

The Case of the ENGLISH WEAVERS and FRENCH MERCHANTS truly Stated.

THe Design of the WEAVERS in their Bill, contained in the Preamble, is the encouragement of them in their Trade, which is confessed by all to be necessary, and very beneficial to the whole Nation, which they say is much discouraged by the frequent Importation of Foreign-wrought Silks, especially from FRANCE, most of which are privately conveyed hither without paying of Customs, by which means the FRENCH MERCHANTS are sufficiently enabled to underfell the WEAVERS in their Home-made Commodities, and consequently carry away the Trade of these Nations.

The FRENCH MERCHANTS, in answer to this, say, The WEAVERS of ENGLAND are under a great Mistake, and that their discouragement is not because the FRENCH MERCHANTS do not pay their Customs, but because the WEAVERS live too high, and are not so good Workmen, &c. And as the WEAVERS in their Preamble refer to the Customs-House Books for proof, so have they ingeniously done likewise.

Therefore here follows a true Account of the particular Entries of all wrought, as well as unwrought Silks in the Port of London, from Michaelmas 1668, to *dito* 1669, together with the Places from whence they came; by which it will truly appear, whether the ENGLISH WEAVERS or the FRENCH MERCHANTS are under a Mistake: And it is humbly submitted to serious Consideration, it being conceived by some eminent Merchants and Tradesmen in and about this City, to be a Matter of very high Concernment to Trade, and the general Interest of the Nation.

Wrought Silks, Forreign Manufactured, Imported from		<i>l. s. d.</i>
<i>Italy</i> — 39457	_____	3123: 13: 7 ½
<i>Holland</i> — 41057	_____	1002: 18: 3 ½
<i>East Indies</i> — 14370	_____	512: 8: 7 ½
<i>Flanders</i> — 226	_____	21: 9: 2 ½
<i>France</i> — 6400	_____	608: 0: 0
Total 71010 l. weight of wrought Silks, which in Subsidie paid the King		5268: 9: 9
Thrown Silk Imported and Manufactured in England from		
<i>Italy</i> — 87216	_____	3452: 6: 0
<i>Holland</i> — 2878	_____	113: 18: 8
<i>Flanders</i> — 3027	_____	119: 16: 4 ½
Total 93121 l. weight of Thrown Silk, which in Subsidie paid the King		3686: 11: 0 ½
Raw Silk Imported and Manufactured in England from		
<i>Italy</i> — 14553	_____	345: 17: 5 ½
<i>Turky</i> — 249502	_____	5925: 13: 5 ½
<i>East Indies</i> — 248	_____	5: 17: 9 ½
Total 264313 l. weight of Raw Silk, which in Subsidie paid the King		6277: 8: 8 ½
Ferret Silk Imported and Manufactured in England from		
<i>Flanders</i> — 7012 l. weight, which in Subsidie paid the King	_____	333: 11: 5
Total of Silks Imported and Manufact. here, 364446 l. weight, which in Subsidie paid the King		10296: 11: 2
Total of wrought Silks Imp. Manufact. abroad, 71010 l. weight, which in Subsidie paid the King		5268: 9: 9
Difference in weight between them — 293436 l. weight. Difference in Subsidie paid		5028: 11: 5

OBSERVATIONS.

Besides, to the Entries of Silks wrought up here, may be added the great Revenue that comes to the KING, by Dying-Staff imported, which amounts the same year to 91931. 6s. 8d. a great Quantity whereof is used in the Dying of the Silks here Manufactured.

It is worthy Observation, that the wrought Silks imported are doubly rated to the Silks that are manufactured here; so that there hath been entered at the Port of London, of wrought Silks 20101 l. weight less than one fourth part of the Silks wrought here.

Now the FRENCH MERCHANTS say, that we make not so many as they import, and it is too true; because we are prevented by their unfair Dealing: nay 'tis verily believed, and by some of themselves confessed, that we make not one sixth part of the Silks that are worn in these Nations; but suppose there were one third part made here, how greatly then is the KING wronged, and his Subjects, the Handicraftsmen, discouraged, when instead of accompting at the Custom-house for 60000l. per ann. and upwards, they pay but little more than 5000l. Subsidy? for the Additional Duty is not to be accompted in this Calculation.

From hence it appears, that the FRENCH MERCHANTS are greatly mistaken in their Grounds of the ENGLISH WEAVERS Discouragement in their Trade; for certainly 55000l. per ann. and upwards, with the Additional Duty added to it, escaping Customs, will enable them to carry on their Trade, and consequently encourage a Foreign Interest, when the ENGLISH ARTISTS must sit still, although as good, if not better Workmen than the FRENCH, as may be proved if occasion offers.

But to take particular Notice of the FRENCH Manufactures of Silks imported, if the Merchants and Traders therein be observed, they will be found to be most guilty of the occasion of the WEAVERS Complaint by their Bill; Therefore here follows a true Account of what they have entered at London and other Ports, from Michaelmas 1668, to *Ditto* 1669.

<i>London</i> 6400l. w.	} Tot. 364621. weight of wrought Silks, which in Subsidy paid the KING 34631.
<i>Dover</i> 29877.	
<i>Rye</i> — 185.	

It is modestly conjectured, that the FRENCH MERCHANTS Trade for at least double the Quantity in Silks more than the Natives, and yet they enter not one ninth part in weight of Silk to what the ENGLISH do, nor pay little more than one third in Subsidy to the King, so that did they make a true Entry, whereas they pay 34631 l. they ought to pay 62334 l. per annum; so that they pay 1/30th of their Duties in Subsidy 58871 l.

But if they object, that a great part of this Silk is wrought up in Ribbons, Laces, &c. against that may be set the vast Quantities of their Ribbons, Laces, &c. which are imported without paying any Duty, because prohibited: And besides allow them to take off one half, for the Manufactures of Ribbons, and Laces made here, which is the most they can reasonably do; yet notwithstanding they answer not their Duty by 29435 l. 10 s. per ann. in Subsidy, besides a Moiety thereof for Additional Duty.

It is observable, that far greater Quantities of French Silks are vended in these Nations than of Italian Silks, and yet enter not so much in Weight: neither do the Italian wrought Silks so much prejudice the Native Artists, because few or none of those kinds, or sorts, of Silks are here manufactured: But by the frequent Importation of French Silks and Stuffs (which are chiefly paid for with Monies, not with other Commodities) the English Artists are greatly discouraged, as from others, so especially from the making of Fashionable figured Silks and Stuffs, in which they are sufficiently skilful, and most inclinable to: therefore the Discouragement of the French Silks and Stuffs is chiefly aimed at by the WEAVERS-Bill.

These things considered, it makes the WEAVERS wonder that the FRENCH MERCHANTS should, in their Paper, say the King would lose 40000l. per ann. if a Seal for their Goods be appointed (which they know is the only way to prevent their Goods from escaping the Customs, and many other inconveniences by the French Trade) whereas by the Account aforesaid it appears, there was paid in Subsidy, for all Silks from Forreign parts, but little more than 8000 l. in one year.

Nor do the WEAVERS design a Monopoly (as is reflected) by this Seal, they being no way fond of that trouble, but willing to wave the same, if any other way may be found as effectual to the End designed by their Bill, that is, Security of His Majesties Customs and Encouragement to English Artists in their Trade. After a serious perusal hereof, it is hoped the FRENCH MERCHANTS Reasons against the WEAVERS-Bill, will be weighed in the Balance with the grand End intended; and then no question but they will be found too light: All which is humbly submitted.