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INTRODUCTION. v

tol, and almost all Commercial Writers, have long ago taken Notice of this Difference of Opinions. But however *strange* and *unaccountable* it may appear to Persons not conversant in these Matters, there is a very strong and convincing Reason, when the Affair is searched to the Bottom, for the *disagreeing* Opinions of different Merchants pursuing their *respective* Interests. The *leading* Idea, or the Point aimed at by *every* Merchant must be, in the Nature of Things, and in *every* Country, a Balance in favour of *himself*. But it doth not always follow, That this Balance is likewise in favour of the *Nation*; much less of *other* Merchants, whose Interests may be *opposite* to his own. While therefore each Person sees in a favourable Light his *own Branch* of Commerce, and desires to procure all *possible Advantages* to that Traffick,

“ tually fixed upon what makes for their peculiar Gain
“ or Loss, that they have no Leisure to expatiate or
“ turn their Thoughts to what is most advantageous to
“ the *Kingdom in general*.” —

“ The like may be said of all *Shop-keepers, Artificers,*
“ *Clothiers,* and other *Manufacturers,* until they have
“ left off their Trades, and being Rich, become by the
“ Purchase of Lands, of the same *common Interest* with
“ most of their Countrymen.”

This justly celebrated Writer was himself an Instance of the Truth of this Observation. For, if I am not greatly mistaken, he did not write this very Treatise, *Till he had left off Trade, and being Rich, became by the Purchase of Lands, of the same common Interest with the Rest of his Countrymen.*