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SEASONABLE REFLECTIONS

Occasioned by the

BILLS

Expected in

PARLIAMENT

Relating to the

DUTIES

ON

WINES and TOBACCO.

a SETTLED VIRTUE

*Makes it self Judge, and satisfy'd within,
Smiles at its common Enemy, the MULTITUDE.
I'm no more afraid of their INFAMOUS CENSURES;
Than th' Skies of being fir'd with mounting Sparks.*

Dryden.

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Seasonable REFLECTIONS, &c.


TIS too notorious to want Evidence that the most *extraordinary*, the most *extravagant* Methods have lately been made use of to bring an Odium upon the Administration, and, if possible, throw the Nation into a Flame.

A *dreadful, hideous Spectre* was first dress'd up to frighten the Nation, and the *direful Monster* they called a GENERAL EXCISE : This, with all possible Industry, the *People* were made to believe was to take place ; and that they were *all* to be *torn* to Pieces and *undone* by it ; that it would not only *devour* their

A 2 *Substance,*

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Substance, ruin their Trade, and bring them to absolute Beggary, but at the same Time swallow up all their Liberties and Privileges, and reduce them to the most abject Slavery: Wooden Shoes and Shackles were display'd in their worst Terrors; and nothing was wanting that might brighten the Alarm and create Horror.

BUT when this Design of a GENERAL EXCISE was disown'd; disown'd with Abhorrence and Indignation; when they found that wise Men had their Eyes open, and saw through the Whole of the Villany as soon as 'twas broach'd; and that the first Fright of the Populace began to abate and wear off; what had our Incendiaries for it then? Why then, monstrous to think of, they cloath'd the LEAST EXTENSION of the Excise, or the Laws of Excise, with all the dread Array of the Former; and to make any Alteration upon ANY ACCOUNT whatever in
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the present Method of Collecting the Revenue, was represented by them as big with every destructive Consequence that a GENERAL EXCISE could possibly produce.

THIS too effectually answer'd their End, and the Multitude soon grew as outrageous against the LEAST EXTENSION of the Excise, as they had ever been against even a GENERAL EXCISE itself; but that such gross Absurdity must be wholly owing to the Artifices of a FACTION, which had work'd them up to Intoxication and Rage, is abundantly evident to all the World; and there is not a sensible Man in the Nation, but must know, that it is not with these People, whether an Excise should take place, or not; but whether by raising a general Clamour, however unjustifiable, THEY should be able to carry the darling Point they have been so many Years contending for; IN WHICH all their Hopes centre; and TO WHICH they

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they would make *every Attempt*, however *base and treacherous*, subservient.

AND we may depend upon it, That if by the Establishment, even of a GENERAL EXCISE, which Mr. D'ANVERS has made such an *indecent Noise* about; and to oppose, has blown the *Trumpet to Sedition* all over the Nation, he could get a NOBLE PERSON removed, and *himself* in his Place, notwithstanding all the *Earnestness* and *Rancour* he has appeared with against it, he would be the MAN who would wish every *other Man*, who *opposed* such an *Establishment*, at the D---l, and *rejoyce* to see it take place To-Morrow. — So true is his *Patriotism*; — so great is Mr. D'ANVERS's *real Dislike* and *Disapprobation* of the present *equitable Scheme*, which he has with *so much Inveteracy inveigh'd* against.

BUT for *Heaven's Sake* let us examine a little. Were we so loaded
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with Excises, and so near Destruction by them, that we could bear no more; that the *very next Comodity excis'd* would be our *utter Ruin*? That we must let the greatest *national Advantage* slip thro' our Fingers rather than suffer the *minuteest Extension* of the Excise Laws to be made? Are we in such a *woful Case*, that the Kingdom must be a looser of *Four or Five Hundred Thousand Pounds* a Year, rather than make any *Alteration* in the Method of collecting of the Revenue, how *Favourable* and *little Burthensome* soever such Alteration might be, because such Alteration transfers the Management of that Branch of the Revenue from the *Custom House* to the *Commissioners* of Excise? And tho' at the same Time, besides the great Advantages mentioned before, perhaps this is the most *effectual Way* that has ever been pitch'd upon to prevent the grossest and most *pernicious Frauds* this Nation was ever Witness to.

WAS

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WAS the *Damage to Trade*, and the *Loss* of our *Liberties*, to be indeed the *Consequences* of this *new Scheme* for altering the Way of gathering an old Tax, they would more than justify all the bitter Harangues and passionate Exclamations that have been said and published upon the Head; but when, on the contrary, such a *Scheme* is found to be highly *Eligible*; to be *greatly advantageous*; and such as no *M—r*, who had the *real Interest* of his *Country* at Heart, would let want any Assistance in his Power to bring to bear; what must we think of him, who is equally Sensible of the Benefits that must arise from it, yet *ridicules* and *reviles* it; would *run it down*, and render it *ineffectual*; and is pursuing both the *Scheme* and its *Author*, with *Scurrilities* and *Defamation*; with all the *Outrage* and *Injustice* that a *resentful implacable Man* is capable of.

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THE most *Sanguine* against this *Scheme*, whatever *odious Names* and *unpopular Appellations* they may give it, can never certainly deny but that it is the most *advantageous Scheme* that ever was establish'd in *Britain*: Those that are chiefly to be subjected to any Inconveniences that may arise from it, cannot do less than acknowledge this; and no less than this the *Scheme* it self must *extort*, even from the *exasperated disappointed Malignants*, to whose *invenom'd Pens* alone we are indebted for the *Ferment* the *Kingdom* has been thrown into, and the *whole Opposition* made to it.

HERE'S no *new Duties* laid; only a different Way made use of to collect those already laid; only a proper Care taken to see they are duly and justly paid; and by this the *Publick* becomes a Gainer to the Amount of *Four, or Five Hundred Thousand Pounds*; 'tis not the *KING* that gets a Shilling by the

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Affair.

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Affair, 'tis the *Nation*, 'tis the *PEOPLE* are the only Gainers, and they'll soon find they are so by the *Advantages* that *must accrue* to the *Fair Trader*; by the *Decrease* of the *National Debt*; and by the *Power* this will put into the *Hands* of the *Government* of *relieving* those poor *Manufacturers* who at present are most *pressed* with the *Burthen* of *Taxes*.

THERE may some *inconsiderable Inconveniencies* attend the Execution of this *SCHEME* with relation to particular Persons, but no *real Grievances*; and those who are determined to behave like *honest Men*, and carry on their Dealings *fairly* and *openly*, without any Designs of *deceiving* or *wronging* the *Government*, will find no *just Cause* for either *Uneasiness* or *Complaint*.

ONE excellent *Provision*, among others made by this *SCHEME*, is the taking away in all Cases of *Excise*, Appeals as they now stand to *delegated*

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gated Commissioners of the *Excise*, and instituting in the Room of those Commissioners three of the *Judges*, and those not to be always the same *Judges* of the superior Courts at *Westminster*, who will be impower'd to determine all *such Cases* as may be brought before them in a *summary Way*, with all *possible Dispatch*, and without the *least Expence* to the *Subject*.

HOW happy would Multitudes think themselves were their Properties to be determin'd in this *unexpensive Method*, by Persons of so much *Integrity*, *Learning* and *Wisdom*; how in most Cases would they *prefer* it to the *tedious, costly Modes* of *Trial by Juries*; by *Juries* that may be *pack'd*; and which too often make a *Sacrifice* of *Justice* to their *Ignorance*, *Obstinacy*, or *Corruption*; as many *ruin'd Families* could *largely testify*, if requir'd.

THE *chief Obligation* upon *Juries* to engage them to behave with

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Upright-

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L A W F U L Means to testify their Aversion to it; and in Consequence of these the most *indecent Letters* and *Instructions* to Members, to say *no worse of them*, have made their Appearance among us; and being spirited up by *his private Agents*, they would, if they DURST, have come into more of HIS DUTIFUL and L A W F U L M E A N S: *Mobbing* and *publick Insults*.

B U T how will the Scene be changed when the Peoples Eyes are fully open'd, and they discover how they have been *abus'd* and *impos'd* upon by M E N, who had an *Interest* to pursue, *independent of their Interest*; and therefore made Tools of them in order to carry it on; used all the *wicked Wiles* and *Artifices* they were Masters of to *deceive* them, and keep them in the Dark, and from a *due Attention* to their *real Good*: When they come by *Experience* to know, when they come to feel, *the best Evidence they can possibly*

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possible have, that they are *bigly benefited* by this SCHEME, how *asham'd* will they be of all the *Obloquy* and *Reproaches* they have been made to be the *Spreaders* of? And how *heartily* will they *detest* and *curse* those who *inflam'd* their *Passions* and *Prejudices*, and were *thereby* able to lead them into a *strenuous malicious Opposition* to what, had they been *true* to their *Country's Interest*, and *been left to themselves*, they *certainly* would have *appear'd for*, to the *utmost* of their Ability.

I F this SCHEME bears so hard upon the *Tobacco Merchants*, and our *Dealers in Wines*, as they give out, why did these *honest Gentlemen* never *publish* their *Case*, and shew us some of these *sad Hardships* they expect to be subjected to? The *Former* are charg'd with *most abominable Frauds*; such as would be a *national Scandal* not to redress, *when known*; and as to the *Latter*, there

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there are not more *Drinkers* of Wine than there are *Witnesses* to their *balderdashing*, and *vile unwholesome Mixtures*; and notwithstanding all this, those *worthy Men* now have never taken it into their wise Heads to advance so much as one Step towards clearing themselves from these *curst Imputations*; are we to take *all*, even the *worst* for granted against them? They have not indeed had so little Modesty, *which is what they could never be charged with before*, as to venture at any *Petition to Parliament* on their own Behalf; they could not but *well know*, what Reception such an Attempt would meet with *there*; they seem altogether to have contented themselves with interesting *Communities* and other *large Bodies* of Men on their Side; *joyning* in the *common Cry* against any *Extension* of the *Excise Laws*, and all in Hopes of *escaping* in the *Crowd*.

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B U T if we have any *Regard* to our *Tobacco Colonies*, any *Concern* for the *Welfare* of the *fair Trader* at Home, such *notorious Frauds* as have been laid to the Door of the *Tobacco Merchants* will no longer be suffer'd, since to rectify the *horrid Abuse* is now within our Reach.

A N D can any Thing be more *equitable* and *righteous* than that *all Brewers* should be upon a *Level*? If *Merchants*, *Wine-Coopers*, or *Vintners* will turn *Brewers*, ought they not to be subject to the *same Laws* that the *Brewers* are subject to? If these will *brew* and *adulterate* their *Wines* let the *Publick* have the *Benefit* of their doing so, let *that* have some *Compensation* for the *Damage*, if not the *utter Loss* of their *Healths* who drink the *pernicious Mixtures*? Nothing can be *more just* than that, if they sell those *unhealthy Compositions* for *Wine*, they should be oblig'd to pay
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the *Duties* of the *Wines* they sell them for. — And what *possible Way* is there of preventing the *Cheats* in the *Tobacco Trade*, or these *Abuses* in the *Wine Trade*, and making the *Dealers* in *Wines* pay for such *extraordinary Encrease* of their *Stock* to which the *Publick* has an *undoubted Right*, but by the *Methods* prescribed by this *Scheme*; which directs to an *Inland Duty*, and of Course to a *daily Visitation* of the *Retailers* of these *Commodities*.

IF those who are *most interested* in setting aside this *Scheme* should be found not *daring* to appear *properly* against it; should be found *neglecting*, or not *able* to *vindicate themselves* from the *heavy Charges* brought against them, what will the *World* say? And farther, If they should be seen *joining* the *Multitude*, and by *Numbers* and *Clamour* be endeavouring to *mob it off* the *Stage*, how would all
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Mankind look upon them as *justly charged*, and soon to a *Man* be with them, who notwithstanding the *most general violent Opposition*, undertook and *greatly went thro'* with *amending* and *reforming* such *egregious scandalous Frauds* and *Abuses*.

FACTION may *chafe* at this, and, like the *troubled Ocean*, continue to cast up *Mire* and *Dirt*, but its *Fury* may be *safely* and *calmly view'd*, and all its *boistrous Rage* *Controlled* and *Contemned*.

NOISE and *Clamour* are but of *short Duration*, they *quickly die away*; and when they appear to have been without *Cause* and *Groundless*, are *commonly succeeded* by a *general Approbation* of what they were *levell'd* to *decry* and *depreciate*.

THIS, there is *no doubt*, the *Whole Kingdom* will soon be *fully convinc'd* of; this *Scheme* comes from those who are *capable of judging* what

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will conduce to the *real Interest* and *Good* of their *Country*; and as *most capable* of *these* 'tis offer'd the *Publick*: We never had any Thing from the *same Hand* but what had a *visible Tendency* to promote the *general Welfare*; and we have all the Reason in the World to depend upon it that nothing shall take its Rise from *thence*; that no *SCHEME* shall ever be able to claim this *NOBLE PERSON* for its *Original*, but what is calculated to answer such *valuable Purposes* as *national Prosperity*, and the *Happiness* of *Britain*.

THE *Calumnies* and *Invectives* of *Enemies* should have *no Weight* with us; especially when we know who these *Enemies* are, and the *Motives* of their *Enmity*: With *Impartiality* and *Candour* let us trace this *NOBLE PERSON*, and the more *strictly* we do so, the more *firmly* we shall believe *these Things* of him, the more *clearly* we shall discover one *continued Scene* of *Action* in *Favour*

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vour of his *Country*; always *aiming* at *publick Good*, and *endeavouring* equally to approve himself to *Prince* and *People*.

IS it *reasonable* to imagine that this *NOBLE PERSON* would be for any *Burthens*, for any *unnecessary Restrictions* upon the *People* who we have seen in the *most amiable point* of *Light* that ever *TRUE PATRIOT* stood in, pleading the *Cause* of the *People* against those who not only *loaded* them with *EXCISES*, but would have *oppressed* them to their *utter Ruin*; greatly *supporting* his *Country's Cause*; *successfully asserting* its *Interest*, *Rights* and *Privileges*, against a set of *infamous Managers* who had *betray'd* and *sold* their *Country*; and having *contracted* for its *last valuable Remains*, its *TRADE*, were *preparing* to *make good* to the *Purchasers* their *EXECRABLE BARGAIN*.

AND that we may be a little better able to determine of the *Hurricane*

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Hurricane rais'd against a SCHEME evidently design'd for *publick Service*, it cannot be improper to take notice, that *One* of those *worthy Managers* and his present Adherents are the *only Persons* who first *irritated* the *Populace*, and have even since supported their Prejudices against this *Scheme*.

CAN it with any Manner of Probability be supposed that this *noble Person* would behave so *inconsistently* to what has *appear'd* ever to have been the unalterable *Bent* and *Inclination* of his Soul; so *inconsistently* to what is fully known to have been always the *settled Resolution* of his ROYAL MASTER, as to be for laying any *unjustifiable Weights* upon the People? We may therefore *depend* upon it, notwithstanding all the *Violences* that *have*, or *may* be shown to this *Scheme*, that 'tis calculated for the *Advantage* of the Nation in *General*, and will, as soon as such an *Affair* can
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be brought to perfection, produce to the *Publick* the most *desireable Effects*.

NO *One* certainly can be so *weak* as to believe that *Those* who have in *trust* the *important, weighty Affairs* of the Nation can be in the least *influenced* by *Outrage, Noise* and *Exclamation*; that *They* can be moved by *Ribaldry* and the *senseless, stupid Sneers* that are handed to the *Mob*, or that they should be diverted from a *steady intrepid Pursuit* of *publick Good* by all the *scurrilous, rascally Reflections* with which *their Enemies* pursue their *Conduct*, and endeavour to render it *Distasteful* and *Odious* to their *Country*.

'TIS not possible to conclude better than to leave with *My Readers*, a *short, but certain Way* how they may form the *best Judgment* of this *celebrate Scheme*; — the *chief OPPOSERS* of it, *Those* who have raised all the *Heat* and *Outcry*
against

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against it thro' the Kingdom, are,
a *Betrayer* of his *Country*; who,
when in *Power*, *enslav'd* his *Country*;
but, out of *Power*, has been unwea-
ry'd in his Endeavours to *Distress*
and *Embroid* it; and this ABAN-
DON'D MAN'S *sworn Associates*.

BUT *Those* who *Espouse* and
promote this SCHEME are well
known to have been CONSTANT
FIRM FRIENDS to their *Country* and
at all Times to have *advanced* its
Prosperity and *Happiness* to the
utmost of their Power.

F I N I S.

