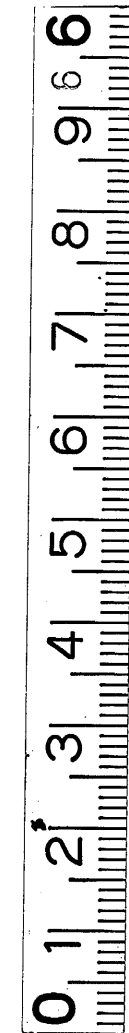


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*The Female Manufacturers
Complaint :* *M*

BEING

The Humble Petition

OF

DOROTHY DISTAFF,
ABIGAIL SPINNING-WHEEL,
ELEANOR REEL, &c.

Spinsters,

TO THE

Lady Rebecca Woollpack.

WITH

A Respectful Epistle to Sir R---- St----!,
concerning some Omissions of the utmost
Importance in his Lady's Wardrobe.

By Monsieur de Brocade of Paris.

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. BOREHAM at the *Angel*
in *Pater-noster Row.* 1720.



*To the Honourable and most
Excellent Matron, Mrs.
Rebecca Woollpack,*

*The Humble Representation and Petition
of Dorothy Distaff, Abigail Spinning-
Wheel, Eleanor Reel, of St.
Edmunds-bury in the County of
Suffolk, Spinsters; in Behalf of them-
selves and many Thousands of the
Female Manufacturers of Wooll and
Worsted Yarn in the said County, and
in the Counties of Norfolk, Essex,
Huntington, Cambridge, Hert-
ford, &c.*

Humbly Sheweth,



THAT Your Petitioners have
for many Years been chear-
fully Employ'd in the Wool-
len Manufactures of *England*,
that is to say, in the Spinning of Worst-
ed Yarn for the Stuff Weavers of *Nor-
wich*

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wich and of *London*, by which we have very comfortably maintain'd and supported our selves in such manner, as that we have upon all Occasions appear'd decently at Church; that is to say, with a clean Pinner, a Cherry-colour'd Chin-knot, a white Apron, and a clean Pair of Gloves, so that our Sweet.hearts have not been asham'd of us; nay, some of us, who have set to our Work harder than ordinary, have obtain'd, by long Labour and good Houf-wifry, a narrow *Buckinghamshire* Edging to our Pinnars, to the great Improvement of our Neighbour-Lasses of that County, and the Encouragement of the Manufacture of Bone-Lace also.

We also farther humbly represent, That in some Parts of the County where our Fellow-Spinners are poorer, and have not Fathers and Mothers to work for them, as we who are good Farmers and Husbandmens Daughters, may be suppos'd to have; but where, on the contrary, the Money earn'd by the Labour of the poor Women and Children is employ'd for their dayly Subsistence, yet that even there, may it please your Ladyship, the industrious poor Women have, by the Help of the Spinning of Worsted Yarn, as aforesaid, maintain'd their said Families,

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Families, and kept themselves and their said Children from Misery, and from being chargeable to the Parish, tho' with very hard Work and the utmost Industry and Application.

But now, and't please your Ladyship, there is sad and dreadful News come among us, as well from *Norwich* as from *London*, where our Masters who employ us sell their Yarn, and from whence they always, till now, had Encouragement to set us to Work, as also from all other Parts of the Country, signifying to us, that all the Ladies of *London*, the Honourable and Right Honourable Spinsters of *Cheapside* and all over *England*, and even your Ladyship among the rest, have on a sudden, and to our great Surprize and Amazement, given over the Use and Wearing of the good honest old *English* Manufactures of Wooll and of Worsted, and of Silk mixt with Wooll, Things in which we always believ'd here in the Country that we look'd as pretty, and appear'd as tempting and agreeable to our Lovers and Sweet-hearts, as in any Thing we can get to wear, and in which we have been told the City-Spinsters have been as high and as proud as ever they can or will be in any Thing else.

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And this is not all, but and't please your Ladyship, our said Masters tell us the heavy Tidings, that upon this Humour of the Ladies, many Woollen Stuffs, and Stuffs mixt with Silk, and even Silks themselves, are in a very great measure laid aside; that some of them are quite lost, and thrown out of Sale, such as Brilliants and Pulerays, Antherines and Bumbazines, Sattinets and Chiverets, Oraguella's, Grazetts, great Variety of Silk and Worsted Foot-works, Flower'd Grazetts, Flower'd Silk and Worsted Tammy Draughts, and Damasks, Fine Colour'd Crapes, &c. and that they cannot sell their Worsted Yarn as usual at *Narwich* and *London*, neither have they any more Work for us to do, any Wooll to put out, or Money to pay for the Spinning, the Market being stopt as aforesaid.

May it please your Ladyship then to consider what a sad and deplorable Condition we are now reduc'd to in the Country; for as to us, your Petitioners, tho' we are as above, Farmers and Husbandmen's Daughters, and our Parents do make shift to give us Victuals and Drink, yet that we are utterly ruin'd, for we can now get no new Cloaths, no Knots, no Edgings, as we observ'd to
your

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your Ladyships, and without which your Ladyship well knows we shall get no Sweet-hearts, for we cannot go to the Market nor to the Fair, as usual; and your Ladyship knows what will be the miserable Consequences of these Things, for that the young Men do not come after us now, to our Fathers Houses, as they used to do, but always expect to see us at Market-Towns; so that if some speedy Course be not taken in this Matter, we are in Danger of being utterly undone.

And as for the poor Women and Children in the Country, as above, whose Employment and whole Subsistence depends upon the Manufactures, and who must Spin, or they and their Families must starve. It were impossible, could your Ladyship hear the sad Lamentations of those Miserable Families, but your Heart would bleed for them, and you would never wear any Thing that would contribute so much to the Distress of the Poor.

But besides this, we humbly crave Leave to lay before your Ladyship, that, as we are inform'd, all this suddain Change, which is apparently to the Ruin of so many Thousands of your Petitioners, is brought about in Favour
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of a tawdery, Pie-spotted, flabby, ragged, low-priz'd Thing, call'd *Callicoe*; a Foreigner by Birth; made the L...d knows where, by a Parcel of *Heathens* and *Pagans*, that worship the Devil, and work for a Half-penny a Day.

We likewise humbly represent to your Ladyship, that all this Misery and Distress, which is and will be the Consequence of the Ladies falling, with such a Gust, into this new outlandish Fashion, is laid wholly at the Door of your own Fancies; that you have not been prompted to it by your Husbands, or invited into it by your Sweet-hearts or Lovers; for the Men, it seems, do not wear any of it themselves, nor do they find that you save them any Money in their Pockets by it, as we shall fully prove to you afterwards: We say, it is all laid at your Door, and we are given to understand, that while the Men in vain have represented to your Ladyship, that it will be ruinous and destructive to the Trade of the Nation, and to the Woollen Manufactures, and desir'd you, tho' to no Purpose, to be persuaded to lay it aside, you are all the more obstinate in the Use of it; so that they are now oblig'd to lay it before the Parliament, in order to *force* you to alter the Mode, and to dress in
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the good, honest, home-spun Manufactures of *England*; which, by the Way, will be not only much against the Grain, as to the Fashion itself, but will also be much to your Dishonour, that you should be so commanded by the Men to lay it down, and be brought to do it by F O R C E.

We most earnestly intreat your Ladyship, therefore, to consider what great Reproach you are going to bring upon yourselves, and upon us all, and what Injury even your Children and Grand-Children of our Sex may sustain, by thus bringing us all under a Sort of Subjection to the Men, in the Modes of our Dress; a *Yoke* from Husbands, *which neither we or our Mothers have ever been able to bear*. It ought, doubtless, to be above the Dignity of our Sex to be thus brought under this Bondage; and, therefore, we most humbly beseech you to let this Change be the Work of your own Choice; and not suffer it to be imposed upon you by the Men, who will certainly, if they carry this Point, take upon them for the future to bring in Sumptuary Laws upon us, and oblige us to wear such Cloaths as they think fit; or otherwise, which would be intolerable, (and which we hope you would make an Infurrection rather than submit to) oblige the Ladies to wear no
B 2 Cloaths,

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Cloaths any richer than their Husbands can pay for.

But besides all this, we desire your Ladyship, in the humblest manner possible, to take the Condition of our poor Sex into your most serious Consideration: We most passionately represent to your Ladyship how much you are really intrusted in this Affair; how the Worshipful your Ladyship's Grandfather was a *Wooll-pack*, the good old Squire rais'd all his Fortunes by us Spinners, and many a comely Country Lass has manufactur'd for him. Old Sir *Harry Wooll-combe*, of *Bury St. Edmonds*, was also near of Kin to you, Madam, and he got a great Estate from the *Comb-Pot*, and made all his Daughters Ladies and Gentle-folks. Besides, your Ladyship is ally'd, by some Removes, to a great many Right Honourable Persons, the direct Offspring of the most ancient Families in *Suffolk* and *Norfolk*, such as the Families of the *Oumblers*, the *Staplers*, and the ancient *Tresfel-Beaters*, and others. L...d, Madam, can you forget the Graves of your Ancestors, and the grey Hairs of your Forefathers? If they should rise from the Dead now, and see you dress'd up in your painted Trangums, and *East India* Rags, while all the poor Spinners hung about

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about you crying for Bread and for Work; good your Ladyship, what think you my good Masters would say to it, would they not carry you away a Pick-a-pack.

Besides, may it please your good Ladyship to consider, that if the Honour of your Family is not supported and maintain'd, which, by the way, can never be done, if a Stop is not put to the Wearing these Callicoe Trumpery, you can never maintain or support your Character; for, we beseech your Ladyship, if the Wooll comes to lie on Hand, and not be spun and work'd up, what will all the Family of the *Wooll-Packs* come to? They will certainly be laid by till they rot, and come to Rags. We have often seen, Madam, some of the largest and most flourishing of you *Wooll-Packs*, when the Market has been dull, and the Wooll would not go off, suffer great Loss, and be reduc'd to a very tatter'd Condition.

Nay, let me recommend it to your Consideration, that if this goes on, the best of your Expectations, and of those other Ladies of your Family, may be to be sent over to *France*; and there, if nothing worse should happen to you, yet you must change your Religion, and you would

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would all become Popish *Woollpacks*, whether you would or no.

And as for us poor Spinsters, we must certainly go away to *France* also. Nay, there is a particular Reason for that, which we have not mention'd yet; and that is, that here is abundance of the young Men, such as we used to pitch upon for our best Thoughts, and who, when they had Work, were pretty clean Fellows, and went well dress'd a *Sundays*; who were Manufacturers, and liv'd very well, have been forc'd since to go down to the Sea-Side, and there they tell us are *French Folks* and *Dutch Folks* at *Ipswich*, and other Places, that give them Money to go Abroad, and so we never see them more: And assure yourself, and't please your Ladyship, that if all our Sweet-hearts run away, we will all go after them, and then you may e'en spin your *Wooll-Packs* yourself.

But we hope your Ladyship will be prevail'd upon by the Tears of your own Sex, and by the Miseries of the Poor, which you cannot be insensible of, to commiserate the poor Country, and set your helping Hand to a Work so necessary to be done, and (which is more than all the rest) is so easy for you to do.

Which

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Which brings us to the main Subject of this your Petitioners humble Representation, namely, That your Ladyship would consider how much it is in your Power, at one Turn of your Hand, to put an End to all these Miseries of your Country, and to wipe up the Tears of all the poor Families in the Nation, by only vouchsafing to submit your Fancy to your Reason, and by bringing your Humour and your Judgment to correspond a little together.

Let us suppose, for once, that your Fancy, at least for the present, according to the laudable Custom of our Sex, does now run for the Gewgaws of the *East Indies*, as sometimes it has done, in former Days, for those of *France*. But, sure, when you are convinc'd, that this Usage of yours tends to the entire Destruction of the Manufactures of your Country, that it will of Course turn Thousands of poor Women and Children into the Streets a begging, and to the Parishes for Support; that the Trade shall be universally influenc'd by it, and that a great many devilish, thieving, running, cheating Trades, are brought in among us by it, to the Ruin of the fair Trader; we say, when your Ladyship is convinc'd of this, we are persuaded you will throw your fine
Chints

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Chints Gown and Petticoat in the Fire, and declare that you will never more wear any Thing so prejudicial to the *British* Manufacture, or so dangerous to the Worshipful Family of the *Wooll-Packs*.

Permit us, and't please your Ladyship, in the next Place, humbly to represent to your Consideration how absolutely it is reserv'd in your own Power, and in your own Hands, to effect this; and to all Intents and Purposes to rescue all the poor Manufacturers in the Nation from the Bondage and Misery they are now fallen into.

As the Evil is laid at your Door, so the Remedy is in your Hands; for if you are the Cause, you may certainly be the Cure. May Heaven dictate to you, how, being the original Spring of all our Misfortunes, you are under an effectual Obligation to endeavour the redressing this Grievance.

As the general Wearing of Callicoes is the Complaint, the general Leaving them off will be the Cure; the Fashion is the Grievance, because it is a Fashion; 'tis in the Ladies Power at once to make it odious and abhorr'd all over the Kingdom: You are able to make it as much out of Fashion, as you brought it into Fashion at once: You gave it your Sanction,

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tion, by approving and espousing it, and you can sink it again by the Blast of your Mouths.

Take the Honour of it, Madam, from the Men, give them nothing to boast of for reforming their Wives, but make their Wives triumph over them, by telling them, that you, whenever you please, can distress them; and again, whenever you please, remove their Grievance.

The Men can make no such Alteration, they cannot decry or oblige us to the Disuse of any Thing; but if you turn your Eyes this or that Way, you can raise or suppress what you please to the Publick Benefit of the Nation.

To what Purpose should we trouble our Representatives with our Complaints? Ease us, Madam, your selves of the Trouble. If the Women in *England* will but set their Hands to this Work, not a Callicoe, not a Piece of Linnen printed or stain'd shall be sold, or worn in *England*: Then all our Petitions will be at an End, they that bid the People petition will bid them be easy, all the Manufactures of *Great Britain* shall revive, and the Women will have the Glory of having saved the Nation.

We most humbly put your Ladyship in Mind how the Men insult us upon
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this Head; how they insolently tell us, that tho' the Women may sometimes do more Good than Hurt, they never had the Opportunity of doing more Hurt than Good but they were sure to take hold of it. And thus they conclude, that our Deliverance, *to use their own Words*, is out of Sight, because it is in the Hands of the Women, who always did Hurt rather than Good.

Contradict them, we beseech your Ladyship, in this Article, and let the whole Country be saved by your Hand: All the Petitions then from the several Parts of the Kingdom shall be remov'd, and we, the poor Country Manufacturers and Spinners, will pay our Homage to you Ladies of London, and the Honour of Delivering the whole Family of the Spinners shall be your own.

In order to this, the Prayer of our Petition concludes to your Ladyship, That you would be pleas'd to take the sad and deplorable Condition of your poor Petitioners into your Consideration; and in a Word, that you and all the Ladies of your Family, the Renowned Family of the Woollpacks, with all your Family and Servants, may, by your Order, lay aside your Callicoe Gowns

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and Petticoats of all Sorts, and declare publickly that none of you will any more be dress'd in them, whether we call Dressing the Set-Dress for Abroad, or the Dishablè for the Morning, but that you wou'd reassume those many pretty Stuffs which are already Invented by our Weavers, or which may be Invented to please the Fancy, in the room of the Callicoes; and your Petitioners, leaving all other Application, shall for ever Pray for all Happiness to the Noble Family of the Woollpacks.

Dorothy Distaff.

The  Mark of

Abigail Spinning Wheel.

Eleanor Reel.

C 2

To



A
Respectful EPISTLE

TO

Sir R---d S---le,

AUTHOR

OF THE

SPINSTER.



After acknowledging, Sir, your very good Meaning in your late Performance for the Encouragement of the good Wives in their compleat Way of Dressing, it seems very strange that you who are so exquisitely read in the Literature

Literature of the *Toylette*, that could rate the very Smocks of the Ladies, and tell as well how much they cost a Yard, as how many Yards of *Holland* there are in them; I say, that you should omit some Articles in the Lady's Wardrobe, that are so necessary to compleat the various Appearances of a Fine Lady: And particularly,

	l.	s.	d.
A Hat of <i>Leghorn</i> ———	1	10	0
A Beaver and Feather for the Forest ———	3	00	0
A Riding Suit, with Em- broïdery of <i>Paris</i> ———	47	10	0
Three Dresses for the Masquerade, two from <i>Venice</i> , 18 l. each ———	36	00	0
One from <i>Paris</i> of Green Velvet à la <i>Sultanneffe</i> , set with Pearls and Ru- bies ———	123	15	0
			—————
			211 15 0

After, Sir, you had gone this length, you ought to have convers'd with *Tom Drawboy* the Mercer upon *Ludgate-hill*, who

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who would for Two Bottles have confess'd that they (*Mercers*) have about twelve or fifteen Master-Weavers at this Time in Work in *Spittle-fields*, and all kept in full Business, making *French Brocaded Silks* for the Ladies; that is to say, for those Nice Ladies of Quality who do not take up with any Thing but what is right *French*.

It must be confess'd that this is a very great Help to the Weavers at this the Time of their unhappy Circumstances; and therefore those Ladies are exceeding kind, and great Supporters of the Silk Manufactures of *Great Britain*, who are pleas'd thus far to shut their Eyes upon so extraordinary an Occasion, and be put off with *Spittle-fields* instead of the *Fauxbourgs* of *Paris*. And as they have no Wrong done them, the Goods made in *Spittlefields* being not only as good, but every way superior to those made in *Paris*, 'tis hop'd they will not think them less *French*, for being made in their own Country.

There are some other Trifles, Sir, you had forgot also, which I shall not now enumerate, as some Essences, Pomatums, especially that of *the grand Occasion*,

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Occasion, and such like Toys, which must not be reckon'd to cost the Lady less than 150*l.* a Year, but of these hereafter.

I most humbly beg your Worship's Pardon for these Hints, not doubting but you will make a good Use of them as they occur in your next *SPINSTER*.

Spitter de Fel,
Jan. 2, 1720.

I am, Sir,

Your most Obedient Servant,

Tisserando de Brocade.

F I N I S.



(88)

Order and such like they which
must not be received to cost the lady
less than 1000 a year out of the here-
after.
I most humbly beg your Majesty's
pardon for these lines, not doubting
but you will make a good use of them
as they occur in your next service.

Yours most Obedient servant
James II

Thomson de Broude

1712

