

by this appearance. For if we have not likewise advanced in as great a proportion to what we were before that period, and to our means since then, as our neighbours have done in proportion to theirs, as I apprehend we have not, then, I say, we have comparatively declined; and shall never be able to preserve that distinguished rank of the first commercial and maritime power in Europe, time must be essential to preserve us in any degree, either of commerce or power. For if any other power, of a more extensive and populous territory than ours, should come to rival us in trade and wealth, he must come of necessity to give law to us in whatever relates either to trade or policy. Notwithstanding that the want of capacity in the ministers of such a power, or the indolence of the sovereign, may protract the evil for a time, it will certainly be felt in the end, and will shew us demonstratively, though too late, that we must have a great superiority in trade, not only to ourselves formerly, but to our neighbours at present, to have any at all which is likely to continue with us for a long time.