

66-24



0001

(6)X.  
THE  
NATURE *and* WEIGHT  
OF THE  
TAXES  
OF THE  
NATION:

SHEWING,

That, by the Continuance of  
*Heavy Taxes and Impositions, and the*  
*Mis-application of Publick Money, Trade is*  
*destroy'd, the Poor increas'd; and the*  
*Miseries and Misfortunes of the Whole*  
Kingdom demand the Consideration of  
the FREEHOLDERS of Great Britain,  
at the Ensuing Election.




LONDON:

Printed for J. PEELE, at Locke's Head in  
Pater-noster-Row. MDCCXXII.

6

Printed for J. PEARCE, at the 'Star and Garter' Press, No. 1, Pall Mall East, London, W.

 *OU* are Possessors of a very great Share of Power, inherited by you in Right of your Birth, or else by some other generous Title made to you; in virtue of your being Free-Subjects of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*; and are thereby vested with that Trust and Property, which, as they are directed and disposed of by you, will always have the most universal and affecting Influence on the Success or Prosperity, the Distress or Misery, of this your Renown'd Native Country.

( 2 )

I think it, therefore, not improper, at this Juncture, and from a View so animating and enlivening as the Happy State of the Commons, and People of *England*, in Regard of their Liberties and Constitution, to offer with some Application to *You*, a short Account of the present Circumstances of Affairs (in some particular Relations only) since it is meerly from *Your* Caution, and a right Direction of your Voices in the ensuing Elections, that we can possibly expect to have Matters in any tolerable Measure brought to Rights again.

Gentlemen; It is not foreign to the Occasion I now take of addressing myself to you, to remind you of the Treachery and horrible Practices that were late a-foot, by the most wicked Execution of Evil Powers granted to the *South-Sea-Company* Directors, and even some then at the H—m not unsuspected; and that it would have been esteemed, during those fatal Transactions, no small Comfort and Satisfaction to have found almost any single Man in P——t untainted with the blackest Infection that ever so predominantly reign'd amongst us. How should we prize those few *Members* that used the most indefatigable Diligence, and made the utmost Efforts that were possibly in the Power of any particular Number of Men, in endeavouring to discover, without Affection or Favour, or any interested Regards whatever, those who had been Accompllices, or active in the Completion of their Country's Ruin, notwithstanding they were oppressed and borne down by Ignorance, Noise, and Numbers? But I just mention this, as it was the Antecedent and Fore-runner of the Consequences of the Subject I shall here limit myself to, *viz.* The Complaints and Poverty of the Nation; The Incumbrances under which we at present labour, And the little Prospect we have of being Relieved from this melancholy Scituation, occasioned by that destructive, sinful *Scheme*, and the unaccountable Management of M——rs.

What

What I propose to submit to the Consideration of the Publick, is; The terrible State and Burthen of the Nation's Debts; which, for these Seven Years, we have been fondly deluded that every *Sessions* was to ease us in; and that the infallible Effects of a Septennial Parliament, would be Peace and Tranquillity, a Flourishing Trade, a Freedom from Taxes, a General Affluence and Plenty, and many such Pledges of Security and Happiness ——— But alas! what have we received in the room of These!

I do not design to have any Retrospection to particular *Persons*, or here to censure *Them*, nor to enter into a Justification of any who might be so miserably imposed upon by those Miscreant Blood-suckers, as to give Credit to their self-designed Schemes, and to believe them meant for the Publick Good; I shall point out (not according to the Opinion of any Set or Party of Men; but) what is the Result of all calm and sober Mens Thoughts concerning the general Demand and Solicitation that most visibly appears for the Discharging the Debts of the Nation, as the necessary Means of supporting the Kingdom, and maintaining (under an almost universal Bankruptcy) common Honesty and Compassion between Man and Man. In what manner, as the Case now stands, are we to proceed for the Elections of a New Parliament? Does not the Circumstances of the Nation require the nicest Care and Circumspection to apply ourselves to the chusing of Gentlemen of Honour and Integrity; such who will enquire into the Disposition and Expending of those *Sums* that have been collected by Taxes, during this Parliament, from the Free-holders, and other Subjects of this *Free Kingdom*? Are we to be drain'd of the Cash that remains with the People? Or are we to force a Majority of those who would repeat a second *South-Sea* Scheme? What Horror should it raise in us, when we reflect of many Persons of Honour and Family that scarce dare venture in Publick! Are not our Gaols, Mint, and Privileged-Places fill'd with

A 2

with Bankrupts of Note and Worth? What then, except an Abatement of Taxes, can produce the least sudden Effect of Plenty among us? The taking off of little inconsiderable Duties, will no ways be a Balance, if a long dismal Catalogue of others are to rest upon the Score.

I believe no one will deny, that great Debts, and a Continuation of fresh and additional Taxes to those Debts, are not some of the most deplorable Grievances that can depress a Nation; for that Taxes are originally a Mark of Servitude, is agreed to by all: But the more Humane, and Mild, and Just a Government is, the less Rigorous and Severe it is in its Taxes on the People. Customs, Payments, and Taxes, remaining upon a People for a Series of Time, and with frequent Assurances of their continuing but for a short Space longer; will consequently keep a People, who have not totally lost all Sense of Liberty, or are not over-whelmed in Afflictions, Tyranny and Oppressions, in a continual Expectation of a Discharge from those Tributes and Taxes; and an absolute Delay thereof will be esteemed as the savage Exactions of an over-grown Power and Government.

The Ancient *Romans* (not a little skill'd in Civil Government) who, when they were Masters of a very great Empire in the World, endeavour'd universally to make their People easy, in Relation to Taxes; and they found nothing contributed more to the fixing and firmly establishing of their Power and Conquests: And instead of cruel or exorbitant Taxes, oft-times generously vested in the People many noble Privileges and Immunities. It is the Mark of equal Wisdom, as well as Justice, in all Governments, so to temper their Conduct, in respect of all Taxes to be levied, as not to purchase to themselves, in the least Degree, any Odium or Reflection of being the Authors of Violence and Rapine upon their Subjects. Certain natural Civilities (if I may so speak) Laws

Human

Human and Divine; whereof Christianity, the most binding Law; forbid whatever tends to the Propagation of Slavery, Defraud, Exorbitancy, &c. wisely knowing them to be most prejudicial to the Success and Advantage, or the promoting of a willing Submission to States or Princes.

The *Romans*, as they were punctual in their Payments, likewise always observed strictly to dispose of any Spoils, gotten in War from their Enemies, so regularly and equally, as not to gratify the savage Herds of covetous, ambitious, or aspiring Courtiers; and whenever their Government had Occasion for Impositions, either for Encouragement or Support of its Subjects, they raised them by such Intervals, that apparently expressed the Necessity of laying them on: And when Publick Hostilities were over, and Worthy Patriots rewarded, those Taxes forthwith ceased, and did not continue to be a lasting Ravage on the People. Had they been artful, in inventing and contriving Ways and Methods of Taxing the People, and bringing in unreasonable Sums into the Possession of the Government, and without publicly and fairly accounting for the Receipt of those Levies; the Subjects, undoubtedly, would have pleaded their Privileges, as *Romans*, of narrowly inspecting and enquiring into the Management and Disposal of such large Advances made upon them. I do not find, that they admitted of any Device or Pretences for the raising Money, but when the chief Reasons thereof were notorious to the whole Common-wealth; and such as tended to promote the Peace and Reputation of the Government, where-ever their Fame reached, throughout the World, by paying their Army, Publick Ministers and Officers, and carefully discharging the State from lasting Debts and Incumbrances; which, where the contrary prevails, it will naturally tempt and draw on to Bribery and Violence; perhaps, in the End, to open Rebellion and Ruin.

And

And if this was the Case, as to Taxes and Impositions under Heathen Governments: Let us make an Inquiry how it is, or ought to be, where the Rule and Power is exercised by Christians and Protestants; the latter of these boasting much of their Superiority in Wisdom and Prudence, as to all Points relating to Human Society; and thence form a Comparison of our own Nation with the other Kingdoms of *Europe*.

To begin with the Taxes imposed by Commonwealths: That of the *Dutch*, which I may venture to pronounce, in some Regard, as powerful and arbitrary as any Government whatever; yet has always taken Care so to particularize their Impositions, that but few of their Subjects know and are apprized of the Necessity and absolute Reasons there are for them; and the Government so justly and clearly accounts for the Collection and Management of the Nation's Levies, that, I believe, the poorest Working-Man in *Holland* is convinced of the requisite Demand there is for them, and is satisfied of the honest Disposition thereof. 'Tis true, indeed, the Excise there is very great, and their continued Wars (which they have not been exempt from more than we of this Island) has occasioned them to make great Levies upon their People; but they have so wisely and honestly order'd it, as always immediately to reduce them as soon as ever the Cause ceased: So that the Subjects are thereby able to vye with any Nation, in Matters of Trade or Riches. And the *Hollanders* exceed all Commonwealths I ever heard or read of, in a numerous Common People, Wealth, and Coin. It must then be granted, That their Taxes are so easy and reasonable, and so prudently directed, that they do not impoverish, and do the People any Harm.

The *Venetians*, whom, in Point of their Greatness and Antiquity, I ought to have mentioned first, as they

( 7 )

they are far from being a poor Commonwealth; yet, the Customs and Impositions which they have at any Time laid upon the Subject (although scarce ever free, for any Space, from dismal and cruel Wars with the *Turks*) are not found to have diminished or encroached upon the Private Property of the People; inasmuch, that the Justice and Prudence of that State, in Regard to the expending of their Taxes, have amounted to an Equivalent and Recompence unto the People, during the Continuance of their Impositions. The Christians, who live in several Places under the *Turkish* Dominions, are not exercised with more excessive Taxes, than those that live in some Countries where the Name of *Christ* is preached, though His Followers there are loaded with an Excise for every Bit of Bread, and even the Meat that they eat. But I shall come to a Period in Relation to the Taxes imposed by Commonwealths: And I only observe, that what I have here mentioned, may demonstrate and certify to us, the vast Distinction between raising of Taxes to supply the Publick Exigencies and Demands, a discreet and honest Disposal thereof; and the certain consequent Ruin that attends a State's laying hold of every little Opportunity for increasing and continuing of their Taxes and Levies, and the constantly forcing Money out of the Hands of Quality, Gentry, and Commonalty.

I shall now specify some few Instances of this Matter, as it stands under certain Monarchies and Kingdoms.

In the *Empire*, the Taxes being moderate and low, the People generally, by that Means, have the Opportunity to improve themselves as much as the Nature of so poor a Soil will admit of; which, nevertheless, they could not attempt, were they under the Indigency of great Taxes join'd to their Native Poverty.

The



( 8 )

The Kingdom of *Spain* copies much the same Method, in Relation to their new Levies and Taxes; and which are not constant and lasting, but irregular, and of a short Duration: And although they have great Armies usually a-foot, yet by the Dispositions made in them, and the Quarterings of those Forces, the People do not feel the Maintenance of them; merely by the Strength of the Taxes levied upon them, and the Payments they make.

*Portugal* is, indeed, somewhat cruel in its Demands upon the Exportations made by their Merchants, thereby raising a prodigious Revenue, and becoming Masters of immense Quantities of Specie; which, nevertheless, is but an unequal Weight in their own Hands, any longer than they permit the full Currenty of it among their People, and the Exportation of it to other Nations, as a Means to make amends to their Subjects (thereby encouraging of Trade) for what they extort from them by very heavy Taxes.

As I have hitherto mentioned those States which I regard as easier Taxed, in some Cases, than our own; and has, consequently, tended to secure them from Poverty, and aggrandized and encreased their Power and Riches: I will now, therefore, refer to the Kingdom of *France*, our nearest Neighbour and Acquaintance, though by its unbounded Impositions, and tyrannical Exactions, has only gained the just Detestation and Abhorrence of all other Nations (in respect of those cruel Levies made upon the People, both Clergy and Laity.) And the Effect of their barbarous Impositions, has constantly proved widely different from the Design and Intention of the Government in the first raising of them: For, without reflecting whether they have any Concern for cruelly impoverishing and draining the whole People of their Money; yet, it is certain, they never imagined that

( 9 )

their Treasures would have been so very much expended out of their own Dominions, in aiming at Foreign Conquests; which, from their restless Ambition, and their frequent invading of their Neighbours, has almost always happened to them; and which I may venture to pronounce, without the Spirit of Prophecy, will prove the constant Fate of all Kingdoms and States that copy after the like Practice; or are over-forward with their Fleets and Armies, under Pretences of *Assisting* others, when their proper Interest is not concerned, or, at most, is evidently best preserved by not intermeddling in distant Broils, very remote and far off from them. I expect now, perhaps, some Queries to be put to me, as, What requires such Reasoning as this in a Time of General Peace? Or, To what do these Intimations conduce? Where are there any Armies now on foot, or Fleets at or going to Sea? Or what Preparations do we see making to interpose in the Affairs of *Others*? To which I shall only answer, That as such like Transactions have happened, even in a *Kingdom* well known to us, and at certain Times, not out of the Memory of Man; so, for the future, we may find it most profitable to avoid the same Scene over again.

But I proceed to what I propose to my self in this Discourse, namely, a Comparison of our Taxes with those I have mentioned Abroad; and then to inquire into the Causes of the Kingdom's paying such Great Taxes. And, secondly, What Use is made of those Taxes; Whether Trade be decayed, and the Poor increased by them; and, in the End, Recommend the applying to a New Parliament for Remedy in these Particulars: Which it behoves us, with more than ordinary Ardour, to hope and strive may consist of such Worthy Patriots, who will vigorously, and without Partiality, oppose that rampant Arbitrary Force of Private Interest that seems violently to bestride and abuse the Nation.

B

And

And, first, it will be necessary, in comparing of our own Taxations with those already spoken of, to consider the Laws and Manner of different Countries in raising of Levies and Taxes upon their Subjects; and then, as to the Bulk and Continuance of their Taxes.

First, The Customs and Manner of Taxing are almost as various as the Climates: But to reduce my self from multiplying of Words, or the instancing from all the Kingdoms in *Europe*, I will only mention the most notable.

*Germany*, whose Taxes arise mostly from a Tenure, or Obligation, of its Principalities, Dukedoms, Free Cities, &c. to furnish a certain equal and just Sum, in Return for those Considerations granted to them by the Government or Empire. They have likewise a Method of levying Money in the Diets: Neither of which Ways are very Burthensome to the Lords and Nobles, or Tyrannical or Oppressive to the Commonalty.

In *Spain*, though the Taxes may be wholly imposed by the King and Council; yet, Regard is observed in a Case of so general Concern, in taking Advice of the Nobility, and other Societies, that they may be formed and laid with a Degree of Acquiescence and Agreement of the Subject; and by that Means are not tiresome, nor felt so sensibly by them.

It has happened in this Age, even in a Country where Liberty, Justice, and Property, are pretended to be encouraged and protected, and pleaded for and extoll'd beyond any other Constitution in the World, that the Sufferings of the Subjects have, in such a Nation, proved unspeakable, from giving into the airy, fantastick Schemes of ambitious, covetous, and vain-glorious Statesmen, and the deceitful Crafts of designing Undertakers or Directors, countenanced by

merce-

mercenary Powers granted to them; and to compleat these Proceedings, fresh Straits and Emergencies, secret Expeditions, Fleets and Armies, have added fresh Taxes to the Account. Such Transactions admit of as large a Field of expatiating on the Crisis of a Kingdom's Credit and Riches, as the most predominant Power whatever prevailing over them.

But to go on, as before: *France*, where the Taxes are of a very considerable Size, and the King's Power of raising Money, depending in great Measure on his Inclination; yet, nevertheless, it is the Practice of that Crown, in order to the obtaining of any Supply from the People, to consult the Parliament, and to have Recourse to their Ordinances, for Levies and Duties to be placed on such Commodities only, as they think most expedient. And I cannot help remarking, that although their Impositions and Taxes have many times been sudden and weighty upon the Subject; yet, I have not observed so general Complaints and Outcries of Mis-application and ill Management, as have frequently prevailed in other Countries; which, if upon just Grounds, will give great Relief to a People under the Payment of acute Taxes.

In *Sweden*, they seem to have a peculiar Happiness allotted to their Country, as to the Ways of making great Part of their Levies: For, as they abound in Mines of Copper, Iron, Tin, &c. from whence the Crown is allowed a Tenth; as also, from all Corn, Cattle, &c. and in great Measure the Riches of the Church-Lands; so that the People are very much exempt from burthensome Taxes, except in an extraordinary War (as of late they have been engaged in) when the King has a Power to raise a Tribute from his Subjects.

The Subjects of *Muscovia* are wont to raise their Taxes from the Commodities of their own Growth

( 12 )

only, which the Tradesmen and Dealers pay, and are afterwards allowed a Licence and Permission to vend them in what Manner they please.

The Duke of *Florence*, who is placed in a most fruitful Part of the World, and his Subjects in the Enjoyment of a most flourishing Trade; has the Opportunity of raising to himself what Helps he pleases, without being able greatly to impoverish the People. However, it is evident, the Levies and Taxes made upon them, are not so much as perceived by them: For what a Mass of Riches and Trade do they appear to be, surpassing most of the Potentates in *Europe*?

In *Venice* there can be no very irksome or oppressive Taxes, unless we can suppose the whole Commonwealth voluntarily to engage themselves into such Payments; for as they consist of an Aristocracy, so the Senate, who represents the whole People and Body of their Dominions, are watchful and diligent in maintaining the Good and Liberty of those they preside over and mean to take care of.

The Kings of *Poland* are so tyed up, that they can come at no Money; but by the unanimous Ordinances of the whole Diet.

The Taxes of *Denmark* are very easy and inconsiderable: They pay a Duty on Cattle, Corn, and some Commodities; but to no great Value: For the greatest Part of the Production of their own Revenue, is collected from all Ships and Vessels passing the *Sound*, by which Means they are happily prevented labouring under any Burthen of Taxes themselves: Nor do I find that Government at any Time requiring any more than a moderate Supply or Aid from the People.

I think,

( 13 )

I think, I have gone through with a brief Account of the Nature and Bulk of the Taxes and Impositions, as they are at present imposed and levied in most of the Kingdoms and Governments in *Europe*; And I shall now come to a Comparison of the State of our own Taxes with those of our Neighbours and Foreign Nations near us, and the Examination (as I proposed) of the Reasons thereof, and the Application of them: Our having struggled for several Years past with this Load upon our Backs, is obviously the Occasion of the insupportable Encrease of the Poor amongst us; and although it be constantly pleaded, to mollify this Weight and Pressure upon us, That Money in this Kingdom is never raised, but by Consent of Parliament; and that it is only made Use of in Defence of Religion, Liberty and Property (which truly are glorious Jewels, worthy to contend for) and that any, who think they have at any Time, with their Eyes open, seen some different Practices, they must be Enemies to the real Peace and Welfare of the Kingdom, prejudiced and contriving against its Happiness and Advantage; yet, I say, this is notoriously but little Ease to us. For how is it that Property and Liberty appear more bright and flourishing under heavy Payments and Taxes renewed from Year to Year? Or can it be proved, that a Free People can taste the highest Enjoyments that can flow from thence, when loaded with numerous Duties, and immersed in Debts of such a Magnitude, that the discharging thereof is almost impracticable with the Safety of the Nation? And that our Credit and Reputation is growing and increasing, notwithstanding we are like to be driven to the unavoidable Choice of Two melancholy Extremes, viz. The blotting out of our Books, and an effacing as irretrievable an infinite Number of Creditors, who have lawful and just Claims upon us; or, The paying of Debts by the Virtue of wild Schemes, and by that Means to sink under a final Bankruptcy. Ought not such a People to reflect with



( 14 )

with Horror and Anguish of Heart, at any who either by Mismanagement or Villany have reduced them to so terrible an Ebb? The Difference in *England* from other Countries, in laying on of Impositions, is only this; That all are alike affected by the Taxes they pay, proportionably to the Expence of their Quality and Station; though this will not prove entirely a Compensation; for unless in the Money that is raised there is a nice Observation and Care had to our Manufacturies, so as not to hinder or bar the Trade of the Nation; all the Regards otherwise, for the Subject, will affect them only in Point of Honour and Shew.

And as to continually getting together large Sums of Money from the Subject Annually, or filling the Coffers of the Crown by Taxes and Levies, the utmost and most consummate Skill and Honesty will become necessary to assign and appropriate them, that they may in some Measure redound to answer the Uses they were at first said to be raised for. And if Laws are often repeated for the granting New Supplies, and by large Sums at a time, then an Enquiry into the Necessity, Design, and Application of extraordinary Aids and Assistances, will earnestly and prevalently take Place: And if several Millions *Sterling* (incredible Sum!) should appear to have been criminally or foolishly imbezzled or unaccounted for, What, except the Divine Interposition, could prevent inevitable Ruin and Destruction? Where would remain the Defence of a Kingdom, if it were dispoiled of its Wealth by long and tedious Impositions, and its Treasure to be diminished and sunk by Improvidence, or Ignorance, or the insatiable Appetites of innumerable rapacious Pensioners.

Indeed, the Uses and Designs for which Monies are levied with us, are commonly disclosed and made appear in Parliament; and afterwards, Whether there have been Dispositions and Appropriations accordingly.

( 15 )

ingly. And it is incumbent on every Member sitting in the House of Commons, to endeavour, with the utmost Truth and Honour, that the Grounds of all Supplies and Taxes be rendered plain, and reasonable, and conformable, to Regards had for the Love and Care of their Country, and the indispensable Dictates of Integrity and Compassion. This leads me, therefore, to an Examination into the Causes (as far as one without Doors may venture to be curious) of our present Taxes.

At the Time of His Majesty's happy Coming to the Throne, the Nation (which had laboured under the deepest Apprehensions and Fears, what would be the Event of the wicked and clandestine Measures of the Last Ministry of the late Reign) discovered an immediate Change of their Confusions, to a Pitch of Joy and Satisfaction, arising from the refreshing Prospect they had of being delivered and secured from the Purposes and Persons of those detestable abhorred Administrators; and a remarkable Sense and Confidence that was (with Reason) placed on the Illustrious House of *Hanover*, for a sure and final Support and Refuge for the Nation, in the utmost Extremes, to betake to; visibly actuated and prevailed among those few Friends then remaining to an expiring Country: But we were soon disturbed in the Quiet and happy Enjoyment of His Majesty's Family Reigning over us (and of the Assurances of Peace and Plenty thereby secured to us, the Favour of Heaven then smiling on us;) by an open declared Rebellion against the King's Right and Government; and this promoted by the very Persons who had been solicitous in tending the utmost Services to Him, and his Royal Relations; and, to aggravate and enrage their Crime, had sworn Allegiance and Fidelity to Him, and abjured the Person of the Pretender.

I re-

(16)

I recollect these Passages, as they were indeed, in some Degree, the sad Grounds of succeeding Charges and Troubles to the Nation; though by the Bravery and Vigilancy of the Army, the Address and Wisdom of the Council at home, we at length surmounted these Straits and Difficulties; and made such prudent Provisions by Parliament, for Supplies, to defray our vast Expences (which so great an Event must naturally put us to) as were consistent with the Ease and Ability of the Subject, and highly conducive to the Honour and Dignity of the Kingdom.

But may we be suffer'd to demonstrate the Grounds and Reasons of the present Payments continued or revived from Session to Session? May we be permitted to ask, If there are any necessary Provisions for the Household or Court? Or that we ought to guard and fence against extraordinary and sudden Eruptions and Wars, by having a loaded Treasury? Is there any large Increase of Naval or Land Forces requisite to be made? Do we find the Circulation of Money and Credit risen to so great an Height among us, that we can easily dispense with numerous Taxes? Do they enrich the Nation, and promote our Trade, and enhance our Credit and Reputation Abroad? Or can we suppose a Redemption could be made of the Losses occasioned in the late *South-Sea* Riot, by Impositions or Levies upon the Commonwealth? Or ought we to expect the surest and best Subjects, I mean the Landed Men, will consent to be immersed in a Flood of Taxes, for the easing of Numbers of insatiate Persons, who have miscarried by their black and horrid Schemes? *O Tempora! O Mores!*

But I will pursue the Thread of my Discourse. 'Tis certain, beyond Contradiction, that gross and weighty Taxes will tend to impoverish a Nation;  
contract

(17)

contract its Treasures, dissipate its Trade, and give Birth to Poverty and Discontent; unless open Wars are to be stopped, and a declared Necessity of watching the Motions of our Adversaries, or Circumstances of the like Kind, which will always produce general and publick Charges.

To come, therefore, nearer the Matter. Will not many and over burthensome Charges on a Commonwealth naturally hinder the employing Numbers of Poor and Idle Persons; and also cause a Decay of that Industry and Labour, which would otherwise strengthen the Whole Body: So that what would terminate to the general Use of the Publick, is hereby prevented by Methods that virtually, if not immediately, affect the universal Industry and Diligence that ought much rather to take Place; for every Member of the Body Politick, is refreshed and animated by the Life and Motion that there is in the Whole.

It will possibly hardly be believed, that from the present Annual Income of the Taxes, even here in this Kingdom, that the meaner Subjects pay many Times the Proportion to the Publick Levies, out of their daily Expences, more than they did a dozen Years ago; and so, indeed, every Degree and Rank amongst us; with this Mitigation, that would but the latter Sort reject Opportunities of gratifying their Extravagance, they would be able, on Publick Occurrences, by doubling their own Quota of Payments, vastly to assist the Bulk of their Fellow-Subjects.

Have we not been in great Expectations, every Session, of Alterations to be made in the decreasing the Burthen of Taxes? How long will Troubles and Disasters happen to us? For my Part, I shall always, with the utmost Alacrity, make the small Share of Payments that will be levied upon me, as  
C an

an Individual of the Common-wealth, and which are enacted by Authority for the Good, Honour, and Safety of His Majesty, and of His Royal House; and with a sincere Heart and Readiness, as far as I am able, contribute to all Advances that may be thought at any Time requisite thereunto; as we have always (next under God) found them, in repeated Instances, the only Defence and Bulwark of this Nation; our utmost Chearfulness in being at some Expence and Charge for the Enjoyment of so many Advantages and invaluable Securities, is the least Return we can make: This is absolutely the real Sentiment and Resolution of every well-meaning and honest Freeholder in *England*. After this Declaration, one cannot be suspected of any other View in this kind of ill-natured Address, than soliciting the highest Caution and Scrutiny at the approaching Elections; neither can it be esteemed impertinent to take more Care for the future, that we may thereby escape falling again into Romantick wicked Schemes of Hair-brained Politicians, in the room of Dispositions that would certainly be of Benefit and Improvement to the Kingdom.

I shall now proceed to enquire concerning the Use and Application of the Taxes; since I look upon it almost as a Position, that the Poor are Increased, and Trade Decayed thereby: And upon this Point there is a great deal might be said; the Nature of Trade in *England* does nearly concern and affect us, and the Decay and Want of it at any Time, is mostly the Occasion of all Publick Miseries and Inconveniencies; for though our Lot is so fortunately ordered for us, that in manufacturing of many of our own Commodities (which are the Product of our Nation only) and which we are risen to a great Degree of Perfection in; yet the Ballance of our Treasures and Riches must be produced from a Free and Flourishing Trade; otherwise we shall soon become as poor and defenceless as the most barren,

( 19 )

barren, arbitrary Country in *Europe*. Our Trading, in all Ages past, sufficiently has demonstrated, that the Opulence of the Kingdom can only arise from hence; and it is the Height of Vanity to imagine, that Returns of Great Charges and Duties are not a Hindrance and Depressure to it; or that a Reformation, as to our Wealth and Credit, can possibly be accomplished, whilst we are impaired by Misfortunes, or too great Impositions. 'Tis a known Assertion, That the Improvement of our Trade, is the Employment of our Poor; but at this Time of Day, we meet with those who pretend to convince us of the contrary; as if great Taxes and Levies were not hurtful to the Common-wealth and destructive to Trade.

There can be no greater Deformities in the *English* State, than that Industry and Trade should be discouraged or interrupted, be it by Funds, fictitious Schemes, or plundering Corporations, instead of spreading abroad the Products of our own Arts and Manufactures by a Foreign Trade and Commerce, and which would center in raising the Fortunes of the Subject, the Grandeur and Revenue of the Crown, and the Acquisitions of the Kingdom.

The Levying, (with us at any Time) of numerous Taxes, though it doth not immediately carry off the Stock of the Nation, yet it virtually and most assuredly is prejudicial to us, as it takes off and deprives (during the Continuance of them) multitudes of Hands of the Poor, which otherwise could be afforded to be employed; and thereby at length becomes a Disease to every County in the Island, by infecting them with Idleness and Poverty; the constant Mischiefs that will flow in upon us from fix'd and durable Taxes, which, when maturely considered, will always gain Abatements and Allowances for Trade.

Men of Industry and Trade, the Merchants and others, when promoted and encouraged, will be emulous to reduce the State of the Commonwealth to its wonted Standard, and thereby give Reason to pride herself beyond all other Kingdoms, in the Riches of her Commerce: And by the Observations I have always made as to our own People, and from the Neighbouring Parts around us, we have ever flourished most, and the Dominions of our Little Spot appeared in the greatest Security, by encouraging an open, unlimited Trade, and exploding all Practices that tended to circumvent or depress our Swarms at home, in the Management of their Arts and Commodities here, or the Merchandizing of them abroad: For, to confess the Truth, we must own, that we are not distinguishable by our Industry; and altho' we have so many Commodities peculiar to our own Growth, and very considerable to us by Special Licences and Grants in the Settlements of those Manufacturies; yet we should find them incredibly useless without such Encouragements; and this arising from an Indolence and Neglect that seems to prevail in our Constitution and Dispositions; so that whenever I see in other Countries the Power and Riches of a small State, or a little Dukedom, from a Right Management and Direction of the various Occupations of their People, and the Employing of their Poor; I grieve for the want of the utmost Encouragement that might be indulged to the Subjects of *Great Britain*; which contains in its Inclosures, Thousands of Artists and Mechanicks, most excellent in their Kinds, and Variety of Manufactures, which, carefully maintained and supported, would be so many Means of rendering us (I may say) the most formidable and happy Power in the World. Shall we then, instead of forwarding of Trade, sooner comply with the ravenous Inclinations of a Set of Men, who like Hawks and Vultures, live upon Prey, without ever doing Good to the State; but are continually upon the Flight to devour? And a continual Duration of large Taxes and Duties,

Duties, are mischievous Moths, that in Time will eat out the Heart and Vitals of the Kingdom, by blunting the Tools of the Industrious, that would be profitable to the whole Community, as well as to themselves, were they not pinch'd by Duties and Payments. And farther, as to the Gentry and better Sort of Persons, who should be Benefactors to their Country by a constant, regular Expence, and a Consumption of the Commodities of Trade; I say, these in Time of long and lasting Impositions, will be apt to change their Measures, and to deprive the Publick of the usual expected Benefit accruing from them, by locking up and hoarding what they would otherwise, in Times of Respite from Taxes, expend and lay out; and then nothing but downright Force will draw out of Holes the Specie of the Nation, which we may be assured will be hidden and concealed, as the only Means to evade the Power of Publick Exactions.

But how is it to be wished, That the ensuing Supreme Council of the Kingdom may pursue such Methods that will effectually ease our Trade, and establish our Manufacturies; which will ever be a Preservation to us from being punished with Cruelties, Wants and Disorders that the contrary Defect will constantly produce. I don't know, whether a downright Prohibition of Trade from abroad, and if no Money was to be Levied at Home by Taxes, might not prove as little hazardous to the Wealth and Credit of a Nation, as Practices of vast Duties and Impositions, which weaken and depress all Commerce; besides great Payments in other kinds that should affect all Denominations of Men.

If we consider ourselves from the Native Commodities we enjoy, *viz.* Meat, Drink, Bread, Cloaths, and these in such Plenty as to be able to dispose of by Traffick to other Nations; the many Mechanical Arts and Manufactures whereof, we have in Perfection, all unanimously

( 22 )

nimously tending to advance the Riches and Power of the Kingdom: I say, from these Views 'tis astonishing to what Course or Cause the Consequences of such Blessings are fled! Our Labour and Trade seem to be at a Stand, and Arts and Sciences to be discontinued by us; not considering that an Interruption but even of a few Months, may deprive us of both Men and Arts (for there is no disusing of these to be admitted of for Times and Seasons) by a surprizing Change of Hands; and thereby our Neighbours to receive the Products of our Single Growth, and the Superior Arts and Endowments that our own People were alone Possessors of.

Is there such a visible Cessation I am speaking of? And does it arise from an Indolence and Inactivity in the People? Or, Is it seemingly caused by any extraordinary Pressure on Trade, from considerable Imposts and Taxes? Or, To what must we assign it? Or, Is this a Charge no ways to be carried to the Account? and the aforementioned Paradox felt as an evident Truth; *viz.* That Payment and Taxes, are so many numerous Treasures to a Kingdom? But 'till I am myself convinced of it, I cannot forbear attributing the decay and want of Trade (in most Considerations) proportionably as the Demands and Levies are upon it to those Issues and Duties; and I know of no sure Purposes or Methods that will not fail of increasing our common Stock whilst we are dejected with these Pressures and Weights. And to evince the Truth of this, it would not require me to exceed the Limits of a Pamphlet; for I am morally certain, that the Levying of prodigious numerous Taxes, in the Compass of a few Years Time, will be an Equivalent and Overbalance upon the Subject for the Amount of all the Profits of Trade, of three times that Space of Years: And the Keeness of Artists, Mechanicks, Husbandmen, as well as Traders and Merchants, will be so pall'd and ruined thereby, that they will rather chuse to confine themselves to the uncertain, dangerous,

( 23 )

ous, and, I am sure, wicked Gains of Stock-jobbing, and unlawful Contracts, than to the honest and commendable Returns of Money by Trade; and which really can only maintain and secure the Profits of Private Men, as well as that of a whole Nation also.

The Separation of Trade from us, or whatever remotely inclines thereto, will infallibly be a Grievance of the highest Extreme to us; and if ever the Subjects and Merchants should be loaded with Multitudes of Duties and Taxes, we should then unavoidably be brought, in the End, to such a fatal Consequence. And is it unreasonable to dread the Truth of this Assertion, or, to conceive, that we assuredly feel any Effects of a want of Trade? Do we never hear it repeated (on that wonted famous Mart of Trade, the *Royal Exchange of London*) *There is no Trade*? Are these Scituations real Truth and Fact? Or, is it only Clamour and Faction? Can we subsist under so unhappy a State, if it proves true? Do not the Principal Branches of our Riches and Credit depend upon our Commerce? Can there be Exception taken against those who at all Times are vigilant to prevent the Decline of Trade?

But to give a very few Proofs more: The Collecting of vast Treasures by diversity of Taxes and Levies, will naturally create a Diminution and Loss of Specie to the Subject; a Discouragement which proves unspeakable in Trading; for though Abroad, we deal Commodity in Exchange for Commodity (which does not always happen neither) yet Seamen's Wages, Shipping, and Bills of Exchange, must be paid in Cash; and however Private Men may subsist, yet Trade must be at a Stand, and the Publick generally impoverished by Loads of Taxes and Want of Specie: And as often as great Payments are pressed for, 'tis so many fresh Obstacles to the carrying on of the Profits and Flourishing Condition of a Nation.

Another



Another Mark of Decay may be suspected from the little Stock of Ready Money which there is in the Country; and is visible in every County, from the Difficulty Landlords have of getting their Rents. The Country is considerably changed in this Point, so that it is become almost invidious to mention it; and upon this Article we may be convinced of the Necessity of the Augmentation of Trade abroad, as the ultimate, only Remedy that can be made use of for the gaining an immediate Redress on this Head, and strengthening the Credit and Reputation of the Kingdom. And it is no Error to insist, that Trade may be sorely hurt and injured by the Disadvantage of heavy Taxes; and the Want of Business to all Traders fully verifies it to us.

After such like Enquiries and Researches as these, I cannot but be persuaded, That every honest *Englishman* and *Freeholder*, will naturally join with me in making some serious Conjectures, what will be the Issue of our State and Condition: And that Fears and Apprehensions, which prompt us to the securing the Manufactures, Arts and Industry of the Nation, are not improper or injudicious; for the Increase of our Poor, and the Decay of our Commerce, are Omens that merit our strictest Vigilance and Enquiry. And herein Men of Fortunes and Substance in Trade, I am sure, will concur with me.

The Evils and Dangers that will most infallibly press upon us from great and extreme Taxes, are very evident; and it must be acknowledged a singular Instance of Wisdom and Care for the Publick, when Parliaments are most inquisitive concerning the Condition of the State, as to this Matter, above all: And it is vain for us to imagine Expedients can be found out, unless we are all thoroughly agreed what our Case is. And, I think, from what I have offer'd, it pretty naturally discovers it self as proceeding from a precipitant Breach of Credit; a Decay of Trade,

Trade, and a Want of Money. And as the State of Things appear, we can make no Mistake to what their Determination is owing; and if we will but found the Methods and Practices we are to take, agreeably to these Evidences, the Event cannot, by the Divine Permission, prove otherwise than happy.

There is no Society in the World, who have a more magnificent Trust, than the House of Commons of *Great Britain*; and, consequently, none have a greater Power of preserving the Health and Prosperity of the State, which they direct and preside over.

I have run through the Nature of the present Taxes, and offered the Reasons that seem convincing of their being, at least, injurious to Trade; if not to the Riches, Credit, and Liberty of this Nation. And as to the Uses to which they are applied; it cannot be expected for me to say much here, since that is an Enquiry to be made, with Safety, in a House of Commons only. I have hitherto taken some Pains in addressing the Freeholders, and Electors of Parliament, on this seasonable Subject; but have been obliged to omit some Hints that might, perhaps, have given Offence to Members and Managers. However, it is not easy working upon the Credulity of the People of *England*; nor to persuade them, that the extorting of vast Sums of Money, are soft and gentle Ways of promoting the Happiness and Good of the State: But (Thanks be to God) Inventions and Impositions cannot be imposed upon us; Fools and Lunatics may be so far intoxicated as to believe Chimera's of Politicians; but a wise and true Lover of his Country will not shut his Eyes against this gaping Chasm, that requires the utmost Expedition and Dexterity in the closing up again. Let us not, how

( 26 )

however, treacherously imagine, among the many Wounds already given by the *South-Sea* Scheme, that large Payments can possibly prove a Restorative for effectually recovering our Credit and Riches; for a very Thought, in this Way, cannot obtain without the highest Stupidity and Perfidy. And the Ability we stand in, as to the State of our Credit, seems to confine us to the utmost Benevolence and Frugality, in Regard of our selves only, and not upon any Score to admit of chargeable Expeditions or Undertakings: And the Commonwealth was never less capable to distinguish it self by Generosity and Beneficence; yet, although we are prevented by our narrow Circumstances, the Happiness of our Case is, that we can yet boast of Plenty of Noble and Vertuous Patriots; whose Integrity and Merit are gloriously deserving of the Nation's Lawrels and Rewards.

But to conclude with this Remark, without being more particular. In Times of great Taxes, there will be necessary, in the Government and Ministry, the utmost Frugality and Diligence in their Application; for, as from vast Comings-in, a Kingdom will be liable to vast Frauds: So it will be impossible to maintain too strict a Check and Observance upon the Managers of the Publick Revenues, that they may be kept in a Channel to answer the Business and Exigencies of the State; which will also make Taxes and Levies sit easier on the Subject. For raising of Money in these Dominions, with constant Augmentation thereof; and to be attended with Suspensions, as to the Uses and Disposition of them; would be a Grievance that could not be supported but with the sharpest Misery and Impatience. To prevent which dismal Tyranny, the Laws and Customs of this Realm have invested every Individual in Parliament with a Right of Enquiry concerning the Disbursements of the Treasures of the Nation; and

( 27 )

and every Member of that powerful Body is basely guilty of perfidiously wronging and injuring of his Country, who knowingly, or negligently, connives or winks at the transferring or alienating the Riches of the Publick, to any other Uses than those which the whole Common-wealth supposed them to be granted for.

And here it is with some Warmth that I could proceed in Addressing the Electors of Knights and Burgeßes for the ensuing Parliament, and, in short, the whole Commons of the Kingdom, That they would avoid Hurry and Precipitancy in their next Choices; or ignobly to barter the Wealth and Liberty of their Country, for the Views of Private Profit and Interest: And that the mention I have here made of the Taxes of the Nation, with the Tendency and Use of them, may be of some Weight to persuade them, deliberately to dispose of Votes for New Members; and that we may be cautious in not tolerating the Hopes of our own Personal Advantages to prevail over the indispenfible Duties of Integrity and a Publick Spirit, which we owe to the Common-wealth; and not to indulge and fawn upon a Set of Men, who shall be either severely bent against, or ignorantly incapable of the Good of the Kingdom.

F I N I S.



