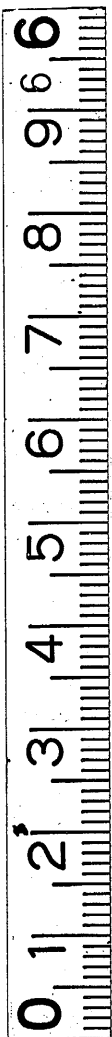


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Seasonable Observations *n*

On the present

FATAL DECLENSION

O F T H E

GENERAL COMMERCE

O F

E N G L A N D.

I N W H I C H

The genuine Cause of the DECAY
of our *Woollen Manufactures* is particu-
larly considered.

A N D

Plain and Particable Methods are
proposed for retrieving the NATIONAL
TRADE, before it be *past* Recovery.

Dedicated to Sir JOHN BARNARD, Knt.

L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by J. HUGGONSON, near
Seargeants-Inn in Chancery-Lane, 1737.
[Price One Shilling Six-pence.]



T H E
D E D I C A T I O N

T O

Sir JOHN BARNARD, Knt.



O U R consummate
Knowledge of the true
Interest of your Coun-
try; your Zeal and
unwearied Application
in the Discharge of your Duty
as a Legislator, and your Ex-
perience in Trade, intitle you, be-
yond most Gentlemen of your
Country, to the Patronage of a
Treatise purely calculated for re-
trieving our decayed Manufactures
and Commerce, for discharging our

ii *The* DEDICATION to

Debts, for restraining our excessive Luxury, and for rendering us, what we once have been, a happy and flourishing People.

I am sensible there are Numbers of our Nobility and Gentry that are indued with extensive natural and acquired Talents, and I believe them equally zealous and assiduous in their virtuous Care of our Liberties and Properties; but there are few who understand, like you, the real Springs, the several various Channels, or the true Nature of Trade.

The Theory alone of Trade is not sufficient, without some Degree of Experience, to guide the Patriot-legislator in his Schemes for cultivating and encouraging the Commerce of his Country: Without this experimental Knowledge he will be always liable to Error, and to the Imposition of those

Sir JOHN BARNARD, *Knt.* iii

those who find their particular Account in misleading him. I am sorry to say that almost every Sessions of Parliament has furnished us with melancholy Examples of this Complexion.

How often have we seen the *L* ----- *re* byassed by the Interest and Craft of particular Men? How often has the private Advantage of this or that County or Borough, of this or that *great Man*, prevented the passing of Laws for promoting general Utility? But your long Experience and Knowledge of Ministerial Intrigues, and of the undue Influence of particular Persons, make it unnecessary for me to be more minute on this Head.

You have seen these Foibles of our Constitution with a generous Concern, and have virtuously interposed whenever you imagined,
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vi *The* DEDICATION *to*

that private Interest was preferred to the general good of your Country ; but Virtue and manly Eloquence, such as yours, have not always prevailed against Ignorance and C----- n.

You will see Sir, that the principal Design of this Discourse is to point out such Means as seem most likely to retrieve our Trade and Manufacturies, which have been visibly decaying for many Years past. And as it may be wondred at by some, and disbelieved by others, how our present Miseries have been brought upon us, or that they are really such as they are represented to be, it was judged necessary to give here a short but true Description of the present calamitous State of our Commerce, and to trace out some of the Causes that had

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had contributed towards its Depression.

Such a Retrospection into our past Conduct may contribute towards deterring those, that shall hereafter have the Management of our Affairs, from falling into the like fatal Inadvertencies, or may occasion some wholesome Laws for tying up the Hands of such as would at any time sacrifice the Trade and Manufactures of their Country to *Ambition, Avarice* or *Self-preservation* : For if ever the publick Good should become a Thing of but little Concern, with future Ministers, and all their Measures should tend only to the accumulating of *Wealth*, and continuing their own *Influence*, such Laws may be found of inestimable Use.

You are sensible, Sir, that as unnecessary Interruptions, and the

vi *The* DEDICATION to

Weight of Taxes have sunk our Commerce and Manufactures, to the low Ebb we now see them at; it will be impossible for these Sources of our Wealth, to recover their former Vigour, except they are more affectionately cherished for the Time to come, and unless they are eased of those unnatural Clogs that have reduced them. You also know, that the Continuance of our Taxes, is owing to the exorbitant Expences the Nation has been put to for many Years past, and that except we are wise enough, to become more frugal for the future, it will be morally impracticable to reduce our Debts, or recover our Trade. You are likewise sensible, that as most of our Funds are anticipated, it will be absolutely necessary to raise some new Taxes, in order to make the Deficiencies that must attend

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attend the Dissolution of all such as now nearly affect our Manufactures, and that those should be raised on the Rich alone. And as I doubt not, but you see the dangerous Growth of our Luxury with Concern, I don't question you will be of Opinion, that the Suppression of this growing Evil should be made subservient to the Purposes of Trade, by easing the one with laying some necessary Incumbrances on the other.

These are Points I have endeavoured to illustrate, though they are so self-evident, that one would scarcely think it possible they could escape the Observation of most Men, much less of those whose Birth and Fortune had intitled them to the Suffrage of the Publick; but should we ever be so unhappy as to see Stupidity find its Way into that august Assembly,

viii *The* DEDICATION to

sembly, I assure myself the Force of your strong Reasoning will clear up the Understandings of all such as shall not be *M* ----- *y* blind. This, indeed is a Disease beyond the Reach of the most skilful Orator, in as much as the Cure would be impossible, without the Concurrence of the Patient himself, who probably may find his Account in the Continuance of his *Inf* ----- *s* Distemper.

But we will hope for the best, I will suppose that the late Choice of the People has fallen on such as will be virtuously sensible of the high Trust reposed in them; and though they should not, we will hope at least, they will have Sense enough to see into their own immediate Interest, (supposing them regardless of Posterity, and their Principals) before the Redress

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dress of our Trade becomes impracticable.

For my Part, I declare I had no other View, than the publick Good, in this Undertaking, and as I have carefully endeavoured to keep up to the Design of it, without intending Reflections on any Man, it is to be hoped no Person will think himself pointed at, from any Thing I was obliged to say in the Course of the Work.

As for you, Sir, as you are a known Friend to your Country, and to a virtuous publick Spirit, I assure myself of your Approbation of the Design of this Treatise, and of your Pardon for thus making Use of your Name without your Knowledge.

I am, &c.

Season.



Seasonable Observations

ON THE

DECLENSION

OF

TRADE and COMMERCE.



THE Business of TRADE is so interwoven with the *Interest of States*, that it is become the Duty of the greatest Men to enquire into the Nature and Condition of it; but we of these Kingdoms are more immediately obliged to this Duty, than those of most other Nations, as the whole of our Wealth and Power flow from *Trade and Commerce*. For it is observable that our Influence in EUROPE has gradually encreased, as *Commerce* was understood and cherished at Home by our

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2 on TRADE and COMMERCE.

Guardians and Legislators ; and has gradually decreased, as this Spring of Power was misunderstood and neglected. A cursory Retrospection of our Affairs for half a Century will convince the most Incredulous of the Truth of this Observation.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S Ministers seemed to have understood *Trade* to Perfection, and, without Doubt, it is owing to their Skill and Regard for *Commerce*, that we had been so long capable of holding the *Beam of Power* on the Continent ; for, as Industry increases or decreases, in Proportion to the *ministerial* Regard or Disregard for the *Commerce* of a Nation, it is manifest, that if our *Trade*, which then was in its Infancy, had not been cherished, by the *true Patriots* of those Days, our Weight, to this Time, would scarcely have been felt in the Scale.

SOME *iniquitous Ministers*, who had formed Designs on the *Liberties* of their fellow Subjects, had found it necessary to restrain and discountenance the Trade of those they intended to *strip* of their *Freedom* ; for as *Poverty* certainly follows an Interdiction of Industry, these *Sons of Ruin* find their Account in laying the *Political Axe* to the Root of Affluence, as the ready Means for cutting away the darling
Tree

Tree of *Liberty*, which seldom thrives in a Land of *Poverty* and *Want*.

IT is also usual, with these *dangerous* Statesmen, to introduce *Luxury* as another sure Means of promoting the servile Work of *Slavery* ; for the Example of the Great seldom fails of drawing the Populace, of any Nation, into *Extremes* of Dyet, Apparel, Equipage, Furniture and Building, which certainly precipitate a People into *Poverty* and *Dependance*. As *Industry* may be justly called the *Parent* of Wealth, *Parcimony* may not improperly be looked upon as the *Nurse* of it, so that whenever *Luxury* is introduced into a Nation of *Commerce*, one may conclude her not only fallen from the *Zenith* of her Power, but swiftly running into the most *desolate Misery*.

PUFFENDORF observes of HOLLAND, above fifty Years ago, that though she appeared about that Time, in a flourishing State of Power and Commerce, she would decline in both, much sooner than most People imagined. This judicious Author founded his Observation on the growing *Luxury* which, then, only appeared amongst that People, famed for Abstinence and Oeconomy before. I won't say that the Ministers of the then *Prince* of ORANGE,

who aspired at the *Stadtholdership*, about that Time, had politically introduced *Luxury* there, as a Means for bringing that People, jealous of their *Freedom*, into his Views: But it is certain, that the Spirit of *Excess*, which had then got footing in the *Provinces*, had no small Share in that Prince's arriving at a Power, far exceeding that which any of his Ancestors had been invested with by that *Republick*.

WE find HENRY IV. of FRANCE introducing *Gaming*, and all other luxurious Excesses to that Kingdom, the better to bring the Wealthy into his Views of *absolute Power*. A *French* † Author assures us, that that ambitious Prince had secretly invited, and went *Sharer* with a certain *Italian Gamester*, called PIMENTELLI, who had bought up all the *Dice* in PARIS, and introduced false ones in their room, the better to execute his Designs. The same Author adds, that SULLY, Intendant of the *Finances*, was the Person who had advised this pernicious Scheme, in order to accomplish those Designs of *Dependance* and *Submission*, he had long projected.

ALTHOUGH it be true, that the Subjects of GREAT BRITAIN have not the least Reason to apprehend, that any Designs have been

† The Duke DESPERNON's *Memoires*.

been formed against their *Liberties*, and that it cannot be so much as insinuated, that the present *Decay* of our *Trade*, and the late *growth* of *Luxury* amongst us, are owing to the *ambitious* Views of our *Ministers*; yet, as our Misfortunes are but too obvious, it cannot be thought unnecessary, that I attempt to point out to my Countrymen the Methods, by which the Evils they feel may be remedied. It were to be wished, that the general Complaint of our *Luxury* and *Loss* of Commerce had not been well founded; but I am sorry the Evils are too sensibly felt, and too visible to be palliated. Complaints, it is true, have been made, at all Times; but I believe it won't be denied, that none have been so general and so continued as the present; and indeed, it is not to be admired, that the *Outcry* should be loud and universal, when every Man in the Nation, of common Understanding, takes upon him to point out the several Causes of our *Calamities*. But, however others may be inclined to impute our Misfortunes to *Design* and *Neglect*, or both, for my own Part, I impute them partly to *Necessity*, and partly to an Ignorance of the *true Nature* of Commerce; and, for this last Reason, I have lamented, that our Men of Fashion do not make the Business of *Trade* as much their Study as it behoves them to do. It is certain, that an *English Gentleman*

Gentleman is obliged more, than any other of his Rank in EUROPE, to be well versed, at least, in the *Theory* of Commerce, and even the *Practice* should be familiar to him, if he would promote the real Interest of his Country. Even our *Nobility*, as they are a Branch of the Legislature, are indispensibly obliged to be well informed of the *trading Interest* of the Nation.

THE Distinction which some would make, between the *landed* and *trading Interest* of this Country, is too absurd to be taken notice of here, there being, at this Time, scarcely a *landed Gentleman* in the Kingdom, who has not observed, from the Value of his Estate, as *Commerce* flourished or decayed, that he is an Enemy to his Country, who would endeavour to distinguish between or separate her blended *landed* and *commercial* Interest.

BEFORE we proceed to the Methods for *retrieving* our Trade, it may not be improper to trace out the Steps by which it has been *depressed*. For though Men are seldom fond of hearing a Recapitulation of their *Neglects* or *Errors*, yet it cannot be thought unnecessary, in as much as it may help to guard them against future Mistakes.

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THE *Wars* we entered into, in Consequence of the *Revolution*, during the Reigns of King WILLIAM and Queen ANNE, had necessarily limited our Commerce whilst they subsisted; but as FRANCE, and most other States in EUROPE, were engaged in those Wars, there was no Possibility for them to have improved their *Trade*, to our Prejudice, during that Interval of Confusion.

Is it not true, that FRANCE was under a Necessity of establishing some *Woollen Manufactures* (to which she had been a Stranger till that Period of Time) for her Home Consumption, during these Wars? And may not we ourselves therefore be so far deemed to have been the Authors of the *present Decay* of our Trade, in as much as we had drove FRANCE to that Necessity? For, without doubt, if we could have continued in *Peace* with that Crown, we must necessarily have become the *Clothiers* of that populous Nation, which, then, seemed only bent upon the Improvement of their *Silk* and *Linnen* Manufactures.

IT is true indeed, this Misfortune might have been partly remedied at the *Peace of UTRECHT*, if we had laid hold of the Opportunities given us by that Treaty. We were intitled, in vertue of that Treaty, to import

import our most material *Woollen Manufactures* into FRANCE, under certain Restrictions; but they were such as left us Room enough to have destroyed all the Manufactures of *Wool* in that great Kingdom: And though we had been Losers, for a few Years, by our Importations into FRANCE, (which, I think, could not well be in 1713) yet it is certain, we should be many Millions Gainers, at this Time, by the Experiment. For, let it be considered how immensely our *Woollen Trade* would have been encreased, could we have destroyed the Manufactures of that Kingdom, which has since supplanted us in our *Turky Trade*, and many other material Branches of our Commerce.

BESIDES, could we have destroyed the LOOMS of FRANCE, even the Natives there must have been soon obliged to us for their own ordinary Consumption. And if it be true, that that Nation consists of no less than 2000,000,000 of People, it is easy to compute the Benefit that must have accrued to us, as her Clothiers. That we should have had the Cloathing of the FRENCH is certain, if we could have destroyed their own Fabricks, which, in all human Probability, we should have done, had we settled a *Tariff* with them on the Footing of the *Treaty* of UTRECHT.

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THE chief Objection, raised against a *Treaty of Commerce* with FRANCE in 1713, was, that our Trade with PORTUGAL would suffer, by admitting *French Wines* upon the same Terms with the *Portuguese*. It is well known, that the Natives of PORTUGAL have always dealt with us more out of Interest than Affection; so that, except they could be supplied upon cheaper Terms by other Nations, there was no reason for apprehending the Loss of that Branch of our Commerce, though we had settled a *Tariff* with FRANCE. And we might have had this further Advantage by it, even as to PORTUGAL, that the Prices of her *Wines*, which are now almost treble to what they were in 1713, would have continued on the antient Footing.

As the *Wines* and other Products of FRANCE may be looked upon as meer Superfluities, we could never receive any material Prejudice from a reciprocal Trade with that Kingdom, in as much as the Consumption of such luxurious Articles, solely depended on ourselves; whereas our Exports to FRANCE must be looked upon as absolutely necessary to the Natives there.

UPON the whole of this memorable Opposition, given to the *Commerce-bill* in 1713, I cannot help saying, that it was

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essentially injurious to the *Woollen* Manufactures of this Nation; but, for the Opponents Sake, I will suppose the Injury was not intended, though it be no Attonement to the Publick.

WE had scarcely tasted the Fruits of *Peace*, when our alternate Misunderstandings with SWEDEN and MUSCOVY had interrupted our Commerce to the BALTICK. However necessary these Steps may have been, it is certain, they contributed to the Decay of our Commerce by paving the Way for PRUSSIA to supplant us in our Trade of *coarse Cloths* to RUSSIA, and by breaking through a Chain of Friendship, which had subsisted for above two Centuries, between this Nation and two of the most powerful and populous Kingdoms in the *North*.

THE Obstruction given to our Trade from those *Northern* Quarrels chiefly affected our Manufactures in YORKSHIRE; and though, of late, they seem to have fuller Employment than they had since the Loss of the RUSSIAN Trade, yet I cannot help thinking, that the present Call for *coarse* Manufactures is rather a Loss than a Benefit to the Nation. If these sort of Goods had been exported for the BALTICK, as usual, it would certainly be of Advantage;

Seasonable Observations II

Advantage; but when these cheap, coarse Manufactures find their Way to SPAIN, ITALY, and PORTUGAL, Countries that had always, till of late, taken off a much *finer* Manufacture, it seems to me rather a manifest Detriment, than Advantage to the Nation in general. If, indeed, the Exportation of our *Northern* Manufactures to the *South*, had been an additional Branch of Commerce, it would have been of real Advantage; but since it is founded only on the Ruins of a much finer Commodity, usually exported to these Countries, it ceases to be a Benefit. But in the present unhappy State of our Manufactures, a Demand for any ~~of~~ of them may be looked upon as an Advantage.

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OUR *Northern* Quarrels were scarcely healed, when a Rupture with SPAIN was thought necessary, by those who, no doubt, understood the national *Interest* to Perfection. It were to be wished, indeed, that we had not been, at that Time, obliged to break with a Kingdom the most useful to us in Point of Commerce of any in the World. For as the late Interruption to the BALTICK, and two expensive Wars, had necessarily depressed our Trade, a Breach with SPAIN, must unavoidably have compleated its Ruin, and therefore I will not doubt, but that the Ministry, in 1718, had more *cogent* Reasons

in like

sons than appear to me for that Spanish War.

I SHALL not enter into a Detail of the *Captures* and other Misfortunes, which were the Consequence of a Rupture with SPAIN, at that Time, and which have not a little contributed to the present Depression of our Commerce; but I must observe, that FRANCE found her Account in those Distractions. For as the SPANIARDS must be supplied, they were necessitated, by the Interdiction of our Trade with them, to have, from FRANCE, such coarse Manufactures, as she could furnish them withal. And this, I think, is the only Reason that can be assigned, for the Disuse of our *fine* Manufacture of Cloth in SPAIN, from that Time to this. For, whenever any Branch of Commerce happens to be *interdicted*, as was the Case here, another Channel will naturally open itself, which seldom or never can be shut up, so as for that, which had been interrupted, to be recovered again.

BUT this was not the only Disadvantage which attended that *Breach* with SPAIN; for as FRANCE had found the Sweets of a Branch of Trade, unknown to her before that Time, she employed all her Art to draw the chief Material from us, that she might carry her *Woollen* Manufactures to such

such Perfection, as should put it out of our Power to recover our *former* Trade with SPAIN, whenever we should happen to recover her Friendship. To this End she wisely encouraged the Importation of *English* and *Irish Wool*; and, as the Demand for her Manufactures encreased in SPAIN, she prudently took off the Prohibitions, which, before that Time, were laid on foreign *Worsted* and *Bay-yarn*: So that we found that artful Nation taking all the Steps imaginable, for perpetuating a Branch of Commerce, which the Necessities of our Dissentions with SPAIN opened to her. It won't, I suppose, be doubted, that the DUTCH and FLEMINGS had improved this Opportunity, as well as the FRENCH.

OUR Difference with SPAIN was productive of another *Evil*, which though not equal to the *Interdiction* of our Trade with that Nation, and the Captures and Seizures made by her, yet it must be looked upon to have precipitated the *Decay* of our Commerce. This was the *Peace* between HOLLAND and ALGIER, which I will suppose (for certain Reasons) the FRENCH had mediated, in order to induce the STATES to accede to the Treaty of HANOVER.

IT is true it would have been uncharitable to have endeavoured to obstruct that Treaty;

Treaty; but, without doubt, it would have been the Interest of ENGLAND, if the DUTCH and ALGERINES had continued at Enmity. For before *that Treaty* was mediated between those Nations, we had the Advantage of being Carriers for the DUTCH, the HAMBURGERS, the DANTZICKERS, the SWEDES, and the DANES, to and from the MEDITERRANEAN, and partly to SPAIN and PORTUGAL.

THE *political* Authors of the present Age, having sufficiently exemplified our extraordinary Expences, in Consequence of our Quarrels in the *North* and the *South*, I shall only observe, that could these immense *Out-goings* have been spared, we should have been enabled to ease our Trade and Manufactures of those *Taxes* that are now real Clogs upon them; and even in this respect, our Misunderstandings with SPAIN, and the Powers of the *North* must be looked upon as Evils of the first Magnitude, tho' they may have been necessary.

It were to be wished, that the foregoing *foreign* Transactions had been the only Impediments given to our Trade since the *Peace* of UTRECHT; but I am afraid we shall find some of our *domestick* Proceedings to have equally contributed towards its
present

present Depression. And though one might be able to produce a long Catalogue of such Transactions, I shall content myself with a very few Observations on this Head.

THE *South-sea* Scheme in 1720 was, not only in its Consequence, but also in its very Nature, the most *injurious* to Trade of any Project the Wit of Man was able to devise. And I have often wondered that our most considerable Traders, who could not but have seen the evil Tendency of that Scheme, had not fairly and strongly represented the Dangers of it to their Superiors before it was carried into Execution: For I cannot think, that any Motives could have induced our *Guardians*, at that Time, to support that Project, if any Pains had been taken to have made them sensible of the Injuries that must have arisen from it. But as that *melancholy* Affair has been so often canvassed, and is now so well understood, I shall only observe, that the Punishments inflicted on that Occasion were not, in my Opinion, adequate to the Heinousness of the Crime: And I wish, that the Lenity, shewn at that Time, may not have occasioned the subsequent Imbezlements and Misapplications, so frequently complained of by the Publick.

It is true, some Alterations were made
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in the *then Ministry*, in order, I suppose, to appease the Sufferers, and a *Gentleman* of great Abilities, in our Domestick Affairs, was charged with the arduous Task of establishing *publick Credit*, and healing our Distraction: But though he had exceeded the publick Expectation, yet it was impossible to have prevented the injurious Consequence of that fatal Project to the Trade of the Nation.

OUR Trade to AMERICA was the only Branch of our Commerce, which our necessary, but unhappy, Quarrels in the *North* and the *South* could not materially affect; but, I know not how it happened, even this Trade has been declining for many Years: And I wish that the Importation of *Brandies* from DUNKIRK, paying the *Flemish* Duty only, which had continued since 1722, had not chiefly contributed towards its Declension. For it is certain, that ever since the Duties on *foreign Spirits* were reduced to 4 s. 1 d. per Gallon, our *Sugar-trade* has decayed gradually; and indeed it could not be well expected to happen otherwise, since a principal Part of that Commerce consists in *Rum*, which could find little Vent here, after the Reduction of the Duties on *foreign Spirits*.

How we came to look upon DUNKIRK,
though

though a Part of the Dominions of FRANCE, to be intitled to a Privilege the other Ports of that Kingdom were not allowed, I cannot tell; but this may be said, that the Ports of NORMANDY and BRITANY, as these Provinces were no Part of *Old FRANCE*, had as good a Right to be exempted from the *French Duties* of 6 s. and 8 d. per Gallon, as DUNKIRK. But I will suppose there was a particular Clause in some Act of Parliament for that Purpose, tho' I could never meet with any.

I WISH the Decay of our *Sugar-trade* may not be also owing to the Indigence or Incapacity of some of those who had been intrusted with the Intendancy of our *Sugar-Islands*; and, if there be any Truth in the Advices from those Parts, there are Reasons for believing that our Officers there, at least some of them, have not cherished that Trade as far as they ought to have done for the good of this Nation.

I SHALL take notice, in the Sequel of this Discourse, of the Methods by which the FRENCH have rose to their present Height of Affluence in AMERICA, and leave the Reader to judge between their Indulgence, and our own in the Government of their Plantations. *Trade* is not like the *Palm-tree*, which, as Naturalists tell us, thrives

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in proportion to the Addition of Weight laid upon it; on the contrary, to bring *Trade* to Maturity, it must be cherished and encouraged.

OUR Trade to TURKEY is in a lamentable Condition, though the raging Pestilence at MARSEILLES in 1719, and for two Years after, should be a Reason why it should flourish more than it had, even before the *Peace of UTRECHT*. This inestimable Branch of our Commerce is so dwindled, that of twenty four Houses or Factories we had at SMYRNA, some Years ago, there are now but four only; and, if I am rightly informed, it is proportionably the same, throughout the Extent of the whole *Turkish* Empire. This melancholy Declension, of this Branch of our Commerce, must be more owing to the Clogs upon our Manufactures, and the Fluctuation of our Measures, than to any Unaptness in our commercial Agents, who have been always looked upon to equal, in Skill and Industry, those of any other Nation in EUROPE.

THE Practice of raising Money, for the *current Service*, by Way of *Lottery*, has not a little contributed towards the *Declension* of Trade; and for this Reason I have been sensibly concerned whenever I saw any Acts passed for this Purpose, particularly when

when the Tickets were at *ten Pounds* and under: For, besides the Idleness and Expence which this Sort of Gaming produces among the People, it proves an Inducement to the *Artizan* to withdraw Part of his Capital out of his Trade, which cannot but be injurious to one of a middling Stock.

As our Interest should induce us to give all Sorts of Encouragement to Trade, so should it oblige us to rid it of all those Clogs and Impediments that hang upon it, whether authorized by Law or Custom only. The several *Perquisites*, exacted upon the Trader in the Offices under the Crown, are become a real Charge upon Commerce; but of many Instances of this Kind, which may be given, I shall only mention the Expences that attend the Recovery of *Draw-backs* at the *Custom-house*.

DRAW-BACKS were certainly allowed for the Encouragement of Trade, and, without doubt, they would prove of far greater Advantage, than they do, if the Trader could receive them without any Charge, and as soon as they became due: But it so happens, that the Merchant often chuses rather to give up his Claim, when the Demand does not exceed two or three Pounds, than be at the Expence and Fatigue of working

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working through the Intricacies of the several Offices of the Customs.

I HAVE seen a Calculation of the Perquisites established only by Custom, raised upon the Subject by the *Officers of the Crown*, and was sorry to find them exceed the neat Duties on *Salt, Soap, and Candles*, put together. It cannot be denied but that the *Treasury* allows sufficient Salaries to those who Act under that awful Board; nor can it be reasonably thought, that they are countenanced, by ~~their~~ *Superiors*, in their Exactions upon their fellow Subjects.

THERE are many other Hardships, arising from the Collection of the publick Revenue, which materially obstruct Trade; but as it would be impossible to enumerate them all, I shall only observe, that as the Crown pays for all Prosecutions relating to the Revenue, the Court of Exchequer seldom wants Occupation, which, without doubt, can be no Encouragement to any Trade but the *Law*.

EVERY fair Trader must naturally be an Enemy to the clandestine Importer, and therefore all Laws which prohibit an *illicit* Commerce are justly looked upon as publick Benefits, as they are supposed to be calculated for the Encouragement of Trade; but it may so happen, sometimes, that Laws intended

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intended for the Advancement of Commerce may become injurious to it, and such, I am afraid, the late *retrospective* Law to prevent *Smuggling*, has proved in its Consequence: I am likewise afraid that the Alterations made in this Law, the last Sessions, will not be less destructive of Industry, than the former Law, tho' both might have been *designed* for its Advancement.

A REGARD should always be had to strict Justice in enacting all Laws, particularly such as affect the *Liberty* of the Subject. In vertue of the Law, under our Consideration, a Man might be beggared and imprisoned for the Crimes he had been guilty of before the Law was made, or perhaps so much as thought of by the *Projector* himself; nay, and often, for Crimes falsely alledged against him, by those who were to benefit by the Perjury. Many of our most useful fellow Subjects have retired into foreign Countries to avoid the Severities of that Law, which did not seem to answer the Ends for which it was or ought to have been made, and therefore may be justly looked upon to have been *injurious* to Trade.

PUBLICK *Companies*, as they are little less than *Monopolies*, have been looked upon, by most People, as injurious to the *general* Commerce of a Nation; but I believe

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lieve it won't be contested, by even the Advocates for them, that they really become so, when they are *corruptly* managed. The several Applications to *Parliament*, since the Year 1720, in relation to *Frauds* in the Direction of some of our *incorporated Bodies*, put it beyond Dispute, that they have not been managed with strict Candour; and, I am afraid, the Lenity shewn to Delinquents is the only Reason that has prevented a more general Complaint. For to what Purpose should a Proprietor complain, when he is morally sure, if Example can make a Man so, to be left in a worse Condition after, than he was in before, the expensive Prosecution was set on Foot?

It is true, some of our *Companies* seem'd to have followed little other Trade than that pernicious one carried on in *Exchange-Alley*; which is now in a great measure prevented: But as the Chain of Commerce is compos'd of many relative as well as actual Links, there are no Misapplications or Mismanagements, throughout the whole State, however remote they may appear, but affect, more or less, the national Trade. So that, to view the Corruption of our Companies, in this Light only, it must be admitted, that our Commerce must severely suffer from any Indulgence to these Plunderers of the Publick. *Lenity*, in some
Cases,

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Cases, may become vicious, instead of being virtuous, and particularly so, when it proves an Incouragement to Corruption, which, I am afraid, would be found to be the Case in this Instance, if the real State of all our other Incorporations had been as minutely examined into, as those of the *South Sea*, the *Charitable*, and the *York-buildings*.

It is allowed, that some Punishments have been inflicted on these Occasions; but as they were not adequate to the Crime, and on a few only of the pilfering Agents, and ~~that~~ the *Over-grown* went free, it is to be apprehended, that these Researches rather added than diminished the vicious Assurance of those in other Directions. There are many Reasons why a good *Englishman* can be no Friend to great Companies; but were there no other, than that they may one Day become dangerous Weapons in the Hands of an *over-grasping Minister*, it ought to determine him against them. And for this Reason, as well as that, I thought them destructive of Trade; I was sorry, that a *salutary* Proposal, concerning our EAST INDIA Trade, made, a few Years ago, by a Gentleman of known Skill and Integrity, had not met with Countenance. But, without doubt, the Opponents to that Scheme had their *Reasons* for the Continuance of the *Company*.

H A V I N G

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HAVING thus cursorily enumerated a few of those *unhappy* Causes that have contributed towards the *present Decay* of our Commerce, we will concisely examine if the *Declension* of this Source of our Wealth be as real as it is generally complained of: And we are the more inclined to think some what of this kind necessary, because some Writers have lately taken great Pains to persuade the People, that our Trade never was more *extensive*, or more *advantageous*, than it is at present.

I won't take upon me here to point out the Views of these Authors, for thus endeavouring to propagate an Opinion so repugnant to the Sense of the People in general; but, in order to justify these *commercial Speculatists*, I will own with them, that one *Branch* of Trade, the only one they seem to understand, is lately become infinitely more extensive than it was in the Days of our Fathers; and I wish the Contraction of the other Branches of our Commerce may not be justly imputed to the enormous Extension of *this*. But as a visible Decay of every other Branch of our Commerce, must necessarily soon dry up the Fountain which sets *this* Trade of *C* — *n* a-going, I doubt these *venal Declaimers* will be obliged to change their Note much sooner than they imagine.

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BUT how little soever some *certain Persons* may be supposed to be acquainted with the *Miseries* of their fellow Subjects, I am very sorry that the *Bulk* of the People have Reason for complaining of the Decay of the *national* Trade and Manufactures. This Decay is visible in our EAST INDIA Trade from the publick Sales of the Company, from the Price of her Stock, her Dividends, her Debts, and, above all, from the known real Value of her Capital, which is now no Secret. It is most lamentably visible in our WEST INDIA Trade, particularly that to our *Sugar-islands*, from the excessive low Price of Sugars, for many Years past, from the Decrease of our Exportations to those Islands since 1721, from the Fall of Estates in those Parts, and from the Miseries that oblige daily the Planters there to quit their Settlement, and seek for Relief on the Continent. It appears visible in our Trade to the BALTICK, whither we do not export one Tenth of the *Woollen* Manufactures, we were wont to do, before our unhappy, tho' perhaps *necessary* Broils with PETER I. and CHARLES XII. It is to be seen in our Commerce to TURKY, which is so reduced of late Years, that of twenty odd Ships, chiefly laden with our *Woollen* Manufactures, which we were wont to send thither annually, we now seldom send above three or four, and even those not a third freighted with

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the *Staple* of the Nation; from the incredible Diminution of the Number of our Factories in that Empire, as has been observed, and from the notorious Increase of the *French* Commerce in that Part of the World. It is manifest, from the intrinsic Value of our Exports to SPAIN, if compared with what they had been before our fatal Quarrels with that useful Crown. It is evident from the Losses of our SOUTH SEA Company, in her Trade with NEW SPAIN, which affects, in the main, the whole Nation, though none so immediately as the unhappy Proprietors of the Stock. It is visible in our Trade, even with PORTUGAL, from the known late Decrease of the Exports of our *Woollen* Manufactures thither, and the extravagant Increase of our Imports of *Wine* and *Diamonds* from thence, which may be looked upon of real Disadvantage to the Nation, like all other Imports that contribute to our *Excesses* and *Luxury*. It is plain, as to our Trade with FRANCE, from the apparent prodigious annual Balance, observed to be in Favour of that Kingdom, in the Articles of *Wine*, *Brandy*, *Cambricks*, *Prunes*, *Toys*, &c. It is notorious in our trivial Exports to FLANDERS, and the excessive luxurious Imports of *Lace*, and *fine Linnens* from that Country, which are chiefly purchased with our *Bullion*. In short,
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if we look round the whole Globe, we shall find either the *Balance of Trade* to be against us, or that the Exports of our national Manufactures, to most Countries, are visibly diminished: But as I have some Thoughts of considering the *general Balance of Trade*, in a particular Treatise, I shall for the present only observe, that no Demonstration in EUCLID is more evident, than that the *general Balance* of Trade is, and has been, notoriously against this Nation ever since the Year 1723.

I WISH I could not point out many other Tokens of our *Declension*, and the *Decay* of our Trade; but I am sorry they are too obvious and manifold to be palliated by the Glosses of the most artful Pen. And though the Fall of the *Interest of Money* should be a Reason why our Commerce and Manufactures should flourish more since, than before, the Year 1723, yet the Fact certainly is otherwise.

THIS appears manifestly from the present Value of *Land* and *Houses*, from the frequent *Failures* of Tenants, and from the great Numbers of *Farms* and *Houses* which lie on the Hands of the Landlord. It appears also from the Increase of *Coffee-houses*, *Ale-houses*, *Taverns*, *Gin-shops*, *Milleners*, *pedling Chandlers*, and such other insignificant

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ficant Trades, set up in Streets, formerly noted for the Habitations of substantial wholesale Traders. It further appears from the known, but extravagant Increase of the *Poors Rates* throughout the whole Kingdom, from the visible Decrease of our finest and most valuable *Woollen* Manufactures, from the low Price of *Wool*, from the frequent Bankruptcies of our Traders in general, but particularly of our Manufacturers in the *West* of the Kingdom. It is evident from the Multitudes of unhappy *Debtors* in our Jails, notwithstanding the many wholesome extensive Acts of Insolvency, passed in Favour of the Unfortunate. It is visible from the Scarcity of *Money* amongst all those who have not the good Fortune to be in *Employment* under the Crown. It appears from the general Inability, which the People are known to be under, more now than heretofore, of paying the *Taxes* established by Law. It is manifest also, from the Deficiencies in many Branches of the *Revenue*, complained of by *certain Persons* of late, for other Purposes than to shew the *Calamities* of the People, tho' nothing can demonstrate the *Miseries* of the Subject more than such apparent Deficiencies, which certainly proceed from the Inability of the Bulk of the People, to expend as largely as they were wont to do.

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on TRADE and COMMERCE. 29

It would be endless to recount the several visible Marks of the *Nation's* Poverty, and the Declension of her Commerce; it appears in every Face, and in every Mouth, except those of *certain Persons*, who, as has been already observed, affect to argue the People into Affluence and Happiness, whilst they severely feel all the Weight of *Taxes, Want* and *Poverty*.

THE Ungratefulness of the Subject would deter a good *Commonwealth's* Man from entering minutely into the Calamities of his Country, if he did not hope that the true Knowledge of the Distemper might help towards the Cure. And I can assure the Reader this was the Author's sole Motive, for the short Recapitulation he has made here of our *Necessities*, and the Causes that have chiefly occasioned them.

WE will now proceed, pursuant to our first Intention, to point out the *only Methods*, by which we think it possible for us to *retrieve* our Trade and Manufactures, to recover our Influence in EUROPE, and to become, what we had been not many Years ago, a *wealthy* and *powerful* People. And though an Attempt of this Nature, by a private Person, may be looked upon as an *Indication* of his Vanity, yet I cannot help thinking myself obliged, as a Member of the

the Community, to give all the Light I am capable of, to those who have Power to redress the Grievances the Nation labours under. There can be but two Sorts of People amongst us, who can be supposed to have any Reason for being displeas'd with an Undertaking calculated for the *Advantage* of the Publick; those are the *Authors* of our *Calamities*, if any such there are, and those who may find their particular *Account* in the *Miseries* and *Confusions* of their Native Country. But as I hope there are no such *unnatural* Brethren to be found in this Land, I think, I may reckon upon the general Approbation of my Countrymen.

As it is universally agreed upon, that the *Declension* of our Commerce is chiefly owing to the *exorbitant Expence* the Nation has been at, for many Years past, which prevented the easing of our Manufactures of those Clogs that depressed them, it will be absolutely necessary that we become more *frugal*, for the time to come, if we would hope for even a *Chance* of recovering our Trade. No Advantages, no Demands from Abroad, for our Manufactures, can be alone capable of *retrieving* our Commerce, except our Manufacturers are enabled to work as *cheap* as our rival Neighbours. For though the *English* Manufactures should be

be intrinsically more valuable, than those of other Nations, the foreign Consumer will naturally buy of him who affords the best Pennyworth. This is a Truth not to be controverted, and of which every Adventurer in the Nation can bear witness. This being premis'd, it is plain our Trade can never be supposed to flourish till the Manufacturer be eased of those Burthens which now obstruct him, though we were to continue in a *general Tranquillity* for an Age together.

It is true, the Necessities of King WILLIAM and Queen ANNE's Reigns obliged the Legislature, in those Days, to lay many *greivous* Burthens upon the People, which nothing less than the most *imminent* Dangers were capable of justifying; but I cannot help doubting, great as the Perils were at that Time, that those Patriots would have scarcely gone the Lengths they did, could they have imagined that those *Aids*, which they gave only for a limited Time, would be *continued* upon their Posterity. They, no doubt, thought that an End of those *Wars* would have put an End to the *Taxes*; and indeed the whole World was of the same Opinion, and hoped to have found their Notions verified on the Conclusion of the *Peace of UTRECHT*. FRANCE embraced the wished for Opportunity, and wisely

wisely set about easing her People, and cherishing her Commerce and Manufactures. But as we had not been so happy as to be able to lay hold of that favourable Conjunction, it may be now hoped that, for the time to come, we will correct, in ourselves, any Mistakes we may have been guilty of, and be better Husbands of the publick Revenue, than we have been. Self-interest requires a Change in our Conduct, if we would extricate ourselves out of our present Difficulties.

LET US then avoid all future Quarrels with foreign Powers, as far as the Dignity of the Crown, the Safety of our Liberties, and the Protection of our Commerce will permit. For as we are a Nation, chiefly subsisting by Commerce, it should be an eternal Maxim with us, never to provoke foreign States, not even the most inconsiderable, who may, one time or other, be useful to us as we are People of Industry. Our Situation and our Naval Force do so secure us from Insult, that it will be the Interest of most Nations in EUROPE to live in Amity with us, except our own imprudent Conduct should, at any Time, drive them to Extremities, which I wish may not have been the Case, on some Occasions heretofore. Nature seems to have designed us to be the Arbitrators of EUROPE, and we should always

always have been looked upon as such, if we had wisely contented ourselves to have walked in the Road of Mediation only. But from a contrary Behaviour, of bullying Mankind, and becoming Principals in Quarrels, that have little or no Relation to her, a Nation may not only lose her natural Influence, but likewise her Commerce in the Don Quixot Atchievements.

IF, at any Time hereafter, we should be provoked to a just Revenge, let our Resentment be sudden and resolute; for as Delays, on these Occasions, often denote Irresolution and Pusillanimity; the aggressing Party, however insignificant, will not fail of imputing that to want of Power, which may be owing only to the natural Cowardice or Unsteadiness of those at the Head of our Affairs. It should be also observed, that a pacifick Tameness generally creates a far larger Expence, than Measures of Firmness and Resolution; the latter ~~are~~ soon ~~over~~ whilst the other continues much longer than one would wish or expect, a tedious

of Injuries & Insults, which
ALL superfluous Pensions should be carefully suppressed, as they are supposed to enhance largely the publick Expence whenever they are become frequent; for, in reality, Pension is but a soft Term for the Word Bribe. There needs no Bribe, or

to Disgrace, and Contempt.

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let us call it Pension, to engage a *good Man* in the Service of his King and Country; such a one will scorn to be gratified at the Expence of the indigent, laborious Artizan, whose Industry supports the very Being of his native Country. I will own, that of all the *self-preserving*, ministerial Arts, that of *Corruption* is, I think, the least pardonable; for Corruption debases the Mind so far, that it habituates the Corrupted to a Disregard for Posterity, and every Virtue requisite for the Advantage or Preservation of the Community.

It must be allowed that *Pensions* become necessary sometimes; but if ever they should happen to be dealt out to the *Unworthiest* only, and that for *bad Purposes*, the infamous Name of *Bribe* may justly be affixed to them. Honours are properly the Grati- fications of such as *deserve well* of the State, and will be ever a stronger Incentive to a *virtuous* Mind, than even *Money*; and these the Prince may confer without impair- ing his own particular Revenue, or that of the Publick. It is true, it may often happen, that the *deserving* Object may re- quire a *pecuniary* Recompence, and then indeed a *Pension*, in its received Sense, be- comes necessary; but, even then, it should be distributed with Moderation, and a due Regard to the *general Distresses* of the Peo- ple.

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ple. But I can see no Reason why the Multitude of *lucrative* Employments, in the Gift of the Crown, may not, at all Times, be sufficient to gratify the *Worthy* and the *Virtuous*. And one would think, that the modern Custom of *splitting* Employ- ments, or Posts, was purposely introduced to save the Crown the *immense* Sums that were given in *Pensions*; and, it is to be hoped, it has answered the Ends of the *Projector*.

It is true, the World is so altered, that few Men covet Employments, except they are really considerable, because they are, for the most Part, attended with an *enor- mous* Expence, and this may be one Rea- son why we have *formerly* seen large *ad- ditional Salaries* annexed to very consider- able Posts.

As an Instance of the Expence that *here- tofore* attended a Place about Court, there was a late ingenious Gentleman, facetious in his *Writings* and Conversation, who had deserved so well of the *Court*, that it was thought proper to bestow a Post in the *Household* upon him, which might bring him in about a hundred Pounds a Year; but the Narrowness of his own private Fortune, and the small Prospect there was of rising, without going into Measures he probably

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did not approve of, would not permit him to accept of an Employment, which must necessarily stand him in *double* the Sum in *Birth-day Suits, clean Gloves, Powder, and Pomatum.*

BUT as this Inconveniency was supposed to arise from the constant Attendance, in *rich Apparel*, which may have been expected from all such as bore any Office under the Crown, it might have been remedied by Precept and Example. It was observable, in former Days, that Attendance at Court was required more in Reigns of *Discontent*, then when the Prince was *generally beloved* by the People, for as the far greater Part of the *Subjects deserted* the Court, it was thought necessary that the *Officers* should *attend*, in order to prevent the Prince from perceiving how far he was neglected by the Majority of the People.

IF we do not interfere, for the Time to come, in the Quarrels and Dissentions of the Powers on the Continent, but by Way of *Mediation* only, I should hope we shall have little Occasion for a large *standing Army at Home*, for *chargeable Naval Armaments*, for *keeping foreign Troops in our Pay*, for *large Subsidies to foreign Princes*, nor for many other Articles, which, however necessary they may have been, must be looked

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ed upon to have occasioned the *Augmentation of our Debts*, and the Continuance of our *Taxes*, since the *Peace of UTRECHT*. And as it is certain the *national Incumbrance* might, by this Time, have been discharged, if we could have avoided the *Expences* we were at since that Time; so is it manifest, that we can never hope our Debts can any otherwise be paid off, than by treading back the *expensive Path*, we had constantly walked in for twenty Years past.

IF we now become Oeconomists, we shall soon be able to create such a *sinking Fund* as will quickly pay off our Debts, considering the present Reduction of Interest. But if we would attain the End proposed, it will be absolutely necessary that such *sinking Fund* be held more *sacred*, than the present has been. It is true, we, who are out of the *Cabinet*, cannot see all the *Necessities* of State, and therefore often form *wrong Judgments* of the Actions of our Superiors; but, as far as appeared to us, the late Encroachments on the *Sinking Fund* might have been avoided. For my own Part, I did not think that any Thing less than an actual *Invasion* could have obliged a certain *great Man* to break in upon his own *favourite Fund*, the establishing of which had created him so many Friends amongst the People. And though I have never

never joined those, who had harboured Suspicions of his *Designs* on the *Freedom* of his fellow Subjects; yet I cannot help thinking, that it were to be wished, he had projected some other Method for raising the *necessary* Fund for the current Service: For the *Discontented* will be apt to say, he never would have agreed to *lessen* a Fund, calculated for the *future Ease* of the People, and the *Recovery* of their Trade, except it was with a View of *continuing* their *oppressive Burthens*. But tho' this *invidious* Construction may be put upon this Incident, I do not doubt but a very little Time will clear up the Matter to his own Credit, and the general Satisfaction.

As it cannot be denied but that our future *Frugality* will soon enable us to *pay off* our Debts, I presume it woud be denied also, that we can have no Hopes of recovering our Commerce whilst they subsist. So that one would think, the *Court*, the *Ministry*, and the *whole* Nation will readily concur in Measures replete with future as well as present Happiness. It is manifest, that the present visible *Decay* of our Trade requires the most *parcimonious* Frugality in the Management of the *publick Revenues*; who then can be so lost to all Sense of the *Welfare* of his native Country, as to oppose a Reduction of her Expence?
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Not the *Country Gentlemen* who have, on a thousand Occasions, manifested their Ardour for the *Ease* and *Encouragement* of Trade; and no Man will imagine that the *Court* will give any Obstruction, except it can be absurdly thought, that a Prince would chuse rather to rule over a *Nation* of *Beggars* (such as we are like soon to be on the present Footing) than over a *rich* and *opulent* People: But as nothing so ridiculous can be imagined, we will take it for granted, that the *Court* will sincerely concur in any Measures that can be calculated for the *Good* of the Subject; so that the Apprehension of Opposition rests on the Side of the *Ministry* only, who, some have thought, without any real Foundation I hope, have had *Views*, widely *differing* from those of their fellow Subjects.

It is true, if one were to form a Judgment of all *Ministers* from the Actions of some few of these *over-grown* Subjects, one reads of in History, a Man might be inclined to think, that the very Moment they are invested with *Power*, they become quite a different Species from the rest of their fellow Subjects. For, some of them have been no sooner raised to this high Office, than they seemed to have taken leave of *Honour*, *Humanity*, *Compassion*, *publick Good*, and every other *social Virtue*; as the

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the *Doges* of VENICE do of their Kindred and Acquaintance, on their Promotion to that eminent captive Dignity. What it is that produces this sudden *Metamorphosis* cannot be easily accounted for, though Experience may serve to convince us, that the Fact was really such.

How often have we heard of a seemingly *honest*, well-meaning *Country Gentleman*, from being a strenuous Asserter of the *Rights* and *Liberties* of his fellow Subjects, become a bold Invader of both, arrogant, implacable, and revengeful, the Moment he is exalted to the Summit of Power. These Men have frequently *obstructed* the *Relief* of Trade, and the *Ease* of their fellow Subjects, so soon as they were set above their Level. We have heard that these PROTEUS'S became the most lavish of the *publick Treasure*, and were the warmest Opposers of *national* Enquiries, during the Existence of their Power, tho' they had made the strongest Pretensions to publick Parcimony and Examination, whilst they remained private and independant. Surely there must be some *Contagion* in Power, which can thus *pervert* the Mind of Man.

IF the *ministerial* Office was even to continue for Life, it should be no Reason for an *arbitrary wicked* Use of it; but
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when it is notoriously otherwise, it must be Infatuation in those, who employ their Power to the *Destruction* of their native Country. Some will argue, that because their Power is precarious, they are under a Necessity of *oppressing* and *corrupting*, in order to continue their Influence; but as this is a Subject foreign to our present Purpose, we will take it for granted, that no *Minister*, now living, will obstruct the *Reduction* of our Expences, who would willingly perpetuate the Fortune he may have acquired to his Posterity; he cannot but see that *general Poverty* must attend any further *Decay* of our Trade, and that, in such Case, his own Family must necessarily suffer along with the other Subjects; so that, supposing him destitute of all Regard for his native Country, the Ties of Nature must bind him to the Interest of Posterity. But as the Humanity of those, at the Head of our Affairs, at this Time, is *conspicuous*, we cannot, in the least, doubt of their hearty Concurrence towards our Relief.

As the Discharge of our Debts must necessarily be a Work of many Years, and that our Manufacturers require an immediate Ease from the Oppressions that prevent their working as *cheap* as they should do, in order to recover our Trade, I should be of Opinion to *abolish*, without any Delay,
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all such of our present Taxes, as nearly affect them. The Duties on *Salt, Soap, and Candles*, are such apparent Clogs on the unhappy Artizan, that, without manifest *Prejudice*, they cannot be any longer continued. The neat Produce of these Duties ~~are~~ very inconsiderable, if compared with the Disadvantages that arise from them. And were there no other Reasons for the Abolishment of them, than that those Hands now made use of in the Collection, should be more usefully employed, for the Good of the Community, it ought to determine every Man who wishes well to the Nation.

PEOPLE are certainly the real Wealth of a Kingdom, when they are usefully employed; and those, who are not so, may be properly looked upon as the *Drones* of the State: So that, in all well-governed Communities, there should be as little Incouragement as possible given to *Idleness*. I own I am not more an Enemy to the Multiplicity of our *civil Officers* from the exorbitant Expence they create to the Publick, and the unsafe additional Power they may give a *Ministry*, than from the Damage which the Nation suffers by their not being usefully employed. What Numbers of *industrious Tradesmen* have we not seen quit their

their useful Occupations for *small Posts* in the Gift of the *Treasury*?

As all our Measures should tend towards the immediate Encouragement of our *Woollen Manufactures*, which must be looked upon as the *Basis* of our Wealth, the intire Duties on *Oils, dying Stuffs*, and, in general, on all Ingredients and Materials made use of in this *inestimable* Branch of our Trade, should be abolished. And as there are many of our present Duties and Excises, which nearly affect the *poor* Manufacturer, such as the Duties on *Coals*, the Excises on *Malt, Beer, Leather*, and many other Necessaries of Life, which cannot be quite taken away in our present Circumstances, I should think that a proportionable *Bounty* might be allowed on the Exportation of all *Woollen Goods*, adequate to the *Duties* and *Excises* supposed to have been paid by the several Manufacturers in their Consumption. The Calculation will not be as difficult as some may imagine; and when once made, will remain a Standard during the Continuance of the *Bounty*.

I AM sensible that such a *Bounty*, together with the Duties to be abolished, will occasion such a Deficiency in the Revenue as may retard the Discharge of our Debts,

which so greatly contributed to the present Decay of our Trade, and therefore I would have it partly supplied by an adequate *Tax* on our *Luxury*.

I WILL OWN, that *sumptuary* Laws, of any Kind, are Strings to be tenderly touched upon, particularly in a *free* Nation, when they always should be introduced with the utmost Caution. But when the most urgent Necessities, such as ours at this Time, seem to require extraordinary Remedies, we ought not to hesitate one Moment in our Resolves.

It cannot be denied that we are, of late Years, grown into great Excess of *Diet*, *Apparel*, *Equipage*, and *Building*, which, if not *timely restrained*, will probably be attended with *fatal* Consequences; so that supposing the *Decay* of our Trade and *Wool-len* Manufactures did not require the immediate Encouragement I contend for, I should think that the present State of the national *Luxury* merits the most serious Consideration. The Disease is really grown epidemical, insomuch, that the most inferior Class of the People have imbibed a Tincture of the Infection. Those who are supposed to subsist by a *Trade*, of no great Advantage to the Community, set the Example, whether by Chance or Design I won't say, from whom

whom the Spirit of *Riot* and Extravagance descends gradually, through the whole Mass of the People, to the meanest *Artizan*.

PUFFENDORF, in his Account of the *civil Wars* in the NETHERLANDS, observes that *Luxury* was more truly the Cause of them, than *Religion* or *Liberty*. For, says he, *The FLEMINGS had quite impoverished themselves by endeavouring to equal the SPANIARDS, in Gallantry and Expence; so that their Poverty, as it drove them to Despair, may be said to have ripened them for Rebellion.* We may justly conclude, that the Poverty of the FLEMINGS, which our Author speaks of, proceeded from *Luxury* alone, in as much as we find no Traces of the SPANIARDS having, at that Time, restrained or burthened that People either as to their Manufactures or Commerce. If then, the FLEMINGS have been reduced to Poverty and Despair, from their *luxurious* Imitation of the SPANIARDS, at a Time their *Commerce* was at its *greatest Height*, what dreadful Consequences may not be apprehended from *Excess*, in the Subjects of ENGLAND, when her *Trade* is reduced to the *lowest Ebb*.

As my Intention, in this Undertaking, was to point out, in general only, the Method

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thod of *retrieving* our Commerce, without offering any particular Scheme of my own, I shall only cursorily take notice of a few Articles of our *Luxury*, leaving the more minute Consideration of it to those who have a greater Right to examine into and redress the *national Grievances* in this and every other Particular.

THE fatal Opposition, which I observed to have been given in 1713 to the *French Commerce-bill*, having shut us intirely out of any Trade with FRANCE, that could turn the Balance to our Advantage, it might have been expected, that our Guardians would prevent our being Losers, at least, by that Kingdom, since they had put it out of our Power to be Gainers by her; but so far from it, that upon the Footing of our present Trade with that Nation, we are Losers, at least, to the Amount of half a Million, annually, in the superfluous Articles of *Wine, Brandy, Cambricks*, and many other more minute, but expensive Commodities, which are purchased by *Bills of Exchange* and *Bullion* only. Now, as it is manifest, that all our Imports from FRANCE are Superfluities only, and consequently productive of *Luxury*, I should be of Opinion to *double* the present Duty on *French Wines*, and *Brandies*, even from DUNKIRK. This Restraint upon Brandy will be of singular

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gular Advantage to our *Sugar-trade*, as has been already observed; and that upon *Wine* will probably lessen the Importation, or, at least, throw the Burthen intirely on those amongst us, who are least able to bear it.

It deserves likewise to be considered, whither an *additional Duty* ought not to be laid on all other *Wines*, in as much as *Wine* of all Growths may be looked upon as superfluous, tho' not so much so, as that of FRANCE.

I SHOULD hope that these *additional Duties*, those which may be laid on *Equipage, Apparel*, and many other Articles of our *Luxury*, which can scarcely escape the Observation of the most moderate Understanding, and one more Article, will produce a Sum far exceeding that now raised on *Salt, Soap, and Candles*; and that which may be necessary for answering the Bounty on *Woolen Goods*, which I have proposed as one necessary Means for retrieving the present *Decay* of our Trade.

I SCARCELY think it necessary to make an Observation here, which is obvious to every Man of common Penetration, *viz.* That the Legislature ought always to distinguish between the *Poor* and *Affluent*, the *Laborious* and the *Idle* in the levying of *Taxes*.

Taxes. This wholesome Maxim is now so universally understood, that I should not at all wonder, if our *present Representatives* would abolish all such Taxes in general as affect the *Poor*, and make up the Deficiency by an additional one on *Land*, after they had *taxed* every material Article of our *Luxury*. But as I am satisfied, that the contended-for Tax on our *Excesses*, and a moderate one on our *Funds*, (of which I shall hint presently) will answer all our good Purposes, without any fresh Incumbrance on Land, I shall not, at this Time, descant on the Advantages that would naturally accrue to the *landed Gentlemen* from easing the *industrious Artizan*, and taking up the Burthen themselves. The certain Affinity there is between the *landed* and *commercial* Interest of this Nation renders the Matter plain to a Demonstration.

ALTHOUGH it has been a received Opinion, since the *Revolution*, that most Ministers looked upon a large *national Debt*, as a certain Pledge of the Subjects Fidelity, and for that Reason constantly obstructed the Discharge of the *Publick Incumbrances*; yet as I have the highest Opinion imaginable of the good Sense and Humanity of the *great Man* at the Head of our Affairs, at present, I shall not only believe of him that he was never *byassed* by this

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fatal Maxim; but also, that he will sincerely concur in all *reasonable* Expedients for the Payment of our Debts as the *certain*, it may be said, the *only* Means for rendering his native Country rich and powerful. I believe him too good a Friend to the *Revolution*, to imagine it stands in need of any Support formed on the *Miseries* and *Calamities* of the Subject. He cannot but know that the *Affections* of the People are the best Pledges the Prince can have for their Duty, and that these are never acquired by any seeming Disregard for their Interest. Upon the whole, I am so well satisfied of the Concurrence of the *Court* and the *Ministry* in a Point that must so much endear them to the Publick, that I shall proceed to shew the Reasonableness of *Taxing* our *Publick Funds*.

It is now fully understood, I presume, that the present ruinous Condition of our *Trade* is chiefly owing to the *unweildy Burthens* laid upon our Manufacturers, and that, for this Reason, they have not been able to supply foreign Markets as cheap as the *FRENCH*, the *DUTCH*, and the *FLEMINGS*, or indeed as cheap as we ourselves were wont to do before the *Revolution*; and as this Truth is so self-evident, it will naturally follow that, until our Manufacturers shall be eased of those Clogs which have

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hitherto hung upon them, we can never hope they will be able to rescue the *Woollen Trade* out of the Hands of our Rivals. If then this Staple of the Nation be visibly decayed, it will be admitted that we should immediately set about easing it of such Incumbrances as have oppressed, and always must oppress it whilst they continue. Most of the *Taxes* that affect our Manufacturers being mortgaged, it will be necessary to create other *Funds* to answer the Purpose of the Anticipation, before they can be abolished. But there seems to be no Possibility of our being able to raise such a *Fund*, but by taxing *Land inordinately*, or *Luxury* and our *Funds moderately*. As it is not probable, that a Tax on our *Luxury* alone will answer the Purposes contended for, it will follow, that either *Land* or the *Funds* must necessarily furnish out the Deficiency. There is already a Tax of *two Shillings* in the Pound on *Land*, and it is probable that the *Exigencies* of the State, for the *current Service*, will require an additional one of *two Shillings* more; so that, morally speaking, there will be no room for applying any Part of the *Land-tax* towards the *Ease* of our Manufacturers. But supposing there should, how unjust would it be to continue an excessive Burthen on the *Landed Gentlemen*, who have, for almost fifty Years past, bore a very unequal Share of the national Expence?

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Expence? And will it not be more equitable to Tax the *Funds* that have never, since the Creation of them, contributed towards the publick Expence?

EVEN most of the present Proprietors of the *Funds* have raised large Estates from the Necessities of the Publick; and such as are late Adventurers, and therefore are not supposed to have benefited in proportion to the old Standers, may be easily traced out and distinguished in the Taxation. Surely, an Exemption of *forty* odd Years will be thought sufficient by the very Proprietors themselves, who have been so long secured in their Properties by the unequal Burthen borne by their more useful fellow Subjects.

IT is true the *Proprietors* of the *Funds* have positive Acts of Parliament to secure them from any *Taxation*; but I believe it will be allowed they have enjoyed the Benefit of those Laws much longer than was consistent with the national Interest. We have seen Laws, the most sacred, repealed when the Publick-welfare seemed to require they should; so that Necessity which has been, and always must be, a sufficient Plea for the Repeal of Laws, will fully justify such a necessary Step, in the present Urgency of our Affairs. Our Necessity, at this Time, bears no Proportion with that on any former

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Occasion, as it is attended with nothing less than the intire Ruin or Preservation of our Trade, the real Source of our Wealth and Power.

SOME have thought that *Publick Credit* must suffer by a Tax upon the *Funds*; but, for my Part, I am clearly of another Opinion, as it appears to me evident, that the Proprietors may more reasonably hope for the gradual Discharge of their respective Debts, when Commerce and Manufactures flourish, than when they do not. That these Fountains of our Wealth will not, cannot ~~be~~ whilst they remain under the Pressures that have occasioned their present Decay, is certain, as it also is that they cannot be otherwise relieved, than by raising a *Fund* that will answer the Amount of those *Taxes* which now affect them. Such a *Fund* is impossible to be raised without obliging the *Creditors* of the Publick to contribute towards it; therefore, as the Certainty or Uncertainty of the Discharge of the national Debt, depends intirely on Advantages or Disadvantages accruing from Commerce, it becomes their own Interest to contribute towards its Relief. However some may be apt to distinguish between our *commercial* Credit, and that which they call our *publick* Credit, it is certain they are one and the same in reality; and whenever that Credit,

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dit, founded on the Advantages of Trade, comes to decline, the other, as it is supported by it, must necessarily fall; which shews that nothing can affect the national Credit so essentially as the Decay of our Trade.

WHATEVER our Pretensions may be to Wealth, and the Means of discharging the *Fifty Millions* we owe, I am afraid we shall soon see ourselves reduced to an Incapacity of discharging even the Interest of this exorbitant Sum, if our Trade and Manufactures, those genuine Channels of our Affluence, are not cleared of the Impediments that choak them up at this Time: And what in such Case can be our Hopes as to the Discharge of the Capital? May it not be justly apprehended, that our Necessities will soon oblige us to get rid of a Load we shall be unable to bear, though it should be by Means not altogether so agreeable to the *Proprietors* Notions of *publick Faith*? For *Necessity*, absolute *Necessity*, must always justify Measures calculated for the general Safety. So that, upon the whole I think, as the Credit, and the future Welfare and Safety of the Nation solely depend on her Trade and Manufactures, Self-interest should engage the Creditors of the Publick to concur towards their Ease and Encouragement.

THE well founded Complaint of our Manufacturers, in relation to the clandestine Exportation of *Wool* from ENGLAND and IRELAND, should be immediately taken into Consideration; and, as I have often been sorry to have seen this essential Point postponed in Parliament, I should be glad to see a constant Committee appointed, by the House of *Commons*, for examining the State of our *Woollen* Manufactures. I should think the *Woollen* Manufactures of GREAT BRITAIN require the highest Attention, and therefore merit a Committee as much as even her *Religion*. But I should be sorry to see that neglected, for the Time to come, as much as this has been for the Time past.

IT was thought proper a very few Years ago, as a Means to prevent the running of *Wool* from IRELAND to pass a Bill in the late House of *Commons*, for taking off all Duties on *Bayze* and *Worsted-yarn* imported from that Kingdom; and though that necessary Bill was dropt in the other House, for Reasons I don't think proper to mention here, I don't doubt but it will be soon thought proper to revive and pass it, as one necessary Means of inducing the *Irish* to sell to us, and to us alone, all their *Wool* and *Yarn*. But it is now evident, even to the Opposers of that Bill, that the Encouragement

ment designed by it to IRELAND, would be of singular Advantage to our own Manufactures, I shall only observe, that as it is our Interest to deprive our *French Rivals* of the Materials by which they have been enabled to supplant us in our *Woollen* Trade, so will it certainly be our Advantage to prevent the *Irish*, by giving them some Encouragements, rather than by Compulsion, from dealing with them.

BUT if we would go to the Root of the *Evil*, I am of Opinion we should give far greater Encouragements to IRELAND, than the taking off the Duties on her *Yarn*. For as the *Irish* can manufacture far cheaper than we, or even than the FRENCH, it may be reasonably, presumed, as they will be able to under-sell those *Rivals* at foreign Markets, the present Current of their *Woollen* Trade will be diverted, which will render the Recovery of ours the less difficult. And for this Purpose it deserves to be considered, whether we should not, for a limited Time, permit the *Exportation* of certain *Woollen* Manufactures from IRELAND. Or supposing we should only permit them into this Kingdom, that we might have the Advantage of transporting them Abroad: Or supposing again, we only admitted their *Woollen* Manufactures imperfectly manufactured, that we ourselves might

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might have the Benefit of the Melioration. I am for trying every Method, every Expedient for the *Recovery* of our *Trade*, before it be past all Recovery. And to convince us that the *Irish* are more capable of destroying the Manufactures of our supplanting *Rivals* than we ourselves are, let us examine how the *French* behaved with relation to the late *illicit* Trade, for Woollen Manufactures carried on from CORK to LISBON. They immediately gave far greater Encouragement than they had before, to the Importation of Worsted-yarn from IRELAND; and it is to FRANCE, more than to the Vigilance of our own Subjects at LISBON, that we owe our minute Informations of that clandestine Commerce; for the *French* do not scruple to say, that they have been more affected, than we, by the late Exportation of *Woollen* Manufactures from IRELAND.

As the Wealth of IRELAND must always center in this Kingdom, it should, at all Times, be a Reason with us for granting her greater Liberties of Trade, than we have done for the Time past; but, in our present Distresses, I should think our own immediate Interest calls upon us to take her to our Assistance, in order to check the Progress of the Manufactures of those Foreigners who have, and I am afraid al-

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ways will, without the Aid of IRELAND, injure us in our favourite *Staple-commerce*.

FOR this Reason I cannot help thinking, that an *Union* with IRELAND, on the Footing of that with SCOTLAND, would be of singular Benefit to this Nation. It is certain that such an *Union* would have eased us of great Part of our present Debts, by the Proportion which that Kingdom would have been able to bear of our Expences; it also seems to me evident, that such an *Union* would have prevented Foreigners from having any Share at present in the *Woollen* Trade, and many other Branches of Commerce which are the Concomitants of it. That People would, by such an *Union* become so linked to us in Interest, that their Affection and Fidelity to us must have been beyond any Manner of Doubt. In short, such an *Union*, as it would be the Means of cementing the present jarring Interests of these Kingdoms, and collecting their Strength, so it would render the *British* Empire equal to, if not surpassing, the Power of even FRANCE, the most formidable State now in the World.

THE *Power* of any Empire certainly consists, as well in the *Union* as in the *Wealth* and *Numbers* of its Inhabitants; and whether its Wealth be in this or that Part of

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the State it matters not, provided it is to be collected upon Emergencies. But as the Bulk of the Riches and Treasure of every State will and must necessarily center in the Seat of the Empire, there is no Doubt but that the Wealth of IRELAND, be it never so great, will always find its Way to this great *Metropolis*.

THE Majority of the present wealthy Inhabitants of IRELAND are either immediately BRITONS, or the Descendants of BRITONS; so that in reality they are now become the same People with ourselves. Their Laws, and, for the most part, their Language and Religion are the same with ours, and without doubt their Interest would be the same, were their Privileges equal to ours.

I NEVER could see any Reason for the *Distinctions* some Persons would make between that People and this; and one would think the *narrow Seas*, which runs between us, ought not to have occasioned it. And yet, absurd as this Reason may appear, it will be found, upon due Examination, to be the only Motive for our imprudent Prepossession. For supposing IRELAND had been joined to WALES, or any other Part of this Island, should we in such Case make any

any Distinction between this and that Part of the King's Dominions?

I AM not singular in my Opinion, that an *Union* with IRELAND would be of Advantage to this Kingdom; for many of our most distinguished Patriots have frequently cherished the same Notions since the *Revolution*. But though our Inclinations should not carry us the Lengths of an *Union* at present, I should think however the apparent *Decay* of our *Woollen* Manufactures, and our Trade, might determine us to give them an immediate Opportunity of supplanting our *foreign* Rivals, as has been already observed.

I SHOULD almost think it unnecessary to recommend here any Thing so obviously advantageous to our Manufacturers, as opening more *Wool-ports* in IRELAND, as well as in this Kingdom, it being evident that the Want of convenient Ports in the *West* of IRELAND, where most of the *Wool* grows, lays the Inhabitants thereabouts under a Necessity of Dealing with *Owlers* for want of convenient Markets. Besides that, in reality, the *English* Manufacturer pays for the expensive Charge of Land-carriage from those remote Parts to DUBLIN or CORK.

AND as to opening more Ports in this Kingdom, it is manifest that it would be of singular Use to such of our Manufacturers as live far distant from BRISTOL, and other Ports now opened. The particular Benefit of this or that Port should never weigh with the Representative of a whole People, when the general Good is under Consideration; though, I am sorry to say it, we have seen some Instances of this sort of Partiality, which had manifestly prejudiced Multitudes of the Subjects.

As the present visible Decay of our *Sugar-trade* is partly owing to the Neglect of most of those who had been intrusted with the Government of our *Sugar-islands*, I should be of Opinion, that for the future none but Gentlemen of known Prudence and Virtue be sent to rule in that Part of the World. And, in order to render the Employments there worth the while of such Men, I think a very considerable Augmentation should be made in the Salaries of the *commanding* Officers in those Parts, which might set them above the Hope or Expectation of *Perquisites* or *Gratuities* from the indigent Governed.

ALTHOUGH I have no great Veneration for FRANCE, as she is a dangerous Neighbour, and our *Rival* in Trade, yet there are

are many of her Maxims which I think worthy of our Imitation; and as I particularly approve her Conduct as to the Management of her *Sugar-islands*, I shall give a short Detail of it for the Reader's Satisfaction.

It must be owned that the FRENCH, of all the Nations in EUROPE, seem to understand the Art of Governing their Plantations the best; for it is observable that all the Instructions from that Court to their Governours are purely calculated for the Ease, Safety and Welfare of the *Governed*: And justly apprehending that the sole Power civil and military, if lodged in the Hands of one, might be liable to Abuse, they wisely divide the Authority between two, who, as they are in a manner independant, are constant Checks upon each other. In their *Sugar-islands*, and indeed in all their Colonies, the Military Power is lodged with the Governour; but the Civil is intrusted with an Officer called an *Intendant*, who is always chosen from among those who are distinguished for Probity, and for a thorough Knowledge of the Trade, Customs and Genius of those to be governed. This Officer has an Inspection into all the Affairs of the Colony; even the most minute do not escape his Vigilance. He curbs the over rigorous Severity of the Planter towards his Servants and Slaves, and exacts Obedi-

Obedience and lawful Submission from the latter; he guards against the Encroachments of the Ambitious and Opulent, and prudently prevents all Feuds, Animosities, or Quarrels, arising either from Interest or Resentment amongst all Orders of People under his Care; he fairly and honestly represents their *Wants* to his Court, and seldom or never fails of procuring them all the Advantages they can wish for; and, in short, this Officer is the common Father of the People, and as such he is generally beloved and respected. If either he, or the Governour, should at any Time swerve from those Rules, by which they are to walk for the Good of the Colony, they are most severely punished, and even with *Death* itself sometimes; for the Crime of *Peculation* is seldom or never remitted at the Court of FRANCE, though without doubt the Criminals there are as capable, as those in any other *Nation*, to bribe the *Ministers*.

It is true, the *derniere Supplice*, or the Punishment of Death, is rarely inflicted in FRANCE on these Occasions: But it is because it is very rarely merited, and not because the Demerit is *stifled*, or the Complaints of the Injured *neglected* by the Court. The Court of FRANCE is always willing and ready to hear the Complaints of the People,

People, and probably it is to her being so, that the Impartiality and Probity of her Officers are chiefly owing.

THE FRENCH use their *Negroes* more like Servants than Slaves; they consider those unhappy Creatures as Part of their own Species, and wisely think that using the poor Wretches with Humanity will rather promote than prevent their Affection and Industry. They piously allow them Chaplains for their Instruction in the holy Mysteries of the Gospel; baptize them, and take care ever after to keep them strictly to the Duties of *Religion*. Thus, by Regulations equally pious and prudent, do the FRENCH encourage their *Blacks*, and benefit by their Lenity and Humanity, whilst we on the contrary are ill served by ours, through our ~~own~~ *unchristian* and *unnatural Severities*.

As an Encouragement to her *Sugar-colonies*, the *French* Court frequently grants Leave for the direct Exportation of Sugars for foreign Countries, without touching at the Ports of FRANCE. We have found this Maxim necessary in the Article of *Rice* from CAROLINA, and I cannot see why the same Indulgence may not be shewn to our *Sugar-islands*, which seem at this Time to require all the Favour we can bestow upon them.

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HAVING thus briefly given a Relation of the *French* Policy in the Government of their *Colonies* in AMERICA, I appeal to the impartial Reader, whether the present distressed Condition of our *own Plantations*, in that Part of the World, be not purely owing to *Maxims* intirely differing from those that have raised our Neighbours to their present flourishing Height, and whether we ought not to change our Conduct to theirs, if we would retrieve our *Sugar-trade*.

Now that FRANCE is under our Consideration, I shall beg Leave to take notice of one or two more of her *Maxims*, or Institutions for the Ease and Advancement of her *Trade* and *Commerce*, which I have often ardently wished might be introduced amongst us here.

THE present Practice of the *Law* in this Kingdom has been, for a long Time, looked upon to be a *very great Grievance* to the Subjects in general, but more particularly so to those employed in the Business of Trade or Commerce, who are equally made the Properties of the ignorant as well as of the *artful* Practicer, as they are little skilled in the *Quillets* and *Chicanes* of the Profession, and are seldom at

leisure to be their own Sollicitors. It may be added, that the Gentlemen of the *Robe*, as they are *Strangers* to *Trade*, are very improper Judges of Affairs of Commerce. It has been observed that the most Learned and most Eminent amongst them have been obliged to the Assistance of the Accountant-trader, when Matters of Account came before them; and the insupportable Dilatoriness, which Suits about Accounts, depending in *Chancery*, are known to be attended with, and the Multiplicity of Errors taken to them, even after they are stated, fully prove that these *intricately profound Gentlemen* are not proper Judges of Matters of Accounts or Commerce. I could produce a Multitude of Instances of the Incapacity of the *Gentlemen* of the *Gown* in Matters of Trade; but I shall at present content myself with one only, which has been well known at most of the Offices in and about *Chancery-lane* for forty Years together. It happened, that a Merchant, who had resided in SPAIN for many Years, died there Intestate, with the Character of Wealth and Probity. His Heirs filed their Bill against the surviving Partner for an Account of the Assets of the Deceased; the Suit went on, the Books of Account were lodged with a *Master* who understood very little of the Matter. In short, after about *forty Years* Litigation to no purpose, and

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an Expence of many *Thousand Pounds*, two Merchants were appointed by the Court to settle the Accounts, which they did in as few Hours as the Chancery took up Years, and to the Content of the Parties concerned, who loudly proclaimed their *Equity* as well as Skill; nay, the very Court and Bar were not ashamed on this Occasion to own their Incapacity in Matters of Trade and Accounts.

THE Wisdom of FRANCE has applied the only Remedy to this Evil of *Ignorance* in the *Profession* that could well be devised; for this Purpose the *Consule*, or a Court composed of *Merchants* and *Traders*, is established in every great trading City and Town in the Kingdom, which determines all Controversies and Differences arising about Contracts of Trade and Commerce.

THE *Court of Conscience*, in the City of LONDON, is somewhat of this Complexion; but the Smallness of the *Sum*, of which that Judicature has Power to take Cognizance, renders it of very little use in Commerce; which probably was the Reason that one of the *City* Members, a Gentleman conspicuous for his true Knowledge of Trade, did propose, in a late Session of *Parliament*, an Enlargement of the Power of that equitable Court; but so far were some Persons from approving or agreeing to

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to his Motion, that the nearest *Relation* of a certain *Great-man* made it the Object of his wonted, awkward, and ill-timed Jest and Ridicule in the *H——e*: Every Hearer by was sensible that the publick spirited Opposition which the City had given to a certain Scheme the Year before, occasioned the flagrant Disregard which was shewn to her well-founded Petition, on this Occasion, and that a like Application from LYNN, NORWICH, or YARMOUTH, however inconsiderable these Towns are, if compared with LONDON, would have met with a more favourable Reception.

THE other *French* Maxim I would recommend is that of establishing a *Chamber of Commerce*, as it is called in FRANCE, or a Board of Trade composed of Deputies from all the considerable Trading Towns in the Kingdom, who, from Time to Time, should represent to the Legislature and Court the Circumstances and true Situation of our Trade and Manufactures. I don't think it can be contested, that a Board, composed of such *experienced* Members, will be more likely to give our Guardians more instructive Lights than one filled with Gentlemen, who have had no Opportunities of acquiring any Knowledge of the national Manufactures and Commerce: De-

puties also from our Islands, and other Colonies in AMERICA, should be admitted to this necessary Board.

As it is certainly our Interest to *encourage Trade*, in every Shape, I hope it will be judged necessary to redress the Grievance complained of in the Beginning of this Discourse, concerning the *Slowness*, the *Difficulties* and the *Expence* that attend the Payment of the Bounties, and the returned Duties, allowed by Law for the Advancement of *Tillage*, *Manufactures* and *Commerce*. What has been already said on this Head, and divers others, will it is presumed be sufficient to justify our Expectations in the Redress of those Particulars. But I cannot conclude this Paragraph without expressing my Wishes, that the whole *Duty* and *Excise*, on Goods re-exported in Time, should be repaid to the Importer. Nor could I ever see, why the *Excise* should not be as liable to a *Draw-back* as any other Duty payable to the Crown. For if the one be looked upon to be an Encouragement to Trade, why not the other, which generally exceeds the Duties in Value? This Article of a *Draw-back* of the entire Duties payable to the Crown, whether in *Subsidies* or *Excise*, in my Opinion, merits the Attention of *Parliament* in the present *calamitous* State of our Trade.

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THE Act of *Navigation*, though truly valuable on many Accounts, is found by Experience, to be an Impediment to Trade in many Instances, and therefore I wish it were taken into Consideration. But at present I shall only observe, that as GIBRALTAR and MINORCA are in our Hands, and cannot be supposed to have any native Growth of their own, there should be an Exception in their Favour, particularly as to the Products of AFRIC. An Indulgence of this kind will be of real Advantage to our Merchants at home, and it will be a Means, as those Places will thereby become our Storehouses in that Part of the World, of our being able to lay some small Duty on Goods imported there, which may in Time help to defray Part of the vast Expence we are at in the Maintenance of them. For such a small Duty will be a less Charge to the Trader, than the Freights and other Expences that must necessarily attend the Commerce of AFRIC, without this Exemption in Favour of GIBRALTAR, &c.

THE *prodigious Increase* of *Buildings* of late Years, is justly looked upon as an Evil which wants Redress; and though these extraordinary additional Buildings may be reckoned by some to be an Indication of the Increase of our Wealth, it is most manifestly

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festly otherwise. This appears as well from the late *Fall of House-rent*, as from the infinite Numbers of Houses that are *uninhabited* in the additional Buildings, notwithstanding that the Heart of the Town is almost become a Desert, from the silly Itch People have had of getting into new Mansions and opener Air.

THE Capital is infinitely too great for a Kingdom of so little Extent as this; and though there might be some Hopes that the Members would be able to support the Unwieldiness of such a Head, if *Trade and Commerce* had flourished, yet as these *Sources* of our *Wealth* flow much slower, there can be no Doubt but the other Parts of the Kingdom must suffer Extremity from the monstrous Increase of the *Metropolis*: The general Complaint of the *Scarcity of Hands* in all the *Southern* Parts of the Island, the Capital excepted, confirms the Truth of this Assertion beyond Dispute.

FOR my Part, I look upon the late *Increase* of our Buildings to be rather an Indication of our *Luxury*, than of our *Wealth*; and for this Reason, if there be no other, I wish a Stop may be put to the Evil before the People ruin themselves beyond all Possibility of Recovery. I have known many who have been lately undone
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by Building, and if I may give Credit to those who are well acquainted with the Building-trade, there are few of the *middle Undertakers*, who have not been ruined, or are in the Way of being so. The Thing speaks itself; for there is scarcely a Year since 1720, but has produced a Fall in the Value of Houses: And if the *Building-frenzy* is not cured, by some wholesome Law, we have Grounds to fear, that, in a few Years, an Estate in Houses will be rather an Incumbrance than any Benefit to the Owner.

It is sometimes absolutely necessary, that the *national Guardians* do take Cognizance of the *Excesses* of the People, who are often found to be the Authors of their own Misfortunes, in Contradiction to Experience, and even to common Understanding. The Year 1720 produced many Instances of this kind; and it will be allowed that the *Charitable Corporation* was a late ~~Instance~~ Instance.

ALTHOUGH I am no Friend, for many obvious Reasons, to *Companies* or *Monopolies* of any kind in a free Nation, like this, yet since we have Companies, I am for giving them all the possible Encouragement, not inconsistent with the public Good, whilst they subsist. Our EAST-INDIA

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INDIA *Company* seems to have been in a very declining State for some Years past; and though it is more than probable, that this Misfortune is owing to the over partial *Lenity* and *Indulgence* shewn from Time to Time, to those who had plundered other incorporated Bodies, I should think it still expedient to give all the Assistance in our Power towards the Relief of this languishing Company.

THE just Complaints of our *Woollen* Manufacturers some Years ago, occasioned at that Time a Prohibition of the Wear of *Chints* and *Callicoes*; but I see no Reason why we should not encourage the Wear of *Muslins*, as it interferes with none of our own Manufactures at Home. *Muslin* is grown into Disuse from the Cheapness of *Lawns* and *Cambricks*, which are suffered to be imported upon too easy a Duty. And if the prodigious Sums which are annually sent Abroad in Bills and Specie, for the Purchase of these superfluous Articles, and the manifest Prejudice our EAST-INDIA *Company* receives from the Use of them, were not sufficient to induce us to prohibit the Wear of them amongst us, I should think that as *Cambricks* and *Lawns* are, for the most Part, of the Manufacture of the Dominions of FRANCE, we ought to discourage the Use of them, as one Means of giving that

that formidable *Rival* some Obstruction in her extended Commerce. We ought not in good Policy, to suffer that industrious, ambitious Nation to grow into Wealth, by any Branch of Trade with us we have Power to prevent.

I HAVE already mentioned the *Law* as a Bar to Commerce, and therefore took notice of the *Consule*, or Merchants Court in FRANCE, as a Matter worthy our Imitation; but here I shall consider the Law more generally as it affects the whole Mass of the People, and leave the Amendment of it to the Consideration of those, who only have the Power of relieving the unhappy Subject from the Oppression of those, who are the more dangerous, as they destroy us under the Guise of Justice and Friendship.

THE Duke DE SULLY observes, that towards the Close of the fifteenth Century, the Law was a most grievous Burthen on the Subjects of FRANCE; and *Monsieur COLBERT* complains, about the middle of the last, that the Law, or rather the Practice of the Law, was more sensibly felt by the *French* Subjects, than all the Taxes put together. Although I am pretty well satisfied that our Professors in ENGLAND are as great Lovers of Wealth, and as little Lovers of their fellow Subjects, or any Thing

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else but their own Interest, as those of the *Robe* in FRANCE could have been for their Lives; and though the very great Numbers of our present Nobility, sprung from the Gown, shew our particular Regard for the Profession; yet, I say, I cannot like *Monsieur COLBERT* affirm, that the Law is as great a Burthen to the Subjects of ENGLAND as the present *Taxes*. If indeed, our Taxes bore any Proportion with those of FRANCE at that Time, or even at this, or of any other Kingdom in EUROPE, I should readily agree that the Burthen of the Law was heavier; but as I much question whether any Nation in the World is, or ever has been, burthened with Taxes like ours, so I cannot help thinking it would have been impossible for us to have borne another Weight, like those of FRANCE in *Monsieur COLBERT*'s Days, surpassing that of our Taxes.

LOUIS the XIVth saw the Calamities of his Subjects as to the *Law*, with a Concern becoming a Father of the People; and therefore determined to apply a Remedy, but before he could establish any Thing like Order or Justice in his Dominions, he found it necessary to abolish at once all the chicaning Arts made use of in the Practice of the Law. For this Purpose, he authorized a sufficient Number of the most Learned and most *Upright* of his Subjects,
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to whom he gave extraordinary Stipends, that they might be above Corruption, to compile a new *Code* or Body of Institutions, which should be the Law for the future throughout the Kingdom, some few provincial Customs excepted. This *Code*, in which no Notice was taken of *Maritime* Affairs, or Matters of *Commerce*, would have been imperfect without a second, which he ordered to be compiled, so plain and intelligible, that every Merchant of common Understanding in FRANCE is capable, from the *Code Marine*, to form a right Judgment of the Demands that may be made upon him, or those he has a Right to make, without consulting either *Council*, *Attorney*, or *Solicitor*.

THE late King of SARDINIA, one of the wisest Princes of his Time, found himself obliged since the *Peace* of UTRECHT, in Commiseration of his Subjects, to follow the Example of FRANCE, as to the Regulations of the *Law*, and a new *Code* or Body of Institutions; and I think something of this salutary Kind has been done, not a great many Years ago, in DENMARK and BRANDENBURG.

Now, without examining minutely into the *Corruption* and Practice of the *Law*, here in this Kingdom, which seems at this

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Time to be *severely* felt, and well understood by the People in general, I will appeal to the Unbyassed, if some Regulations, like those of FRANCE and SAVOY, are not necessary towards relieving Trade, and for the general Ease of the Subject. It is true, some few Steps have been lately taken by the Legislature, towards a Cure of the Evil, such as reducing *Pleadings* to the *Language* of the *Country*, &c. But all this is but nibbling at the Distemper; it must be probed to the Bottom before a thorough Cure can be made.

OUR ACTS of *Parliament* are, for the most Part, worded in so general and loose a Stile, that the *Minors* of the Robe work their Way through them whenever it serves for their own Purpose; we have known a thousand Instances of their great Ingenuity in Matters of this Nature; but, for the present I shall only fix upon one that happens to be a real Grievance.

It was enacted, some few Years ago, in Compassion of the *industrious* Poor, that no Person should be *held to Bail* in any Action brought for any Sum under *ten Pounds*; and this is observed as to *Writs* issued out of the Courts of *Westminster Hall*; but the *Marshal's* Court continues to arrest and hold to Bail in Actions for Sums exceeding
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forty Shillings. Now I would be glad to know how the Condition of the Subjects, in and about this great *Metropolis*, is mended by that Law, which had indeed taken them out of *bad Hands*, but left them perhaps to be grasped to Death by *worse*? If there be an Exception in the Act in Favour of that and other inferior Courts, it might be more owing to the Degree of Favour, in which the superior Officers of those Courts stood with *certain great Persons*, than from any real Reason there could be in it: For why there should be any such Exemption does not in the least appear clear to me: Nay, I am pretty sure some have found it prejudicial.

THOUGH this Instance carries its Share of Inconsistency with it, it is trifling if compared with other Mistakes, which daily happen (to the great Prejudice of the *industrious* Subject) among the Gentlemen of the Law.

BEFORE it can be possible to make any considerable *Amendment* in the *Law*, or the Practice of it, it will be absolutely necessary to destroy all *Grants* of Offices in the Profession heretofore obtained by Favourites of the Crown; and though I do not think it would be Injustice to strip those of the Employments, that they have unworthily executed; yet, as I would
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not countenance even the Colour of an Injustice, I am for purchasing, at the real Value, the Property of all such Grantees. I do not question but that a Sum far short of one *hundred thousand Pounds* would suffice for this Purpose; and though it should exceed a *Million*, the Publick would be Gainers by the Bargain.

SOME will say, the *Professors* of the *Law* are grown so very formidable, as to be able to prevent a Reformation in the Profession. I hope this don't hold true in Fact, though I must confess, they are become a very considerable *Corps*, and very formidable in one Sense, that is to say, in *Wealth*; and probably it is owing to this Reason alone, that the general repeated Complaints of the People, against the *Practicers* and *Practice* of the *Law*, have met with so little Countenance of late Years.

It was indeed formerly complained of, that no publick Grievance however notorious, no Petitioner to *Parliament* could hope for Redress, or even to have the Merits of his Petition considered or debated, except certain Persons were first consulted and their Consents obtained.

How such extra-judicial Jurisdiction (if it was true) came to be introduced contrary

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trary to the Nature and Institution of *Parliament*, I won't take upon me to say; but certainly such an assumed Authority, might have been productive of much Evil, in as much as the Liberties and Properties of the Subject would have become thereby purely dependant on the Caprice of any such Persons.

I SHALL conclude my Observations as to Methods, for the *Encouragement* of our Commerce, with one or two Points, which seem to merit the Attention of *Parliament* in a particular Manner, as they immediately affect the *poorer* Part of the Subjects, which should always be the chief Object of their Consideration. These are the *unequal Tax* upon *Windows*, and the *Misapplication* of the *Poor's Rates*.

ONE would think that those who had established the *Window-tax* had forgot that wise Maxim to be observed by all Law-makers in levying Money upon the Publick, *viz.* That the *Laborious* and *Indigent* are to be eased at the Expence of the *idle* and *wealthy* Part of the Subjects. This will appear evident to any one who considers ever so little the Inequality of the Tax under our present Consideration. For by this Law the largest Edifice in the Kingdom is taxed at little more, than the Habitation of

of the meanest Artificer. How that Parliament came to have so little Regard for the Ease and Encouragement of Industry, I cannot say; but it is to be hoped this Grievance, together with many others will be redressed by our present Representatives, who, I don't in the least doubt, have the *Revival* of our Trade and Manufactures much at Heart.

As to the *Poor's Rate*, it is become so excessive a *Burthen*, under its present Regulation, that I am surprized how it came hitherto to be neglected by Parliament. Some Countries have paid for many Years *seven* Shillings in the Pound, and most Estates in the Kingdom pay from *one to five* Shillings. Now, if it be considered how immense a Sum has been *annually* raised for the Maintenance of our *Poor*, and how few have been relieved, it will readily appear that the Collectors and Managers of this Tax must have been guilty of no small Misapplications. Would it not be worth the while of our Guardians to inspect minutely into the Application of a Sum of publick Money, little short of that arising from *Land*, when taxed at *four* Shillings in the Pound?

But as it is not the Business of any private Person to take upon him to dictate to the Legislature, I shall only say upon this
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Head, that the Grievance will probably soon become intolerable, except the legislative Power interferes.

HAVING thus pointed out, in the general, the Methods by which our *Commercial Grievances* may be redressed, we will now examine, whether it be possible, by any other Expedients, to relieve us from the *Miseries* we labour under.

I AM not so in love with my own Productions, but that I should be extremely glad to see any Scheme, ever so different from my own, which might answer the glorious Purposes which induced me to appear in Print; but I own I cannot at present perceive, how the *Redress* of our Calamities is otherwise possible, than by retrenching our exorbitant Expences, by taking off such oppressive Clogs as obstruct our Commerce, and by encouraging, in every Shape, by *Bounties* and *Exemptions*, the *Merchant* and *Manufacturer*, in their several Capacities. I own also, that I cannot see how the *Funds*, absolutely necessary for answering these Ends, can be otherwise raised (without falling into the same Errors we would avoid) than by taxing our *Luxury* and the *publick Funds*: I have shewn, that, besides the Injustice of obliging *Land* to contribute towards such a *Fund*, it will be morally im-
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possible from the known annual Application of this Tax for defraying the Expence of the *current Service*.

Now then, a *Tax* upon Land being out of the Question, I should be glad to learn how it may be possible to make up the Deficiencies that must attend the Abolishment of such of our present Taxes as affect our *Trade* and *Manufactures*, and for the Payment of the *Bounties* necessary for the Encouragement of these Pillars of our Strength, but by taxing our *Luxury* (which without this Necessity requires Redress) and our publick *Funds*, which have not hitherto contributed, in the least, towards the national Expence. If there are any other Methods by which such a necessary *Fund* may be raised, I freely own they are unknown to me; and therefore, 'till I am better informed, I must persist in thinking that it will be impossible to retrieve our *sinking* Commerce without future *Parcimony*, and without laying a temporary Tax upon *Luxury* and our publick *Funds*.

THE Decay of our Commerce being too visible to be controverted, we will for a while, extend our Reflections to Futurity, and see if we may reasonably hope for the Time to come, to be able to make any Figure in the *Political* World, to be ever in

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a Condition to discharge our *Debts*, or to retrieve our *Commerce*, except we immediately enter upon Measures, such as have been partly pointed out here, for the Recovery of our Trade, upon which the others so much depend.

It is certain, that our *Wealth* and *Power* flow from our Trade and Commerce, as it is, that our *Influence* in EUROPE must always rise or fall in Proportion to the Gain or Loss accruing from them. Experience, I am sorry to say it, very late Experience confirms this Truth beyond Contradiction: For without doubt FRANCE must have been well apprized of the *Decay* of our *Trade*, our Load of *Debts*, and our other Misfortunes, before she entered into the late War. She durst not have disturbed the publick Tranquillity, by impetuously falling upon the chiefest of our Allies, if she had not been sensible of our *Inability* to act as vigorously as we had done in former Reigns. And I wish the present *pacifick* *Disposition* of the DUTCH does not proceed from the same Cause.

IF then we are already so reduced as to be unable to assist, without the most manifest Danger towards the Preservation of that *Ballance of Power*, for which we had spilt such *Oceans* of Blood, and spent so many

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Millions of Treasure since the *Revolution*; what Efforts can we hereafter hope to be able to make, in the Cause of Liberty, when every Year, every Month, nay every Day, must be productive of greater Decay in our Commerce, and consequently of a greater Degree of Disability.

As to the Discharge of our *Debts*, which certainly might have been accomplished before this Time, if we had not been infatuated, how can we hope to be able to get rid of them, ~~the~~ the same, or pretty near the same, national Expences are continued which had created them; nay, even though our Commerce was not to become less beneficial than it is at present? But as its farther Decay is inevitable, under the present Oppressions, it seems impossible we should ever be in a Condition to pay off our Incumbrances with any Justice to the Creditors, except our Trade is suddenly relieved.

THEN as to our Trade, which has been here all along observed to have decayed from the *Weight* of our *Taxes*, and Unsteadiness of our Conduct, is it to be imagined that it can be retrieved by the Continuance of the same *Pressure*, and Perseverance in the same *expensive* fluctuating Measures, which had chiefly brought its present *Consumption* upon it? No, as it is manifest that its Disease

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ease is owing to *wrong* Prescriptions, we must make an intire Change in our Practice, if we would restore it to its *primitive Health* and *Vigour*.

To conclude, I think it demonstrable, as well from the present Situation of our *foreign* and *domestick* Affairs, as from what has been observed in the Course of this Treatise, that unless we immediately re-trench our Expences, and go into the other Expedients proposed here for the Encouragement of Commerce, we never can have even a Chance of being able to *recover* our Trade, to *pay* off our Debts, to make any *Figure* in EUROPE, or to defend our trading Interest from the Insults of Foreigners.

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