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# EXCISE

ANATOMIZ'D.

DECLARING

That unequal Imposition of Excise to be the only Cause of the Ruin of Trade, the universal Impoverishment, and destructive to the Liberties of the whole Nation.

By Z. G. a Well-wisher of the common Good.

*Rev. ix. 3. And there came out of the Smoak Locusts upon the Earth, and unto them was given Power, as the Scorpions of the Earth have Power.*

*Ver. 10. And they had Tails like unto Scorpions, and there were Stings in their Tails, and their Power was to hurt Men five Months.*

*That this Parliament will, with their ever-honoured Ancestors, annihilate, utterly demolish and eradicate, both the Name and Being, Root and Branch, of that detestable and so often damn'd Imposition of EXCISE, whose Prudence never gave it Time to hatch, but always crush'd it in the very Egg. Vide Page 19.*

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# EXCISE

ANATOMIZ'D,

AND

TRADE Epitomiz'd.



**S**UCH hath been the Happiness of this Nation, that the Constitution of our best Laws (principally the great Charter and Petition of Right) which hath been confirmed by so many succeeding *Kings and Parliaments*, have been always of such Force, that the ancient fundamental Rights, Liberties, and Properties of the People thereof have been ever kept inviolable ; insomuch, that the Fame of this our Freedom hath founded Echoes of Praises amongst all the Nations round about us, they thereby emulating our Happiness, as being that which hath crown'd our Felicity, with the Name of Plenty, and made our Trade the World's Exchange, till of late Years this whole Nation hath, and still doth, lie under such weighty Burthens by *Excise*, and such like

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heavy Impositions, that the Vitals and Life of our Trade so languisheth, that it is almost consumed to nothing; so that whereas all our Expectations were, that so much *Blood* and *Treasure* should not have been spent in vain, but that the enlargement of our *Liberties* should have been indubitably confirmed; yet have we only the Name (in the Place of real *Liberty*) characterised on all our *Miseries* and *Burthens*; having in the Place of Righteousness, a Cry, all the former Hopes of our *Freedom* being eclips'd, and the *little Finger* of our present Condition, (exceeding in Oppression) the *Loins* of those against whom we most exclaimed, and so, consequently, are more deeply plunged and involved into Thralldom than ever, unless this present Parliament, whose Power did first impose it, do now, by the same Prerogative, utterly suppress it, before the continued Custom of it bring it into the Latitude of a perpetuated Law, and so consequently extinguish (with the Being) the Knowledge also of our *Liberties*.

That it is an unparallel'd Oppression, shall be demonstrated by the several Particulars following, *viz.*

*First*, By the disproportionableness and inequality of its Imposition, by laying the greatest Weight and Burthen on the Back of Trade, thereby utterly disheartning the most ingenious and industrious Party: Infomuch, that finding the Stream of the Oppression so strong, and the Gusts so powerful, in an Agony they stand amazed, not knowing how to contract,  
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nor yet maintain the Sails of their Endeavours, least by the one they run on this *Cylla*, or by the other be driven on that *Caribdis*.

*Secondly*, By the Bondage Merchants suffer after by all their Care and Industry, they have hazarded their Estates, and by God's Providence escaped the Danger of the Seas (greater then which was never known) as by that almost incredible Number of Ships, which by a true List doth appear to be taken since our late War with *Spain*, 1200 Sail, (besides those which have been lost by Shipwreck, Fire, and such like Casualties) should yet be exposed to an additional Misery at Home, by not being permitted to deliver their Goods after Sale, without paying an imposed Penalty by Way of *Excise*; as if the Trade of a Merchant (which formerly was accounted the most honourable Profession, and principal Fountain from whose industrious Streams flowed in the Riches of a Commonwealth) should now be looked on as guilty of some high Crimination, and therefore fitting to be manacled and awed with the Bonds of slavish Restraint, depriving them of selling their Goods, with the same Liberty which the Farmer does his Sheep and Oxen, or Landlord his Land and Houses, without Licence or paying a Fine; as if those Goods which the Merchant hath purchased in foreign Parts, were not as properly his as the Gentlemen's Houses and Lands (or the Farmers Cattle) as theirs; or as if our Laws (to which all claim an equal Title) should be dispensed with such partial inequality, that the one Part may have an unquestionable Privilege, while the other

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other is restrained by an unexcusable Penury; Yea, although this Imposition be paid to the full of what that Law can demand, yet dare they not deliver their Goods without an Officer; so that by long and tedious Attendance for such, besides other Inconveniencies, (which requires the Charge of keeping a Servant more than ordinary, if they have any considerable Trade) they often lose the Sale of their Goods, and Conveniency of sending them away, unless they will expose their Estates to a violent Seizure, by such, who like ravenous Wolves (using the Law of *Excise* for their Sheep's Cloathing) will not satisfy their insatiable Appetites with less than the greater Part thereof; the *Commissioners* of *Excise* always setting them on (like Mastiff Dogs on silly Sheep) encouraging and countenancing (not only their paid Officers, but such as go under the Name of *Free-booters*, no Purchase no Pay, all which are generally of inferior Rank and no Worth) to give Information against any whom they please, they being without Controversy believed, before never such able and honest Men, that can witness by Oath to the contrary; because *they are Judges, and Parties*, and Sharers in the Booties, though they veil this their arbitrary Proceedings with this plausible Excuse, that an Oath on the behalf of the State renders them unquestionable. Thus they take the Water out of the State's Stream, to drive the grinding Mill of their Oppressions, putting Men of mean Fortune into a Capacity of undoing and ruining whom they please; their Poverty prompting them also for their own Profit, to Swear any thing, because by their arbitrary Power

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Power they have half whatever they can Swear Men out of, and so erect their own Decays by others Ruins; so that from hence ariseth such a Spirit of Lying and Hypocrisy on the one Hand, in hopes of Gain; and such hypocritical Equivocations, and mental Reservations on the other Hand, for fear of losing, that like an invenomed Serpent, it hath engendered a most abhorred and detestable Spawn of careless Swearing, which is now grown to such a dangerous and desperate Monster of wilful Perjury, that the Custom of this Sin hath taken away the Conscience of it, esteeming others but *Ignis Fatui*\*, Bugbears, and By-words, to the great dishonour of God, Scandal of Religion, and Infamy of this Nation; so that if not stopped, (like a Canker) it will eat out the Life of Grace, and Spirit of Fidelity from amongst us; and then consequently extinguish the very Being of Religion and Power of Godliness, and hereby also that sacred Bond of an Oath (which is observed by the very *Turks* and *Heathens*, as the greatest and most binding Tie on Earth, and should be also a Christian's chief Security) will expose the Life and Estate of every tender Conscience to thy Mercy, or rather Cruelty and Treachery of every feared Conscience, whose barbarous Actions and unbridled Progress in their Impiety, utterly disanimates Industry, and frights the Spirit of Ingenuity into a slavish Fear.

Thirdly, Least there should be an Objection made, that the foregoing Grievances have been

\* Jer. xxiii. 10. *Because of swearing, the Land mourneth.*

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long since remedied, by constituting a Committee of Regulation, to put check to such their arbitrary Proceedings; it shall be answered, That however the Parliament might intend it for Good, yet it ushers in with it but an Aggravation of our Calamities; their Appellation only founding as if we should there be supplied with healing Salves, and that all our Grievances and Oppressions should be redressed; but these formerly have (contrary to the Trust imposed on them) applied Corrosives instead of Restoratives; so that the Merchant, partly with the Attornies and Solicitors to follow their several Causes, and partly by the often Trouble and Loss of Time before they can obtain Audience, they find the Remedy worse than the Disease, and an Addition to their Burthens and Oppressions, being often turned back to the Commissioners of *Excise* from whence they came, thereby not only heightening the Charge of the Nation to no Purpose; but as if principled by *Machiavel*, they divide and rule, metamorphosing our beautiful Ornaments of Justice and Equity, into torn Rags of Oppression and Devastation; therefore it is now hoped that our Laws shall be no longer restrained, but that those who have received Injustice by the illegal and arbitrary Proceedings of the Executioners of that Law (principally the Farmers thereof) may now have Liberty to take a due Course by a fair and legal Proceeding in Common Law, (whereby our Freedoms and Liberties ought to be defended) and that there may be no stop put to such Proceedings as hath been, and is daily, most illegally done by this Court.

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4. A fourth Grievance is demonstrated by imposing *Excise* on the very *Sweat of laborious Brows*, as Brewers, Distillers, Soapboilers, &c. who, although their Materials (from whence is extracted their Manufactory) first paid *Custom* and *Excise* at its Importation and Sale, yet, upon altering of the Property, must pay it again.

As if a Farmer should pay *Excise*, not only for his Cows and Hens, but for the Calves and Milk, Eggs and Chickens, which by the Strength and Heat of Nature, is the concocted Product of that Food which formerly was *excised*.

So that hereby the Merchant and Trader stands in as much Fear of the *Excise-Man*, as the *Welch* Traveller did of his Host, when being at Supper, and finding amongst his Eggs, one with a Chick in it, hastily sup'd it up, for fear, least his Host seeing it, might make him pay a Groat for it.

5. Fifthly, Neither was the Imposition of *Excise* (as it was instituted in its first Creation) so heavily laid, nor executed with such Cruelty and Rigour as now, principally by those deformed Monsters of this Age, cloak'd with the Name of Farmers of the *Excise* (but in Truth they are no other than unreasonable and tyrannical Oppressors and Monopolizers of our Freedom) whose insolent Vileness, and exhausting Oppressions, transcends all former Ages: And to whom all those oppressive Courts

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of High Commission, and Star-Chamber (which justly fell) never ran Parallel, adding all those unworthy (and so much exclaimed against) Patentees, with its Projectors together.

Some of whom, by the Stirrup of Pride and Ambition, aspiring to lay hold on the Bridle of our Oppressions, (*Excise* and its *Monopoly*) have eclipsed the Honour of this Nation and City, by mounting into the Saddle of State and Government.

Others of them (being *Monopolizers* of the Country *Excise*) have not blushed (in their un-human Boastings) to say, That they would leave them so bare, e're they had done with them, that whosoever should Farm it after their Lease is out, should never be able to do good by it. Thus they enlarge the gaping Gulf of their greedy and unsatiated Desires, and (like *Egyptian Tax-Masters* \*) they compel from us our Tale of Brick, when themselves have gotten all the Staw; proclaiming themselves hereby, to be of the Number of *Solomon's* wicked ones, whose tender Mercies are *Cruelty*, adding hereby not only Shame to their Posterity, but Sin to their Souls.

So that contrary to the Charity of the Primitive Christians † (who sold their Possessions, to relieve and make up the Breaches of those that wanted) these purchase their Possessions by their Oppressions, though they hazard the Intail thereof, to be accompanied with a Curse to their Pos-

\* Exod. i. 34. † Acts iv. 34.

terities,

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terities, they (being wrapp'd and covered with depraved Cruelty, as with a Garment) bless themselves in their impious Achievements; adding Impudence to their Insolence, and by their grinding and cruel Innovations proceed to the violating of the very fundamental Rights and Liberties of this whole Nation, that groaning under its heavy Weight and unsupportable Burthen, it lieth gasping for Breath; they having, like unsatiable *Horse-leeches* and *Caterpillars*, so devoured and drawn forth the Treasure thereof, that all our former flourishing Tranquility, is thereby become a Skeleton of dry Bones.

6. A sixth Grievance by *Excise* is, the Inequality of its Impositions, by compelling the Payment of *Excise*, for the very Custom and Charges of all Goods, they being generally not only much over-rated, but those which are at the lowest Rate, comprehend also the Custom and Charges; so that hereby, it doth evidently appear, that the whole Stock and first Principal is totally eaten out, in less than two (in some) in one Return, besides the Insurance, Freight, and Charges which attends all Goods; yea, many Times the Goods are not worth the Charge.

As for Instance, in *Spanish* and *French* Wines, which though never so much decayed, must pay *Excise* 4*l.* per Ton *Spanish*, and 2*l.* 10*s.* per Ton *French*, besides the Customs and all other Charges; although the Value of these Wines will hardly amount to the very Charge of *Excise*: And this is one of those cruel Laws

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which the late unpatterned Tyrant made; aiming by these, and such like Oppressions, to sink, and vail, both the Merchants and Traders, and (with these Pillars) the Prosperity of the whole City; imitating *Machiavel's* Principles, lest the flourishing Estate of so large a Head might Counterpoise, and turn the Scale of all his usurp'd Dominions.

And that which yet adds a greater Aggravation to the Merchants Miseries, is, That it is brought to a Custom that they must pay *Excise* likewise upon the Sale of their Goods; so that hereupon they are forced not only to employ double the Stock usual, but often (by the failing of their Debtors) they lose both their Stock, first disbursed in foreign Parts, and also the Custom and *Excise* thereof, together with all other Charges; and yet pay to the State (if their Trade be any Thing considerable) the Value of their whole Stock yearly; yea, many Traders pay above treble their Stock, in Custom and *Excise* annually. How then is it possible this Nation can possibly flourish, when the Merchants (the natural Fountain of this Nation's Prosperity) are obstructed and deprived of their former *Freedoms*, which in all other State, and Dominions, they have a tender Respect unto, and always confer more peculiar Prerogatives for their Encouragement, than to any other Profession: Being sensible, that with their Well-being consists the Prosperity of their whole Territories; witness the Duke of *Tuscany*, who by the Policy of granting free Privileges to Merchants (upon very small or

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no Duties) hath of a poor Fishing Village, converted it to a most flourishing and strong City, and with it, thereby enriched his whole Dominions; and it hath ever been the chief and principal Policy of the States of *Holland*, in all Times to procure of all Kings and States, some peculiar Prerogative above us and other Nations, for the Ease of the Merchants Charge of their Nation; whereby (together with the small Customs they pay at Home, and half the Charge in setting forth their Ships, that we have) they insensibly eat us out of both Trade and Shipping; as already doth so frequently, most apparently appear; in that it is seldom seen, that any Merchants that hath any Parts of Ships here, can reap the Interest of their Money; but often Times, they on every Voyage add more Stock (in Place of receiving Interest) to the setting them forth again; so that the Merchants building, or buying a Ship for any Master, doth but purchase an Inheritance for him, while themselves suffer; and therefore, must much dishearten them therein, and is the great Cause of our Decay in Shipping, in regard they are necessitated to be at greater Charge in victualling, and more numerous Manning them, than the *Hollanders*. Because they cannot be furnished with Convoys to conduct them, which the State of *Holland* ever maintaineth, and alloweth to all; and in Equity should also be greater by this State, because the Customs they pay (which is upon that Account) are greater.

Thus as our Shipping goeth to Decay, the *Hollanders* increaseth, and the Nation flourisheth;

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eth; and if not suddenly taken into Consideration, and provided against by some good Laws, this Nation will ere long be subjugated to their Wills, as the *Carthaginians*, who, as long as they continued their naval Power, were able to wage War with their Neighbour State the *Romans*, upon equal Terms; but upon their Neglect thereof, they were suddenly involved into a constrained Obedience.

And so likewise had we miserably suffered in 1588. had not a special Providence and Benediction attended the Endeavours of our naval Forces, with a happy Success against the Navy of the King of *Spain*, and the rest of the Confederate Princes, when they came against us with such a potent and numerous Armado.

7. A seventh Grievance, is by the frequent burthening Mens Consciences, be enforcing of Oaths impossible to be taken; so that many, to avoid wronging their Consciences, lose their Trade and Sale of their Goods, while others (stretching their Consciences to the Extent of the *Excise-Man's Taint*) carry away the Trade from them.

Neither is the Rigour of these Enforcements, any whit inferior to that Rack of good Mens Consciences (the Star-Chamber, and High Commission Court) formerly so much condemned, and exclaimed against, as a Mark of the highest Tyranny; but, as if their tyrannical Ambition disdained to come short of their Predecessors, they have so far exceeded them,

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them in this their oppressive Court, that they not only compel Men to swear against themselves, but also Apprentice-Servants against their Masters, though absolutely contrary to their Oaths and Covenants, which they make at their first Entrance into Servitude to them; herein appearing such active Agitators of Tyranny, that they have attempted to act that which the Star-Chamber Commissioners never durst so much as to think of: So that hereby, the *Excise-Man* (like the subtle Jesuit in Affairs of State) hath an unavoidable Inspection into the Mysteries of Trade, and thereby are in a Capacity upon all Occasions, to enter upon the same Way; and so consequently not only shuffle out antient Traders, but likewise stifle the very Infancy of new Beginners, and Fortunes of second Brothers, whose Trades have formerly proved so advantagious, as hath exceeded the Inheritance of their elder Brothers; but at the present (*by this cursed Excise*) it is almost utterly decayed, unless some speedy Course be taken for its Remedy; for being truly considered, reflects much on the Interest not only of Traders, but the most eminent Families of the whole Body of this Nation will in some measure suffer, being epitomized, and contracted into the Trade of this City.

8. The eighth Grievance is, the uncivil Proceedings of the Officers thereof, who, upon every Suspicion, and often malicious Information, come unto our Houses with armed Men, and if not immediately let in, violently break open our Doors, to the great Affrightment  
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and Amazement of our Wives, Children, and Families.

9. The ninth demonstrateth the Inequality of this Imposition, depriving the Commonwealth of many Members, who forsake their Callings to be Waiters, Informers, Free-booters, with an innumerable of Rabble idle Drones, who make their Gain by honest and laborious Mens Ruins, and (like Swarms of *noisome Locusts*) they over-spread and devour the Substance of the whole Land, and become as chargeable to this Nation as a considerable Army; so that notwithstanding the Revenue that cometh in by *Excise* is so vast, yet the fourth, if not third Part is eaten out by the innumerable Multitude of Officers; all which (besides the large Profits which the *Monopolizers* thereof reap, being near sufficient to maintain another Army) might be taken off, to an unexpressible Ease of the People.

And then might we in some measure say, We have the Privilege (as well as the Name) of a Commonwealth, when the Charge of the Nation is three Parts lessened, and not so heavily laid on the Back of Traders; but all Conditions bear a proportionable Share of the Nations Charge, according to their Abilities; and this cannot any way be done, but by raising Monies by Subsidies, Tenths, or Fifteenths, according to the usual and laudable Way of our Ancestors: And by this Way only did they defray all Charges; when this Nation was beset (with far more Dangers than now hath appeared for many Years) both with

*French,*

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*French, Scots and Spaniards*; and then also, had they very small and low Custom; and yet the Expences of the Court likewise to defray, which is now so much cry'd out against as an extraordinary Charge of the Nation.

But 'tis the general Opinion of some (whose Affections perhaps concenter not with the way of this present Government) that this Parliament (being most, or all landed Men, and few Traders) will never take away the *Excise*, because their own Burthens will thereupon become greater; but in this it is supposed that Opinion hath darkened the Eyes of their Judgments, which is very much hoped will be suddenly testified to the World; the Parliament being sufficiently informed and sensible of the sinking and languishing Estate of this Nation (by this *Excise*) for want of Trade, and that they will therefore manifest to the World that they disdain so much as the Thoughts of Self-Endedness, by taking away, and utterly abolishing this general Burthen of *Excise* from the People; though in the mean Time themselves in some measure suffer by a larger Tax; yet is supposed cannot much exceed ordinary, if we thoroughly consider the great and vast Charge that will be taken off by the innumerable Attendance of this *Excise*.

Besides these, and many more insupportable Burthens, that lieth upon this Nation by *Excise* (too tedious here to insert) it ushereth in with it an innumerable Train of Oppressions: In Consideration whereof no former Parliament would ever consent to a Grant thereof;

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until the Year 1643. at which Time (the Affairs of State fluttering on the Wings of doubtful Success, against the Forces of the late King, and not knowing which Way the Hand of God's Providence might turn the Scale) the Parliament (to carry on the great and imergent Affairs of the State in the Depth of their Extremity in that Juncture) did (for the Ease of those who sided with them) impose the same, because thereby they brought the *Enemy to contribute* to the Maintainance of the War against themselves, which by no other Way could be; for we having all the Maritime Ports of Consequence, and they the Inland only, their Necessities required a Supply of all Merchandize from us, and so paid *Excise*, which defrayed the Charge of the Parliament's Army, and was their only Policy and chief Reasons for imposing the same, as by their own Ordinance, 11 Sept. 1643. doth appear; yet did they then impose the same with much Regret and Unwillingness, because contrary to the *Great Charter*, and Petition of Right, which invironeth our Rights and Liberties; and therefore, tenderly sympathizing with us therein, they then limited it to continue but one Year, hoping by that Time to bring those which adhered to the King under their Obedience; and then again, to raise Money for the Occasions of State, by the antient and equitable Way of Subsidies; yet finding that War to continue longer than their Expectations, they were again necessitated to renew their former Ordinance, 8 April 1644. limiting it to continue only one Year, from the eleventh of September following, least its continued Progress might aggravate

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vate our Calamities, as by the foregoing Particulars hath too apparently appeared: But it was never known, that ever any Parliament in *England* before, did levy Moneys by Way of *Excise*; they never having such unhappy Causes to force them to such Impositions, which then was the best and most equal, and carried with it much Reason and Policy, because no other Way could be found to bring the King's Party to pay towards the Maintainance of the Parliament's Forces; therefore it is generally hoped, that the Cause and Reasons being now removed, the Effects and Thing itself will be likewise taken off; and that this Parliament (considering the Cause of our Decay and Ruins) will with their ever-honoured Ancestors, annihilate, utterly demolish, and eradicate, both the Name and Being, Root and Branch, of that detestable, and so often *damned Imposition of Excise*, whose Prudence never gave it Time to hatch, but always crush'd it in the very Egg, at its first Nomination; it being such a Stranger to our *Fore-Fathers*, that no *History* nor *Chronicle* whatsoever, hath ever been seen to nominate it before the third Year of King *Charles*; at which Time the Duke of *Buckingham*, and other evil Counsellors, endeavoured to set it on Foot, dating it after the Summons of that Parliament, and issued it to thirty-three Lords, and others of his Majesty's Privy-Council; thereby authorizing and urging the speedy raising the same Imposition, and not to fail therein, as they tender'd his Majesty's Honour, and the Safety of the Kingdom and People; yet the House of Commons having Notice hereof, sent

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for it, and without one dissenting Voice, voted it and adjudged it to be against Law, and contrary to the Petition of Right.

And then desiring a Conference about it with the Lords in the Painted Chamber, after the Commission was read, Sir *Edward Cook*, and Mr. *Glanvill*, by the Commons Appointment, did there manifest the Illegality, Strangeness, and dangerous Consequence of it to the whole Kingdom; and amongst other Expressions, he stiled it, *Monstrum horrendum, informe ingence*, (descanting upon every Word) yet blessed be God, its Eyes were pulled out by the Commons in Parliament, (which they hoped their Lordships would second) before it ever saw the Sun, or was ever brought forth into the World, to consume and devour the Nation.

Whereupon the Lords fully and unanimously concurred with the Commons, adjudging it to be against Law, and the Petition of Right, and fit to be eternally damned; and upon the Lords Request to the King, this Commission was cancelled in his Majesty's Presence, by the Lord-Keeper, and by them sent, cancelled, to the House of Commons for their Satisfaction; who returned it back to the Lords, with thanks for their Care and Concurrence herein.

And to manifest a further Emulation and Dislike to such illegal Proceedings, *June 21, 1628*, they cast Sir *Edward Sawyer* (a Member of the House) out of it, and upon solemn Debate, committed him Prisoner to the *Tower*, and perpetually

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perpetually disabling him from serving in the Parliament for the future, because he had a chief Hand in making a Book of *Rates* for Tunnage and Poundage, and laying Impositions on the Subject, in Nature of a Projector.

And likewise suspended Mr. *John Baber*, (then Recorder and Burgefs of *Wells*) only for making a Warrant to Billet Soldiers on some of the Townsmen, against Law and Subjects Liberty; resolving that all the Projectors and Promoters of illegal Impositions, were unfit to Sit and Vote in any *English* Parliament, and fit to be turned out thence with greatest Infamy.

If therefore these Proceedings in illegal Impositions, were then so solemnly and unanimously condemned, as contrary to the Law of the Land and Petition of Right, it seemeth now exceeding strange, and absonant to Reason, that so much *Blood* and *Treasure* should be spent to *Purchase* that *Misery* from which we were then freed.

Neither would this Parliament so much as pass a Bill for Subsidies, but on the 25th of *March 1628*, they did unanimously declare, that it had been the old Custom and Use of our Parliaments, constantly to redress, re-establish, and secure, their violated great Charter, Laws, and Liberties, in the first Place, before they would Debate, or grant any Aids or Subsidies demanded of them, (though never so pressing and necessary) it being both dangerous and imprudent, and a Breach of their Trusts towards

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towards the People that elected them, to Play an After-game for their Liberties, Laws, and Grievances; which would never be effected nor redressed after Subsidies once granted.

Whosoever saw or heard of the Declaration of the Commons in Parliament, dated September 8, 1642, could not have thought but they would have been as faithful and tender in preserving the Liberties and Priviledges of the Subject as ever their Predecessors were, when they declared that they had received Information, that divers publick Rumours and Aspersions are cast upon this House, that they intend to Assess every Man's Pewter, and lay *Excise* upon that and other Commodities: The House, for their Vindication therein, do declare, that those Rumours and Scandals are raised by ill affected Persons, and tendeth much to the disservice of the Parliament. It is therefore ordered, that the Authors of these false and scandalous Rumours shall be searched and enquired after and apprehended, and brought to this House to receive condign Punishment.

Yet notwithstanding (as if such a Declaration had never been made) the Parliament levied this Imposition the very succeeding Year: So that now we can only say, we had such noble and worthy Patriots sitting at the Helm of our Commonwealth, who would hazard their being blown over-board by Storms and Tempests, before they would neglect their Trust; it is now only wished that one Drop of that noble Blood and Resolution were yet remaining in the Veins of their Successors; for then  
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should we Reap (or at least Glean) some Part of the Fruits thereof. But some there are, who endeavour to tickle our bleeding Wounds, and think to set our sinking Condition afloat, and rectify the Distempers of our *Excise* Malady, by prescribing a Removal from *Broad-street* to the *Custom-House*; and to this End have endeavoured to propagate it by Petition; but they are not sensible of the Inconveniencies that will succeed; they know not that the Dead are there, and that her Guests are in the Depth of Hell: For though hereby the great Expence of Officers may be taken off, yet would it prove of dangerous Consequence, and be a means to have it perpetuated with the Customs; so that we had better endure the Inconveniencies we now suffer for a Time, where it is, then be yok'd to it for ever in another Place. This Deceit is much like that of Boys, who hiding a Pin in a fair Rose, prick those that Smell it. But we must have an Eye as well on *Jael's* Nail, which will pierce our Temples, as on her Milk and Lodging, to relieve our Thirst and Weariness; as well on *Dallila's* Scissars to cut our Hair, as on her Lap to lull us asleep; as well behind on the Tail of the Serpent, as on the uniform variety of his checquered Body. Now herein lies the Danger of such Impositions, that like Snow-balls, they are always gathering, and like Rivers, that the farther they go, increase to a larger Magnitude; and as the People of *Naples*, whose voluntary Contribution was at first ten *Carlins* to *Alphonsus*, towards the Maintenance of the Wars of *Spain*; after that it increased to five *Carlins* more in the time of *Ferdinando*, and  
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from that Time forward it increased by Degrees to sixty six *Carlins*.

So that to raise this, they laid a *Gabell* (or *Excise*) upon all manner of Necessaries for Food, even to Beans, Pease, Apples, and all other Fruit.

So that *Charles V.* compelled from them in ten Taxes, five Millions of Gold; and *Philip II.* in thirty three several Times, thirty Millions of Gold; and *Philip III.* and *IV.* from 1628 till *Massanello's* Rising, a hundred Millions of Gold.

Thus their *Gabell* (or *Excise*) like the River *Nilus*, never ceas'd increasing, till a universal Deluge of Misery had so overspread that flourishing Kingdom, that the Banks thereof (not being able to contain) broke forth with such Violence, as threatned (with its Ruin and Destruction) a perpetual Rent, at least, from his other Dominions. I need not enlarge, *Mr. Prin* having more particularly amplified and demonstrated the Illegality of this *Excise*, in his Declaration and Protestation against the same.

And it is God's great Mercy that our *Excise*, which hath filled our Land with such an innumerable Number of Poor, hath not e're this caused a general Insurrection and Devastation; here likewise, it being grown to such a Height, and extorted with such intolerable Oppression, as it is at this Day, by a cursed Generation of *Monopolizers*, and those who have

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let the same, have done no better than enslaved the whole Nation, by selling their Freedoms (and our formerly so famous Liberties) to satisfy some particular Mens Lucre.

Therefore this Monster (*Excise*) should be dealt with as *Jocasta* did with *OEdipus*, who not only crippled and cast him away in his Infancy, that he might have no Feet nor Foundation to stand on, but likewise slew him, that he might not revive again; for why should we hug a poison'd Dart in our already wounded Bosoms.

But some will say, how can it be expected that this *Excise* can be taken off, seeing the publick Debts are contracted to such a vast Sum, it is impossible that ever publick Debts should be discharged without it. To which I answer, it can never be expected so long as that continues; for the Burthen that it brings with it is greater than it takes away, and to continue it is but to pour Liquor into a Vessel by the Spicket, while in the mean Time it runs out at the Bung; whereas by taking off this Burthen (though in the Place a Subsidy or Tax be laid) we shall have a third, if not half, our Shackles knockt off at once.

Is there no way to supply the Necessities of this State, but by imitating the Devil's Remedy, who (taking the Opportunity of Christ's Hunger) perswaded him to relieve himself by turning Stones into Bread?

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Seeing an ordinary Means by way of Subsidy, may do it more easily and equitably, why should an extraordinary Way be used.

I know there are a Multitude that will plead for the Continuance thereof; but if you look on the Force of their Argument, the Stream of their Discourse tends only to drive their own Mill, and like *Demetrius* the Silvermith, who apologiz'd for *Diana*: Sirs, you know by this Craft we have our Goods, and if *Excise* go down, our Livings go down with it. Thus for their own private Profit they Dispute against the publick Good.

Thus far to testify (with the Inequality) the miserable Poverty that is brought on this whole Nation for want of Trade, by this most unequal Way of *Excise*.

There remaineth yet other Oppressions which causeth an Impediment to Trade, and so consequently the impoverishing the whole Nation, and that is by imposing such large Customs on all Goods, far exceeding what hath formerly been; and that which yet aggravates this Burthen is that *Argeer* Duty, importing ten *per Cent.* Custom, forcibly extorted from all Merchants for all imported Commodities; but that which is yet more abhorred and detestable, is, that all this is shrouded under the Name of a Charitable Act to redeem Captives, when indeed it hath been converted to other Ends; neither is there a Necessity of such Collections, in regard of our present Amity with that Nation;

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tion: Besides, when we were at Peace with them, and were in a real Way to redeem Captives, yet did we then only pay the Moiety that we now do; and this was one, amongst others, of the late Tyrant's Tricks.

Now if this Parliament, in their Wisdom, would please to constitute a Committee for the Advance of Trade, that Customs might be taken down to a lower Rate, we might thereby much recover our lost Trade, and this Land would become a Store-house for all Nations, and thereby, consequently, the Reception of the Customs would be larger than now it is.

For first, the Importation of Merchandize will be far greater than now.

Then Secondly, All those who (while there are great Impositions) will hazard the Loss of all their Goods, rather than pay so much, will then be content to pay the whole, without seeking to Save. To verify the Truth hereof, there are many Instances, Tobaccos not being altogether impertinent, which the lower the Rate is put upon them, hath always produced a far larger Reception; and the higher the Rates have been made, the less hath been the Revenue.

The State of *Venice*, as long as they put low Customs on Goods, they carried the chief Trade of those Parts, and enriched themselves by supplying all the Nations and Principalities far and near; but upon raising the Customs, their Trade strangely decayed, and was transferred

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to *Genoa*, upon their laying small Impositions; so that thereby, in a short Time, they became in Fame the richest State in the World; but as Time increased their Wealth, so did it likewise beget Covetousness, which prompted them to grasp at more, by raising their Customs; whereupon (notwithstanding that unexpressible Expence of Treasure in erecting a stately Mould, for the Security and Shelter of Shipping, from the Danger of those bad Seas) their Trade suddenly declined and vanished; but the great Duke of *Tuscany* taking his Advantage thereupon, made *Leghorn* a Free Port; by which Means, of a poor Fishertown, it became not only rich itself, but hath enriched his whole Territories, and continueth the Storehouse of all those Parts to this Day; so that the State of *Genoa*, seeing their former Error, are now endeavouring to regain their former Loss, and invite Trade, by declaring that City as free as *Leghorn*.

And this is another Reason, that the *Hollanders* also at this Time carry away the Trade from us.

And this very Way was likewise proposed, and some Progress made, for the setting of it a Foot here in *England* in the Time of King *Charles*.

It hath been the Policy also of our State for the propagating of Trade, and continuing the Staple of Woollen Manufactories in this Nation) to provide strict Laws for prohibiting the Exportation of Wool and Fullers

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lers Earth; it being of such weighty Importance, that in the Observance and strict Execution of those Laws, consisted the chief Riches of this Nation; and through the Industry of the Merchant (who convoyed the Manufactories thereof, as all sorts of Stuffs and Cloth, far and near) supplied the whole World therewith, and thereby it became as Beneficial to us as all the *Spaniards West-Indies* was to them; but of late, some particular Men, to accomplish their own private Gain, have frequently exported both Wool and Fullers Earth, into Foreign Parts (principally into *Holland*) whereby that Nation hath attained not only to the Height of our Art, in all such like Manufactories, but likewise have in a great Measure drawn from us that Trade, by supplying other Nations; and if this be not suddenly provided against by severe Laws, and as diligently look'd after for Prevention, will unavoidably ruin that our Trade, its Exportation being shrouded under such subtle Ways as is, not easily discovered.

These I suppose are Arguments and Precedents sufficient to convince any Man of Reason, and therefore shall decline from enlarging any farther, only shall offer these few Scriptures following, to the Consideration of this present Parliament.

That seeing the Eyes and Hearts of this whole Nation are looking on this present Parliament, and longing for their Deliverance from all the tearing Briers of their Oppressions, that like good *Nehemiah* (who, when the People

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People complained of their Bondages and Oppressions, and that their Sons and Daughters were Servants, and that their Land and Vineyards were mortgaged for Monies borrowed for to pay the *King's Tribute*) they will so manifest their Displeasure and Anger, not only against the Oppressions and arbitrary Proceedings of the *Monopolizers* of our Freedoms, by exposing them to the Last of Justice for their Tyranny, (*As he did, and yet went forward in the Work of the Wall*) but likewise that they will utterly remove, and take away the Spawn which first engendered such Thraldom, least by its Continuance this whole Nation become not only disabled from trading, but likewise from paying their Impositions, for they cannot make Brick without Straw.

And then likewise may they be in Hope in Time to redeem their mortgaged Lands and Houses, and support their tottering Estates.

*Ezek. xlvi. 18. Thus saith the Lord, remove Violence and Spoil, execute Judgment and Justice; take away your Exactions from my People.*

*Isa. lviii. 6. Is not this the Fast that I have chosen, to loose the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burthens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every Yoke?*

*Ver. 12. And they that shall be of thee, shall build the old waste Places; thou shalt raise up the Foundation of many Generations, and thou shalt be call'd the Repairer of Breaches, and Restorer of Paths to dwell in.*

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