

T H E N^o. 108.

M A R Y L A N D G A Z E T T E,

Containing the freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic.

TUESDAY, May 19, 1747.

To the WRITER that subscribes himself *Q* in the Corner.

S I R,

I PRESUME, from the drole character you have assumed, that you expect to be answered in as drole a manner: But I shall be very serious; for the subject is of too much importance to us all, to be treated ludicrously.

You admit that our Staple loudly calls for a regulation, to destroy the trashy Tobacco; and do not deny that an Inspecting Law would be attended with that consequence; but affirm that a Burning Law would have the same effect: Now if it should appear to be a scheme that cannot be executed without great injustice, and that even then it would be impossible to destroy the Trash by it; I hope you will acknowledge that an Inspecting Law is absolutely necessary.

One hundred and fifty pounds of Trash, you say, is as much as is generally made by a taxable; and, in another place, that 1500*l.* of Tobacco is a good crop for one man. From these premises it follows, that all the Trash annually made cannot amount to above the tenth part of that which is merchantable. Yet it is certain, that the Tobacco made by such as do not ship it, but lay it out in the country, does contain a fourth or fifth part Trash; which is 300*l.* for every taxable that cures 1500*l.* of good Tobacco. Of this the merchants and factors are well convinced, from their own experience; otherwise they would not be so willing, as they generally seem to be, to strike off, after a Law to destroy the Trash, or (which would answer the same purpose) to prevent it's being exported, the fourth or fifth part of the debts before due to them. To lay that the value of the Tobacco will increase in a greater proportion after it is cleared of the Trash, than it will decrease in quantity, and that creditors ought to make a deduction on that account, is an argument that can have no manner of weight with them; as it would hold equally strong for clipping of debts upon a part of the commodity, either before or after a regulation for preventing any filth to be mix'd with it.

If the idea you give us of a Burning Law, every taxable that sends Tobacco will be obliged to destroy an equal quantity of Trash: Now if each should be obliged to burn only 150*l.* the half of what is made by such as lay their Tobacco out in the country would still remain; for they make 300*l.* to a taxable, as was before proved from the testimony of the merchants and their factors, who know best. Methinks I hear you cry out, How easy is it to remedy that! it is only compelling each taxable, instead of 150*l.* to burn 300*l.* of Trash. But then this difficulty occurs: Those who ship their Tobacco generally make no more than 150*l.* of Trash to a taxable; and should they be obliged to destroy 300*l.* for every hand in a crop, the tenth part of their labour would be consumed by the dreadful flames of this Burning Law.

It is natural to imagine it was in order to guard against such an inconvenience, that a great many persons, as you inform us, have already very wisely furnish'd themselves with great quantities of Trash. But you have another easy remedy at hand for that: It is only burning, you say, a large quantity for the first or second year. So a poor Planter, because he had not as much foresight as those prudent folks you have been telling us of; to furnish himself beforehand with a handsome provision of Trash, may have the greater part of his crop burnt; for by the large quantity that each taxable is to burn the first or second year, I cannot suppose you mean less than 7 or 800*l.* This was an objection of your own starting, and you have surprizingly solved

it: Tho' I really believe you would not have dragged it into open light, out of the darkness it lurked in, if you had chanced to have recollected how dangerous it is for a Conjuror to go about to raise the Devil, without being sure of laying him after he appears.

AGAIN, supposing for arguments sake, those heaps of Trash you speak about have only an imaginary existence, and that a taxable now makes but 150*l.* do you think no more would be yearly made after a Burning Law? Most certainly there would; for every Planter, before accustomed to mix up Trash with his Tobacco, might easily contrive to make enough to burn, without diminishing a single pound of his usual quantity. There are many other obvious objections against your scheme, that must occur to every reader, that will take the pains to consider it. Those I have mentioned sufficiently demonstrate, that this admirable regulation, which you so warmly contend for, would not only miss of it's designed effect, should it be passed into a Law (which Common Sense forbids), but would also be attended with great injustice, and much unnecessary labour in collecting, curing, housing, inspecting, and burning our best manure; which, however, you reckon as a mere trifle of a charge to the inhabitants.

The great concern you express for the poorer sort, than which nothing is more laudable where it is real, deserves particular notice. I have already touched upon it, and am going to give a clearer instance of that noble spirit of benevolence, that animates this wonderful scheme of yours.

The merchants and factors first deliver their goods, before they see the Tobacco they deal for; and in such case there will be always a good many Planters, provided they can make up the quantity, who will never trouble their heads about the quality. The sellers, to be even with them, and in order to avoid continual suits and contentions with their customers, raise the price of their goods in proportion to the Trash that they think they shall receive upon the whole. The honest Planters then perceiving they get no more for the cleanest than their neighbours for the foulest Tobacco, follow their example; in which I apprehend they act very reasonably. Hence it appears, that in all outstanding Tobacco-debts, the contracts were virtually, tho' not actually, for a fourth or fifth Trash. Now if what you assert be true, that a Burning Law would totally destroy the Trash, it would be extremely cruel and unjust, in the manner you propose it, without any reduction of the debts. How well therefore you have pleaded the cause of the poorer sort, on whom these debts lie so heavily; and whose advocate you would nevertheless have us believe you to be, I shall leave to their determination.

I MAY take another opportunity to consider your objections against an Inspecting Law, which, in my poor opinion, are still weaker, if possible, than your arguments for a Burning Law; and in the mean time remain,

S I R,

Your humble Servant,

A PLANTER.

A Copy of a LETTER from a Gentleman in Virginia, to his Friend in Maryland.

S I R,

Virginia, April 30, 1747.

A Friend in Maryland acquainting me, that you would be glad to be informed by some person in this Colony, how our Warehouse Law occasions the present affliction and prosperity of Virginia; I will endeavour to make the thing clear