

is a more considerable Alteration : And though Three-pence on a Gallon of Rum (for the Charge amounted to no more) does not seem to be an intolerable Load upon such a Commodity, and the Effect of it could not be thoroughly known by one Year's Experience only, yet as a Duty of one Penny must incontestably be less inconvenient to the Trade, which the *American* Distilleries supply, the Importance and the Extent of that Trade become the principal Considerations : And so far as this Manufacture, (for it is an *American* Manufacture to which the Indulgence has been shewn, and so far therefore) as it interferes with the Produce of the *British* Distillery, either on the Coast of *Africa*, or in the Fisheries, it certainly ought not to be favoured ; so far as it is supported by Molasses purchased with Money, or as the Consumption of their own Corn in the Distilleries is prevented by the Importation of Molasses, it is not advantageous to the Colonies : And the excessive Use of Spirits among themselves, has been found to be so pernicious to the People, that the Imposition of a Duty as the Means of checking it, has been often under Consideration in the very Provinces which are most concerned in the Manufacture. That Part therefore of the Trade which does not fall within any of these Descriptions, is alone deserving of Encouragement ; and the Benefit which it is said may arise from lowering the Duty upon that Part, is the only commercial Advantage supposed to be obtained, by a Diminution of 240,000*l.* per *Ann.* in the disposable Revenue.

I pass over here the other less important Articles which have been mentioned before ; and to these must be added the opening of Free Ports at *Jamaica* and *Dominica* ; of which little can be said with Certainty, as it is a Concession which may be beneficial or may be dangerous to Trade : I can see Advantages arising from it, if proper Precautions be taken against the Mischiefs which may attend such a Relaxation of the Acts of Navigation : But I confess myself not a competent Judge of the Plan which has been adopted. It is a Subject which requires the most mature Deliberation, much previous Enquiry, a watchful Jealousy, and extensive Provisions : The Ministers themselves once thought they were not prepared for such an Establishment this Year : They suddenly changed their Opinion ; but I have not altered mine : I still wish it had been postponed, till the whole Extent of the Indul-