

MARYLAND GAZETTE,

Containing the freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic.

WEDNESDAY, December 9, 1747.

At the Request of several of our good Customers, we shall, as we have Room, publish the following Performance, and make it the front-piece of three or four Papers. It was wrote before the passing of the Inspection Law, and designed then 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 in this and the neighbouring Province. These are Circumstances which, if but rightly improved, might render Tobacco more valuable Branch of Commerce, in Proportion to the number of Hands employed in it, than the Sugar Trade; for the French are our formidable Rivals, but in the other we have no Competitors that attempt to appear with us at the Market.

It, of late, TOBACCO has hardly cleared to us of this the Costs of making it; tho' in Virginia it bears an extraordinary Price. There are several concurrent Causes that this Difference, which would at first sight seem to be an Insupportable Burden.

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

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

TOBACCO consumed in England must, by reason of the Duty on it, cost the Retailers about 8s. Sterling; and therefore, if they could be sufficiently supplied with it, they would never run the Risk of purchasing it here; for by every Pound of Trash in a Hoghead 3s. Sterling. For a like Reason we are in a Manner shut out from vending our Staple in most other Countries in which are the best Markets for it.

THE Duty on Goods imported into Holland being venal, and laid on the Value of the Commodity, the Dutch buy a considerable Quantity of our TOBACCO. The great Advantage, however, is sold to the Farmers General in France, Consideration of a great yearly Rent paid to the King, who have the sole Privilege of importing Tobacco into that Kingdom; and it being also retailed on their Account, they sell it here by the Trash, as the Tobaccoists do in England and other Places. But tho' they therefore do buy the greatest Quantity of it we make, yet being confined to sell it to them, as it excludes us from almost every other Market, and gives no other Purchasers allowed in France that might be of Advantage to the Commodity, we must let them have it on their own Terms, for can it be imagined, that for their Leavings they will give us a greater Price.

THE bad Quality of a great Part of our Staple, as is proved by the ill Curing, unreasonable Pressing, and o-

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

TOBACCO badly cured, or spoiled in the pressing, contracts a stinky loathsome Scent, that must render it very unpalatable, and raise an Aversion in the Takers 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 Ease in purchasing the Commodity there than here.

THE Notes given by the Inspectors for the TOBACCO of the neighbouring Province, so 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 wonder'd at, if a Merchant would rather give 7s. Sterling per Hundred for TOBACCO in Virginia, than 5s. 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 home is 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 14s. per Ton, than he could do at 16s. 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.