

OBSERVATIONS

ON

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Mr. Asgill's Brief Answer

TO A

Brief State of the Question between the printed and painted Callicoes, &c.

WHEREIN

His Falsities and Sophistry are laid open.

By CLAUDIUS REY, a Weaver.

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ON

Mr. Asgill's Brief Answer

TO A

Brief State of the Question, &c.



BOUT twenty Years ago the Trading Part of this Nation was in as miserable a Condition, through the East India Commodities, (though then in time of Peace,) as 'tis now through

the printed Callicoes and Linnens.

It may be remember'd, that no less a Man than Dr. Davenant took up the Dispute on behalf of the East India Company against the A Weaver

Weavers, and the other Trades which depend thereon; as the learned Mr. Asgill doth at this present time.

And as the former made use of all his Rhetorick, to find out some spurious and pretended Causes, for the want of Trade at that Time, in order to delude the Nation, and divert it from applying a proper Remedy; so likewise, the latter hath compass'd Sea and Land, not only to find out some frivolous Causes to account for the Badness of Trade; but hath also grossy misrepresented every Thing, and more particularly the most samous Manusacturies of this Kingdom, and magnissed those which are but insignificant in Comparison of them.

But tho' Mr. Asgill seems to have a better Plea than his Predecessor had, by Reason that there is some Parts of our Manusactury mixed with those Commodities he pleads for; yet he ought to know, that the Reason why our Legislators did prohibit those India Goods at that time, was not because they were wholly of the Manusactury of India; but because they took away the Labour of the People, and that many Manusacturers became excessively burdensome to their respective Parishes, and others were compelled to seek for Employment in foreign Parts. Now, I say, if

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the Consumption of any Commodity whatsoever causes the very same Evil and Detriment, as in Fact the wearing of printed Callicoes and Linnens do: Then, in Strictness of Reason, there ought to be the same Remedy apply'd to the latter, as there was to the former. But,

As all Mr. Asgill's Book is grounded on two Arguments only, which are in his two Comparisons, as he calls them,

1. Between the Silks and the Callicoes,

2. Between the Silks and the Linnens, page 8.

Therefore I'll confine my self to unsold the artful Sophistry of these his two main Arguments, the rest being but Trisses and Cavils, which must fall of themselves after their only Basis is entirely destroyed, as will demonstratively appear in the sollowing Pages.

This ingenious Gentleman, in order to shew that neither the printed and painted Callicoes, nor the printed and stained Linnens, are the Cause of the Badness of the Weaving Trade, hath divided, with a great deal of Art, the Weaving Trade, for Womens Garments, into two Branches, viz. The Silk Manusatury, and the Woollen Manusatury. And then,

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England are first imported from Turky, India, China, or Italy. Those from Turkey,
India, and China, are for the most Part
imported Raw, and so are thrown and
woven here. But some less Parts from
thence, and all those from Italy, are ready
thrown. Though this is not altogether
fairly stated, as having omitted first of all
the winding of the Raw Silk, as likewise the
dying it after tis thrown, and then winding
it again: Yet I shall pass it by, without any
any other Observation. After which he
states immediately his supposed Callicoe
Manusactury; as follows.

Find Cotton, of which Callicoes are now made in England, is imported from our Plantations in America in the Wool, and so is Spun and Woven here. The REST of the Callicoes are imported by the East India Company from India in White Cloath, and so are used here either White, as they come over, or as afterwards printed here.

By this Comparison, this worthy Gentleman wou'd fain have the World to understanda (5)

stand, that the Bulk of Callicoes is actually of our own Make, much upon the same Foot, if not on a Better (see his Conclusion on this Comparison;) as the Silks are. This is so far from being true, that, according to the best Information I can come at, there never was in this whole Kingdom Ten Looms of these Callicoes: And these so very coarse, that when they are printed, they are not Sold for above Two Shillings and Four Pence per yard. And consequently cannot interfere with our Silks. Yet our Author speaks of them as a very confiderable Manufactury, and compares it with no less than that of the Silks, which is known at least to employ Twelve Thousand Looms. And then he goes on to speak of the India Callicoes as a mere Trifle, faying, the REST (which is, in the Sense he speaks of, but very infignificant) of the Callicoes are imported by the East-India Company, &c.

Thus this Gentleman endeavours to impose upon the Nation, after he himself had been imposed upon by his Patrons.

And therefore every thing, which he infers from this Comparison, must fall to the Ground, as being without foundation.

What this Author fays concerning India Callicoes, amounts to this, viz. that the prime Cost

Cost of every Yard of India Callicoe is but Six Pence; and the Crown, and SUBJECTS, of Great Britain, gain 2 s. 6 d. for every Yard of these Callicoes imported from India, here. To which I answer, that this Gentleman mistakes the Question entirely; because the Question is not what some Subjects may gain of their Fellow Subjects; (For, all the World knows very well, that a pernicious and ruinous Trade to a Nation may be carried onto the Advantage of some particular Subjects. But the proper Question is what the NATION GAINS or LOOSES by

these India Callicoes.

This then being the Question, our Author hath been so Civil, though not designedly, to surnish us with an Answer p. 13. viz. that the prime Cost of all white Callicoes, Yearly imported from India, and legally consumed in Great Britain, amounts to 40000. Laster the rate of 6d. per yard, as he informs us p. 8. Which Sum of 40000 l. according to his own Account, is wholly lost to the Nation. For though he says, p. 18. that The East-India. Company, who Import the Callicoes from thence stand obliged to Export from hence. Ten per. Cent. of all their Exportation in English Goods: Yet he allows in the same page that those Indians take none of them.

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So that 'tis very plain, that the East-India Company Export these English Goods to those Parts, where our Merchants are not debarred from trading; and consequently, renders this the same Thing to the Nation, as if the East India Company exported none. And thus,

According even to this Gentleman, this Sum of 40000 l. is lost and funk to the Nation; notwithstanding some Subjects may be considerable Gainers thereby.

But if we suppose, as we may very justly, that double that Quantity is run and smugled upon us; then the Loss to this Nation must be at least 120000 l. in neat Bullion; besides the Loss that must accrue from about 50000 People being deprived of their Labour and Subsistance thereby. (N. B. by the Consumption of Callicoes only.)

This is therefore the Channel that drains our Coin, and our Bullion; and consequently 'tis no wonder to see the Price of Silver rise 3 or 4 per Cent. every time the East India Company sit out their Ships. Which is properly sending our VITALS to the farthermost Parts of the World, to purchase Misery and Beggary, in the Literal Sense, for our poor working People; and thereby deprive them of those Necessaries for Life, with which the good Providence of God hath in

a more peculiar Manner bless'd this Country, than most others.

This Gentleman maintains an Hypothesis which is in it felf so absurd and inconsistent; that nothing in the World can be more fo. He wou'd not only infinuate throughout his Book, and all his British Merchants, that Callicoes do not hinder the Silk and Woollen Manufacturies; but asserts it in express Words (viz) For it is not the printed Callicoes or Linnens, that hinder the Manufactury of Raw Silk, but the great Quantities of Foreign Silks. p. 12. And then he concludes thus: But as the printed Callicoes, or Linnens, are no Cause of this, so the prohibiting of them would be no Remedy, p. 13. He says the very same as to the Manufactury of Wooll, as follows. 'That the printed Callicoes (against which the Complaint is made) not being worn or used for the same Purposes with the Woollen Manufactury, do not therefore interfere with Them, nor ought to be suppres-' fed in favour of them, p. 20.' So that, according to this Gentleman's Hypothesis, our Women, who are now clothed with printed Callicoes, formerly went in the Streets without any Clothes, that is, without Gowns and Petticoats.

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But it seems, that these palpable Falshoods and Inconfistencies have thrown this learned Gentleman into such Consussion, that he did not know what he was Writing; else he could never have contradicted himself so manifestly as he has done upon this very Thing: For he allows, p. 15. that Callicoes do interfere with Silks, which is allowing the same thing he had absolutely denied in p. 12. But to return to Foreign Silks.

If this Author was ask'd the Reason why those foreign Silks hinder our Silk Manufactury? His Answer doubtless wou'd be, 'Because so much as are confumed of those foreign Silks, just so much of our own Silks are less consumed. And fo fay the Weavers with respect to the Callicoes, that so much as is consumed of them, just so much of their Manufacturies are less consumed.

And 'tis very observable, that it is upon this very Argument, that in p. 16, he says, that . The Persecution in France had driven out from thence into England, and other Countries, Multitudes of Silk Manufacturers: Who setting up ' the same Trades there, Those Countries were " fupply'd at Home with fuch Silks, as they before bought from France'.

But, if the Weavers, either in England, or in France, argue in the same Manner, and say that the Importers of Callicoes, and the Callicoe Printers have set up a Trade which supplies our Women with Printed Callicoes and Linnens to be used in the stead of our own Manufacturies both of Wooll and Silk, as they before us'd to be supplied with: Then, This is,

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according to this learn'd Gentleman, all a Clamour and Mistaken Pretences, p. 16. and throwing Stones against the printed Callicoes, &c. and is as oblique a Calumny, as that of his Seamen's Rats, &c. p. 12, 13.

But if this Gentleman would hearken to good Argument; as I hope he will when he sees that his Falacy is seen thro; and that he has been so much impos'd upon, by his Clients: Then he wou'd soon acquiesce to these plain Reasons. As I will on my Part agree with him in all that is Reasonable: Accordingly I agree that those foreign Silks, ate so far an Evil to the Silk Manusacturers, as to hinder the Silk Manusactury of the like quantity. So far it is an Evil, and no farther. And I hope, that this Gentleman in his turn will be so good as to acknowledge, that other foreign Commodities also are so far an Evil, as they hinder the like quantity of our own Manusactury. For Example,

Let us suppose, on the one Hand, that there are 12000 Gowns and Petticoats of foreign Silks confumed Yearly among us, whether Legally imported or smugled; which I think is a great deal more than what really are.

On the other Hand, let us suppose that there are but 600000 Callicoe Gowns and Petticoats confumed yearly among us; which I think also to be less than the Number really is. Yer,

This will shew demonstratively that the Evil caufed by the Callicoes, is Fifty Times greater, than the Evil caused by foreign Silks, whether legally

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imported, or finugled. And confequently, the first of these Evils is infignificant, in Comparison of the latter,

Therefore the wearing of printed or painted Callicoes and Linnens is the CHIEF and PRINCIPAL Cause of the Excessive Badness of the Weaving Trade.

But, as this Gentleman, in The British Merchant No. 3. calls for the Name of this or that particular sort of Woollen Stuffs that Callicoes interfere with; I answer, that Those Women which were formerly clothed with Woorsted Damasks, Plain and Flower'd Russels, and Flower'd Calimancoes, and Fine Stuffs from 15 d. to 20 d. per Yard (these were all Woollen Stuffs) besides those Half-Silk and Half-Woorsted, such as Flower'd Grezates, Woorsted Satinets, &c. are now generally clothed with the cheapest Callicoes, and with the best of printed Linnens. Which is so true in Fact, that these considerable Branches of the Weaving Trade are almost extinct, by the wearing of these printed Callicoes, and Linnens.

I come now to consider our Author's Second Comparison, between the Silks and the Linnens, as he calls it p. 8. and 11. though in Reality 'tis between the Woollen and the Linnen. His Words are these, viz.

'The Linnens printed here, are all made in Great
Britain or Ireland; (except some few imported from
Germany, which are printed for Handkerchiefs only)
And therefore are ASMUCH a Staple
Commodity and Home Manufacture as the
WOOLLENS. And ____ are not therefore

to be suppressed as damaging the Manusacturies of WOOLL or Silks. The Linnens employing THE Hands of the Poor in Spinning and Weaving, as well as the Wooll or Silks.

To which I answer, that this Comparison is also greatly misrepresented, and with abundance of Art, as will evidently appear by the following Observations, viz.

made in Great Britain or Ireland: Though this might very well be disputed, I shall pass it by now for brevity Sake; yet it cannot follow from the Linnens being made here, that they are AS MUCH a Staple AS the Woollens; Because on the one Hand 'tis well known that the Flax, of which our Linnens are made, is not all of our own Growth, but that abundance is imported from abroad; whereas on the other, ALL the Wooll, which is used in our Woollen Stuffs for Women's Garments, IS of our own Growth: Therefore this Gentleman ought not only to cross out the Adverb, AS MUCH, but ought also to censure his Clients for having thus imposed upon him.

But as his Proposition is false, so the Consequence drawn from thence cannot be good.

2. Besides the Falsity of the Argument, there is another gross Insinuation equally salse and pernicious, in his Second Consequence, viz, That the Weavers demand no less than a total Suppression of the Linnen Manusacturies; hear his own Words. And the Linnens therefore are not to be SUPPRES-SED as damaging the Manusacturies of Wooll, &c

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For what doth this Gentleman, or his Patrons, mean by this infinitive Passive to be suppressed? Do the Weavers demand the Linnens to be demolished or suppressed? Do they ask, that the use of Linnens shou'd be prohibited for Sheeting, Shifting, Table-Cloths, Napkins, swadling Clothes for young Babes, Frocks for Children, Aprons, both for Men and Women, and for many other necessary Uses in Families; as also, for Frocks for Soap-Boilers, Chandlers, Butchers, Waggonners, and many other Tradesmen, whose Bufiness requires such upper Garments? For all which Uses there is above double the Quantity consumed in these Two Islands, than there is made in all the Three Kingdoms. And is it not as clear as the Sun at Noon Day, that what the Weavers ask, is only the suppressing or prohibiting the Wearing of printed and painted Callicoes, and printed and stained Linnens; or, as this Gentleman pretends to foretel, both the Abjectives and Substantives themfelves, for Women's Garments, that is, for Gowns and Petticoats?

Notwithstanding that this is as plain as Words can express; yet we see, that this Gentleman and his Patrons have the Assurance to infinuate falsly that the Weavers ask for so absurd a Thing as a Total Suppression of the Linnen Manusacturies. Ought not these Men, therefore, to blush for Shame, for endeavouring to impose such palpable Falsities and Absurdities upon so wise and so penetrating a Nation as this is?

3. As this whole Argument is artfully crouded with Falsities, and Misrepresentations; so with the same

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fame dexterity he wou'd fain infinuate that the Manufactury of Linnens employs as many Hands, as those of Wooll, or Silks: For, he says, 'the Linnens employ the Hands of the POOR in Spinning and Weaving, as well as the Wooll or 'Silks.' Which is very True: But nothing to the purpose. For the proper Question is whether the Linnens employ as MANY HANDS as the Woollen does. But to proceed,

Let us suppose, for Argument sake, that the Linnen Manufactury, as well as that of Wooll, were both equally Staple, i. e. the Growth and Manufacturies of this Nation: And that both were incompatible together, so that either the one or the other must be destroy'd.

Upon this Supposition, The COMMON GOOD of the Whole Body Politick must intervene, as the GRAND BASIS of all National Laws, and give the preference to That Manufactury, of the Two, which should be most Essential to the true Interest and Welfare of the whole Nation.

Accordingly it would appear, that the Linnen Manufactury is almost infignificant, in comparison to that of Wooll, both with respect to the Number of Hands they employ, and to the Encouragement of our Navigation: Which are the Two main Supports of our Strength and Grandeur.

It would appear also, that in prefering the Manufactury of Wooll, to that of Linnen, we might enjoy for E V E R this famous and advantageous Manusactury, it not being in the Power of the whole

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Universe to interfere with us in the Woollen Commodities.

Whereas in the Manufactury of Linnen, we shou'd be continually perplex'd, it being in the Power of all our Neighbours to interfere with us in the Linnen Goods.

But as this is not the Case; so 'tis needless to go any further upon this Supposition.

For we may be certain by our former Experience that half of the People in the Three Nations confumes more Linnen, besides those printed or stained, than there is made in the Two Islands.

Therefore, the Linnen Manufacturies of Great Britain and Ireland may very well be encouraged, notwithstanding any Prohibition of printed or stained Linnens for wearing Garments.

But as this Champion for printed and stained Linnens, insists upon this Article; so it must be lest to the great Wisdom of our Legislators to decide it.

Of whom I humbly beg leave, to lay down the Consequences which I apprehend will follow on either Side of the Question; as also the Reasons which shew that the following Consequences, under their respective Suppositions, are unavoidable.

First, if the printed and stained Linnens are allowed to be worn, then I think it will naturally follow.

1. That vast Quantities of Linnen, both White and Printed, will be poured in upon us from all Parts; which Mischief will be covered under the

specious Pretence of encouraging our own Linner.
Manufacturies.

- 2. The Linnen Printers would foon improve their Art to that Degree, as to become almost as pernicious to both the Woollen and Silk Manusa-Cturies, as the Callicoes and Linnens are at prefent.
- 3. The intire Ruin and Loss of our Manufactus ries of Woollen Stuffs for Womens Wear; as is already the Case of some of them, viz. Woorsted Dasmasks, Flower'd Russels, and Flower'd Callimaneoes, &c. Whereby our best Manufacturers will be forced to seek for Employment in foreign Parts; while their Families, and the meanest sort of Workmen, must be maintained here by their respective Parishes; as is already the Case at London, Norwich, Canterbury, and elsewhere.
- 4. That our Wooll must be carried, and run our of the Nation, to those Pecple who need not be told what to do with it: For, 'tis very reasonable to suppose that our Farmers and Wooll-Staplers will seek for a Market where 'twill be to be had, rather than see their Wooll rot upon their Hands, or have lirtle or nothing for it. This appears also to be our present Case.
- 5. That several hundred thousands of poor People will be deprived of their Employment, only in the Woollen Stuffway for Womens Wear; and that even without doing any Service to our own Linnen Manusacturies, as I have shewn already.
- 6. and Lastly, That the present Evil will not at all be removed, but perhaps will be much greater

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in a very few Years; because, though some of the best Gentry should leave off these printed Commodities, yet it would spread much more in Proportion among the common Sort; and that on a much better Foundation than Callicoes are at present, that is, on the specious Pretence of encouraging our own Linnen Manusacturies. But,

Secondly, If the wearing of both the printed and painted Callicoes, and printed and stained Linnens, are prohibited; then I humbly conceive the natural Consequence will be,

- only be restored to their former sourishing Condition, but they will also very much increase; whereby all our Poor, Old and Young, will be employed in both City and Country; and consequently the Parishes will be eas'd of abundance of Pensioners, and other accidental Poor; and those who shall be incapacitated to do any Manner of Work, will be better provided for.
- 2. That many of the ablest Manufacturers in foreign Parts, will be encouraged thereby to come and settle among us; as has been the Case, in several of the preceding Reigns.
- 3. That our Wooll will bear a reasonable Price at Home; and consequently our Farmers and Wooll-Staplers not be forced to run the Risk of carrying and smugling their Wooll beyond the Seas; which will effectually incapacitate Foreigners from being our Rivals in the Exportation of our Woollen Commodities Abroad.

5. The Estates of our Noblemen, Gentlemen, and other landed Men, will be not only more secure, but will also very much improve.

6. And lastly, The King's Revenues will not only considerably increase, but will also add much Lustre to his Glory, and Strength to his Power. In short, every individual Member of the whole Body Politick will find his respective Account herein.

I humbly beg leave also, to offer some Reasons to shew, that these Consequences, under their respective Suppositions, are unavoidable.

But as no Reason can have so much Weight, as former and parallel Precedents; so likewise I shall give none but what are grounded upon known Facts.

1. Before This Nation was bleffed with Manufacturies, it was but weak and mean; and confequently defenceless: For, our Ancient Histories are crowded with the dismal Accounts of the Nation being ravaged, plundered, nay even conquer'd by the Romans, Scots, Danes, Normans, Saxons, &c. But since England has been bleffed with Manufacturies, no Power has attempted to insult our Coast, or invade us, but what have found just Cause to repent it.

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2. And as These Manufacturies have increased, and stourished; the Strength and Grandeur of the Nation hath increased in proportion. Witness our renowned Queen Elizabeth, who, after she had given a secure Asslum to Multitudes of persecuted Manufacturers, reduc'd the exorbitant Power of Spain.

3. The landed Interest rises or falls, in proportion as our Trade and Commerce increases or diminishes. For Example. In King Charles the 2d's Reign, so good a Law was made for encouraging our Silk Manufacturies, as to prohibit all French wrought Silks, under the Penalty of being burn'd. Which good Law caused several Manusacturing Towns to be full of People. And consequently, raised the Rents. Which, I suppose, encouraged the East-India Company to Import from Persia, China and East-India, vast Quantities of Wrought Silks, Bengals and Stuffs mixed with Silk or Herba; as also vast Quantities of Callicoes, printed and painted. This Flood of foreign Commodities soon laid waste all the Advantages which had flown from that good Law; thele Manufacturing Towns soon became depopulated, and the Parishes excessively burdened with Poor, as is express'd in the Preamble of an Act of Parliament, intituled An Act for the more Effectual Employing the Poor, by encouraging the Manufacturies of this Kingdom. The Rents fell prodigeously; and fome Streets were almost without Inhabitants. But when our Legislators had prohibited the wearing of those pernicious Commodities, all our Poor, Old as well as Young, both in City and Country, were employed. Many new Branches sprung up and flouriss. flourished extreamly. All our Streets became full of Inhabitants. The Rents raised gradually to about one Third. Many new Houses have been Built, Sc. *

These were the happy Consequences of the Prohibition of East-India Silks, and East-India Callicoes, notwithstanding all the pretended Arguments Dr. Davenant had learnedly set forth against the Prohibition, in his Essay on the East-India Trade; not much unlike Mr. Assill in his Brief Answer to a Brief State, &c. For, as this Gentleman is perpetually begging the Question, by taking, always, That for granted, which is the very thing in dispute; and affigning as chief Causes, for the Badness of Trade, those Things which are the least; so, his Predecessiaw through, as I hope they will now, with respect to Mr. Assil's Impositions and Misrepresentations. But to return.

As the overflowing of the aforesaid East-India. Commodities had laid waste all the Advantages which accrued from that Law, and that very many of the Manusacturers of this Nation were become excessively Burdensome and Chargeable to their Respective Parishes, and others were thereby compelled to

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feek for Employment in foreign Parts, as 'tis said in the abovesaid AA.

So likewise the overflowing of printed and stained Callicoes and Linnens, hath almost laid waste those happy Consequences which have accrued from the Prohibition Act; in such a Manner, that many of the Manusacturers of this Nation are become excessively burdensome and chargeable to their respective Parishes, and others have been thereby compelled to seek for Employment at Tankerville in France, and elsewhere.

To conclude, As the Trading Part of this Nation is in as miserable a Condition, as it was before the Prohibition Act; so the Weavers humbly hope, from the known Wisdom and Justice of our Legislators, that a suitable Redress will be granted to their present Calamity; as it was to That Twenty Years ago.

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^{*} This accounts fairly for that only Argument, Mr. Asgill hath in his British Merchant No. I. of the Rents Rising and Building of new Houses. For, tho' the Weaving Trade is as bad as it can well be: Yet People do not turn off their Trade, nor leave their Habitations, before they see whether or no there will be a Remedy apply'd to their Grievances.

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THE Weavers true Case; or the wearing of printed Callicoes and Linnen destructive to the Woollen and Silk Manusacturies. Wherein all the material Objections against the Weavers are fairly stated, consider'd, and answer'd. Address'd to the Members of the Honourable House of Commons. By Claudius Rey, a Weaver. The Second Edition. To which is added, a Preface, in Vindication of it. Sold by J. Noon at the White-Hart in Cheapside; J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane; and W. Chetwood at Cato's Head in Russel-street, Covent Garden. Price Six-pence.

