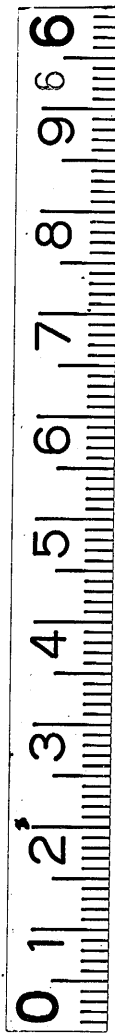


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THE  
MISERIES <sup>N</sup>  
OF THE  
MISERABLE:  
OR, AN  
ESSAY

Towards laying open the Decay of the  
Fine WOOLLEN TRADE,  
AND  
The Unhappy Condition  
OF  
The Poor *Wiltshire* Manufacturers.

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By a GENTLEMAN of WILTS.

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Printed in the YEAR, 1739.



THE  
M I S E R I E S  
OF THE  
M I S E R A B L E, &c.

V ENKUNG, a Chinese Prince, desired *Mencius* to give him some Rules to direct him to govern *wisely*.

THE *Philosopher* replied: 'The first Object a King ought to regard, is his People; what principally touches the People, is their *Subsistence*; the Means of their *Subsistence* are the *Lands*, when diligently cultivated, and abundantly producing the *Necessaries* of Life. Agriculture then ought to be looked into, and the greatest Care taken that the *Lands* do not lie idle; the People will then have whereupon to live, and being under no Apprehensions of *Want*, they will endeavour to reform their *Manners*, and to acquire *Virtue*.'

THE Happiness of *China*, and the Power of her *Emperors*, depend in the same absolute Manner on the Flourishing of *Agriculture*; as those of *Great-Britain* and her *Kings* do on the Prosperity of *Trade*. The *Emperors* themselves, *wisely* sensible of this important Truth, forego any Pleasures, part with any Thing, nay, with the *Revenues* themselves, rather than *Agriculture* shall be neglected, or the *Husbandman* oppressed.

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fed. And as an Instance of his great Care of this most essential Interest of his Empire, the Emperor goes with all his Courtiers, once every Year, into a certain Field, where his Majesty ploughs and sows a Parcel of Land with his Royal Hands, as an Incitement to his Subjects to imitate his illustrious Example.

MENCIUS therefore acted the Part of a wise Man and a loyal Chinese, in advising his Prince to look into Agriculture, and take Care that the Lands might not lie idle, in order to provide for the People's Subsistence. I am apt to think, had this Philosopher been a Briton, lived in our Times, and had the like Honour of advising his Sovereign, he would have spoke somewhat like what follows: *The Means of the People's Subsistence is TRADE, particularly the Woollen Manufacture; which, when diligently cultivated and encouraged, will abundantly produce the Necessaries of Life. The Woollen Trade then ought to be looked into, and the greatest Care taken, that Wool doth not lie unwrought, nor is exported into foreign Countries: (which is like tearing out the very Entrails of Britain) The People will then have whereupon to live, and being under no Apprehensions of Want, a good Government may reform their Manners, by restoring Religion and Virtue among them.*

THIS Philosopher at the same Time told his Sovereign: 'That when a People find themselves in Want, all their Passions will soon break loose; for there is no Crime but what Necessity and Indigence will drive them to commit: When their Wants are excessive, the Rigour of their Laws, and the Severity of Punishments will be Curbs too weak to restrain them. For this Reason, (added he) wise Princes formerly lived with great Modesty and Frugality, the former Virtue inducing them to treat their People with Moderation, and the latter preventing their imposing too severe Taxes.'

THIS Observation of the Eastern Sage will hold equally good at all Times, and in every Nation; which shews, that the first Point of political Wisdom consists in

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in keeping the People from falling into Want; for as the Sovereign is without Glory, when the Miseries of Hunger and Nakedness abound among his People, so his Authority is diminished, in Proportion, as the Laws are transgress'd with Impunity. From hence, I humbly think, the following Consequences may naturally be deduced; 1st, That those, whoever they are, who are most instrumental in bringing their Fellow Subjects to Want, are the greatest Enemies of the Government they live under, (however low they may cringe, or servilely behave on any Occasions!) because they sow the Seeds of Disaffection and Rioting among the People; and 2dly, That those do best practise the great Duty they owe their SOVEREIGN, who, when publick Want first begins to shew itself, do, with Submission to better Judges, make Proposals to relieve the Indigent, and prevent the People's future Oppression and Misery, that are consistent with Order, Justice, and publick Frugality, however disagreeable the Measures proposed may be to particular Persons, for private Reasons.

IT was upon this Principle, (which I hope contains nothing disagreeable with the Duty of a loyal Briton) that I humbly proposed, that an Enquiry might be made into the real Causes of the late Riot in the County of Wilts. That Fortune, with which the Goodness of Providence hath blessed me, doth indeed consist in Land, the Husbanding of which, mixed with a small Share of Study, is the Business of my Life; for which Reason, I hope, it will not be expected from me, that in order to convince the Publick of the Miseries of the poor Manufacturers in the Neighbourhood I live in, I should lay open the Mystery of Cloth-making: No, I promise myself, that the universal Complaints of the Poor themselves, the many and frequent Instances we see of the Want of Work at the several Branches of that Trade, together with the late prodigious Encrease of Poor Rates, in a Time of great Plenty and Cheapness of the Necessaries of Life, will be sufficient to convince every unprejudiced Person of that melancholy Truth;

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*Truth*; and as to those whom *Interest* may blind, or a *Consciousness of Guilt*, or *Fear of Punishment*, deter from confessing it, I perceive it will be a *vain Labour* to endeavour to gain them over to an *Acknowledgment* of it.

FOR, alas! we see, that instead of *pitying* their poor, distressed, and almost *starving* Work-People, who, I will be bold to say, have not *earnt* in general, within these two or three Years past, above *Two Thirds*, if so much, of the *Wages* which they used formerly to do, at the several Branches of the *Woollen Manufacture*; I say, instead of *pitying* these poor Wretches, so far as to represent their, every Day more and more, *deplorable Case*, to his Majesty or the Parliament, from whose *Goodness* and *Wisdom* alone, under GOD, some *Relief* can be hoped for, for them; we see these *unmasterlike Masters* more and more *falling their Wages*, encreasing their *Oppressions*, and adding fresh *Miseries* to their *Misfortunes*.

I do not pretend that the whole *Body of Clothiers* are charged by their Work-People with *Oppressions*, altho' *All* have fallen their *Wages* considerably; nor did I ever charge that *whole Body* with *Oppression*, or insinuate any such Thing, as the Publick may see in the *Essay on Riots*, and its *Defence*; altho' *Clothiers Advocates* have basely charged me with it. No, there are *some Masters*, who, as their Work-People phrase it, are GOOD HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN; that is, their *Wool* is *unmixed*, their *Work* good in *Quality*; they pay 'em *Ready-Money*, without obliging 'em to lay it out again with *Themselves* or *Friends*, and don't *meanly* lay hold on every *slight Occasion* to stop back *Wages*, nor *cruelly* busy themselves to keep others from *employing* one who quits their *Work*, or is turned off; and seem to come with *Regret* into Schemes for *lowering Wages*. But, alas, if the *Word* of the *Poor*, or publick *Fame*, are to go for any Thing, the Number of *such Masters* is far from rising to a *Majority*, they are, *Raræ Aves in Terra!* and far from enough, to counterprize the *Hardships* practised by those of the  
contrary

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contrary *Character*, especially in a *dead Time of Trade*, were they never so heartily disposed for it.

I HOPE our *judicious Readers* will think the just *Inferences* we have drawn in the *Beginning* of these *Papers*, from the *wise Rules* which *Mencius* gave his *Prince*, are sufficient to turn the *Charges of Disloyalty, Disaffection, &c.* so plentifully poured on me by *Clothiers Advocates*, on the *Heads* of some of their *Patrons*, if the *Poor* are really in *Want* thro' their *Oppressions*. But however, as these *Writers* have taken *Occasion* to disgorge an extraordinary *Quantity* of their *Malice* and *Invective*, because we have mentioned the late *Method* of suppressing *Riots* with a *Standing Army*, with some *Disapprobation*; I will beg leave to explain myself a little farther on that *Article*.

AT the same *Time* that every *Briton* must confess the great *Services* which our *Troops* have lately done in suppressing *Riots*, and particularly that at *Melksham*, it must needs afford every *true Briton* some melancholy *Considerations*, to reflect that *Order* is so decayed, as to make their *Assistance* necessary to the *Civil Power*, in executing the *Laws*, and preserving the *Peace!* And in the *Particular* of *Country Riots*, I can't but humbly think the *antient Assistants* of our *Magistrates* in such *Cases*, the *Posse Comitatus*, preferable to a *Standing Army*, especially for *two Reasons*.

ONE Reason, is the *Lateness* in which *Orders* can be got from *Court*, and *Troops* arrive at the *Place* of *Rioting*, if any considerable *Distance* from *London*, in *Comparison* of the *Expedition* with which a sufficient *Number* to quell any *Country Riot*, might be assembled in the *Neighbourhood*, by the *Sheriff*, or other proper *Officer*. I believe it will be acknowledged by most who know the *Country*, and the *Circumstances* of the *Riot* and *Rioters* at *Melksham*, that had this *old Method* been still in *Use*, a sufficient *Number* might have been got together soon enough to have prevented four *Parts* out of five of the *Damage* lately done there. And I can't help being humbly of *Opinion*, that the *Melksham Clothiers*, would have had at  
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least as much Reason, *with Hearts full of Gratitude, thankfully to have acknowledged the Goodness of the King and Government*, if they had been delivered out of their *calamitous Condition*, by a *neighbouring Gentleman*, at the Head of some of their *own Neighbours*, as by the *Officer* at the Head of a *military Force*. But, alas! our *antient Constitution*, our *antient Spirit*, and our *antient Trade*, seem ready to desert us all at once.

ANOTHER Reason, is hinted in the *Essay on Riots* itself, *viz.* the *little Justice or Wisdom* of trusting to a *military Force* on such Occasions; for whatever may cause *Mobs* in great and populous Cities, where, perhaps, a 40th Part of the Populace may compose a considerable Body, and possibly be brought together by *Party Motives*, and fomented by *Malecontents*, yet, I will venture to say, the Case is not, cannot be so in Country Towns and Villages, and among People generally *laborious*. Such *poor Wretches* can seldom gather in a *riotous Body*, without a general Discontent; and a *general Discontent* can rarely happen without Cause, without they are really *oppress'd*, really in *want*, or have reasonable Apprehensions of the *one* or the *other*. When this is the Case, where is the *wise Government* that will trust to a *Body of Troops*, which never give Bread to the Hungry, nor cover the Naked with a Garment, but rather take these good Things away? Who is the *faithful loyal Subject*, who, when he is convinced that this is the *deplorable Case* of great Numbers of Poor, (which those at the *Helm* may not apprehend) can be silent, without disclosing it, in Behalf of his industrious, well-affected Countrymen, who are *unable* to do it for themselves? Where I say, is the *faithful Subject*, who would not do his utmost that his *Majesty's* poor People should have a comfortable Living on their honest Labour; nay, who would not, for more Reasons than *one*, justly dread, that *Suppressing, or rather Stifling the Discontents of the Subjects by a military Force*, without looking with the utmost Integrity and Care into the *real Causes* of a Riot, and using all possible Means to redress all true Grievances

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*Grievances* of the People, might spread a *Gangrene*, and produce *worse Effects* at a longer Day?

HAVING said what we presume to hope our *judicious Readers* will think more than enough to confute those base Calumnies of these *pitiful Tools* of Writers, who, conscious of their *own* or *Patrons* Inability to defend themselves on those *Heads*, in which the Complaints of the Poor, and the *Merits* of the Cause consist, have enlarged on Points *foreign* to the Purpose, with much *dim Eclat*, and a deal of *dull rhetorical Flourish*. We will proceed first to point out one general Cause of the present *Decay of Trade*, and *Miseries* of our People; and thence go on to the *particular Complaints* of the poor *Wiltshire Manufaeturers*.

As *Indolence* and *Idleness* are the certain Causes and Companions of national Impotency and Miseries, so the great Bane of a Trading Nation is to have the *industrious* Part of the People over-burthened with the Maintenance of too many who gain their *Subsistence* from them. I am afraid that the grand Source from whence the *Decay of our Trade*, and all the *Wants*, which in the midst of a plentiful Country afflict the People of *England*, is, *the Number of those who suck their Living out of the Labour of others, being by Degrees encreased to Infinite*. I cannot help being humbly of Opinion, that this, without speedy Reformation, will naturally bring every *Trading Nation*, whose unhappy Case it may at any Time be, to *Want* and *Confusion*, tho' in the midst of the greatest *general Plenty*, in Spite of all Laws and Endeavours to the contrary.

SOME Folks seem to have imbibed a Notion, that if there's *Money* in a Nation, it matters little what Sort of People the *Property* belongs to; and if People can gain a Fortune or Living, no matter what *Business* they follow in order to do it. These Notions, or Notions like these, have too much, and too generally prevailed in this Nation within a *Century* past, or we should not have had so many People gleaning their Substance out of the Labour of others, from the P——n

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at C——, to the *Beggar* in the Streets. Now, the *Misfortune* is, when such Notions prevail, People are no longer careful to place themselves or their Children to such Trades, in which they may be beneficial to their Country, as well as themselves, *viz.* such as encrease the Wealth and Interest of their Country from abroad; but indiscriminately to such as they can get most by, or they can find most *Pleasure* in; without considering whether their *Country's Wealth* encreases, stagnates, or is diminished by their Means.

SUPPOSE 100 little Societies, with 1200 Families each; if one of the *e*, instead of generally employing its Members in Manuring the Land, Manufacturing its Produce, and Trafficking with it to its Neighbours, should maintain 20 Families by Places and Pensions, 20 in collecting Taxes, 50 as a standing Guard, 20 Creditors, 20 Lawyers, 10 Stock-jobbers, 50 Ale-House-Keepers, 50 Bakers and petty Shop-Keepers, 50 Vagrants, besides many more in several other *domestick* Ways of Business, amounting in all to above a 3d of the Society; it would follow, that the others *Labour* must be raised in its Price in Proportion, in order to maintain these *idle People*; and for the same Reason, Manufactures and Commodities must be sold so much the *dearer* to Foreigners. *This* would give other Societies, who kept a better Oeconomy, Room to undersell 'em in those Goods; but still, if the others can vend the Product of their Lands and Labour, *Two* might drudge on and maintain a *Third*, somewhat tolerably; but when a *Third* or *Half* of the 800 Industrious come to live *idle*, by Reason of their Neighbours *underselling* the Commodity they work on; this must throw the Society into *Want* and *Confusion*, till a new Oeconomy is pursued.

By Parity of Reason, every Nation whose Power and Happiness depend on *Trade*, ought to take the greatest Care not to suffer a Multitude of *idle People* to live on the Labour of their Fellow-Subjects. As impossible as it is for the Weakness of Man to change that Order of *Nature*, which the Wisdom of God hath

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hath establish'd; so far is it out of human Power, by all the Arts of *refined Politicks*, to keep a Nation from *Want*, that abounds with *Idletons*. What is it that hath hinder'd most *Popish Countries* so long from flourishing in Trade, but the infinite Numbers of *idle Ecclesiasticks*, with whom those Nations are filled? Now, the *Evil* doth not consist in the *Ecclesiastick*, any more than in the *Merchant, Trader, or Husbandman*, but meerly in the *idle Man*, who lives lazy and slothful on the Sweat of other Men's Brows; and if a Person lives on the Labour of others, without contributing, by his Study and Practice some Way or other, to the Improvement of the Common-wealth, he is worse than an *unprofitable Member, viz. a Burthen* to his Fellow Members.

Now, there are *two Ways* of Burthening the Industry of others; *One* in Practising a Business that is *hurtful* to the Community; the other taking *unreasonable Profits* at a useful Occupation. Having given this general Description, I shall leave to our Readers own Sagacity, what Sort of People are proper to be distinguished in each *Class*; with this general Observation, that too great Plenty of that Sort of People who live by Selling the Necessaries of Life and Trade to the Community, as it must be attended with a Deficiency of *honest Gains* to many of them, often puts *petty Traders* upon such Arts of Oppression and Dishonesty, to gain a Livelihood, as are greatly hurtful to our *Manufacturing Poor*. This general Rule then ought to be observ'd in *Great-Britain*, to let our Poor have a comfortable Subsistence at the *cheapest Rates* we can; to improve our *Lands*, and encourage the raising of *Wool* on them; to keep our Poor industriously at Work on *Manufacturing* it all, in its native Soil; and to send the Cloth to *Foreign Markets*, and sell it for what it will yield; which however, will be so much *clear Gains* to the Nation; whereas the Suffering our *Wool* to be run, or letting it, or our *Cloth* lie long unwrought or unsold at home, for the Sake of keeping up a Price, sets our Poor to Idleness, and will,

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in fine, ruin all our Trade. We come now to the particular *Case* of the *Wiltshire* Manufacturers.

It is the almost universal Complaint of these poor People, that they cannot earn even a *tolerable Maintenance* for themselves and Families, by their honest Labour and Industry, at their several *Trades*. This is the Complaint, (to use the elegant Style of the Author of the *Case* between the *Clothiers, Weavers, &c.*) not only of the *drunken Punk*, the *tattling Gossip*, or the idle vociferous *Fuddle-Cap*; but also of the most *industrious Poor*, who work 12, 14, 16 Hours out of 24, and live with the greatest *Soberness* and *Frugality*.

ONE would think, when a Person (and especially one who *praises himself*, as a very GOOD MASTER too!) takes upon him to state a *Case* between two Parties to the Publick, he should however keep within some Bounds of Truth and Modesty, on both Sides. The Writer of this *Case* may, for aught I know, be able to produce an Instance of a weak impotent *Male Child* found on a *Dunghill*, now a *Weaver*, who at 15 *d.* a Yard, has lately receiv'd of a *Clothier* 1 *l.* 19 *s.* 3 *d.* or 2 *l.* 1 *s.* clear, and in *Ready-Money*, for a Cloth filled in *Three Weeks*, or *less*. He may be able likewise to produce a *little Child* of *four Years* old *Quilting* to a Loom, tho' I would go *four Miles* to see it! He may be able to produce some *Wife* of a *favourite Workman*, who can earn 2 *s.* 6 *d.* or 3 *s.* a Week by the *Spinning-Wheel*, and at the same Time perform all necessary Offices in the Family. He may be able to produce *Shearmen* and *Scriblers*, who earn just now in the *Spring*, when the *fashionable Colours* must be got ready, from 8 *s.* to 12 *s.* per Week; but at 1 *d.* an Hour, a *Shearman* must never sleep, and have no *Tricks* played with the Clock, in order to do it. These *picked-out* Instances, may make some *unwary* People believe, that Trade *flourishes* indeed among us; and that *Weavers, Spinners, &c.* not only have wherewithal to live comfortably at home, but earn such *extravagant Sums* beyond the poor *Husbandman*, that 3000 of 'em, Men, Women, and Childen, jovially drink

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drink up every Year, near three Qrs. of a Hoghead of *Strong Beer* a-piece.—It may however deserve Notice, that *Scriblers* and *Sheermen*, who (he says) work in the *Clothiers own Houses*, are *incomparably* the most idle and drunken of all the *Woollen Manufacturers*; this I speak to *Clothiers Praise*, it being an undeniable Instance of their *strict Discipline* in their *own Houses*, and great Love of *sober Servants*! At the same Time it ought not to be forgot, that *Weavers* and *Spinners* complain most of *Want*, and of the *Oppressions* of their Masters, who generally are as laborious and sober, as the others drunken and debauched.

IN order to shew the *real Case* of our Poor, we must not relate what *one* or a *few* particular Masters do, nor what *Wages one* or a *few* particular Work-People make, at particular Times, and on particular Work; but we must look into their general Relations and Complaints. I am apt to think, as many Instances might be found of *industrious Weavers*, who in this *last Winter* were from five to ten Weeks a-piece in Weaving a Cloth of about 40 *s.* merely thro' the *Badness of Work*, as this Writer can find, who have done it in *three Weeks*. And innumerable more Instances may be found of *Spinners*, who at 6 *d.* a Pound, could not earn above 3 *d.* 3 *d.* half-penny, or at the most 4 *d.* from Six o'Clock in the Morning to Nine at Night, (Fire and Candle deducted) than this Writer is able to do, of Women that could earn 2 *s.* 6 *d.* or 3 *s.* a Week, and tend a Family; or Children of six Years old, who can earn 1 *s.* 6 *d.* a Week. For, to speak out the Complaints of the Poor on that Article, few *Clothiers* care that Children of double that Age should *Spin* at all, since *fine Spinning* has come so much in Fashion; so that Children are generally become a *dead Weight* upon their Parents Hands, and seldom *Spin*, but by Stealth. I humbly think, the Reason of this may deserve the Enquiry of the *Legislature*; because through it, many *Children* are brought up to *idle Habits*! To shew the *Case* of our *poor Manufacturers* in its proper Light, we will therefore reduce their Complaints

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plaints under the four following Heads, viz. 1. *Want of Work*; 2. *Fall of Wages*; 3. *Badness of Work*; 4. *Badness of Pay*; each of which I shall consider briefly by itself.

*WANT of Work*, instead of a Master's Fault, is his Misfortune, which he bears in common with his Work-People, and they with him; it arises from the *Decay* of our Manufactures, and certainly ought to incline both Masters and Servants to mutual Comiseration of each others unhappy State!—I presume it will not be denied, that many *hundreds* of poor Manufacturers belonging to the *fine Woollen Trade* in *Wilts*, have had *no Work* for a long Time together, within some Years past, and especially the *last Winter*; and it is well known, that a Person who has nothing but his *Work* to depend on, can't afford to lose much Time, for *Want* of it, at his Trade; especially if he has a *large Family*, who will dearly miss every Day that's lost, altho' the *Quality* of the Work (when he has it) be good, and the *Wages unabated*.

But some complain of *one Thing* under this Article, for which, I'm afraid, *some Masters* (who mind their *Pleasures* more than *Business*) are to blame, viz. being forced to spend a good deal of their Time in running about after *Wool*, *Chains*, and *Abb*, and it may be, giving a *little Fee* to a superior Servant to dispatch 'em. It hath been for some Years an almost universal Complaint of the Manufacturers of all Sorts, that their Masters keep a great many more Hands at Work, than they have *full Employment* for; so that they are forced to play by *Intervals* a great Part of their Time. 'Tis certain, no Masters do so, who pay their Servants by the *Year* or *Day*, when the Loss rests on themselves; but as the poor Manufacturer's Pay generally rises according to the Quantity of his Work, the Loss rests, not on the *Master*, but the *Servant*: Perhaps these Gentlemen may do this, for the Sake of dividing the *little Bread* to be earn't among the more *Mouths*; perhaps they may do it partly for the Sake of having *many Hands* at their Call, without

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*rising Wages* in quicker Times of Trade. I am verY far from blaming the Generality of Masters on this Account; but some do certainly make their Work-People lose more Time in *waiting* on them, than they need to do. Alas! they have almost layed aside that honest Diligence and Frugality, that our *good-old Clothiers* used to practise, and in which the *Spirit of Trade* so essentially consists. *To live and let live*, was a good Rule observed by their Fathers and Masters, (if they had any of that Trade) and by observing it, they got considerable Estates by the *Clothing Trade*, and layed the sure Foundation of their own and Families Wealth, on Principles of *Justice*, *Humanity* and *Wisdom*. But now,

*Tempora mutantur, & nos mutamur in illis.*

Too many of our present Clothiers seem to follow a contrary Maxim, viz. *not to live themselves, nor let others live*.—These are the People, who chusing rather to appear like *gallant Gentlemen* without *Estates*, or *fine Ladies* without *Fortunes*, than be plain, honest, industrious *Tradesmen*; or their *Wives* with Money in their Pockets, Credit in the World, and Esteem of their Neighbours; build, live, appear, keep Company, spend above their Abilities, *meanly* run themselves, or set up their Wives or Children, in the petty Trades of *Baker*, *Butcher*, *Malt-seller*, *Shop-keeper*, &c. and seem to think it no *Sin* to grind the Poor, and neglect their proper Trade, in order to furnish out a little criminal Pomp, and luxurious Sumptuosity!

*FALL of Wages*, is a 2d Grievance complained of by our poor Manufacturers.—As *Lowering* the Price of our Manufactures, is the only effectual Way that can be taken in our present Circumstances, to recover our *Export Woollen Trade*, or keep that *little* which yet remains; *Falling of Wages* is obviously the most necessary Means towards it. At the same Time that the Wages of the Poor is lowered, 'tis *just* that the Profits of Masters and Factors should also be lower'd in Proportion; else the whole Burthen would

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fall on the *weaker Vessels*. Care ought also to be taken to lay the Burthen of the *Fall* equally on the Shoulders of All; for what may be tolerable when divided betwixt *Eight* or *Ten*, may be intolerable to *Four* or *Two*. The *Fall* of *Spinning* from 10, 11 and 12 *d.* a Pound, to 7 *d.* and 6 *d.* is certainly very great. That of *Weaving*, from 16, 17 and 18 *d.* to 15 *d.* a Yard, is indeed easy; but when it comes to 14, 13, and 12 *d.* it must be very hard.

At the same Time that the *greatest Falls* have been made on these *two Sorts* of Poor, if their Complaints, which I am going to relate, are true, it must appear plain to every unprejudiced Person, that they ought rather to be *favoured* above other Manufacturers, in that Article.

For, say the *Spinners*, it frequently happens, that through the Fault of *Pickers*, *Dyers* or *Scribblers*, who manufacture it before it comes to us, or of the *Master* for not allowing *Oyl*, or of a Mixture of *Wools*, our Work is made worse than it naturally is: And, say the *Weavers*, if the *Chain* or *Abb* is of a *rotten Consistency*, if Damage is done the Wool by the *Dyer*, *Scribbler*, or *Picker*, or the Yarn by the *Spinner*, oft-times it doth not appear 'till it is sized or wove into the Cloth; then we must answer for all, and pay the Damage: And, say both *Spinners* and *Weavers* together, the *fine Manufacturage* of Cloth chiefly depends on our Labour; the *one* in drawing the *Chain* and *Abb* to a *finer Staple* than formerly, by which we are several Hours longer in spinning a Pound of Work, (which is our Master's Advantage, who makes more Yards of *thin Cloth*, than of *thick*, out of the same Wool;) the *others*, in making a *4th* or *5th* more *Shuttle-Shoots* than heretofore, in beating longer to beat in the *Abb*, which our Masters require; and in tying more *Knots*, occasioned by the Beating, Smallness, Mixing or Rottenness of Work. These are *particular Complaints* made by these two Sorts of Manufacturers, *Weavers* and *Spinners*; on Account of which, (if they are not fully refuted by their *Masters*) we humbly hope, that  
instead

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instead of being the *first* and *greatest Sufferers* by the Fall of Wages, it will appear to all reasonable People, they ought to be the *last*, and the *least*.

The 3<sup>d</sup> Grievance, *Badness of Work*, if the just now mentioned Complaints of the *Weavers* and *Spinners* have any Truth in them, is an Article that occasions very great Hardships to them *sometimes*, and on *some Masters* Work: They tell us, the Work of *some* differs very much from that of *others*, as to *Easiness* of Manufacturing; and some Work of the same Masters from other. Many of 'em say, that a Master gives 14 *d.* a Yard for one Sort, and 12 *d.* for another, the *Weaving*; and yet that they can weave more Yards of the *Fourteen-penny*, than of the *Twelve-penny* Work: Which they lay to the *Mixing* of Wools, which won't well incorporate.—They also relate many Instances of a Weaver's being 6, 8 or 10 Weeks in filling, now and then, a Piece of about 43 *s.* which they lay to the Cause just mentioned, to the *small Spinning*, to the *Dyer's stemming* the Wool, or to its *Rottenness*. They say, such *Chains* have increased pretty much in *late Winters*, for what Reason the Masters best know. However, it would not be amiss, if Enquiry was made of *Merchants*, *Factors*, *Drapers*, &c. whether the Credit of our *fine Cloth* hath increased lately, since this *fine Spinning*, &c. have been so much in Vogue; because 'tis certain, it creates much *Hardship* to the Poor, and much *Idleness* among Children, who are not often judged capable to perform it; whatever it may bring into the Master's Pocket, by increasing his Yards of Cloth.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Head, is *Badness of Wages*. According to the Complaints of the poor Manufacturer, this is of *two Sorts*, viz. *Stopping of Wages*, or *Paying in Goods*, or *Truck*. The Writer of the *Case*, &c. says, the *Act of the 13<sup>th</sup> of Geo. I.* puts it out of the Power of any *Clothier* to oppress, or defraud any Manufacturer in any Shape whatsoever. This is giving a glorious Idea of a Statute, which in the next Paragraph he talks of being *very deficient*, and wanting many Amendments:

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But this is no Wonder, when we consider that this Gentleman's Characteristicks are, Praise of *Himself*, Defamation of his *Betters*, the grossest *Self-Contradiction*, and stupid *Impertinence*. But it is not the Want of good Laws, but of their *Execution*, that makes Englishmen unhappy; and to say, there is no such Thing as *Oppression in Wages*, because there are good Laws that prohibit it, is to suppose, that *Laws, Execution, and Obedience* always go together; which every Child knows is *false* in Fact.

ALL the Justice and Vigilance which the best *Magistrates* in the World can exert against these Oppressions, as the Manner of Executing these Laws stands at present, will avail *very little* against the Epidemical Practice of them, in these *dead Times* of Trade, when two will do the Work of three, if Masters are suffer'd to *combine* together; for, a poor Man had better fit down under a Stoppage of 6 s. or 8 s. in a Cloth, or with *Goods* trucked at almost double Price, than complain according to Law, get Satisfaction from his Master, be *turned off* by him for so doing, and not be able to get *Work* of any other afterwards. A poor Man has nothing but his *Labour* to get his Bread by; and as *some Work*, tho' *bad Pay*, is better than *no Work*, and *no Pay*, they almost universally chuse the latter; by which Means, the good Laws made in their Favour, tho' frequently transgress'd, are seldom executed.

THE Complaints of the Weaver on the Score of *Stoppage of Wages*, are of *two Sorts*, viz. 1<sup>st</sup>, under Pretence of *Damage* done the Cloth; 2<sup>d</sup>, of its being made *wider* than the Master orders.

THE Writer of the *Case, &c.* says, That the Clothiers generally leave the *Reparation* of Damages done to Cloth in the Manufacturing, *to the Servants own Conscience*. This is advanced with that Air of *Veracity* which is peculiar to this Author; supported by a Charge of *Partiality* on a *Gentleman*, (plainly pointed at without being *named*) of whom, I believe, all who know him will confess, that his private Character as a *Clothier*, whilst he used that Trade, and his publick Reputation

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as a *Magistrate* now, are exceeded by *very few* in his Country. But to what Lengths of *Falshood* and *Folly* will some People's *private Ill-will* and *Envy* carry them? For my Part, I was amazed to see this *worthy Gentleman* lugged into this Dispute against all *Decency* and *good Manners*; he had no Hand in the *Essay on Riots*, which gives this Writer such Offence; he never saw it before it was *published*; what then, in the Name of Wonder, could make this Writer so *stupidly silly*, as to disgorge his foul Stomach on his *near Neighbour* in this publick Manner, without the least publick Provocation!—This Writer, (who is so liberal of his Charge of *Sedition* and *Invective* against the *Essay on Riots*, for only mentioning certain Causes of the *Decay of Trade*, and the *Vices of the common People*, with the utmost Tenderness and Submission) would do well to consider the natural Purport of the following Passages in his own *inimitable Piece*, viz. *Took on them to DIRECT the Legislature, and DICTATE in the Affair*, (i. e.) the Act of 13 Geo. I.—Again, *The JUSTICES at the Sessions, who never fail to do the Manufacturer perhaps more than Justice*.—Again, *The MAGISTRATES, from a Principle of Envy, are generally forward enough to scourge the Clothier, and exceeding Partial to the Labourer*. What do such Passages as THESE, but carry the *basest Reflections* on the *Legislature* and *Magistrates*, without Distinction!

Now, many *Weavers* complain, that instead of referring *Damage*, as this Writer ridiculously, and for no other Reason but to asperse the *Justices of Peace*, affirms, to the Servants *own Conscience*, several Clothiers stop considerable Sums out of Pieces according to their own *arbitrary Wills*, under that Pretence, when the *Damage* is frequently done by other Manufacturers, tho' it does not appear till after the *Weaving*.

OTHERS complain, that *some* Masters of a *certain Town*, instead of bringing their Complaints before the Magistrates, as the Law directs, are got into a Way of making themselves *Judges* in their own Cause, by *Passing the Cloths in the Market*; after which Mark

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of *publick Infamy*, the Weaver goes off with a Deduction of about 8 s. and can hardly ever get another *Chain*. I should find no Fault with this Piece of Discipline, if the Law thought fit to inflict it on a *bad Workman*, after he had been *legally convicted* before proper Magistrates; but I humbly think this *Punishment*, attended perhaps with coming to the *Parish* or *Work-house*, is a little *too rigorous* for any *private Persons* to be suffer'd to lay on their *Fellow-Subjects*.

THE Stoppage on Account of the *Wideness* of Cloths, by the Workman's Relation, is thus: Some Masters have of late increased the Quantity of *Abb*, which they used to order to be wove into a Cloth, and at the same Time confine the Weaver to a *narrower Breadth* than formerly, under the arbitrary Penalties of a certain *Stoppage* of Wages, or no more *Work*, if he either exceeds the *Breadth*, or carries back any *Abb*. Other Masters, on the contrary, of unquestionable Skill and Credit in their Trade, suffer the Weaver to bring back what *Abb* he can't conveniently beat into the *Chain*, and are satisfied with seeing a Cloth *well wove* without it. Whereas the *Dilemma* they are layed under by the *Former*, of performing almost an *Impossibility*, oft obliges them to many Days extraordinary Labour, and seems the ready Way to force 'em into *dishonest Practices*.

THE 2d Sort of Oppression in Wages, *viz.* *Payment in Goods*, is said to be practised under several Shapes; some are said to pay mostly in *Truck*; others to be got into a regular Method, brought by long Usage almost to *Prescription*, of stopping *so much* out of a Cloth; others, or their near *Relations* or *Tenants* at *large Rents*, sell the Necessaries of Life and Trade, and expect their *Work-folks* should lay out the greatest Part of their *Pay* there; and others of *better Credit*, often pay Part of their Wages in *fine Cloth* of 16 s. a Yard, (or 15 perhaps, if a *Remnant*) to poor People who are frequently at the *Parish Pay*, when those who maintain 'em, and may chance to pay for the Cloth too, by Means of it, are glad to wear *coarse Cloth*, of less than *half* the Price.

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AMONG innumerable Instances of this which may be produced, I will beg Leave to relate the following.-- A poor Woman with a Daughter of 23 or 24, and another of 14 Years old, could not all three, as they declared, earn above 8 d. a Day a Spinning *fine Work* at 6 d. a Pound; the Woman took a Remnant of *fine Cloth* of her Master the Beginning of this Winter at 15 s. a Yard, that came to about 25 s. One Child of the same Woman but a few Months before, by Sickness, cost the Parish between 2 and 3 l. and the Daughter of 23, who goes arrayed in Part of this *fine Cloth*, much about the same Time, was not sick *three Days* before Complaint was made to her Parish Officers, of whom she received 5 s. Relief, and next Day recover'd; yet these People must be pamper'd up in Luxury, with their *fine Spanish Cloth Cloaks*; and drudge on a whole Winter to pay for them, by outsetting 1 s. every Padd of Work.—These are the *real Circumstances* of a Story related in a printed Paper of *four Pages*, carefully dispersed in *Wilts*, the Week of the *Assizes* at *Sarum*, as the Writer thinks, to the *Disparagement* of a *certain Gentleman and his Son*, whom he calls the *Authors* of the *Essay on Riots*. I must inform this Writer, that the *Father* had not the least Hand in that *Essay*, and insist on his publicly asking his Pardon for charging him in an *abusive* Manner on that Account. This Writer, (whoever he be) is desy'd to prove, that this Gentleman or his Son *treated, cajoled, or threatened* the poor Woman with *starving*, because she would not *falsely declare*, her Master forced her to take a Piece of *fine Cloth*; or that either of them talked of *immediately taking Horse* to ride and persuade the Officers of a neighbouring Parish, to which the Daughter belonged, not to *relieve* her. These Assertions, I say, this Writer is desy'd to prove! At the same Time, this Gentleman can produce several *credible Witnesses*, that the Woman's *Husband* declared, his Wife was asked by the Clothier to take the Cloth, with an Intimation, that his Work would *run short* in a little Time; and both *Husband* and *Wife* offer'd Part

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of the Cloth to Sale again. The *Wife* indeed varied from what her Husband had said, *viz.* That she asked her Master for it, in order to get in his Debt, and secure her Winter's Work. — However, it is submitted to the Publick, 1<sup>st</sup>, If any Person deserves the Charge of *iniquitous Doings*, for making a *fair Enquiry* into this Matter, after the Husband had declared as above, and offer'd the Cloth to Sale? 2<sup>d</sup>, Whether, supposing the Woman's Relation to be true, she did not deserve some *Reprehension* for her vain Extravagance; especially from a Gentleman who pays largely towards the Relief of the Poor, whereas the Clothier does not pay a Penny? And 3<sup>d</sup>, If it be not high Time for Gentlemen to discourage this *luxurious Practice* among the Poor in Clothing Places, unless they are willing that the *Poor Rates* shall devour the Income of their Estates?

I do not relate this Instance of *Paying in Goods*, or *lending Goods* before-hand as a *Pawn* on poor People's Labour, (not to do 'em any *real Good*, but to feed *Luxury* and keep 'em *Poor*!) out of Complaisance to this Writer; nor shou'd I mention it at all, but that *putting off* fine Cloth to the Poor, is become too common with Clothiers, who are called Gentlemen of *much Honesty* and *Honour*. I believe that, setting aside Clothiers and their Families, there are in the Parish I live in, *Ten* poor People hardly a Degree above the Parish Pay, who wear *fine Cloth*, to *One* who is able to pay for it. And I will venture to say, it is equally hurtful to a poor Man, whether his Master *forces* him to take *such Goods*, or he asks him for it voluntarily, as looking on it as a Thing of *Custom*, and *pleasing* to him.

As to the two Species of *Paying in Goods*, first mentioned, I believe nobody questions the Illegality or Oppressiveness of them, especially when, as is most Times the Case, the Poor are forced to take Goods that they have little or no Occasion for, or are above their *Wear*, or the *Market Price*. But as to the 3<sup>d</sup> Instance, *viz.* Laying out their Wages with their Master, his

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*Relation* or *Tenant*, either before 'tis earnt, or after 'tis pay'd 'em; this some People learnedly dispute, is not *Truck*. Now I should agree with them, if, *first*, their Work-Folks were at *Liberty*, (*i. e.*) were under no Dread of being put out of Work, if they did not lay out their Money in that Way. And if, 2<sup>dly</sup>, They had such Goods as were *fit* for their Use, they *wanted*, and at the *Market Price*; else, let it be disguised under what shew of *Liberty* on the Workman's Side it will, as it has only the *Shadow*, without the *Substance* of *Honesty*, it has all the *Evil* of *Truck* in it, and as great, or greater *Iniquity* too.

I THINK it appears from what hath been related, that great Numbers of poor Manufacturers cannot but want a comfortable Subsistence at their Trades; and that their *Wants* are owing to the following Causes, 1. *Decay of Trade*; 2. *Oppressions of Masters*; 3. *Luxury and Drunkenness in many of Themselves*.

As to the Decay of the *fine Woollen Trade*, as it depends more absolutely on Home Consumption, than the Trade of *coarse Cloth* doth, it might perhaps be worth while to enquire, if that Trade be really so *bad* as Clothiers would make the World believe, by the large *Falls of Wages* above-mentioned; and if so, what is the *Cause* of it? If it should partly appear to be the *Wear of Foreign Manufactures*, Nature herself dictates a Remedy, *viz.* Let us follow the Example of other Nations, by *prohibiting* them. And if the Want of a *Sale abroad* should be owing to the *Dearness* of our fine Cloth, as it will certainly be best to keep our *Export Trade* at any Rate, the Way to compass the proper *Abatement of Price*, is certainly to make the Misfortune fall equally on both, *Masters* and *Workmen* of every Sort; and not chiefly on the *poor Weavers* and *Spinners*, (as is the Practice of too many Clothiers) who are the freest from *Vice* of all the Manufacturing Body, and ought to be the *least* and *last*, whose Wages is fallen; as we have shewn above, from the particular *Nature* of their Work. But if it should appear, that the *Badness* of the fine Trade is not so

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great, as the Abatements of the Price of *Weaving* and *Spinning*, made by the Clothier; nothing can be more reasonable, than to oblige 'em to raise the Wages of those two Sorts of Poor; and as there is already a *Statute* against *Combination among Workmen* to raise Wages, to ballance it by another, against *Combinations in Masters* to fall it.

It might also be worth while to enquire, if Clothiers have already fallen the *Price of Cloth*, in Proportion as Wool and Labour are cheaper than formerly. *Country Gentlemen* whose Estates maintain those Poor, whom the *low Wages* given by Clothiers throw on the Parishes, buy *fine Cloth* for their own Use, but little cheaper, if any thing, than they did several Years ago; which I can't help looking upon as somewhat *ungenerous*, and even *impolitick*, in our Gentlemen Clothiers in the fine Cloth Way. But as I doubt not, but their Advocates can give *very good Reasons* for this seemingly *too hard* and *interested* Way of Acting, we shall certainly see their Conduct in this Article defended to the Satisfaction of all unprejudiced Persons, in a very little Time!

It would be no small Relief to Workmen, under the *Badness of Trade*, to redress the *second Cause* of their Poverty and Wants, *viz. Oppressions of Masters in their Wages*.

I NEED not put my Readers in Mind, that in Contests at Law, especially where each Party pleads his own Cause, without the Intervention of Advocates, a poor Man lies under great Disadvantage, merely thro' *Ignorance*, and Want of Conversing with Persons of *good Sense*; besides the Fears he may be under of offending *Masters*, wanting *Work*, and consequently *Bread*; which I will venture to say, have terrified many Servants, who have been *really oppressed* in Wages, from prosecuting their Masters according to Law. — This our *Maker* himself seems to have foreseen, and with equal Goodness and Wisdom, to have guarded against in his *revealed Law*, by his many particular Recommendations of the *Poor* and their *Causes* to the Rich,  
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and those in Power; and by his Threats, on their Neglect, to avenge their *Cause* himself, on the Heads of their Oppressors. This does not come from that, GOD favours the Poor more than the Rich; for that is repugnant to an *All-perfect Being*, who loves both Rich and Poor equally, as they *obey his Laws* and are *pure in Heart*. It must come therefore from that, GOD knows the Cause of the Poor is generally the *Suffering one*, thro' their *Ignorance* or *Inability*, or other *Discouragements*, which hinder them from reaping the Benefit intended by those Laws, which are provided for their Protection, and to do 'em Justice.

Now, I believe, it is generally the Part of the poor Manufacturer to be *Plaintiff* against his Master, for Stoppage of Wages, either for pretended *Damage*, or for *Truck*; in which Case, I can't but think it would prevent the most Part of these Oppressions, if the Law was to force the Master to be *Plaintiff*, by laying a *heavy Penalty* on any Master who shall *stop Wages* on any Pretence whatsoever; by which Means, he would be obliged to drop all *pretended Damages, &c.* and might have Reparation for *real Ones*, after the Workman should be *convict*, by a Warrant of Distress on his Goods.

It would be a still greater *Relief* to the poor Manufacturer, if effectual Care was taken, as in *France* and other Countries, to sell him the *Necessaries* of Life and Trade at the *cheapest Rates*; for these poor Wretches don't want to grow *Rich*, but to get *Bread* for Themselves and Families; and consequently, *Lowering* the *Necessaries* of Life to them, if effectually done, will be equal to an Advancement of Wages.

THE Price of these is raised to *them*, considerably above the common Rates, both by *Trucking Masters*, or their *Relations* or *Dependants*, at whose Shops, the Poor are obliged to buy Things; and thro' their Means, by other *Bakers* and *Shopkeepers*. Instances might be produced of Masters, &c. who get a 4th, 3d, or sometimes near half, by the Goods they put off to their Work-Folks: But that which makes other *Bakers* and  
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*Shopkeepers* pinch the Poor in Weight and Price, is the Lack of *Ready-Money*; that is, the Poor almost constantly taking up Goods upon *Trust*, the Petty-Trader loses perhaps 25 per Cent by *bad Debts*, of which he has no Way to make himself whole, but by selling *less Weight*, and raising the *Price*, to his honest Customer. Now, this *bad Pay* is in a good Measure owing to *Truck*, which takes off so much *Ready-Money*; it is also partly owing to the great Number of *Ale-houses*, &c. at which the idle Part of the Poor spend large Shares of their Wages.—In these Instances, it is in our *own Power* to relieve the Miseries of our People; and it is to be hoped, for that Reason, we shall have the *Wisdom* to set about it!

It is also highly fit, that Masters should be prohibited under a *Penalty*, the selling or putting off any Cloth, tho' of their *own Making*, to a Workman, except at such a *low Price* as our Legislators may judge equal to the Condition of a poor Manufacturer; for all Rules both of publick and private *Oeconomy*, must condemn the pampering poor People up in *luxurious Dress*; and nobody so ready now, as *Clothiers* and their *Writers*, to cry out against the *Rioting*, *Drunkenness* and *Extravagance* of their poor Work-People; yet, I wish it could be said with Truth, that the Readiness of too many of themselves to sell 'em Goods above their Rank, on Purpose to save *Ready-Money*, hath not helped to cherish this *vicious Spirit*!

THERE is another Thing, which I humbly think wants to be *prohibited* for the same Reason, *viz.* a common Practice of turning a *damaged Cloth* upon the Hands of the Manufacturer who did the Damage. Methinks it should be better for him to pay what Damage *proper Judges* may lay upon him in Money, because by this, the *luxurious Wear* of fine Cloth is propagated among the Poor. If the Clothier has his Damage payed him, it is enough; he may reasonably be supposed to be in a better Way of *selling Cloth*, than one of his inferior Manufacturers.

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I HAVE been stigmatized in almost *Twenty* publick Papers, since the *Essay on Riots* came out, with the Titles of *Friend of Rioters*, *Encourager of Sedition*, *Exciter of popular Fury*, *Riot-Doctor*, and many others; nay, some People of *Melksham* (as the *Bearers* told me) have been so *modestly wise*, as to send me Papers sealed up in Form of Letters, with my *Name* at large, superscribed with some of those Titles. These are *Pieces of Politeness*, rarely to be met with but in a *Wool-Loft*! However, I appeal to Mankind, if attacking their *favourite Vices* be the Way to *Cajole*, or get the *good Will* of any Body of Men whomsoever! The favourite Vice of too many poor Manufacturers, alas, is *Sotting at an Ale-house*! These Houses of *Debauchery*, and their *concomitant Vices*, we attacked in our *Essay on Riots*, as we had done before in several other Papers. Is this the Language of a Man that wants to Halloo a Mob on to their Masters Destruction? Is it not rather the Language of one who sees, who laments this great Origin of the *Miseries* of his poor Countrymen, and who has a Soul superior to the *mean Arts* of gaining Popularity, by over-looking, or looking with Complacency, on the *Vices* of the Populace?—However, the Suppressing of *Ale-houses*, at which too many Poor spend that Money which their Families want, and contract not only *Poverty*, but Habits of *Vice* and *Idleness* into the Bargain, would be a very great and effectual Relief to many *poor Families* in the present Times of *bad Trade* and *low Wages*. It would be of great Benefit likewise, if an entire Stop was put to the pernicious Practice of giving *Money to Drink*, as Custom, Income, or else, to any of the *Woollen Manufacturers* whomsoever. The other Article, *viz.* The *Luxury* of the Poor in *fine Cloaths*, *fine Bread*, &c. is in a good Measure owing to their *Trucking Masters* who put off these Things to them, which are not agreeable to their Condition or Circumstances: It will avail little to say, some Poor are fond of *fine Things*; for if so, their Masters are the more inexcusable for encouraging this *peccant Humour*; they act like those, who seeing others



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others running on a *Precipice*, drive 'em forward with greater Impetuosity, till they have hurled themselves into the *devouring Gulph*! Something therefore is highly necessary to be done by *publick Law*, in order to hinder our Poor from the Use of such Things, as either *debauch 'em*, or are *above* their Rank and Ability.

It would perhaps be no difficult Matter to point out some other Regulations, which would be helpful to our Poor in their present Circumstances. But, alas! *Britain* is already fortunate in *good Laws*, but unfortunate for Want of their *Execution*; if they were *well executed*, as they are *wisely made*, half our *Laws* would be sufficient to cure all the *Evils* that afflict our Country. And if all who call themselves *Loyal Subjects*, were really such, the sole Consideration, that a *Sovereign* is no further *so*, than his People are governed by the *Laws*, wou'd make them set about re-establishing *Order* in the Kingdom, and keeping publick Officers to their Duty, who would then make the People live in Obedience to their *lawful Governours*, without the Assistance of a *Military Force*. And till this is done, I fear, every *penal Statute* will only make our *Liberties* in greater Danger!

HOWEVER, I must beg Leave to mention one Thing, which I find the *poor Weavers* in general desire; that is, that the *Legislature* would be pleased to *settle the Price of Weaving* by Law. I mention it for the Consideration of *better Judges*; and, as I humbly think, as a Sign of their Desire to live *un-oppress'd* by their *Masters*, and in Peace and Unity with them. I wish to be shewn, why *settling* the Price of Weaving *fine Cloth* now, is not as practicable by *competent Judges* in the Affair, as the *Rating of Wages* was in *Queen Elizabeth's Time*; or wherein it is harder on a *Clothier* to give his *Weavers* a *set Price* per Yard, than for a *Farmer* to give his *Labourers* a *set Price* per Week! Was such a Thing, for the Sake of the *Good* of the Poor and the *publick Peace*, to take Place, whatever *Rule* was taken to settle it by, I presume to hope,  
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Consideration will be had of any *Disadvantages* they may lie under, on Account of the Nature of their Work; it being a *treble Hardship* on a Man, to bear the *Faults* of others, to have his Work *finer*, and his Wages *abated* at the same Time.

If these Complaints of the *Weavers* are *just*, I can't help taking the Liberty of recommending to the Thoughts of *proper Persons*, whether the present Abatements from 16, 17, and 18 *d.* a Yard, to 15, 14, and some to 13 and 12 *d.* are reasonable; except it be made appear, that the *Clothier* has *fallen* the Price of Cloth at the same Time in Proportion. A poor Man's *Want of Work*, in a dead Time of Trade, seems little less than equal to the Misfortune of his Master's *Want of Sale*; they must both suffer at the same Time, and from the same Cause. Nay, I take it to be a Thing of dangerous Consequence to *Trade* itself, to suffer the Master to indemnify himself his *bad Sale*, by grinding his Loss out of the Wages of the poor Workman; for when the *Factor* can make out his Loss on the *Clothier*, and the *Clothier* his by oppressing the Poor, the Evil of a *bad Trade* will fall on the Poor and the *Landed-Man*; and those who can best lay open the *Decay of Trade*, will ungenerously shrink from that great Duty of every *honest British Trader*, and not only leave the Task to such as are *less capable* to perform it, but make any *Mistakes* they may ignorantly, tho' with a good Intention, commit, the Subjects of their own and the publick *Ridicule*.

I HOPE therefore, that altho' I am no *Clothier*, my *good Intention* will excuse any *Ignorance* or *Misinformation* I may have bewrayed in these Pieces, with all Persons of Candour and publick Spirit. It is certain, that the poor Manufacturers of fine Cloth, who live in my Neighbourhood, are lately reduced to great Want, thro' the several Causes mentioned in this Essay. In this Misery of the Poor, not one of their Masters had *Pity* or *Gratitude* enough, publickly to propose any Measures for their better Subsistence; instead of this, too many were adding to their Burthens, without  
Mercy!

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Mercy! For Want of a more *skilful Hand*, I have, as the Publick sees, made this *Essay* towards laying open their Grievances. I wish it may excite some *abler Hand* to do it in a better Manner! I heartily wish it may make the *Body of Clothiers* behave like *Masters* towards their poor *Servants*! Then all my Pains will be amply repayed; and I shall rejoice in my *old Age* for the *Calumnies* I have suffer'd, for asserting the Cause of my Country, of Trade, and of the Poor, in my *Youth*!

The E N D.

