

would still have kept within the bounds which had already so long sufficed to restrain it. During a century, the British government had prudently avoided to exasperate the minds of the colonists: with parental solicitude, it had protected and encouraged them, when in a state of infancy; regulating, afterwards, by judicious laws, their commerce with the mother country and with foreign nations, it had conducted them to their present prosperous and flourishing condition. In effect, in times immediately following the foundation of the colonies, England, as a tender mother, who defends her own children, had lent them the succor of her troops and her ships, against the attacks of the savage tribes, and against the encroachments of other powers; she granted immunities and privileges to Europeans who were disposed to establish themselves in these new countries; she supplied her colonists, at the most moderate prices, with cloths, stuffs, linens, and all necessary instruments as well for their defense against enemies as for the exercise of useful professions in time of peace, and especially such as were required for clearing the lands, and the labors of agriculture. The English merchants also assisted them with their rich capitals, in order to enable them to engage in enterprises of great importance, such as the construction of ships, the draining of marshes, the diking of rivers, the cutting of forests, the establishing of new plantations, and other similar works.

In exchange for so many advantages, and rather as a necessary consequence of the act of navigation, than as a fiscal restriction, and peculiar to commerce, England only required the colonists to furnish her with the things she wanted, on condition of receiving in return those in which she abounded, and of which they had need. The Americans were therefore obliged to carry to the English all the commodities and productions which their lands abundantly supplied, and, besides, the fleeces of their flocks for the use of her manufacturers. It was also prohibited the colonists to purchase the manufactures of any other part of the world except England, and to buy the productions of lands appertaining to any European people whatever, unless these productions had been first introduced into the English ports.—Such had been the constant scope and object of a great number of acts of parliament, from 1660 down to 1764; in effect, establishing a real commercial monopoly, at the expense of the colonies, and in favor of England: at which, however, the colonists discovered no resentment; either because they received in compensation a real protection on the part of the government, and numerous advantages on that of individuals, or because they considered the weight of this dependence as an equivalent for the taxes and assessments to which the inhabitants of Great Britain were subjected, by laws emanating from parliament.