

nue: And we may be assured, that the customs paid on the imports of a losing trade (unless on commodities to be re-exported, or further manufactured) by no means equal the consequent loss in excises, by the decrease of the national riches from this consumption. The mere possession of riches is not the great point (though of no small consequence); it is the consumption they occasion, the industry they give rise to, and the infallible journey they regularly take to the coffers of the public.

This idea is not, however, to be carried to an infinite extent, because an over-quantity of riches is pernicious, in raising the prices of every thing too high, and doing mischief thereby to the general industry. I extend the reflection no farther than the actual or probable necessities of the state.

As Great Britain pays such immense sums in interest to foreigners; is at such prodigious constant expences of government; and is never far removed from the expectation of a war; and as much of her revenue depends on commerce and its consequences (which are by-the-bye much greater than at first apparent); for these reasons, a regular acquisition of riches by commerce is become an absolute necessity of state.

Lastly; in respect of naval power. This point will require very little attention to settle. While Britain has so powerful an enemy to cope with as France, some system of military power must be formed for defence; to say nothing of plans of attack. This system must be that of land or sea forces. The first, to be depended on altogether, would perhaps be insufficient; most certainly it would be dangerous to liberty: But if both these objections were removed, there remains another very material one; it is naval power alone that can protect, defend, and secure the possession of any colonies. The most powerful armies would alone be useless in this respect. A superior French fleet, with ten thousand men, would reduce half the British colonies, though an army of ten times that number was encamped at Portsmouth, without a fleet to waft and convey them. As a naval power can have no other foundations than an extended commerce, there wants no other proof to shew that commerce is necessary to Great Britain, independent either of the employment of the poor, or the acquisition of riches.

II. The means of promoting this branch of industry are so prodigiously various and extensive, that it will not be expected every particular should be explained here. It would fill volumes upon a subject that has filled a thousand already; a few remarks, however, are necessary, and especially if the subject be found to admit any that are not already hackneyed by common use.