

MARYLAND GAZETTE,

Containing the freshest Notices, Foreign and Domestic.

WEDNESDAY, December 9, 1747.

At the Request of several of our good Customers, we shall, as we have known, push in the following Performance, and make it the first piece of three or four Papers. It was written before the passing of the Inspection Law, and designed for the Press. As it contains some ingenious Hints, which may in Time be of Advantage to the Province, we hope there needs no further Apology for it's Publication.

An ESSAY on the Means of Improving the Trade of MARYLAND.

SECTION I.

TOBACCO is a Commodity which the Europeans are to extremely fond of, that they must and will have it, in spite of the high Duties that are almost every where laid upon it: Yet they cannot be supplied with it, in any considerable Quantity, but from this and the neighbouring Province. These are Circumstances which, if but slightly improved, might render Tobacco a more valuable Branch of Commerce, in Proportion to the Number of Hands employed in it, than the Sugar Trade; for in this the *French* are our formidable Rivals, but in the other we have no Competitors that attempt to appear with us at the same Market.

YET, of late, Tobacco has hardly cleared us of this Colony the Costs of making it; tho' in *Virginia* it bears an extraordinary Price. There are several concurrent Causes that occasion this Difference, which would all cease on an IMPROVING LAW.

I. THE principal one is, that the Tobacco exported from *Virginia* is all sound and good; whereas ours is mixed with a great deal of Trash, which can sell for nothing, yet pays as much Freight, Insurance, Commission, &c. as that which is merchantable.

II. THE Trash obliges us to sell our Staple to the *French* and *Dutch*, from whom we must therefore take just what they please to give us for it.

THE Tobacco consumed in *England* must, by reason of the great Duty on it, cost the Retailers about 8*l.* Sterling a Pound; and therefore, if they could be sufficiently supplied from *Virginia*, they would never run the Risk of purchasing any from hence; for by every Pound of Trash in a Hoghead they lose 8*l.* Sterling. For a like Reason we are in a Manner excluded from vending our Staple in most other Countries in *Europe*, and which are the best Markets for it.

BUT the Duty on Goods imported into *Holland* being very small, and laid on the Value of the Commodity, the *Dutch* take off a considerable Quantity of our Tobacco. The great Part, however, is sold to the Farmers General in *London*, who, in Consideration of a great yearly Rent paid to the Crown, have the sole Privilege of importing Tobacco into that Kingdom; and it being also retailed on their Account, they cannot suffer by the Trash, as the Tobaccoists do in *London* and other Places. But tho' they therefore do buy the greatest Part of what we make, yet being obliged to sell it to them, as our Trash excludes us from almost every other Market, and there being no other Purchasers allowed in *France* that might bid for the Commodity, we must let them have it on their own Terms: Nor can it be imagined, that for their Leavings the *Dutch* will give us a greater Price.

III. THE bad Quality of a great Part of our Staple, as it is occasioned by the ill Curing, unseasonable Pressing, and o-

ther careless Management, must necessarily lessen the Demand, and consequently the Price of it: Whereas, if it was all sound, and fragrant, the Consumption even among the *French* and *Dutch* would be much increased.

TOBACCO badly cured, or spoiled in the pressing, contracts a ranky, nauseous Scent, that must render it very unbecomingly, and raise an Aversion in the Masters to the Commodity itself. The Farmers of the *French* Revenue cannot but be very sensible of this; and in Fact, we see that they rather chuse to purchase *Virginia* Tobacco at almost any Price, than accept of ours at the lowest Rate, by which they run the Risk of disgusting their Customers, from whom they get near as many Shillings for a Pound of Tobacco as they pay Pence for it.

THE Reader will readily observe, that whatever lessens the Value of our Staple in *Europe*, must also sink the Price of it in *Maryland*.

IV. BUT there is another Reason why TOBACCO sells so low in this Colony, compared to what it yields in *Virginia*; and that is, the much quicker Dispatch given to Vessels, and the greater Rate in purchasing the Commodity there than here.

THE Notice given by the Inspectors for the TOBACCO of the neighbouring Province, to exceedingly facilitate the Exchange of it, whether for Money or Goods, that one Factor there can purchase, in less Time, and with much less Trouble and Charge, more Tobacco than 4 or 5 Factors can do here; so that a Merchant, who sends a Vessel with a Cargo to purchase a load of Tobacco in *Maryland*, is at four or five Times the Expence that he would be at in *Virginia*. And the Commodity being there collected in public Warehouses, his Vessel may be soon dispatched from thence after her Arrival; whereas here, a Ship sometimes waits four or five Months for her Loading. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if a Merchant would rather give 7*l.* Sterling per Hundred for Tobacco in *Virginia*, than 5*l.* here, supposing the Commodity in both Places equally good.

AFTER having observed, that the Shippers are affected by the Delay which Vessels meet with, but not by the Difficulty of purchasing Tobacco;

It may be objected, That the Freight from *Maryland* happens lower than from the neighbouring Colony; and that therefore the Dispatch given there to the Shipping can be no Reason why our Tobacco yields less here, or nets less at home, than that of *Virginia*.

TO which it is answered, That here the Master of a Vessel never signs a Bill of Lading but for the Hoghead; but in *Virginia* he is obliged not only to sign the Bill for the Hoghead, but for the Weight of it; and therefore the Factor to whom the Tobacco is consigned, must account for every Pound of it to the Shipper: But what goes from hence always sustains an intolerable Loss by the Weight. From whence it follows, that a Merchant who sends a Vessel here on Freight, which hardly ever happens but for the Sake of the Consignments, may gain more by taking in Tobacco at 14*l.* per Ton, than he could do at 10*l.* in *Virginia*. Therefore, admitting the Fact to be true, as I believe it is, on which the Objection is grounded, nothing can be concluded from it against the Assertion laid down, that our Tobacco must net less at home, than that from *Virginia* (and consequently must yield less here), by reason of the greater Dispatch given to Vessels in that Province than in this. I should be glad, however, to see so odd a Phenomenon in Trade accounted for in a different Manner.