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Account of the EMPEROR'S

East-India Company,

Of its Foundation and Progress.

WHEN I was at *Vienna*. Anno 1714, negotiating some other Affairs, which are mentioned in the foregoing History; Monsieur *Leibnitz* told me, That the Emperor was so much pleased with the Zeal and Affection of my Friends for his Interest, that there was nothing we could reasonably demand of his Imperial Majesty, but what would be readily granted, he added, that it would be of the last Consequence to the *Hanover* Succession, to keep the Emperor firm to our Interest, and to neglect nothing to keep him in the good Humour he was then in.

THE Emperor likewise concerted with Monsieur *Leibnitz* at the same time, upon the bad State of his Finances, and inclined to borrow Money of his *British* Friends, upon a Mortgage of some of his Dominions, at an Interest of 8 per Cent to redeem another Mortgage the *Dutch* had upon the *Quicksilver Mines* of *Hungary* at an extravagant high Interest; which, he said, my Friends need not doubt punctual Payment of both Interest and Capital, within the time to be stipulated as

faithfully as had been formerly done in *Silesia* Mortgage.

MONSIEUR *Leibnitz* also told me, that the Emperor's Cabinet Secretary was to speak with me, for tho' he knew I had no Instructions for any such Matters as borrowing or lending of Money, yet it was necessary for the Service of the *Hanover* Succession, that I should endeavour to oblige his Imperial Majesty, and give him all the Encouragement I could, and wished me to manage the Affair when the Secretary came, so as the Emperor should be pleased with it, without bringing myself under such Engagements as I could not perform notwithstanding.

THAT very Evening a Letter came to my Hands, from a very worthy eminent Merchant in *London*, who was deeply embarked to assist his Imperial Majesty to carry on the War, and attack the *Spaniards* in the *West-Indies*; informing me, that the Hopes of the well-affected in *Great-Britain*, were very low and small from the News they had just received of the Treaty of *Baden's* being finished, that both he, and many of his Friends, feared they would be forced soon to fly their Country, which they inclined to do, rather than submit to the Pretender; and therefore desired me to propose to the Emperor to establish an *East-India* Company in his Dominions, which, upon following such Privileges and Immunities as they should demand, they would not only Transport themselves and settle there, but carry on a very beneficial Trade to their mutual Interest and Advantage.

THIS Letter was enough to prepare me for a Meeting with the Secretary, who accordingly came the next Day, and told me of the Emperor's Intentions.

I answered, That since I left *Britain*, I had employed my Thoughts chiefly upon such Things, as I believed tended to serve his Imperial Majesty, and was surprized to hear, that such fine large Countries as the Emperor possessed, yielded such small Revenues, which must proceed either from the bad Management of those who had the Government of his Finances, or from want of Trade; if from the first, it was none of my Business, nor was I come there to accuse any of his Servants; but if it was from any other Cause, I supposed myself at Liberty to speak my Thoughts, and so I told him, that if his Imperial Majesty designed to borrow Money at a moderate Interest, he would do well to think of proposing other Security, than that of Mortgage upon Land; which Merchants, and monied People, were no way fond of.

I proposed to him the Example of *Great Britain*, who had Credit enough all the World over to borrow what Sums they pleased, upon Funds, arising from Trade; for tho' they were at that Time above 50000000*l.* Sterling in Debt, yet they had never Mortgaged any of their Countries or Land-Tax; the Merchants being rather inclined to lend their Money upon such Funds, than Land Security. That it was nothing but the Trade of *Great-Britain*, and the Improvements thereupon, which made that Nation so considerable, and its Credit in the World so very good;

that one single Vote in the House of Commons, had made all the Forces of the Empire March, and alarmed all our Enemies and Neighbours round about us; and that it was our Trade alone had made us Masters of the Sea.

ALL which is evident from the Comparison of the present Power and Riches of *Great-Britain*, with what it was in the Days K. of *Henry VIII.* when we had no Colonies nor Trade; that *Great-Britain* is now ten times the Value of what it was then.

WHEREUPON I recommended to him, to set up an *East-India* Company in *Flanders*; that the Revenues and Customs arising therefrom, and the inseparable Concomitants of it, might be a Fund of Credit to raise Money upon; which should be a better Security to the Lender to advance it than Land, or any other Security whatsoever. That no Country in the World was better situated for it than *Flanders*: The first Trade that ever was commenced to the *Indies*, being at *Antwerp*, which might have continued to this Day, had not *Philip II.* of *Spain*, by the Inquisition, and other Oppressions forced it, with its Merchants, to fix at *Amsterdam*.

I proposed that the Emperor should grant a Charter to my Constituents, with the usual Privileges; upon paying a Duty not exceeding 6 *per Cent.* which would make it the most considerable Company in *Europe*; and would afford him 1000000 Florins upon demand, as the British

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East-India Company had lent the Government above 3000000 *l.* Sterling at several times.

THE Secretary was very attentive, and thanked me for what I had said, but for my Life I could not answer all the Objections which they started, even tho' they seemed to be satisfied; for said they, the Glory of the Emperor, which of all Things we ought to be most tender of, would upon any bad Success, by unforeseen Accidents be tarnished forsooth, &c.

BEING provoked with such trifling Arguments, I bid Mr. *Fury*, whom I entrusted with that Affair in my absence, tell them, that if such little Difficulties had been regarded in *Great-Britain*, when first they commenced their Trade, they would have been in as poor Circumstances still as the Emperor's Hereditary Countries.

HOWEVER I gratified them to obviate even this Objection, that they might delay the establishing of a Company for some time, and only grant Letters of Mart to Merchants to make a trial; which if they had good Success, would encourage his Imperial Majesty to grant the Privileges demanded; and then if they did not like it, they might give it over, which would save their Glory, which they were so very tender of from losing any of its Lustre.

UPON this, Letters of Mart were issued out to sundry People, who all went to the *East-Indies*,

dies, and returned to *Ostend*, loaded with Joy and Profit.

SOME will perhaps find Fault, that I was so earnest and instrumental to fix a Trade in the Emperor's Dominions; so very prejudicial to that of my Country.

I have this only to answer for myself, that it was contrived in the latter end of the late Reign; when my Friends and I apprehended the Pretender must inevitably ascend the Throne; which must have certainly proved fatal to us, who had every way distinguished ourselves in Favour of the Illustrious-House, if we had staid at Home, and therefore designed to make *Flanders* our Place of voluntary Banishment, which we thought would not only intitle us to the Emperor's Favour, but also enable us to live handsomely in a Foreign Land, that so we might the sooner forget our Native Country.

BUT, upon King GEORGE's Accession to the Crown, I became very cool in this Affair; for then I thought all our Fears were removed, and so I dropt my Correspondence with the Imperial Court as handsomely as I could.

I must own, it had been very dishonourable to have acted any Thing to the Emperor's Prejudice, to whom I shall always acknowledge myself very much obliged; but at the same Time I thought it my Duty to let King GEORGE know of every Thing I had done at *Vienna*; and for that end, gave a Memorial to *Bernsdorf*, to be presented to
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his Majesty, after he came to *Great-Britain*, not doubting, but proper Measures would have been taken for the publick Good of the Nation; but must own, it would be an Injury done to the King, to think that he received it, and I rather incline to believe, that *Bernsdorf* industriously avoided to inform his Majesty of what was doing at the Emperor's Court, so much to the disadvantage of *Great-Britain*, for Reasons best known to himself.

WITH Sorrow and Shame, I confess, that our *British* Ministry ought to have been acquainted with it, only that I had not then the least Suspicion, but all Means would have been used by their Advice, to prevent such Measures as had been followed Abroad to interrupt our Trade so effectually.

AND since I had a principal Hand in those Measures myself, I thought I was obliged to find out another Expedient, not only to preserve our *East-India* Company from the fatal Consequences of the Emperor's new-laid Scheme, but also to make even that Project turn to our Advantage.

FOR this End, in 1718, I sent for Mr. *Thomas Lewis*, who had for many Years faithfully served the *East-India* Company in an eminent Post, with Reputation, and shewed him the following Scheme, who said, he would lay it before Sir *Gregory Page*, to which I agreed, and was told afterwards that Sir *Gregory* desired me to meet with the said Mr. *Lewis*, who should have full Power to Treat upon that Affair, and intreated Secrecy.

MR. *Lewis* and I met several times upon it, but to no purpose, and at last we were told, that the Company was playing another Game, which I feared would turn to their own Prejudice, by applying to the Emperor's Ministers; that they should persuade his Imperial Majesty wholly to give it up, quite contrary to the Advice I had given them, and some convincing Reasons why that Affair was to be treated upon with the Emperor himself.

I likewise feared that this Affair would take a quite different turn, to what they intended thereby; for by these strenuous Solicitations, they would rather heighten the Emperor's Esteem of it; and that the Bills they brought into the House as a designed Remedy (whereupon there passed an Act of Parliament) would not prevent the Subjects of *Great-Britain* from being concerned in it, tho' under the Names of the Emperor's Subjects, and thus, I am also afraid, our *East-India* Company have lost an Opportunity, which they will not recover, the *Ostenders* and Others, concerned in that of the Emperor's, having found their Account of late so considerably in it.

AFTER all this, the Reader may easily see, with what Zeal and Industry I laboured to relieve our *East-India* Company from the Hardships they are now under, by their own Negligence, which if they do not take Care to amend, must soon reduce them to their Primitive Circumstances.

THE Scheme I proposed, was this, that the Company should send a proper Person to *Vienna*, to procure a Charter, which I am sure might
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have been obtained, nay, even in ſuch Terms as would not interfere with the Regulations in the *English Charter* from his Imperial Maſteſty, to our *British Eaſt-India Company*, repreſenting to him, that it would be of far greater Conſequence to the Emperor in their Hands, than many others, whereby a great many fatal Accidents would be avoided, which moſt Companies are ſubject to at their beginning, and much Time and Expences ſaved in bringing this to bear, which otherwiſe muſt be loſt, in an Infant Company.

I offered my Service to the *Eaſt-India Company* to go to the Emperor, if they pleaſed, and undertook to perſwade him, to agree to every Thing that would redound to their Advantage, with ſuch Arguments as I was ſure would prevail, by telling him, that the *Dutch* would give him all the uneaſineſs in the *Eaſt-Indies*, that was in their Power; that our *British Eaſt-India Company* had a very great Trade already; that they were Maſters of both Forts and Forces, ſufficient to protect them from the Inſults of the *Dutch*, or any other Nation, and that he would find it very difficult to manage ſuch Schemes and Projects of his own, if he did not come into my Propoſals, to join his Company along with ours, as knowing that a long Courſe of Time would bring theſe Advantages to his Door, which I then offered him at firſt ſetting out, and by his agreeing with us, and putting it into the Hands and Management of a Company already formed; they would have no more to do, but increaſe their Shipping and Factories in theſe Ports, and make larger Contracts with the *Indian Princes*.

AND to convince him of our Sincerity, that the *East-India* Company had no sinister Design, by getting his Imperial Majesty's Company into their Management, to act dishonourably with him; I would tell him, that they could immediately lend him 100000 *l.* at an Interest of 6 per Cent. to be paid out of the Duties arising from that Trade alone.

ALL this, and much more I laid before our *East-India* Company, with a Copy of the Memorial I designed to present the Emperor withal; and told them, I expected no Money till the Charter was procured, and even then I offered to leave it to their own Honour what Reward such Services deserved.

I convinced Mr. *Lewis*, their Secretary, what Advantages would accrue to them.

1. THE fixing so small a Duty as abovementioned to the Emperor, would be such a vast Profit, as must give them extraordinary Advantages, over all other *East-India* Companies yet in Being.

2. THEY would thereby have a larger Market for all these Commodities; not only in the Emperor's Hereditary Countries in *Germany*, but *Italy*, *Hungary*, *Flanders*, &c. would by this Charter become their Market, exclusive of all other *East-India* Goods not imported by that Company; and every Body knows what a vast Consumption of *East-India* Goods there is in these Parts, where Pride and Vanity prevails.

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3. THAT this Union of the Companies would not only deprive the *Dutch* of a large Market for their *East-India* Goods, but would check them from insulting, or offering to interrupt our Trade, as they have already done more than once, and are in a fair way to drive us entirely out of these Parts: *Amboyna* for that! But upon this Union, I believed they would scarce venture upon such Practices again; for the Emperor being Master of *Flanders*, it was in his Power to curb their Insolence by Land, and hoped it was still in our Power to do the same by Sea.

4. THAT upon this, the Price of the *East-India* Stocks would rise considerably, as appears by the late Union of the *East* and *West-India* Companies in *France*.

5. BY this likewise, would the Subjects of the Emperor's Dominions in *Flanders*, not only be prevented from getting Navigation into their Hands, which if they had, would be very prejudicial to *Great-Britain*, but our own would be very much increased.

AND lastly, by the Emperor's having such Dependance upon us, we should not only keep him our fast Friend, but should also oblige the *Dutch* to come into what Measures we pleased.

THUS I have sincerely discharged my Duty, and shall leave the Reader to his own Reflections, being sorry that those who were the principal Directors of our *East-India* Company did not take Care to prevent this Blow in time; for the
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Emperor's *East-India* Company will have such Advantages over ours, as we can never retrieve by the vast Disparity of Duties, which will enable them to undersell us, and deprive us of such a vast compass of Ground, as we can never expect henceforth to make any Markets in: Representing also to Sir *Gregory Page*, that this Company, when it should be established, would have another Advantage, as being fixed in a Country, endowed with Privileges and Immunities, where Liberty and Property is insured; so that it will be settled on as firm a Basis, as either the Companies of *Great-Britain* or *Holland*, and will be much preferable, even to that of *France* in this Particular; for whatever Freedoms and Privileges the Emperor shall grant to them, cannot be liable to be revoked, or to suffer any Hardships, as if it had been fixed in any other of his Imperial Majesty's Countries, or even any Nation under Arbitrary Government; the Liberties of *Flanders* having been perfectly secured, and the Subjects in the peaceable Possession of their Properties for a long time together.

THAT the Emperor was very fond of this undertaking, which the assiduous Solicitations of the *East-India* Companies of *Great-Britain* and *Holland* had contributed to, and for that end he long ago declared his Inclinations to introduce and encourage Trade in his Dominions; being sensible that nothing else hath rendered both *Britain* and *Holland* so considerable, by inviting Merchants from all other Countries to settle in his, and granting them what Privileges they demand, nay, every Thing to facilitate and advance

vance Trade and Navigation; whereof *Fiums* in *Istria* upon the *Adriatick* is an Example, which is now made a Free Port with all the Franchises that Merchants can Desire; he likewise Favours the *Protestants*; and, in short, omits nothing that may conduce to this great end, which alarms the *Dutch, Venetians, &c.*

THAT his Imperial Majesty was constant and true to his Word, which I had abundant Testimonies of, when I was at his Court: And all these Advantages are vast Encouragements to this New Company in *Flanders*, which, no doubt, will be established with the Empéror's first Convenience.

It was therefore in vain for us to hope he would proceed no farther than by granting Letters of Mart to Private Traders, because he cannot answer his first Intention, which moved him to grant it, otherwise than by forming it into a Company, which must be very valuable if the just Measures, and a proper Scheme be followed. And consequently that Trade would be a great Prejudice to the *English-East-India Company*, if the Charter should be granted to his own Subjects.

We ought also to be aware of something else that seems to threaten our Trade from the Emperor's farther Designs, which, if we be not, will affect us very much, *viz.* His establishing a Trade to *Turkey*, which was agreed to at the late Treaty of *Passarowitz*, with the Grand Signior in 1717, where our Ambassadors were present as Mediators, upon more Advantageous Terms than hath
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been granted by the Port, to any Prince or State in *Europe*, which will bring immense Riches to his Imperial Majesty, considering the noble convenient Opportunities he hath to convey Goods through his Country by the help of great Rivers, particularly the *Danube*, which is Navigable fifteen hundred *English* Miles, and empties it self into the *Black Sea*, where great flat bottom Boats run down quick, only by the help of the Stream, whereby all Goods can be conveniently carried into any Part of *Turkey*.

THAT the Staple of Wool, was also once in *Flanders*; and I do not see what is to hinder the Emperor from erecting a Woolen Manufactory there now; whereby not only many Places in *Germany*, *Hungary*, &c. may be supplied by the Rivers abovementioned, but even *Turkey* it self much cheaper than we.

ALL these Things considered, in my humble Opinion, we have not so much Reason to be alarmed at his Imperial Majesty's turning his Thoughts so much upon Trade, as either *Holland*, *Venice*, or any of his Neighbours.

HE hath very lately formed a Company at *Vienna*, to carry on their Trade to the *Levant*; hath himself Subscribed 10000 Florins, as many of his Ministers and Courtiers have also done, for which, a Court of Directors is constituted, and a President named, to regulate that Commerce.

HE is also endeavouring to engage the other Princes of the Empire, to Subscribe for raising a Stock to Encourage that Trade; which the *Turks* are so well pleased with, that great Numbers of their Merchants are arrived for that end in the Neighbourhood of *Belgrade*: And when he grants Liberty of Conscience in any of his Dominions, especially in *Flanders*, no Doubt, but the *Dutch* themselves would remove thither, if it were only to be relieved of the great Taxes and Oppression; they are necessarily under to their States, for their own Preservation: The Reasons are very evident, as his Advantages by granting such Liberty will be very great, for he knows very well, that nothing else hath made *Amsterdam* so Considerable: And if *Hamburg* had followed the same Measures, it would have been rather more; and it is also plain, that he is taking quite different Measures, especially in Matters of Religion and Trade, and very probably will be found to be the greatest Prince, having the most just, and noble Views of any Monarch that ever Swayed the Imperial Scepter since *Charles V.*

I shall now proceed to give an Account, how, and by what Means the Private Trade from *Ostend* to the *Indies* came to be erected into a Company, by his Imperial Majesty, but previously I must acquaint my Reader, that in an Audience, I had the Honour to have with the *Emperor*, in 1714, he was pleased to lay his Commands upon me, to have a watchful Eye on every Opportunity that might tend to his Service, appointing me a certain Canaille, whereby I was to communicate my Advices immediately to himself, through the Hands

of one Confidant; for added he, when any thing comes to his Ministry, in the ordinary way of Business, it generally takes Wind, and becomes good for nothing; but when he came immediately to himself, he knew how to make the proper use of such.

IN the Year 1720, when the *Mississippi* Scheme had just miscarried in *France*; and that of the *South-Sea* was so vigorously carrying on in *England*; I was informed, that some *English*, and other *Stock-Jobbers*, were gone to *Flanders*, with a Design to draw in the Marquis *De Prie* into their dangerous Measures; and having been always an Enemy, both to the said *French* and *English* Schemes, which I was never able to reconcile to my poor Understanding.

I thought it my Duty in Obedience to my Promise to the Emperor, to endeavour to stop this wicked Design; wherefore I went to *Brussels* to prevent, if possible, the Introduction of any fatal Schemes, unto his Imperial Majesty's Dominions: Resolving, if I found the Marquis positive to Establish a Company of Commerce in the *Austrian Netherlands*, to offer him such a Scheme as I could answer for, both to the Emperor, and my own Conscience.

UPON my Arrival, I found the Marquis just taking Coach to go to *Aix la Chapelle* for the recovery of his Health; I immediately followed; and found him at *Judoigne*, where he presently began to play the Statesman with me, for indeed he was a consummate one: So not knowing
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what to make of him, whether he designed any Company or not, I took my Leave of him, giving him at the same time, the Scheme I had composed for the Emperor's Service, and returned to *London* the beginning of *September* 1720, from whence, without any loss of Time, I wrote to Prince *Eugene* of *Savoy*; giving him an Account of my late Journey to *Flanders*, and of what had passed between the Marquis *De Prie* and me, and sent him also an exact Copy of the Memorial and Scheme I had left with the Marquis *De Prie*.

ABOUT six Weeks afterwards I received a very pressing Letter from a Gentleman at *Brussels*, desiring me to make all the haste I could to that City. for he had something of very great Importance to communicate to me: I thought I had done enough to discharge my Promise to the Emperor, and was unwilling to move any more in that Affair; therefore returned an Apology, and a cool Answer to the aforesaid Gentleman, excusing my not going over, but my Excuses could not be received; for I had a second Letter, pressing my hastening over, assuring me no Excuses would be admitted; for there was a Person of the first Rank, appointed to confer with me upon an Affair which might concern the Emperor: I did not obey this Letter, but at last received a third, couched in such Terms as I could not any longer decline going over.

UPON my Return to *Brussels*, my Correspondent told me, It was not the Marquis *De Prie*, but the Count *De Windisgratz*, the Emperor's

first Commissioner of the ensuing Congress of *Cambray*, and who was then at *Brussels*, and the Velt *Marshal Vellen*, that had called me over, in order to Confer with me upon the Subject of establishing a Company of Commerce in the *Austrian Netherlands*; the two Counts, and I, met accordingly, and after some Conference, they desired me to form a proper Scheme for erecting a Company of Commerce, and a Draught of a Charter to be granted by the Emperor, which they were to take care to lay before his Imperial Majesty, in Order for his Approbation; withal, they desired I would keep my Business very Private from every Body, telling me, at the same time, that the Marquis *De Prie* was to know nothing of it, and that he had always been an Enemy to erecting of a Company in these Provinces, because, thereby, he would be deprived of the Means of exacting, yearly, very large Sums from the Private Traders to the *East-Indies*, for their Private Commissions, which he, as Deputy Governour of the *Austrian Netherlands*, was authorised to give out, I was thus prevailed upon to compose a Scheme for erecting the said Company of Commerce, and a proper Charter to be paid before his Imperial Majesty; during all which time, I could not forget the many Ungentlemanlike Treatments I had so lately received from our *English East-India Company*.

I was sensible that the Success of all great Undertakings consisted in Secrecy; and in such a cautious and prudent Conduct, as all the Art and cunning of its Enemies, should not be able to prevent the Execution thereof; for Experience hath often

often proved, that a Wound given to any undertaking in its Infancy, generally proves Mortal.

I was aware of the Enemies of this Infant-Company, but especially the *Dutch*; who, I knew would stick at nothing, by fair or foul Means to destroy a Trade, that interfered with them. Therefore in order to prevent their taking such Methods, as would in time destroy this new Company, I took care in my Scheme and Charter, industriously to lay a great stress upon the *East-India* Trade, mentioning as little of the *West-Indies* as possible, and yet enough to authorise the Company to put in Execution, what really I intended for their Service; for what I had principally in View, was all along chiefly in the *West-Indies* intending, the *East-India* Trade in a great Measure, as a Blind to cover my real Design, and to render this new Company's Enemies secure in these Parts, where I resolv'd they should make their principal Settlements.

I was always of the Opinion, that the Trade which encourageth the consumption of the Native product of a Country, and the manufacturing thereof at Home, the Exportations thereof to Foreign Countries, where they are wanted, and that which in Return, Imports these Commodities that are wanting in *Europe*, and the Ballance in *Specie* must certainly be the only Trade to enrich that Country: And the Trade which Exports little or nothing but Bullion, and Imports in Return, only Superfluities to support Luxury, must certainly be Pernicious, and at last Fatal.

THAT the *Dutch* Trade to the *East-Indies* was really in Effect no Exception to this Rule; for it is to be considered, that by their being Masters of a vast Continent in the *East-Indies*, and having there almost as many Subjects as in *Europe*, those Advantages give them Opportunity to send thither, great Quantities of *European* Commodities; which prodigiously lessens the Export of their Bullion, besides that, they are Masters of all the Spice-Islands: But the *English* and other *European* Companies, who have only a few Forts and Factories in the *East-Indies*, would be Grievances, if the Luxury of this Age had not now made this Trade necessary.

I was also apprized, that an *East-India* Trade would prove more hurtful to the Emperor's Subjects than to the *English*, because the *English* have a vast extensive Trade to most Parts of the World, and in most of them, the Ballance on their side; whereby any Loss on our side from the *East-Indies* is insensible, and not felt by us, whereas the Emperor's Countries have very little Trade, whereby supplies of Money are Imported; therefore I believed an annual Loss of *Specie*, would soon empty these Countries of the little Money they had Current among them.

FOR these Reasons I had my Eye principally upon the *West-Indies*, and had pitched upon a certain Island, situated pretty nigh the *Spanish-West-India* Coast, at present in the Possession of no *European* Prince or State, and which none could pretend any Right or just Title to; having an Excellent Harbour, and capable of being made tenable

nable in a little time: But knowing that nothing could be kept a Secret, after it had been presented to the Emperor's Cabinet-Council, and before a Court of Directors, I took the Method I have mentioned, since the last Discovery might have ruined what I intended; which in few Words, was, that this new Company, under the Colour and Pretence of making two Settlements in the *East-Indies*, should have fitted out a few Ships with a competent Number of Hands Aboard, consisting chiefly of Soldiers, Artificers and Amunition; with all Necessaries, Provisions, and Arms, who under the aforesaid Cover should have sailed to the *West-Indies*, and have taken Possession of the aforesaid Island, and thereupon, so soon as this Island was fortified, and made tenable, that the Emperor should declare it a free Port for all Nations to come and Trade in, upon Payment of a small moderate Duty, and also for all sorts of Persons of what Denomination and Quality soever, to resort to, and live in unmolested, both as to Body and Effects, upon paying a Capitation Tax; which Island would consequently have been the greatest Magazine and Storehouse of all the Product of *America*, and also of Money, to have exchanged their Commodities for those of *Europe*, especially those of the Emperor's Countries, which would not have been in the Power of all the Governors in these Parts to have prevented: Because a private Trade is not easily hindered, when an Advantage is found by it; which would have been very great in this Case, because it came from the first Hand, so that here would have been a Market for all the Linnen, Cambricks, Laces, Stuffs &c. that the Emperor's Countries are able to produce

duce and Manufacture, and they again be supplied from their own *American* Market in Return, with the valuable and substantial Commodities in *America*, and the Ballance in *Specie*.

I believe all this might have been brought about without any great Expence, for by taking care to establish an easy form of Government, the People would have flocked from all the Neighbouring Colonies, who very often labour under Grievances by the Oppression of many of the Governours; for it is well known, that nothing but the Severity of the Governours, forced several of the People, in these Parts, to turn *Pyrates*.

WHAT might have discouraged me from proposing this to the Emperor, was, the Opposition it would at that time have met with from the *Spaniard*: But having, for several Years, carried on a Correspondence with several Persons, who had travelled over the *Spanish-West-Indies*, by which Means I had attained to good Knowledge of those Countries, and of their true Strength, and the Situation of their Affairs with the *Indians*, whereby I was in a Condition to satisfy his Imperial Majesty, there were at least forty *Natives* to one *Spaniard*, and such irreconcilable Enemies to them, that they were ready and willing, upon the least Occasion, to Rise, and join with any who would lead them on, and assist them in overcoming their Tyrannical Masters, and dispose of them at once. A *Scotsman* particularly, with that View, travelled all over the *Spanish-West-Indies*, and was long conversant with the *Natives*: This Gentlemen told me, that the *Indians* had assured him, that the *Spaniards* had

had not yet discovered the Eighth Part of the Mines, and that the Richest were still concealed; and that they would never make any more of them known to the *Spaniards*; who instead of rewarding, continue to put them to the Torture, to Discover the rest; especially those of Gold, an Error which none but the blinded *Spaniard* would be guilty of: That the *Indians* farther assured my Friend, that if the King of *Great-Britain*, or any other *European* Prince, would take them under his Protection, and furnish them with some Officers and Arms for that Effect, and allow them the property of the Mines yet undiscovered, they would freely give a fifth Part to such Prince so protecting them, and work the Mines at their own Cost, in which Case they would use and wear our *European* Commodities, and pay for them to their Deliverers, at any Rate; and that if they knew of better Masters, with a small Assistance, they would be able to expel the *Spaniards* out of many Parts themselves, and that even the *American Spaniards*, were weary of the Oppressions and Hardships they met with from Old *Spain*; and would make but a feeble Resistance against the House of *Austria*: He had assured me farther, that if the *Spaniards* should attempt to disturb the Emperor in his *American* Settlement, or *European* Dominions; he would want no more to make as sudden a Revolution in *New Spain*, as hath already happened in *Portugal*; only to send to *New Spain* a few Arms, Ammunition, Officers, and Manifestoes, proclaiming Liberty, and Property, in the *Spanish-West-Indies*.

I believe no Body at that time had any Prospect of a Treaty of Peace and Commerce between their Imperial and Catholick Majesties, or that a firm Friendship, and good Understanding, could have been established on the Basis it now is between them; and having been always of the Opinion, that it was not the Interest of *Great-Britain*, those two powerful Monarchs should unite theirs: I took the Course I have mentioned, to be an effectual way to prevent it, and this would put the Emperor under the farther Necessity of courting the Friendship of *Great-Britain*; whose Interest also it would have been, to have supported the Emperor in *America*, as well as they had done in *Europe*; because the greatest Part of the Advantages arising from this new Settlement and Trade of the Emperor's, would have come into the Hands of the *English*.

I proposed also in my Scheme, to establish a Bank in the *Austrian Netherlands*, quite upon a different Foundation from these of *England, Holland, Venice, and Genoa*; which I did not doubt, but it might have been made a very flourishing one, and to answer Expectation, and would hardly have been weakened in its Credit.

HAVING thus given an Account of what I intended, this I concealed for the Reasons above-mentioned: I presented the Scheme and Charter to the two Courts, so soon as I had finished them, telling them at the same time, that there was a Necessity I should explain myself upon these Papers; I had then the Honour to give them; but that I would not discover the real meaning of them

them to any but the Emperor himself, because the Success of the whole depended upon Secrecy; I added, my Affairs called me to *England*, but I would return so soon as they thought it proper to send these Papers to the Emperor, and that I would be the Bearer of them myself, in order to discharge my Duty to his Imperial Majesty; all which being thus settled and agreed to between the aforesaid two Counts and me; they gave me a Writing under their Hands to Interest myself and Friends into the equal half of the capital Stock of the said Company: So I took my Leave and departed from *Brussels*. I arrived in *London* the 26th of *March* 1721, But I must return a little to acquaint my Reader, that when I was admitted at *Brussels*, there came a Gentleman from *Paris* to that Place, Mr. *John Colebrooke*, who taking up his Lodging at the same *Hotel* where I did, he found some Persons of Distinction resort to me, and that I had in a manner withdrawn myself from ordinary Conversation: He being a cunning Man, and perfect Master of the Art of *Stock-Jobbing*; took all the Ways imaginable to find out what it was, I was so much buied about, and at last I found the young Man who was my *Ammiensis*, had used some indiscreet Freedom with him; I thought it was my best way to make him my Friend, and engage him to me, so calling on Mr. *Colebrooke*, I told him, after a little necessary Introduction, that my Time had been intirely taken up, since my arrival at *Brussels*; in forming a Scheme and Charter to be granted by the Emperor, for erecting a new Company of Commerce in the *Austrian Netherlands*; and the Reason of my communicating so much to him, was, that by the Conversation

Conversation I had with him, I believed him capable of being very useful in the practical Part of Trade, to which I was a Stranger, as being only a Country Gentleman, and if he would be faithful to me, I would give him Opportunities of making Money enough to himself; which would be his true Interest, but if otherwise, or if he endeavoured to Supplant me, and Abuse my Confidence in him, he would find Shame and Disgrace attend such Practices; for neither He, nor any Man but myself, knew the meaning of my Scheme, and there was a material Difference between the Letter and Spirit thereof, which would prove fatal to him, and discover him to be a Cheat, but Mr. *Colebrooke* taking the deepest Engagements of Fidelity, I left him behind me.

UPON my Arrival at *London*, I found the British Parliament enacting some Penalties upon such as should be concerned in the Trade from *Ostend* to the *East-Indies*; but this was not the only discouragement I met with, for soon after this, I received Advice from *Brussells*; that Mr. *Colebrooke* was playing False with me, and had found Means to get himself introduced to the Two Counts, and by his Art, and cunning Contrivances, insinuated himself so far, as to be intrusted to Peruse the Scheme and Charter I had left behind me, and had Assurance enough, to make several Alterations in those Papers; whereby the Design I had of preventing the bad Consequences of *Stock-Jobbing* as far as could consist with the use of Property, was intirely cut off, and several Gaps opened for Private Ends, which I had in mind carefully guarded against, taking all the Pains I could to
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unite and cement the several Interests of the Emperor, as Sovereign, the Country and Company by giving each of them the Means of finding of their Account therein, and in such an equal manner, as none of the Three should have any just Reason to Envy or Grudge one another their several Advantages, which I believed would prove a very strong Foundation, for a Company of Commerce which was every Body's Interest to Support.

MR. *Colebrooke*, being flushed with these unexpected Successes, procured also, in a little time, himself to be intrusted with the Papers, and was sent with them by the two Counts to *Vienna*, with strong Letters of Recommendation from them to the Count de *Sinzendorff*.

I was very quickly apprized of all these Proceedings from *Brussels*, and very uneasy thereupon; knowing well, that Mr. *Colebrooke*, without giving myself any Trouble, would very soon confound and undo himself; so I composed myself, resolving to give Him full Liberty to follow his own Methods. I intended to give myself no farther Trouble in those Affairs, which had been so very Troublesome and Expensive to me.

So soon as the News was spread about, that Mr. *Colebrooke* was gone to *Vienna*, to procure the Charter from the Emperor, the *East-India* Companies of *England* and *Holland* took the Alarm; for in the Month of *October*, 1721, Mr. *Thomas Lewis*, before mentioned came to my Lodgings

Lodgings, and had a long Conference with me about the *Ostend* Affairs; he regretted very much their Companies not going into the Measures I had sometime before proposed, to procure them the Charter from the Emperor: I answered, That might easily have been done, and believed myself capable of unhorsing *Colebrooke*, and of doing that Favour still, if I were not now rendered incapable of it, by the late Act of Parliament, which the *East-India* Company themselves had been so very Industrious to procure.

HE asked me if I thought there might be still any Means left to prevent the Emperor's granting the Charter: I told him there was, and that the *Ostenders* Trade to the *East Indies* might be laid aside, and that it was to no purpose to trouble him with it; for there was no Dealing with his Masters upon a Gentleman-like Footing; nor did I believe I could have any Credit in serving them, and that he himself knew very well how they had used me three Years since, he said the Case was changed, and that he really believed they would now act more sincerely, and generously with me than they had formerly done.

HE at last prevailed with me to agree to meet with two of their principal Directors; whereupon I drew up in Writing my Proposal, and the Method how I intended to manage it, and the Arguments I would make use of to induce his Imperial Majesty to agree to a Suppression of a Trade from *Ostend* to the *East-Indies*; and how easy it was for me to discredit Mr. *Colebrooke*. Mr. *Lewis* in a few Days came and carried me to the
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East-India House, there I met with two very great Men of the Company, in one of the inner Chambers, where, after the necessary previous Discourse, Mr. *Lewis* read my Papers before them, which they seem'd wonderfully to approve, and desired I would agree to go to *Vienna* my self, and manage that Business; I told them, my own private Affairs called me to *Scotland*, and it would be of great Prejudice to me; if I neglected to hasten to that Country, where an Affair of great Importance, to me, was come to a Crisis, and run a great Risque of losing it, if I was not very soon in that Country: But, if they were resolv'd to send me to *Vienna*, I would endeavour to engage a Gentleman in the *Middle-Temple*, who had been my Counsellor for many Years, and agree with him, upon reasonable Terms to go to *Scotland* to supply my Place, he having a perfect Knowledge of my Affairs: But I told them, I expected they would reimburse me what Money I should give him on that Account, which they promising to do, I accordingly, in a few Days, agreed with the foresaid Gentleman for one Hundred and Fifty Pounds for his Journey and Stay in *Scotland*, which could not be less than six Months.

IN three or four Days after, the same Gentlemen, of the *East India* Company, and I, met again, when they asked me what I demanded for these Services? I Answered, I wanted only to be indemnified, and to have, in Hand, a reasonable Sum of Money to provide a suitable Equipage, and to bear my Charges till my return to *London*, and then, if I had Success, I would leave it to any reasonable Man, to determine what I should

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deserve; They agreed readily to this, and then desired me to use all the Means I could think of, to put a stop to the Charters going out, till I should arrive at *Vienna*.

I shall not be so Vain, as to say my Means put a stop to it, but its certain, Means were used, and a stop was put to it. At our next Meeting, they told me, the Affair was laid before the Court of Directors, and an Order given to issue out Money for that Purpose, and two other Directors were added to them, to finish what was requisite at that time, in order to dispatch me, and desired I would be as quick as I could, in making the necessary Provision for my Journey; which accordingly I did, and thereby run my self considerably in Debt, not then imagining I should, afterwards, have it to pay out of my own Pocket. At last, just as I was expecting to be dispatched, Letters came from Mr. *Coleman*, the *British* Resident at *Vienna*, giving an Account, that just when it was expected the Charter would pass the Emperor's Hand, *Colebrooke*, all of a sudden, came under some Discredit at the Imperial Court, and that a stop was put to the passing of the Charter.

THE *East India* Company, as I suppose, (imagining this had proceeded from some other Motives and Endeavours than really it did) instead of meeting with me themselves, they sent Mr. *Lewis* to me, with my Papers, which they had in their Custody, and bid him, in their Name, Thank me for all my kind Endeavours to serve the Company; But, that now there would be no Occasion for giving my self the Trouble of going to *Vienna*
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on their Account, for, that they had received the good News, that the Charter was dropped.

Mr. *Lewis* delivered me this Message, and the Papers, with a deep Concern, telling me, that he was ashamed to look me in the Face. I answered, he had no Reason to be so, but truly his Masters had; for they would find themselves in a Mistake, and that by what they had then done, they had lost their last Opportunity; adding, I would speak no more upon that Subject, for, they had, to say no worse of them, used me Barbarously, and very Unjustly, for, that he knew I had never received one Shilling of them, upon any Account whatsoever, first or last.

AT last, I found my self obliged to make an Apology to a certain great Man Abroad, and lay the Saddle upon the right Horse. I shall not insist any farther on this Subject, for every Body knows, that sometime after, the Charter came out, and the Company was erected in the *Austrian Netherlands*.

It might be expected, that I should, in this Place, insert a true Copy of the Papers I gave to the Gentlemen of the *East-India* Company, the Minutes thereupon, together with their Names who treated with me; but being truly unwilling to expose any Set of Men, or Gentlemens Names, I have declined it, being now much broke in my Health, by the extraordinary Fatigues, both in Body and Mind, that by these Means, I have drawn upon me. I shall not give my self any farther Trouble in this, but am resolved to put them

into the Hands of two Friends, to do with them as they shall find Convenient for the Publick Service.

I shall therefore conclude, with giving my Reader a short Account of the Fate of Mr. *John Colebrooke*, with whom it fared, just as I had foretold; for he came at last to be discovered, or, indeed rather he discovered himself, to be what he really was, whereupon, very soon after the arrival of the Charter at *Brussels*, for establishing the *East-India* Company in the *Austrian Netherlands*, there came an Order from the Imperial Court, to seize upon the Person, and Papers of the said Mr. *Colebrooke*, and, accordingly, a strict search was made for him, but he narrowly escaped out of the Emperor's Dominions, so leaving him to Travel in Foreign Parts; I shall say no more of him.

F I N I S.