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THREE  
LETTERS  
UPON THE  
Subject of the GIN ACT,  
AND  
COMMON INFORMERS.

I. --- From a Citizen of *London* to a Freeholder in the County of *Norfolk* concerning Informers in general-- particularly, the present Practice of those People, in which is consider'd the Method of Trials upon Penal-Laws, as well in a Summary Way as that by Juries.--- with the Substance of the Trials of some Citizens of *London*, at *Guildhall* in *December* last, for an Assault upon a COMMON INFORMER.

occasioned by the Outrages committed in putting the Law in Execution, for suppressing the pernicious Custom of retailing Spirituous Liquors.

II. --- From *A. B. Esq;* to the good Citizens of *London*.

III. --- Answer to the said Letter, wherein the Citizens of *London* and the Company of Distillers, are defended from the Reflections cast on them in the said *A. B's* Letter, with a Postscript, in Relation to two Paragraphs, the one published in the *London*, and the other in the *General Evening Posts*.

To which is added,

A LETTER in respect to the LIGHTS in *London*, and the PRESENT DARKNESS of *Westminster*.

--- Oft we imagine all Things well,  
When Death and Danger tread upon our Heel.  
*Hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane Caveto.*

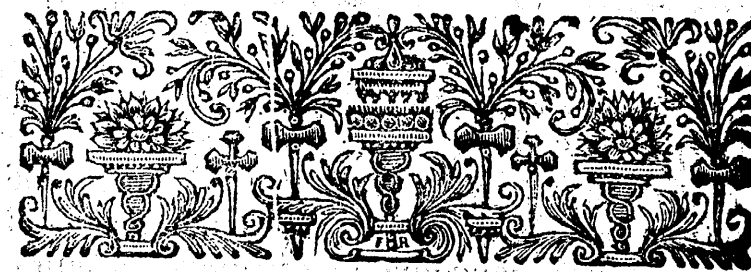
Hor.

L O N D O N :

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*Manuscript*



London, January 2, 1738.

S I R,

**A**S I know you to be a Gentleman of Speculation, and by your last Letter, seem desirous to be informed of the Condition of this large City since you left us, I shall proceed no farther at present to entertain you than what is the general Topick of Discourse here, I mean that of the GIN ACT — I remember you have often observed, “ that where pecuniary Rewards are offered for Discovery of Offenders against Penal Laws, it generally raises up (for their own Gain) a Set of Creatures known by the Infamous Name of COMMON INFORMERS” — which Observation is certainly just, and has in no Instance so fully appeared, as since the passing that well intended Law for restraining the excessive Drinking of Spirituous Liquors — Sometimes we find the News-Papers filled with Accounts of Persons convicted of transgressing against the GIN ACT, at other Times we find the same Papers stuffed with the ill Treatment these Penal Law Evidences for Gain have met with from the Populace, which I do not doubt you agree with me, are

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equally

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equally shocking to every considerate and faithful Subject.

The Truth is, a very great Number of Persons have been accused of offending against the Gin Act, whereby it has drawn a numberless Set of People of all Denominations to the *Excise-Office*; though I am concerned in no Branch of Trade or Business that subjects me to the *Excise Laws*, yet my Curiosity among others led me to observe, the Method of Trials in a Summary Way, as well in that Place as before *Justices of the Peace*, which does not become me to condemn, in regard there are Laws to justify their Proceedings, but I hope it will be no Offence to say, if the present *Race of Informers* are not honest than those in *Henry the 7th's* Time (which is much suspected) a Man stands but an ill Chance, that is liable to be convicted upon the Evidence of one of these mercenary Wretches, it being almost impossible to falsify such Evidence, in Regard (as I am informed) the Party accused has no Copy of the Charge delivered to him, nor knows not from whence the Accusation arises, till the Informer is produced at his Trial.

Indeed upon a Conviction in a Summary Way his Majesty's Subjects have this Consolation, that their Judges are Gentlemen remarkable not only for Humanity, but for their perfect Knowledge of the *PENAL LAWS*, and who are ready to re-consider the Case of the Party convicted, and even to mitigate

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mitigate the Penalty, where the Offender, or the supposed Offender, deserves Compassion.

It certainly becomes all wise Governments to see the Laws duly observed, and to punish where the Offence requires it, but in the midst of Justice, Mercy accompanies the virtuous and good Magistrate.

'Tis agreed the lower Class of People, have taken upon them to express their Dissatisfaction, against *common Informers* upon the Gin Act, and therefore in order to prevent Riots and Tumults, and to bring Offenders to justice, it has been thought requisite "to offer a Reward of 50*l.* to such as would discover any one that should presume to attack any Officer or other Person concern'd in detecting Retailers of Spirituous Liquors."

Soon after this Advertisement one of the Women Informers who had been ill-used by the Mob, took it in her Head to indict some of my Fellow-Citizens (Shop-keepers, and ancient Inhabitants within this City) for an Assault and Riot; in *December* last they were brought to their Trials, at *Guildhall*, the Informer swore positively against the Defendants; — her Evidence was answered, by Persons of undoubted Credit and Reputation, who swore there was no Assault or Riot on the Day, or in the Place charged on the Side of the Prosecution, but says the Defendant's Evidence, two Days before the Time mentioned by the Informer, a Disturbance arose

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in their Neighbourhood, but as to the Prisoners they were far from aiding or joining with the Mob, that the Part they acted, was only gently to remove the Informer from their Shops in order to preserve their Persons and Goods, from being hurt, broke, and tore to Pieces, through the Fury of an enraged Populace. It was asked on the *Trial* whether the Prisoners were Lovers of Gin, this Question was answered in the Negative, and particularly on the Behalf of one of the Prisoners it was proved "that he was so far from loving Gin, that the Evidence said he had known him 16 Years; and who was so greatly reserved that he scarcely allowed himself a Pint of Beer, or wherewithal to keep Life and Soul together," so that after a full Trial, the Prisoners were honourably acquitted, and the Informer disappointed of the Reward. — This besides innumerable other Instances, shews the Excellency of our Constitution, and how preferable the *trying Men by Juries* are to that of a *Summary Way*, notwithstanding the Justice and Goodness of the *present Commissioners of the Excise*.

I do not from what I have said, or shall say of mercenary Informers, presume so far as to insinuate that a Man where he knows any Thing carrying on against either the Honour, the Dignity, or the Interest of his Sovereign, or against the Tranquility, Trade, or Safety of his Country; that he ought to be deterred from giving an immediate or proper

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proper Information of it to the Government. On the contrary, I say, I think a Person is bound by the Laws of God, and the Realm, by the Laws of Nature and civil Society, to discover such Practices, and I don't doubt, but every Man of Honour and Virtue, will commend him when he does it through a Sense of Duty.

But a common Informer upon penal Statutes, for Lucre, and who likely induced the Party by a Stratagem to commit the Offence, is of another Mould, and as such finely described in the *TRUE BRITON*.

" There are (says that great Author)  
 " many pernicious Creatures, that seem as if  
 " were to be Born to be professed Enemies,  
 " to the Repose of all the World; of all those  
 " obnoxious Animals, who make to them-  
 " selves an execrable Livelihood, by disturb-  
 " ing the Peace and Quiet of human Society,  
 " there is not any so fatally Mischievous,  
 " and so frightfully Dangerous, as that  
 " Wretch who makes Use of all the proper  
 " Artifices, which intitle him to the Name,  
 " of a *common Informer*."

" The main Delight and Pleasure which  
 " he takes, consists in distributing about him,  
 " the Seeds of Strife, Discord, and Confu-  
 " sion, in scattering as much Pain and Tor-  
 " ment as he possibly can, among all with  
 " whom he converses. The poor good Man  
 " that is frail in his Notions of Things, that  
 " is, weak of Understanding, but truly ho-  
 " nest

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“ nest in the Disposition of his Heart, that is  
“ open, sincere, and Righteous in his Desires,  
“ but perhaps a little imprudent in his Con-  
“ duct, such an innocent Man, (who has all  
“ the Right in the World to the Instruction  
“ and Assistance of every faithful Companion  
“ in Life, that is blessed with superior Ta-  
“ lents) is the very Person whom the faith-  
“ less and perfidious Informer, takes an in-  
“ human Satisfaction, to beset and betray,  
“ and he is, if considered, in this Light, as  
“ dangerous with Regard to others, as he is  
“ deformed with Regard to himself.

“ If we consider him with Regard to him-  
“ self, we shall be apt to deplore and bewail  
“ the weak and lamentable Condition, of  
“ Man's Nature, that it should ever be ca-  
“ pable of falling so despicably low, that  
“ it should ever be unhappily liable to such  
“ monstrous Corruptions, as are the daily  
“ Practices and hourly Pursuits of this sort,  
“ of Miscreant; of this two Legged Beast  
“ of Prey, an *Informer*, is the very worst  
“ Child of Perdition, he is an Abstract of  
“ Mischief in its most frightful Shape, the  
“ most hideous Peice of Deformity, the most  
“ ugly Prodigy that Nature, in her utmost  
“ State of Depravity can possibly produce.

“ Such a Man surely can never be said  
“ to enjoy Life himself, let him make what  
“ Advantage he will, who is thus eternally  
“ breaking the Rest and disturbing the En-  
“ joyments of his Fellow-Creatures, he must

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“ at some deliberate Hours, let him be as  
“ hardened as he will, be painted with the  
“ severest Remorse that he is the Terrifier  
“ and Tormenter of honest and virtuous Men,  
“ and the Abomination of that GREAT  
“ BEING, who superintends over all human  
“ Affairs, and sees the Secrets of all Hearts,  
“ in this View he can look upon himself as  
“ no better than an incarnate *Demon*, that  
“ gratifies the most hellish and cruel Appe-  
“ tites, in leading well-meaning Men into  
“ Temptation, and in beholding them suffer,  
“ for the very Crimes of which he knows  
“ himself to have been the Main Spring,  
“ the Master Engine, and the Original Au-  
“ thor.”

Even those great Societies, which have  
made such a Noise in the World, in Respect  
to their Attempts for the reforming the Man-  
ners of the wicked and disorderly, have testi-  
fied by a publick Advertisement their Detesta-  
tion against *common Informers* for Lucre, in  
these Words.

“ The Societies for the Reformation of  
“ Manners, think themselves obliged to ac-  
“ quaint the Publick, that they have all a-  
“ long insisted upon it, that those who give  
“ Informations, against Vice and Prophan-  
“ eities, should never receive any Part of  
“ that Penalty that the Law allows the *In-*  
“ *former*, and it is not come to their Know-  
“ ledge, that any such Person hath acted  
“ contrary to such Orders; It is allowed  
“ there

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“ there have been some base and wicked Per-  
 “ sons, not engaged or in the least concerned  
 “ in the said Societies, who have extorted  
 “ Money from Offenders, and sometimes  
 “ from honest Men, but all such Practices  
 “ are detested by the said Societies, who,  
 “ 'tis well known, have truly enquired  
 “ after such infamous Persons, and when  
 “ discovered, have brought them to Punish-  
 “ ment.—

—“ However, if at any Time here-  
 “ after, (says those Gentlemen) it should  
 “ happen that any Person or Persons, con-  
 “ cerned with the Societies, should be charge-  
 “ able with any of the evil Practices aforemen-  
 “ tioned, or even in taking the Reward  
 “ which the Law allows, then it is humbly  
 “ requested that they will give Notice thereof  
 “ to any of the said Societies.

I remember when the Act commonly cal-  
 led the POTT-ACT, first passed, several Fel-  
 lows went up and down this Capital, to in-  
 form against honest Victuallers, in a very short  
 Time they commenced a great Number of  
 Suits, and took upon themselves to compound  
 and end them at their Pleasure, so that they  
 seemed to be in a fair Way of making a fine  
 Penny of the poor Victuallers; but one of  
 them happened to be stopped in his Career,  
 by an honest Victualler, (who knew some-  
 thing of the Law in Relation to *Informers*.)  
 In fine, he was indicted for offending against  
 the

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the Statute, † made against *common Informers*  
 in Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, whereof the  
 Person was convicted, but by some Mistake  
 in the Indictment, Sentence was not passed  
 on him, by which he escaped the just Reward  
 due to his Demerits; but however it had this  
 good Effect, that the poor Victuallers were  
 rid of being further pestered by this Set of  
*Two-Legg'd-Wolves*.

The News-Papers have at Times furnished  
 us with Instances with respect to the Steps  
 our different Informers upon the Gin Act  
 have taken to entice his Majesty's Subjects to  
 offend against the Law, and then to inform;  
 and therefore, further to shew that the Obser-  
 vation before-mentioned is just, it will not be  
 amiss to lay one of those Accounts before  
 you, which I shall take from the *Daily Ad-  
 vertiser*, who gives us the following divert-  
 ing Relation from *Bristol*:

“ A Man that intended to inform against  
 “ a Woman, that used to sell Spirituous  
 “ Liquors, went to her, and desired a  
 “ Quartern of Gin for his Wife, who he  
 “ told her was very Sick; the Woman be-  
 “ ing apprehensive of his Design, put a

† Statute 18. *Eliz. Chap. I.*  
 V. No Informer shall compound with the Defendant  
 before Answer, nor then, but by the Consent of the Court,  
 in Pain of 10*l.* and the Pillory.

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“ sign,

“ Quartern of Vinegar into the Bottle,  
 “ which he carry'd to a Justice in that  
 “ City, upon examining the Bottle, found  
 “ what it was, and told him he could  
 “ do nothing in it, but he must bring it  
 “ before the Justices at the Sessions, which  
 “ he did, and for the Affront he put upon  
 “ the Court, was ordered to be set in the  
 “ Stocks; while he was there, the Mob  
 “ brought a Pitch-Kettle, pitched him all  
 “ over, and afterwards rolled him in Feathers,  
 “ by which Means he made a most Grottesque  
 “ Figure.”

The *London-Evening-Post* has given us a particular Account of the Success that one of the *Excise* Officers had met with in his Trade of informing in this singular Manner.

“ We hear that a very vigilant superior  
 “ Officer of the Excise in *Southwark*, has  
 “ been instrumental in convicting to the Num-  
 “ ber of Ninety-six Persons, for Offences  
 “ within the Meaning of the late Act against  
 “ retailing Spirituous Liquors, in less Quan-  
 “ tities than two Gallons, whereby at 5*l.*  
 “ Penalty for each Person, his Share will  
 “ amount to 480*l.* a fine Sum raised out of the  
 “ Ruins of several poor Families.” In the same  
 Paper, (*Thursday January the 7th, 1738,*) we find the following Paragraph: *On Friday last one Green went to two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Surry, to convict a House-Keeper in that County, for selling Spirituous Liquors con-*  
*trary*

*trary to the late Act; but hesitating about the Name and Parish, and otherwise giving the Justices Occasion to suspect him, he confessed upon Examination, he was employed by one whom he called his Partner to get Money by informing, and that he had continued so to do ever since the Act was in Force; upon Enquiry after his Partner, he was found waiting at the Door, and being examined, said he was an Excise Officer. The Business of informing seems almost at an End, for the Informers are such despicable Fellows, that make a Trade of it, that the Justices do not care to take their Informations.*

The *Craftsman*, in his Paper of the 3d of December last, very judiciously observes, *That it was thought necessary to restrain the Practices of common Informers, in the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth, and King James the first: It is certainly (says this Gentleman) expedient at present, when Penal-Laws are multiplied and extended to such a Degree, that our Streets swarm with mercenary Informers, and our Prisons are filled with little miserable Offenders against them, which excites the Compassion of good natured People at Home, and I am afraid gives no Credit to our Country Abroad.*

*It is a Dispute among the judicious Part of Mankind, whether penal Statutes with pecuniary Rewards are really beneficial to the Publick, and do not rather increase the Evil*  
 C 2 which

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which they are designed to prevent; but however necessary they may be in Cases of Extremity, against desperate Gangs of Thieves, Robbers, and Murthurers; I must beg Leave to give my Opinion, they ought not to be made general and extended to petty Offences, where the Interest and Safety of the Commonwealth are not immediately concerned.

'Tis no doubt the Business and Duty of Parliament, to suppress not only Vice and Immorality, as far as it lies in their Power; but every Thing they apprehend Prejudicial to Publick Good: for this Reason, we had several Laws against costly Apparel, Diet, and Building, which are certainly of this Kind, but they were found to be attended with so many Inconveniencies, by encouraging Perjury and Vexatious Prosecutions, that they are either expired or repealed; and though we are obliged to confess, that all our present Penal-Laws, were wisely and justly designed upon particular Emergencies, yet if they should be rigidly executed, we must intirely cease to be a free People.

A very great Man has observed, That the most flourishing Nations and Commonwealths, have longest preserved their Power and Authority both at Home and Abroad, where the Penal-Laws are not generally, and for every slight Offence, put in Execution, those Laws ought to stand only as Land-marks, to forewarn the disorderly from being guilty of Excesses,

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cesses, and not to be made Use of but in Cases of Necessity.— That great Statesman, the late Lord SHAFTSBURY, was pleased publickly to advise Mr. Serjeant THURLAND, (upon his being made a Baron of the Exchequer) against suffering the raking after old Debts, in this elegant Manner.

\* Let me recommend to you, so to manage the King's Justice and Revenue, as the King may have most Profit, and the Subject least Vexation. Raking for old Debts, the Number of Informations, Projects, upon Concealments, I could not find in the eleven Years Experience I have had in this Court, ever to advantage the Crown, but such Proceedings have for the most Part, delivered up the King's good Subjects into the Hands of the WORST OF MEN.

'Tis to be wished, that where Men in Offices encourage merciless Proceedings upon old or new Forfeitures, they would be so good as to hang up in their Closets, the Pictures of those famous Penal-Law-Men, EMPSON and DUDLET, which may before it's too late, Caution them from overacting their Parts, especially when these PLACE-MEN remember that the Names of the latter will stand infamous upon Record, as long as the British Annals remain.

\* Vide the Speech in the Appendix to the Lives of the Lord Chancellors.

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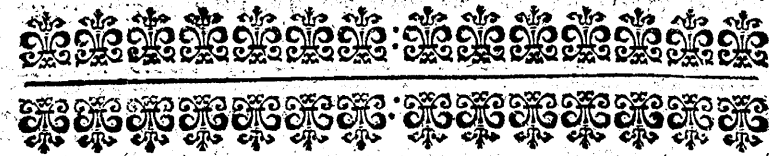


Many thousand of his Majesty's good Subjects, with the Legislature would find out some Method, to hinder the People from immoderately drinking Spirituous Liquors, without the Aid of mercenary Informers.—  
 As the Case now stands, the Evil is rather increased than cured: The Trade of the *British* Distillery, being turned out of the Hands of such, which the Law intended should enjoy it, into those, of the meanest of the People, which has, as 'tis believed, been the Occasion of the many Tumults and Disorders complain'd of. In short, some mean Persons have first set up selling Spirituous Liquors, in Defiance of the Law, and when they found informing more beneficial, they quitted one Employment, to take up the other, which has been the Means of filling our Prisons with little miserable Offenders.—Here I break off, and am,

S I R,

*Your Humble Servant.*

The



The two following LETTERS were published in *October* last; the one in the *Daily-Advertiser*, and the other in the *Grub-street-Journal*, upon the Subject of the GIN-ACT.

To the AUTHOR, &c.

S I R,

AS your Papers are generally read, and most esteem'd for their Correctness and Attachment to Truth, I choose to desire this, and some following Letters upon the same Subject, may have room in them.

*From your constant Reader,*

A. B.

*A Let-*

I. A LETTER to the Good Citizens of London, occasioned by the late Outrages committed in putting that wholesome Law in Execution for suppressing the pernicious Custom of Retailing Spirituous Liquors.

S I R S,

IT is the Happiness of the People of England, that no Laws can be made, or alter'd, but by their Consent, and the Execution of those Laws, as far as relates to Civil Matters, is in their own Hands: No Man can be tried or condemned without a Jury of his Countrymen and his Equals, upon their Oaths, finding him guilty, and his Sentence cannot be pronounced but by a Judge learned in the Laws, and who cannot be displaced from that Office unless he has misbehav'd in it.

Every Englishman is concern'd in preserving this Constitution. The Support and Execution of the Laws is in the People of Substance and Character, and it is the Duty and Interest of all Men that have any Abodes or Substance to support the Execution of the Whole against lawless and disorderly People; upon it the Safety of what they have, and even of their Lives and Families depend. It is the Duty of those of a superior Degree to act vigorously, as Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace,

Peace, and Grand Jurymen, with a conscientious Regard to their Oaths. The Offices of Constable, Tything-Men; &c. is the Duty of the honest House-keeper; and if they do not exert a little Zeal and Publick Spirit in executing these Offices, the whole must run into Confusion, and Robberies and Murders be more common than they are in the Streets and HighRoads, and the very Houses not be safe from Violence.

I should not have troubled you at this Time, but that I saw the Constitution trampled under Foot by the basest Wretches; I mean the Hirelings of Men concerned in a certain Trade: They, in Defiance to all the Laws and Liberties of Free-born Englishmen, which exempt them from all Punishment except by legal Trials, have taken to themselves, in the publick Streets of London, in the open Day, to punish Men for doing their Duties, and for obeying the Laws; and they glory in these Outrages, and publish them in the News-Papers by Way of Triumph, and to deter others from conforming to the Laws.

The Good People of England saw, with Grief, the Devastation that was made by the Increase of Spirituous Liquors, and that the drinking of them had well nigh destroyed the Industry, Morals and Lives of this Generation, and would certainly greatly injure the Health, Strength and Happiness of the next\*.

\* See this demonstrated in a Pamphlet, address'd to both Houses of Parliament, entitled, *Distill'd Spirituous Liquors the Bane of the Nation.* Printed for J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane.

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A true publick Spirit arose : Gentlemen of all Characters strove which should most express their Detestation of it. The Parliament pass'd a salutary Law, laying such a Duty upon Spirits, as, if comply'd with, would make them too dear to be drank to Excess, and yet not too dear to be used in Medicines.

All Arts were tried by those concern'd in the Trade to prevent the passing this Bill ; but their Endeavours were vain, the Honour and Good Sense of the Members which compos'd both Houses, and the unbyass'd Integrity of a disinterested and honourable Patriot, made all their little Arts of Corruption and Sophistry vain.

Those in the Administration, the Country Gentlemen, Gentlemen of the Long Robe, the Citizens, the Physicians, Officers of the Army and Fleet, were all, at length, appriz'd of the Mischiefs arising from this growing Enormity ; all Parties united to save the Kingdom from Destruction ; and the Act pass'd.

The Trade finding they could not byass the Legislature, resolv'd to erect a new one, and to punish more severely those who conform to the Act of Parliament, than the Law does those who act in Defiance of it. For this Purpose certain Wretches, intoxicated with these Liquors, set upon those Persons who would save the Nation from the Venders of this Poison, by convicting of the Criminals : They assume a kind of Judicature, try, and drag about the Streets, and even murder any whom they are pleas'd to call *Informers*. I have

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have room, at present, but to relate at large one Piece of Cruelty mention'd in all the Papers.

*August 20, 1737.* " Yesterday a Man inform'd against a Woman for selling Gin, and she was carried before Sir *William Billers*, who committed her to *Bridewell* for the same : The Man escap'd the Vengeance of the Mob, but his Wife they seiz'd upon, and pelted her with all manner of Filth, and rolled her in the Channel : Then they forc'd her to the *Swan and two Necks* in *Lad-Lane* to pump her, but the People of the Inn shut the Gates against them : Then they drove her to *Blossoms-Inn*, but the Yard was so full of Waggons that they could not do it there ; at last they carried her to *Guildhall-Pump*, where they pump'd her for a long while ; from whence she escap'd their Fury into *Guildhall-Porch*, where an honest Common-Council-Man got her into a Gentleman's House near *Guildhall*, and saved her from the Mob, who would else have, in all Probability, murder'd her. It's remarkable that she begg'd for Mercy and Protection from the Shopkeepers, &c. all the Way they dragged her and pelted her, but Nobody shew'd her any Compassion 'till the above good-natur'd Gentleman rescued her."

Numberless other Outrages are daily committed upon the Bodies, and even the Lives of the Officers whose Duty it is to put this Law in Execution ; and they often insert them in a triumphant Manner in the News-Papers to frighten Men from obeying, and to shew how

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little dangerous it is to disobey the Laws. They would fain have it believ'd, that it is the whole People of *England* that dislike this salutary Law; whereas it is only a few of the Wretches who liv'd by selling Destruction to their Fellow-Creatures; and join'd with other Hirelings, who begin these Insults; then the People assemble and stare with Consternation, and that Crowd they would have believed to be Assistants, whereas they only gaze as idle Spectators, and the Generality disapprove of the Action, but dare not shew it for Fear those outrageous drunken Wretches should fall upon them. It is therefore Time for every Justice of Peace, Constable, &c. and every honest and good Inhabitant, to come forth and prevent such Outrages in the Streets: If they are allow'd to encrease, none will in a short Time be safe in their Houses.

Let us see the Example in another Part of the Kingdom. The low Mob being suffer'd to stone the Executioner, they grew so insolent as to end in a regular and unheard-of Murder, by executing an Officer of Justice on the publick Gallows, for which the City itself was fin'd and the innocent House-keepers obliged to pay for not suppressing the Rioters. If these People are allowed to go on any longer with Impunity, what Mischief may not Men mad with intoxicating Liquors do? It is but crying out, an *Informer!* and no Man is safe, for there is no Trial whether he is so or not.

They have lately threaten'd to pull down the House of a very worthy Justice of Peace, whose indefa-

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indefatigable Labours in detecting of Thieves and Retailers of Spirits, have expos'd him to their Resentment; which honest and worthy Behaviour, as it draws on the Hatred of the Wicked, will not only secure the just Applauses of the honest Part of Mankind, but also, as it is hop'd, meet with suitable Reward, Encouragement and Support.

I make no Apology for the length of this Letter, less could not be said upon such an important Occasion.

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A LETTER to good Mr. A. B. occasioned by his LETTER to the good Citizens of London, concerning the putting the Law in Execution for suppressing the pernicious Custom of retailing Spirituous Liquors.

S I R,

I DO admit, that "it is the Happiness of  
" the People of *England*, that no Law  
" can be made or altered, without their Con-  
" sent." But, Sir, there have been several  
*Laws made*, that the Generality of the *Peo-  
ple* without Doors have highly complained  
against, and the same have not passed even  
within Doors without great Opposition.—  
I can't agree with you, that always " the  
" Execution of the Laws, as far as relates to  
" civil Matters, is in the Hands of the Peo-  
" ple; or that no Man can be tryed or con-  
" demned

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“ demned without a Jury of his Country-  
 “ men and his Equals, upon their Oaths,  
 “ finding him guilty; or that his Sentence  
 “ cannot be pronounced by any other than a  
 “ Judge learned in the Law;’ unless you  
 mean, that the worthy and honourable Gen-  
 tlemen, the *Commissioners* of the *Excise*, are  
 both the one and the other.

I agree with you, that ‘ every *English-*  
 “ *man* is concerned in preserving this Con-  
 “ stitution:’ but how far a Man is concerned  
 in putting in Execution every Penal-Law, I  
 shall not take upon me to say.— Only I  
 would remind you, that *EMPSON* and  
*DUDLEY* in *HENRY VIIIth’s* Time,  
 were famous for putting the Penal Laws in  
 Execution, and for retaining a Parcel of In-  
 formers in their Service, and also for erecting  
 a private Jurisdiction, and condemning Men  
 in their Houses, without trying them by  
 Juries. In *HENRY VIIIth’s* Reign, they  
 justly met with their Reward, (by losing their  
 Heads.) As for their Men, in those Days cal-  
 led *Promoters*, now known by the Name of  
*Informers*, they were set in the Pillory, and  
 afterwards died of Shame in *Newgate*. Yet  
*EMPSON* though he, with his *FELLOW*, lost  
 their Lives with the universal Consent of  
 the Nation, told the Lords of the Council,  
 upon their first being taken up, ‘ That the  
 “ Accusation against them was of a new and  
 “ strange Nature, that usually Men were  
 “ prosecuted for acting against the Laws, or  
 “ disobeying their Sovereign’s Command;  
 “ but

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“ but for their Part they were accused by the  
 “ People for *executing the Laws*, of which  
 “ they themselves were the Authors.”

I pass over the Trouble that *the good Peo-*  
*pel of England* was under, through the In-  
 crease of Spirituous Liquors. For myself, I  
 am one of those that never was any great  
 Lover of such Liquors: It is true, I am some-  
 times willing to take a chearful Dram of good  
*Nantz* or *Rum* as a Cordial. Being in *Kent*  
 last Week, through the excessive Rains my  
 Spirits were much flagged, as we term it.  
 Then I should have been glad of a Glass  
 (and even your solemn Self, had you been  
 with me, I believe, would have been glad of  
 the like Assistance.) But alas! not one to be  
 had at all the Inns or Apothecaries Shops in  
 the Place where I was; and had it not been  
 for an honest *CHIP*, it’s likely I must have  
 rid twelve Miles through Floods of Water in  
 the highest Pain, before I could obtain what  
 was of exceeding Service to me.

It is none of my Province to enquire into  
 the Motives that induced the Legislature to  
 pass the *GIN ACT* in the Manner it was done.  
 It is sufficient for me and my Fellow Citizens,  
 as *Englishmen*, to submit to it. But I must  
 tell you, Sir, that if a Man goes into any Inn  
 or Coffee-house, and requests the People to  
 assist him with a Dram, under Pretence of  
 being Sick, and leaves Money for the same,  
 and afterwards turns Informer, I consider that  
 Person, as the good People of *England* did the  
*Understrappers* to *EMPSON* and *DUDLEY* in  
*HENRY the VIIIth’s* Time. The

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The Legislature, to be sure, made the Law for the restraining the excessive drinking of Spirituous Liquors with a laudable and good Design; and I agree, that the drinking of those Liquors was got to a very great Height, and called for the Interposition of Parliament, to prevent the same being attended with pernicious Consequences. How far the Law, made for that Purpose, has answered the Intent; or how far the Trade of the *British* Distillery has been turned out of its former Channel, the Publick and the Traders in that Branch are best Judges of.

I am surprized at your unfair Reflection on that Trade, in Relation to their opposing the passing the GIN ACT. You must know then, Sir, what you seem to be ignorant of, that the Distillers Company in *London*, are a very ancient Corporation; and that there are many of them rich, generous, and worthy Citizens; and that they even saw, with Concern, the ill Use that was made of Spirituous Liquors by the common People, and would gladly have restrained the same, had it been in their Power. You likewise forget, Sir, that the *British* Distillery has been thought not unworthy of the Care and Encouragement of a *British* Parliament.

What you mean by the *Arts that were try'd by those concerned in the Trade, to prevent the passing the Bill*, I know not; tho' you seem to be ignorant of the Intention of printing the *Votes*. Was it unfair in the Distillers, when they found a Law going to be made, which

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which they apprehended would hurt their Trade, humbly to remonstrate against it?—No sure—I suppose you was one of those that was angry with me and my Fellow Citizens for opposing the EXCISE SCHEME. Had not a laudable Spirit then rose in the People, I shall not now tell you the Consequences that might have ensued.

The Story you tell of a Parcel of poultry People in the Street, and a beggarly *Informers*, and one *informed against*, I and my Fellow-Citizens have nothing to say to; the Laws having provided in those Cases sufficient Remedies: tho' I believe your solemn self, on that Occasion, would have shut your Door against such Creatures. And I can likewise assure you, that the Distillers in *London* not only disown the Paragraphs in the *News-Papers* you talk of, but also the *hiring* any Person to oppose the *Laws now in being*, they having submitted thereto as becomes good Subjects.

Sir, we have the Honour to have Magistrates in the City of *London*, renowned for asserting *the Cause of Liberty*, and to have a *Recorder*, who adorns the high Stations he sustains in the Law, and who is ready to advise the meanest of my Fellow-Citizens against being unwarily drawn in to act contrary to the Law. Being thus governed, we are under none of those dismal Apprehensions you mention, of falling under the Calamity that lately attended the City of *Edinburg*.

In short, we have no threatning here, even  
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among the meanest of our Citizens, to pull down the Houses of any of our worthy Magistrates, tho' offenders against the *Gin Act*, when found out, are punished: but then our Magistrates consider the Nature of the Offence, and do not always punish with the utmost Rigour—Our Magistrates pass the Streets in Security, and are secure in their Houses; because they have all Honour and Respect shewn by the Citizens of all Denominations suitable to their high Stations.

From what I have said I suppose you will begin to believe, that we, in this City, have no Occasion for your Advice. If Persons at your End of the Town are grown wicked, be so good as to address your next Letter to the Inhabitants of *Westminster*, and the County of *Middlesex*; and no doubt but so learned a Pen as yours, joined with the Assistance of the *Middlesex* Justices of the Peace, either in the Army, or out of it, will reduce the disorderly to Reason—When that is done, I hope there will be no more *threatening to pull down the Houses of any of your worthy Justices*: but that every Man may be good Subjects to a good King, and live peaceably under their Vine, is the hearty Wish of,

S I R,

Your humble Servant,

London, Oct. 3.  
1737.

J. G.

P. S. Soon after the publishing the last mentioned Letter, the following Paragraph appear'd in the *London-Evening-Post* of the 3d of *November* last.

“ Yesterday *Anne Mounckton* and *Samuel Kilburn* were convicted before Col. *de Veil* for selling and exposing to Sale Spirituous Liquors in less Quantity than two Gallons, contrary to the Statute in that Case made and provided; the first of which paid the Penalty to the *Informer*, and to the *Overseer* of the Parish of *St. Clement-Danes*, and the last was committed to *Tothill-Fields-Bridewell*. Several Persons came in the Behalf of the said *Anne Mounckton*, the Colonel being very ill of the Gout, they were admitted up Stairs, amongst whom was a certain Distiller, who behaved in a very audacious insolent Manner, insulting the Justice in the Execution of his Office, and causing a great Disturbance to be made in his House; but the Colonel had him immediately taken into Custody, and he was forced to enter into Recognizances to answer the same at the next General Quarter-Sessions of the Peace. This must be some busy meddling Fellow, who calls himself a Distiller, for the real Distillers abhor the raising or fomenting Disturbances, and patiently submit to the Act, in hopes that in Time their Case may be consider'd, and they reliev'd.

Two Days after the following Answer appear'd in the *General-Evening-Post*.

“ The Person bound over for insulting Col.

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“ *de Veil* in the Execution of his Office, ap-  
 “ pears to be a certain Distiller, notwithstand-  
 “ ing what is insinuated in the *London-Even-*  
 “ *ing-Post* of the 3d Instant; and it is not  
 “ doubted but the Publick will soon be oblig’d  
 “ with some Affidavits relating to a certain  
 “ Magistrate, a real Distiller, by which it will  
 “ appear, that more Distillers than one endea-  
 “ vour to prevent the putting in Execution  
 “ that laudable Statute against *Gin*.

Upon the whole as the Publick has not yet  
 been obliged with the Affidavits relating to a  
 certain Magistrate, (a real Distiller) opposing  
 the *Gin Act*, the regular Distillers in *London*,  
 notwithstanding the said last mentioned Para-  
 graph, are for ought appears to the contrary  
 fully justified from the Reflections cast on them  
 in Mr. *A. B*’s Letter.

Whilst these different Matters were in Con-  
 troversy, the City of *Westminster* proving ex-  
 ceeding dark at Night, occasioned the follow-  
 ing Letter to the Author of the *London-Daily-*  
*Post*.

To the Author of the LONDON-DAILY-POST,  
 S I R,

MANY of my Fellow-Citizens, besides  
 myself, took Notice with Pleasure, soon  
 after the putting in Execution the late Act of  
 Parliament — *For better Enlightening the*  
*Streets of the City of LONDON* — That you  
 rightly censured those who had not justly per-  
 formed their Agreement; on the other Hand,  
 it was observed with like Pleasure, that due  
 Commendations were bestowed on such as had  
 faith-

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faithfully discharg’d their Contracts; those sea-  
 sonable Observations, joined with the Noble  
 Spirit that appeared in our WORTHY MAGIS-  
 TRATES, has had the desired Effect; and dis-  
 appointed particular Private Men from reaping  
 the Benefit of what was intended for Publick  
 Good only. — ’Tis now agreed, no City in  
 the World, at Night, makes so glorious a Fi-  
 gure as that of LONDON, — by that, and the  
 new Act for regulating the Watch, a Man may  
 now (upon his lawful Occasions) walk in Light  
 and Safety from *Aldgate* to *Temple-bar* at any  
 Hour in the Night.

I am led into this Reflection from an Ac-  
 cident I lately escaped — You must know  
 then, Sir, my Affairs in *December* last (a-  
 bout Eight in the Evening) called me from  
*Aldgate* to *Old Palace-Yard*; no sooner did  
 I pass thro’ *Temple-bar*, but I begun to miss  
 the Lights that had so well guided me from  
*Aldgate* to that Place; as I further proceeded by  
 the *Old Palace* in the *Savoy*, it grew worse;  
 still I comforted myself, in hopes when I came  
 to *Whitehall*, I should find Lights on to the  
 Place where I was going to, agreeable to those  
 we have now in this CITY. In this I was great-  
 ly mistaken, for when I came under the Dead  
 Wall (so I call it) near *Whitehall*, I found it  
 yet worse, for there were no Lights at all; in-  
 somuch, that I was in danger of breaking my  
 Legs, by falling over the Poll of a Chair care-  
 lessly set in the Walk; after I recovered my-  
 self, the only Consolation I received from  
 the Chairmen, they told me — *That the Lamps*



on that Side of the Way were in Mourning ; in fact, it was with Difficulty I reached the Lights before the large Gates where that late famous Palace stood.

I wish the learned Gentleman, who did the Citizens of London the Honour of writing the Letter printed in the *Daily Advertiser* of the first of *October* last (in relation to *Informers* and the *Gin Act*) would address one of his *Fine Letters* to some *Great Men* in Power at this End of the Town—That an Act may be obtained for erecting Lights in WESTMINSTER, and the Parts adjacent, upon the Plan of that obtained for this CITY, which may prevent many Murders and Robberies in those Parts ; It being agreed that Rogues generally fly from the Light.— Tho' the *Two Cities* join, the Aspect of the one is far less engaging than the other ; and if *Westminster* is continued in *Darkness*, a new name will be soon found out further to distinguish this celebrated CITY (besides that of her Magistrates, Laws and Customs) from what I have last mentioned, notwithstanding the intended NEW BRIDGE.—By inserting this, you will oblige many, as well, as

London, Jan. 4. 1737. S I R, &c.

N. B. Since the Writing of this Letter we hear the Inhabitants of *Spittlefields* and the Borough of *Southwark* intend to apply to Parliament, in order to get an Act for Enlightening the Streets, in those Parts, upon the Plan of that obtain'd for this City.

F I N I S.