

NECESSARIES;

BEST

PRODUCT

OF

L A N D;

BEST

STAPLE

OF

COMMERCE.

PHILADELPHIA:

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M.DCC,LXXVI.

NECESSARIES, &c.

*The following OBSERVATIONS were occasioned by this
Extract of a Letter.*

“ **Y**EARS are past since first you bestrid the
“ hobbies silk and wine, which seem to be in
“ full career; and sorry I am to see such speed, for
“ aught that appears, without any previous considerati-
“ on of the effects they may be attended with to the
“ community, in an extensive view. I applaud the
“ endeavours of your Philosophical Society, in general;
“ but in this particular, with some less mischievous ob-
“ ject had flattered their attention. In a conversation
“ at Bath, when I was last there, it was said they are
“ excellent objects to employ our colonists in; for, silk
“ and wine will come to us from our plantations, upon
“ much easier terms than we now obtain them; and in a
“ little time we shall be able to spare a part of them to
“ the European Countries that at present supply us.
“ The plantations cannot sell to any other than our-
“ selves.

“ selves ; therefore, we shall have their wine and silk
 “ upon our own terms, and be able to undersell our
 “ neighbours in Europe, so as to render it not worth
 “ their while to make them. * Much more past that af-
 “ fected me greatly ; rather on behalf of your children
 “ than yourselves ; who, it may be, shall have scuffled
 “ through life ere the fatal effects of your policy, in in-
 “ troducing the silken cord and luscious draught, from
 “ your once better employed fields, shall be fully
 “ felt : and I plainly perceived, rather indeed from in-
 “ timation than from any direct discourse, that the Ame-
 “ ricans are to be drawn, by degrees, into an humble
 “ state of dependence and submission absolute, by such
 “ employments as may divert them from a prudent and
 “ due attention to the raising *necessaries*.”

Notwithstanding the readiness with which the pro-
 jects for making wine and silk have been received by the
 numerous class of wine drinkers, and fond ones for no-
 velty, I, though a wine drinker, have not yet been
 able to reconcile them to my poor judgment ; however
 fashionable it may have been to embrace and promote
 them. On the contrary, some reflections in consequence
 of the hints in the foregoing extract, have determined
 me, with a view to the public permanent happiness, to
 declare my disapprobation of them.

It is a principle of sound prudence, whenever in mat-
 ters of government, law and commerce, any material
 alteration is proposed, that you beware of latent conse-
 quencies—be jealous of *new* establishments—look
 forward, and consider how flattering soever appearances
 are, what probably may be the mischievous tendency
 of

* Should this be accomplished, instead of wine they would make
 grain ; which would render them less dependent upon others,
 and we in particular should lose the demand for our best article
 of export.

of such new † projects when adopted. It is often better to drudge on in a temperate and middle state, than to aim at too much.

The proposed cultivations are intended to introduce wine and silk as an American staple; and should the attempt be crowned with success, their produce may, for a while, yield considerable profit to individuals; provided the hand of power should not by imposts, or some other way, clogg and burden it. That there is at least one other way, my friend has shewn by the intimation, that our English brethren would tie us up from selling to any but themselves, as is actually the case of tobacco, and many other articles of American land produce, which are already heavily burthened with duties in England. We have no assurance it would not be clogged; and if we had, it might become a question how far those who have recently committed repeated breaches of public faith, are entitled to our confidence, in a matter of so great importance as the parting with what is essential to our being.

The first and great essential in life is *bread*. Whenever we shall surrender that—throw away the sickle for the pruning knife and silk reel; for the making fine wines and fine silk materials for our task-masters, that they may more readily besot and bedeck themselves; and in the end, through our pinching necessities, which must follow, govern us with a bit of bread, then may they tax at pleasure and command like true musselmen. We should have but little spirits to claim, much less support constitutional rights, and it would be as ridiculous to talk of them, as it would be for the meagre Spaniard or Italian, who, with their bunnel and husks of grapes, are just enabled to drudge through a dark, dull, slavish life.

Unfortunate

† “ It is not easy to determine, upon theory, the success of political innovations.” PRINC. P. L.

Unfortunate brethren! to be thus deluded and debased by the arts of tyranny.

Being, from such a surrender, reduced to want bread, how could our dejected minds contradict or disobey the most oppressive mandates of a Grand Vizier? I would suppose that with our silk and wine we have, like the poor peasants of South Europe, made some bread: but our labour and attention being, by the artifices of those called politicians (too often enemies to plain honesty and liberal sentiment) *diverted*, more especially to the purpose of raising *luxuries*, which will neither sufficiently feed or cloath us, we have, alas! only aimed at a scanty stock of grain, barely for our respective country family's consumption, and falling a little short in that, become miserably dependent on strangers*, for the *surplusage of their necessaries of life*: these we are to purchase with our wine and silk, which they are under no necessity of buying—or may chuse to get of others, when so disposed by starts of ill humour towards us; whilst, from our starving condition, we are necessitated, not only to buy their bread—to give their price, but to sell our articles of luxury, the product of our novel employment, to them, and to them only, at their poor offer, when they may be pleased to call for them. Our people who shall

* Italy formerly exported corn; but afterwards became *dependent on other countries for its daily bread*: This is ascribed by the Roman authors to the *neglect of tillage*.

Columel. Præf. Sueton. August. C. 42. &c.

“ The country about Volisso, in the island of Chio or Sciros, in the Archipelago, is very pleasant, spacious and *fruitful*, the inhabitants raise 5000 weight of silk yearly, *with which they pay their tribute*. ’Tis thought they lie under a curse of being *always destitute of bread*.” *Thev. Trav. to Lev.*

The curse is no more than the natural consequence of their neglecting to cultivate a fruitful country for raising the gew-gaw silk. Had the tribute been reserved in wheat, their attention being thereby drawn especially to that object, the curse of wanting bread would never have fallen on them.

shall then live in the poor remains of once flourishing towns, at all times, and those in the country, as often as accidents shall happen to their scanty pitched crops, must gape for the arrival of ships with corn from abroad*.

View the state of the southern countries of Europe:— all Italy, Spain, Portugal, great part of France. and till lately that the cultivation of corn became the first object of the attention of its government, the whole of France. employing their chief attention and labour in making silk and wine: and though they are fine countries for producing wheat, and some is made in them, yet, not aiming at *that article as a staple* of commerce, how constantly are they in want of, and how dear do they pay for bread †.

In the war immediately preceeding the last. France, in the midst of almost uninterrupted victories and conquests, whilst her labor and attention were much engaged by wine and silk, was compelled to make peace, and

* “ We can have no wheat so good as our own, although as good may be shipped from abroad. By a sea carriage it is liable to many accidents. Some years since in a *scarcity in New-England*, wheat was imported from England; but from the *long Westward* passages it became musty, cast dark, and did not answer.”
Douglass.

† “ It may seem an odd position, says Mr. Hume, that the poverty of the common people of France, Spain, and Italy. is, in some measure, owing to the superior riches of the soil and happiness of the climate; and yet there want not many reasons to justify this paradox. The *fine vineyards* of Champaign and Burgundy, are cultivated by *peasants that have scarce bread*. But the farmers and graziers are in better circumstances in those countries.”
Hu. Ess.

“ Connecticut is valuable for *grain and pasture*. Any country is happy where the meaner people are *plentifully and wholesomely fed*, and *warmly and decently clothed*; thus it is in Connecticut.”
Douglass.

and relinquish all her fine prospects, merely from a great *scarcity of corn* in that kingdom: when her enemies had only the barren island of Cape Briton to deliver up in exchange; whereas it might well be thought that Madras alone, then in her hands, was an equivalent. Ever since that fore-felt scarcity, it has been her policy to encourage the making of corn, preferable to all other produce; seeing and feeling, as we may suppose, that however great or flourishing they may be in other respects, *bread being wanting submission must follow*. This is an axiom applicable to individuals as well as to provinces and kingdoms†.

A celebrated author reckons it bad policy in the English to obstruct the use of French wines: and would encourage the French to turn their labor to the making more wines, by the free use of them in England; because each new acre of vineyard planted in France, in order to supply England with wine, would make it requisite for the French to take the produce of an English acre sown in wheat, in order to subsist themselves: “and it is evident, that we have thereby got the command of the better commodity.” Apply this to the lure now hung out to America‡. Why would our countrymen on the other

† “After the battle of Blenheim, the French army wanted large recruits, and there being a great scarcity of bread in the country, the French King ordered his public stores of bread to be well taken care of. The soldiers alone were well fed out of them; whilst the country people were starving, which occasioned them, through necessity, to flock to the army and enlist in crowds.” 2 *Ha. Hus.* 338. Here then, we have an instance of the application to private, as the text is of a public submission for want of bread, and that too in the same country.

‡ Hints and intimations were thrown out, from England, of immense riches to America, should she employ her attention in making wine and silk. Such a spirit as James I. attempted to infuse in the minds of the English nation, was now to be caught by the

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other side the water, coax us to drudge in articles on which we may starve? Have we any reason to conclude, especially from the present Asiatic temper of their rulers, that there is in the project the least regard for our welfare? Rather may we not suppose that the *benevolent* motive is pointed out, above, by Mr. Hume; when, what he would that England should do by her implacable enemy France, that she would now do by us;—cajole us out of the *command of the better commodity, necessary to our existence*, and make it requisite for us to take

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the Americans.—But they are employments equally inconsistent with the genius of this people as of that, and it is hoped that nothing will lead this manly people into so dangerous an employment. Like their English ancestors, they are too wise and considerate to enter into such an effeminate business as silk making especially.

In the time of the same James of England, the silk raised in France, yielded such an immense *apparent* profit, that our effeminate King repeatedly recommended it from the throne, to raise Silk worms in England: But the nation was too prudent to be influenced to it by the Royal recommendation, although it was, perhaps, more earnestly pressed by him and his servants than any other matter—even by the judges on the circuits, however foreign to their office: and there could be no doubt of the Silkworm thriving and working as well in England as in other parts of Europe: as appeared by many experiments, besides what are recorded by the Philosophical Society, in their transactions. It was not many years ere that brilliant business began to decline greatly in France, where it is now quite trifling compared with its then vast extent; for “the profit being *little else than apparent*, was not realized.” Why did England reject the Royal scheme, for making her rich?—It was against the genius of a free and manly people.—An employment fitted only to an effeminate and poor spirited people. Hence we may observe that, all the world over, the making of silk mostly flourishes among people of that stamp, who are every where in a state of miserable oppression or slavery. The very nature of the employment tends to enervate that hardiness and vigour, which is the general effect of manly labour, and to effeminate the nation that unhappily stumbles on it.

the product of *her acres* of WHEAT, in order to subsist ourselves*. He further says, there “are many edicts of the French King, prohibiting the planting new vineyards, and ordering those lately planted to be grubbed up; so sensible are they of the *superior value of corn above every other product.*”

Let it not be said, I am so extravagant as to contend we should be wholly employed in making corn, and nothing else: it would be a design too unnatural for any legislative authority to enforce. My meaning is, that we drop not, nor even relax from, *the staff of life*:—that we so far attend to raising, within ourselves, a plenty of heart-cheering subsistence, as to make luxuries and delicacies subservient to it; and not that any of the *necessaries*, our first care, should depend on them. I am, too, for preserving the connection with Great-Britain. But it may be expected she will allow us to be men who have rights; and having feelings, such as she once had, that she will forbear to play the tyrant over us. Let America, when her constitutional freedom shall be *secured*, support the true interests of her parent: She is old, drinks hard, and her constitution is much impaired; and having litigious neighbours, let us exert ourselves in her defence, not barely in proportion to her sickly state, but to her justice and public virtue; and let affection accompany it—when possible! Let the commerce between us be so regulated, that whilst we render her raw materials
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* If from their excessive luxury and their endless manufactories, consumers of bread among them, should be in too great proportion to their corn-makers, for these to supply them and us also with wheat: yet the subjecting us to a dependence on them for bread, would be answered by foreign wheat, purchased and sent to us in their ships; They have been used to buy of us, to send to foreigners; why not buy of other foreigners to sell to us? They are not to be deterred by the price to be given, whilst we must buy of them at any rate.

for her manufactories, she grudge us not an independent security of our property, and such a share of foreign commerce as will enable us to pay for those materials returned to us manufactured for use, burthened, as they would be, with the internal taxes of England, and with the high profits necessary to support the luxurious living of Messieurs the merchants, the mariners, gentlemen—tradesmen, gentlemen scavengers, and other gentlemen, down to the shoe-black.—If this be denied to us, then it becomes not our choice but necessity, to disuse her wrought-goods, and to manufacture the raw materials for our necessary occasions; further I hope we shall not attempt. It is not the proper business of an infant country to engage in the manufacturing materials *for articles of commerce*. We want lands cleared and improved. The most natural, most advantageous article of trade, to us, is the produce of our farms; which ought of choice to consist in necessaries; *corn, cattle, wool, hemp, flax, saltpetre, &c.*—Let these, and such like, be our staple of commerce; and let even the wool, hemp, and flax go in gross, to England, so long as she will leave to us a trade elsewhere open, to enable us to buy her wrought wares. When this regulation, so beneficial to the Mother Country, is refused, if we have been so provident as to have made necessaries our staple, we shall have the comfort to find our hands full of materials for our own necessary consumption—I should say salvation! with these, we may be warm and robust, which with wine and silk alone we cannot. Here then is an advantage in choosing the “better commodities” for staples of trade, in attempting to raise all we can, a safe game is played: we have a moral certainty of our real wants being ever supplied; and, generally, if not at all times, there will be a *surplusage of those necessaries to exchange with others for their delicacies and luxuries*, whereby our imaginary or artificial wants would also be gratified.—Nor am I indifferent to a glass of good wine:

I admire, and am feldom without it; but it is obtained in a way that America ought only to get it: by a commerce and exchange of a *surplusage of necessaries* for that delicious juice.

Should I ever be without such surplusage, which has not yet been the case (for my ground yields abundant corn!) then I shall only miss of, for a time, what I can always do without. Nor yet do I carry my objections so far, but that those gentlemen who have the opportunity, may proceed in wine-making, for amusement or for family use: and even, should the humour so run, for general internal consumption: though, perhaps, it were better not carried so far as this, for fear we should reach to exportation.

The question has been repeatedly asked: “would you have every body make grain?” I have declared it cannot be; a law to that purpose would be as ridiculous as inconsistent with the various dispositions and humours of men. And yet too much cannot be made. Mountains of grain would invite a market. But husbandmen will in these cases ever choose for themselves; all that I say is, let not our provincial legislators, or men of influence, mislead the people, by encouragements of any sort, to labour in making for the principle commodities, articles of luxury; but rather dissuade them from it: and let the fat farmer be on his guard, nor part with his staff, “the better commodity” for vines and worms§.

It

§ It is not thirty years since wheat first became a considerable object of exportation, in Maryland; nor twenty since Virginia first attended to it. Before these times, acts of assembly were not unfrequent for prohibiting exportation of corn, from the scarcity of it to answer the necessary wants of the country; and so inconsiderable was the quantity of wheat, and it was so unusual to export

It is said that silk would be mostly womens work. 'Tis true; but, if our wives and daughters were to raise as
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port it, that the prohibitory acts chiefly affected indian corn;—scarcely touching wheat. The people of these countries were then poor and spiritless to what they now are. Tobacco and indian corn engrossed the planters whole attention. Of tobacco, they constantly aimed at making all they could; all Dung was for tobacco ground;—not a scrap for grass or grain; their cattle indeed were numerous; but being usually hide-bound for want of food, made not *much* dung: They were apt to take an ugly disorder in the spring of the year;—they could not eat,—could not chew the cud—for want of food,—they died. Of corn the planters aimed at making but little or no more than might suffice themselves, their Negroes and beasts: more would interfere with the quantity of tobacco.—So would wheat interfere with wine, and wine with wheat. What of their corn they had to spare—it was but sometimes, and seldom much, was purchased with a little rum:—The tobacco, by English or Scotch stores of dry goods; or it was shipped in driblets, to London, on consignment, the planters receiving returns according to the cunning of their factors there. But so much was sold in the country to those stores, or rather bartered for family necessaries, and too often for luxuries, that many planters, at the end of the year, had nothing they could call their own, except their lands and utensils of husbandry; and not always these. They were strictly delvers,—planters for Britain;—always in debt, year over year;—begging indulgence,—cringing for more credit, and humbling themselves before foreign factors, and their boys;—who being birds of passage had no feelings for the interests of the country—they rather poisoned the minds of the planters from behind their counters, with principles and opinions inimical to American rights and the planters own interests, in favour of that people—that parliament—which was to second the views of those very factors and the British merchants as often as they should call for aid, to facilitate their designed advantages over the planters—“our planters”—as they call the Americans. It was a striking instance of wheat being the “better commodity.” that, as the cultivation of it advanced among us, the demand, and of course the price, increased: and whilst, by its means, the upper counties of Maryland were enjoying plenty, and a cheerful independence, being emancipated from the tobacco stores, the lower counties, still continued for years, the cringing mortgagers
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much silk as would, from its high price, purchase a plenty of cloathing and food. the men, after a while, would undoubtedly become idle and indifferent to any other produce; our lands would be but little, if at all, cultivated and improved and the women performing, within a few weeks, the business of raising worms, would become equally lazy and worthless for the rest of the year;— and, by degrees, both men and women would be ignorant of husbandry and housewifery. Nor could their silk more readily purchase necessaries and all we should want, than money would. Suppose then mountains of guineas open to all the people of this country with which they should purchase what at present they labour in the fields to make: Can any be at a loss to conceive the wretchedness and dependency in which a country of people, so circumstanced, would presently be plunged!— how totally ignorant the next generation, of agriculture, commerce, and the arts. “The riches and safety of a country consist not alone in the number of its inhabitants, but of those *well employed.*” Look to Spain—to New Spain and its rich mines;—see the crawling ignorant Spaniard!—our oppressed, necessitous, and unhappy neighbours!

It is probable, that in another century, silk, with other fine materials, and even manufactured goods, will be articles of commerce, from the mountaineers, back of Carolina, and other places, far from navigation, and not bulky, cheap and heavy articles, because of a long land

to British merchants; and, perhaps, are not quite clear of them, in some counties, at this day. Thus, as the progress of wheat making travelled southward, the people became daily more improved in their sentiments, manner of life, and independency. Between tobacco and hemp—how great the contrast! Tobacco, a luxury, hemp, a necessary, in universal demand! It is in these, and in every sense the planter and politician can examine it, “the better commodity.”—for private, and for public advantage!

land carriage; whilst all heavy, gross, and cheap articles, will be from the countries most convenient to navigation: of which corn is one. as being too heavy for its price. to bear a very distant land carriage. Let us then, for as yet we have little else improved than the maritime country. retain our bulky produce of *necessaries*, for the staple of commerce. The more bulky, the better for the country exporting it; because it employs more labour and shipping; Wheat is therefore better than silk, as well as for the before mentioned reasons. Tobacco (although a luxury by the bye) is better than the luxury furr;—rice better than indigo.

Perhaps the chief export produce of the maritime country between Connecticut and James river, will be wheat and flour;—of the Carolinas, Georgia and the Floridas. rice;—Massachusetts, and other parts of New-England, fish, cattle, and horses;—the Mississippi, lumber, iron, and hemp---in ships built there.

As to the success of the present design of raising silk, I am not without hope. it will fail in Pennsylvania, as it has in Carolina and Georgia, notwithstanding the industry used to induce the country people to bend their attention to it. The Carolinas went heartily to work to enrich themselves. *in a hurry*. by making silk; but in fourteen years they exported only 251lb. of raw silk; and in the same time imported the extravagant quantity of 26781lb. wrought for apparel. This I take from a state of Carolina published in London. in 1761, which seems to be the production of a Governor of that colony. I hope the following reflection of his will not be disagreeable, although somewhat foreign: “ I cannot help
 “ expressing my surprize and concern, to find that there
 “ are annually imported into this province, considera-
 “ ble quantities of Flanders lace, the finest Dutch linens
 “ and French Cambricks, chintzes, hyson tea, and
 “ other

“ other goods, silk, gold and silver lace, &c. by which
 “ means we are kept in low circumstances. and though
 “ it may have the appearance of being for the present,
 “ beneficial to the British merchants. yet it retards our
 “ increase, both in people and wealth. and consequent-
 “ ly renders us less profitable to Great-Britain; for the
 “ riches of all colonies, must at length center in the mo-
 “ ther-country.”

It is said, in all countries there are spots of land too poor for any other cultivation than the vine:—and that it is the case in the colonies: I can only declare, I know of no such soil in our America I affirm, there is no soil suitable to the vine, that will not produce some other *more necessary* plant. You have heard of this and that island, or part of some country, poor and rocky, producing delicious wine:—they are wine countries;—countries, where that culture has been introduced by despotic influence, and is rivited on the backs of the miserable inhabitants:— *they want bread*. There are other countries, equally portioned with rocks and poverty of soil, in as good climates:—these produce no delicious wine---no wine at all, or none for exportation, but they yield the necessaries of life in greater abundance; *they have bread!* and enjoy some freedom---consolation at least. The truth is, where, of lands very poor and rocky, you cannot cultivate above one acre; of better, clear of rocks, you can cultivate an hundred acres, or more; in this you sow fields of grain; in the other you are confined from sowing grain, sufficient even for your little family's consumption. You then look for a plant that will yield much of something from little land:---this something in your country, has hitherto, usually been the grape. But the vine requires manure: it will not answer without it; and your acre of grapes requires as much labor and attention as the hundred acres of corn. If poor land is the best
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for the vine, it is so only with the addition of good manure and the highest cultivation. Cultivate the poorest ground equally well, and look about for some plant of more necessary use:—suppose hemp, flax, grass, cotton, &c. But why hazard the happiness and independency of the country, by introducing the vine culture, in order, niggardly, to disturb the repose of a few acres of the very poorest land, when a vast continent teems with better!—Thousands—millions of poor land lay waste and uncultivated in the best countries of Europe, and of all the world; and in the less happier countries, millions of acres, better and more improveable, are equally neglected.—If, still, you are determined to cultivate the grape, for making wine, you will choose the land best adapted for it:—if the poorest is the best then cultivate it. But why wine? You want to be employed:—go then, to *better lands*;—there seek the “*better commodity*”—in the *better employment*! and take example by the sufferings of a great nation!* Your taste—teazes you to attempt the making wine:—indulge it!—But, as you will answer it to the necessitous husbandmen, hereafter, lead not one mortal to delve in such barren soil, in an employment only tending to bronze the voluptuous at their expence. Rather encourage them to avoid your taste and be happy at home, amidst a “*plenty of wholesome food and decent cloathing*,” with their placid wives and rosy children, manufacturing all necessaries, *under a depressed trade*, within themselves---sparing to foreign countries the surplusage of their GRAIN, their WOOL and HEMP;—**BEST COMMODITIES!—ESSENTIALS OF DOMESTICK AND NATIONAL FELICITY!**

C R E S I N U S.

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* France, as well as other countries. See before.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

WHEN the country, six or seven years since, was anxious to introduce the culture of Wine and Silk, the Writer of the preceeding pages did no more than now and then, in conversation, drop a hint of his apprehensions of the mischievous tendency of such culture. But under an illness, whilst confined to his room, he amused himself with scribbling off his sentiments nearly as they now appear. He shewed them to two or three friends, who thought them to be too much against the spur of the day to be attended to. The piece was then thrown aside, and lay unseen from that time, until lately that he shewed it to several Gentlemen, who thought it ought to be published: But he determined to print only a few copies for Gentlemen, who are supposed to be better judges of the subject and the expediency of publishing at large such sentiments, than the generality of readers are.

N. B. I have been informed that there was but twelve copies of this pamphlet printed, and at the author's expense. — D. S.