

moreover a convincing proof that there is a spirit abroad in the world whose influence is destined to produce events fraught with the greatest importance to mankind ; and which, if it do not tend to the amelioration of their condition, must at all events have the effect of putting to the test many of those *theoretic principles* which have so long given employment and a name to economists and philosophers. Nothing appears more strange than that the notions entertained by many of these men, whilst speculating in their closets on the laws of commerce, should at last become not only the ruling principles of government, but the foundation of legislative enactments. An inquiry into this subject would, we are convinced, be attended by some curious results. Is it the consequence of events, or the produce of conviction ? Is it the system of a school, or the mere result of a combination of circumstances ? Is it the accomplishment of a prediction, or one of those great and overwhelming currents in human affairs which carry mankind—their immature thoughts, prejudice and obstinacy on modes of government—into one common way of judging and acting ? These are questions naturally arising out of the late proceedings of parliament with regard to trade in general ; but, as mere philosophical speculations, we leave them to others more capable of doing them justice.

As to these measures, in so far as they relate to the colonies in a practical point of view, so far from exciting sentiments at variance with those of their authors, they have on the contrary, by the general wisdom and liberality on which they are founded, secured the unqualified approbation of all who are capable of judging of their merits. It was time that a more generous spirit should prevail in the councils of the nation with regard to colonial administration. It was time that the narrow prejudices and bigotry of the old system, which had produced so many commercial and political evils, should be done away with. It was time that the restraints placed upon industry and capital by the short-sighted views of former times, should be struck off the roll of our sufferings. It was time that men should be allowed to act for themselves who had given no signs of imprudence or idiocy. It was time that our merchants, by intercourse with foreigners and strangers in all parts of the world, should have the privilege of enriching their country and extending their own comforts. It was time that the offspring of the mother country, so numerous in almost every region of the world, with their property and talents, should be recognized as an "integral part," of that great country that gave them birth. In a word, it was time that the "lost sheep" and the "prodigal" should