AN

ESSAY

ON

WAYS and MEANS

FOR

Improving the Inland NAVIGATION

AND

Increasing the Number of SAILORS in *Great-Britain*.

Humbly offered to the CONSIDERATION of PARLIAMENT.

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AN

ESSAY, &c.

THE Strength and Riches of all Kingdoms are calculated from the Number of their well-imployed Inhabitants. A Kingdom with large extended Territories, and but few Subjects, muſt be of ſmall Conſequence, and make but a ſmall Figure in the World, tho' a large one in the Map. Of this, *Spain* is a glaring Inſtance: Before that Kingdom extended its Territories beyond the Proportion of its Subjects, it made a very conſiderable Figure in *Europe*: But ſince their immenſe Acquiſitions in the Golden World, tho' Maſters of all the Treaſures in *America*, they are *now* the moſt deſpicable State in *Europe*. But

A Number of Subjects *(unleſs profitably and uſefully imployed)* are not of any real Advantage or Strength

to the Government they live under: A Nation of Beggars, however numerous, *muſt* be a Burden to their Maſters, and often prove a very troubleſome Taſk to govern. *Pride, Rapine and Rebellion are the conſtant Attendants of Poverty.* If a People cannot by their Labour earn a Subſiſtance, they muſt ſteal or rob from ſuch as can. If they are furniſhed this Way, they muſt ſoon forget Labour, and purſue theſe Courſes that will ſatisfy their Wants with the ſmalleſt Fatigue to their Perſons. This muſt naturally ſet ſuch a Nation at Variance with their Governors, who would attempt to reſtrain their Licentiouſneſs; begets in them an Averſion to all Policy, and puts them upon Endeavours to ſhake off a Yoke that muſt ſeem irkſome to them. *Thus, we ſee, Seditions and Rebellions are the conſtant Produce of theſe Countries, where the Inhabitants are poor and idle.* And

To theſe ſame Cauſes may be attributed *that ungovernable Temper and Impatience under legal Reſtraint*, that diſtinguiſhes the *Highlanders* of *North-Britain* from all others in the *Iſland*; they are abſolutely poor, and in their own Country ſcarcely capable *(as Matters are now managed)* to earn a wretched Subſiſtance. As they are Strangers for the moſt Part to Traffick, have little or no Communication with the reſt of Mankind, they have contracted a Fierceneſs in their Manner. Having nothing to loſe, they are deſperate in their Undertakings; and, by Cuſtom, have imbibed an Affection to an unſettled and licentious Way of Living; and, of Neceſſity,

ceſſity, are obliged to pay an implicite Obedience to the Commands and Intereſts of their Chiefs, by whoſe Bounty and Connivance they are only enabled to keep Soul and Body together.

This Dependance, which the Neceſſity of the People, and the miſtaken Notions of their Chiefs daily increaſes, has been, and always muſt be the Occaſion of many Diſturbances in that Part of the united Kingdoms.

Half a Million of People which now poſſeſs the *Highlands* and adjacent *Iſles*, are ſo far from being a Strength to the Government, that their Neceſſities lay them always open to be practiſed upon by thoſe who have any Intereſt to diſturb the Peace of the State. Their licentious Manner of living, their natural Hardineſs, Activity and Fierceneſs, make them fit Inſtruments to execute any Undertaking. And ſo, we ſee, let the Government be what it will, theſe Men have been the chief Support and Abettors of all Inſurrections that at any Time has diſturb'd it.

This Poverty of theſe People is neither occaſioned by their natural Situation, nor to want of perſonal Abilities; but is owing intirely *to a Miſapplication of their Talents, and a Want of a ſmall Fund to begin and animate the firſt Attempts towards Induſtry.*

It is true, their Soil is not univerſally rich; yet their Mountains produce a very great Plenty of Herbage fit for feeding of Cattle, of which they have great Plenty, and their Valleys have many rich

rich Veins of Earth fit for producing any kind of Grain, if rightly cultivated: To this they are very much Strangers. The Inside of their Mountains are mostly replenished with rich *Mines* of *Lead* and *Copper*. These natural Advantages, if properly cultivated, would be of great Use to their Possessors; but not half so much as the Advantages that might arise from a prudent Management of the Herrings, Cod and Ling, that are to be had on all their Shores. Of the first of these the *Dutch* reap the whole Advantage, and draw from the Shores of this barren Tract of Land more Riches to their own Country than centers in *Spain* of all the Riches of *Peru* and *Mexico*. The famous Pensioner *De Witt* admits, that the *Dutch* employed 200000 Seamen in fishing and transporting the Fish taken on the Coast of *Great-Britain*, and caught and cured in his Time above 400000 Last, which he computes to be worth eighty Million of Guilders, very near eight Million Sterling. It is true, since that Time, the *Dutch* Fishing has declined; but what they lost has been taken up by the *Norwegians*, *Danes* and *French*. The Fish taken on our Shores by Foreigners are still the same, the Inhabitants of *Great-Britain* not having increased in their Share of this useful Branch.

It must surprize all the thinking Part of Mankind to see *Great-Britain* going to War with the *Emperor* and all *Europe* to procure a Share of the Trade of the *East-Indies*, waging War with *Spain*, and employing Millions to preserve the Trade of the

the *West-Indies* and the *Mediterranean*, and yet neglecting a Branch of Trade within its own Dominions, that of itself would employ ten times the Number of Hands, and, on a Balance, bring into the Kingdom ten times more Riches than all these Trades put together. For it is certain, if *Britain* would assert its exclusive Right of Fishing on its own Coasts, (a much more natural one than the *Spaniards* of searching on theirs) it behoved to follow, that *Britain* must gain eight Millions by the Trade, and employ 200000 Sailors, and about ten times as many Hands on Shore to supply the Shipping. Such an Increase of Riches and real Strength as would be worth going to War for, and spending some Millions in the Prosecution of.

But, if it should be thought ungenerous and invidious to desire a *Monopoly* of the whole, and the Advantages, tho' great, not worth the falling out with our Neighbours about; a Share of it at least is worth the looking for, if it can be gained at a small Expence, as it certainly may: For the Situation of the Highlands of *Scotland* to the Main of that Fishery is such, that with small Pains the Inhabitants of these Parts may be enabled to undersell all the Fishers in *Europe*, *the most infallible Method to gain a Branch of Trade.*

There has been several Attempts to encourage this Fishery, which have all proved abortive. There are at present very considerable Encouragements given to private Persons to make it advantageous for

for ſuch to proſecute it with Vigour; but the Succeſs does not anſwer Expectation, nor the Expence laid out upon it; and inſtead of enabling us to vie at foreign Markets with our Rivals, theſe very Encouragements have been a great Means to confirm them in the Trade.

I ſhall briefly run over the State of the Fiſhery at preſent, remark the moſt obvious Cauſes of our Miſcarriages, and offer at ſome Hints to put the Fiſhing upon a proſperous Footing, and remove the Obſtacles that lie in its Way.

That ſmall Share which we enjoy of the Herring-fiſhing is carried on in this Manner;

Thoſe *Shoals* of Herrings coming from the Northern Seas, that paſs between the Iſlands of *Shetland*, *Orkneys*, and the Main, are in theſe deep *Sounds* fiſhed for by the *Dutch*, *where we take a religious Care never to diſturb them*, and are again detached in ſmaller Shoals into the Creeks, Locks and Bays of ſhallow Water, that lie along the *North* and *North-weſtern* Shores of *Scotland*, where we ſearch for them; theſe are only the weaker ſort of Herrings, that are not able to ſtem the Currents, which ſet along that Coaſt from the *Weſtern Ocean*, which is one main and principal Reaſon that our Herrings will never draw at a foreign Market ſo great a Price as thoſe of the *Dutch*. All the Herrings taken by the *Scots*, (except thoſe in *Lochfine*) are ſo ſmall, that it will take nine hundred to fill a Barrel,

Barrel, whilſt of thoſe fiſh'd by the *Dutch* in deep Water, five or ſix hundred packs a Barrel; an Odds in Quality that muſt give great Odds at any Market.

Theſe ſmall Herrings are fiſhed by the Natives in ſmall Boats, of about 40 Barrel Burden, and ſold by them to Veſſels of between 50 and 60 Tuns, that attend from Place to Place on theſe Coaſts, with Salt and Barrels, on purpoſe to buy them. They are ſold by the Fiſhers by the Crane, which is the full of a Barrel, from Sixpence to Three Shillings. Two Barrels green will make about one Barrel of ſalted and packed Herrings; they are then gutted, and immediately ſalted and barrel'd, either on the Shore, or on board, by the Merchant, who ſeldom gives himſelf more Trouble about them, unleſs he re-packs them once, and in this Condition he ſends them to a foreign Market.

If it is to a warm Climate, it is ten to one but they rot: And to whatever Country they are ſent, they ſurely ruſt, or gild (as they call it); are black at the Bone, and never bought whilſt there is a *Dutch* Herring in the Market, and afterward only by the poorer Sort; being really only fit for Hogs, and give a Price accordingly: Inſomuch that, if it were not for the *Debenture*, and the Method of impoſing in that Article on the Crown, no Merchant would be concerned in the Trade. And as it is, there is ſcarce one in ten of any Character that meddles with it. The Reaſon is, if he takes no more than the

 legal

legal Bounty allowed by the Government; considering the Attendance of his Vessel for six Months, the Risque he runs of not getting a Cargo after all this certain Expence, and the Prime Cost of the Herrings themselves, the unhappy manner of curing what he buys, he cannot expect to draw a Price that will bring him even his own Money. In this Shape, no wise Man will employ his Stock above once; those that do, either are ruined, or must fall into Measures of defrauding the Government, to reimburse their Expence, which no Merchant of Reputation will care to meddle with.

Such is the wretched Condition of this Fishing. The first Error in Management worthy Observation is the Smallness of the Fishing Vessels employed, which are open Boats, and not able to carry a sufficient Quantity of Lines and Nets for fishing in deep Water. The *Scotch* Trustees appointed for encouraging Fisheries and Manufactures have been sensible of this Error, and has given an Encouragement of forty Shillings *per* Tun to every Vessel furnished with Nets and other Implements, that exceeds 30 or 40 Tun. This Encouragement is considerable; but the largeness of the Vessel required is an effectual Bar to the Success desired; for, tho' for several Years that *Præmium* has been offered, there are but very few who have accepted.

The *Dutch* indeed use Vessels of this Burden, but of a great many below it. The Reason they use Vessels of so large a Bulk is, that they are obliged to land

land these Herrings in *Holland* before they carry them to Market. It is evident, as they have so great a Run, it is their Interest to have large Vessels, that will carry something worth the length of their Voyage: This is not our Case. The deep Waters where they fish, is in no Place above four Leagues from Shore, where they may carry their Herrings, as often as they have taken a Loading, without a Day's Hindrance to their Fishing. Now,

Every Man, who lies convenient for the Fishing, is not able to build a Vessel of that Bulk. This Observation the Event justifies. There is not one Buss in *Scotland*, belonging to the Natives of those Shores, that are contiguous to the Fishing: The few that are, belong to Merchants, who fit them out at double the Disadvantage the Natives could.

Vessels at twelve, or at most fifteen Ton, of a proper Mould, and Decked, would carry as many Nets and Lines as would be necessary to keep on board till they were brought on Shore, would answer to all Intents and Purposes for the Fishing, as well as the large ones, and have these manifest Advantages, they would be easier purchased, three or four of the Natives joining would be able to compass the Price of one of these, whilst a hundred of them are not able to muster up the Price of a large Buss. In the next Place, when Storm and the Season of the Year would put an End to the Fishing in deep Water, these small Vessels and all their Tackling could be employed in Shallow Water, which the

 larger

larger could not: This would render the Fiſhing leſs precarious than at preſent, as it could ſcarcely happen that it would miſgive both in deep Water and ſhallow in the ſame Year. Beſides

The Seaſon for the deep Fiſhing is always over before that in *Creeks* and *Lochs* begins; except in the *Loch* before mentioned, where the Fiſhing begins very near as early as in the deep Water, and continues for 4 Months; after that is over, and after the *Herring* Seaſon is over theſe ſame Veſſels might be employed in *Cod* and *Ling* Fiſhing 'till the Return of the ſame Seaſon again; which Veſſels of a larger Bulk are not proper for, on theſe Shores.

The next Diſadvantage I ſhall obſerve, is, the, at leaſt, impolitick, (if not ill-warranted Exactions) of the *Proprietors* of the Shores where the *Fiſhing* is carried on. His Grace the *Duke* of *Argile* makes a Demand of 16 *Shillings* and 8 *Pence* from every Boat that has catch'd 2 Herrings in the Seaſon within the Bounds of his Grace's Juriſdiction, which extends, in Reſpect to this Tax, from *Pentland Firth* to the *Mull* of *Galloway*, which comprehends the whole of the *Fiſhing-Shore*.

When theſe poor *Fiſhers* have paid his Grace this Toll, they are obliged in the Proſecution of their *Fiſhing* to pay to the Proprietors of the *Shores* that lie *North* of the *Shire* of *Argile* the ſame Impoſition, and that as often as they ſhall happen to *fiſh* on the Coaſts of different Proprietors, which may

may be three or four Times in a Year. Others of theſe *Proprietors* oblige their Tennants, or ſuch as *fiſh* within their Bounds, to pay them every *fifth* Day's *fiſhing*, and to ſell the other *four* to whom they pleaſe, and at what *Price* they pleaſe. If the *Fiſhers*, for their Conveniency, land any of their *Fiſh* upon the *Beach*, they are obliged to pay what Exaction theſe *northern Proprietors* or their *Bailiffs* ſhall judge proper, and for the Uſe of uſeleſs *Bruſhwood*, or *Heath* for *firing*, as great a *Price* as if it were purchaſed in the City of *London*.

By the Means of theſe repeated Exactions, there is not one of theſe ſmall Boats, whoſe intrinſic Value, with all her Tackling, is ſcarce worth *ten Pounds*, but muſt pay a Duty of betwixt *forty Shillings* and *three Pounds* every *fiſhing Seaſon*; beſides, theſe poor People being obliged, at the *Whim* of one or other of theſe *Proprietors*, to leave their *fiſhing*, perhaps when at the *heighth*, to give Attendance at their Courts as often as they pleaſe, under the *Penalty* of ſevere *Fines*.

I cannot help owning myſelf at a loſs to find out upon what Grounds the Proprietors of theſe *Shores* eſtabliſh their Right to this Duty. I can find no *Statute* that warrants this Exaction, tho' I am convinced nothing leſs than a Statute can juſtify ſuch Demands. But whether theſe Exactions are claimed under a juſt or an unjuſt Title, it muſt appear evident to Mankind, that they are not calculated for encouraging the *Herring Fiſhery*. They

They discourage those People from pursuing it chearfully, since they know a great Part of their Labour is not for themselves, but for those who have no Regard to a Disappointment in the Season, and must have their Toll whether legal or illegal, or whether or not the *Fishers* have made as much the whole Year as their Demands amount to; and this must necessarily increase the prime Cost of the Fish, and hinder the more substantial Sort of the Natives from being concerned in a Trade which subjects them to certain Expence, and is in itself *precarious*.

It is impossible to make any thing of *Slaves* but *Slaves*, except Liberty and Property is secured to these People in some Measure equal to the rest of his Majesty's Subjects; all Undertakings in which they are necessary must move in a slow Pace, and miscarry *ten times* for *once* they succeed; and *Encouragements* and *Premiums* for Exportation are useless, unless the *Fishers* are invited to *fish* by at least securing their Property in what they fish, and protecting them during the Season from the Tyranny of their *petty Chieftains*. If *Fish* is taken, and the Merchant can purchase them at a moderate Price, there is no fear but they will be carried to Market.

The *next Error* in our *Herring-fishing*, is, the Practice of the Merchant in *freighting* a Vessel, which he loads in the Month of *July* with *Salt*, *Casks* and *Provisions* necessary for the fishing; with which Vessel he attends on these *Shores*, always following

lowing the *Fishers* from Place to Place, until after *Christmas* at least six Months. This is a *terrible* Article of certain Expence added to the *prime Cost* and other Contingencies of the *Herrings*; an Expence the *Dutch* shun for the most part, tho' they have more Reason to follow that Practice than we. Their general Method is, so soon as a Buss has caught her Loading, she returns to some of the Ports of *Holland*, where the *Fish* are properly cured, and there the Merchant buys them, and not till then. Sometimes indeed it happens, that a large Vessel goes from one of those Ports on account of the *Fishers* in that Part, and is loaded so soon as she comes, and immediately sent back, whilst the *Busses* remain at the *fishing*. But it never was known, that a Vessel was freighted by a Merchant in *Holland*, and sent to attend the *Fishers* to buy up a Cargo; nor does ever one of these few *Carriage* Vessels leave *Holland* till she is certain that her *Cargo* is *fished*; whereas our Merchantmen are there perhaps a Month or two before a Herring is fished, and not one in ten of them make their Loading in the Season.

This prodigious Expence, which is more than *two Thirds* of the Value of the *Herrings* when cured, might be saved, if the Merchants would agree not to buy any *Herrings* till they were brought to Shore, and likewise agree upon some Place centrical to the *fishing* on Shore, where they might have their Factors to buy up the Herrings when brought to them; such a Place might be found that would not be twenty

twenty Leagues diſtant from any Part of the Fiſhing; Such a Mart would ſave all that vaſt Expence, and bring the Herrings to the Merchant, at leaſt, one half cheaper than at preſent, and allow the Fiſher one half more than he gets. It would make the univerſal Price of Herrings more certain by all the Fiſh coming to one *Market*; whereas, at preſent, there is nothing more uncertain; They ſhall perhaps be giving in one *Creek* three Shillings *per Crane*, whilſt in another not ten Miles diſtant, they ſhall be ſold for twelve Pence; and this Difference is not owing to the Odds of the Quantity of *Herrings* taken in either, but to ſome Accident that determined more of the Merchants Ships to remain in the one *Creek* than in the other. Another Advantage, ſuperior to all the reſt, is, that the Herrings, in ſuch a Caſe, might be properly cured, by the Help of a few ſkilful Salters, which in the preſent Management, would require an infinite Number.

The next Error I ſhall obſerve, is, a Practice amongſt the Merchants, of endeavouring to engage the Fiſhing-Boats to ſell their Herrings to them by a certain ſtated Bounty, in this Manner. As ſoon as a Merchantman comes up to the Fleet, he engages as many Boats as he can, by promiſing each of them every Week, and ſome every Day, ſuch a certain Quantity of Spirits, ſo much Bread, and ſo much Meat, whether they kill or not, over and above the Price of the Herrings. Every Merchant vying with another, has raiſed theſe Perquiſites to an

an exorbitant Height, and adds vaſtly to the certain Expence of the Fiſhing; is, in the main, an unfair way of Trade; a kind of fore-ſtalling of the Market; makes the Fiſhers lazy, when they know they are to have their Perquiſites, kill or not kill. Tho' it inhances the Price of the Commodity to the Merchant, yet the Fiſher has but a nominal Value for his Fiſh; the principal Article of theſe Perquiſites being adulterated *French* Brandy, of no real Advantage to the poor Man's Family. It is true, Spirits are neceſſary for his Support; but if he was to receive Money only for his Herrings, tho' he would buy ſome Spirits, yet 'tis reaſonable to ſuſpect he would not drink ſo much as he does, when he fooliſhly imagines he gets it for nothing: For, when the Fiſher is raiſing the Perquiſites, he imagines them all for nothing; not being ſagacious enough to comprehend, that the more he gets in this manner, the leſs the Merchant is able to give him for his Herrings in Specie, whoſe Price is not aſcertain'd at this previous Bargain. Since I have mentioned Spirits, I cannot here help taking Notice of a villanious kind of Barter carried on with theſe poor People; that is, of *French* Brandy that never paid Duty, and Tobacco, for which the Merchant has drawn Debenture. This is ſo much practiſed, that I ſpeak within Bounds when I aver, that two Thirds of the Price of the Herrings is paid the Fiſhers in theſe two Articles; by which Means, *France* and the Smugler run away with two Thirds of the ſmall Fiſhing we have.

The next Error in Management, which I ſhall take Notice of, regards the Method of curing, in which we are miſerably miſtaken; and, till that Error is mended, all our preceding Labour muſt be in vain; and we need not expect to vie with the *Dutch* in any Market, let us purchaſe never ſo cheap, unleſs we can ſay, they are as good as theirs. *The Property of a well pickled Herring, is to be clean on the outſide, white at the Bone when broken, and ſo firm, that they bear to bend the Tail upon the Head, without breaking. The Diſeaſe they are moſt liable to, is to rot; its Symptoms are Blackneſs and Brittleneſs of the Fiſh, and ruſting on the outſide.* Theſe are occaſioned either by Blood remaining in the Fiſh, or their not being purged from a Slime and Oil that is about them when taken. The fatter Herrings are, they have more of the laſt; but if that is not taken from them, they will ruſt, if they were to be put in a Salt Mine; this is only to be done by changing the Pickles, compreſſing the Herrings, and ſcumming the Oil.

The Method the *Dutch* uſe is as follows. So ſoon as the Herrings are taken out of the Nets, they are gutted, are ſalted in the Hold of the Buſs in Bulk, where they lie and purge away the Blood; and by their Weight upon one another, and additional Weights put upon them, they are compreſſed, and the Oil, by that Means, ſqueezed out of them. When they are landed in *Holland*, they are taken out of the Hold; a clean and ſtrong Pickle made for them; in Part of which they are waſhed and barrelled

barrelled up; and as they are packing, they are beat down with a heavy Weight, or Screw, at ſeveral Diſtances in the Barrel, which is heaped up full, and a Weight laid upon it, till it ſubſides. After they have remained in the Barrel for ſome Time, they are taken out, and again re-packed, with the ſame Preſſures as before; the Head is then forced in, and the Barrel blown: It is then laid upon its Side, and the Bung taken out: About the Mouth of the Bung is placed ſome Clay, about an Inch high; the Barrel is then filled up with clean new Pickle, to the Brim of the Clay. All the Barrels being thus uſed, a Man goes round every one of them with a Mallet, and beats upon the Ends and Sides of the Barrels once every two Hours; if there is any Oil in the Barrel, it riſes by Degrees to the Top of the Brim that is ſurrounded with the Clay, and is then ſcummed off, and the Clay always kept full: This is continued till no more Oil appears, when the Barrels are bunged up, and are fit for any Market.

The Method at preſent practiſed by the *Scotch*, is only; So ſoon as the Herrings are gutted, they barrel them, and preſs them a little in packing; in the Barrel they remain for ſome Time, and are, at laſt, re-packed with the ſame Salt and Pickle, with a little more preſſing; the Barrel is then cloſed up, and ſo ſent to Market. The Difference in the Management is plain, and the Conſequences obvious. In the Hold, or by ſalting in Bulk any where elſe, the Herrings are purged from

Blood and Filth; all this goes into the firſt *Scotch* Barrel, and ſo into the ſecond. By their lying in Bulk, they are more compreſſed, and the Oil better ſqueezed out of them; whereas the *Scotch* Herrings, by the Oil, are always ruſty; and, for want of compreſſing, the Barrel, when it comes to Market, wants a Fifth of being full.

At preſent, as the Fiſhing is managed, it is almoſt impoſſible to put it under any Regulation: But if it was carried on by Boats of 15 Tun, which a ſmall Encouragement, perhaps of twenty Shillings *per* Tun for every Veſſel above ten Tun, properly deck'd, rigg'd, and furniſhed with proper Implements for the deep Water, would bring it to; theſe Veſſels might ſalt in their Holds a Fortnight's or a Month's Fiſhing, and then bring them to ſuch a Mart as is above propoſed, where a few ſkilful Salters, properly inſtructed, and encouraged at the publick Expence, would ſoon bring them to go through the reſt of the Aparatus.

The next Misfortune we labour under, is, the dangerous Practices uſed in obtaining fraudulent *Debentures*. The Government allow half a *Crown* for every Barrel of *Herrings* ſalted with foreign Salt, and exported. Theſe *Herrings* are chiefly exported from the *Cuſtom-houſe* of *Stornua*, *Fort-William* and *Cambeltoun*; all three Places (but eſpecially the two firſt) of no Trade, and the legal Perquiſites of the Officers ſo few, and their ſettled Appointment ſo ſmall, that its almoſt *morally* impoſſible they can live

live without ſpunging on the Subject, and conniving at Frauds in the *Revenue*. Few People of a liberal Education, or that can be better provided for, caring to go to ſo remote Parts; The Conſequence of this, is, that a great many of thoſe who are concerned in this Trade, go with a premeditated Deſign to impoſe upon the Government. Their firſt Step is, when their Ship is regiſtrated by tipping he *Officer* who meaſures: She is certified to be *thrice* her real Burden. They next enter, perhaps, *ten* Times more than the Quantity of Salt they have on Board; in this Manner; the Veſſel is ſuppoſed to be but fifty *Tun* in Reality; but the Officer ſuppoſes her to be 150: There is, perhaps, 10 *Tun* of Salt on Board, which, by means of ſome empty Caſk, is raiſed up to the Mouth of the Hatch; by this Means the Ship to the *Officer* appears full. He is not at the Trouble of examining or meaſuring, but makes a groſs Computation from the ſuppoſed Bulk of the Ship, and receives the ſmall Duty accordingly, and gives Credit to the Merchant for exporting as many *Barrels* of *Herrings* as there are Buſhels in 150 *Tun*.

The Salt thus entered, the Merchant goes in Search of his *Herrings*, if he makes as many Barrels as his Ship will carry, its well; but, if he ſhould chance to make but a couple of *Laſt*, it will anſwer his Turn. The empty Barrels are put firſt in the *Hold*, and whatever Number of full ones there are on Top, he now comes to make out his Debenture. The *Officer* to make a Shew of Diligence, perhaps,

haps, looks at the firſt or ſecond *Tyre* of full *Barrels*, ſees the Veſſel is full, computes how many *Barrels* a Ship of her ſuppoſed Burden will carry, and for that Number makes out to the Merchant a Debenture. Thus we ſee *Debenture* is paid for 150 *Tuns* of *Herrings*, when in Reality, there are not exported above three or four *Tuns*: If the *Fraud* ſtopped here, it would be tolerable; but not ſatisfied with this, the Ship is entered under different Names in 2 or 3 different Ports, where the ſame *Scene* is conſtantly acted over as was mentioned firſt. I will not pretend to charge all the Dealers with theſe *Frauds*; but, that a great Number of them practice this is undeniable. The Conſequences are, that People of ſmall and indigent Fortunes engage in this Trade with no View of making Profit by the Fiſh, but by impoſing on the Government; this tempts them to buy from the Fiſhers at an extravagant Price, the few they take makes them careleſs of the Manner of curing, their Profit not depending on the Quality, but the Number of *Barrels* they can muſter up to make a Show, enables them to underſel the fair Trader, if any there are; and yet all this immenſe *Fraud* cannot give them the Preference, at any Market, to the *Dutch Herrings*, becauſe of the wretched Manner they cure them: *And this is an evident Demonſtration, that an Improvement in their Quality is the only Means to give us a Chance for a Share in that Trade.*

Theſe are the many Errors in Management that hinder us from enjoying a Branch of Trade, that Nature

Nature ſeems to have thrown in our Mouths, but *Tantalus-like*, we have not as yet *the Power to uſe it.* Its not improbable but the Knowledge of our Errors is half way towards amending them. And, perhaps, the Methods hinted at above might be effectual; *To wit*, that the Encouragement of 40 *Shillings per Tun* now given to Veſſels of 40 *Tun*, and upwards employed in *Fiſhing* be converted to a *Præmium* of 20 *Shillings per Tun*, to every Veſſel above twelve *Tun* properly equipped for the *deep Water fiſhing*. Secondly, that no Merchant be allowed to buy Herrings till they are brought to Shore. Thirdly, that a centrical Place be appointed, where Merchants might keep *Factors* to buy *Herrings* for them. Fourthly, That a *Cuſtom-houſe* be ſettled in that Place for clearing out *Herrings* for Export, and that none be cleared out for Export, but in that one *Port*. Fifthly, That in that *Port*, there ſhould reſide four or five Commiſſioners with *genteel Salaries*, whoſe Buſineſs it ſhould be to inſpect a proper Number of *Salters* in the *curing* of all *Herrings* deſigned for Export; that the *Salters* ſhould have *Salaries* from the *Government*, beſides 2 Pence *per Barrel* from the Merchants; that theſe Commiſſioners ſuppoſed to be Men ſkilled in *Fiſhing*, ſhould have Power to lay down Rules to the *Salters* for their Direction in managing the Herrings; and that no Change be made in the State of the *Herrings* but at the Sight of one of the *Commiſſioners*; that is, that the *Commiſſioners* be ſatisfied by Inſpection, that the *Herrings* have lain long enough in *Bulk* before they are firſt packed, and have been long enough packed, before they are repacked

repacked, and that they have been properly compressed, and the *Oil* sufficiently taken from them before they are closed up for Exportation. Sixthly, That each Barrel so closed up should be branded by the *Salter* in Presence of the *Commissioner* with a proper Mark and Number. Seventhly, That the Collector of the *Port* should not make out a *Clearance* or *Debenture*, but upon a *Certificate* signed by the *Salter* and *Commissioner*, signifying the Number of *Barrels*, and their Marks and Numbers; and upon another *Certificate* signed by the proper Officer, certifying the same Number with the same Marks to be shipped in his Presence. And lastly, that the Fisher should be freed from all Imposition on any Pretence whatsoever, and be allowed the Liberty of curing their Fish, and drying their Nets on Shore without any Tax on that Accompt or for the Use of useless Brushwood or Heath. These *Rules*, in a short Time, would bring our *Herrings* into Repute, encourage the *Natives* to prosecute the Fishing (the only Persons capable of succeeding) and discourage, and effectually put a Stop to fraudulent Debentures, which would perfectly answer the End proposed by the Government, as the Bounty would only be given to such as deserved it; such as had *cured Fish*, that would bring Credit to our *Market*.

There is this Objection, which will naturally occur, that as there are two Fishings carried on, one in the *Murray-firth* and Eastern Parts, and the other on the *North* and *North-west* Shores, that one Port could not serve both. That which I have been hitherto

therto describing is the latter, and by far the most considerable; and I only meant that one *Port* would be sufficient to carry on that *fishing* to Advantage; but if the other *fishing* was thought of Consequence enough to bear the Expence, another Port would serve that.

The additional Expence of one or both these *Ports* is only the *Commissioners* and *Salters*, and might be raised out of the Revenue alotted for encouraging *Fisheries* and *Manufactures* in *Scotland*, there being upwards of 20000 *l.* lying unemployed of that Fund.

I have hitherto confined myself to the *Herring-fishing*, as the most considerable, tho' the other of *Cod* and *Ling* might be made very valuable if properly encouraged. We cannot *cure* near so well nor so cheap these *Fish* as the *Dutch*; but if the *Præmium* that is now given was confined to *Fish* shipped from such a *Port* as I have mentioned above, our Errors in *curing* might be corrected; and as the *Præmium* proposed to be given for Vessels of twelve or fifteen *Tun* would increase the Number of these Vessels, so they would be employed the one Half of the Year in this *Cod-fishing*; and I take it, that a Number of *Lines* and *Hooks* given *gratis*, (which would amount to no great Expence) would be a great Means to further this *Branch* of *fishing* amongst these poor People.

The same *Frauds* are committed in the *Debentures* for these *Fish* as the *Herrings*, and constantly

 will

will be, whilſt they depend upon the Honeſty of theſe remote *Collectors*, &c. I thought to have hinted particularly at the *Errors* of this *Branch* of *fiſhing*; but this Diſcourſe has ſwelled to ſuch a Length, I am obliged to avoid it till another Opportunity.

The Methods above propoſed, will, in a great Meaſure, make us better *Fiſhers* and better *Salters*, and bring us a better *Price* for what we ſend to Market. But there is ſomething more wanting to enable us to make a Figure in this Trade, that is *Money*. The *Natives* of themſelves, nor indeed all thoſe commonly *now* concerned, have not ſufficient *Stock* to *launch* out into this Trade. *For this Reaſon*, it would be abſolutely neceſſary to raiſe a *Company* with a ſufficient *Stock* to employ the *Natives*; there has been ſeveral Attempts to raiſe ſuch a *Company*, but hitherto with *little* Succeſs; a Spirit of growing haſtily rich in the *Proprietors* of *Stock*, the *Covetouſneſs* and *Profuſeneſs* of their *Managers*, have generally ruined theſe *Undertakings*. However, theſe *Miſcarriages* ought not to *diſcourage* all ſuch; but *only* teach us to avoid the *Errors* that *occaſioned* them.

I am perſuaded, to raiſe Money by *Subſcription* purely for that Purpoſe, would ſcarcely ſucceed; but it is not improbable but Money might be raiſed by a Lottery ſufficient to anſwer the End; ſome for the Sake of the Lottery, others for the Sake of the

the *Fiſhery*, would make ſufficient Number of *Subſcribers*.

100000 *l.* in the Hands of proper Managers, would be ſufficient for an *Eſſay*, and might be augmented as Occaſion required, and might be raiſed in this Manner; let 500000 *l.* be raiſed by a *Lottery* of 100000 *Tickets*, at 5 *l.* each, diſtributed into Blanks and Prizes, as follows.

2	at 10000 *l.* each,	——	20000
4	5000	——	20000
8	2500	——	20000
12	2000	——	24000
24	1000	——	24000
48	500	——	24000
96	250	——	24000
192	200	——	38400
384	100	——	38400
768	50	——	38400
1535	25	——	38375
2272	20	——	45440
2599	15	——	38985
10000	10	*in Fiſhery Stock.*	100000
82056	Blanks		
100000			

Firſt drawn	1000
Laſt drawn	5000
	500000

In this Scheme I would propose, that the 10000 ten Pound *Prizes* should be incorporated into a *capital Stock* of 1000 *Shares*, being 100 *l.* each *Share*, for carrying on the fishing; *that is*, the Proprietors of these *Prizes* should be by *Charter* erected into a *Company*, in order to carry on the *Herring* and other *fishing* on the *North* and *North-west Coast* of *Scotland*. That the *Company* should have *Liberty* to *fish* in all the *Lochs*, *Creeks*, and *Bays*, (but not exclusive of others) without being subject to any *Toll* or *Duty* whatever for *such* Liberty. That the *Affairs* of this *Company* should be managed by five *Directors*, a *Governor*, *Vice-governor*, a *Casheer*, *Accomptant* and *Comptroller*, whose Settlement should be in such a *Port*, supposed to be fixed as the general *Mart* above hinted at.

That the first *Directors* be chosen by the *Parliament*, and to continue for one *Year*, and afterwards three of the *Directors* and one of the *Governors* to be chosen *annually* by a *general Court*, two *Directors* and a *Governor*, remaining in Office for two Years, but no longer, unless re-chosen.

That there should be a *Clause* in the Charter to prevent the Embezlement of the *Company's* Money by *Sallaries* and useless *Officers*, restraining the *Directors* from charging the *Proprietors* with a *Sum* exceeding 5000 *l.* for the Article of Expence of Management. This *Sum*, considering the *Country* they are

are to live in, is sufficient for all the *Sallaries* it will be necessary for them to pay.

This 100000 *l.* raised in this Manner, without any Expence to the *Public*, and an insensible one to the *Proprietors*, would give *new* Life to *this* Trade, employ a vast Number of the *Natives* usefully that are now idle, and bring a reasonable Profit to the *Proprietors*; but that I look upon as the smallest Advantage arising to the *Public*, tho' it were certain that the *Company* should gain little or nothing, which can happen only from their own Mismanagement; yet that should not discourage the Government to undertake it, because this Sum *annually* employed for a few *Years*, would infallibly, in conjunction with the other Methods proposed in the Beginning of this Discourse, bring us at least a *Share*, if not the whole of this profitable *Trade*.

The common People are generally tenacious of their old Customs; and are never to be beat out of them all at once. They must have *Examples* set before them before they can be convinced of the *plainest* Truths. Such a *Company* as is *now* proposed, would answer that End, could bear the Expence of making *Experiments*, which a private Person cannot, and would be capable to *pursue* the Trade, tho' the *Fish* should not *swim* for a *Year* or *two*: But such an Accident would ruin all the private *Undertakers* now concerned in it.

I have

I have hitherto confined myſelf to the Conſideration of the Advantages ariſing to the Inhabitants of theſe Parts from an induſtrious and prudent Management of the Fiſhery; but if we conſider the Benefit which may be drawn from an Increaſe of that Trade to the Strength of the royal Navy, it will ſtill appear to be more worthy the Conſideration of the Public.

The Nation in general are agreed that ſome Meaſures are neceſſary to be uſed to enable his Majeſty to man the Fleet with the proper Compliment of Men in an eaſier Method than has hitherto been fallen upon.

As that Affair is now under the Conſideration of Parliament, Meaſures will be purſued, no doubt, that ſhall be thought moſt conducive to that End, and at the ſame Time eaſieſt for the Subject.

A voluntary Regiſter of the Seamen, and a certain annual Penſion to ſuch as inregiſter themſelves, will, no doubt, be of great Uſe; but I am afraid that alone will not be ſufficient to anſwer the End propoſed.

If there was in the Kingdom as many Sailors as would ſerve to man the royal Navy and the Merchants Service alſo, it would be no great Difficulty to perſuade the Sailors to enter into his Majeſty's Service; for

for granting that the Difference of Pay would make them prefer the Merchants Service, yet the Remainder would certainly go voluntarily into the King's, rather than ſtarve at home for any conſiderable Time.

If this is the Caſe, that the Difficulty of manning the Navy ariſes from a real Scarcity of Sailors, the whole Matter turns into a Competition betwixt the King and the Merchant which of them ſhall have the Sailors, and he that offers moſt, no doubt, will carry it, if the Sailors have a Vote in it, which brings us under this Dilemma, that if the Government ſhall give ſuch Encouragement to Sailors that the Merchant cannot exceed, Trade, ſo far as the Deficiency of Sailors will amount to, muſt ſtop. If the Encouragement is not ſo large but that the Merchant can give higher, any Præmium given by the Government will have no other Effect than to inhance the Wages of Sailors, and lay an additional Embargo upon Trade. I have a very great Opinion of the generous Temper of the *Britiſh* Sailors, but cannot help thinking they will prefer the Maſter who gives moſt to he that gives leſs, tho' the more honourable of the two.

As his Majeſty is at preſent engaged in a War in Defence of the Trade and Honour of theſe Kingdoms, I am perſuaded the Merchant, who is principally concerned in the Event of the War, will, no doubt, chearfully ſacrifice the preſent Time,

Time, I mean the Profits that might be expected during the Continuance of the War, for the Sake of his future Security in time of Peace; but it may not be unworthy the Consideration of the Public to think on Means to hinder them from falling under the same Difficulty for the Time to come.

If it be admitted that the Difficulty in manning the Navy arises from a Scarcity of Sailors, it will easily be allowed, that all Measures that does not tend to encrease their Number, will fall short of the Success we expect.

That encreasing the Wages of Sailors either in his Majesty's or the Merchants Service, will have but a small Effect in encreasing the Number of Sailors in general, few, that have considered the Matter, will doubt. We cannot be so sanguine as to imagine that such Encouragement will bring any over from our Neighbours; if it in any Measure hinders their going abroad, it is all that can be expected.

There must be an annual Decrease of our Sailors of at least *every tenth Man*, by those, who, after a few Years, leaves off the Business, and settles at home; by such as grow superannuate and unfit for Service; by those who die natural Deaths, or of Distempers common to other Men; by such as die in hot Countries, and of Distempers and Accidents

to

to which their Way of Life is exposed; by such as desert the Service, and settle in foreign Countries; I say, by all these Means, we must compute that the Number of able bodied Seamen decrease at least one Tenth.

If this Decrease is not supplied by an equal Number, we must soon be reduced to very bad Circumstances, and I am afraid the Increase of late is not equal to the Decrease. But our Increase, to answer our Purposes, must exceed the Decrease as much as the whole Number of Sailors is less than the Number necessary to supply our Wants.

We have no other Way of breeding Seamen, but either as Apprentices aboard our Ships, or by our inland Navigation. Such as have lived to serve out a seven Years Apprentiship aboard a Merchantman, I believe will scarce be persuaded to go aboard a Man of War.

The Increase of our inland Navigation is then the most natural Way to get an Increase of Seamen, and if we examine the Matter to the Bottom, we shall find that the Advantage the *Dutch* and *French* have over us in manning their Fleets, is more owing to that, than to any Policy they use in that Matter.

The Fisheries in both Countries are vastly superior to ours, and more than sufficient to answer the

 Decrease

Decreaſe of Seamen neceſſary in their foreign Fleets.

This Nurſery raiſes a Number of ſtrong robuſt Hands, ſeaſoned to all the Hardſhips of the Sea, and yet accuſtomed to earn ſo ſmall Wages in the Fiſhery, that they always take the firſt Opportunity to leave this laborious Way of Life, and enter into the Merchant and the Government's Service, where they prove as good Sailors as thoſe who have been from their Infancy on board a Merchantman.

The Fiſhery I have been ſpeaking of, may, in a few Years, be made capable of employing 100000 Sailors, out of which it would be no Manner of Difficulty to man the royal Navy, and their Places would ſoon be ſupplied with Landmen, who are capable in a few Weeks of being made as uſeful in the Fiſhery as the moſt experienced Sailors.

As the Safety of *Great-Britain* depends entirely on the Royal Navy, and the manning of that Fleet depends upon the Increaſe of our Sailors, and eſpecially thoſe employ'd in the Inland Navigation; it would ſeem that *That* of itſelf ſhould be Argument ſufficient to induce every true Patriot to ſet about an Enquiry into the State of the Fiſhery, and to give it all the Encouragement that ſo uſeful a Branch of Trade requires.

As

As this Iſland is happy in a numerous People, and ſo much of their Happineſs depends upon the Increaſe of that uſeful Society of their SAILORS; and that ſuch an univerſal Spirit of Charity reigns over the whole, as may appear by the great Increaſe of Charity-Schools; it may not be impoſſible to render that Charity uſeful towards manning our Fleet.

There are, in *Great-Britain*, about 28000 Boys educated in theſe Schools, of which I compute about 5000 may be annually put out to, or are fit for Trades: If the Managers of theſe Schools were hindered from putting the Boys to any other Trade, but to the Sea, it might produce a very good Effect; as in this manner.

When a Boy is about Fifteen, the Managers ſhould bind him, by Indenture, to the Maſter of a Merchant-ſhip, for ſeven Years, four of which he ſhould be obliged to ſerve the Merchant, receiving nothing but his Diet and Cloathing, and the other three he ſhould be obliged to ſerve on board one of His Majeſty's Ships for One Third Pay.

By this Means, after four Years, His Majeſty would be annually ſupply'd with 5000 Sailors, for One Third Wages; and theſe Sailors, who are ſuppoſed to be about nineteen Years of Age, as capable of Service as ever they will be thereafter.

Such

Such an annual Increaſe of our Inland Navigation, would certainly enable His Majeſty to man his Fleet, without the preſent troubleſome Method of impreſſing.

It is poſſible I may be wrong in the Methods propoſed for encouraging this Fiſhery; but it is impoſſible that I can be miſtaken in what I affirm, that it is a Matter worthy the utmoſt Attention of the Legiſlature to beſtow ſome Thoughts on, if there was no other Motive, but the Employment of ſo great a Number of People as inhabit that Fiſhing-Coaſt, whoſe idle Diſpoſitions are of dangerous Conſequences to the Peace of the Nation; but more eſpecially, when that Employment muſt neceſſarily add ſo great a Strength to the Royal Navy.

I cannot be miſtaken likewiſe, when I affirm that all the Nation wiſh that ſomething were done towards that *great Work*; and that nothing could be more grateful to *Scotland* than ſuch a Settlement; that nothing could tend more to quiet the Minds of thoſe reſtleſs People (I mean the *Highlanders*;) or ſtrengthen their too much *wavering* Loyalty; or increaſe their Affection to his *Majeſty*'s *Government*, than that the Government ſhould by ſome Means enable them to earn their Bread in this beneficial Way; and in that manner convince them that they enjoy the *Protection* of that *Government* they ought to ſupport. *For, at preſent, unleſs Poverty and abſolute Slavery*

Commands of their many Petty-Tyrants
Protection, they enjoy nothing elſe;
that none can wonder tho' they
us to preſerve.

that if ſuch a Work was begun,
in that Part of the united Kingdoms
get their *Diſtinctions*; and would join to a
ſupport that Government, that had reſcued
n from Poverty, and put into their ſtarving
Hands ſo *unvaluable* a Bleſſing. The Intereſt of half a Million of People inhabiting near the fourth Part of *Scotland* certainly deſerves ſome Attention, eſpecially when their Happineſs may be purchaſed, and ſo great an Addition to the real Strength of the united Kingdoms at ſo ſmall, or rather at no Expence, as it certainly may if the foregoing Scheme is rational.

F I N I S.
