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AN  
ESSAY  
ON THE  
*Treaty of Commerce*  
WITH  
FRANCE:  
With necessary  
EXPOSITIONS.

PROV. xviii. 13.

*He that judgeth a Matter before he Heareth it,  
'tis Folly and Shame unto him.*

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AN  
ESSAY  
ON THE  
*Treaty of Commerce*  
WITH  
FRANCE, &c.

**I**T is in vain to make Complaints of the Iniquity of the Times; and make a long Introduction to blame the People for the Humour that at present, like a Contagion, infects the Nation, and spreads it self Universally into all Conversation, (*viz.*) of finding Fault with, and Condemning every publick Transaction, before they Weigh or Consider the Reason and Nature of the thing. It is enough to sit down and look on it with regret, and with a just Pity for the Distempers of our Native Country, apply suitable Remedies for the use of such as are not Incurable, and

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for the opening the Eyes of those who are not wilfully and resolutely blind; leaving the rest, as the Parishes used to do Houses shut up with the Plague, to their own Fate, with *Lord ha' Mercy and a Cross* set upon the Door.

The Treaty of Commerce made with *France*, is the present Subject of every Man's Discourse, and it were to be wished People came to the Reading it with less resolution to Dislike it beforehand than they do, or at least with a just resolution to Read and Consider it, before they passed their judgment for or against; but since that cannot be hoped for in this Age, it may not be a useless endeavour to open the Eyes of some misguided mistaken People, about such things in the said Treaty, which they may either on one side or other Causelessly Condemn, or too easily approve. That things being set in a true light, every Man may Reason with himself calmly of this matter; for certainly a thing of this Consequence ought to be Duly weigh'd, and Coolly Debated, before we come to make such Conclusions as are to Determine our judgments, both of the Treaty made, and of those that made it.

To Do this as it ought to be done, it seems needful to enquire a little into the state

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state of our Commerce with *France* before the War began, that People may a little know upon what Foundation things formerly stood, and may accordingly judge whether we are better or worse than we were before.

We are told in the Treaty of a General **TARIF**, that is, an Act of Trade made in the Year 1664, by the *French*; by this, some People understand a Treaty of Commerce formerly made between *England* and *France*, which is a general mistake, and which mistake ought to be set right, the Words themselves explain it, *a Tarif made in France*, (*vide* the Treaty) by which is to be understood, a Table or Decree of the several Impositions and Prohibitions, made by the King of *France*, for the Regulation of his own Subjects, declaring what Goods shall be Imported into *France*, and from what Countries, and what shall not be Imported, and what Customs or Duties shall be paid in *France* upon those Goods which are allow'd to be Imported; something like our Act of Navigation, allowing for the difference of the Subject only.

When the *Dutch* have entred into any Treaty of Commerce with *France*, they have grounded those Treaties with respect to

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to their Liberty of Trading into *France*, upon that Tarif of 1664, *that is to say*, They have declared themselves Content with those Conditions of Trade, and have only Articled that they should not be otherwise obstructed; and therefore we found that in all the Transactions at *Utrecht*, when the *Dutch* were Insisting on the particulars of their Trade to *France*, it was call'd, *The French granting them the Tarif of 1664, that is, granting that no other Impositions or Prohibitions should be laid upon them in France, than that Act of Trade had formerly laid.*

Pursuant to this Notion, we never find any of our former Treaties with *France* make the least mention of these things, since admitting or not admitting the Importation of Goods and Merchandizes into a Kingdom, is the undoubted Property and Right of the Sovereign Power or Government of that Kingdom, much more the determining what Duties, Payments, or Impositions shall be charged upon the respective Goods brought in; which Payments and Duties being paid by the People of the said Nation who Import, no other Nation can Object against them.

And therefore we find in all our former Treaties, nothing of this nature has been

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been entred into at all: The first Treaty of Peace between *England* and *France*, after the Restoration, was the Treaty of *Breda*, Anno 1667. wherein all that is said of this matter, is in the Fourth Article, thus, "Navigation and Commerce shall be Free between the Subjects of both the Kings, as it was during the Peace, insomuch that all of them may Freely, and without any Molestation, go with their Goods into each others Kingdoms, Provinces, Places of Commerce, Ports, Rivers, and there stay and Traffick. *Vide Treaty of Breda.*

In the *February* following, there was a Treaty between *England* and *France*, concluded at *St. Germans en Lay*, the late Duke of *Montague*, being then the *English* Ambassador in *France*, and this is call'd a Treaty of Commerce; yet from one end to the other, there is not one Word mention'd in it of the Duties paid or to be paid in either Kingdom by the Merchants; as what really was the peculiar of every Prince or Sovereign Power in their respective Dominions; and therefore tho' this Treaty is called a Treaty of Commerce, it ought rather to have been call'd a Treaty of Navigation, every Article therein respecting the Navigation of Ships, Freedom of Ports, Visiting Ships, adjusting

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adjusting what are, and what are not Contraband Goods, Terminating Differences about Passports, detaining Vessels, &c. what Goods are liable to Forfeiture, and how to be seiz'd, and the like; but not a Word about Tolls, Customs, Duties, &c. upon Importation.

The next Treaty, was that of *Nimeguen*, where the *Dutch* were only immediately concern'd, and a Treaty of Commerce was likewise settled then, between *France* and *Holland*, Anno 1678, but even in this Treaty we have not a Word relating to what Duties or Imposts the *French* should lay upon Goods Imported into *France*, except as follows. " Neither  
 " Party shall be permitted to grant to  
 " their own Subjects any Immunities,  
 " Benefits, Gratuitous Concessions, or  
 " any other Advantages, besides those  
 " granted to the Subjects of the other  
 " Party, or to their prejudice, neither  
 " shall the Subjects on either side be  
 " bound to pay greater or other Duties,  
 " Charges, Payments, or Impositions  
 " whatsoever upon their Persons, Goods,  
 " Wares, Ships, or Freights, directly, or  
 " indirectly, by any Name, or under  
 " any Title, or Pretence whatsoever  
 " other than such as shall be paid by the  
 " proper

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" proper and natural Subjects of either  
 " Party.

*Vide Treaty of Commerce at Nimeguen, Article 7.*

The only Remedy, in all these Cases, that has been used by these several Nations, has been, that when one Nation laid high Duties upon the Goods Imported, or Ships Importing, from another, or Prohibited the Importing such and such Goods, or stop'd Trade with the other, the other Nation constantly did the like, and these Impositions, Prohibitions, and Interruptions of Commerce were generally taken off, at the concluding a Peace, tho' not always.

Thus when the *French* after their Tarif of 1664, laid a Duty of Fifty *Sols per Tun*, upon all Shipping that came into their Harbours, it was resented highly by all the Trading part of *Europe*, the *Danes* and *Sweedens* were very uneasy at it, their Ships being large, and the Loading such as Timber, Deal-boards, Planks, Baulks, Spars, &c. being of but little value, it went far into the Freight, but they were of too small Consequence to obtain any Alteration in *France*. The design of the *French King* being Really very justifiable (*viz.*) by that difference to encourage his own Subjects,

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to build Ships of their own, and fetch the Goods themselves, in which Case they went Free. The *Dutch* solicited eagerly to be exempted from this Duty, the Trade they had with *France* being very great, and carried on wholly in their own Shipping, but they were so far from obtaining an Exemption, that in the Treaty of *Nimeguen*, the *Dutch*, by a separate Article, consented to pay that Duty of Fifty *Sols per Tun*, as follows.

‘ It hath been stipulated on the behalf  
 ‘ of his most Christian Majesty, and  
 ‘ consented to by the Lords the States-  
 ‘ General of the United Provinces of the  
 ‘ *Low-Countries*, That the Equality which  
 ‘ is precisely to be observ’d with relation  
 ‘ to the Subjects of each, and the Natives,  
 ‘ as to Duties, Charges, and Impositions,  
 ‘ according to the Seventh Article of  
 ‘ Treaty of Commerce this Day con-  
 ‘ cluded, shall not derogate from the  
 ‘ Imposition of Fifty *Sols per Tun*, Im-  
 ‘ posed in *France* upon Strangers Ships,  
 ‘ and that the Subjects of the Lords the  
 ‘ States-General of the United Provinces  
 ‘ of the *Low-Countries*, shall be bound  
 ‘ to pay the same as other Strangers.

*Vide Treaty of Nimeguen, separate Ar-  
 ticle.*

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The *English* were as much concern’d in this Imposition of Fifty *Sols per Tun*, as any Nation, the *Dutch* excepted; but seeing no just Foundation to object against the reasonableness of the *French* laying such an Imposition, and having by their own Act, called, *The Act of Navigation*, done almost the same thing, or in effect worse, they contented themselves with laying a like Duty of 5 *s. per Tun*, upon all *French* Ships which should Lade in the several Ports of *England*, and so it has rested till this time.

The next Treaty of Peace was at *Ryswick*, and in this *England* made no Treaty of Commerce at all; It was indeed Verbally agreed, that Commissioners should be appointed to meet afterwards to enter into a Treaty of Commerce, and to settle the Trade between the two Nations; But as *France* did not seek it, and *England* thought they had no occasion for it, the War also being very quickly renewed, that Proposal vanished.

Now to make way a little to the explaining the present Article of Commerce in debate, it may not be amiss to enquire Why *England* was so indifferent at the late Treaty at *Ryswick*, whether they entered into a Treaty of Commerce with *France* or no? And if this thing be rightly Under-

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flood, it will open the Eyes of many, if not of every considering Person, to the Justice, nay, to the Advantage to *England*, by the present Article of the Treaty of Commerce now made, which so many complain of, and so few understand.

It is too well known, to need any Debate, that *England* had for many Years, we may say Ages, carried on the Trade with *France*, with manifest disadvantages; That by the prodigious quantity of Wines, Brandies, Silks, Linnen, Paper, Glass, and other Goods, which we greedily Imported into *England* from *France*, the Ballance of Trade went against us to a very great yearly Sum; *France* having used many ways to encourage the Industry of their own People in Woollen Manufactures there, in order to lessen, as much as might be, the demand they might make from *England*.

When the War interven'd, *England* by several Acts of Parliament, laid Excessive high Duties upon some of the Goods usually Imported from *France*, especially Wine and Brandy, and others were entirely prohibited to encourage the *English* to pursue with Success the Attempts they had made of setting up the like Manufactures in *England*, such as Paper, Glass-Wares, Hats, Linnen, Wrought

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Wrought Silks, and the like, these high Duties and Prohibitions remain'd in Force even when the War was at end; nor did the restoring of Commerce in general Terms by the Treaty of *Ryswick* alter the Case at all.

It came immediately into Debate among the Men of Trade, whether the *French* Trade was worth so much to us as to make it worth while to open it at the Expence of taking off those high Duties and Prohibitions or no? And it appeared so evident that it was absolutely necessary to keep on the high Duties, as well to encourage the Trade to *Portugal*, from whence all our Wines came in return for Woollen Manufactures; as also to prevent the excessive Flux of *French* Wine and Brandy to the over-ballancing the Trade to *France*, as also to support our several Manufactures of Silk, Glass, Paper, Wrought Linnen, Iron, &c. in which we began to Improve, so as to be likely in time, not to want any of those Goods from *France*. I say this appeared so evident, that no Man could think with any Patience, of entering into any Treaty of Commerce with *France*; but every one was convinc'd, that it was necessary to keep on the high Duties, so to give the Advantage to the other Trades above named,

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named, and keep the *French* Trade under foot.

Upon these accounts it was that no Treaty ever came to any head with *France* (notwithstanding Peace was made) for the regulation of Commerce, and it was apparent that *England* was in the right of it at that time, for that in that Interval of time, from the Peace of *Reswick*, to the Commencement of the last War, the *French* bought exceeding Great Quantities of Goods from us, while we on the contrary took but very few Goods of them in Return, and the Ballance of Trade was turn'd against *France*.

This the *French* King was so sensible of, That to give his People the Equivalent, he made a new Tariff or Settlement of Duties and Customs of Goods Anno 1699. the same which is now mentioned in the 9th Article of the present Treaty, by which some Goods he entirely Prohibited from *England*, (*viz*) Red Herrings, which when some of his own Merchants Petitioned against, he answered wisely, *Is not the Sea open? If my Subjects want Herrings let them Catch them, not Buy them of others.* Upon other Goods from *England* he laid higher Duties than before, especially our Woollen Manufactures, supposing two things, (1.) That it

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it would encourage his own People to make them at Home; and (2.) might lead the *English* to open the Trade for *French* Wines and Brandies, in order to make way for the Trade of the Woollen Manufactures again into *France*.

But this had no effect here; for the Government here, who easily foresaw that the Trade of our Woollen Manufactures in *France*, was never equal to their Trade of Wine and Brandy here, and that the Channel of Trade was Happily turn'd to our Advantage against *France*, were far from enclining to alter it, and thus the Notion of a Treaty of Commerce was slighted as a thing *France* might desire indeed, but we were better without than with; And this was the true Reason why it never came to a head.

Upon renewing the War, New Prohibitions of Commerce on both sides follow'd of Course, and to prevent the Wine Trade falling in by private Methods, such as Confiscation, Prize-taking and the like, under which Heads, while the Duties were low, great quantities of *French* Wine was daily brought, a new Duty additional to the former was lay'd upon Wine and Brandy, particularly 25 *per* Ton upon the Wine, and *per* Ton upon the Brandy, which amounted to a meer Prohibition



hibition except for a very small quantity, so great an Advance of the Price reducing the Consumption to almost nothing; and the *Portugal Wines*, a very profitable Trade to *England*, became our general Draught all over *England*.

This is the true state of the Affair of Commerce between *England* and *France*, and thus Her Majesty found things when her Ministers came at *Utrecht* to Treat of the Settling a New Treaty of Commerce, and from Hence it will appear that the Measures taken in the said Treaty, and the Conditions agreed on relating to our Manufactures in *France*, and their Wine and Brandy in *Great-Britain*, and taking off the Duty on either side, are not only equal and just, but are founded on the True Interest of Trade, and much more to the advantage of *Britain* than of *France*, as will appear, if the following Particulars are Impartially Considered.

Upon this New Treaty, after having in General Agreed in the 6th Article, thus, That the Subjects of each Party shall Pay the Tolls, Customs and Duties of Import and Export through all the Dominions and Provinces of either Party, as are Due and Accustomed: That is, as the Government of that respective Country shall Exact or legally Impose. And again in the 5th Article, 'That

' Subjects of each of their Royal Majesties may have Leave and Licence, to come with their Ships, as also with the Merchandizes and Goods on Board the same (the Trade and Importation whereof are not prohibited by the Laws of either Kingdom) to the Lands, Countries, Cities, Ports, Places and Rivers of either side.

This again allows that either Nation may Make, and Continue such Prohibitions of Trade as they think fit, without any Infringement of the Peace. Indeed the Nature of the Thing implies that they should and ought to do so; for every Country is judge for themselves, what it is they ought to Admit, and what to Prohibit.

The Ministers of *England* then finding the High Duties necessary to be Continued upon Wine and Brandy, at least to a certain Degree, as well to support the Appropriations of those Duties, as to prevent the Ruin of our Trade; and also Considering that those Duties being laid by Parliament, could not be taken off but by Parliament, and that therefore the Plenipotentiaries could not positively agree to take off what their Principals had no Dispensing Power to Direct, Our said Ministers a-

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broad, *I say*, could not therefore reasonably yield to the taking off those Duties by an absolute Concession: And as it could not be expected on the other hand that the *French* would, without such a Concession, take off the Duties they had laid on our Goods, and leave the Duties we had laid upon theirs to be paid, there appeared but one Expedient for settling this, which is contain'd in the 9th Article (*viz.*) That when the Parliament and Government of *England* shall agree to take off the high Duties in *England*, then the *French* shall take off their Duties upon our Goods in *France*: The Ballance of Equallity in which is evidently given to *Great Britain*, in that the *French* are bound, and the Choice is given to *England*, whether to take off their Duties and open the Trade, or let it remain as it is.

I can see no Objection that lies against this Article, but what is founded upon those unreasonable Peoples Notions, who expect the *French* to give up all Conditions of Trade to us, and that we at the same time should absolutely tie up our Trade from them; and since the Advantage of the Trade as it now stands lyes manifestly against the *French*, the leaving this Article to our own Choice, to Deliberate

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berate upon and Determine as we shall find Cause, is a tacit preserving in our own Hands those Advantages as long as we shall think fit, which is a kind of Advance made upon the *French*, that they have very seldom been found to admit; and had any such Advantage been given on our side, some People would have valued themselves very much upon taking hold of it, against the Prudence or Fidelity of those who Managed the Treaty.

I shall return to this Head again, after a brief Examination of some Clauses in Commerce which are settled by this Treaty, particularly to the advantage of the *British* Trade, and which no Treaty before this ever either obtain'd, or so much as offer'd at: Not that this is spoken of as a Ballance to any thing yielded up by our Ministers, for it does not appear that any thing is so yielded up, or that it is expected those who Complain in General Terms should be Answer'd and Silenc'd by such Particulars; but it may be needful to remind some People (more Reasonable than others,) how far the Interests of the Commerce of *Britain* are really secured by this Treaty, and what Advantages in Trade are obtain'd by this Treaty, which

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never were obtain'd before. *For Example :*

1. The Imposition of 50 Sols per Ton is here expressly agreed to be quitted in *France* to all Her Majesty's Ships: It is true, we quit at the same time the 5 s. per Ton on *French* Ships; but whoever pleases to Calculate the Number of Ships Trading from each Kingdom respectively, will allow there is no Comparison to be made; and tho' we contented our selves, as is noted before, with laying that Duty of 5 s. per Ton upon *French* Shipping, as a Return for their Tax of 50 Sols per Ton, it was because it was a Duty of the same kind with the other, rather than that it was any way Proportion'd in the Collection; and therefore when the *French* take of their 50 Sols per Ton, for your 5 s. per Ton, they give you 20 s. for every 1 s. you give them.

2. The Liberty of Importing Cured or Salted Fish into *France*, is a Point in Trade Gain'd meerly by this Treaty, and which, as I noted before, after the Peace at *Reswick*, was absolutely Prohibited in *France*, and upon the best Reasons (turning the Tables, and making *their* side *our own*) that could be imagined (*viz.*)

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to Encourage his own Subjects to Fish for themselves, which is many ways an Advantage to the *French* more than to other Nations, especially in the Breeding and Encreasing their Seamen, a thing they so greatly want. This Trade by the 3d Article of the Appendix to the Treaty is to be admitted, being only referr'd to the Discussion of Commissioners, whether it shall pay according to the Rule of the Tarif of 1694, or of 1699.

3. Liberty of Religion comes in as an Addition to this Treaty, and which I do not observe to be mentioned in any of the former Treaties, occasion'd, I suppose, by an Edict of the King of *France*, past and published in 1699. wherein no Merchant Strangers were allow'd to reside in *France* without Conforming to the Popish Church; whereas now every Protestant is at liberty to pursue the Dictates of his own Conscience, as by the 5th Article thus: "But in the Business of Religion, there shall be an entire Liberty allow'd to the Subjects of each of the Confederates, as also (if they are married,) to their Wives and Children, neither shall they be compell'd to go to the Churches, or be present at the Religious Worship in any other Place. On the

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“ the contrary they may, without any  
 “ kind of molestation, perform their  
 “ Religious Exercises after their own  
 “ way, altho’ it be forbid by the Laws  
 “ of the Kingdom, Privately and within  
 “ their own Walls, and without the ad-  
 “ mittance of any other Persons whatso-  
 “ ever. *Vide the Treaty P. 10. Article 5.*

I might enlarge on the justice of this Article, and the Consequences, which omitting it might have brought to this Nation; but being principally engaged here, in matters relating to Commerce, I purposely omit it for the present.

4. The Fourth Article, *viz.* for the Freedom and Equality of Importing *Virginia Tobacco* into *France*, seems to be very considerable, and especially upon two Accounts, or in two Cases, in which *England* has been, and might be, under especial disadvantages in the Tobacco Trade in *France*; which Trade, as it is Improving in *France*, is of the last Consequence to *England* to preserve, and if possible, to Improve it; that Trade being at this time in the greatest danger imaginable of being utterly lost to this Nation, as to that part of it, especially which is Exported again to other Countries.

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The two Heads of this Article, relate (1.) to the selling it into *France*, to understand which, more especially it is to be observ’d that there is a certain set of Men who have engrossed, *as we would call it here*, the Privilege, or obtain’d a Patent from the King, *to use our own Words again*, for the sole Liberty of Importing Tobacco. Again by another Edict, no Stranger can be allowed to Sell or Import any Tobacco, but it must be done by such and such; so that whoever brings any Tobacco into *France*, is obliged to sell it to these Men, or have it seized, and give it to them for nothing which he pleases. Now this Monopoly is put to an end, and the Subjects of the Queen of *Great Britain*, may Import and Sell their own Tobacco to whom they please, and for the best price they can; and in one of the Articles not yet adjusted, it is demanded by our Ambassadors, That the letting out the Duties of Tobacco to Farmers, shall wholly cease. (2.) The other Article relating to the Trade of Tobacco, is, that Tobacco Imported into *France* from *England*, shall pay the same Duties, and no other, as the Tobacco of any Country in Europe or America, being brought into *France*, does, or shall pay; this



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this I mention, because of the loud Complaints that some People make of the great probability, nay, certainty, that after the Peace, *France* and *Spain* would give and take reciprocally such Advantages in Trade, to, and from each other, as should be very much to the detriment of *England*, and to the Advantage of *France* in matters of Commerce. Now as it is manifest, that in the Article of Tobacco, especially Tobacco prepared, as for Snuff, &c. *Spain* has great quantities brought Home yearly from *America*, and that it would be much for the Advantage of *Spain* to have the same Imported upon easy and good terms into *France*; yet, that by this Treaty, *France* obliges her self to give neither *Spain* or any other Nation any advantage over the *English* in the Trade of Tobacco.

Nor is this an Inconsiderable Article; *France* being lately come into the Custom of Smoking Tobacco, and which *England* can supply, (placing the Goodness against the Price,) Cheaper and Better than any Nation in the World, also the Encroachments upon the *Virginia* Trade which have happen'd in these few years, being considered together with the discouragements which the *Virginia* Merchants have of late

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late met with, this Article is of very great Consequence to them, and may help to save that sinking Trade from final Ruin, till some other Methods may be found out which may restore and revive it some other way.

As to the rest of the Articles of this Treaty as they are the same *Mutatis Mutandis*, with the other Treaties of the same kind, either made by *England* or by other Nations with the *French*, there needs no other Remark to be made, nor can any Objection lye against them, the usual Forms being Calculated for the Security of Commerce and Navigation. I shall therefore return to the said Ninth Article, in which all that can reasonably be objected against in the whole Treaty seems to be contain'd; and here it may be enquir'd what the real Objections, that our People pretend to make are, and to what they tend, for, till this is known, it will be very difficult to know what part of it wants explanation.

The first thing which I meet with, is, That our high Duties and Impositions as well as Prohibitions, upon the Growth and Manufactures of *France*, are demanded to be taken off, and those Duties reduc'd to equality with the Duties on the like

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Goods



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Goods brought into *Great Britain* from other Parts.

This, it is alledged, cannot be done,  
(1.) Because it is expressly stipulated against in our Treaty with *Portugal*.  
(2.) Because it would Ruin our Wine Trade to other Countries. (3.) Because it would over-run our whole Trade, and turn the ballance against us again, as it was before in favour of *France*.

The short Answer to this without any Circumlocutions, is, *Then, can't you refuse it and not take those Duties off?* But then say Objectors, You cannot have the free Export of your Manufactures into *France*; to which the Answer is also direct, you must do without that too. And what then? *Why then,*

1. You will have as free an Export as you had before the War.

2. You had better be without that free Export, if the equivalent which you are to give for it would Ruin your Trade. But let us enquire into the thing:

1. I say, *You will have as free an Export as what you had before the War*; this has some things in it which would a little reflect upon the Prudence and Judgment of

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of some People, and for that Reason I shall mention them very cautiously;

(1.) You will have the same Liberty of Trade, which you had after the Treaty of *Ryswick*, and which then was not complain'd of at all. (2.) If as some alledge, the *French* are so fallen upon making the Woollen Manufactures of *England*, that they are in a Condition to supply *Spain*, What need have we to insist so much, and at so great a Price, upon the Liberty of sending our Manufactures to them who can have no occasion for them, being able to supply themselves and other Nations also? But to pursue this Argument would seem Invidious, this Paper has no such Design, the present Argument extends thus far only; The State of the Case between the *English* and the *French* Trade is such, That no other Conclusion could possibly be made, in the particular Article of the respective Duties. Our Ministers, if they had been willing, could not have conceded the high Duties (laid here) to the *French*, because they could not repeal Acts of Parliament. Some of the Prohibitions laid on *French* Goods are so essential to the encouraging the like Manufactures here, that it could by no means be thought of; at least, till it was

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laid before the Parliament, by whom these Encouragements and Acts of Parliament were Granted and Made. On the other Hand, How could it be asked of any Nation to open their Doors to our Trade, and agree that we should shut our Doors against theirs? And yet, even in that Case, the Treaty, as it stands, has, *as is said above*, actually done so in some Particulars; for whereas not the least Farthing is abated by the Treaty on our side, the *French* in the several Articles mentioned before, have actually receded from several things on their side, as the Fifty *Sols per Ton* upon Ships; the Monopoly of Tobacco; the admitting Fish in Barrels, that is, *Herring* and *Salmon*, which they had prohibited before? All this is done on their Side without the least Concession on our Side; but all that is offered on our Side, is left to the Parliament to determine, whether they will come into it or no.

2. If the Equivalent, which you are to grant in Lieu of the *French* Trade be too great, if it be ruinous to our Trade, we had better be without it.

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Upon this Foundation, no question the Plenipotentiaries of her Majesty acted; for first obliging the *French* to stand to it on their part, they left it entirely to the Determination of the Parliament, to whom it would certainly occur, what the value was they Exchanged, as well on one Side as the other: If it be true that the *French* have Wooll sufficient for their own Manufacturing, and both can and do Manufacture sufficient, not only to supply their own Dominions, Colonies and Plantations, but also to Export to other Nations, then it must certainly be of no great Use to us to open a Trade with them at all, because there is no Advantage to us in it, they having little or no occasion for the Manufactures which we think to supply them with.

On the other hand, If it be true that the *French* upon taking off their new Duties, revoking and repealing their Edicts and Tarifs, will necessarily take off a great quantity of our Manufactures, then it cannot be true, as has been so warmly suggested by some Writers, That the *French* have gotten the Manufacture into their own Hands, and will not only supply themselves, but other Nations also. On the other hand, *France* is a Country of

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of a vast Extent, full of People, and if they take our Manufactures for their own Use, will take so great a quantity as we can hardly Buy such an Advantage too Dear, and the reducing the Duties of their Goods here; especially as it is mention'd in the Ninth Article of the Treaty, may, or may not be a thing of great Extent to them and to us too, as we do or do not rightly manage it. For example:

What is it they ask of us? I see but two things that are material in their Demand. They ask (1.) That we should Repeal all our Prohibitions. And (2.) Reduce our Additional Customs, which have been laid upon their Goods since the Year 1664. and they offer to do the like. Well says our Merchants, What then must the Customs of Wines and Brandies be no more than in the Year 1664. that will bring Claret down to the Price of Six Pound, to Eight Pound a Hogshead again, and the common Tavern Price to One Shilling per Quart, and what then will become of our *Spanish* and *Portugal* Wine Trade? The Article answers for it self in this Case, the mistake is in the Reader, not in the Expression; for in truth, there is nothing at all of such a reduction

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reduction; but on the contrary, the *French* are oblig'd to submit to whatever Duties we think fit to lay upon the Wine and Brandy, as will appear more particularly in the next Head: For the *French* are wisely brought down to consent to this Proposal, viz. That their Wine should pay as much as the *Portugal* Wine, only we join to admit, that it shall pay no more, and yet the Complaint of our People, against this Clause, is, *so loud*, that the old Proportion of things can be ill heard, and some People conclude, that this equality will ruin the Trade of *England*: For, *say they*, The Inclination of our People to *French* Wine is such, that if it be at the same price with the *Portugal* Wine, none will Drink the latter; and therefore it is absolutely necessary, that the *French* Wine should be laid under the disadvantage in their payment of Customs, that the *Portugal* Wines may still be made the *Common Draught*, as it is called through the Nation.

To this there lies two Objections.

1. If it be true that upon opening the *French* Trade as above, they will necessarily take our Manufactures in Return for their Wines, then we have the same Advantage

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vantage in both Trades, and ought to Encourage one as well as the other, and the Reason is just that the Duties should be alike, and the Encouragements or Disadvantages equal; if it be not so, then it alters the Case: But then some other Objections will be ill maintain'd, (*viz.*) *That the French have rejected our Trade to set up the Manufactures among themselves, and plac'd high Duties on all our Goods, without which they would be out-done, and their own Manufactures Discouraged.*

2. That the *Portugal* Trade always paid a less Duty than the *French*, is a great mistake, and consequently it is a mistake, That if they are reduced to an Equality, the *Portugal* Trade will be ruin'd; for it is apparent that from the Restoration to the Revolution, being Twenty eight years, and the Reign of two Kings, the *French* Wines were always Charg'd at above 6. 10 s. per Ton less Customs than the *Portuguese* Wines, which always paid *Spanish* Wine Duties, and yet the *Portuguese* had a very considerable Trade with us for Wine, and very far it was from being lost.

Again,

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Again, We do not see that this Demand of the *French* will Help their Brandy Trade at all: For all they Demand is that their Brandy shall pay no more Duties than the Brandy of other Nations, it is but passing an Act then that the Brandy from *Spain*, *Italy*, or any other Nation, shall pay as much as the *French* pay now, and the Brandy Trade stands just where it was: This is so easie to do, and of so little Consequence to us, that it cannot be Disputed: For all the Brandy that we Import from *Spain* and *Italy* is so little, and so ordinary, that it matters not to us whether we Import any of it or no; and what ever then is wanting in the Import of Brandy by reason of the high Duty, will be made up in Malt and Melasses Spirits, and so the Treaty of Commerce, may be a means to preserve the Distilling Trade to us, which every one owns is of the Greatest Consequence, and which can be supported, humanly speaking, no other way.

If the *English* Plenipotentiaries foresaw this, they acted very wisely when they brought the *French* to yield up that Point, and not absolutely Determine the reducing the Duties to what they were before the first War, which would have

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been very injurious to our Trade ; if they did not forsee it, the good Luck is greater than the good Meaning ; and it is to be hoped the Commissioners who are to Treat still of farther Regulations, will take care to make this Article of the Brandy effectual.

In this could we be Impartial in our Judgment of things, we might see that this Treaty of Commerce is made with several advantageous Clauses against the French Trade, which none that ever past before Contain'd, and in this particular it is remarkably advantageous, That the French are bound to take off all the Duties, Customs, Tarifs, Edicts, &c. since 1664. as by the Article ; but we are only obliged to provide by a Law that their Goods pay no more than the Goods of other Nations : So that if we please to Charge the Spanish Brandy, the Portugal Reds, Malaga Whites, Florence, Galitia, &c. at 100 l. per Ton, the French must pay the same.

I would not be found putting a wrong Construction upon the Treaty, and consequently upon the Treaters ; but I leave every Man to make his judgment from the Words of the 9th Article, which run thus :

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It is farther Enacted, That within the space of two Months after, a Law shall be made in Great-Britain, whereby it shall be sufficiently provided, That no more Customs or Duties be paid for Goods and Merchandizes brought from France to Great-Britain, than what are payable for Goods and Merchandizes of the like Nature Imported into Great-Britain from any other Country in Europe ; and that all Laws made in Great-Britain since the year 1664. for Prohibiting the Importation of any Goods and Merchandizes coming from France, which were not Prohibited before that time, be Repealed. The General Tariff made in France the 18th day of September in the year 1664. shall take Place there again, and the Duties payable in France by the Subjects of Great-Britain for Goods Imported and Exported, shall be paid according to the Tenor of the Tariff above mentioned, and shall not exceed the Rule therein settled.

It seems plain here as Words can express it, 1. That we are only to make a Law or Act of Parliament, to reduce the Duty of French Wines, and the Duty of all other Country Wines, to the same Rate, the like of Brandies, &c. 2. That

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upon our doing this, upon our passing this Law, or within two Months after it, the *French* are obliged to admit our *English* Goods upon the Foot of the Tariff of 1664. and to Repeal all the Additions of Taxes, Customs or Duties whatsoever which have been laid since that time, to the Rate they were at before.

I believe this part of the Article has not been Considered as it might have been by most People, and if it had, perhaps so many would not blindfold have Condemn'd the Article as Ruinous and Destructive to our Trade, even before they enquired into the particulars; But as I hope the mistakes of this kind are not so many or so great, but that they may be easily rectified, and the People will be forward to own themselves in the wrong, when they see plainly that the Advantage is on our side. These Considerations obliges me rather to endeavour to convince the Persons of their Error, than to reflect upon their Weakness.

Upon the whole, the Treaty, like other things of so nice a nature, gives many People uneasiness at first sight, for want of rightly understanding the intent and meaning of it, and to others, for want of Considering rightly what they do

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do understand of it: The Conditions of it are evidently to the Advantage of the *English* Commerce in the main; perhaps some part of Trade, some particular Persons and Interests in Trade may be touch'd, may be shortned in their present Advantages and future Prospects; but as to the Interest of Trade in General, I think it easie to make out, that the Commissioners who are to meet to Regulate Duties, Remove Difficulties, and State the Proportions and Differences of Things, may so order it, that the General Interest of Trade in *Britain* shall be bettered very much by the Treaty: And tho' it is reported, and is not doubted but Endeavours are now using, and will be used to procure Clamouring Petitions from the several Manufacturers and Labouring Poor, as well in the Trade of Silk as Wooll, yet I am perswaded Time will shew them that the first will be little injur'd, and the last greatly better'd by this Treaty, especially if the Commissioners who shall be Entrusted with the Management of it understand their Duty, and act their Part with Courage and Fidelity.

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And that we may a little open the Eyes of the Commons about this matter, for they seem to be the most affected with the Danger from it, a Word or two may be necessary to say to them :

First, for the Woollen Manufacturers : It has been for many Years the Complaint, That the *French* have Prohibited our Woollen Manufacture ; That they have put a stop to our Trade ; That the *Dutch* have a great Trade to *France*, *Holland* and *Flanders*, who make prodigious quantities of our kinds of Manufactures, send them into *France*, and ours are Prohibited, and the like : The Government having now made an Essay to Remedy this Evil, and to open a Trade for our Manufactures, We seem agriev'd, and as much offended the other way ; because by opening this Trade with them the Silk Trade and the *Portugal* Wine Trade will be touch'd. But look into your Woollen Manufacture Trade, if opening a Trade with *France* Gives you a Free Market in so large a Country where you had none before, Shall not this Encrease the Consumption of the Woollen Manufacture ? And is not that of infinitely more value than what we  
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speak of against it ? Every one agrees that our Woollen Manufacture is the Life and Soul of the *English* Trade, and if this be but forwarded and promoted, whatever other Trade suffers, it is able sufficiently to make us amends for that Loss : The Employment of Families is this way, and perhaps this way only to be supplied. If it were possible that other Manufactures could be Encourag'd, and this be Preserv'd, we should all be pleas'd and satisfied : But this must be Preserv'd, must be Encourag'd, must be Extended, what-ever risque we run of the rest. Either *France* will, upon the making this Treaty Effectual, take off a very great quantity of our Woollen Manufactures, or it will not ; if it will not, Why do we desire a Treaty of Commerce at all ? Why do we Complain that the *French* have Prohibited Trade with us ? If it will, if the Market for our Manufactures will be great in *France*, then what are we Dissatisfied at ? and why is not the Treaty now made our Advantage ? Let those People who argue against it Compare the Advantages of an Encrease of our Woollen Manufacture, with all the Disadvantages to other Trades, and see whether  
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the Benefit on one hand is not such, that the Loss on the other hand ought to be risk'd for it.

But here comes in our Complaining Crouds with Petitions and mournful Representations, That their Manufactures will be ruin'd; the *Colchester* poor People, as I have been told, are particularly alarm'd, and yet it was never heard that the *French* ever went about to make a Piece of Bays in this World, no, nor are they able to do it, they know the impracticableness of it. What then can be the Dissatisfaction that can affect that side! I might name sundry other People who are Employed in Manufactures in *England*, especially those which depend upon the goodness of the Wooll, whether the Fineness, or the Length of the Staple: The Petitions therefore of these People, if they come, ought to express that their Apprehensions of the *French* are grounded upon sufficient Evidence of Fact, such as, That they have already attempted, or are likely to attempt the making Bays in *France*, and the like.

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It were then to be wish'd, some People would calculate a little from just propositions, what quantity of Manufactures *France* has usually taken from us, when we Traded with them upon the Foot of the Tarif of 1664. and what it is probable they may take again, if matters return to that Channel; and then it would be seen what price we ought to bid, in Order to restore the Trade to that Rule of Taxation; and what such a purchase would be worth in our other Trade, which, as they say, we must give in Exchange for it; and this would be a very good way to make a right Judgment of the thing, for, as is said before, either our Goods will find a Sale in *France*, or they will not; if they will, it is certainly our Interest to procure the Trade to be open, and though it should hurt us a little in some other branches of our Commerce, the loss would not be felt, at least, not enough to move us to prevent it, because of the Profit of the Woollen Manufactures which is our main Support and Dependency.

This brings me to mention the Complaint of those who are concern'd in the Silk Manufactures, which is the alter-

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native to the other. These People are made to believe, that they shall Infallibly not suffer only, but be ruin'd; and they talk already of such a stop to the Weaving, that I know not how many Journey-men Weavers (more I believe by a great many than there are in the whole Broad Weaving Trade) are already turn'd off, and out of Employment.

I do acknowledge it is a hard and melancholly Circumstance when any publick Transaction so clashes the parts of the Body, I mean the Body of the Nation, that one can hardly live without the Destruction of the other. and yet as I said above, the Woollen Trade is so great, that there is no comparison between it and the Silk Manufacture; neither must the preservation of the one be set in competition, when the preservation of the other is the immediate Question: But what if after all the Melancholly things which have been said upon this Subject, it should appear, that the Silk Manufacture in *England* may be preserv'd and supported in a consistency with the present Treaty of Commerce, and particularly with that part of the Ninth Article, which Conditions

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for the taking off the Prohibitions upon the *French* Goods Imported into *England*. This is a Point few have touch'd upon; but I make no question, it may be farther handled in time; and those Persons, whoever they shall be, who shall be employ'd by the Government to regulate the Duties of the two Nations, and to remove the difficulties that may be in the way, cannot be so Destitute, as to want a proper medium for the clashing Interests between the Silk Manufactures of each Kingdom as well as for that of the Woollen.

If then the Woollen Manufacture be encreased, and the Silk not diminished, the Woollen advanced, and the Silk not discouraged, Men must be very much at a loss to find out wherein the Damage or Intricacy of the Ninth Article of the Treaty of Commerce does consist.

The misfortune lies in the difficulty there is to open the Eyes of the Poor People, who are severally employ'd in the *English* Manufactures, whether of Silk or Wooll, both which, for ought I see, are equally allarm'd, and equally possess'd with apprehensions of their Trade being ruin'd by the *French*.

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But all popular Disatisfactions are allay'd by time, the care of the Government will be to prevent the real Mischiefs, and the Fears of the People will wear off in the experiment, when the Woollen Manufacturers shall see that a greater quantity of Goods are Vended than used to be, and the Silk Manufacturers shall see, that as many Looms are employ'd as were before, then the Folly and Blindness of their present apprehensions will abate, and they will Peaceably acknowledge that that were mistaken.

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**F I N I S.**