

The tonnage of Britain's coasting trade,	—	450,000
That of all French ships,	—	279,540
The former superior by	—	170,460
Seamen of Britain's coasting trade,	30,000	
Plantation ditto,	12,300	
Fisheries ditto,	20,000	
		62,300
All the French commerce,	—	57,588
The former superior by	—	4,712

These heads of comparison reduce the parallel to a very plain state.

The whole commerce of France has, by a modern writer *, been valued at 8,750,000 per annum, but evidently too low: his design, however, was to undervalue every thing but agriculture.

It would be mere trifling to compare the commerce of Britain with that of any other power than Holland and France.

S E C T. XVII.

Of the Importance of Commerce to Great Britain—The Means of promoting it—And Conjectures on its future State.

IN this section I shall speak of commerce in its common extent, comprehending the possession of shipping and the employment of seamen. I shall avoid entering minutely into the examination of a point that has been canvassed by a million of writers; only touching on a few circumstances, which it is requisite should not be wholly omitted in this Essay.

The importance of trade to this nation consists in, *first*, the employment of our poor; *secondly*, the acquisition of riches; *thirdly*, the support of naval power. A very few words will shew that these interests are in some measure distinct, and certainly of high importance. It may perhaps be thought, that the employment of our poor, and the acquisition of riches being the same thing, I have made a distinction without a difference. I do not deny their being in some respects the same thing, but certainly not in all; a losing trade, that is, one in which the balance is against us, may employ vast numbers of our poor. The importation

* *Les Interets de la France mal entendus*, tom. ii. p. 325.