.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. ROBERTS, at the *Oxford-Arms* in
Warwick-lane. MDCCXXXIV.

[Price Six-Pence.]

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L E T T E R

To a Worthy
Member of Parliament, &c.

As the Riches and Strength
of this Nation principally
consist in the Flourishing
State of its Trade; what-
soever tends to lessen, or to clog and
discourage it, must needs obstruct the
constant Current of Our Wealth and
Affluence, and, by transferring it to

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Other Places, inevitably tend to weaken and impoverish Us.

THEREFORE, amidst the great and arduous Affairs of the Nation abroad, which properly fall under the immediate Care and Cognifance of the Legislature, it highly behoves Them to take all prudent and necessary Measures for the due Protection and Encouragement of Our Commerce; as the principal Means of making Us Easy and prosperous at Home, and both able and willing to sustain the present, and Every other additional Burden, which the Situation of our Public Affairs, in this Critical Juncture, the Emergencies of the State, and the Honour and Safety of the Nation, either does or may regularly call for.

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NOTHING can be more certain, than that the overcharging of Our Mercantile Goods imported, with higher Duties than the Nature of Them, and a just Proportion to the State of Foreign Markets will bear, unavoidably tends to enrich Other Trading Countries (who will, by that Means, become great Gainers, whilst They undersell Us) and to impoverish Our Selves.

THE Excessive Increase of the Smuggling Practice, of late Years, is a Grievance which Every One, who has a true Regard for the Publick Good, cannot but be sensibly affected with. And it is demonstrably certain, that if some more effectual Course than any

(6)

any which has been yet try'd, is not speedily taken, to put a Stop to it, 'twill, in a great measure, contribute to the Ruin of this Kingdom. 'Tis a continual Draining of Our Cash, and more especially the Silver, by transmitting it, in very large Quantities, into a Neighbouring Countrey (whose Interests We have little Reason to promote); not to circulate, or return hither, but for the pouring in upon Us fresh Supplies of Surreptitious Goods, by their further bold Adventures, to the great Detriment of the Fair Traders, and the general Impoverishment of the Nation. And how can it be otherwise; when it is well known, that in One obscure Corner of *Kent*, there's seldom a Week passes without a Body of Twenty, Twenty

(7)

Twenty-five, or Thirty Horsemen appearing together, to guard both the unlawful Merchandise, and the large Sums (frequently from 500 to near 1000 *l.*) at once exported in Specie. Nor is it reasonable to think, that from all the Sea Coasts, put together, there is less than 8, or 10000 *l.* per Week carried off in this manner. Thus, without considering the plain natural Consequence, by encouraging these Domestic Enemies, We ruin Our Selves, and madly help Them to fight against Us with our own Weapons.

This pernicious Traffick is already grown to such a daring Height, as not only to bid Defiance to all *Laws*, but even to the Military Aids wherewith the

(8)

the proper Officers have been assisted, in the Discharge of their Duty. Nor would it be effectually crush'd, if 10000 of Our regular Forces were, to that End, dispers'd into all the Maritime Coasts of the Kingdom; or if they were never so many Seizures made, or Offenders taken, and convicted for Transportation. As the Numbers of those idle and dissolute Persons are continually increasing, They would still find Ways to carry on the stolen Trade; either by secret Arts of Conveyance, or by defending their Cargoes imported, with a resistless Number of arm'd Men, desperately resolv'd to run the utmost Hazard of their Lives, in a Course so highly wicked, and but little short of actual Rebellion. This may

(9)

may be justly esteem'd One of the principal Causes of that growing Scarcity of Money among the middle Sort of People, and of their great Difficulties in carrying on the common Business of Life, which is every Year more sensibly felt and complain'd of.

NEVERTHELESS, there is One Way, and perhaps the only One, which, without the Hazard of any Lives, or the extraordinary Charges of the Government, would put a speedy and an effectual Stop to this so dangerous and spreading Evil: And that is, if the Legislature would forthwith condescend to reduce the Duties on Tea and Coffee to One Shilling per Pound. As this would proportionably

(10)

portionably lower the Price of those Commodities in the ordinary Way of Trade, it would certainly very soon take off the Buyers from giving any further Encouragement to that lawless Importation; and the Importers themselves, finding it no longer to answer their Ends, would be obliged to drop it of Course. Neither would such a prudent, and indeed necessary Reduction be to the Disadvantage of the Government, or in any measure lessen the Amount of the Duty; but would very probably increase it. For, if Four or Five Times the Quantity of those Goods, which are now in universal Use among the common Sort of People, would, by this means, be sold in the fair and regular Way of Trade (which

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(which is little less than a Certainty) this would be a sufficient Balance to the Revenue of the Crown; beside the National Benefit which would arise from the Money circulating at Home, and the very great Encouragement of the Fair-trading Merchants.

As to the *Other*, equally Destructive Branch of that *Clandestine Practice*, viz. the continual Running in upon Us vast Quantities of *French Brandy* (which is, in many Respects, highly prejudicial to the common Interest of this Nation, and consequently ought to be restrain'd with the utmost Care): This also would be effectually remedied by taking off the High Duty from *Rum*, and suffering that

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Product of our own Plantations to be imported Free. For when this much wholsomer Spirit, thro' such an Indulgence, can be purchas'd here, at a cheaper Rate than *Brandy*, the latter will soon grow into Disuse among Us; and the *Smuggling Trade* will no longer find any Room to carry on that pernicious Trade, but it must inevitably fall to the Ground of itself. The Loss of the present Duty on *Rum* would be, in a great measure, alleviated by lessening the Number of Officers, and their Assistants, on the Sea Coasts. But if that Duty was only reduc'd to One Shilling per Gallon, there would be no Loss at all: For, the Amount of it would, even then, be, at least, equal to what it is at present, from the

(13)

far greater Quantities which would be imported and sold. Yet it must be allow'd, that the most effectual Way to exclude the *French Brandy* at once, would be by sinking the *Other Duty* intirely, or, at least for a limited Time, by Way of Experiment. And indeed the heavy Discouragements which Our *Sugar Planters*, who are, in a manner, ruin'd, lie under, at present, may be justly pleaded on their behalf; and do, as it were, intitle them to such a Favour: Which would very much contribute towards a Reparation of their low Circumstances, and restoring Them to a Flourishing Condition; so as to become a Public Advantage to this Kingdom, as They have

(14)

have formerly been. But, for a further powerful Inducement to such Kind Usage, it ought certainly to be consider'd, that, by putting a Stop to the present Inundation of *Brandy*, We shall cut off a very large Supply of ready Money from Hence; which is not only lost to Our Selves, but by which a Neighbouring Nation, whose Interests have been always thought incompatible with Ours, is enrich'd. Nor is it a Matter of small Moment, that Every Landed Gentleman in the Kingdom would reap the Benefit of such wise and provident Measures: When their Tenants shall be enabled to pay their Rents duly, and without Complaint; from a more plentiful Circulation of Money

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Money among Them, as well as a much greater Consumption of their *Barley and Hops*, by a more general Use of the stronger Sorts of *Beer*, which have been, in a great measure, laid aside, since the late prevailing Fondness for *Brandy*, either by itself, or in that pernicious Mixture call'd *Punch*: Or, if the same Fondness for such a Mixture should still continue, it will be much more wholsom and agreeable, when prepar'd with the soft and oily Spirit distill'd from *Sugar*, and the Benefit of our Plantations thereby promoted.

I might mention another smaller Instance of the wrong Policy in loading

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ing any One Branch of Our Trade with an higher Duty than what the Nature of it can reasonably support. If the late Impost, of One Shilling *per* Pound, on the Juice of *Spanish Liquorice* imported, was design'd as a Prohibition, it is certain that the End was not at all answer'd thereby; since there has been a continued Supply from thence: And it is equally certain, that None has been brought hither, since that Time, but by clandestine Management; and the Duty has been wholly lost to the King: Whereas, if it had been settl'd at Three Pence *per* Pound (which is full as much as that cheap Commodity can bear) such fraudulent Practice would unquestionably have been prevented,

(17)

prevented, proper Entries constantly made, and the Duty regularly and cheerfully paid. I might also add a further Specimen of the great Advantages to such a Trading Nation as Ours, together with the certain Improvement of the Royal Revenue, from moderate Imposts on Foreign Goods imported; by shewing that formerly, whilst the Duty on Our *Spices*, viz. *Mace*, *Nutmegs*, *Pepper*, &c. was extravagantly high, They turn'd to very little Account, either to the Merchants or the Government; by reason of the large Quantities which were run, by Stealth, into most of Our Sea Port Towns, and privately convey'd from thence:

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And that, upon the prudent Reduction of those Duties to less than One Half, the Amount of the Customs, for Them, has been more than doubled. Nor is there any Room to doubt but that it would be the same, in Case of *Tea*, &c; beside the certain Remedy of that Grand Evil before mentioned. If the Duty on *Rhubarb* was but Two Shillings *per* Pound, instead of Four, it would, doubtless, bring in more Money to the Government, than it does at present; and as it would probably prevent the running of those great Quantities which is constantly practis'd. This will ever be the Case, upon the like Occasions; and the Fair Way of Trading will always suffer a proportionable

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Discouragement and Diminution, according to the Exorbitant Duties wherewith it is incumbered. Our Merchants, for the Sake of so large a Drawback, will be often oblig'd, after Entry, to ship off a great Part of their imported Goods, to other Trading Countties; where, from the Lowness of their Imposts, They can dispose of Them to better Advantage than at Home. To such Moderation and good Policy, the Flourishing State of Trade in *Holland*, and that *Hamburgh*, *Genoa*, *Leghorn*, &c. may be rationally imputed: And the further Declension of it, with Us, will be but a natural Consequence of the contrary Measures.

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It was, doubtless, expected that the Additional Penny for the Postage of Letters would have proportionably advanced the Yearly Amount of that larger and noble Income; but the Event has prov'd quite the contrary. For it is well known, that this standing Revenue of the Crown, ever since that Addition commenc'd, has been about Ten Thousand Pounds *per Annum* less than it was before, whilst it remain'd upon the Old Foot of Two Pence only. This suppos'd Expedient for raising a much larger Sum, very probably put a great Number of Persons upon sending many of their Letters by private Hands, or procuring more *Franks* than They had formerly

formerly due, or, perhaps, not writing so often, upon slight and trivial Occasions. For a Close to these Brief Remarks, give me Leave, *Sir*, to touch a little upon that Grand and important Article of Trade, *Our Woollen Manufacture*: You know very well, to what an Height, in improving, enlarging, and carrying on that advantageous Branch of Commerce, a Neighbouring Kingdom is arriv'd; and with what Art and Industry They have already too successfully endeavour'd to supplant our *Spanish* and *Turky* Merchants, in the Foreign Markets which were wont to be almost entirely supply'd by Them.

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You know likewise, that these powerful Rivals can do Nothing comparatively, to Our Detriment, without a constant Supply of *Wool* from the Kingdom of *Ireland*; where They ingross, in a manner, the Half of the Growth to Themselves. Certainly then, it is a Point of great Importance, and highly deserving the Care and Wisdom of the Legislature, to cut off, by a timely Interposition, that most necessary Supply. And, as this End cannot, in Reason and Justice, be obtain'd, without allowing that Kingdom an Equivalent for the present Advantages accruing to Them by such a Foreign Sale of their *Wool*; the only proper and equitable, as well as effectual Expedient would

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be, to fix a Legal Method for Our taking off a good Part of it, at the current Price; and likewise to settle and encourage a Woollen Manufacture among Them; whereby a great Number of useless Hands would be employ'd, for the more comfortable Subsistence of their Poor, and the common Benefit of the Publick. Such a mutual Agreement and Assistance between the Two Nations, would, in a short Time, surmount all the present Inconveniences which can be alledg'd, and produce very great Advantages to Both; by bringing back that valuable Branch of Trade into its ancient Channel, and fixing it entirely among Our Selves. Nor would it be reasonable for any One to envy that

(24)

that Kingdom, and Shares in such Improvement of their own Product, under such Limitations as will be put into the Hands of Our *English* Merchants; if it be duly consider'd, that a very great Part of the common People there, tho' well affected to Our Happy Constitution and Government, have long felt the heavy Pressure of Poverty and Want, and not a Few of Them have been constrain'd to seek their Bread in Other Countries: And, especially, if it be consider'd, that whatsoever tends to the Encouragement and Prosperity of that Dependent Kingdom, would be infinitely more to Our Advantage, and every way more conducive to Our common Strength and Safety, than to

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suffer any longer a Foreign Power, which We ought always to guard against, with a suitable Care, to draw from thence the Means of becoming more rich and formidable to its Neighbour.

AND now, Good Sir, give me Leave to express, in general Terms, a compassionate Concern at a very great and growing Evil among Our Selves; without presuming to anticipate the Wisdom and Judgment of the Legislature, by proposing any particular Way or Method of Redress. 'Tis certainly very much to be wish'd by Every One, who has a true Sense of Humanity, and the general Welfare of Mankind, that, after the Example of a very industrious

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dustrious and provident Neighbouring *Commonwealth*, Some proper and adequate Means might be found out, for employing and maintaining the vast Swarms of vagrant and starving Persons, dispers'd over all Parts, and into every Corner of the Kingdom: And that, instead of being a miserable Burden to the Public, and very many of Them perishing, thro' Want of the Necessaries of Life, They may rather become useful to the Community. Proper and wholsom Endeavours for obtaining so good and charitable a Design, are certainly not impracticable: And if there appeared an hearty Disposition towards it, in Those to Whom the framing of Our Laws, and the Supreme Care of

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the Public Safety is committed, it would not be very difficult for some Men, of good Thought, and of a Public Spirit, to draw up a rational Scheme, which might, in a great measure, answer that desirable End. And the Consequence of it would not only redound to the immortal Honour of the Projectors, but be attended with this further Advantage, of contributing more effectually to lessen the prodigious Number of Robberies, both in the City and Countrey, than all the united Terrors of the Law.

BUT, to resume the proper Drift of my *Letter*: I beg Leave only to add, That, as *Trade* is the chief Sup-

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port, and, as it were, the Vital Spring of Wealth, Activity and Chearfulness to this Nation; as the Splendor of the Crown, the Grandeur of the Nobility, and the Riches both of the inferior Gentry and Commonalty essentially depend upon it: So, whilst it is assisted with all necessary Encouragement, and appears to be in a Flourishing State, We shall, with great Alacrity and Willingness, bear up under all other Kinds of Difficulty, which may arise from the Public Emergencies, or in any wise relate to the Honour, Interests and Safety of the Kingdom. But if We should ever be so unhappy as to see any great or lasting Obstruction to this main Source of Our Prosperity, the

(29)

the sad Effects of it would be soon felt by all Ranks and Degrees of Men among Us: The Landed Interest, as well as the Government Stocks, would suffer a proportionable Declension; and a general growing Poverty, after a long Course of great Plenty and Affluence, would, in Time, render Us as weak and helpless as Other remote Countries, who know little or Nothing of the great Benefits and Advantages of Commerce.

You see, *Sir*, I have, in these Few Hints, express'd my Thoughts with such Freedom and Plainness as becomes a Friend and an Englishman; purposely omitting (lest I should trespass too much on Your Patience) Some other

(30)

other Instances, relating to Trade, which might also deserve to be consider'd by so Worthy and Dutiful an *House of Commons*, no less firmly attach'd to the true Welfare and Prosperity of the Nation, than to the Security of Our Happy Establishment, and of the present Administration, against the utmost Efforts of popular Clamor, Faction and groundless Prejudice. As You have steadily shewn Your Self an active and useful Member of that Honourable *House*, I should be very glad if what I have, with great Sincerity, suggested, might induce You to move for a Redress of any of Those Inconveniences before mention'd (But, more especially, of that detestable and most pernicious Practice

(31)

Practice of *Smuggling*); or, at least, to confer with Some Other Members, on those particular Subjects, if You judge Them to be of sufficient Weight to deserve Your Consideration.

I AM, *Sir*, with the truest Esteem, and with all becoming Acknowledgments,

Your very Humble and

Obedient Servant.



Erratum : P. 21. l. 1. for due, r. done

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