

HAVING thus answer'd the Allegations of the Bill, in a Manner which I hope may be satisfactory, I am next to consider such Arguments as I have met with in Conversation from Persons in the Ministry and others.

WHAT I have heard most insisted on is, *The Third Objection, that the Acts of Trade and Navigation, made on purpose to render the Plantations beneficial to Great-Britain, are disregarded in the Charter Governments ; and that this Evil cannot be effectually cur'd, but by a Resumption of the Charters.* To which I answer very particularly and distinctly,

*First,* THE Complaints on this Head are for the most Part of an old Date, and when the Bill against the Charters was depending in the House of Commons, were produc'd from the Files of the Plantation Board, whither they had been transmitted in former Reigns, when Custom-House Officers in the Plantations were such great Rarities, that one Collector serv'd four entire Provinces. And can it be thought strange that Merchants, whose Business is Gain, should have sometimes for Lucre transgress'd the Acts of Trade, when there were no Officers to see them duly observ'd ? The Case is vastly different now. Officers of the Revenue are multiply'd, and are extremely rigorous, so that instead of *their* Complaints of unfair Traders, the Merchants on the other Hand, greatly complain of the Oppression of the Officers. I've seen an Account of such intolerable Hardships impos'd on fair well-meaning Traders, under Colour of Law, that one would hardly give Credit to the least of the Articles, if the Whole had not been deliver'd publickly in an Assembly of one of the Provinces by a worthy Member, and afterwards printed with his Name to it. The Author I refer to, after a Recital of the several Facts, in which he is very full as to every Circumstance, draws up this melancholly Conclusion, That the Custom-House Officers had by their violent Practices either seiz'd or driven away all the Vessels belonging to that Part of the Country, so that they had no Sloops left to carry their Produce to Market in the adjacent Colonies.

*Secondly,* If there be some *late* Complaints, perhaps upon Examination, they will appear to be ill-grounded. I can speak this knowingly,