

Wiltshire¹, ca. 1738

When a person goes into a Poor Manufacturer's House, sees Bread and Cloth upon the Table, is told by the Poor Man, that he is forced to take'em of his Master for Work and on saying '*Tis your own Fault* in not prosecuting your Master, *I dare not, I shall starve if I do*' — such a one did so, but could get no work afterwards: — When another offers Superfine Cloth of several Sorts, some shillings a yd² cheaper than the common price and says. He took it of some Master he work'd for, but refuses to tell his Master's name... When he heard a Master in publick blame Truck and in a few Days is accidentally told by a Workman to that same Master, that he keeps back a certain Sum out of such a Quantity of Work which he pays in Goods; when the Goods is shewn and when on asking the poor Man's leave³ to speak to the Master about it, he is conjur'd to say *nothing* in these emphatical terms: *My Master trucks almost as little as anyone and is one of the best Masters in the Town he lives in* (where are many) *but if he was to hear I had complained wou'd turn me off, and I should never get Work more: as was such a One's case...* When 'tis common in the mouths of the Poor, Such a Master trucks *so much*, such a one *so much* in a Piece [...]. I say that when things are come to this pass⁴, we may not only conclude that Truck is yet a common Trade with some [...] but also that the oppressed Poor are under their Master's Power or Influence by some private ways or other. [...]

A Defence of The Essay on Riots (by the Essayist),
Gloucester⁵ Journal 13/2/1739

¹ In south-western England.

² Yard.

³ Permission.

⁴ A particular state of affairs; bad situation; difficult or unpleasant condition.

⁵ The county town of Gloucestershire, in south-western England.