

tions, that they are mere nominal free ports, called ironically by the Americans, regal republics.

There should therefore be no jealousy on the part of the British Islands, nor should the *experiment* be denied on this ground to an almost barren island; but, if it be *practicable* in the productive *agricultural* colonies, why not give them the same privilege—the shipping interest may possibly from misconception object, but they will not be injured by foreign ships trading to Tortola, where not above two or three British ships go now; these would still go to bring the mortgaged sugar home;—nay, the ship owners would be benefited, for many British ships would trade to Tortola instead of the many foreign ones which now go to St. Thomas from the British connection in a British island; and if the British ships did not supersede the foreign ships they would not be in a worse position than now. In short, it is sharing with a foreign island and competing with foreigners, and not with British capital, except as far as British capital has been attracted to St. Thomas's, from the culpable negligence or perverseness of Great Britain by St. Thomas having been permitted to supersede her next door neighbour, Tortola. There is in Tortola a large free African population let loose on the island and wanting employment; there is a British apprentice population, occupied in raising sugar at a larger cost than elsewhere, and who have not adequate employment. Will you give these people employment by trying an experiment, which may benefit that community and can injure no other, and may be of great service to the manufactures, commerce, and navigation of Great Britain. Tortola has some claim too on the benevolence, I may say justice, of the British Government. As the price of a British Constitution she paid in 1774 the four and a half per cent. duty to the crown, amounting in 1820 to £105,000. sterling, no part of which has ever been applied to island purposes. She erected at her own expense fortifications to preserve the colony to the Crown amounting to £22,000. She experienced a tremendous hurricane in 1819, nearly fifteen years ago, from which she has never recovered;