

It will be much more difficult to find for the West Indies a sufficient supply of rice and Indian corn, which are both said to be absolutely essential. It is however a comfortable consideration, that neither rice nor Indian corn formed the food of the slaves. Of rice there were only imported in the British West Indies, if we may judge from a three years average ending with 1773, 20563 barrels*, which were all consumed at the luxurious tables of the seventy thousand masters. Of Indian corn there were equally required, if we may determine from a similar average, 401,471 bushels†; which had done something more than furnish 400,000 slaves with one week's supply, had the negroes consumed what was actually given to the horses and other labouring cattle. Rice then was a luxury of the rich; and Indian corn was the food of labourers, who indeed were equally entitled to their hire. It is not then so much to be lamented, that from the United States, rice and Indian corn can alone be procured in sufficient quantities. But, every community

* The Custom-house entries.

† Id. Indian corn was the only article of provisions, which was unreasonable in its price, according to the latest accounts from the West-Indies. It was as high as 5s. 10d. sterling per bushel at Antigua in April: But, it was about the same time as high as 4s. sterling the bushel in Virginia; and corn was selling in the Baltimore market on the 18 of May 1784 at 3s. sterling the bushel. All these high prices were owing to the severity of the preceding winter, when the planters were obliged to feed their cattle with the corn which they used to export.