

A N
A R G U M E N T
U P O N T H E
W o o l l e n M a n u f a c t u r e
O F
G R E A T B R I T A I N .

Plainly demonſtrating, that

I R E L A N D

M U S T B E

Speedily Imploy'd therein, as the
only Means to Recover its D E -
C A Y , and to Prevent its R U I N .

Quos Deus vult Perdere, Dementat prius.

L O N D O N ,

Printed for T. Millan, in the Strand.

M D C C X X V .

(Price Six Pence.)

AN

ARGUMENT

UPON THE

Woolen Manufacture

OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

Plainly demonstrating, that

IT IS NECESSARY

MUST BE

Speedily employ'd therein, as the
only Means to Recover its De-
CAY, and to Prevent its RUIN.

Printed by J. Smith, in the Strand.

LONDON.

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MDCCLXXV.

(Price Six Pence)

T O

ROBERT WILLIMOT, Esq;

Chairman of the COMMITTEE

F O R T H E

WOOLLEN MANUFACTURE,

A N D

To the rest of the REPRESENTATIVES
of this METROPOLIS.

W H O S E

SENTIMENTS and PRINCIPLES,

Unconfin'd and Generous,

A R E

Proper Qualifications for that High
Station to which they have been call'd by
the incorrupted Choice, and the unbiaffed
Judgment of the CITIZENS of LONDON.

The Guardians of our LIBERTIES,

The Protectors of our TRADE;

Of the one without FACTION; of the other
without PARTIALITY,

The following Lines are Dedicated.

ROBERT WILLIMOT, Esq.

Chairman of the Committee

FOR THE

WOOLLEN MANUFACTURE

AND

To the rest of the REPRESENTATIVES
of this METROPOLIS

WHOSE

SENTIMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

Unconquered and Generous

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without Partiality.

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Houses of the Oil-each has

AN
ARGUMENT
UPON THE
Woollen Manufacture.

A General Infatuation has of late Years seiz'd this Country. We court our Ruin, in every Instance, more eagerly, than other Nations seek their *Interests*.

The *Interests of England*, as they are now understood, are the *Interests of Particulars* against the *Publick*.

There is no *settled* Interest, no *National* Interest. It is *private, local, personal*.

Thus our *Maxims* are grown *Absurd, Arbitrary, and Contradictory* in their own *Nature*.

And our *Conduct* (the Result of these *Maxims*) such as runs counter to the very first Lights of *Human Reason*, *passionate, violent, and oppressive* to the *Minor Part*

of the Society, calculated by the *Major*,
fottishly also, to their own Ruin.

From having been bought out of *our Reason* in *grand Instances*, it is grown a National Habit to neglect the Use of it in all; and, from having been at first accustomed to part with it to our *private Interest*, it has fled so far from us, that we have the use of it no longer to direct us truly to any one Interest of the *Publick*.

ENGLAND has no Mines of Gold, or Silver, or of Precious Stones: It's only *Riches* are its *Trade*.

Trade cannot exist under heavy Taxes: Yet our Taxes are double what they are in *France*, even in Times of hottest War. They pay, at this Hour, under Eleven Shillings *per Head*: We, in time of Peace, above Twenty.

Trade cannot exist in a Country where the *Price of Land* is excessive dear, when the *Trade* of that Country principally arises from *its own Product*. Our *Trade* arises from our *own Product*, and our *Land* is dearer than in any Part of *Europe* (excepting *Holland*, whose Commerce does in no Sort depend upon it.)

Our *Trade* therefore cannot exist, *unless* our Taxes be diminish'd ----- Or *unless* we reduce the *Price of our Lands* ---- Or turn our *Commerce* upon *Foreign Product*.

Without

Without a *Revolution* our *Taxes* cannot be sufficiently diminished.---The *false Interest* of Particulars will never suffer the Second to be *effected*, till it *effects* itself; before which our *Commerce* will be lost. We have therefore nothing else to do, than to turn our *Commerce* upon *Foreign Product*; that is, the *Product* of Countries where Things are cheaper than they are with us.

Foreign Product is PROPER OR IMPROPER. IMPROPER *Foreign Product*, is the *Commodity*, or *Manufacture* of another *People*, entirely distinct from us in Point of *Government*, and in Point of *Interest*. PROPER *Foreign Product* (a wrong Term in itself, but used here to humour the narrow Notions of the Times) is the *Product* of *Colonies*, or *Countries*, united to us, or dependent on us.

Commerce, founded upon IMPROPER *Foreign Product*, is very *Expedient*, and very *Profitable*. *Commerce* founded upon PROPER *Foreign Product*, is more *Expedient*, more *Profitable*, and more *Certain*.

COMMERCE, in IMPROPER *Foreign Product*, employs an infinite Number of *People* in *Navigation*: Its principal Profits arise upon *Freight*, and upon prudently buying in *cheap Times*, to sell again in *dear*. The *Commerce* of *Holland* is, in great Part, of *this Kind*. The *Commerce* of the *Genoese* was antiently the same.

But

But *Commerce* of this Kind may lose its *Channel*, and suffer by many *Accidents*; and, with respect to *particular* Countries, be ruined by the *Wisdom* of the *opposite* Government. The *Profits* of it must be *less*, because the Nations you deal with being the *Root* of the *Commerce*, must have a *great Share* in the *Gain*.

But *Commerce* founded upon *PROPER Foreign Product* (or the *PRODUCT* of your own Colonies, Countries united to you, or in *Dependance on you*) is a *Natural Commerce*, and ought to be as tenderly *treated*, and as much *indulged*, as that of the *Mother Country*; having no *Difference* from *Her's*, but as *She* is resolved to make a *Difference*. It cannot be easily destroyed, but by *oppressing* and *distressing* such a Country; and *Oppression* and *Distress* will ruin *Commerce* where-ever it meets with it.

Its Profit is infinitely greater: For as the *Root* of that *Commerce* is our own, the *whole* of the *Gain* is our own also. The main of the Profit settles with us; so much only remaining in the Colony, as may be sufficient to draw in more.

Great Britain therefore has no better Choice, than to ground her *Commerce* on the *Industry* and *Product* of her Colonies, and Countries united to her, or dependent on her. And yet her *Maxims*, with regard to all these Countries, have been
violent

violent with regard to those Countries, and contradictory to their own Intention.

Violent --- Because against the Natural Course of Things ; which requires every Man to make the best Advantage of the *Product* of his *Land*---Because grounded upon manifest Force ; upon Laws made upon a People who have never consented to them---Because they cramp the Trade of those Countries---And because---That to forbid the Export of any Commodity to another Country, is to command it to be sold at your own Price, to yourselves, which is nothing better than downright Robbery.

Contradictory to their Intention, because they have manifestly produced the RUIN of the *Commerce of England*, which they affect to support.

The Reflections that arise on a violent, and contradictory Conduct, with respect to *Government*, are these ;

That such a Conduct must destroy our *Constitution*.

1. By alienating the Affections of a vast Body of our Fellow-Subjects, who envying our superior Privileges, will be ever ready to seize Occasions to abridge them, and to reduce us to their own Level of Ruin.

2. By obliging us to govern the People it is exercised upon, by a *military Force* ;
which

which *Force* may be as well employ'd against *our* Liberties as *theirs*.

With respect to *Commerce*, - which is more immediately to our present Point, such a *Conduct* must entirely confound it.

1. Because a *lively Commerce* is incompatible with a *Government by Force*: *New People* will never settle in such a Country, the *old Inhabitants* will fall from it.

2. Because *no kind* of *Manufacture*, or *Branch* of *Trade* will flourish, where *any* is prohibited; for Men are never satisfied, but that the Power which has abolished *one*, may deprive them of *any other*.

The *Genius* of *Trade* *sickens* under the Reflection of a bare Possibility of *Restraint*; and therefore must grow *very languid* upon Reflection, on an *actual* Restraint, a Restraint rendered perpetually *present*, tho' but by a single *Instance*.

Thus must the *Conduct and Maxims* of GREAT-BRITAIN, with Regard to her *Colonies, Countries united to her, and dependant on her*, destroy (not only the Liberty, but) the *Commerce* of those *Countries*.

But it has been proved, and is evident, that her own cannot exist, without it now founds itself upon the *Commerce of those Countries*.

It follows, therefore, that the *present Conduct and Maxims* of Great Britain, with respect

respect to the Commerce of those Countries, if pursued farther, must ruin her own Trade.

The General Conclusion upon the whole is this, that *Great Britain*, for the future, must change her Conduct with respect to these Countries.

IRELAND is the Chief of these Countries: She must therefore chiefly change her Conduct with Regard to IRELAND.

As a Merchant, in his particular Sphere, employs the *cheapest* Manufacturer he can find; so *England*, in her general Merchandize, must employ the POOR of *Ireland*, and the Product of *Ireland*, as the *cheapest* she can find.

And as Men pour Water into Pumps, which, once set moving, throw up Water in Return, as long as they require; so must *England* give Encouragement to *Ireland*; which Encouragement will render infinite Returns.

England has never exercised her Power over *Ireland*, but she has suffered for it.

The whole World see it in two Instances, which are the Principal in which she has done it.

1. The Act to prohibit *Irish Cattle*:
2. The Destruction of the *Woollen Manufacture* of that Kingdom.

The first is generally now allowed destructive.

The second begins, by its fatal Consequences, somewhat to open the Eyes of Men.

It was also seen in a *third Instance*; the Prohibition of importing certain Commodities directly from the Plantations to *Ireland*, without touching first upon *England*. But this Prohibition was lately taken off, after that Nation had laboured under the Restriction half a Century. During this Law, the Price of those Commodities, Pitch, Tar, &c. were so raised by that Difficulty, that *Ireland* paid above 100,000 *l.* to foreign Nations, for what they might have had, and now have, from our own.

The *Consequences* of the Destruction of the *Woollen Trade* in *Ireland*, were;

1. The Expulsion of 30,000 Manufacturers at once from that Country.
2. Their Retreat into foreign Countries.
3. The Establishment thereupon of the Woollen Manufacture in almost all Parts of *Europe*.
4. The Exportation of *English* and *Irish* Wool.
5. The gradual and notorious Decay of our Trade from that Hour.

From these Consequences we ought to observe, That the Decay of our Trade does not arise from the *Exportation of Irish Wool*;
That

That were to make an Effect a Cause. To ascribe the Misfortune of the Retreat of Manufacturers from *Ireland*, and the Establishment of foreign Manufactures, as a Cause, would be equally wrong.

These are but Effects of one fatal Cause.

The *vain Expectation* of engrossing the Woollen Manufacture to ourselves; the *narrow Principles* we have spoken of above; *Principles*, which, in proving *too much*, prove *nothing* but their own Absurdity.

The Argument which proves that any one Branch of Trade should be confined to any one Part of these Dominions, exclusive of the rest, will tend to prove that even that *Part* should be again divided to the Prejudice of a *Part* of itself. Thus, if *Great Britain* should argue that *Ireland* shou'd have no Trade in Wool, the rest of *Great Britain* may argue that *Yorkshire* ought to be excluded too. And thus we may argue down the Manufacture, by a Parity of Reasoning, into one *Country*, into one *Town*, into one *House* in that *Town*, and to one Manufacturer in that *House*.

And surely, that Argument which proves that the Woollen Manufacture of *Great Britain* wou'd be most advanta-

geous when there was but one Man employ'd in it, will hardly be allow'd a good one.

No! let us open our Minds, let us think in a more generous Manner.

Let us think that *all* Men have an equal Right to *Liberty*, and to all the *Advantages* of Human Nature with *ourselves*.

Let us consider, if *Power* could take away the *Natural Rights* of Mankind, what *Right* wou'd now remain to ourselves of *Freedom*?

Let us credit this *Truth*, that Nations are only *powerful*, in proportion as they are *united*. And,

Let us understand, that no People can be united, where *equal Liberty*, and *equal Advantages* are not permitted.

Monopolies are destructive to a *State*.

Kingdoms may admit of *Monopolies* as well as *private Companies*; and the most horrid *Monopoly* of all is, where, in a *Kingdom* compos'd of many *different States*, one State is suffered to assume, or engross any *particular Advantage*, to the Exclusion of the rest.

Such *Monopolies* are not found in *absolute Monarchies*, even in the *worst* of Governments.

But *absolute Monarchies* are the *only* Governments in which they may be *suffered*.

They

They cannot be maintained without *Force*; and *Force* may be allow'd in absolute Governments, because no *Liberty* can be lost.

But where *Liberty* can be lost, *Force* cannot be permitted, but *it will be lost*.

The *Liberty* therefore of *Great Britain*, depends upon the Freedom of the *People of Ireland*. And,

The Commerce of this Kingdom has been proved to depend upon their Liberty in Trade: What then shou'd give us room to hesitate, in granting them every Advantage with ourselves?

Is it that they are a *distinct* Government, and that this Circumstance renders it unsafe? But they complain, that our Laws have Force among them: If not, unite them.

Give them an equal Representative.

Make them the *same People*: The *same Constitution* must take away *all* Objection, if there shou'd be *any* now.

Is it the *Fear* of being underfold by them, that prevents this great Design?

Whose *Fear* can this be?

It cannot be the *Fear of the Publick*; for it is well known, that every thing gain'd by *Ireland*, must center here at last.

It cannot be the *Fear of the Publick*, because nothing but the Incouragement
of

of their Trade, can save our Commerce. It must then be the *Fear of private Men.*

And of what private Men ?

Those, whose *Estates* arise from *Wool*, those, who *manufacture Wool*. These imagine their *Estates* must fall upon such a Change: that the *Price of their Labour* will diminish.

But their *Estates* are now rais'd too high to suffer any *Commerce* to thrive, or to continue *in our Favour*; and their *Labour* is too dear.

If they will have *Commerce* then, they must suffer their *Estates* to fall, their *Labour* to lower its *Price*.

If they will suffer no *Commerce*, their *Estates* will produce them nothing; their *Labour* will not be wanted.

Which is then better? that their *Estates* shou'd lower in their Value, or that they shou'd produce them nothing? That their *Labour* shou'd *fall in Price*, or that they shou'd *never labour*?

They have ruin'd their *Estates*, and their *Labour*, by pushing up their Value. They must save them by bringing them down.

Had *England* no *other Cause* for *Ruin*, its *Commerce*, as it has been lately managed, wou'd have *ruin'd* her?

She has fatten'd with too much *Precipitation*, and there is a *ne plus ultra* in all Nature. Thi

This Truth is more evident in Trade, than in any other Thing. For that *low Price* of Commodities and Labour, which is the Foundation of it, is changed into the very contrary by its *Continuance*.

Little States may therefore soon be gorged by advantageous Traffick, and soon be ruined by it.

Great Countries have this Advantage; as they rise *slower*, so they fall *later*. But *England*, in the Management of its Commerce, has lost this Advantage, which was natural to her.

By *confining Commerce* to herself, she is in Effect to be considered but as a *little Country*. And, like a *little Country*, has been quickly *ruin'd* by it.

To have avoided this, she shou'd have admitted equal Profits to *Ireland*, that she might have grown up with her.

And to recover this *Error*, she must act upon the same *Principle*. She must submit to *reduce* herself: If she does not, she will be more severely *reduc'd* by other Means?

Let the INTERESTS of *private Men*, therefore no longer blind the *Publick*.

But these are not the *Interests* of private Men; they are *false Principles*, which the *Selfishness* of the Times renders favourable to the *Majority*.

Is it the *Interest of private Men*, to neglect a *certain Profit*, for *imaginary Gain*?

For *Gain* impossible?

For *Gain*, if possible, yet *destructive*?

A Nation circumstanced like ours, has been already proved incapable of engrossing *Commerce* to the Exclusion of its *Colonies*.

And such a *Commerce*, if obtain'd, has been proved *destructive*.

But to admit *Ireland* to a Freedom in *Commerce*, must be *certain Gain*: For *Ireland* wou'd gain by a *Freedom of Commerce*. And what *Ireland* gains, must center here.

Ay, but this must come out of some Branch of our own *Manufacture*.

As suppose their *Gain* on the *Woollen Manufacture*. This *Gain* must come out of our *Woollen Manufacture*.

Can we keep our *Manufacture* as we are?

If we can, why so much *Noise* and *Glamour* upon the Subject? Why such *Complaints* of *Manufacturers*? *Applications* to *Parliaments*, and *Committees* appointed to consider these *Complaints* and *Applications*? Why *Bills* brought in for many *Years* together to secure it?

If we cannot; How would the *Gain* of the *Irish* be out of the *Manufacture* of *England*?

The Gain of the Irish must be out of the Woollen Manufacture of those Countries which will *succeed Us* in it :

And who will *succeed Us* in it ? or rather, Who has already *got it* from us ?

France in the principal Part.

The Gain of the Irish, then, in the Woollen Manufacture, must be a *Gain upon the Manufacture of France*.

If to *permit* the Woollen Trade to *Ireland*, be a *Gain upon France* ; to *prohibit* the Woollen Trade to *Ireland*, must be a *Gain to France* : And shall a BRITON argue for the *Gain of FRANCE* ?

Could the *Irish* recover the *Woollen Trade* ? Rather, Can *We* recover it any other Way ? *If we can*, let us take *that Way*. *If we cannot*, shall we refuse to make *this Experiment* ?

But the *Irish* can recover the *Woollen Trade* ;

1. Because they *can* undersel our Rivals in that Manufacture.

2. Because if they manufactured at home, they would export no *Raw Wool*, or *Woollen Yarn*, to foreign Manufactures ; and, without *Wool*, or *Woollen Yarn*, of their Growth, those Manufactures cannot exist.

As to the first, it is evident that the *Irish* do it : They have a *clandestine Trade* in *Stuffs* to *Lisbon* : The *French* trade

thither also, and so do We, in the *same Commodities*.

The *Irish* underfel both the *French* and Us: The *English* Manufacturers complain of this *clandestine Trade*: The *French* dislike it with more Reason: For, if it were possible to prevent it, and it were prevented, the *French* would come into the Place of the *Irish*; but the *English* would be underfold *as much as ever*.

As to the second Argument, that if the *Irish* allowed the Manufacture of *Wool*, they would export no *Wool*, or *Woollen Yarn*, to FRANCE.

This is evident from the Nature of the Thing; *Men* study their *Profit*, and this would be manifestly against their *Profit*.

Wool manufactured is worth *five* times as much as *Wool unmanufactured*; and therefore to sell their *Wool* abroad, would be a *Loss* to them, unless they sold it for *five* times what they sold it for at home. And if they who bought it, gave but *one third* of that Price, they could not use it when they had bought it.

This all *Ireland* must see, and therefore unite to prevent it; whereas it is feared that all *Ireland* now finds it its Interest to promote it.

Impeach this Argument --- Allow some *Wool* and *Yarn* would still be run; Would not the *Quantity* be extremely *less*? Be-
ing

ing *less*, would it not be *dearer*? Would not the Manufactures arising out of that Commodity, in Consequence *diminish* in *Quantity*, and *augment* in *Price*? And what other Method can be taken, better to destroy a *Rival* Manufacture, than to *diminish its Quantity*, and *augment its Price*?

To pursue the same Question:

Is it doubted that the *Irish* Wool and Yarn be necessary to the Manufactures of *France*? We are told by all who are conversant in this Business, that they cannot carry on this Trade without it.

They may make very coarse Cloths with their own Wool, which may serve, in some degree, for ordinary *home Consumption*.

They make the *finest* Cloths with *Spanish* Wool; but the *Cloths and Stuffs* for *Exportation*, and *general Use*, are of a *middle* Sort, and cannot be made without a Mixture of *Irish* Wool. This we are told. This the *French* have acknowledged in the most publick Manner: But if we were not *told it*, and if it were not *acknowledged*, is it not self-evident?

1. Do not the *French* consume greater Quantities, at far greater Price, than their own Wool and Woollen Yarn can bear? Would they act so wild a Part as to do this, if it were not necessary to their Manufacture?

2. Do

2. Do not the very Manufactures of *England* depend, in some measure, on the Woollen-Yarn of *Ireland*? If they do! the Manufactures of *France* must do it in a much higher Degree: For the Wool of *France* differs far more than the Wool of *England*, from the Wool of *Ireland*. But whether they do, enquire of the Manufacturers of *Bristol*, and of those of *Norwich*; they will tell you that they cannot work without it.

To reduce also this Argument below its full Force;

Not that we may suit it more to *Reason*; but that we may render it less Obnoxious to *Prejudice* and *Passion*; let us suppose it only strong in *Part*; let us suppose the Wool of *Ireland* necessary only to *France*, for such Manufactures as it is necessary to in *England*. Would not the Woollen Manufacture establish'd in *Ireland*, confound the Commerce of *France*, for so much?

Is not this *Species* of Manufacture a very considerable Branch of the *Woollen Trade*? Would not therefore the Establishment of the *Woollen Trade* of *Ireland* confound the Commerce of *France*, in a considerable Branch of the *Woollen Trade*. As we now stand, are we able to confound it in any Branch? It is allow'd we cannot: If it is allow'd we cannot, shall

shall we not employ the People of *Ireland* who can.

Let me here observe one Circumstance?

In whatever Branches of Manufacture the *Irish* or *English Wool* is employ'd, in *France*, it works up twice as much of the *French Wool*: Thus one thousand Stone of *Irish* or *English Wool* produce three thousand Stone of *French Manufacture*.

If the *Irish*, therefore, were now allowed to work up all their *Wool*, they could but Manufacture one third of that Quantity. This is the only Quantity, or only kind of Cloth, in *France*, for *Exportation*, and the greatest Part of it is employ'd in *Exportation*?

All the Cloth of *France* for *Exportation* is thus destroy'd; yet the *Irish* gain but one third of that *Exportation*: The Demand for Cloth abroad must continue the same. There must then remain two Thirds of that Demand unsatisfy'd. Who can satisfy this Demand? *Foreigners* cannot, from the Nature of their *Wool*. The *Irish* cannot, because they have not Quantity sufficient. The *English* therefore must.

Thus do the *English* plainly benefit as much again, by opening the *Irish Commerce*, as the *Irish* can do themselves; for of the Ruins c^t the *French Manufacture*, two thirds must demonstrably fall into our Lap. Thus

Thus do we plainly recover the *Woollen Trade*, and that in a Way, for as short a Time, and in as small a Degree detrimental, to the Rents of *England*, or to the Poor of *England*, as can possibly be conceived. The greater Demand of the Commodity which must ensue, will keep up the Price of the Commodity, and consequently of our *Land*. The greater Consumption must employ the Poor.

If the Rents of *England* can be maintain'd upon the Foot they now stand, they will be maintain'd upon that Foot by this Expedient, which seems to promise to confine the whole Trade to our own Dominions. If they cannot be maintain'd upon this Foot, we shall have the Comfort to perceive, after they are once fallen to their due Standard, that they will daily rise upon such Foundation as will maintain them when they are risen.

But on the other Hand, we shall find that no other Scheme can have Effect: Our *Woollen Manufacture* must be totally lost; the rest of our Trade must follow. The Rents of the whole Kingdom will be every where reduced; a dismal Poverty, a general Distress, an universal Discontent, Faction, Tumult, Civil War, Anarchy and Tyranny, will sink us, by a natural Succession, into the Circumstances of an Asiatick Province, FROM WHENCE WE SHALL NEVER RISE.

I conclude with these Sentiments, tho' they appear contrary to the Judgment of the Nation.

1. A NATION will not grow Poor by Increase of Money. 2. A NATION will not grow Rich, by refusing to Employ any of her Subjects. 3. A NATION will never Thrive by Means which have brought her to Ruin. 4. A NATION may attempt Impossibilities, but will never succeed. 5. A NATION may persevere in an Error, till its Ruin becomes inevitable. May it never be the Case of this.

F I N I S.