

MARYLAND GAZETTE,

Containing the freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic.

WEDNESDAY, May 9, 1750.

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THE question now in agitation, between the masters and journeymen of the city of London, is of the greatest importance to the general trade and manufactures of the kingdom. One of the PROPOSALS in a late ingenious pamphlet, entitled, *An Essay on the Advantages and Disadvantages, which respectively attend France and Great Britain with Regard to Trade: With some Proposals for removing the principal Disadvantages of Great-Britain*; will not be improper for consideration.

PROPOSAL VII.

LET foreign merchants and tradesmen be encouraged to settle among us, by a general naturalization-act for all Protestants: If it be judged improper to admit them into offices of trust or power, it is easy to add a clause, that these privileges shall be confined to natural born subjects.

OBJECTION.

What! Must foreigners come, and take the bread out of our mouths?

What bread do they eat?—And out of whose mouth? It must be English bread; of corn which grew here; and the foreigners who eat it, earn it by their labour, and pay for it. The more inhabitants there are to consume the produce of our lands, the better can the farmer and the gentleman pay their shopkeepers and tradesmen, and the more manufactures will they consume in every respect. In the next place, out of whose mouth do they take this bread? If they introduce new manufactures, or carry those already established to greater perfection, the public is greatly benefited, and no individual can be injured. If they employ themselves only in such as are already settled and perfected, they will not defraud the mouths of sober, frugal, and industrious persons, who may work as cheap, and can work as well as foreigners; and therefore should be obliged to do both. None but the abandoned, debauched, and dissolute, who would chuse to be idle three or four days in a week, and want to have their wages so high as to support this extravagance, can make such a complaint. And shall they be heard? Shall we continue the exclusion of all sober and industrious foreigners, so much to the national disadvantage, merely to gratify the extravagant and unreasonable humours of such wretches as these? It is to be hoped we shall pursue more prudent measures, both for our sakes and their own.

We are told farther, that all English tradesmen, of every denomination, are used to live better than foreigners, and therefore cannot afford to work or sell so cheap as they.—Be it so: Carry this argument to a foreign market, and see whether it will persuade the inhabitants of that country to trade with you. A French and an English merchant are competitors, and rivals to each other, in the markets of Spain, Portugal, Italy, Turkey, and in short all over the world. The Frenchman offers his goods at 20, 15, 10, or 5 per cent cheaper than the English.—Our countryman is demanded, why he will not sell his goods as cheap as others? His answer is, that the manufacturers and merchants live better in England, than foreigners do; and therefore he cannot afford it. This is a most persuasive argument!—Undoubtedly he will sell much more by alleging it! He is asked again, why they will not in his country assist foreigners, who work cheaper, to settle among them, that so they may be able to trade upon an equal footing with their neighbours? To this he replies, that foreigners ought not to come and take the bread out of the mouths of the natives. Such kind of reasoning must give a high idea of our sense and discernment. Let us therefore apply the case to ourselves, and not argue in that absurd and ridiculous manner at home.

The admission then of foreigners to settle in our country is so far from taking the bread out of the mouths of the natives, that it is putting bread into the mouths of those who, otherwise, in a short time must have none: For the English must trade, at least, upon an equal footing with other nations, or not trade at all.—And then, when the not trading at all is the consequence, we shall indeed have no foreigners to complain of, but we shall have a much sorer evil;—and then, perhaps when it is too late, the most self-interested among us will be sorry that we had not admitted the frugal and industrious from all parts of the world, to share the gains of trade with them, rather than to have none at all.

But let us try all this reasoning by plain matters of fact. The town of Birmingham, for example, admits all persons to come and settle among them; whom, tho' they are Englishmen, the original natives of the place may as justly term foreigners with regard to them, as we like other nations by that name. 'Foreigners, therefore, and I know not who, came from all parts, and settled at Birmingham; and—took the bread out of the mouths of the natives.' What then was the consequence of this great wickedness?—Why, within these few years, the trade and buildings of the town have been prodigiously increased, and all the estates for a great many miles round have felt the benefit of this great accession of trade and inhabitants. Birmingham, from being a place of little consequence, is now become one of the most flourishing and considerable in the kingdom. And there is no town, with its exclusive charters, that can boast of so many skilful artists, as this which admits all comers. Moreover, there are fewer beggars in this town, Manchester, and Leeds, where all are free, than in any which has companies of trades, and exclusive charters. So true and certain it is, that these rights and privileges, as they are called, do multiply the numbers of the poor, by damping the spirit of industry, frugality, and emulation, instead of diminishing them. A manufacturer, who knows that no foreigner dares come in to be a competitor against him, thinks himself privileged to be idle.

The other instance I shall mention, is the case of the French hugonots, who fled from the persecution of Lewis XIV, and took refuge in England. But great was the outcry against them, at their first coming. 'Poor England would be ruin'd! Foreigners encouraged! And our own people starving!' This was the popular cry of those times. But the looms in Spittle-fields, and the shops on Ludgate bill, have at last taught us another lesson. And now, it is hoped, we may say without offence, these hugonots have been so far from being of disservice to the nation, that they have partly got, and partly saved, in the space of fifty years, a balance in our favour of, at least, fifty millions sterling.

In short (self interest apart), what good reason can be assigned, why we should not admit of foreigners among us? Our country is but thinly inhabited, in comparison to what it might be: And many hundred thousand of acres of good land, in England and Wales, not to mention Scotland and Ireland, lie either intirely waste, or are not sufficiently cultivated, for want of hands, and persons to consume the product. Our vast commons all over the kingdom, and many of the forests and chaces, might be parcelled out in lots, to such of the foreigners as chuse a country life; and the rest might find employment, in some shape or other, in the different manufactures. The natives of England likewise do not increase so fast as those of other countries; our common people being much abandoned and debauched. The marriage rate also is not sufficiently encouraged among us; and ten thousand common whores are not so fruitful (setting aside the sin of the parents, the diseases of the few children that are born, and their want of a proper and virtuous education) I say, 10,000 common whores are not so