

without the intention of being malicious or unjust, it is possible for writers on political metaphysics to nourish illusions if they are ignorant of the evidence, and that they are entitled to maintain silence about the Treaty of Paris until they appreciate the condition which English statesmen faced in the midsummer of 1782.

England had been fighting France, Spain, and Holland in Europe, and the colonists in America. In Europe she faced the armed neutrality of Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, and the Empire; practically the whole civilised world. In November 1781, Lord Shelburne stated that the last loan for £21,000,000 had only realised £12,000,000, that £80,000,000 had already been added to the national debt, which would amount to £100,000,000 before the next campaign was over, and that, in Europe, England had not a single ally. During the next few months fresh disasters came. The fleet of brave Kempenfeldt was too feeble to face the French squadron. St. Eustatia, Demerara, Essequibo, St. Christopher, Nevis, Montserrat, and Minorca were lost; Gibraltar had been beleaguered since 1779; in America, with the exception of New York and Charlestown,