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Scotland's Interest:

OR,

The Great Benefit and Necessity

OF A

Communication of Trade

WITH

ENGLAND.

BEING

A Brief Account of the Chief Motives that ought to engage us to insist on it, at this Juncture: And of the Danger of Neglecting so to do.

Humbly offered to the Consideration of the High Court of Parliament.

Magno in morbo nunquam certior imminet interitus, quam ubi parca Remedia, atque intempestivè adhibentur.

Opportunitas Rebus etiam minimis præterit addit.

Nunquam satis cavetur inter Suspectos.

Printed in the Year 1704.

SCOTLAND's Interest, &c.

THe Power, and Wealth of a Nation, has been observed to have so cloſe a connection with Trade, That upon the good or bad Management of the later, the former have never failed to Increase, or be diminished : and for this Reason, every Wiſe State has done its utmoſt to encourage it ; And Men of greateſt Judgement and Learning, have not thought it a Task below them, to imploy their time, in laying down ſuch Schemes and Meaſures, as ſeemed moſt fitting for promoting it ; in ſo much, that the political Arithmetick, has of late become a Piece of the moſt uſeful, and valuable Knowledge. As few Nations have outdone that of *England* in Trade, ſo they are certainly the firſt, that have reduced it to almoſt the Nature of a Science, which I mention the rather, becauſe I ſhall have occaſion to appeal to their practice in the following Diſcourſe. And though this Nation has had the miſfortune, to fall under ſuch Diſcouragements, from their influence on our Miniſtry, in all the Reigns ſince the Union of the Crowns, as have utterly ſtifled all the Attempts for advancing Trade ; though the faireſt Opportunity we ever could expect, of being admitted into a ſhare of the Trade of *England*, at the late Revolution, was (to ſay no worſe,) unadviſedly let ſlip ; yet neither they, nor our Miniſtry, have been able entirely, to blind-fold us in the Matter ; Perſons diſinterreſted have long ago been ſenſible of the Escape : And now that a new Opportunity is put into our hands of rectifying, GOD forbid we ſhould a ſecond time deſerve, the common Reflection of being *Wiſe behind the Hand*.

It is the Duty, of every Good Country-Man at all times, to contribute to the promoting of the publick Weal, particularly at the Meetings of Parliament, where the Affairs of greateſt Importance are Tranſacted ; But above all at this time, when the Fate of the Nation, is likely to be determined by a ſingle Vote, with how much Caution one ought to proceed in ſo nice a Caſe, where the miſery or proſperity of his Country may depend on his ſingle Voice, I leave to every ones ſerious and cool thoughts. But to be more plain ; laſt Seſſion of Parliament, an Act of Security paſt the Houſe, notwithstanding of the unnatural oppoſition it met with, wherein there was a Foundation laid for the Future Happineſs of this Nation, in the Event of Her Maſteſty's deceaſe, by clogging the Settlement of the Succeſſion, with a *Proviſo* of a Grant from *England* of a Freedom of Trade, if we ſhould

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should make the same Choice with them; And by enacting such Limitations of Government, as should be necessary for asserting the Liberty of the Subject, and Independency of the Crown; But to the unspeakable Sorrow of those Noble Patriots, who had toiled hard to obtain it, it was denied the Royal Assent; not because of the Limitations, but for the other Clause, which our Neighbours could not digest. This alone would be proof enough of the value they put upon a Communication of Trade, and consequently of the Advantages we should get thereby, were it not, that some of late pretend to be of a different Sentiment, and would be at selling our last Opportunity of being Happy, for a poor handfull of Limitations, which they rejected with Scorn last Session of Parliament, when Engrossed into the Succession Act offered by the Earl of *M...*, and perhaps in greater plenty, then we are to expect hereafter. I must beg leave to tell these Gentlemen, that they begin now to be shrewdly suspected, of having had no other Aim by their Zeal, save a Change of the Ministry. I would not be understood to Contemn Limitations; No, I consider them absolutely necessary, to free us from *English* influence, and consequently to our Thriving; But I humbly conceive, we are not to be indebted to *England* for them; And therefore, we make but a pitiful Bargain, if we throw away the present Occasion, and Complement *England* with entering immediately into the Succession, without the least Equivalent from them. We need not be at a loss to find out an Equivalent: A Freedom of Trade in General, is what we have all along aimed at; and without that, all our Limitations are an empty sound, without any subject to exercise them upon; They may make us value our selves a little more, upon our Freedom and Independency, but will not greatly enrich us, excepting only by withdrawing our Nobility from Attendance at Court. I shall endeavour then in the following sheet, to shew the advantage of a Freedom of Trade with *England*, by such Arguments as did most Naturally present themselves to my view, in the short time I bestow'd upon this small Discourse, which I should have lengthned, if taking a longer Time would not have made it come too late; Humbly submitting my weak Endeavour to the Consideration of the Members of this High Court of Parliament now met; hoping that every Uprights'd and Well-meaning Person, will supply what is here deficient, from his own Judgment, so as to make the whole arise to a Convincing Proof.

First then let us consider, as I before hinted, the averfeness of the *English*, to grant this Freedom, when they expected no Equivalent

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lent; And how at all times they have Discouraged our Endeavours that way, but more plainly in the Recent Example of *Darien*, when they left no Stone unturned to Disappoint us, and in the end succeeded to their Wish, when we were expelled the Place; So jealous were they of our getting any Footing in the *West-Indies*, Was all this Noise made to thrust us out, and deprive us of a Trade, that would have been prejudicial to us? Did they think the *West-India* Trade a loss to *England*, and yet would not quit with the least part of it to us, that we might share in the Loss? If they meant us a Kindness in the Matter, sure 'tis the first we have had from them since the Union of the Crowns; And being so remarkable a Piece of Service, I hope it will be made a prime Motive to engage us into their Measures. No Nation, (as I said before) have more closely pursued their Intetest in Trade then *England*, and if they imagined their Plantation Trade, to be disadvantageous to them; they would certainly have laid it aside, and decoyed their Enemies into it, who might thereby be weakned to their advantage. But seeing their Conduct all along, has demonstrated them to have no such Inclination, I may lately conclude, that whoever undervalues that Trade, must reckon himself Wiser than the Government of *England*, and upon his Scheme, we owe them our hearty acknowledgements; for undermining our *Darien* Project.

In the 2d. place, This Trade (for I shall Confine my self chiefly to it, being the most probable to prove beneficial to us,) has all the Advantages that can make a Trade valuable. As First, a Vent for our Home Commodities, without Exporting a Farthing of Money. Next the Importation of such Commodities as we purchase at second hand for Money and at a very dear Rate. Our Commodities to be Exported (to mention but a few.) are Linnen Cloth, which 'tis very well known, could be sold to very great advantage, in the *West-Indies*, and is now become such a drug on our hands, that not a third part is sold of what was formerly, & even that at so low a Rate, that what was before sold for 12 pence, is now sold at near a half under. Next, our Stockings, Serges, and Fingrums, which we have but small hopes of ever putting off in *Spain* again, and when we did, 'twas for eating and drinking Commodities; Whereas the return of these, and the Linnen from the *West-Indies*, would be so considerable, as not only to serve our Selves, and thereby to save a great Yearly sum, but we should be able to Export, a great quantity, which if the Trade were prudently Managed, we could afford cheaper then any Traders to the *West-Indies*. And I must take notice by the by, that these Woolen Manufactories are found so hard to Export, to advantage, that

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Some who opposed the Exportation of Wool before, are now more cool in the Matter; Alledging, that Wool Manufactured, brought us in Money, but Manufactured none. Which Reasoning however defective, is still a proof of the necessity of a new Place to discharge what lyes on our hands into.

A 2^d. Argument may be brought from the deplorable Condition of the greatest part of our Sea Ports; Trade & Increase of Shipping, and Seamen do necessarily go together; so that besides the general Advantage, the Sea-Ports in particular would be greatly Enriched, by a Freedom of Trade and the Western-Ports, especially by that to the *West-Indies*. A great many more Arguments might be added, with a fuller Enumeration of the several Commodities to be Exported and Imported to and from the several *English* Plantations, which the designed brevity of this Treatise will not allow. I shall therefore endeavour only, to remove some Objections, which being out of the way, will strengthen what has been said.

First then, A late Author (to whom we are much Indebted, for his letting us into a clearer Notion of our Interest, with regard to *England* in the Matter of the *Union*;) does raise this Objection, that a Plantation-Trade would tend to the De-populating our Country, upon the Expectation of great Advantages to be made in the Plantations; and that many Persons of Judgement in *England* reckon they have lost more than gained by it, being thereby diverted from the Fishing-Trade. To which I Answer, That,

If any such Depopulation did happen, it would be more profitable, then to be Depopulated by poverty and misery; or by sending vast numbers of our Men, to fight in the Service of *England*, in wars, from which we are never to reap any Advantage; and where all the Glory, except what we take to our selves at home, is attributed to *England*; whereas we should in all probability, feel the advantage of our Country-Mens Industry in the Plantations, which otherwise goes to other Nations in whose Plantations they settle. In the next place, it is not likely any such Depopulation would follow: For misery will drive more People out of a Country, than expectation of gain, and our People are satisfied with a narrower way of living then the *English*; So that if by a good Market for our Home Commodities, the State of our Country came to be even but what it was, not thirty years ago, few would be tempted to leave their Native Country, in expectation of what they could get by settling in the Plantations, which are already pretty well Stock. Indeed at first Planting, it may have occasioned, a considerable Depopulation in *England*; But as no Trade can be freed from all disadvantages, so this

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as to Us is over; We have nothing to do, but to reap the benefit of all the proceeding Depopulation *England* suffer'd in the planting it, without any great probability of being Loosers that way, for the Reasons above adduced. But lastly, as the foresaid Author owns, any disadvantage the *English* complain of, is not so much a real one as a comparative less advantage, than they might have expected, from the Fishing Trade, had they followed it as close, as that of the Plantations: However, since they have not been able to retrieve that Trade out of the hands of the *Dutch*, whatever Endeavours have been made towards it, we have but small Encouragement to depend upon it, who are so ready to be discouraged, at the least disappointment; And if any thing in the World set it on Foot, 'twill be the enriching our Merchants first by a sure Traffick: Though I could heartily wish we would seriously set about it, yet I must own, that I see more difficulties, we shall meet with in it, then in the Plantation Trade. First, The Fishing is not so properly a Trade or Traffick, as a piece of Handy-craft, not to be acquired but by long Experience; and hence it is, that the *Dutch* do so far exceed us in Packing and Curing; So that till we be in a better State otherways, 'tis not likely we shall undertake this successfully; we must have the Patience until we improve in the Handy-Craft, before we can expect to sell to as good advantage as our Neighbours, which our present Stocks will not Answer, witness the several attempts of fitting our Bushes begun, and very quickly deserted, when the Profits did not immediatly come in. Next the difficulty of this Fishing will appear, from the many advantages the *Dutch* have over us, to enable them to manage it cheaper, to wit, 1st. Multitudes of Men above any other Nation. 2^{dly}. Cheapness of Building all sorts of Ships fit for this Trade, above any other Place. 3^{dly}. Their convenient building of Ships fit for this Trade. 4^{thly}. Greatness of Vent in Foreign Trade for all sorts of Commodities, returned in Barter for their Fish. 5^{thly}. Their Excellency in Curing and Packing all sorts of Fish already mentioned. These and many others duly considered, make it next to impossible, to wrest that Trade out of their hands, any other way, then by an Article in a Treaty of Commerce, or Federal Union betwixt *Scotland* and *England*, whereby they shall be bound mutually to assist one another in hindering the *Dutch* from Fishing on our Coasts, which would effectually put us Jointly in possession of that Trade.

A second Objection that Author makes, is, That the chief Commodities brought from the *West-Indies*, are Sugar and Tobacco, which the Markets are already glutted with.

To which I answer, that there are many other Commodities, which

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which though inconsiderable to a great and opulent Nation as *England*, yet with regard to our Stocks, might yield us great Advantage. 2^{ly}. There is great reason to believe, that no Nation will be able to sell *West India* Commodities cheaper than we; since what we export will turn to us good Account at any carried thither, and we can afford them cheaper than any Nation beside. 3^{ly}. Though we were to reap no other Advantage (which is unreasonable to believe) than merely to save great Sums that go out of the Nation for Tobacco and Sugar yearly: (as will appear from the customs of these Commodities) even that might engage us to endeavour a freedom of Trade thither: And lastly (to do that Author Justice) however he may seem to undervalue that Trade, when compared with the parting with our Sovereignty, by an incorporating Union, which would indeed render any such Advantage useless, as appears from the case of *Wales*; yet in a federal Union, he would certainly have been of a different Sentiment as he seems to own, when he says, that the Advantages proposed by a Communication of Trade would be much greater in a federal Union, than in any other: And then he goes on to show in all the Branches of Trade, that the proposed benefit would be absolutely lost in an Incorporating Union, which gives me occasion to take notice, that by the Proceedings in the late Treaty of Union, we may guess what for an Union we are to understand in the House of Lords address to her Majesty, when they assure her that they will do their utmost to promote an Union, when we shall have settled the Succession, even an incorporating one, the only sure way to render us a Hunting-field of our own making.

I shall then conclude all with this single Question; Since without an Enlargement of our export, it is simply impossible to save us from sinking into the greatest Poverty & misery; Since a freedom of Trade with *England*, is the only probable way to retrieve us; Since we have a very great probability of obtaining it, if we rightly manage the Opportunity in our hands; Since our endeavours that way, last Session of Parliament, have so far prevailed, that Limitations are offered to stop our mouths; Since it is so highly probable, that by lying off some longer, we may obtain all; Since the Succession is by the Claim of Right, and the Act ratifying it, in a great measure secured; Since we are still complaining of *English* Influence and Counsel; Since the pressing us to settle the Succession at present, is the most evident and palpable example of their undue intermeddling in our Affairs: And lastly, since we are *Scotsmen*, and are bound in Conscience to have a regard to the sinking State of our poor Nation; why will we be so mad as to run headlong into our own Ruin?

F I N I S.