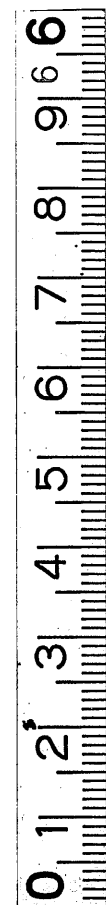


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REFLECTIONS  
AND  
CONSIDERATIONS  
Occasioned by the  
PETITION  
Presented to the HONOURABLE  
House of COMMONS,  
For TAKING OFF the  
DRAWBACK  
ON  
Foreign LINENS, &c.

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REFLECTIONS  
AND  
CONSIDERATIONS

PETITION

FOR TAKING OFF THE  
DRAWBACK

ON FOREIGN  
LINENS, &c.

By JOHN HENRY  
Author of the  
"History of the  
Linen Trade in  
Ireland"



REFLECTIONS  
AND  
CONSIDERATIONS,

Occasioned by the  
PETITION presented to the  
Honourable House of Com-  
mons, for taking off the  
DRAWBACK on Foreign  
Linens, &c.



BELIEVE it will be readily granted, whoever is able to supply any Market, Foreign or Domestic, with Goods or Merchandise cheaper than any other can, that he may, and undoubtedly will, in a short time engross the whole Trade and Custom to himself; especially if his Stock and Abilities are equal to the whole Demand of the Consumers.

I WAS

I WAS led into this Reflection, by observing the Contents of a Petition presented to the Honourable House of Commons, setting forth, "That the Manufactures of Linen now labour under several Discouragements, but more particularly on account of the Drawbacks allow'd on Exportation of Foreign Linens, Threads and Tapes; by means whereof, considerable Quantities have been, and still are sent from hence to Parts beyond the Seas, to the great Hindrance of the Consumption of our own Produce and Manufactures; and therefore praying the House to give such Relief as to the House shall seem meet."

If I differ from those Gentlemen, it will be expected that I should give sufficient Reasons for my Dissent; and if I succeed therein, I shall be sure of their Concurrence with me, if their personal Views and Designs are as disinterested as mine are.

I HAVE no Concern, directly or indirectly, in the Importation or Exportation of Foreign Linen, or Merchandise of any Sort or Kind whatsoever, farther than as a Member of the Community I may be desirous of the Welfare and General Good of the Whole; and if I have any Fears concerning any Alterations and Regulations in Trade that may be proposed, they proceed from an Apprehension that they may not be for the General Good of these Kingdoms. And in the first Place, I should have thought it necessary for the Petitioners to shew, what greater Discouragements the Linen Manufactures of *Great Britain* and *Ireland* are under now than formerly? Which might, perhaps, enable the  
Parliament

Parliament to point out a Remedy less hazardous than that of endangering our Commerce with Foreign Nations.

EXTENSIVE Commerce is of such a Nature as not to be understood but by the diligent and sensible Observer. Short-sighted and ignorant Persons are often led to conclude, that most Gain and Advantage is to be made by imposing high Duties on Foreign Commodities, and by trading to those Countries directly with their own Produce and Manufacture only, where they expect ready Cash in Return, not considering that, in the Course of Trade and Commerce, the Productions of many Nations and Countries are become absolutely necessary for the Sorting of a saleable Cargo; and that often much more Gain and Advantage will accrue to the Merchant, and consequently to this Kingdom, by trading in Goods of Foreign Manufacture, than in those of our own.

In such Case, if the British Merchant is not at Liberty to sort his Cargo with such Wares as the Markets he sends to, require, and at as low a Rate as others can, who trade to the same Market, he must be beaten out by the others, and leave the Trade wholly to them.

If a Merchant is to send a Cargo to the *West Indies*, for the *Spanish* Trade for Instance, the Linen Goods in a well-sorted Cargo will amount to more Money than all the Woollen Goods in such a Cargo; and though the Drawback on Foreign Linen was allowed to him, yet a *Briton* cannot afford

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afford to sell his Linen at that Market so cheap as a *Dutchman* can, because there is Package, Freight, Commissions, Insurance, and petty Charges to be paid from *Holland*, or any Part of the *East*, from whence they are imported to *England* or *London*, for all which we cannot reckon less than 5 per Cent. besides 3 per Cent. namely  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the *Old Subsidy*, which remains with the King for ever, that is not drawn back: Add also to these 5 per Cent. gained by the Importer from the Exporter.

THESE Charges and Duties, at a very moderate Computation, amount to 13 per Cent. Part of which Sum, in the Way we are in, is saved by the *English*, as the Duty, and Commissions, and all the Petty Charges of Importation and Exportation again, remain with us for ever.

Now, notwithstanding that these Commissions, Petty Charges, and Duty, amounting to 8 per Cent. in the whole, remain with us for ever, yet it will be allowed, that even so far the *Hollanders*, and *East* Country People, have the Advantage over us at Foreign Markets, more especially when we consider that the Importer is very rarely, if ever, the Exporter.

So that, under our present Situation and Circumstances, we may reasonably admit, that the *English* in Foreign Ports cannot afford to sell Foreign Linens so cheap by 13 per Cent. as the Foreigners from whom we take those Linens are able to do, supposing us to be only on an equal Footing.

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Footing with them, as to Navigation and all other Charges of delivering them to the last Buyer or Consumer.

IF this be the true State of the Case, or nearly so, as it evidently will appear to be, on the nicest and strictest Examination, some Gentlemen may wonder how the *English*, under such manifest Disadvantages, have been able to carry on the Trade of selling Linen at all to the Foreigners, or even to the People of our own Plantations.

BUT when these Persons shall be made acquainted that the Nature of Trade and Commerce, more especially in *America*, is such, that if a Merchant was to send a Ship laden with Woollen, or all Linen Goods, only to any one Market there, as Trade now stands, he would over-stock the Market; for there are few, if any, in that Part of the Globe, who can afford to let great Stores of any one Species of Merchandize lye long by them, even for the Chance of making so considerable a Profit; Besides when great Quantities of any one Species of Goods are imported there, it cannot be a Secret; and whoever knows that a Seller is in Haste to sell, will not seem forward to buy.

THEREFORE to avoid these Inconveniencies, all the People who trade to that Part of the World, be they *English*, *French*, *Dutch*, *Spanish*, *Portuguese* or *Danes*, all of whom have Trade and Settlements there, are under the Necessity of making up a portable Cargo, which may, and generally doth consist of all the Commodities most in Demand in those Countries, whether such Commodities

B

Commodities are the Produce and Manufacture of their own Countries in *Europe*, or any other *European* Kingdom or Country, or even of *Africa* or *Asia*. And the Reason of this appears to me very plain; for if the respective Powers and States to whom these Countries belong, do not supply them with necessary Commodities of all Sorts on moderate Terms, they are tempted to take them from the next Person that will and can supply them at a more reasonable Rate: And to this it is owing that the *English*, *Dutch* and *French* frequently supply the *Spaniards* in *America* with *European* Goods, because they can and do, notwithstanding the Laws of *Spain*, afford them cheaper than the *Spaniards* do.

Now to enable an *Englishman* to carry on Trade to that Part of the World as well and as advantageously as the best of them, I will not deny but that he hath some Advantages over all these Nations; particularly, in carrying thither all the Manufactures of *Great Britain*, in Demand there, which are not a few, beside the Woollen Manufacture; at a cheaper and easier Rate than any other *Europeans* can; because they are not at present loaded or clogged with any Duties or Commissions, till they arrive at the Place of Sale. And as our Commodities are numerous, and some of them of great Value, I am willing to believe that we can yet afford to send a portable and proper Cargo thither, a sufficient Quantity of Foreign Linen included, on as easy Terms as any of our Neighbours can; for if Linens cost us 13 *per Cent.* more than theirs do, our Woollens and some other Manufactures of *Great Britain* (with-

out

out which they cannot fort a Cargo) cost them, upon the whole, as much more than they do us, as the 13 *per Cent.* on the Linens amount to. And as an *Englishman* at a Foreign Market is obliged to sell his Linen as cheap, or nearly so, as a *Dutchman* or *Frenchman*, or they will not deal with him; so a *Dutchman* or a *Frenchman* must sell his Woollen Manufactures and other Commodities, as cheap, or nearly so, as an *Englishman*, or they will have no Commerce with them, while the *Englishman* will supply them: So that these Rivals are to consider and contrive, by all the Means in their Power, who, upon the Whole, can make it turn out most to Advantage: And I will not conceal my Sentiments, which are, that upon the Whole we are at least upon a Par with them, if we have not some Advantages; I wish it was clear to me that we had many.

EXCEPT in the single Article of Linnens, I cannot recollect that the *British* Subjects in *America* are under the least Temptation to deal with Foreigners for *European* Goods or Manufactures. Our People in the Plantations may have the Manufactures of *India* as cheap as any People; for they go as free of Duty to them as to any People whatever, and so do all our own Manufactures: And it must be the Continuance of this Indulgence to them, that will make them prefer these Things that come reasonable and cheap to them; for such is their Nature, that they, like the Subjects of *Spain* in *America*, would get them cheaper, if they knew where; or if it was worth their while to manufacture more than they do, they would do it.

NOR do I know of any Law now in being that restrains their Manufactures: Some I know that are a very great Encouragement to them, particularly to their manufacturing of Iron and Paper. I heard an Inhabitant of the Province of *Pennsylvania* say, on occasion of the Law being passed for taking off the Drawback on Paper,

*THIS Act is a greater Benefit to the Paper-makers of New-York and Pennsylvania, than if the Parliament had given them a Thousand Pounds for their Encouragement. But, I presume, if they had known it, and that we make all sorts of Paper there already both for writing and printing upon, we, though we had applied for it, had been denied that Indulgence: By this Encouragement we shall in a few Years need no Paper from Europe.*

AND if the Drawback was wholly taken off from Foreign Linen, so that they were to pay 14 per Cent. more than they now do, Would it not be of the same Effect to them, as if a Bounty of 14 per Cent. was given to them for the Encouragement of their Linen Manufacture? I think it evident that it would. Now, if any Person is so much unacquainted with our Northern Colonies, as to imagine this is a very remote Consideration, and that they are as yet unskilled and ignorant in the Linen Manufactures; if they will not be satisfied with the Accounts that I shall give them, upon Inquiry they will find, That coarse Linens for Sheeting and other Uses, equal in Goodness to Linens that sell in *London* from Eight Pence to Eighteen Pence per Yard,

Yard, are already manufactured there; and it is also as true, that fine Linen, equal in Goodness to Holland of Four or Five Shillings per Ell, is also made there, and in no very inconsiderable Quantities; nay, to such a degree, that I doubt much whether the Exportation of Linen thither hath increased in any degree of Comparison to the Increase of People there; although, as they have increased in Riches, they are grown more expensive.

BUT what might we expect (only supposing that they were to buy no Linen from the Foreigners in the *West-Indies*) they would not do in the Linnen Manufacture with such a Bounty as 14 per Cent. or, what is equal to it, a Duty of 14 per Cent. imposed on all Linnens imported there more than now are?

NEITHER the Banks of the *Nile*, nor the most fruitful Plains of *Egypt*, were ever more capable of producing fine Flax, (though formerly esteemed the best in the World) than the Banks of the *Susquahanna*, *Delawar*, *Hudson's River*, and the rich and fat Vallies of the *English North America* are.

THE Climate of *North America*, with regard to the Production of most Vegetables, particularly as to Hemp and Flax, is inferior to none in the known World: They have so many sorts of Soil, that no Place, in any Climate, can shew more than may be seen there in one Day's Riding. Mines of Iron, Copper, and Lead, are already discover'd there; and the two first are inferior to  
none

none that History mentions, or any Man living ever saw.

The first they are compelled to manufacture for their own Use, because they are treated as Aliens in that Instance; and are obliged to pay as much Duty at Importation as an Alien; which Duty, with the Freight, would amount to about 13 or 14 per Cent. whereby *Great-Britain* loses the Carriage Homeward and Outward, and Commissions thereon, and the Manufacture thereof, which is, at least, three times the Value of the Whole, and lays them under a Necessity of becoming Rivals in an establish'd Branch of Trade, perhaps not inferior in Value, as to Exportation, to the Woollen Manufacture.

As to the Duty on Copper-Ore, it is so small in proportion to its Value, that it is cheerfully paid; and *England* hath the Carriage backward and forward, and the sole Manufacture thereof hitherto.

THEN, as to Lead, as they are supplied at so easy a Rate with manufactur'd Lead, of all sorts, from *Great-Britain*, free from Duties, they have not been tempted to produce any considerable Quantities of so base a Metal, knowing better how to employ their Time: But if a Duty of 13 per Cent. *ad valorem*, was imposed on Copper-Ore of the Produce of the *British* Plantations; at Importation here, and a Duty of 13 per Cent. was imposed on all Leaden Manufactures exported to the *British* Plantations, without pretending to prophesy, a Man might say, That you would have very little, if any, Copper-Ore imported here from thence, and

and as little, or no Lead, exported from hence thither.

IF this is allow'd to be Reason or Argument, it will hold as strong in the Case of Linens, Threads, Tapes, or whatever they are capable of producing and manufacturing for themselves. They, at present, manufacture Flax and Hemp of their own Production; they make Linen and Cordage thereof now, though not enough for their own Consumption: But it shews what they are capable of; and if the Manufacturers of Linen in *North America*, who are mostly *Scots* and *Irish*, and such as they have taught, were to beg of the *British* Parliament to pass an Act for the Encouragement of the Linen Manufactures there, could they in Modesty desire, that a greater Duty than 14 per Cent. added to the 13 per Cent. which still subsists, should be imposed on all Foreign Linen imported into those Places where they already had begun and carried on that Manufacture? Would not an impartial Man think they had asked enough? And what Opinion would any Man have of a *Briton* who should consent to such Demands? Perhaps, that he liked *New-England* better than *Old-England*.

BUT, say some People, cannot we restrain the People of *North America* from manufacturing of Goods for their own Use, and oblige them to take just what we will please to send them, and on our own Terms? Have we not, already, by Law, deprived them of obtaining any *European* Commodities, but what are sent them directly from *Great Britain*?

I WILL

I WILL not dispute, whether, in Reason or Justice, any of the King's Subjects, without having forfeited their Liberty by some Crime, can be deprived of the Privilege of making the most of their Productions, whether by Manufacture or otherwise, for their own Use only.

BUT, admitting that by a Law of *Great Britain* they were restrained, even in that Case, I doubt whether they would take so much Goods from *Old-England* as now they do.

THE *Spaniards* in *America*, who are too lazy to work, which is as well for us as if their Laws restrained them from working, do not take half their Consumption of *European* Goods from *Old Spain*: More than half, I am persuaded, they take from the *English*, *Dutch*, and *French*, at a very great Hazard too, no less than the Forfeiture of the Goods, Fine, and Imprisonment at the King's Mercy: For they too, by their Laws, are depriv'd of obtaining any *European* Goods, but what are sent them from *Old Spain*.

BUT all this happens because, by the wise Laws of *Spain*, and the grave and solemn Regulation of her Fleets and Convoys, the Goods which they send into *America* are so laden and clogged with Duty and Delay, that they cannot be afforded by 20 *per Cent.* so cheap as the *English* can afford them at the same Markets.

AND hence it is, that the *Spaniards* in *Old Spain* do not send so many Ships in one Year to all their  
Dominions

Dominions in *New Spain*, as we, the *English*, send to one of our Islands in the same time. Now, let us admit, in order to give every Argument and Reason its due Weight, that the *English* were absolutely restrain'd from manufacturing of all sorts of Goods for their own Use in the Plantations, and that all Manufactures were to be sent from *England* to them only 20 *per Cent.* dearer than they could be supplied with them from our *European* Neighbours; What would be the Consequence?

OUR People in the Northern Colonies abound in Shipping; they carry on Trade to Advantage where-ever they have Encouragement, and can do it lawfully: They trade to the Islands and Main of *America* with *French*, *Dutch*, *Spaniards*, and *Danes*, and, in many Instances, directly to *Europe*, without being oblig'd to come to *Great Britain*; but, if they must be oblig'd to pay 14 *per Cent.* more for their Linens only, than usual, would there not be, at least, twice the Temptation for them to buy Linnen from the Foreigners that there now is, when they have them only at 13 *per Cent.* more than the Foreigners will make them pay? which last Advance may not be worth their while of running the Hazard of Ship and Goods often for; but, when doubled at least, the Gain will be so tempting, and the Hazard so small in proportion to the Gain, that I, who have some Reason to know their Genius, Inclinations, and Abilities, can easily foretell, that *England* would not be able to impose any Linens upon them at so advanced a Price. The Harbour of *Curasoa*, the Island of *St. Eustatia*, the Ports of *Surinam*, and the *Barbises*, belonging to the *Dutch*, are always  
open



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open and free for the *English* to trade to. The Duties on what the *English* import and sell there seldom amount to above 5 *per Cent.* I remember but one Instance when they exceeded, and that was just upon the glorious Peace of *Utrecht*, when Monsieur *Carfar*, after having plunder'd *Nevis* and *Monferrat*, made the Garison of *Curafoa* ransom themselves for 1200,000 Pieces of Eight or *Spanish* Dollars, as I have been informed the Sum was: Then indeed, for two or three Years, they made all Foreigners pay 10 *per Cent.* on all the Goods they imported and sold there: But during that Time and Occasion, which might have, in some measure, excused a Tax on their Merchandize at Exportation, they were not so weak as to do it, well knowing, that no body would buy Goods and Merchandize of them that knew where to buy cheaper; nor did they ever, in any Instance that I know of, demand any Duties on any Goods that any one purchased in their Harbours, but let him carry them where he would or could, well knowing that whatever draws Shipping, draws Trade, and that draws Profit or Money, which all trading People want.

THERE is not a Port in the World, out of *Europe*, where all sorts of *European* Goods are to be seen in greater Plenty than there, in *Curafoa*; and, I believe, there has not been a Day these twenty Years when there were no *English* Ships to be seen in that Harbour: But this is only one Port: *Surinam* and the *Barbeses* lye to Windward of *Barbadoes*, and not above three Days sail from it; so that the People of *Barbadoes* might be supplied from

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from thence very conveniently, and with small Risque.

*St. Eustatia* lies in sight of our *Leeward Islands*; and, as I will not put all on my own single Authority on this Occasion, I will transcribe a Passage out of a Book published about seven Years ago, intituled, *The Importance of the British Plantations in America to this Kingdom*, printed for *J. Peele*, page 32 and 33. The Author says,

“ I shall take leave, in this Place, to mention  
 “ an Affair, for which, if a Remedy could be  
 “ found, it would be of some Advantage to us.  
 “ The Island of *St. Eustace*, which is inhabited  
 “ by the *Dutch*, is not above three Leagues distant  
 “ from *St. Christophers*; and, with regard to its  
 “ Extent and Produce, very inconsiderable: But  
 “ its Road is the Place where *Dutch* Interlopers  
 “ from the Coast of *Africa* seldom fail to call at.  
 “ In a few Days all our *Leeward Islands* are in-  
 “ formed of this. In Places, such as our Islands  
 “ are, it is not much to be wonder'd at if there  
 “ are Persons who run some Hazard for the Hope  
 “ of a considerable Gain; so that all the ready  
 “ Money which they can advance at any Rate, is  
 “ carried by them on Board these Ships, where  
 “ Negroes are sold to them frequently 20 *per*  
 “ *Cent.* cheaper than our own Ships do afford  
 “ them. This ready Money is a great Tempta-  
 “ tion to some Planters, who sell their Sugars  
 “ to them at less than the current Price; and,  
 “ under Pretence of sending it in Sloops to our  
 “ own Shipping, it is sent on Board these In-  
 “ terlopers, who, by these Means, get loaden at  
 “ less

“ less Expence than our own Ships, and carry  
 “ off more Money than a great Number of our  
 “ own Ships which trade for three times the  
 “ Value. By this it is evident, that we have  
 “ really employ'd a *Dutch* Ship, and have paid  
 “ her whole Freight, Out and Home, in Money,  
 “ which is just so much lost to the Nation: Nor  
 “ is that the only Damage; for on Board these  
 “ Ships are often great Quantities of fine and  
 “ coarse Linens, which are sold for ready Money  
 “ only.”

THIS Instance, I think, is sufficient to shew,  
 how easily Foreign Linnens may be run in upon  
 our Islands, and consequently in upon the northern  
 Colonies.

BUT, if all these were possible to be pre-  
 vented, which I think not so, there is yet a Place  
 where this Business may be carried on, if possible,  
 more to Advantage, namely, at the Port of the  
 Island *St. Thomas*, belonging to the *Danes*; and  
 which is an absolutely free Port, and the only one  
 in all *America*. It lies as well as can be desired  
 for a Northern Colony Man to touch at, after he has  
 got his Money for his Cargo either at *Barbadoes*,  
 or among the *French* at *Martinique*, *St. Lucia*,  
*Dominic*, *Granada*, *Santos*, *Marigalant*, *Grand*  
*Terre*, *Guadalupe*, or any of our own *Leeward*  
*Islands*.

FOR, we may be assured, a Man will not  
 carry Money to the Northward, as is now pretty  
 constantly practis'd, (and which ultimately comes

to *England*) when he can make above 20 per Cent.  
 by carrying Linens from *St. Thomas's* even to the  
 most distant of our Northern Colonies; which  
 Voyage can be so quickly perform'd, as in twenty  
 or twenty-four Days at most, and the Hazard  
 of being seiz'd or discover'd, not 1 per Cent.

I HAVE purposely omitted to mention any  
 Danger that may be apprehended from the *French*  
 supplying our Colonies and Plantations in *Ame-*  
*rica* with their Linens, though that may deserve  
 some Consideration; And my Reasons are, that  
 I apprehend the *Dutch* and *Hamburgers*, *Lu-*  
*beckers* and *Danes*, by means of their free Port,  
 may be able to supply all the *West-Indies* as cheap  
 or cheaper than hitherto that Market hath been sup-  
 plied, when once they get into their Geers,  
 that is, shall be perfect in the Trade. In the  
 mean time, the *English* will be forward enough  
 to shew them the Way, by carrying their Li-  
 nens to the Places I have mentioned directly from  
*Hamburg*, &c. and there wait the Chance of a  
 Market, which they will have no Reason to doubt  
 of, when the Drawback shall be taken off, which,  
 at first, will have this Effect, namely, to raise  
 the Prices in the *West-Indies* to the *English*, and  
 lessen the Price at *Hamburg*, &c. until Trade is  
 got quite out of its old Channel, and lost to the  
*English*. All these Consequences are as evident  
 to me, as that Merchants will trade where there  
 is the greatest Prospect of Gain to be made, all  
 Hazards and Risques consider'd.

IF nothing hitherto advanc'd shall be thought of Weight enough to ballance so heavy, so unreasonable, and, I am sorry to say, so popular a Clamour, I desire that it may be calmly and seriously consider'd, How this Nation hath been able hitherto to raise and support such a Share of the Trade of *Europe*, and the rest of the World. Has it been by imposing high Duties upon Goods to be exported, whether of our own Growth and Manufacture, or of Foreign Growth and Manufacture? Surely not: The contrary will appear, on Examination, to be the Case: Whatever hath enabled us to supply Foreign Markets cheaper, hath enabled us to extend our Trade farther and farther; and is the only Cause why, at this Day, we are the Envy of the Nations round us.

HIGH Duties only have been the Bane of all trading Nations, who can be said to have been remarkably famous in Trade; so far as can be proved from History in *Europe*.

THE *Venetians* appear to me to have been the first considerable Traders in *Europe*, and had, when in the Zenith of their Commerce, more Trade and Traffick than all the rest of *Europe* had. By Trade they increased their People, Power, and Riches. Their Alliance was sought after by great Kings; and, in more than one Instance, they shew'd that they were able to protect their Dominions, Trade, and Liberties, against the greatest Naval Power then upon the Face of the Globe.

THEIR

THEIR Trade increased and flourish'd while they imposed no more than 5 *per Cent.* on Merchandize brought into their Territories; so long as they continued low Duties, they were the greatest Merchants, and had the most extensive Commerce. When they waxed wanton and fat, and grew stupid to the Cause of their Prosperity, and thought the World made only for them; they imposed more and more Duty upon Merchandize, till they raised it to 15 *per Cent.* Then the *Genoese*, who were no Strangers to Commerce, open'd their Port, and, by low Duties, invited the Trade of *Europe* to visit them. On this she forsook the *Venetians*, after having enrich'd them, and took up her chief Residence with the *Genoese*, who had promised to lay a less grievous Burden on her. In fine, they began and ended with her just as the *Venetians* had before done: They loaded her with 15 *per Cent.* which was more than she could bear; therefore she left them, and took up with a People who were very fond of her and her Sister *Liberty*, and had promised to stand by and support the two Sisters at all Events: These were the *Hollanders*, and the rest of the People of the *United Provinces*, at the Union of *Utrecht*.

WITH them she continued and still doth continue. She raised them from a low, weak and distressed State to a high and mighty one; and she is still both able and willing to support them in the State she hath raised them to: Where she deigns to smile, she turns a Marsh into a fruitful Meadow, and a Bog into a Paradise.

THE

THE once potent, rich and flourishing States of *Venice* and *Genoa*, when by high Duties they had drove Trade and Commerce from them, dwindled into Nests of Bankers, Brokers, and Beggars; mighty Boasters of their Nobility, and the immense Sums lent to great Monarchs and States; yet without Power to compel the Payment of those Debts, said to be due to them; or Strength sufficient to defend their own Dominions, or to keep their own Subjects in Obedience and Order. And such will be the Fate of all Nations who shall be weak enough, or wicked enough, to follow such Measures, while other Nations are wise enough to encourage Trade, and extensive Commerce, by imposing light and low Duties, if any, upon those Sorts of Goods which may best bear it, namely on Commodities not of absolute Necessity for their own Commerce, and such as are consumed amongst themselves. All other Duties that remain on Commodities that you re-export are a Clog and a Burden, which, if other Nations were wise enough to take Advantage of, your Trade and Commerce must soon sink under.

THERE is another Consideration which occurs to me, and which I doubt the intelligent Reader may think deserved to be treated of before; and that is, supposing us able, in time to come, to manufacture Linen sufficient for our own Consumption at Home, what will become of the Woollen Manufactures which those Countries took from us, from whence we were supplied with Foreign Linens? Are they not as  
capable

capable of manufacturing of Woollen, as we are of Linen? Or can we oblige them to take none any where else, or prohibit their manufacturing for themselves? Or can we be sure that in Repentment they may not impose a Duty on our Manufactures, equal to what we lay upon theirs, or totally refuse to make use of them, as *Russia* did not long ago? If we can do neither of the First, nor be sure of the Last, Why must we lose or destroy so considerable a Branch of our Woollen Manufacture, not to mention many others, for the bare Chance of raising and encouraging another Manufacture which neither by Nature, or Art, we are so capable of excelling our Neighbours in?

If they take off our Woollens, which have generally been reckoned our staple Commodities, and also, our Tin, Lead, Leather, Toys of Gold and Silver, hard Wares of all Sorts, such as are the Manufactures of *Sheffield* and *Birmingham*, the Produce of our own Plantations above our own Consumption, likewise the Goods we import from *India*, to as great a Value as we take from them, which I really believe they do, and greater; Can we have the least Reason to desire a Change in so profitable a Branch of Commerce, as fairly and clearly brings to the second Buyer, that is the Nation, 13 per Cent. on the whole that is exported again?

BESIDES as the Imports and Exports are principally in our own Shipping, a Man would be apt to conclude, that this was a Trade not to be despised; because if we take in to the Account the whole of the Transactions between these Countries

D

and

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and our own, it will be allowed that we have employed as many Hands in manufacturing as they, and consequently that we have supported and maintained Numbers at least equal to all that they employ, in the Linen Manufacture; beside, as I said before, the Encouragement of our own Navigation and Shipping which we are principally to consider as our greatest Strength, and most sure Protection. Nor can I see any Sort of Advantage would accrue to this Kingdom by making our own Linen, preferably to purchasing it of Foreigners with other Manufactures, which are worth no more to us, than we could afford Linen for. So that all Hands are but employed and subsisted, it matters not much whether it be in Linen or Woollen; but if we design to make any Advantage by Foreign Commerce, we should consider what will bring in most Gain to the Nation ultimately, or on the Ballance, as the Merchants say.

If an *Englishman* is to put himself to more Trouble, Labour, and Expence, to make a Yard of Linnen worth an Ounce of Silver in any Market in *Europe*, or any other Part of the World, than he is to put himself to in making a Yard of Woollen worth an Ounce of Silver in any Part of the World; would he not be laugh'd at, should he chuse to employ himself about what was most troublesome, laborious, and expensive?

EVERY Person in the Kingdoms of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, who have Reason, and the Use of it, will or may see the Tendency of  
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all I have delivered. I wish well to the Whole, and as we are Subjects of the same Prince, I wish we were all under the same Laws, Advantages, and Circumstances, in Matters of Trade and Commerce; for I am not so narrow in my Notions of Trade, as to think even *Ireland* ought to be restrained in Manufactures or Trade, more than that the People on the North Side of *Trent* should be under a different Set of Laws and Restrictions from the rest of the People of *England*. The Increase of Trade in *Ireland* would be of Advantage to *Great Britain*, as certainly as the Increase of the Value of Lands in *Kent* would also increase the Value of Lands in *Middlesex*.

AND *Ireland* could not grow rich without enriching *England*, while the Gentlemen of Property and Estates in that Kingdom were obliged to attend the Parliament here. And all Gentlemen of Consequence, who were Men of Fortune and Ambition, would, by Choice and Inclination, be near the Fountain of Honour and Preferment, as is the Case of most of our Gentlemen of great Fortunes and Estates in *Great Britain*; which alone makes Estates near the Court, or *London*, worth more per Acre, according to its Fertility, than in more distant Counties.

Now as I wish Prosperity to all His Majesty's Subjects, so I should be sorry to see Trade clogged or restrained by high Duties, especially at Exportation. It was high Duties that ruined *Venice* and *Genoa*, and made them  
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lose their Trade, tho' they are still famous for Manufactures.

AND, in fine, though we should be capable of producing and manufacturing every thing within ourselves, so that we had no Occasion to import any one thing, What should we be Gainers of? I really believe of nothing but woeful Experience, to find our Trade lost, and the Power, which that created, dwindled, and that we were become an easy Prey to a bold Invader: Which may the good Genius of *England* avert!

F. I. N. I. S.

ERRATA: Page 12, Line 17. for are read is. P. 19: for Eustace read Eustatia.