
There are but two Wretches upon this Earth that cou’d write so Villainous a Libel as the Pretended Letter from a Member of Parliament. Both of ’em are already branded with Infamy by the Law. One of ’em never had any Principles or Morals, the other has had Principles indeed, but never any Morals; these Principles, he has basely Sold for a Precarious Subsistance, and while he pretends to Liberty and Fanaticism, he Labours with equal Industry and Impudence in the Service of Popery and France. How in the Name of Wonder shou’d this Creature know any thing of Trade, unless it was by Inspiration? Whom has he convers’d with for these Twenty Years past, that shou’d inform him of the Commerce and Wealth of the World, when during all that Period he has been the Abhorrence of the fair Merchant, and herded with none but Owlets, Bankrupts, Projectors, State-Quacks, Lighter-Men and Bailiffs. He had as good e’en throw off the Vizard and own himself a Jacobite or a Hireling, for there is no Man so dull but to see he will write any thing, do any thing, Pro or Con, according to the Cue that’s given him. Among ail the wretched Events that have contributed to make Fools of us, nothing is more to be lamented than Peoples suffering themselves to be amus’d and impos’d upon by a Parcel of Ignorant, Mercenary Scriblers, Fellows they wou’d scorn to Converse with in Person, yet in their Scriptions they are their Guides and Governors; Inconsistency and Contradiction, which were formerly so Scandalous in Argument, is now become the very Foundation of it; this Man only asserts, and that he calls Proving; if detected and expos’d, he asserts again, and that he calls answering. For my Part, tho’ I have no more value for his Masters than I have for him, tho’ I think their Merit to be much upon a Level, yet I have so much Respect for their Denominations, that I pity ’em for being reduc’d to the Necessity of employing so foul and so prostituted a Pen; but indeed the Cause is such, that no Pen that is not prostituted and foul, will have to do with it. By the Cause, I understand nothing but the Pretender and France; for the former, he has writ and been chastiz’d for it, for the latter, he is writing, and I doubt not, will one time or other, have another sort of Chastisement. Nonsense is, one wou’d think, a harmless thing, but when ’tis accompany’d with Assurance, and is laid in a Fool’s way, it does Mischief: A Fool cannot comprehend how a Man can be so Impudent and yet write Nonsense; Boldness he has heard is a sign of Truth, and not being able to distinguish between Boldness and Impudence, between Truth and Falshood, he mistakes the one for the other, and this Mercenary Mercator for what he pretends to be a Philosopher, a Wit, a Merchant, when in Fact he has nothing but Words and a Forehead to bring to Market. This his Chapmen know, but they know also that Reason and Merit are not of their side, and that such Wares as he sells ’em are at present most in demand with ’em, and most for their Purpose.

I hope we may be allowed to Vindicate a House of Commons, that has done such great things for the Nation, that has restor’d Credit, confirm’d Peace, and made us the Envy of Europe; so much happier and greater are we than all the Nations round us, yet this very House of Commons has he insulted in the vilest manner: The Majority is the whole, and the Majority have rejected the French Bill. I doubt not they did it for the good of their Country, and that all that are against them must be as much its Enemies as if they were Voted to be so. There are some very short Question[s] to ask, such as are so mad after a French Trade. Will Interest Lye, is Theory better than Practice, and Sophistry stronger than Experience? What signifies abundance of
Words, was there a trading Town in England that petitioned for that Bill? Was there a trading Merchant of Common Sense or Common Honesty that spoke for it? Don’t every Boy upon the Exchange know, that the One Article of Wines from France, will more than Ballance all that we can send them; and that for the Overplus, and whatever else you bring thence, in a Thousand other Articles, Paper, Silks, Brandies, costly Fripperies, &c. must be so much Money put into their Pockets, and that that Money amounted to near Twenty Millions, by a Medium between Sixty-Eight and Eighty Eight, prov’d to the Parliament in 1677 and again in 1689. This is the Fact, this is the History of the French Trade, this is the Consequence of it. And were not the House of Commons in the right, to hearken to the Petitions of so many Thousand Manufacturers of the Growths of Great Britain, whom the Bill, if it had past, wou’d have sent starving, if they knew any thing of the Matter, which ’tis probable they did, their Bread depending upon it, and the Bread of half the People of England. Is this a Matter to be bandied about by a Clerk to a Brick-Kiln, under the Protection of a Footman? Is it a Subject to be trifled with by a Wordy Declaimer? He has Two or Three Months been arguing against downright Fact; not a Line without a Lye in it; the Phrase is not a Jot too strong in this Case. Whatever has had an Appearance of Argument, has been answer’d over and over again, yet his Papers are bought up and sent away by the Carriers in Bundles, Carriage Paid, to Poyson or Blind the Poor Country, and make ’em believe a Bottle of French Wine is better than a Bale of English Wool and they will Thrive and grow Rich when they make Bonfires of their Looms, and hope for nothing but what we shall have from France.

’Tis a fine Employment a Man has, to take Notice of such Writers as these, Slaves to Printers, or such as have bought them Body and Soul, and use the poor Creatures without Conscience. But unless we wou’d let the World run away with wrong Notions of Things, which those Tools to a Party are always vending by Wholesale and Retale, we must animadvert upon them; for People seeing no Body meddle with them, are apt to think ’tis not so much out of Contempt as Fear, not because we will not, but because we cannot.

These Writers have got one good way to defend themselves from Attack, by making use of Her Majesty’s Sacred Name and Authority in their Odious Disputes; whereas there is nothing more certain, than that ’tis of such Licentious Scriblers, that Complaints have been so often made from the Throne; and never was there a more Scandalous one, than the Author of The Pretended Letter from a Member of Parliament, who treats so great a Part of that Illustrious Body, as so many Whimsicals : A License I never before knew anyone durst be Guilty of, while a Parliament was in being.

I am very well satisfy’d, he wou’d have excus’d himself of this Drudgery, had not the Man for whom he wrote, represented to him that he cou’d not Print his Lists without such a Preamble; and that those Lists wou’d put off Twenty or Thirty Pages of Scandal, which wou’d be so much the more Money in his Pocket. For as to this wretched Argument of his, he wou’d have kept it for the Mercator if it had not been to have mended his Bargain. There’s such a Pack of ’em, that one can’t guess at ’em without Blushing, to think one lyes under a sort of Necessity to have any thing to do with them.

Some Persons, says this Notable Author, have deserted Us, meaning the
Examiner, the Mercator, Abel, and the rest of the Labourers in that Glorious Cause. When Abel speaks of an Election in City or Country, to his good liking, 'tis We that carry'd it, 'tis Our Parson has such a Deanery, Our Squire has such a Post, or such a Title; and this it seems, is the Company these unhappy Gentlemen have deserted, for there’s not a Mortal Living besides them, that will own him.

The next Thing he presents us with, is his Bill, which being thrown out of the House of Commons, has no more weight with me than if he had writ it himself; so I shall not trouble the Reader about it, but proceed to his Observations.

This Honest and Ingenious Person, all along flatters the Whigs when he abuses 'em. He sets 'em out as if they had more Concern upon 'em for the Good of Trade and the Nation, than all the rest of the Kingdom, and as if they were so Cunning as to make their Neighbours believe so. He makes his Member say, You may be sure we heard little New in the Debates. By the way, he is talking of the Merchants at the Bar, who, we know, are us’d to debate Things as the House does in Committees, because 'twas apparent their Speeches were the Collected Sense of the Whig Party: And then he has a Fling at the Lawyer Lechmere, and the Sophister Walpole, Persons so infinitely below him for Quality and Merit, that I wonder he shou’d descend to be so familiar with them [...]