

can do it? People are sensible of the unhappy Circumstances the Lowness of their Staple has reduced them to. And they are inform'd several Ways, (and many believe the Information) that Mr. Hyde has had the chief Hand in breaking the Agreement that was made for the Benefit of the Country. And, is it possible any one can disbelieve so many Information as we have had, because Captain Hoxton says he has a Letter which he has shewn to several, with which they were generally satisfy'd, the Contents whereof are confirm'd by the Letters of another Merchant; or because he says he will shew it to any one that desires to see it. For my own Part, I think it incredible there should be any Letter that will convince unbiassed People, since it is not made publick.

As to the Turn that is givento what Capt. Hoxton himself and Capt. Mudge said When they arrived, I appeal to those that heard them, if it be just or ingenious: And, if it be not, their Folly (since they are not Idiots), will not lessen their Credibility; when it was the Interest of their Employer (and probably their own) to keep the Fact they related secret. For the Proverb tells us, *Who speak Truth.*

The Virginia Story, I am in Hopes, will be put in a true Light soon.

The Captain, I find, attacks Mr. Ridley's Declaration very warmly, and tho' he thinks by the Imperfection of it, that it seems to him to have been lately trump'd up, and that no Body will give any Credit to it, I can assure you, Mr. Parks, that the Relation was given very soon after Mr. Ridley's Arrival at Annapolis; and that its Contents are believed by a great many, upon Mr. Ridley's own single Testimony. For his Acquaintance are satisfied, that he is a Man of too much Honour and Integrity, to belye Mr. Hyde, or any one else, tho' he were to gain by it. And the Imperfections which the Captain cavils at, are very trifling; they are only as to the Time of the Meeting, and whether Mr. Randolph or Mr. Falconer propos'd to enquire how Tobacco had been sold, and being cautious even in Circumstances not very material in themselves is rather a Mark of Truth than any Indication of Falshood. As the Subject in Debate, was of the greatest Consequence to Mr. Ridley's Country, 'tis no wonder that It made a deeper Impression on his Mind, than such Circumstances as I have already mentioned.

And as to his Charge against Mr. Hanbury and Bradley, which is said to be contradicted by the Merchants; what is it? Mr. Hanbury was tax'd with the Sale of between Twenty and Thirty Hogsheds, contrary to the Agreement; He told what he sold it for, and declared, that his Sale was conformable to the Agreement, as he understood it, but the Majority was of a contrary Opinion, that is, they were of Opinion, that the Agreement was not as Mr. Hanbury said he understood it. This is the whole Charge against Mr. Hanbury; and if he inadvertently sold so inconsiderable a Quantity as 20 or 30 Hogsheds for less than the stated Price, it could not affect the Market; and by all the Accounts that I have ever heard, Mr. Hanbury has been very zealous to raise the Price of Tobacco, and to establish it upon a good Foot. And therefore, to compare his Conduct with that of a Person who was charged publicly by a great number of Merchants, with overthrowing every Thing that was done for our Relief; which Charge he did not gainsay, is confounding Right and Wrong, and the Innocent with the Guilty. Mr. Ridley does not say, that he heard Mr. Bradley charged with selling contrary to the Agreement, by any one of the Merchants; he only says, that Mr. Perry charg'd Mr. Hyde and some others; and that he, (Ridley,) understood afterwards, that Mr. Bradley was meant as one of the others. Perhaps had Bradley been named then, he might have acquitted himself, as I suppose he did afterwards: But if he had been actually named, and had not denied the Charge, who would doubt his being guilty?

It will not be amiss now, to examine the Captain's Reasons and undeniable Proofs, that the Agreement was not broke, by Mr. Hyde.

I think it is very evident, the Captain either misrepresents the Agreements, or has a wrong Notion of them; for it appears by the Merchants Letter, that before Mr. Darnall came away, it was resolv'd not to sell Tobacco, not even the very worst, under Two-pence Half-penny per Pound; and afterwards no first or second Leaf under Two-pence Three-Farthings; which second Resolution did not put an end to the first, as appears beyond Contradiction in the said Letter. For, there they say, that notwithstanding their Agreements, by one MEANS OR OTHER, they (the Agreements) became abortive and ineffectual, and Tobacco had been sold at TWO-PENCE

per Pound or UNDER. The Merchants declare, that the Sale of Tobacco, by one Means or other, at Two-pence per Pound, or under, render'd the Agreements abortive and ineffectual. Captain Hoxton thinks, that selling at One penny Three-farthings, is no Breach. Let any Body judge who is in the right, and whether the Accounts of Sales under Two-pence per Pound, be not so many undeniable Evidences, that the Agreement was broke, and whether the Captain has given one Reason or Proof that Mr. Hyde did not break them.

A false Quotation is sometimes of Use, and Mr. Hoxton was in Hopes to have gain'd some Advantage by one on the present Occasion. The Merchants, says he, say, 'That the Largeness of the Quantity of Tobacco is the grand Cause of the Price.' If the Copy I have seen, be right, the Merchants say, 'That the Largeness of the Quantity is another, and indeed a grand Cause of the Lowness of the Price.' The Difference is very material; for the Captain, in order to support his Reasons and undeniable Proofs, would make the Merchants impute the Lowness of the Price, to the Largeness of the Quantity imported only; altho' it is evident, that they mention That as one Cause of several, that contributed to reduce the Price of Tobacco so very low as it is. And I believe, there are very few Men (if any) in Maryland, that are not convinc'd, that the treacherous Conduct of some that were intrusted with the Sale of Tobacco, was ANOTHER GRAND CAUSE of the Lowness of the Price.

Besides, can it be suppos'd that the Merchants, when they enter'd into the Agreement, were ignorant of the Largeness of the Quantity of Tobacco imported, or of the Effect it would have upon their Agreement? Can it be doubted, but they were satisfied that Unanimity among themselves and steadily adhering to their own Resolutions would have kept up Tobacco to the Price agreed on, notwithstanding the great Importation? If the Merchants really knew that the great Importation alone would render their Agreement ineffectual (and I can't think but they must know it, if it was so) their entering into it, was a mere Fisce. But I am far from even suspecting any such Thing; I am convinc'd they knew it was practicable to keep up Tobacco to the Price they agreed on; and that That would be a great Step (when the Country would reduce the Quantity and amend the Quality) to establish the Trade upon a good Foot for the future.

The Use of Tobacco, is become almost as universal as the Use of Bread; and there are abundance of People who will no more be without the one than the other: There are but few who have the Disposal of it; and therefore it is in their Power to sell it at a living Price. I think Mr. Falconer's Reasoning unanswerable; I will therefore borrow a Passage or two from him. 'No doubt, Methods may be found out to make good Terms with the French Agent; for we know the French want, and must have our Tobacco, as much as we want their Money. Therefore the only Dispute will be, which of us will have most Patience; I make no doubt the French will endeavour to tire us out. If we have less Patience than them, they will gain the Victory. On the other side, if we can stand it out but a while, the French must comply for they cannot let their four Factories at Morlaix, Dunkirk, Havre de Grace and St. Valery, stand still, and those four Factories, I am well inform'd, work up Eighty Hogsheds of British Tobacco every working Day throughout the Year besides what European Tobacco they use; and well it may be so, all France being supplied from those four Factories.

How then can the French be long without buying, so great a Consumption being daily wanted, and a great Tax to be paid to the King, which must be paid out of Tobacco; that there is for them no long standing still. Every Body is guided by his Interest, and no doubt, that will induce them to comply with our reasonable Request. Happy it had been for Maryland, if those judicious Remarks, and the HONEST ADVICE, were observ'd as they ought.

The Objection to that Part of Mr. Ridley's Relation Mr. Randolph's Treatment of Mr. Hyde, is very odd. Mr. Ridley declared, that Mr. Perry the Chairman, ask'd Mr. Hyde a plain Question, which he evaded giving a direct Answer to; that after he had done speaking to the Chairman several of the Merchants reproach'd him for having done so unfairly; and Mr. Randolph in particular, was very free with him: Mr. Hyde made no Reply to Mr. Randolph's heavy accusations, but sat silently by, in great Confusion, (a strong Indication of Guilt) after he had given his Answer to the Chairman. The Question which the Chairman ask'd him, was, how much he had sold his Tobacco for? which was a very plain one, yet he evaded answering it. He afterwards was