



A LETTER to a Nobleman, concerning the NATIONAL FISHERY.



Omit the common Excuses that are made on such Occasions as these, of asking Pardon for the Trouble hereby given, being persuaded that the Subject hereof will prove rather acceptable than otherwise to Your Lordship.

It is to communicate to Your Lordship my Opinion of a Scheme for the purpose of carrying on a National Fishery, concerted by Mr. *George James*.

On Perusal of his Scheme, he discovers to have entertain'd for some time an Apprehension how beneficial the Establishment of a Fishery in *Great Britain*, might prove to the Publick, and for that Reason, to have apply'd himself with great Diligence, to consider upon what Foundation the same might be most advantageously carry'd on.

In order to be the better enabled herein, he remain'd some time in *Holland*, on purpose to procure more certain Information relating hereto; and I may venture to say, with good Foundation of Reason, has brought his Scheme prepar'd for a Fishery, to the greatest Perfection the Nature of the Thing will possibly admit of. His Calculations in each Part, admit of Demonstration, and will afford Satisfaction of the Certainty thereof, to the best of Judges, who shall peruse or examine the same.

I am far from endeavouring hereby absolutely to determine Your Lordship relating hereto. All that I ask on this Account, is, That a good Opinion may be conceiv'd of this Scheme, unless the contrary, on Perusal of the same, may justly appear to be deserving from thence.

This Character I am conscious I owe to the Scheme, in regard to the great Labour and Pains the Gentleman appears to me to have employ'd on this Occasion, and the great Expence I am sensible he must have been at on this Account; and also to the Publick Interest, which, I humbly conceive, will be greatly promoted hereby.

That a Fishery in this Nation, under a judicious Regulation, might prove a Publick Advantage, I apprehend, I need employ no Labour to persuade. This I believe to be a general Apprehension; and I am certain, on a serious Reflection upon this Head, a Person of Your Lordship's Judgment, will by so much the more be confirm'd herein.

Our Ancestors have discover'd their Apprehensions upon this Subject, and I may venture to say, No Alteration of the Nature of the Thing has happen'd since their Time. The *British* Coast is what still furnishes almost all Nations with Fish; and still we remain idle Spectators of the carrying off Quantities of inestimable Value: A just Reproach (tho' with Reluctance I express it) to the sluggish inactive Disposition of the *English*.

Providence has particularly provided the Advantage of a Fishing Trade to this Nation. Upon our Coast only this Blessing is plac'd, and can, for that Reason, be plainly demonstrated to admit of being carry'd on here to much greater Advantage, than in *Holland*, or elsewhere; however the contrary Belief may be entertain'd, by reason of low Wages in *Holland*, and some other Particulars; yet those common Instances are fully answer'd by the Scheme I have before mention'd.

The Method of Curing the Fish in *Holland*, is perfectly well known to the Projector of this Scheme; Their Conduct in every respect; The Seasons; The different Places of Resort, and every necessary Circumstance of the Trade is what he is well acquainted with.

His Regulation, I'll venture to say, is an Improvement upon theirs, and the Advantages and Profits that may arise from thence, in all Probability, will be proportionate thereto.

Now is the happy Opportunity of entering upon such an Undertaking: All Circumstances concur to justify the same at this particular Juncture: No Reason offers to the contrary hereof; and under these Considerations, I presume to importune Your Lordship's Attention and Reflection upon this Subject, and hope to prevail upon You to endeavour the Establishment of a Trade, from whence immense Riches may arise to this Nation, and its best Safety and Defence against any Foreign Enemy thereby also be secur'd.

Our great Security consists in our Strength at Sea, in our Number of Ships, and skilful Sailors to supply them; but what avail Ships only, if Sailors are wanted? This Inconvenience always attends the Occasion of an Expedition, That to furnish Sailors, an Embargo is forc'd to be laid: Trade is, by this Necessity, greatly obstructed; Numbers of Merchants considerable Sufferers, and the Revenue of the Crown it-self a Partaker herein. These are Particulars of no trifling Moment: They are of Consequence; and a Redress herein, is an Affair worthy our serious Consideration.

The Establishment of a Fishery effectually obtains it; a sufficient Number of Sailors may from thence, on any Emergency, be supply'd; they'll always be ready at Hand, which will be a great Conveniency at some certain Conjunctions. Thereby we grow in Strength in that Part wherein our greatest Strength consists. Here our greatest Care and Circumspection is properly employ'd. If we attend thereto, in Time no foreign Power dare venture to declare our Enemy; the Ballance of Power in *Europe* will certainly be in the *English*, and this Nation will be inabled to Rival all the World in Glory: And all these Advantages may, in all Likelihood, prove the Result of a Fishery, being established under such a Regulation, as is at present concerted, and offer'd to the Publick for that End.

Perhaps, it may be imagin'd, that Mr. *James* himself, or some Friend, at least, deeply concern'd in Interest, may have given Your Lordship this Trouble: But I assure the contrary of either, in which, I hope, I may be credited. I acknowledge to have one single Permit of 5000 *l.* deliver'd me; which induc'd me to desire Leave to peruse his Scheme; which having done, what I have here said is nothing more than my impartial and unbia's'd Judgment concerning it, and which I incline to communicate in this manner, that a just Notion may be entertain'd of it, and to procure it a Reception agreeable to its real Worth.

It may possibly be apprehended, that no Subscription as yet being taken by Mr. *James*, which has been done by several others for the same purpose, that His is only in Consequence of Theirs, or borrow'd from them: Tho' I can trust to his Assurance of the contrary hereof, yet I have sufficient Reason, from the Nature of his Scheme, to disbelieve the same. It plainly appears to me, to be a Work of Time, and I have credible Information, of his having employ'd a whole Twelvemonth's Pains in the Formation thereof; that he continu'd some time in *Holland*, on purpose to gain Acquaintance in that Branch of Trade, with an Intent to form a Scheme for a Fishery here in *England*; and that this Scheme was earlier fram'd, than any other at present made known to the Publick.

I have no Intention here to give His the Preference on a Comparison with others. If any is found to be better, let that be prefer'd: All that I would persuade Your Lordship is, To employ some Consideration relating hereto, and if after that, You agree with me in Opinion, that many great Advantages may accrue to the Publick from the Establishment of a Fishery in this Nation, that You would use Your Endeavours to procure the same. I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most Obedient and Humble Servant,

A
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