

0468

70-22



22

A
DISCOURSE

SHEWING
That the Exportation of Wooll is de-
structive to this KINGDOM.

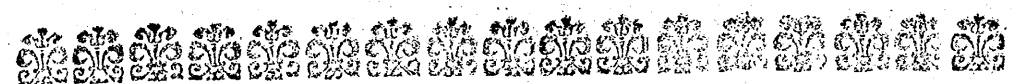
WHEREIN
Is also Shewed the absolute necessity of promoting our
Woollen Manufacture, and moderating the
Importation of some Commodities, and
Prohibiting others.

With some easie Expedients tending thereunto.

By *Thomas Manly* Esquire.

Licensed *March 8. 1676. Ro. L' Estrange.*

LONDON.
Printed for *Samuel Crouch* 1677.



Reader,

ALtho the Opinion debated in the following Papers be frequently found among worthy men, and such who truly love their Country, yet I shrewdly suspect 'tis of Forreign Original cunningly introduc'd and trim'd up like a Native, the easier in such a disguise, to cajole men of no ordinary circumspection, and who in truth aiming onely at the common welfare of their Country, would abhor (whatever other men may do) to betray it to the interest of a stranger.

That 'tis of Forreign production may modestly be presum'd from the necessity the Forreigner hath for our wooll to mix with theirs, and without which they can scarce make a tollerable piece of Drapery, from their subtil contrivances to purloyn it from us, even at any

To the Reader.

expence and hazard, and from the superlative advantages they may gain by Commerce, and employing their people if once our Laws were repeal'd, which render it hazardous, scarce and chargeable to them: so that you see what ever gaudy disguizes for our advantage, forsooth, the Adjutors have clap't on the design, do but snatch off the Vizard, and presently a Forreigner appears in Masquerade: who (kind man!) designing our good equal to the rest of his Neighbours, and fearing other operations may work too slowly, prescribes us this infallible Dose; ---from which good Lord deliver us.

The rest I leave to be discharg'd by the following Papers, which aiming onely at the honour and welfare of my King and Country, may be, I hope, as candidly accepted.

F. M.

(1)

Exportation of Wooll Destructive to this Kingdom.

Having lately in discourse with some persons of Quality, observed an Opinion favouring the repeal of the Laws now in force restraining the Exportation of Wooll, (a discourse of harsh sound to my old English understanding) I could not then refrain from offering such Reasons as then occur'd against a matter of such pernicious consequence, however the contrary may be understood by Gentlemen who truly love their Country; what through incogitancy, or want of time, I then omitted, I now in love to my Country, offer to consideration.

I will, to proceed clearly, set down, in the first place, the reasons alledg'd for Repealing those Laws, so far as I can collect from the favourers of that Opinion, and then briefly give my reasons to the contrary; modestly submitting my self to the Judgment of Reader.

- 1. Our store of wooll (say they) is so great, that we have sufficient both for our selves and Neighbours.
- 2. Its free and unrestrained Exportation will occasion a great encrease in its price, which will sustain our drooping Rents, and draw considerable sums of money from abroad, for so desirable a Commodity.
- 3. That tho we use all care imaginable to prevent its Exportation, yet our Neighbours, by means of our own people, draw great quantities from us.
- 4. 'Tis to small purpose to keep our wooll at home, for that Ireland supplies our Neighbours therewith to a great degree.
- 5. This prohibition of wooll is a new practice, unknown to us till within these twenty years, and yet before that time, both wooll and Drapery yielded the best Rates for above 60 years last past.

To the first I Answer.

1. That I conceive our yearly encrease of Wooll is now no greater than when the Rates were double, nay treble, to what they

(2)

they now are; and if so, the fall and meanness of the price proceeds purely from the loss of foreign Markets for our Drapery, and from our own forsaking the wear of it, and not from the quantity above what we had 30 or 40 years ago.

2. 'Tis very manifest how the Rates of Wooll these last 15 or 16 years, have gradually fallen from bad to worse, and how as by degrees we have encreas'd in the wearing of Silk, Camlets, and frowie French Druggets, and as our Neighbours, especially the French, have enlarg'd their woollen Manufacture by means of our wooll, which they mix with theirs, just so have the Rates of this Commodity with us sunk almost beyond belief.

3. That seeing we have a multitude of people, who for want of employment, want bread, and that the price of Wooll here is so low as to tempt us to let out that commodity, which the wisdom of this Trading Age hath hitherto secur'd under Public Prohibitions, as being the prime fund of our Trade and Navigation, and which is so necessary to our active Neighbours, that no Laws, how Penal soever, have yet totally debar'd them from it, what do we else by such a design, but declare that henceforth, being not able to manage that Manufacture, we abandon all thoughts of an advantageous commerce, necessitate our people to live on us, or dye at our doors, and surrender to our Neighbours that Manufacture for which we were once so notorious? is not this, at once, to cast the Childrens bread to strangers; and to remain for ever without hopes to maintain, after such a dereliction, any Manufacture which our Neighbours may have a mind to snatch from us?

4. If our Neighbours could have Wooll as good to all intents and purposes, and as plentiful and cheap from other Countries, it might peradventure, be advisable, how far we ought to keep ours at home; but the case being otherwaies, and they (our Rivals) being not able to carry on that Manufacture effectually without it, it seems a great mistake and dangerous to spare it on any terms.

To the second Reason; *That it will occasion the Rates of wooll to rise, and thereby sustain our drooping Rents, &c.*

1 Answer.

1. The wear and use of Silks, Camlets, &c. have so far supplanted that of Drapery in Europe, that we must never rationally expect

(3)

expect those Rates for Wooll which were usually given 30 or 40 years ago.

2. If we find bad markets for Drapery now Wooll is cheap, 'tis very improbable our Neighbours will take so much Wooll from us as to raise the price thereof to that degree as may sustain our falling Rents; for the dearer we sell them our Wooll the dearer they must sell their Drapery, and consequently sell so much less; or else it will be our shame or ill fortune that they shall vent much Drapery made of dear Wooll, and we vent little or none, now wooll is cheap.

3. The more Markets our Neighbours supply with Drapery, by means of our Wooll, the less Drapery we must Export; the reason is, because there is a certain and determined quantity of Cloth consum'd by the Trading world; whence it must necessarily follow that so much wooll as they receive from us, so much less Drapery we our selves shall Export, and consequently the price of wooll remain the same it was before those Laws were repeal'd.

4. Upon repealing those Laws we may bid adue to the Exportation of Drapery; the reason is, because our Neighbours live, work and Navigate cheaper than we; and having once our wooll in common, must necessarily undersell, and beat us out of Trade: it being a great mistake to imagine that the Exportation of our wooll and Drapery may consist together; and as great a mistake to suppose that the pretended encrease of the Rates of wooll occasioned by an allowance of its Exportation, may ballance the mischiefs accruing thereby; because a pound of wooll Manufactur'd and Exported, is of more worth to us by employing our people, than ten pound exported raw at double the present rate; unless, which is not reasonable to imagine, we could introduce some other better employment for them.

5. If our Neighbours tread on our heels in this Manufacture, begin to supply us with their Drapery at home, and to supplant us therewith abroad, having onely their own corse wooll; which they mix with ours obtain'd at dear rates (by reason of secrecy and many chargeable contrivances alwaies attending a prohibited traffick) there is no doubt, when once the prohibition is remov'd, and they by that means plentifully supply'd therewith (which in an open and allowed commerce is alwaies cheapest) but that they will

(4)

will soon beat us wholly out of that Trade, and by consequence e're long out of all other Commerce and Navigation to boot.

6. Every pound of our Wooll now worth five pence (and which makes about a yard of broad Cloth worth 8 or 9 s.) being Exported, and mixt with our Neighbours coarse Wooll, helps them to make 3 or 4 yards of Cloth, which probably hinders us of all that advantage, which by employing our people, would otherways accrew to us, besides the benefit of Commerce and Navigation; which must decline as our Drapery lessens, and as *we languish by sending out our Treasure to Import Apes and Peacocks: what the consequence thereof may be, when the most formidable and daring Nation is visibly seizing on Trade, and the Ocean, is obvious to every reasonable man*; and how His Majesties Revenue may be supply'd, when our Manufactures are lost, our Treasure wasted, and Rents subdu'd, by our excess in Forreign Commodities, is worthy of consideration.

7. The Exportation of our Wooll will be so farre from sustaining our drooping Rents, that tho we may Export the whole yearly growth thereof, yet I conceive it will not answer the value of our Drapery, which hitherto we have yearly Exported, and by consequence, so much loss must redound to us, as the wooll Exported may be of less value than our Drapery; without any consideration had to the want of employment for our people, or to the insignificant Navigation which the freight of wooll will occasion, compar'd with that of Drapery; *and how Politic it may be to lessen the value of our Exits, which already are so trivial and so exceedingly Overballanc'd by importations to foment our luxury, I leave to the judgement of every man, who considers that 'tis the Exportation of the Growth and Manufactures which deserve the name of Trade, and makes a Nation rich.*

8. But suppose that by repeal of the Laws the value of our Wooll should rise considerably (which for the reasons already given is very improbable) whereby our Neighbours should be enabled to manage that important Manufacture, which otherwise they could never effect, must it not necessarily follow that as they enlarge their Drapery so ours must lessen, and gradually shrink to nothing, our Navigation decline for want of so staple a Commodity wherewith to Traffic, our Treasure yet more convey'd abroad to manage a wanton and Luxurious Commerce, multitudes of our people

(5)

people who subsisted by that Manufacture Expos'd to ruine, and as many in every Age, thereby becoming useles and poor, must become chargeable, and may become dangerous to the Kingdom: all which must and will inevitably subdue our Rents to a degree farre beyond any relief or benefit we may reasonably expect from any encrease of the price of wooll, occasioned by the repeal of our Lawes: hence an experienced Merchant, who in other Commodities was himself a great smuggler, us'd to say, that the offence of exporting wooll was like the *sin against the Holy Ghost, not to be forgiven*; can the injury then be less to the Commonwealth if it go out by a Law?

The present Parliament hath had right sentiments in this matter, when (as by the Preamble of the Statute may appear) *for the better setting on work the Inhabitants of this Realm, and to the intent that the full and best use and benefit of the principal native commodities thereof, may come unto the Subjects of the same, and not unto the Subjects of Forreign Realms as heretofore*, they prohibited the Exportation of this Commodity: the like care and good meaning did also appear in them (however perverse and silly people have hitherto rendred it useles) when *for the encouragement of our woollen Manufacture, and prevention of the Exportation of our monies for the buying and importing of Linnen* (the very words of the Preamble) they enacted, *that none should be buried in other than woollen*: Now he that should Vote for the Exportation of wooll and censure the Act for burying in woollen, must invert every period of these most excellent Preambles, and say, *That for the better employing the Subjects of Forreign Realms, and to the intent the best use and benefit of the principal Native Commodities of this declining Kingdom may come unto the Subjects of Forreign Countries, as one, two, or 300 years ago it did, and be no longer continued unto the people of this Realm, as has been us'd by the space of 60 years last past; and to the intent that the woollen Manufacture may be discouraged, and the Exportation of Monies encreas'd to buy and import Linnen from our trusty Neighbours, especially the French, let wooll be freely exported, and none buried in woollen, except such as dye of cold diseases.*

To the third Reason for repealing our Lawes; *That our Neighbours with the help of our people get great quantities of our wooll daily*

B

(6)

daily from us notwithstanding those Laws to the contrary.

I Answer.

1. That such practices are shrewd evidences of what esteem that commodity is among them, and that what is thus purloyn'd cost the Receiver dear, by reason of secrecy, subtil contrivances, &c. as hath been already hinted, (for who will venture hanging for nothing?) which upon repealing those Laws will come freely to them without any such incumbrances, and consequently cheaper, whereby they may be enabled to contest with us in this important Manufacture on even terms.

2. Our Neighbours by these undue practices either have or have not sufficient of our wooll already; if they have, there will be no need of repealing those Laws, and we may justly charge the present dullness of Forreign Markets for our Drapery-upon the export of our wooll by these vile practices; which must needs grow worse when those Laws are repealed; but if they have not enough by reason of the prohibition, let us thank the Laws for it; and yet observe that 'tis a pregnant argument that by our wooll, thus unduly obtain'd, they manage a considerable Manufacture, for it seems they get great quantities from us; and that if they had more they would enlarge their commerce, which must necessarily undermine and lessen ours.

3. It is better particular persons do acts hurtful to the Public against Law, than for want of a Law, because this latter would reflect on the wisdom of the Government.

4. Should we repeal the Laws against the Exportation of wooll, because against Law wooll is Exported we should transcribe their wisdom that would repeal Laws against felony, because ill men contrary to Law commit Robberies; or imitate those who will not shut their doors because Thieves sometime break in at the windows.

To the fourth reason, That 'tis to small purpose to keep our wooll at home, for that Ireland supplies our Neighbours therewith, &c.

I Answer.

1. If this be true, it is to small purpose to permit its Exportation in hopes to put a better value on it, which is the most avowed reason for the repeal: for if our Neighbours be plentifully supplied therewith from Ireland, where 'tis much cheaper

(7)

cheaper at present then with us, (and probably ever will) there is small reason to expect better Rates for Ours: for who will give us six pence for that pound of wooll which in Ireland may be had for four pence? unless it may be granted that ours is better than that of Ireland; which few of the Adjutators will, for certain Reasons, be willing to confess.

2. If the Irish wooll enables the Forreigner to carry on that Manufacture to a degree hurtful to us, we have small reason to assist them further therein by affording them ours, seeing they enjoy advantages too many already; least we immitate those good men, who break the pot because their wives break the pitcher; ruine our selves because Ireland hurts us.

To the last reason, that the prohibition of wooll is a new practice unknown to us till within this twenty years, and yet before that time both Wooll and Drapery yielded the best Rates, for above 60 years last past.

I Answer.

1. That 'tis very true, but it does not follow that the prohibition was therefore unnecessary, or that the same brought a prejudice upon either; but that other reasons already given, must be assigned for the fall and meanness of the Rates of those Commodities; it being no waies questionable, but that the exportation of our Drapery had long since expired, had not the prohibition of wooll interpos'd.

2. Statutes are provided to answer the present emergencie and reason of Affaires, and adapted to the occasion and Interest of the Age wherein they are made, so that what was judg'd unnecessary in former Ages, may be of superlative use in this; and if the reason thereof again cease, may be as insignificant in the next.

3. We had no need of such restraining Laws long before they were enacted; for till the peace of Munster, England alone enjoy'd almost the whole Manufacture of Europe: But France (who then also receiv'd woollen Drapery from us) agitated since that peace by a most sagacious Counsel (who understands the advantages of Manufactures and Navigation) and fill'd with an active and enterprizing people, 'has unhappily added that Manufacture to the many other advantages they enjoy for commerce, above most

other Nations; and hath all things propitious for the managing thereof except fine wooll, such as ours is, to mix with their own: Must our Ancestours proceedings then who were govern'd by reasons farre different from ours, be presidents to us? or is it not rather high time to employ our utmost skill to retain so necessary a Commodity at home.

I have late'y met with one Merchant of no small pretences to the intrigues of Trade, who, although he will not allow that the Rates of wooll may encrease upon the repeal of our Lawes, (which is the prime reason alleadged for repeal of the prohibition) yet affirms that if the prohibition were remov'd and due Imposts charg'd upon wooll, it might thereby, better than by the prohibition, be either retain'd at home, or rendred so chargeable to our Neighbours that we might have sufficient advantages over them in that Manufacture.

To which, I answer.

1. That he which affirms all this, must maintain that either his Majesties Officers of His Customs will be more industrious to collect the Duties, and Imposts so to be charg'd on this Commodity, than they were to make Seizures of it by vertue of the prohibition, tho they had a Moyety of the Seizure, or that the Exporters will be more consciencious in paying His Majesties Imposts, than they were in obeying His Laws which prohibited the Exportation, tho they ventured their necks into the bargain, or that the Forreigner may be less desirous of it after the repeal than before.

2. The Imposts must be either much, or little; if much, it may be worth venturing to save the payment; as is too frequently practic'd in payments of the like Nature; but if they be little, the payment of them will be easily ballanc'd by the advantages our Neighbours have over us in cheap dyet, labour, &c. as has been already shewed.

If, to what has been said, it be reply'd that it is better export wooll, then neither wooll nor Drapery.

I Rejoyn.

1. That it is so, were it true that we exported no Drapery, and remain'd without hopes of ever sharing again in Forreign Markets: but thanks be to God matters are not yet arriv'd to so ill terms, and probably never will, unless some aspiring Neighbour (who may design to engross all Traffic) beat us out of the Medi-
terra-

terranean Sea, or that we let out our wooll by a Law.

2. If we do yet more effectually provide to keep our wooll at home, 'tis a thousand to one but our Drapery will off: but if once we export our wooll by a Law (charge it with what Impost, and confine it to what Ports and seasons you please, as some vainly or silyly propose) we may bid an Eternal adieu to the Exportation of our woollen Manufacture.

Who will buy our wooll, seeing we slight it our selves? will the French? to what end? to employ their people, and carry on a Manufacture as universal as their other designs, have they not of late charg'd our Drapery with heavy impositions, meerly to discourage its coming among them, the better to employ their own people? and must we then return the civility with such advantage to them?

4. And lastly, to export our wooll because at present we want vent for our Drapery, is for ever to confirm in that want; and is a choyce like pulling down my house for fear it may be burnt, or like hanging my self least any other kill me.

If I be ask'd what we shall do with our wooll seeing its Exportation is of such dreadfull consequence, and our Drapery so neglected at home,

I Answer.

1. That tho we cannot impose our Drapery on our Neighbours, yet we might easily nick some of them in their Wines, Brandies, and Bawbles, which are as necessary for them to vent as Drapery is for us, and are as unprofitable for us to receive. And surely we might also provide yet better to keep our wooll at home.

2. And Secondly, seeing the generality of Mankind pursues rather vain examples than rules of Reason, and wants judgment to discern things hurtful to the Public Authority, hath frequently prescrib'd the Subject in point of Clothes: and he that considers the habit of our people at this day, might suppose silk, and not wooll the native commodity of this Kingdom.

I therefore humbly propose.

1. That the Laws against the Exportation of wooll be consulted, and if upon enquiry they appear too short to reach all the tricks and contrivances of the enormous Exportors, to provide yet further remedies against them: proposing especially large rewards.

(10)

rewards and Characters of esteem to those who shall, at any time, discover the Managers of so ruinous a Commerce; the punishing of whose Estate (if they have any) and not the persons, being possibly the most effectual means to animate informations; because most men would rather make discoveries, in this case, for gain to themselves, than onely bring corporal punishment on others; and where the Criminals have no Estate, and are not apprehended to receive due punishment, the Division, or Hundred, as in cases of Robberies, ought to be fin'd to pay the Informer; it being certain, the Neighbourhood knows the Criminals and their Intrigues, and might without much difficulty either apprehend or drive them out of the Country: and 'tis worth enquiry how farre some of those very persons commissioned to prevent these practices, are themselves guilty of fomenting them, as some do report: and then besides, the wayes and methods to pursue these offenders and recover the Fines, ought to be as plain, short, and easie, as the wisdom of a Counsel can contrive: and where the discoveries are made by any one Employed in these practices, Indemnity and Rewards ought to be provided for him also; and that such a Discoverer, or other single witness (tho he hath profit thereby) ought to be sufficient evidence, because it is a work of Darkness, and more destructive than Robbery; it being better for us to run the hazard, that one man in seven years be injured by the perjury of an Informer, than that so many vile Offenders escape for want of witnesses, who have no benefit by the Seizure and evidence.

2. That a Law might pass that every man using any Manual Occupation, Trade or Mistry, Inholders, Marriners and Masters of Ships, and every person of like quality, not having an Estate, Real and Personal to such a value, and the wife, widow and children of every such, and the Child of every person not having an Estate Real and Personal, to be limited by the Statute, being under eighteen years of Age, (the Estates to be proved upon Oath) who shall wear any manner of Garment or Stockings made of other then wool, flax, hemp, Cotten or Callico, shall for every offence forfeit to the Poor of the Parish where the offence shall be committed, a valuable Sum; and every Servant (other then the Domestics of some Peers of the Realm) offending in the premises, shall forfeit the like Sum: unless it appear upon Oath that the
Garment

(11)

Garment &c, so worn, was either made before the Statute, or since given by his or her Master or Mistress: all which Forfeitures upon the Oath of one credible witness, to be levied by warrant from two Justices of the peace upon the offender, their husbands, Parents, &c. and for want of such Distress, Imprisonment without Bayle, &c. And for the more vigorous execution of so necessary a work, the two next Justices under some penalty yearly to nominate and swear two or more honest Inhabitants of every Parish to execute the said Act; who for their greater encouragement may receive some part of the Fine. And if any one pretend this Law may prejudice some thousands of *Silkweavers*, some *Mercers*, &c. I more truly affirm the same will be abundantly recompenced by raising the Rates of Wooll, which will refresh our Rents, by providing Employments for four times that number of *Breakers*, *Kembers*, *Carders*, *Spinners*, *Weavers*, *Fullers*, *Shearmen*, *Clothiers*, *Drapers*, &c; and by reducing an extravagant People to a decent and modest Apparel: And if His Majesty, by passing such a Bill, may possibly loose something at present in His Customs, it will be happily supply'd by the glory redounding thereby to His Government, by the hearty thanks and prayers of His intelligent Subjects, for so gracious an Act, and by continuing us in a condition to make good and sustain so splendid a Revenue; which will be impossible to do, if we still forsake and disuse our Growths and Manufactures, and continue to consume so much of the Ferreign.

3. And Lastly, whereas the late Statute for burial in VVoollen hath not wrought the intended good effect, for want of Officers to inspect its execution, I humbly propose that some one honest Inhabitant of every Parish be, by the two next Justices of the Peace, under some penalty, yearly nominated and sworn to inspect the Corps the Morning before interment, and certifie the Minister under his hand that the defunct is wrapt according to the Statute; for which Certificate the searcher shall from the Executor, &c. (in case the defunct paid scot and lot) receive some small fee: and without which Certificate, the Minister under some penalty, may not inume the Corps: a penalty payable to the poor of the Parish, and teniably by warrant from two Justices of the Peace, being also laid on those who shall not comply with the said Statute, or shall disturb the Officer in doing his duty.

A

(12)

A Law on each of these Subjects, with right plac'd penalties, must necessarily quicken the consumption of our Drapery at home, enlarge our Markets abroad, and put a better value on our wooll, than spare it on such destructive & ruinous terms. And if my Arguments have been too frivolous to prevail on the Judgement of any man, who yet may remain dissatisfied in the point, I heartily desire him to believe, the same proceeds purely from the incapacity of the Undertaker; being confident that tho' my self may not have been so lucky to draw out such conquering Arguments as the subject may afford, yet arguments there are, invincible in the case; ---and that we must by all the Methods imaginable, promote the Manufacture and wear of our own woollen, moderate the consumption of Wines, Silks and Camlers, prohibit Brandy, Coffee, and other idle and new fangled liquors, which hindring the expence of our own wholesome drinks, subdue our Rents, prevent the importation of a thousand trifles, which draw our Treasure from us, obviate Forreign Designs, and keep our Wooll at home, or perish.

FINIS.