# OBSERVATIONS

## ON THE

# COMMERCE

## OF THE

# AMERICAN STATES

### WITH

## EUROPE AND THE WEST INDIES.

AS a sudden revolution, an unprecedented case, a momentous change, the independence of America, has bewildered our reason and encouraged the wildest sallies of imagination, systems have been preferred to experience, rash theory to successful practice, and the Navigation Act itself, the guardian of the prosperity of Britain, has been almost abandoned by the levity or ignorance of those who have never seriously examined the spirit or the consequence of ancient rules. Our calmer reflections will soon discover, that such great sacrifices are neither requisite nor expedient; and the knowledge of the exports and imports of the American States will afford us facts and principles to ascertain the value of their trade, to foresee their true interest and probable conduct, and to choose the wisest measures (the wisest are always the most simple) for securing and improving the benefits of a commercial intercourse with this foreign and independent nation. For it is in the light of a foreign country that America must henceforward be viewed; it is the situation she herself has chosen by asserting her independence, and the whimsical definition of a people *sui generis*, is either a figure of rhetoric which conveys no distinct idea, or the effort of cunning to unite at the same time the advantages of two inconsistent characters. By asserting their independence, the Americans have renounced the privileges, as well as the duties, of British subjects. If in some instances, as in the loss of the carrying trade, they feel the inconvenience of their choice, they can no longer complain; but if they are placed on the footing of the most favoured nation, they must surely applaud our liberality and friendship, without expecting that, for their emolument, we should sacrifice the navigation and the naval power of Great Britain. By this simple, if only temporary expedient, we shall escape the unknown mischiefs of crude and precipitate systems, we shall avoid
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