

of raw commodities to be manufactured has palpably this effect, even if the whole amount is paid for in cash. If such manufactures are consumed at home, provided it be by the rich, the benefit of the trade is not thereby impeached: And this sufficiently proves, that a plain distinction may be justly made between the employment of our poor and the acquisition of riches.

An increase of riches, in some situations, is no farther desirable than as they increase industry: in such case, the principal aim of commerce is the employment of such of the poor as the established agriculture and manufactures will not maintain; for commerce increases both; besides immediately employing great numbers. A people may carry on much trade in selling their products and manufactures to foreigners in their own ports, as was remarked before; but in that situation, neither their agriculture nor manufactures can be carried on to near the extent and perfection which attends a brisk trade being joined with them. Where a single purchaser is found in one case, a thousand will be met with in the other; and the more products and manufactures a nation sells, the more of her poor is undoubtedly employed.

The best markets for these are found out and preserved by commerce; for without it, a kingdom would sell nothing but what her neighbours could neither do without themselves, nor supply others with. If Portugal demanded cloth, and the Dutch supplied them, they most undoubtedly would give the preference to their own; and as long as they could possibly supply the market, would never buy ours for that purpose. Without commerce, the immense consumption likewise, and singular benefits of colonies could not be enjoyed: all which is sufficient to prove, that foreign trade is of prodigious consequence to the increase of the sale of products and manufactures, and consequently to the employment of the poor.

If it is said that commerce, by increasing of luxury, decreases population, occasions a greater inequality among mankind, and adds to the number of the poor, I answer; so does every thing but feudal barbarity; manufactures, agriculture, as a trade, &c. &c. and that there is scarce any medium between a state of polish villainage and a commercial prosperity. Switzerland, without a single ship or a port, experiences the latter. But conjectures about the decrease of mankind, in consequence of luxury, are very equivocal, and never amount to a proof. In great cities the fact is undoubted, but the case may be very different with a nation at large. That luxury increases the number of the poor, there can be no doubt; but at the same time it furnishes them with the means of employ-