



MARYLAND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The
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BALTIMORE



From Tuesday April 8, to Tuesday April 15, 1729.

(Numb. LXXXIII.)

The Original of the following LETTER from the Merchants in London, to the Gentlemen and Planters of Maryland, in Answer to a general Letter sent to them from hence, last Year; being sent by Capt. Finch, was lost with the Ship; and this being only a Copy from a Copy sent by another Ship, if any Errors have escaped the Pen, it's hoped they'll be excus'd.

Gentlemen,



R. John Falconar having acquainted Us, that he had a Packet come to his Hand from Maryland, directed to Micajah Perry, Esq; our Chairman, We, in Respect to you, had a General Meeting called on Purpose the 17th Day of last Month, when that Packet was opened in our Presence; therein we found a few Lines from Daniel Dulany, Esq; dated the 17th of August last, acquainting our Chairman, that by Order of the Subscribers of the inclosed Paper, he sent the same to him, in order to be communicated to the rest of the Merchants; which Paper or Letter, dated at Annapolis, the 14th of August, 1728, and sign'd by Charles Calvert, Esq; and 83 other Gentlemen, was then publicly read by our Secretary, and ordered to be recorded in our Books; and a Committee of 12, all Maryland Traders, were appointed to prepare an Answer, which has been considered and approved of in our General Meeting of this Day, and is as followeth:

WE are, Gentlemen, extremely glad, the Measures we have of late fallen into, of promoting the general Good of the Trade, appears so much to your Satisfaction; and we should be so much more pleased, could we acquaint you, that our Endeavours had met with the desired Success: No doubt, Mr. Darnall has acquainted you, that before his Departure from London, we had resolved, that no Tobacco, even the very worst, should be sold under Two-pence Half-penny per Pound: Since, Mr. Darnall's Departure, we came to a Resolution, that no first and second Leaf should be sold under Two-pence Three-farthings per Pound, and also that we should not, as in Times past, make a Secret of the Price; but to prevent our being imposed on by the Buyers, we should freely declare to one another what Prices we sold our Tobacco at.

But notwithstanding our Agreements made, by one Means or other they have become abortive and ineffectual, and Tobacco has been sold at Two-pence per Pound, or under: Thus, at present, is the State of the Tobacco Trade here; which brings us to reply particularly to yours.

As to that Part, where you declare your Opinions, that sending your Tobacco to Holland is of the most pernicious Consequence; we agree with you, and can with Pleasure acquaint you, that that Practice has of late Years been very much less off, and we hope, will be still less used; upon some Occasions it may be necessary, but the less goes that Way; we think, will be the better for the Trade: But finding you in this Opinion, makes us the more wonder, that Tobacco should come from Maryland directly consign'd for Holland; we hope you will not encourage that Practice for the future.

We are glad you so well approve of our levying Three-pence per Hoghead on your Tobacco; that Fund has been

and will be of great Benefit to the Trade, and you may depend shall be properly applied.

We come now to that part of your Letter, wherein you are so kind as to promise to do all in your Power, to promote our Interest on your Side, and particularly in the Dispatch of our Ships, which you truly observe have been very chargeable to us of late Years: And that you hope there will be no other Strife between the Merchants of London and the Planters of Maryland, but who shall serve each other most; desiring we might be free to communicate to you in a Body, what we expect or desire of you.

We greatly rejoice to see such a Foundation as this laid between us; what Happiness and good Fruits may not be expected from a Temper like this, every one to study to make each other easy; this is the Way to thrive indeed, and in this good Disposition we heartily wish you and we may remain.

To begin with our selves, we think it not improper to give you a true Representation of the Circumstances of the Trade: Know then, that London used formerly to have a much greater Share of the Trade from Maryland and Virginia, than of late Years it has had, and consequently, it was then much more in the Power of the Merchants of London to govern the Markets, than now they can pretend to; for very near one half of all the Tobacco that comes to Great-Britain, goes to the Out-Ports. Glasgow alone, imported last Year above 10,000 Hogheads, that gives them a Weight in Trade, that is not at all for your Interest; for they being Traders chiefly upon their own Account, and living at a great Distance from us, it cannot be expected that they will come into Measures with us to raise the Price; which we know by Experience they have not been very careful about; and that has made us wonder how they can, for so many Years, carry on a Trade, by which we know they must have been great Losers, had they nothing to trust to but the fair Market Price; most certainly they must have Advantages in the Customs, beyond what we are acquainted with, otherwise they must have been ruined long ago.

The next Thing on our Side to take Notice of, is, that the Quantity of Tobacco imported into Great-Britain, of late Years, has really been more than all Europe doth consume within the Year, which leaving every Year a Stock of old Tobacco upon Hand, has clogg'd the Markets in Europe; and that is another, and indeed, a grand Cause of the Lowness of the Price; for when the Quantity is so much too large, all the Merchants can do, will be but palliating Cures; the Weight of the Quantity will break our strongest Resolutions; not but we are sensible many good Effects must flow from a good Harmony, and acting in Concert among ourselves. We have now given you a Representation of the Circumstances of the Trade on our Side, and that brings us to mention, what we think incumbent on you to rectify.

The first and principal is, to take effectual Means to lessen the Quantity; how that is to be done, you are the best Judges; yet as you press us to be free, we will venture to give you our Opinions: We think there are three Ways of doing it, viz.

1. By planting less every Year.
2. By destroying every Year all the Trash and mean Tobacco.
3. By