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Thomason. I. p 229. Feb. 2nd. 1643.

L. 88. (13.)

THE HUMBLE

PETITION

OF

MANY THOUSANDS

OF

Wives and Matrons of the City of

London, and other parts of this

KINGDOME,

For the Cessation and Finall Conclusion of
these Civill Wars,

And for the restitution and revocation of their

HUSBANDS,

Who have as just cause to complaine for the want of them,
together with our children and bosome friends, as the
Virgins have for losing their Sweet-hearts.

Presented by divers Gentlewomen of good credit,
and Citizens Wives;

To the consideration of both Houses,

On *Thursday*, the second of *February*.

Ecce jacent viduo membra sepulca thoro.



Printed at *London* for *John Cookson*. 1643.

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PETITION

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MANY THOUSANDS

OF

Wives and Matrons of the City of

London, and other parts of this

KINGDOM

For the Cessation and Finall Conclusion of

the Civil Wars,

And for the restitution and revocation of their

RIGHTS

Who have as just cause to complain for the want of them,

together with our children and beloved friends, as the

Virgins have for losing their sweet-hearts.

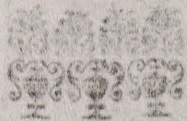
Protected by divers Gentlemen of good credit

and Citizens Wives;

To the consideration of both Houses

On Thursday, the second of February.

Printed by J. Sturges, at the Sign of the Crown, in St. Dunstons Church-yard.



Printed at London for John Cookin. 1643.



The humble Petition of many thousands of Wives and Matrons, of the City of London, and other parts of this Kingdome, for the cessation and finall conclusion of these Civill Warres.



It was the first act of God Almightyes favour, to our first parent in Paradile, to ordaine him a helper meet for him ; namely, a Wife ; such as we are, to the number of many thousands, who doe hereby present this Petition for the rectifying of our dreadfull and increasing grie-

vances. First, it is not unknowne to the whole kingdome of England, that Wives are the maine supporters of the strength and beauty thereof, that Wives are those who people and replenish the Common-wealth with Inhabitants ; that Wives are the Mothers of the faithfull, and the producers of all good Subjects. As it is impossible, that fields alone without corne should bring forth fruit, or that corne should multiply

tiply without being cast into good ground : so it is impossible mankinde should be continued, or succession maintained without the help of Wives, who bring forth children when they have conceived them in sorrow with much paine and affliction. It is therefore a great deale of justice, that in our owne lamentable and distressed cause, our complaint should be heard, and our Petition regarded with an indulgent respect, since we have so many eyes upon all those men who shall reade this our Petition, and whom it concernes equally with our selves.

First, we are not ignorant that there hath been a great many malicious and ungracious reports cast upon us Women, as that we should weare the breeches, that our tongues are perpetuall larums to disturbe the peace and quietnesse of their rest, that we are cankers in their Estates, consuming them more in new fashions and fooleries, then would maintaine an Army against the Malignants ; that besides, the Wives of the City are terribly given to the making of monsters, or converting our Husbands into such, by furnishing their fore-heads with large and beautifull hornes ; all which aspersions we returne upon the vile and scandalous Authors, who in the height of their Wine have branded us with these ignominious calumnies, because we would not permit them to lime their twigs at our Plum-trees, nor to inoculate our stocks with their grafts ; and attesting against all such mis-reports, as unprejudiciall to our cause, or any way impeaching this our Petition, which out of the anguish and bitterness of our hearts we are forced to deliver. We the Wives of all sorts, ages and conditions, from the Merchants Wife of fifteen in silke Mochado, to the Apple-wife of fourescore in Canvas ; as Ale-wives, Oyster-wives, Fish-wives, Tripe-wives, in all humility shewing the greatnesse of our dolours and sufferings, occasioned by the lamentable and lasting continuance of these intestine civill wars, where there hath been more proper men slaine (which grieves us even beneath the
bottomes

(bottomes of our hearts) then would have done a hundred of
 us good turnes, and such turnes as would have served our
 turnes indeed, and to some purpose, then having been more
 mans bloud shed in these combates and contentions, then
 there is left in all our bodies, which is certainly a point of
 great inhumanity and barbarousnesse. And whereas before
 the beginning of these wars, each of us good Wives, either by
 the due benevolence of our Husbands, or the charitable as-
 sistance of our friends, whom we respected in the nature of
 Husbands, could every yeare for the most part bring forth
 fruit in due season, without lying idle like Fallow and until-
 led fields, now heaven have mercy upon us, we walk desolate
 like Wiidowes, with our bellies as flat as Flounders, and
 empty as crackt-nuts that have lost their kernels: Your com-
 mon harlots undoing us in the wayes of copulation and pro-
 creation, they in this dearth of mans flesh having some cu-
 stomers and helpers at dead lifts, while we poore soules
 wander like solitary Turtles without mates ; not one man
 among a hundred, since the departure of the Courtiers and
 Cavaliers, that in this City hath so much honesty as to aske
 a married woman the question, or offer his body to her ser-
 vice ; and if this be not a lamentable case my Masters, you
 who have Wives, and so know what belongs to women, be
 impartiall and just Judges. All flesh is fraile we know, and
 we women are the weaker vessels, and so have the frailer
 flesh, and are more subject to our failings then men. And is
 it not a pittifull case, able to make a mans bowels yearne
 with compassion, that women should out of their frailty fall,
 and have no man to take them up, except we should be be-
 holding to those who have the palsie in all their joynts, de-
 crepid old men, that cannot lift up any part about us, nor
 stand at all to elevate our directions for paines and aches :
 while we in the meane time tyre our soules, and consume
 the flesh of our bodies with pinings and mentall concepi-
 ons ; such as may call to our remembrance onely to trouble

our fancies, the past banquets we used daily and nightly to taste, when as they say we eat sweet meats with spoones and rioted in dainties. But now, woe worth the time since the beginning and continuance of these warres, we have been held to hard meat, scarce getting a morsel to satisfie the gripings and hunger of our bellies in three or foure dayes; nay, not in a weeke sometimes, and that we are faine to steale or borrow from our neighbours, in an ill houre be it spoken, to such a dearth of men are we reduced, our Husbands who according to the Lawes of the Jewes, were bound to give us due benevolence, being engaged and imbroiled in these warres, shedding their bloods, and maiming their bodies, to the losse of divers of the best of their members in the hot service, as many of us whole Husbands are returned lame and impotent can speake it by wofull experience.

And which is a far greater affliction, besides the losse of our Husbands (whom we would have spared with all our hearts, so they had been left us) we are deprived of our deare and delicious friends, who used with such pleasure to solace and recreate our bodies at Tavernes, and other places, paying for our going in to playes, and intalling us in triumph in the halfe crowne boxes, though we often paid for it our selves, borrowing of our Husbands by ingrosse to supply our friends, who paid our wares and commodities againe by retaile: By which though our Husbands were losers, we were sure to be good gainers. And these good Gentlemen, our noble friends, are taken away by the imployments of those civill warres, and in our places supply the necessities of Farmers daughters, and Inne-keepers, and Parsons wives, that make them lucky to horse-fleeth. In what a miserable estate and condition are we Wives left then, being not onely deprived of the bodily consolation of our Husbands, but also of our friends, who in stead of dauncing the shaking of the sheets, are dauncing to the musicke of the Drums, endangering hourly those precious and delectable members so deare to

us: Wives. Besides this misery and defect, the want of trading lamentably afflicts us Oyster-wives, Apple-wives, Tripe-wives, nay, the very Ale-wives, that had wont to commonly and to every Chapman and Passenger to sell off their wares, having now no vent for their commodities, unlesse they will put them off upon trust, and score up all their Beere, Ale, and Cakes: so that Wives of all sorts and occupations have reason to lament and complaine of the continuance of these warres, which have brought them so many and such killing afflictions, which makes all the parts and every particle of our bodies tremble with feare, and amazement to behold the still increasing torrent of our miseries; which neither tongue can expresse, nor pen decipher; for we are not onely in daily jealousies of our Husbands not returning to us, but also of their being slaine in the warres, whereby we are made unable of having hopes to propagate or fructifie the earth with children lawfully begotten, and so posterity must cease, and the City, Towne and Countrey, be left desolate: Besides, we are fearefull if we should lose these Husbands, that we shall not suddenly get new ones; for though we care not much for them, yet we know, according to the old Proverbe, *that seldome comes a better*, and therefore we should gladly rest our selves contented with these we have, rather wishing to weare our old clothes, then to goe starke naked. But surely this taking away of our friends, whom we set in the first place, and our Husbands from us, was a just judgement of Heaven upon us for our sinnes and iniquities; for before, when each of us had a loving and kinde husband as ever laid leg over woman, we were not contented with them, but still desired change, divers of us, having a friend, two or three in a corner besides, and so hath hapned to us as to covetous wretches, who striving to increate their state, lose all they had before, we poore distressed Wives this cold weather lying alone in our beds, without the warme touches and embraces of any man to comfort us.

In

In consideration of all which grieuances and oppressions which fall daily and nightly upon us, we the good wives and bad wives, chaste and unchaste, Scolds and Turtle-doves, being to the number of at least three millions of bodies, throughout the whole Kingdome, most humbly intreat, and with teares in our eyes beseech that an end may be suddenly put to these bloody and desperate civill warres, wherein so much bloud hath been shed, to the terrour of all Christian people, especially of us weake and tender-hearted women, that we may no longer lye alone in our beds, but have our husbands restored to us, to the solace and consolation of our bodies and soules, that we may againe bring forth children every yeare to increase the number of the Kings liege people and faithfull Subjects. And we as in all duty bound shall ever pray, &c.

FINIS.

