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T H E
COMMERCIAL CONDUCT
OF THE
UNITED STATES
OF
A M E R I C A
CONSIDERED,

A N D

THE TRUE INTEREST thereof,

ATTEMPTED TO BE SHEWN BY

A CITIZEN of NEW-YORK.

*We may trade and be busy and grow poor by it,
Unless we regulate our Expences.*

LOCKE.

NEW-YORK: Printed by S. and J. LOUDON, for the AUTHOR,
AND GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC GRATIS.

M,DCC,LXXXVI.

WE seldom meet with a man who doubts or dares to dispute the utility of trade; but if we look on the fate of Tyre and Sidon, Corinth, and Carthage, we shall not have so high an opinion of it, since it brought on all of them their ruin; and the wretched present state of Venice, Cologne, and Antwerp, which were all within these two centuries very commercial, prove the instability of trade.

But to bring this reasoning more home to ourselves, notwithstanding that our productions amount annually to a very considerable sum, we have found means long before the late war, not only to get rid of it, but to have an immense balance against us; societies therefore to encourage arts and manufactures were entered into, but after a rapid progress they were dropped on the repeal of the Stamp Act, and with the return of the present peace, though attended by Independence, our former luxury was again revived; since which our merchants are importing an inundation of goods from all Europe, but which we are unable to pay for, the consequence of which begins, and will be more severely felt.

The profession of a merchant is trade, they consult their own interest; but it is the Legislature only which can check and prohibit an intemperate, impolitic, and luxurious commerce, and therefore, for the exertion of such power and authority, the following sheets are inscribed to the Legislatures of the respective states: If they are found consistent with truth and right reason, they claim their attention; if otherwise I desire they may be suppressed, as my intention is not to propagate error, but to remove it; but if I have failed in my design, I at least have the pleasure that I wrote as an independent enquirer after truth and right reason, and to enforce it; not from the vanity of being an author, or the most distant desire of any emolument whatever.

A CITIZEN.

reign linens and *Asiatic* manufactures, but taking in all the ports of Great-Britain, and those of foreign countries, this Continent did for several years before the war import above three millions sterling per annum, and since the conclusion of the peace our importation has been greater than ever, for now all Europe pours in like a flood her luxuries upon us. In this vast importation the people rejoice upon the same principle that the Portuguese do, who think that their great importation is a mark of their riches, when it is exports alone that make a country rich, and imports that impoverish it; and that all our bread and flour, beef, pork, horses, fish, lumber, fur, pot-ash, rice, indigo, &c. are not able to keep us out of debt, I think the Legislature and every merchant must be fully convinced of, or we should not be millions in debt to Europe as we at present are, and this is the reason that we are not able to keep any money among us, for silver and gold imported for our provisions and productions cannot stay here, whilst there is so great a balance in Europe against us, it not being made ours, is therefore no increase of our wealth: The only way of keeping silver and gold in these States is, by consuming less of foreign commodities than what our own commodities will amount to, for then whatever the balance is, it is certainly our own, and will stay in the States; but our provisions and other produce not being by any means equal to our vast imports, our money must go, and this is the real and only cause of our distresses which we have and do now labour under, but I will with a little variation better illustrate this by a quotation from Mr. Locke.

Let us suppose Staten-Island one farm, and that the owner, besides what serves his family, carries to New-York, beef, pork, corn, butter, cheese, &c. all commodities produced from his farm, to the value of one thousand pounds a year, and for this brings home from New-York, in rum, sugar, wine, cloth, silk, muslin, tea, &c. to the value of nine hundred pounds, and the remaining one hundred pounds in money; it is evident he grows every year one hundred pounds richer, but if the owner be a better husband, and contenting
 himself

himself with his native commodities, buys no silk, muslin or tea, he will bring home five hundred pounds a year, and instead as in the first instance of having saved in ten years one thousand pounds, he will now have saved in the same time five thousand.

He dies and his son succeeds to the estate, but being a fashionable gentleman, he must have his wines from France, Spain, and Portugal, &c. he cannot drink the malt liquor of his own country, but must have it from Europe; the linen made of his own flax is homespun, he therefore cannot endure it, but supplies himself from Holland and Ireland; he cannot sleep in a bed with his own linen and stuff furniture, but must have it of chintz, which is more genteel; and nothing but a China damask is fit for a morning gown for him to wear, by this means he soon spends the ready money his father had saved for him: The produce of his farm still goes to market, and though it sells for a thousand pounds, that will not supply his luxurious wants; he brings home fifteen hundred pounds in rum, sugar, spice, silks, gauze, and a great variety of *India goods*, he lives with the appearance of splendor, but grows every year five hundred pounds poorer; he is arrested, judgment and execution is awarded against him, his farm is sold, and his body shut up in prison.

The conduct of a single farmer, and of these States, differ in this respect no more than greater and less; for it is certain as in the above instance, that we may trade and be busy and grow poor by it, unless we regulate our expences; but if the virtuous and provident way of living of our ancestors, who were content with our own native conveniences of life, without the costly itch after the materials of pride and luxury from abroad, were brought in fashion and countenance among us, this alone would do more to keep and increase our wealth than all the help that *paper money* can afford us; it is with a State as with a family, spending less than our commodities will pay for, is the only way for these States to grow rich, and when that is once seriously set about by the respective Legislatures, we certainly shall have no need of *paper money*, our commodities

dities will soon bring us a balance of gold and silver, but till this be done, our misfortunes will not only continue but *increase*; for money that is brought among us from the West-Indies, Mexico, Havanna, Portugal, &c. can stay by no other means than consuming fewer foreign commodities; but by spending and consuming more than our productions can pay for, brings on poverty and ruin.

Foreign commodities, which by us ought to be looked on as luxuries, most certainly impoverish these States by being brought in, but that is the fault of our importation, and there the mischief ought by wholesome laws to be cured; vanity and luxury spend them, and our merchants having imported and vended them, our money must go to pay for them; but as that alone will not do, our lands have been, and are every day sold to make up the deficiency.

The Americans, says Mr. Locke, who are rich in land are poor in all the comforts of life, whom nature having furnished as liberally as any other people, with the materials of plenty, a fruitful soil, apt to produce what ought to serve for food, raiment, and delight, yet for want of improvement, have not the conveniencies that we in England enjoy.

This he said of the native Indians of America, who had never an opportunity of knowledge, or the use of *iron*: But that Britons who planted themselves here, and brought with them arts and sciences, should not be able in one of the best countries, situated in the most desirable climate under Heaven, whose very forests abound with natural plenty, whose luxuriant soil refuses not to yield any fruits that its owner demands, and is actually capable of any productions that any part of the world is known to afford, and which in great measure experience has demonstrated; for this we can venture to assert, that whatever has been introduced here from Europe, or from under the tropic, to this Continent, flourish here. That such a country then should have recourse to Europe, and even the most despicable corners of it, and through them to *Asia*, in order to clothe themselves, is such a conduct of its inhabitants, that a stranger unacquainted with these facts would pronounce

pronounce them incredible; but would he not be astonished when he was told that the United States of North-America were according to the best calculations above five millions sterling in debt to Great-Britain, not only for her useful goods (which we want) but for silks, chintz, callicoe, muslin, tea, &c. from *Asia*; and even for linen from Silesia and Austria, *via* London and Amsterdam; hemp, diaper, sheeting, and other linens from *Russia*, and even from Archangel, when they have under their feet a country, whose natural fertility surpasses any in the world.

But they prefer ploughing the ocean from the Torrid to the Frigid Zone, rather than our *fields*, and to supply a whole kingdom with flax-feed, and afterwards involve themselves in debt to that very people for linen: a people oppressed by their Lords with extreme heavy rents, whilst the inhabitants of these States pay no rent at all. But, notwithstanding this, they chuse to be in debt, and to have their lands taken from them, rather than to make their own linen.

The kingdom of Scotland, which is by no means famous for its fertility, having found that their imports greatly exceeded their exports, and that in consequence they grew poor, did, so late as *anno* 1746, establish at Edinburgh a British linen manufactory, or company, which in 1766 stamped for sale twelve millions seven hundred and forty-six thousand six hundred and fifty yards of linen of their own manufactory, the value of which was five hundred and seventy-two thousand two hundred and twenty-seven pounds sterling: This they export, and a great part of it even to these States, and which not only pays for their foreign wants, but leaves them a balance. All this they have done in twenty years, though most of their flax they buy from *Russia*, an article which we have of our own.

Will not this great example, as well as the much greater one from Ireland, animate every friend of these States, as well as the respective *Legislatures*, to exert themselves in the deliverance and salvation of their country, by the establishment of a linen manufactory, and in earnest to set their faces against the

the importation of every species of foreign linen, and particularly against all *Asiatic* goods, as well as against those of Holland, Hamburgh, and Russia: Nor is it any service we do England in taking her luxuries, which we are unable to pay for.

But as to the great staple of *England*, her *woollen* manufactures and *hardware*, those are useful goods; and therefore a moderate importation of them would be mutually beneficial, and it is our interest that she alone should supply us. But men being brought up with the notions of an extended foreign trade, they think there is no way to fortune but that, and therefore more particularly since our declared Independence; they, in pursuit of commerce are exploring the whole globe, even from *Greenland* north, to *Falkland's Island* south, and from *Lake Superior* west, to *China* east; all this in pursuit of imaginary wealth, whilst they have a redundancy of real wealth in their own soil; but by means of their search after it in Europe, they import such immense quantities of goods, that they have thereby not only stripped us of every farthing of our money, but have and are daily reducing us to the greatest distress. And though a very few may get rich by such pernicious trade, they should remember, that in general it is at the expence and ruin of the *States*, for a merchant may and often does get rich by a trade that makes his country poor; as a proof of it, we have only to look round us and see how many are rolling triumphantly in their coaches on the profits got out of their unthinking unwary countrymen, whose paternal estates they did, and are seizing by the law, and the bodies of those who have none, did, heretofore, and do at present crowd our *prisons*; and which a few years before the war were obliged to be enlarged, whilst the *din* and noise of prosecutions even tired our Courts of Justice.

All these evils are derived from no other cause but that our imports greatly exceeding our exports, the balance of which was, and is the cause of all our calamity; for a country, says Baron Montesquieu, that constantly exports fewer commodities than it receives, will soon find the balance sinking; it

will receive less and less, till falling into extreme poverty, it will receive none at all; but neither his opinion, nor that of Mr. Locke, and both confirmed by our own experience, that we follow a losing and destructive trade to foreign countries, is sufficient to determine us to set ourselves in earnest about curing the evil; and thereby prevent the total ruin of these States, many of whose unfortunate inhabitants are prevailed on to buy the toys and trifles of France and other countries, which they soon find themselves unable to pay for, by any other means than by the sale of the best estates in the world, **THEIR LANDS**. But our distresses began to be felt before the war, and they pointed out our mistaken pursuits, we began to be alarmed; in consequence, united in several of the States into societies of arts, agriculture, and a manufactory of *linen*, in which we succeeded beyond expectation; but the famous Stamp Act being repealed, we dissolved those laudable societies, and relapsed into our former follies.

“ I will, said Aurenzebe, make my kingdom so rich, that that there shall be occasion of neither hospitals or prisons.” This indeed was a resolution becoming a great Prince, and wise legislator; who though he ruled over realms burnt up by the sun, in great measure effected it.

Is it not then a reproach to these States, who are not only blessed with the finest climate, but the most fertile soil under Heaven, to have occasion of either hospitals or prisons, in a country whose extension knows *no bounds*, and this is more than the proudest and greatest Monarchs on earth were ever able to say.

But we prefer plowing the ocean rather than our fields, and corresponding with other nations for their luxuries, by which we have brought on ourselves debts, difficulties and perplexities; and now in order to prevent and put a stop to those evils; which an imprudent foreign trade has involved us in: What is the remedy we mean to apply? I answer it is a *paper-currency*. This every man is anxious about and solicitous for, as well as many Members of the respective Legislatures, who think it would be a sovereign remedy for all their evils; but
this

in this I beg leave to differ from them, for I think the remedy would be much worse than the present *disease*; I mean to except the emission of Congress, for which there was a necessity, but I intend not to go into politics. The duty which I have taken upon me is to reason on trade, and perhaps I am the first who have attempted it since our independence.

My reasons for differing with the friends of paper currency are: *First*, That it carries no intrinsic value, that it is exposed not only to depreciation, but also to annihilation, and which the whole Continent has fatally experienced.

Secondly, If it be emitted by way of *loan*, the people who are so extremely fond of trade, will obtain such paper on the security of their *lands*, which being invested in ships and set afloat, many of them *either* for want of experience or through misfortune, would soon find themselves without either land or *paper currency*: In short, it would prove a *snare* to them, nor have I ever known or heard of a man in Europe parting with a landed estate, in order to turn merchant; but on the contrary, merchants always look forward with a hope of quitting that uncertain profession, in order to invest their property in *LANDS*. Emissions therefore of paper currency appear to me the most mistaken, and the most fatal measure that we can possibly take; and will by no means remedy but increase our evils, and in this opinion I am supported by Mr. Locke, who says——

“ That a law cannot give to bills that intrinsic value which
 “ the universal consent of mankind has given to silver and
 “ gold, which writing cannot supply the place of, because
 “ bills are liable to unavoidable doubts, disputes, and coun-
 “ terfeiting, and require other proof to assure us that they
 “ are true and good security, than our eyes or a touchstone:
 “ and at best this course of using paper, if practicable, will
 “ not hinder us from being poor, but may be suspected of
 “ helping to make us so, by keeping us from feeling our po-
 “ verty, which in distress will be sure to find us with greater
 “ disadvantages.”

This

This has been fatally experienced in these United States on this Continent, and Europe has by no means escaped the evils of too much credit given to *Paper*, witness the South Sea Stock in England, anno 1720, where though it was not a legal tender, yet the kingdom went into that bubble to such a degree, that it ruined a very great part of the nation; and the year before the famous Mr. *Law* formed the Missisipi Company in France, where the *Billets de Bank*, or Bank notes, were emitted; the people who had been told of mines not inferior to those of Potosi, swallowed the gilded bait, and paid in their silver and gold to the Exchequer, for stock or bank notes, but in nine months time they found themselves stripped of all their money, in exchange for which they had *paper*, which depreciated to such a degree, that in a few months more, one hundred livres in paper would purchase but eight livres in silver, and soon after it was not worth a farthing; and this we have too fatally experienced on this Continent.

A precious metal therefore, ought to represent the value of all other things, and in this all nations have agreed, that silver and gold shall be the sign of it, because it is durable, and little liable to be counterfeited.

But there are many among us, who being intoxicated with an excess of trade, say that the trade of England is extended by the immense emissions of bank notes; and therefore consider them as a *paper currency*, alledge their utility. To which I answer, first, That they are payable on sight at the Bank in gold or silver, which for want of ability is not proposed in the American emissions; and secondly, although they are payable at sight, I am far from thinking that they are of so great use as is imagined, my reason is, that people who are embarrassed in consequence of their having overtraded themselves, and who are on the brink of ruin, make promissary notes payable at one or two months to their friend, a man of credit; this he endorses, the paper is taken to the Bank, which is continually discounting at 5 per cent. per annum, and which always takes care to have a good indorser: The Bank therefore,
by

by this pernicious temporary succour, are so far from giving aid to the adventurous and enterprising, that on the contrary, I think they greatly contribute to their ruin; add to this, the faith put in stocks or national paper: *Those of England*, for which the people paid one hundred pounds, were last year, 1785, worth no more than fifty-four pounds, the then current price, and of this stock there is above eighty millions sterling.

Paper emissions in these States, will not only have a similar evil effect, but a much greater; for in England if a man possesses an hereditary estate, and he be apt to build castles in the air, they in their fall will only overwhelm himself; but in his ruin his successor cannot be involved, the estate remains entire and goes to the next heir: But this is not the case in these States, for our lands are considered and put on the same footing with *chattels*.

This consideration alone ought to operate on our minds, and more particularly on the minds of the Legislature, not to wish for, or to enact emissions of *paper currency*; the greatest part of which would be invested to gratify a trade of *luxury*, at the expence of the only intrinsic, valuable, permanent wealth in the universe, OUR LANDS; which will forever give us both food and raiment, and who on earth has more? This is really and truly riches, which will never depart from us; and this opinion is confirmed by the ingenious Baron Montesquieu, who says, "That is a bad kind of riches, (meaning trade) which depends on accident, and not on the industry of a nation, on the number of its inhabitants, and above all on the cultivation of its LANDS."

Great-Britain from the reign of Henry the Seventh has had an increasing trade, but whether it has done it good, to me is doubtful, and therefore I shall not take on me to determine it; but this I will venture to say, that the far greater part of the national debts derives its origin from *commercial wars*. The mode of funding began in the reign of King William, to carry on his Flanders and Dutch wars, he left the kingdom sixteen millions in debt; Queen Anne's wars
added

added thirty nine millions, together fifty-five millions; for the succeeding twenty-four years peace after her death, there was but eight millions paid off, thus in 1739, the national debt was about forty-seven millions; this year war was declared against Spain, and in anno 1744 against France, which concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, with an addition to the national debt of thirty-one millions, it now stood at seventy-eight millions; and in 1756, war was again declared against France, and sometime after against Spain; this ended by the Peace of Fontainebleau, anno 1762, with the enormous addition of sixty-eight millions to the debt.

The first of these wars in 1739, was on account of a supposed right to cut logwood in Honduras; the second on account of the invasion of the Colonies back of Virginia, at Fort du Quesne; both of these wars, after a great variety of adventures, flew round the globe, and was transferred even into the interior parts of Germany; when it was said by that bold *assertor*, "That we had conquered America in Germany." The debt now stood at one hundred and forty-six millions sterling; this was alledged in Parliament as insupportable, and that one hundred millions of it was incurred on account of America, therefore she ought to bear a part of the burden by taxes. The experiment was tried by the Stamp Act, &c. which was opposed; force was used, which brought on the late war, and which ended in an acknowledged Independence of America; and added to the British national debt, including navy, victualling, and ordnance bills, one hundred and thirty-four millions, the whole of the enormous debt now is *two hundred and eighty millions sterling!* The like of which, nor the half of it, was ever heard of in any Empire, Kingdom, or State in the world; the very interest of which is above eight millions four hundred thousand pounds a year; the King has another million for his civil list; and the revenue of the realm was not in 1785 quite eleven millions: Thus there was left about fifteen hundred thousand pounds for the army, navy, building, repairing, pensions, &c.

Under the weight of this, and the enormous taxes imposed the present year, which are almost beyond conception, the *people groan*; taxed for the light from Heaven, for being christened, and another for being buried, taxed for taking a receipt from your creditor, and five pounds stamp on your last will, and two per cent. on legacies, even for hiring a horse, or keeping a man or woman servant twenty-five shillings per head, and for keeping five servants thirty-five shillings per head per annum; on hats, shoes, and gloves, with an infinity of other things are taxed, and thus the revenue considerably increased, in order to pay the interest of the whole *mistakenly incurred national debt*, and which last year sold at 54 per cent. but now on account of peace, is risen.

I have recited these latter particulars to shew you, that this dreadful debt is originated from a *mistaken thirst of commerce*: I say it sprung from the Bay of Honduras, from Fort du Quesne, Canada, and the attempt to tax the United States of America; her thirst of trade brought on her all these wars, for neither seas, mountains or deserts, can stop their ambition, or truth and right reason their mistaken notions of trade, and which I think is the only cause of their being sunk into an abyss of national debt.

Let then the most fatal measures of Great-Britain be a warning to this Continent, and to this State in particular; by avoiding her dreadful mistakes in ransacking the globe, from Otaheite to Greenland, and from Lake Huron to the Ganges, and beyond it, whilst they have every thing that they ought to wish for in their own soil, the fruits of which we have hitherto scattered about the world, and have but little to shew for it.

But we can now by laws prevent the importation of the luxuries of Europe and Asia, and particularly the dishonorable, the detestable, and iniquitous *trade to Africa*, by enslaving mankind; a trade that is or ought to be shocking to human nature, and at which every American in particular, who have fought for liberty, ought to *blush*.

But though I have said thus much against a foreign and pernicious trade, yet I desire to be rightly understood; a trade

to climates dissimilar to our own is useful, as for instance, a trade to all the West-Indies for their productions, in exchange for ours; a trade to the Havanna, Vera Cruz, Brazil, Bounes Ayres, for gold and silver; also to Portugal and Spain for the same, in exchange for ships, fish, wheat, rice, &c. ought to be encouraged.

But I am clearly of opinion, that we ought not to have any commercial connections with *China*, the Moguls Empire, or any part of the *East-Indies*. They have for their luxuries thro' all antiquity, been a drain of the wealth of the Egyptians, Grecians and Romans, and of every other nation that ever knew them; and since the discovery of anno 1492, round the Cape of Good Hope, they have been a constant sucker of the wealth of Europe, and the destroyers of the manufactures of England, and still worse, for her wealth has blinded England so far, as to make vast conquests there of Bengal, Orixa, Bahar, and the Carnatic. In short, of most of the vast Peninsula of India, and holding them by the sword of Britons, Seapoys, and others; and building numerous forts and castles, as well as keeping very large British fleets there, and yet amidst all this parade, India stock has long been falling in London, and the Company immense sums in debt in *India*, where their bonds sell at 30 per cent. discount, at the same time in debt to the Government in *England*, and applying for a *farther loan*. But though the Company is not prosperous, nor I think useful to the State, yet individuals, the adventurers of England, by the sword of *violence*, displayed equally *fierce* with those of Pizarro or Cortez, return with *Asiatic plunder* immensely rich; then get in Parliament to assist in overturning the *constitution* of their *country*.

All these are well known but awful facts: Is it then possible that the Legislatures of these United States will permit a trade to a country productive of so many *evils*; on the contrary, 'tis hoped they may be inspired with resolutions, absolutely to prevent all commerce with *Asia*. That an American shall not be able to go to breakfast without going round half the globe for it, is an insult to the wisdom of Providence,
who

who has supplied every country with all its wants, and to discern his beneficent hand towards us, we have only to lift up our eyes and look *around us*. But as British are the best in Europe, we ought always to prefer her manufactures, and never to forget encouraging our own linen manufactory, and for which we have all the materials, this should be our second great object of study and pursuit. The first I mean with all submission to recommend and ever to prefer, is *agriculture*, and which seems to have been dictated by God Himself—*Till the Earth*; and of this we have an inexhaustible treasure, and more than any other nation on earth can boast of, (Spain only excepted) and perhaps frozen Russia.

Agriculture is the first and most healthful of all employments, it is the great source of domestic riches; and where it is neglected, whatever wealth may be imported from abroad, poverty and misery will abound at home, for such is and ever will be the fluctuating state of *trade*, that thousands may be in full employment to day, and in beggary to-morrow: But this can never happen to those who cultivate the ground; they can eat the fruits of their labour, and can always obtain the necessaries of life; and once more to prove the advantages of this great *profession*, I will call in my Lord Bacon to my aid: Agriculture, says that great man, is the most natural way of obtaining riches; and when men of fortune become *husbandmen*, they often grow immensely rich, rich in corn, rich in flocks, rich in herds, in woods, &c.—so that the earth continually blesses the profession of the plough.—And of late date, the present King of Prussia, though born and bred under despotism, said, “I venerate the *plough*, “much more than a *ship*, and it is my will that four millions “of rix-dollars be distributed on very moderate terms, to “my industrious and frugal farmers.”

But to return, having thus considered and I hope clearly shewn, that from our imports infinitely exceeding our exports is derived all our calamities, and from which paper currency cannot deliver us, nor can they be removed by any other means than those above mentioned, and for which we have almost every

material; but notwithstanding this, we are poor with a profusion of natural wealth in our possession. That we are poor needs no other proof than our *Prisons, Bankruptcies, Judgments, Executions, Auctions, Mortgages, &c.* and the shameful quantity of business in our Courts of Law. From the late unhappy war, when all things were inverted, when *financeering, contracting, jobbing, agency, &c.* took place, diffipation brought up the rear, and the good sense of my motto from Mr. Locke, it seems is quite forgotten. But there are some sages among us, who I hope will vindicate the cause of *truth*, and of their *country*; and that they will let all the Citizens of these States know, that Great-Britain in the reign of Edward the Sixth, sent the wool of England to Flanders, there to be manufactured, and then the cloth returned and sold to the English, whose true interest was not understood or pursued, till the persecution in the Low Countries by the Duke de Alva; in consequence thousands of manufacturers fled to England, where they were received with open arms; from which time, manufactures increased, improved, and drew wealth from all other parts of the world. Let us then avoid the former ignorance of Great-Britain, as well as her *modern mistakes*, and adopt that part of her present policy; which gives protection, countenance and encouragement to arts and sciences.

But we are not without many persons among us who assert, that we can import goods from France, Holland, Hamburg, India, &c. cheaper than we can make them; and therefore conclude, that it is our interest to encourage such importation; but in order to convince them of their dangerous mistake, I will suppose a piece of Dutch or Irish linen costs in Europe forty shillings, which must be paid for either in our money or produce; but if a piece of equal quality be our own manufacture, and although it costs more per yard, it nevertheless is so much clear gain to the State, because the flax and labour of which it is composed are our own, but in the first case neither one or the other; and this being equally true in all other goods, most of which are made or prepared by women and children, it is therefore so much clear gain. But

But if we possessed an inhospitable climate and sterile soil, which refused us either the necessaries or conveniences of life, the arguments of such advocates for a foreign trade would have some foundation to stand on; and in such case, it would be prudent to follow the example of the Dutch, in becoming the carriers to other nations, and with such gain to procure to ourselves what we stand in need of; but as we are blessed with a country excelled by none, and equalled but by few, our real intrinsic wealth therefore lies in our *soil*; provisions we have enough: We ought therefore to turn our attention more to the growth of *flax* and *hemp*, and these with many other raw materials well manufactured will supply all our wants; but instead of such domestic trade, which would be attended with peace, plenty, happiness, and independence on other countries; I say rather than do this, we chuse to ransack more than half the globe, and in pursuit of such things as we can produce in our own country, and for others which we can do without, such as insignificant currants, olives, capers, figs, &c. to the Mediterranean; and there expose our property to be taken by the Barbary corsairs, which we have already felt, and our citizens to be carried into slavery to Moroeco, Algiers, and Tripoli for life, and which they are now suffering for our folly in search of the above very trifling luxuries; in which, if we persist, we must resolve to become tributary to pirates.

But in order the better to illustrate my meaning, I will suppose you, Sir, to be a linen manufacturer in any one of these States, by which you would have the pleasure of employing and giving bread to spinners, weavers, &c. your affairs would all be under your eye, and in a narrow compass, which every wise man would chuse; you would lead a tranquil, unembarrassed life, and could not fail of getting rich.

I will now suppose myself a merchant, with a ware-house full of Asiatic goods, as well as those of France, Holland, and Hamburgh, which are all loaded with commission, freightage, insurance, and many other charges: These goods I sell, and in order to make payment I build sloops to trade to the
West-Indies.

West-Indies for molasses; this I distil; and send the rum to Newfoundland, exchange it for fish, and send that to Spain or Portugal, in order from thence to make payment to Europe; or I send my rum to Africa, and exchange it (horrid to tell) for unhappy slaves, and send them to the West-Indies, in order to obtain a bill of exchange to remit to Europe: It does not require much sagacity to see, that all these adventures are full of anxiety, risque, and disaster; my vessels are exposed to hurricanes, fish is a very perishable commodity, and slaves often rise on the coast, or die in the passage; if any one of these misfortunes happens, I am unable to pay my European creditor. Now would not any man, who will allow himself a moment's reflection, chuse to avoid such a precarious profession, and embrace that of a linen manufacturer, which would not only be attended with more peace and serenity, and a much greater probability of fortune too, but he would also acquire great *honor*, as being an encourager of arts, and the author of plenty. In short, to use a homely expression, our conduct is like that of the butcher, "who run about in search of his knife when he had it in his mouth."

If it be said that my plan narrows our navigation, and will reduce the number of our seamen; to this I *answer*, that, added to our mutual intercourse on our own seas, we have all the English, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Danish West-Indies to trade to; in short, to all the western hemisphere, or new world. I hope this will be thought sea room enough, without going to Africa, or Asia; and that we may drop the idea of sending and maintaining at great expence Ambassadors and Agents at the different Courts of Europe, and with whom we have no business, nor ought to have; *England only excepted*, from whence we originated, and laying aside our late animosity live in peace with her.

To conclude, if, from what has been said, it appears that we have, in our commercial pursuits, been very much mistaken; and if we chuse to continue to indulge ourselves in the luxuries and expensive goods of *China*, *India*, and *Europe*, only because they come from far, and at dear rates, nothing
but

but inevitable ruin will be the consequence; in order to avoid which, we have no other effectual means or *remedy* for all those evils, but that of reducing our imports and encreasing our *exports*, the latter being properly encouraged by the respective Legislatures, will not only prevent the seizure and sale of our estates, bankruptcies and ruin, but it will, in a particular manner, operate on and extinguish our national debt, the burthen of which is the *great cause* of the uneasiness and complaint among us; and, in order to extricate ourselves from it, the States have imposed various duties on merchandize imported.---With submission to their superior judgment, I think they are mistaken; for such taxes, or duties, operate little on the foreigner, and none on the importer, but on the people; for the merchant will take care of himself; he will add the duty to the price; therefore the consumer *only* pays the duty. To remedy this, such duty should amount almost to a prohibition, (always excepting the goods of England) and then only our exports will exceed our imports; the balance then in our favor would soon enable us to pay off our national debt, which can never be done with *paper*, or, I think, by any other means whatever, than those above.

And, finally, by these means we shall prevent the destruction of our people by wars with other nations, which an infatuated desire for *useless* and *luxurious* trade will certainly lead us into, but which I hope the wisdom of the respective Legislatures will prevent.

F I N I S.

