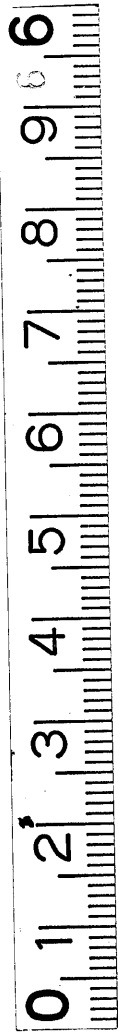


50-3

0090



---

THE  
LINEN SPINSTER,  
IN  
DEFENCE  
OF THE  
*Linen Manufactures, &c.*

---

314

THE <sup>Al</sup>  
Linen SPINSTER,  
IN  
DEFENCE  
OF THE  
Linen Manufactures,  
&c.

---

To be Continued as Mrs. Rebecca  
Woollpack gives Occasion.

---

Number I.

---

*Qualem commendes, etiam atq; etiam adspite: Ne mox  
Incutiant aliena tibi peccata pudorem. Hor.*

---

By JENNY DISTAFF.

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. Roberts, at the Oxford-Arms in  
Warwick-Lane, 1720.



T H E  
L I N E N S P I N S T E R .

**T**HE World wants not to be informed how some *medling busy* People have occasion'd great Heart-burnings in several Branches of our Family about Preheminence, and I know not how many other Pretences. I always gave my half Sister, *Rebecca Woolpack*, on this side the *Tweed*, the upper hand; but by particular Priviledges granted to the *Distaff's* by former Kings of *Scotland*, we claim the Precedence there. However since my Sister has given me so fair and publick an Invitation to a Friendly Correspondence, after it had been very much interrupted; I have as publickly acknowledged the Favour by the following Letter, under cover to *Isaac Bickerstaff* Esq; Burgess of — — to save Postage, since she pretends the Woollen Manufacture

( 6 )

nufacture cannot at present bear it. Squire *Bickerstaff* is half Brother to us both, who are by different Venters; but he is a little partial to my Sister.

*Jenny Distaff's* Letter to Mrs. *Rebecca Woolpack*, &c.

Dear Sister,

" I Am very glad of an Occasion, wherein  
 " I have at last the good Fortune to think  
 " the same way with you in many things; and however Matters have been carried of late,  
 " I have never said any thing that ought to  
 " displease you, but with a reluctant Heart,  
 " and in opposition to much good Will and  
 " Esteem for your many great and uncommon  
 " Talents. For I agree with " that judi-  
 " cious, delightful and memorable Writer the  
 " Spectator, that 'tis to your Manufactures,  
 " that the Mahometans look at least like Chri-  
 " stians, and the Inhabitants of the Frozen  
 " Zone are warm amidst mountains of Snow.  
 Nay, 'tis to you that an Antient Briton en-  
 fensed in Flannel cheerfully whistles down  
 the Sun on the bleak Mountains of *Wales*.

But why Sister would you engross all  
 Merit? " If a Woman's chief Praise (as  
 " you say) consists in Domestick Industry and  
 " in

( 7 )

" in Simplicity, rather than Variety of  
 " Dress, I believe my Claim is the better  
 of the two. I own I have very little Ac-  
 quaintance with what you call the modern  
 English Ladies. In the Country they are  
 a Species so little known, that was one of  
 them to make her Appearance rigged out as  
 you dress her, she would be as much stared  
 at as one of your Masquerading Rakes in  
 Lawn Sleeves; or a blooming Toast with  
 the blighted Phyz of an Old Witch of Se-  
 venty. — Besides, if I am rightly in-  
 form'd, these modern Ladies are not a thou-  
 sandth part of the Conversable Sex in  
 Town; then how Sister can we " come at  
 " a true State of Trade, and the Interest of  
 " this Island with relation to the Habits now  
 " worn, when you do not take a Survey of  
 the ten thousandth part of them.

But allow me some just Exceptions I shall  
 make to that part of the Dress, which be-  
 yond all Practice Frenchifies your modern  
 Lady. For really, Sister, Mrs. *Stitch* in her  
 last Advice of Fashions affirms, that for one  
 Suit of *French Brocade*, *Lace* or *Alamode*,  
 these very Ladies wear twenty of your *Ita-  
 lian Mantua Silk*, or *English, Genoa, or Dutch  
 Damask*, *Velvet*, *Lustring*, &c. allow me, I  
 say, this Exception, and then your fine  
 Lady

( 8 )

Lady is dress'd chiefly with our Woollen-  
Manufacture ; viz.

- Her Smock \_\_\_\_\_ Serge or Crape.
- Her Hoop Petticoat \_\_\_\_\_ { Broad Cloth or  
Perpets.
- Her Italian quilted ditto \_\_\_\_\_ { Stuff, Cloth, or  
Baize.
- A Mantua \_\_\_\_\_ Ditto.
- A Head Dress and Pocket { Broad Cloth, stuff  
Handkerchief \_\_\_\_\_ { or Kersey, &c.
- Flowers for the Hair, and { Cloth, Stuff,  
a Fan \_\_\_\_\_ { &c.
- Her Black Hood and Scarf-- { Broad Cloth, or  
Baize, &c.

To these Articles, add those that you  
allow to be entirely *English*, and, I think,  
your modern Lady will be dress'd with our  
own Manufactures at all Points, except her  
Girdle, her Garters and her Pockets.

I don't doubt but your giddy Head will  
be as much puzzled at this Doctrine, as  
† *Martin* and *John* were with *Lord Peter's*  
Conceit of carving some slices of excellent  
Mutton out of a brown George ; " Come,  
" *Brothers*, says *Peter*, fall to and spare not,

† *Tale of the Tub.*

" here's

( 9 )

" here's excellent Mutton. But say they,  
" We never saw Mutton in our lives so nearly  
" resembling a slice from a Twelve-penny-loaf.  
\_\_\_\_\_ So you'll tell me, that never any  
Broad Cloath, or Serges so nearly resembled  
Cambrick, Holland, Damask, or Point Laces  
in this World ; but look again Sister into that  
*delightful* Author, the *Spectator*, and he'll tell  
you that our Merchants ' convert our Tin into  
" Gold, and our Wooll into Rubies : And I may  
add, into Holland Point, Damask, Raw Silk,  
&c.

When Brother *Isaac's* Conceits come in thy  
way, I see thou makest very free with them,  
tho' very little to the purpose : What avails  
it to the matter in Hand, if we are cropt  
above, and Branch out downwards, as he  
told us in his *Lucubrations* long since ? Is  
it your Acquaintance with these great Peo-  
ple ; for by the Dress and the State of your  
Lady, she must be a Countess at least ? Is it,  
I say, their Tast has debauch'd your Under-  
standing ; for if thou didst not know as little  
as these fine Modern Ladies, how could  
you think that their Rooms are hung, or  
their Chairs, and their Coaches are lin'd  
with Foreign Silks and Velvets : The *Mercers*  
will inform thee better. There is scarce one  
in a Hundred that does not Use *English* Silks,  
B Camb-

( 10 )

Camblets, or Velvets for those purposes. So after all thy fine reasoning, this very Modern Lady may, 'in Justice, as well as Compassion, be chearful in putting on Ornaments, which if generally worn, may respectively cherish Crowds of her fellow Subjects with plenty.

' It is not desired, you say, that we should return to the first Ages of the World for Dress; truly Sister, I hope this Generation is wiser than even to step back so far as the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, tho' a most Excellent Princess, and dearly lov'd, and encouraged her Subjects in all Manufactures, especially those for Foreign Markets. — Look into our Cousin Dr. *Distaff's* Genealogy of our Family: Tatler, No. II. Vol. I. You'll find there honourable mention of the White Staffs, though they were Courtiers, a younger Daughter of that Branch was a Maid of honour in the Glorious Reign I mentioned, and her entire Dress is still preserved in my Great Grandfather's Wardrobe. — Upon this Occasion I have considered it, and give you the principal Particulars: *Viz.*

A Curious fine *Turkey* Nett-work Headgeer, Edg'd with Florentine Sattin, Sprig'd and Flower'd.

A

( 11 )

A Ruff of fine *Flanders* Lawn containing 56 Yards  $\frac{1}{2}$  and a Nail.

A stiff Body'd Gown of Flemish Grogram, with a Gold colour'd Gimp-Edging *Dutch*.

A Fardingale of the same, containing 48 Yards  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

A Pair of Sleeves of Florentine Damask.

Four Roses of small *French* Ribbin for her Shooes and Garters, containing 375 Yards.

Two Ear Knots of Silver and Gold colour'd Ribbin, 69 Yards.

A Pair of Drawers of fine *Holland* Dimity, with Silver-tag-points to Lace them, almost quite down before and behind.

A Curious *Turkey* Leather Pouch to hold a Bible, a Manchet, and cold Roast Beef upon a Progress.

A Pillion Cloath and Save-Guard of *Brussels* Mohair Camblet Edg'd with a Mohair Fringe. —

Her Smock indeed appears to be of her own Spinning, by her Name and Age being mark'd at the Bosom when it was Spun.

So the Wisdom of that Glorious Reign agreed with that you well observe, *That*

“ no one would make and provide at home what

B 2

would

( 12 )

" would hinder a Family from doing what  
 " would purchase a great deal more than what  
 " would buy the same thing from abroad;  
 " and on the contrary, No one will go abroad  
 " for what they can have for less Cost and La-  
 " bour at home. This is the main Principle  
 " which, you say, and say Judiciously, makes  
 " Men Rich or Poor, a Nation Great or Con-  
 " temptible.

Now if thou hadst but thought again, and  
 drawn as Just Conclusions from so Just a Prin-  
 ciple, you and I should entirely agree; nay,  
 I find your being lost in your Subject, has  
 only hindred you from meeting me more than  
 half way; for according to your Principle,  
 Printed Callicoes will be so far from reduc-  
 ing the Daughters of Eve in this Island to  
 their *Primitive Poverty and Nakedness*, that  
 it will help to maintain the Balance of Trade  
 on our side. But I must have it granted me  
 before I prove this by Just Conclusions from  
 your Principle, that it will not be practical  
 by any Law, to force the Ladies to resume  
 that Antient cheap Dress of their Ancestors,  
 the *Piſs*, viz. *the Pinking, Painting and Flou-*  
 " *rishing their fair Skin, both for Ornament*  
 " *and Dress.*

Attend then; A Yard of Callicoe Cost 6d.  
 Abroad. This when printed is wore instead  
 of

( 13 )

of slight Silks, which is made of Foreign Ma-  
 terials that Cost 12s. and so there is sav'd  
 to the Nation 6d. in one Yard.

On the other Hand, if you had but consider-  
 ed the high Duties upon all sorts of Manufactu-  
 red Goods from Abroad (not to be parallell'd  
 in any other Trading Country) You might  
 have concluded how little Encouragement  
 there is to Import most of those Goods. Nay,  
 those high Duties would amount to a Prohi-  
 bition, if the Dearness of Labour here, and  
 Cheapness of it abroad did not still give some  
 Foreign Manufactures a preference. And had  
 it not been, Dear Sister, for a self Convicti-  
 on of the Truth of this Matter, I had it in  
 my Head to have join'd with your Cry against  
 those Foreign Callicoes; and in Truth I should  
 have had a much better pretence than your  
 Foreign Ally, the Silk Manufacturer. For  
 our Materials are either Hemp or Flax of our  
 own Growth, or Cotton from our Plantati-  
 ons. Then as for the Merit so much insisted  
 upon, of employing the Poor; My claim is  
 much stronger, consider, Sister, we not only  
 employ them in the Spinning and Weaving,  
 but also in the Additional Work of Print-  
 ing.

Reflect

( 14 )

Reflect then, Dear Sister, on these plain Conclusions, and thou'lt be able to tell, even Brother *Isaac*, should he ask why Printed Callicoes, Foreign Wrought Silks and Printed Linens do encroach upon our Manufactures of Wooll and Silk, because ' *No one, as thou sayest,*  
 " *will provide at Home what will Cost less A-*  
 " *broad : Or, will hinder the Manufacturer*  
 " *from doing what will purchase a great deal*  
 " *more than would buy the same thing from A-*  
 " *broad.*

Now if it appears, that it is the Dearness of Labour here that gives Foreign Commodities preference by reason of their Cheapness, it is certain that many more of our Manufactures would go abroad if they were as Cheap as heretofore. Will then this Evil be cured by making them still dearer, by restraining the wear of such things as may interfere with them? And more particularly, why must the Family and Fortune of the Distaffs be oppressed and sunk to raise Estates for others on their Ruin? Have we not paid our Taxes chearfully, behav'd Loyally, and kept the Industrious Poor from Want with our Liberality? And can they boast more, nay, so much, who expect these partial Favours at our Expence? Thus much for our selves, and

For

( 15 )

For those " *particular Collections or Bodies of*  
 " *Men, or particular overgrown Trades, who*  
 are concerned in promoting the *East-India* Trade, now justly esteem'd the brightest Jewel in the Crown, who furnish a Cheaper wear than our own Manufactures, and gives thereby some force to their being Exported, and purchasing more a great deal than the Printed Callicoes Cost. " I will say no more of  
 " these Worthy Traders at present, but that  
 " they have all pretension to the Panegyrick,  
 " the *Spectator* bestows upon Merchants in  
 " the Paper you quoted.

Upon the whole, we are undone, if in the present Posture of *Spittle-fields*, something is not *resolved* for the effectually restraining those frequent Violences still offer'd to the most defenceless part of His Majesty's Subjects, for Wearing what the Laws of their Country allow them to wear. If Force usurps the Seat of Justice, what occasion is there for Acts of Prohibition, or any other Remedy the *Weavers* want for imaginary Evils? These Violences will lay a sufficient Restraint upon the Wearing of Printed Callicoes and Linens. This is a Distemper in the Blood, and if not timely check'd will end in a raging Calenture.

This



( 16 )

This is what every *Briton* ought to detest, if he has any regard for that Liberty and Right which his Ancestors purchased with so much Blood: And is that of our Family, Sister, run to the very dregs of the lowest *Plebeian*, in your Veins, that you should prostitute even the Wisdom of *Lycurgus*, to countenance these Violences? It so borders upon Sacrilege, is so shocking to Human Nature, that it cannot be the Reflection of your Thought, but the unhappy Escape of a flashy Temerity. I know your Candour, I know the Pride of your honest Heart is such, that you will not, you cannot suffer this Repröach to continue to wound the Fame of your Family, after this Animadversion.

Besides that Institution of *Lycurgus* was no way to your Purpose. His Intent was to caution modest Matrons against the Wear of such like Habits as the lewd Women were distinguished by; lest they might by such a Resemblance, be exposed to those Indignities the other often suffered: In which Case, as it proceeded from their own Indiscretion after the Promulgation of such a Law, they were to expect no Reparation for any Abuses; no, not of their Persons; and the Reason of the Institution is very plain. The  
Affront

( 17 )

Affront was supposed to be offered to a *Me-retrix*, and not to a modest Matron; for in such a Dress she appeared out of Character, and could not claim the Priviledge of it.

Before this Time the following Account must have wounded thy tender Ears; *viz.*  
 “ on the 29th of *December* last, three young  
 “ Ladies were very near being drag’d out  
 “ of their Coach, and tore to pieces, by a  
 “ Mob calling themselves *Weavers*, and for  
 “ no other Reason, but because they wore  
 “ Callicoe-Dresses; to which the Laws in  
 being have given a Sanction, and are obliged to protect, not only, as I said before, for the common Support of the Liberties of a Free People, but more particularly to maintain the Security of the Money [*which has always been held sacred*] Lent on the Duties upon the said Callicoes. And God knows how far the *Weavers* may have been animated to these horrid and barbarous Violences, by the Encouragements that thou, I trust inadvertently, and others premeditatedly, have given these Mobs. Let me seriously ask you, Would not the *Black Princes*, if they should see one of these *Bashaws of Spittle-fields*, disrobing a Woman of Fashion of her Cloaths, and spurning at her in the Dirt, would they not make the same Reflection  
 C as

( 18 )

as they did one Night at the Play-house, when they imagined the Gentry in the upper Gallery were Grandees, distinguish'd by some eminent Priviledges, because they made a greater Noise, and used a greater License in their Behaviour than other People? Would they not cry out; " *How do*  
 " *the People of this Country excel ours in the*  
 " *speedy Execution of Justice! For see that*  
 " *Great Man! See! how he seizes the Of-*  
 " *fender in the Streets, drags her down, tears*  
 " *off her Cloaths, and then leaves her to make*  
 " *a miserable Exit by the first Cart or Coach*  
 " *that runs over her!*

When you have duely considered these Things, I don't doubt, Sister, but in your next I shall find your Opinion so far alter'd, as to think that our particular Interests are not so inconsistent as some Make-baits would perswade you. Ben't too credulous, and we may both live, love and prosper: Which is the hearty Wish of

Your Loving Sister,

December, 1719,  
 Salop.

Jenny Distaff.