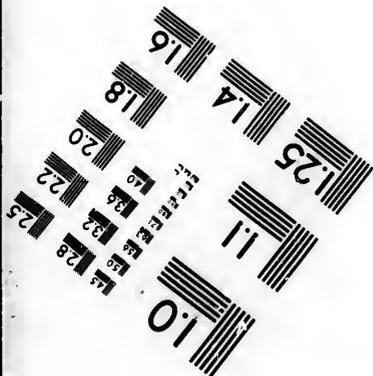
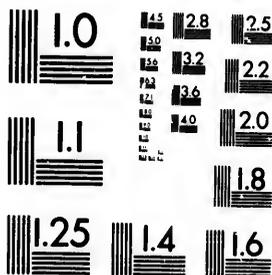


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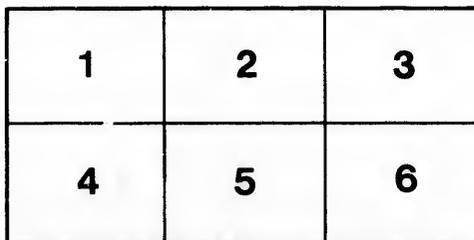
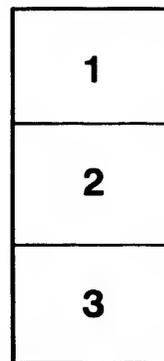
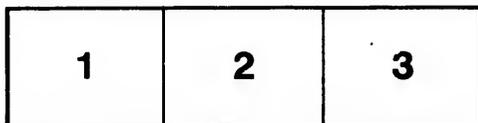
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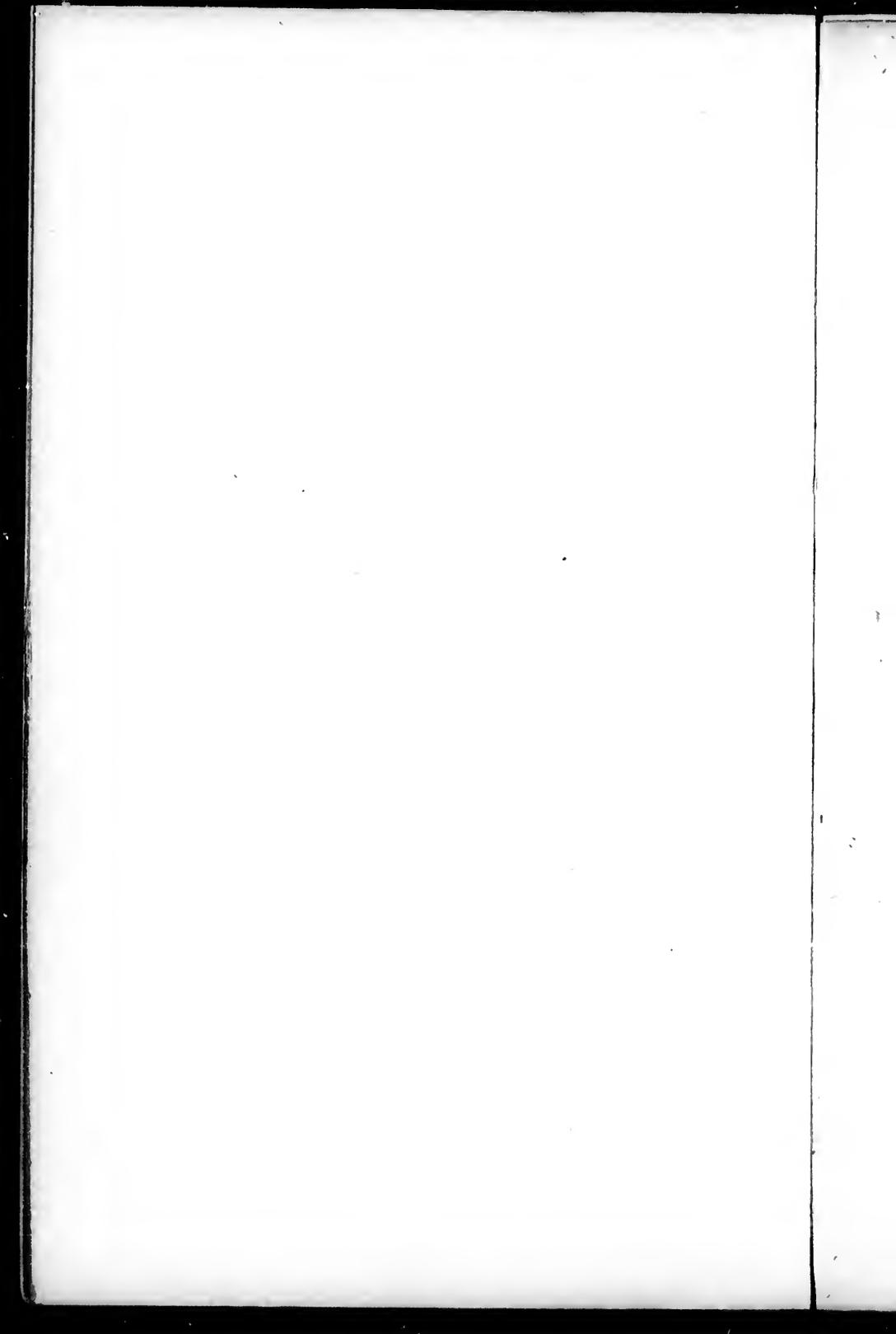
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T H O U G H T S
ON THE LATE
PROCEEDINGS OF GOVERNMENT,
RESPECTING THE
TRADE OF THE WEST INDIA ISLANDS
WITH THE UNITED STATES OF
N O R T H A M E R I C A.
THE SECOND EDITION,
CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

To which is now first added

A P O S T S C R I P T,

ADDRESSED

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD SHEFIELD.

By BRIAN EDWARDS, Esq.

Quis furor iste novus? —————

————— non hostem, inimicaque castra

Argivum; vestras spes uritis.

VIRG.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR T. CADDELL, IN THE STRAND.
M. DCC. LXXXIV.

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TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

THE most material of the facts stated in this pamphlet, were collected by the author during his residence in the West Indies previous to the beginning of the late war. His situation there, afforded him means of information not always attainable; and he endeavoured to avail himself of it for a purpose very different from that of a hasty and temporary publication. Some late measures of Government, particularly the proclamation of the twenty sixth of December last, renewing, among other regulations, the restrictive proclamation of the second of July preceding, induced him, in judging of their propriety, to recur to the materials in his possession; and conceiving that a clear and accurate knowledge of every part of our antient commercial system with
Ame-

America, is at this time essentially necessary, he ventures in this manner to submit his thoughts on a very important branch of it, to the wisdom of our ministers and the judgment of an enlightened publick. Unconnected with party, he writes with the freedom of history: he trusts with impartiality: he hopes without offence. And although he has not the folly to suppose that the name of an undistinguished individual like himself can add weight to his opinions; yet as he finds it necessary to animadvert on the writings of others who have avowed themselves to the world, he has thought it his duty, as an honest man, to give his name also to the publick.

B. EDWARDS.

Westbury House, *Hants*,
10th *Feb.* 1784.

T R A D E

BETWEEN

N O R T H A M E R I C A

AND THE

W E S T I N D I E S.

THERE is this essential difference attending the conduct and determinations of private persons, and of persons in power: the mistakes of the former, however gross and dangerous, seldom spread their consequences beyond the individual himself, and the small circle to which he belongs; whereas those of the latter are often co-extensive with the interests of a whole people.—A single error in the councils of a publick minister may involve in it the fate of nations, and the welfare of posterity.—We have all been melancholy witnesses to the truth of this remark; and can bear testimony, from our own remembrance, of the fatal effects that one eminent mistake in the conduct of a great and able statesman has produced: the revolt of

three millions of our fellow subjects:—The dismemberment of the empire, and a combination of impending dangers, from which death seems our only refuge.

It is not wonderful, therefore, that our late administration with such an example before them, at once a lesson and a terror to the world, should, in a case so unprecedented as the settling a commercial intercourse with our late fellow-subjects, now a great and independent nation, have displayed unusual timidity and caution. That their intentions were good, I have not a doubt; but I think it may be questioned whether the dread of *doing too much*, has not had too powerful an influence on their councils; for in dangerous cases temporising expedients are not always the safest line of conduct. To me, indeed, the governing principle of what *ought to be* the Conduct of Great Britain, on the present occasion, appears sufficiently obvious. The basis of every permanent commercial alliance between distant nations is *mutual advantage, founded in mutual confidence*. Surely then it is our interest and our duty to endeavour, by softening animosity, to restore that confidence which we have unhappily lost. Although we cannot retrieve ALL the great benefits which we have wantonly and foolishly thrown from us, let us not, in the peevishness of disappointed ambition, neglect
the

the recovery of such as are still within our reach. By an enlarged and liberal policy on our part, passion and prejudice will at length happily subside, and then, and not till then, will interest have its natural bias on the mind of America. Trade will no doubt, in such case, revert in a great degree to its ancient channels; and that separation which has rudely torn from the robe of Majesty one of its brightest ornaments, may not ultimately prove so essentially fatal as is now apprehended. Thus—allied to us, as they still are, by the dearest ties of consanguinity—let us hope that the Americans will yet prove themselves, as they have hitherto proved, our best friends and customers in peace, and in war our firmest allies. The propriety of this doctrine, I presume to think, is not less justified by the precepts of christianity, than by the maxims of sound policy and commercial experience.

But we are now told, by men of high rank and great authority, that such generosity is not only unnecessary but dangerous; and that, in spite of American resentment and independency, this kingdom must necessarily possess as much of their commerce as we wish to retain*.

* See the debates in Parliament, March 7, 1783. See also 'Observations on the Commerce of the American States' by Lord Sheffield. The aim of his lordship's pamphlet throughout, is to support this doctrine.

If this be indeed the case, what a dreadful monument of human infirmity does Great Britain exhibit to the world! And what have we to console ourselves with, for the millions we have expended, and the blood we have spilt? we have dismembered the noblest empire in the universe;—and for what? “*To make assurance sure!*—to possess ourselves of an object already our own, and of which nothing it seems could have deprived us!

I have indeed ever thought and said, and ever shall think and say, that the war with America on the part of Great Britain, was conceived in wickedness, and continued through insanity; but I had hopes, after the discipline we have undergone, that at length we were nearly cured of our delirium; for we have been blistered and blooded, pumped, purged, and chained to the earth. Nevertheless there are, I am sorry to find, a considerable party in the nation, who appear to me to be still labouring under some *unlucky ascendant*; for they tell us, that the only method which now remains of improving and extending a commercial intercourse with our late-brethren, is to treat them in all respects as a foreign people: to shut our ports against them, as aliens and strangers: to make them sensible, that having renounced the duties, they have renounced also the privileges of British subjects.

The

The Americans, we are gravely assured, will be far from taking such conduct amiss: nay, they will even applaud us for it, and consider it as a convincing proof of our liberality and friendship towards them †.

Fortunately among the great parties that are now contending for the preservation, or the attainment of power; there are a *few* who argue more consistently on the subject. Mr. Burke, with his usual comprehensive discernment, has expressed a generous indignation against all prohibitory systems; and the accomplished minister in the direction of our finances, brought into parliament ‖ a provisional bill for the re-establishment of a commercial intercourse between this kingdom and America, founded on very beneficial and enlarged principles; and which, had it passed into a law, would, I am persuaded, have tended in its consequences, not to the injury of our trade and navigation, as was apprehended, but, in a very eminent degree to the support and encouragement of both.

A change of administration taking place soon afterwards, this bill was rejected. Nevertheless, I will not presume hastily to condemn the mea-

† Lord Sheffield's observations, p. 2.

‖ March, 1783.

sure which was adopted in the place of it. I allude to the act which empowers his Majesty in council to regulate the trade with America in such manner as shall be thought most expedient and salutary. It seemed not unreasonable, it must be owned, that some engagement should be required on the part of America, in return for *certain* indulgencies, which she will probably expect from Great Britain; and I take for granted, that considerations of this nature induced parliament to vest a discretionary authority in the privy council; but notwithstanding this display of prudence (perhaps of wisdom) it does not appear that the authority thus intrusted to administration has been productive of any of those beneficial effects which were expected from the exercise of it. One of its first fruits was the proclamation of the second of July; a measure which I venture to pronounce (if it be meant as a permanent regulation) was founded on the grossest misinformation, and is fraught with the most serious consequences:—of the danger of which, however, I firmly believe its advisers had not, nor yet have an adequate conception*.

If

* The proclamation was renewed 26th of December, 1783; yet few men are better acquainted with the true interests of the West-India Islands, the importance of their trade, and their dependance on external support, than the

Right

If there ever was one particular system of commerce in the world, that called less for restraint and limitation than any other, it was doubtless the intercourse and reciprocal exchange

Right Honourable Gentleman † (at that time secretary of state) who supported the act in the House of Commons on which this proclamation is founded. I say this from no other motive than the love of truth; for I am wholly unknown to the Right Honourable Gentleman; but I have frequently, from the gallery of that house, heard him display to rich a fund of correct and most valuable information on those subjects, (as he did particularly on an application of the sugar refiners in February 1781, for a reduction of the duties on foreign sugar,) as convinces me that on the present occasion (if indeed he advised the proclamation) he has suffered his own most excellent judgment to be biased by that of less enlightened or interested men. As the reader may wish to refer to the proclamation at large, it is herewith added.

At the Court at St. JAMES'S, the 2d. of July, 1783.

presented R E S O L U T I O N
The KING'S Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

WHEREAS by an Act of Parliament passed this session, intitled, "An act for preventing certain instruments from being required from ships belonging to the United States of America, and to give to his Majesty, for a limited time, certain powers for the better carrying on trade and commerce between the subjects of his Majesty's

† Mr. Fox.

change of commodities, which subsisted between our subjects ^{of} and the West-India Islands, and those of the now United States of North America. It was not a traffick calculated to supply the

“ Majesty’s dominions and the inhabitants of the said “ United States,” it is amongst other things enacted, that during the continuance of the said act, it shall and may be lawful for his Majesty in Council, by order or orders to be issued and published from time to time, to give such directions and to make such regulations with respect to duties, drawbacks or otherwise, for carrying on the trade and commerce between the people and territories belonging to the Crown of Great Britain, and the people and territories of the said United States, as to his Majesty in Council shall appear most expedient and salutary, any law, usage, or custom to the contrary notwithstanding; his Majesty doth therefore, by and with the advice of his privy council, hereby order and direct, that pitch, tar, turpentine, hemp, and flax, masts, yards, and bowsprits, staves, heading, boards, timber, shingles, and all other species of lumber; horses, neat cattle, sheep, hogs, poultry, and all other species of live stock and live provisions; peas, beans, potatoes, wheat, flour, bread, biscuit, rice, oats, barley, and all other species of grain, being the growth or production of α γ of the United States of America, may (until further order) be imported by British subjects in British-built ships, owned by his Majesty’s subjects, and navigated according to law, from any port of the United States of America, to any of his Majesty’s West-India Islands; and that rum, sugar, molasses, coffee, cocoa nuts, ginger, and pimento, may, until further order, be exported by British subjects in British-built ships, owned by his Majesty’s subjects,

the fantastick calls of vanity, or to administer gratification to luxury or to vice. Its first object was to obtain food for the hungry: to purchase common sustenance for thousands in those islands who must otherwise have unavoidably suffered the miseries of famine. And the second great aim of the planters was, to procure materials for the supply of two capital objects; their buildings, and packages for conveying their staples to Great Britain, from whence alone they are supplied with raiment and other manu-

jects, and navigated according to law, from any of his Majesty's West-India Islands, to any port or place within the said United States, upon payment of the same duties on exportation, and subject to the like rules, regulations, securities and restrictions, as the same articles by law are or may be subject and liable to, if exported to any British colony or plantation in America:—and the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, are to give the necessary directions herein, as to them may respectively appertain.

Steph. Cattrell."

The act on which this proclamation was founded, expiring the 20th of December, 1783, it was renewed the last Session, and declared to be in force until the 24th June, 1784. The reader will observe, that those important articles beef and pork, salted fish, lamp oil, &c. are prohibited altogether from the United States, even in British ships, navigated according to law.

factures to an immense amount, for the comfort of life and the support and maintenance of their plantations.—Of the necessity of obtaining materials for the package of their principal commodities, sugar and rum, an idea may be formed from this,—that the quantity of those articles only, annually shipped to Great Britain, exceeds in value the sum of three millions of pounds sterling, and without the means of conveying the same to the British market, the whole of its immense cultivation must stop;—for who will raise, at a great expence, commodities which he can neither consume himself nor sell to others?

Such being in part the nature, and indeed the absolute necessity of the trade in question, it seems beyond the stretch of human ingenuity to devise a solid reason why the circumstance of American independency should induce Great Britain to object (if America does not) to the continuation of so beneficial an intercourse:—beneficial in the highest degree to Great Britain herself; not to her sugar plantations only:—yet the proclamation before mentioned, by interdicting American ships from a participation therein, is, according to my conception of it, tantamount to, and in effect an absolute prohibition of the trade altogether. Nor is this opinion single and unsupported: the inhabitants

bitants of all the British West Indies considered the proclamation in the same light; for it no sooner reached them, than American supplies rose immediately, in consequence of it, three hundred per cent. in price.

It were easy to demonstrate the impossibility of British ships supplying exclusively the sugar islands with American cargoes, except on terms absolutely ruinous either to the merchant who carries on the trade, or to the planter. To those who are acquainted with the nature and comparative cheapness of American navigation, proof of this is unnecessary; and it is equally unnecessary to those who are not: for in my opinion, the United States will cut the matter short by a reciprocal restriction towards British vessels. That they certainly *will* come to this determination, however, I do not affirm; I only say they *may*: and I think it more than probable, as soon as their present internal disquietudes are sufficiently allayed, to permit them to attend to foreign commerce, *that they will*; and I form my opinion on the following circumstances: First, because they well know that Great Britain must in time recede; for America has this advantage in the contest, that sugar and rum, and coffee, and molasses, though very wholesome things, are not, however, like American provisions, absolutely necessary to the pre-

servation of life. Secondly, because if they are not permitted to purchase those commodities from us, in their own way, they can get them elsewhere. The commerce of America, therefore, is beyond all equivalent more necessary to the British West-India Islands, than that of the islands to her. For these reasons Great Britain, as America well knows, must recede *at last*. The misfortune is, that our devoted planters may be famished before the contest is settled.

Those who contend that the necessities of America will oblige her to send her merchandize to the best market, through any channel, appear to me to judge somewhat hastily of human nature. They take for granted that *interest* has, in all cases, an irresistible influence on human action. I doubt this is not *always* a just conclusion. The bulk of mankind are, I believe, as commonly governed by *passion*. But though on the present occasion, the passions and prejudices of America concur, according to my idea, with her real interest, to induce her to reject the alternative offered by Great Britain, yet it may not be useless to enquire what other nations have done under a similar predicament, and in cases too where evidently it was *not* their interest to retaliate. An instance occurs in history too striking to be overlooked. By a statute

ture of Queen Elizabeth, the importation was prohibited of cutlery from the Netherlands. This act was no sooner promulgated, than the Princess of Parma instantly prohibited in return the trade for English woollens, amounting to the annual value of one million sterling. This Princess knew as well as Elizabeth, that by this prohibition she essentially injured the trade of the people under her government; but she gratified her revenge: and in truth the annals of all ages abundantly prove, that considerations of interest, are frequently overpowered by motives of resentment.

Surely the present subject is not properly understood in this kingdom, or the profitable existence of the most valuable of our remaining plantations;—the welfare of thousands and thousands of valuable subjects;—I may add the manufactures and industry, in a great degree, of the nation, would not have been thus put in hazard. That the subject is not well understood, is evident from the reasoning of many distinguished men, both in and out of parliament, who cannot be supposed to be actuated by interested or improper motives. Yet their arguments prove them to be most strangely misinformed in a matter of the highest importance. Among other positions, which have seemingly had an influence on the councils of govern-

vernment in this business, it has been very confidently urged.

First, That if the United States shall refuse permission to British ships to carry on the trade between the West Indies and America exclusively, the planters may obtain sufficient supplies of provision and lumber from Canada and Nova Scotia, at least with some assistance from Great Britain.

Secondly, That Great Britain being entitled to the monopoly of the produce of her own West-India Islands, it will be injurious to her interest, to permit a direct importation into the United States of any part thereof, in American vessels.

Thirdly, That if the Americans are allowed a free commercial intercourse with this kingdom and its dependencies as formerly, they will soon substantially enjoy it, to the exclusion of our own shipping, and the entire loss of our carrying trade.

Fourthly, That Ireland will have just reason to complain, if America is permitted to purchase sugar and rum cheaper than herself.

I shall

I shall consider these positions separately; but in this, as in all other commercial disquisitions, it is the first duty of a writer *to ascertain facts*. Declamation may mislead and speculative reasoning perplex, but in matters of trade, the most plausible theory, unless it be raised on the solid evidence of well authenticated facts, is built on stubble.

Lord Sheffield observes, and very truly, that the knowledge of the exports and imports of the American trade, will afford us facts and principles to ascertain its value. I shall apply this observation to the trade in question, as it actually subsisted between our islands in the West Indies and the now United States of America previous to the year 1774, in the latter end of which year, the non-importation agreement took place. I omit that year for obvious reasons. If I mistake not, the summary which I shall present to my readers will afford a full and sufficient answer to more than one of the preceding objections. The rest will give me very little trouble.

I begin with the imports. It is indeed abundantly necessary that Great Britain should be acquainted with their nature and value, for their importance extends not merely to the preservation of fortune, but to the maintenance

of life.—It was said in parliament, that they amounted to about 200,000l. annually, but that neither the people nor parliament of England have at present any just conception of their magnitude, may be seen from hence, that on an average of three years, previous to 1774, our several West-India Islands received from America (I mean from those provinces which now constitute the United States;—the small and casual importations from Canada and Nova Scotia being unworthy particular discrimination *) an annual supply of one hundred and twenty-five thousand barrels of flour, five thousand tierces of biscuit, fourteen thousand tierces of rice, twelve thousand five hundred barrels of pork and beef; three hundred and sixty thousand bushels of Indian corn; besides beans and pease, oats, &c. but above all, as being of infinite importance towards the maintenance of the Negroes, was the article of salted fish, amounting to one hundred and fifty thousand quintals, and thirty thousand barrels †. Such were the provisions,—not matters of luxury,

* From 5th July, 1782, to 5th July, 1783, only two small vessels from Halifax, and one from Quebeck, entered at Kingston in Jamaica.

† Worth in America about 120,000l. sterling—of the great importance of this particular supply I shall again have occasion to speak.

but plain and necessary food. Of lumber for building, such as joists, boards, planks, &c. (worth in the West Indies before the war about 5l. sterling per thousand); the quantity imported was twenty million one hundred and fifty thousand feet, besides twenty-one million of shingles for roofing; and of staves for hogheads and puncheons, worth 8l. sterling per thousand, or thereabouts, the islands receive twenty one million one hundred and sixty thousand, exclusive of seventeen thousand shooks hogheads, and about a million and a half of wood hoops. To all which are to be added frames for houses, spermaceti candles, iron, tar, turpentine and lamp oil; horses, oxen, sheep and poultry; the whole annual importation, I venture to set, on the most moderate estimate, at the sum of 750,000l. sterling Money of Great Britain!

In payment of this immense supply, the Americans exported part of all the staples of our islands; but principally *rum*. And it is a circumstance, deserving particular attention, that the *rum* of all our plantations (Jamaica and Grenada excepted) is fit only for the American market, and would seldom prove a saving remittance if shipped to Great Britain. The quantity of this article sold annually to America, on an average, as above, was three

D

million

million six hundred thousand gallons, amounting, at 1s. 6d. sterling per gallon, to 270,000l. sterling.

The next article of export, in point of value, was *sugar*, of which the Americans purchased about 3000 hogheads, 1500 tierces, and 4000 barrels yearly, worth on the spot, about 125,000l. sterling. It was chiefly the finest Muscavado intended for the scale.

With *molasses* the Americans were chiefly supplied by the French, who being checked in their distilleries by the policy of their government, could afford to sell it much cheaper than the British planters, yet in assorting their homeward cargoes, this commodity was not entirely overlooked. The quantity purchased by them in our islands annually, was stated to me at about 150,000 gallons, worth 5,000l. sterling, but I suspect it is greatly under-rated.

Coffee constituted a very essential article of American consumption. The demand for it in Jamaica for the American market, was so great for some years previous to the commencement of the late war, as to occasion an increase of cultivation in the mountainous parts of that island, (especially in the vicinity of Kingston) so rapid as to excite astonishment.

The

The quantity shipped to North America so long ago as 1767, (since which time I have no exact account) from the port of Kingston, was 904 casks, worth, I presume, on an average, 20l. each (currency). I have no doubt that this exportation was doubled, on an average of the six succeeding years; and allowing the island to windward (particularly Dominica and Grenada and its dependencies) to have furnished an equal quantity with Jamaica, the whole supply in sterling money would not be short of 50,000l. This article too would have proved a losing remittance if shipped to Great Britain. Our late ministers, however, very wisely and prudently reduced the duties on its importation.

The Americans purchased likewise (chiefly in Jamaica) considerable quantities of *cocoa* or chocolate, and about 10,000 *mahogany planks*. These articles were obtained principally from the Spanish Main, and the island of Cuba, in exchange for British manufactures sent from Jamaica. This was a trade formerly of infinite importance to Great Britain, till the British ministry, in 1763, through a mistaken policy, becoming custom-house officers for the King of Spain, gave it a wound which it has never thoroughly recovered. They purchased likewise, but to no great amount, *piemento*, *ginger*,

cotton-wool, fustick, logwood and lignum vite. For these various articles I reckon on a loose estimate, 60,000l.

From this state of their imports and exports, the sum of 240,000l. sterling appears to have been the balance in favour of America, and it was paid in cash and bills of exchange. Part of which, as it is supposed, was afterwards laid out in the French islands, in the purchase of molasses and coffee; but much less I believe than is commonly imagined; for the French planters had as great occasion as our own for American lumber and necessaries; and that those articles were freely admitted into their ports, I have been myself an eye-witness; that they gladly received them too, instead of money, in payment of sugar and other articles of their produce, which were afterwards conveyed (whether legally or not) into the ports of North America, there is no reason to doubt. It is therefore more than probable, that the whole or the greatest part of the balance due and received from the planters in our own islands, was remitted by the Americans to Great Britain, in reduction of their debts to the British merchants. And such *were once* the happy effects of colonial navigation and commerce! Though spreading through a variety of distant channels, their profits all returned to, and ultimately concentrated in,
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Great Britain, like rivers to the ocean, which, as philosophers tell us, supplies, by unobserved operations, and through a thousand secret recesses, the springs and fountains of the earth: but these, after giving fertility and life to the remotest corners of the globe, return back with collective and augmented force, and freighted with golden treasures, to the bosom of their general parent.

In the preceding enumeration of the exports from the British West Indies to North America, I am not clear that my statement conforms to official documents. The Custom-house books in the West-Indies, out of which those documents are formed, afford no certainty of information; for many of the bays, creeks, and shipping places in the islands (particularly in Jamaica) being remote from the ports of entry, it was formerly usual with the masters of American vessels loading at such places, in order to prevent delay, to make out their manifests, and take out their clearances before they were fully laden, receiving afterwards on board, notwithstanding the risques they incurred by the practice, much greater quantities of goods than they had reported. Governor Lyttelton, in a representation to the Lords of Trade, in 1764, now before me, observes that there was not at that time *one half* of the produce entered

entered for exportation in the Custom-house books at Jamaica, which was actually shipped. Perhaps, therefore I may have over-rated the balance in favour of America.

I am the more inclined to suspect that government is not rightly informed in this particular of the *exports*, because Lord Sheffield, who appears to have been refused no information that office can give, speaks of them in general (the article of rum excepted) as inconsiderable and of little value.—With respect, however to the *imports*, it is impossible but that the fullest and most correct information has been obtained; and amongst the numerous accounts collected by his Lordship, it would have been a proof of his candour if he had stated also an account of the imports in question to the publick, and thereby have rendered this intrusion on their patience unnecessary.

In truth it is the knowledge of the magnitude of the imports from the United States (—seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling laid out in such cheap and bulky commodities as provisions and lumber!—) that chiefly demonstrates the mockery of referring the disappointed planter to Canada and Nova Scotia. Even if nature had not, as unfortunately she has, shut up the navigation from
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the former of these provinces six months in the year, and devoted the latter to everlasting sterility; there is this plain reason in the nature of things that forbids the planter to look to those countries for effectual relief. "It is inconsistent with the nature of commerce, to furnish an adequate supply to so vast and so various a demand; coming immediately and unexpectedly. The demand and the supply must grow up together, mutually supporting, and supported by each other." It will require a long series of years to bring them to a level*.

This principle applies too in a great degree, as well to England, as to our few remaining provinces in North America. I will suppose, however, that Great Britain can actually furnish the chief of those articles which the planters formerly obtained from the United States; yet it must be remembered, that the price of them in Europe, from the advance of freight only, will at least be doubled. The freight of lumber, even from North America, a short and safe passage, is a moiety of the first cost of the goods. Nevertheless (as was well observed by a noble Earl in the House of Lords) "it is the
"readiness and cheapness of the navigation that

* See Mr Walker's evidence before the House of Commons on the Planter's petition in 1775, wherein this remark is ably illustrated.

“ supports the intercourse. From the vicinity
 “ of the American Continent, and the West
 “ India Islands to each other, the trade is carried
 “ on by small sloops and schooners; nay, even
 “ by half-decked boats, with two and three
 “ men, and perhaps a boy on board of each;
 “ the value of one cargo, inconsiderable as it
 “ is, being more than sufficient to pay the
 “ prime cost of the whole vessel †”

With the advance of freight on goods purchased in Europe, (to say nothing of the augmented cost of the goods themselves) must be reckoned also the loss which the planter will sustain in the sale of his produce.—I mean in the difference he will experience between the prices he usually obtained from the American trader (who, dealing on barter and for a homeward freight, could afford to pay liberally) and those which he is likely to obtain at a glutted market, and subject to enormous duties in Great Britain.—Part of his staple commodities too, as we have shewn, if he cannot sell them to America, must remain a dead loss on his hands. It is, therefore, cruelty and insult to tell him of supplies in Great Britain, if he has not wherewithal to purchase them. There may be corn in Egypt, but there is no money in the Land of Canaan.

† Lord Abingdon's speech, July 15, 1783.

Under circumstances of such accumulated distress, it is absolutely impossible that nineteen out of twenty of the planters can subsist. If it be asked, *How it came that they subsisted during the war, when all immediate intercourse with the associated provinces was cut off?* The answer is obvious. They obtained American supplies by means of the prize-vessels which were condemned and sold in their ports; and, if this resource proved deficient, the advanced price of West-India produce at the British market, enabled the planter to purchase such articles in Great Britain, as Great Britain could supply. The resource and its alternative no longer exist. And here it may not be improper to shew on what terms the planter was usually supplied at the British market with those commodities which he formerly obtained from North America.—An instance or two will suffice. Among other necessaries, *flour*, and *packages for rum*, constituted two important articles. Of the flour, a third, at least, perished before it reached its place of destination; and with regard to puncheons for containing rum, it is to be observed, that pipe-staves from the Baltick, though affording the necessary material, are not prepared for the use of the West-Indies; being too long for a single puncheon, and not long enough for two; neither are they properly manufactured in other respects. The planter was compelled,

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therefore, to purchase ready made puncheons in Great Britain; the average price of which, during the war, was about twenty shillings each,* to which add six shillings for freight, insurance, and charges, and the whole expence on delivery in the West Indies, exclusive of the iron-hoops, was 26s. sterling.—Now the whole cost in the West Indies of the same article, prepared from American staves, was usually about 11s. only.—Some part of this expence, however, was repaid; and a very small part of the puncheons were used as packages for dry goods sent out, which was a saving in the freight; but it is no exaggeration to aver, that in this instance alone, trifling as it may appear, by importing their rum-packages from Great Britain instead of America, the islands sustained a loss of at least 50,000l. sterling per annum. From hence some judgment may be formed what little dependence, even the most opulent of the West India planters, can place on the Mother Country for the supply of necessaries. The resource itself is ruinous in the extreme.

The preceding observations have, I trust, fully obviated the first objection above stated, and anticipated in some measure an answer to the second. I most readily admit that Great Britain is of right entitled to the monopoly of

* The price is now 18s.

the produce of her West-India possessions, as long as she continues *to them* the monopoly of her market. This reciprocal obligation I consider as founded on an implied convention, on the faith of which the sugar islands were settled; but I contend that a vent in America (though no longer a part of the British dominion) of those articles of their produce, for which the demand in Great Britain seldom affords a saving price, may very reasonably be requested. For not tending in the smallest degree to the prejudice of the mother country, it cannot surely be considered as a breach of that convention which I have supposed to subsist between her and her children. It were indeed strange policy in a parent state to deprive her colonies of any resource, the loss of which, though an injury to them, is productive of no advantage to herself; nor can any contract warrant so extensive an interpretation. Sugar, indigo, cotton wool, dying-wood, &c. being raw materials, for which Great Britain affords a sufficient demand, she may perhaps properly enough confine to her own market, but all or most of the remaining West India products, ought to lie under no such restriction; and I shall offer some reasons to prove, that the principal staple, *sugar*, ought to be allowed a free export to America as heretofore, even in point of true policy on the part of Great Britain.

It is incontestibly true, that if the Americans are not permitted to purchase this article from our own islands, they will obtain it from those of France. We are told indeed by Lord Sheffield, "that neither Holland nor France will suffer the American States to carry sugar from their ports in the West-Indies;" but unless his lordship alludes to some recent regulation of those governments of which I have not heard, he will find it difficult to reconcile this assertion with that which immediately precedes it, in the same page and in the same paragraph of his book. "The difference of price, says his lordship, between French, Danish, and Dutch, and British West India sugar, was so great, that above two thirds of the sugar imported into America came from the foreign islands." This indeed, I believe; and whether such sugar was imported clandestinely from the foreign islands, or otherwise, it is a circumstance of which Great Britain ought certainly to avail herself, by encouraging as much as possible the Americans to deal with her own sugar islands for this article among others, instead of laying out their money with the French, the Danes and the Dutch. It seems not to be sufficiently understood, that every addition to the prosperity of our sugar islands is absolutely and entirely an augmentation of the national wealth. Envy perhaps may not be willing to allow this,
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and ignorance may not comprehend it ; but such is the fact. It is to Great Britain, and to Great Britain alone, that our West-India planters consider themselves as belonging. It is *here* that their children are educated ; their wealth centers *here*, and it is *here* that their affections are fixed. Even such of them as have resided in the West-Indies from their birth, look on the islands as a temporary abode only, and the fond notion of being soon able *to go home* (as they emphatically term a visit to England) year after year, animates their industry and alleviates their misfortunes ; of which by the bye, no people on earth have received a greater share from the hand of omnipotence than themselves. On what principle then of reason or justice, are we called upon to deprive these colonies, thus attached to us by every tie of interest and affection, of any one advantage in the disposal of their produce, which is not immediately prejudicial to ourselves ? Are we by mistaken prohibitions to compel their old customers, the Americans, to deal with foreigners, whether they incline so to do or not ? Very different was the policy of our former system ; for why was a duty of five shillings per cent. levied on sugars of foreign growth, imported into North America, while that of our own islands was admitted duty free ? evidently that the tax on foreign sugars might operate as a bounty on our own. This system, it is true, has ceased with
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with the allegiance of America: nevertheless, if the vessels of the United States are freely admitted into our West-India ports, it is probable, in the assortment of their homeward freight, that sugar will still constitute *some part* of their cargoes. I believe in truth a *small part*. But whatever may be its amount, the value of it, if sugar itself is prohibited, must be paid in ready money, which will afterwards probably find its way to those plantations where a wiser policy prevails*. It follows, therefore, and the fact undoubtedly is, that as we restrain our own sugar islands, we support and encourage, in the same degree, those of our rivals and enemies, the French.

I am not unapprised of that narrow selfish argument, that the British revenue will be injured by the export of our sugar to North America:—but judging of the future by the past, I maintain, that the plenty of sugar at the English market, as it has always kept, so it always will keep pace with the reduced price of necessaries in our sugar plantations, and the ease with which labour there, is upheld and promoted. It is not the sale of an inconsiderable portion of their great staple to the North Ame-

* See the Second Address in the Appendix, from the inhabitants of Jamaica to Governor Campbell.

ricans, that ultimately lessens its general export to Great Britain. On the contrary, by a reduction in the planters annual expence,—an advantage which he owes to an immediate, and therefore beneficial exchange of commodities, (sugar among the rest) with America, a desire of improving and extending his possessions, urges him to new undertakings;—his ambition is awakened;—his faculties expand, and cultivation increases with a rapidity unknown to the cautious inhabitant of the colder clime, and less vigorous soil of Europe. Thus it is that the islands will gratefully repay the generous indulgence of their parent. By permitting a direct exportation of sugar to America she will soon find a proportionate encrease of the same staple, at her own emporium; while the consumption of her manufactures will enlarge with the augmentation of her navigation and revenues. The improvements that were visible in the island of Jamaica, within the short space of fifteen years, previous to the late unfortunate war, establish the truth of this reasoning beyond all contradiction. They may be judged of from this, that in 1757 the import of sugar into the port of London, from that island, was 24,494 hogheads; in 1772, it had risen to 45,889 hogheads! Let us now no longer be told, that an exportation of that

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commodity to North America is prejudicial to the revenues of Great Britain!

I come now to the loudest of all the objections that have yet been urged against the establishment of a liberal intercourse with the Americans; namely, the supposed danger of their engrossing the navigation and carrying-trade of this kingdom; on which, however, it is sufficient to observe, with respect to our sugar colonies, that the argument whereon this objection is founded, (if I rightly comprehend its meaning) takes for granted what yet remains to be proved; since it implies, that the admission of American vessels into our West India ports allows them also *a free trade from thence to Great Britain*. But assuredly this does not necessarily follow. Whether it may be prudent in Great Britain to consent to so liberal an extension of her navigation laws, is a question of general policy, whereon it would be presumptuous in the West India planters to offer their opinion. Impressed with the dread of impending evils, they confine themselves to their own particular situation, requesting only that America may be permitted, as formerly, to bring them food, and such other necessaries as Great Britain herself cannot furnish, and to receive in payment such of their staples as Great Britain cannot consume. They are told that 'Canada and
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Nova Scotia shall satisfy their wants." We have demonstrated the folly of this expectation. "But Great Britain claims the monopoly of their produce." It has been shewn that she will still possess it to every beneficial purpose. Obstacles, however, multiply. "The Americans will engross the carrying-trade, to the exclusion of our own shipping."—This objection in truth, is expressed in such general terms, that I really believe, many well-meaning men, who have grown hoarse in repeating it, have no precise idea of its meaning to this hour. If the sense of it be this, *that American ships will supply foreign markets with British plantation sugar, to the prejudice of the British refinery*; the noble author of whom I have made frequent mention, and who has clearly given it this interpretation, has himself furnished an answer; for he repeatedly affirms, that the French islands can supply, not only the American consumption, but that of all Europe besides, on far cheaper terms than our own. Does the noble Lord suppose, that the Americans will buy *dearer* with a view to sell *cheaper*, than the French? Their past conduct has afforded no proofs of such egregious folly. I must observe too, that our islands have already permission (by 12 Geo. II.) to send sugars to the southward of Cape Finistere; yet during a residence of 15 years in the West Indies, I never

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heard

heard but of two vessels that tried the experiment, and the owners had no encouragement to repeat it. If the objection signifies, what I believe it was meant to signify by some who urged it in the House of Commons in the debate on Mr. Pitt's provisional bill; namely, *That American ships having discharged their cargoes in our West India islands, will enter into a competition with British vessels loading there, for freights to Great Britain*; it is, I confess, a matter deserving consideration; but Great Britain surely may administer a *preventive* less dangerous in its effects than the project of starving her sugar colonies, by interdicting all intercourse whatever between them and the United States. The disease, in this case, is, indeed, by far the lesser evil.

I hope that no apology to Lord Sheffield will be thought necessary for the freedom I have taken with his opinions. I mean no personal offence; for I have heard and believe, that he is a man of great liberality and humanity; but drawing his conclusions, as he confesses to have done, chiefly from oral testimony, I am inclined to think, that great part of the information given to his lordship, was not given in the spirit of truth; but, in that of selfishness and malignity. His lordship, having submitted his opinions to the publick, avowedly

avowedly for the purpose of influencing public measures, they are fairly an object of public investigation.

One objection still remains to be considered. It is that which respects Ireland. It shall quickly be dispatched; for it is without even a shadow of foundation. Ireland has already received, as matter of right, all the freedom of trade which she claimed, or can reasonably desire, and she nobly earned it.—Happy, if she knows her own happiness! Among other privileges she possesses that of a direct intercourse with our West India islands. It is true, she has charged the consumption of West India produce with duties proportionate to those which are laid by Great Britain; and she has adopted our navigation act, in prohibiting the introduction thereof from foreign plantations in foreign bottoms. This she did at the reasonable request of this kingdom; for it was obvious, that a system of smuggling sugar and rum from thence hither, would otherwise have been introduced that must have proved fatal to our revenues: but the duties which Ireland has thus established, she retains in her own hands. Great Britain receives no part of them; and if by means of *these*, the people of Ireland are relieved of *other* taxes, how are they injured, and what have they to complain of? When there-

fore they are told, "That they ought to have West India produce on as good terms as the Americans, now a foreign nation," the fact itself is not fairly stated. It is necessary to observe too, that England is no longer at the expence of maintaining a fleet for the protection of the commerce of America. Does Ireland expect that Great Britain is to support the whole burthen of naval defence for both kingdoms, besides the load of debt contracted for both; and will the people of Ireland contribute in no respect to her relief? Men who have acted so bravely as the Irish, will not argue so ungenerously.

But perhaps it will be urged that America will interfere with Ireland in her provision-trade; and, without doubt, could Ireland furnish the West India market *altogether*, on the same terms she has hitherto supplied it *in part*, it were not unreasonable in the Irish to expect the preference of our custom. I will admit too the possibility of her doing this with regard to many articles; for the quantity of beef and pork annually supplied by America never exceeded 12 or 13,000 barrels. Let America therefore be prohibited from sending to the West Indies every species of salted provisions except only fish. The planters will not quarrel about trifles, neither will the Americans have just reason to complain in not being

being permitted to import those commodities into our sugar colonies, which the mother-country and Ireland can supply to advantage. I contend not for any such indulgence towards them; but I contend with regard to that great component article of the Irish provision-trade *salted fish*; that, as Ireland can by no means furnish a sufficient quantity for the West India consumption, she ought not to expect the monopoly of supplying it.

I have thus briefly, but I trust satisfactorily, obviated the principal objections and arguments that have been eloquently urged, both in parliament and from the press, against the revival of a commercial intercourse between our West India islands and the United States of America, on terms of equal freedom and advantage. It has cost me but little trouble, for none of them were of deep and difficult consideration, and the subject did not require me to enter more fully and at large into that great system of general policy, which it will speedily demand the closest investigation on the part of Great Britain (aided by temperate councils, uncontaminated by party, and unbiassed by resentment) to arrange and establish on a solid and prosperous footing. Of that general system, however, the commerce of which I treat constitutes a very essential part, and by considering it separately

parately and distinctly, I flatter myself that I have enabled the reader to form a clearer notion of its nature, and a more accurate estimate of its value, than otherwise he might have done. With a few miscellaneous observations, therefore, that occur to me, I shall dismiss the subject.

It has been remarked, that the navigation from Canada is obstructed six months in the year by the ice. It should also have been observed, that the hurricane months in the West Indies occupy a part of the time in which the river St. Lawrence is open. How casual, how uncertain, therefore, must be any supply from thence for the use of the planters in the West Indies, even if Canada had people sufficient to cut her lumber, and the means of preparing her wheat into flour fit for the West India market, neither of which advantages she possesses at present. I doubt also, whether Canada (as now bounded) furnishes that species of wood called *white oak*; the only material proper for containing rum. It is certain that Nova-Scotia does not. This is a very striking circumstance; for next to the necessaries of life, *wood*, of which rum puncheons are made, is the most important of supplies to the West Indies, as I have already demonstrated, and the want of it affords an additional reason for placing
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very little dependance on either of those ill-fated provinces.*

The papers, which I shall subjoin in an Appendix, have anticipated in part an observation wherein our humanity, as well as policy, is more interested than in any other. It arises from the dreadful conflagration which a few years ago reduced the large and opulent emporium of Jamaica to ashes, and the still more dreadful hurricanes, in which the angel of desolation visited in his wrath great part of that extensive country, and the whole of some of the islands to windward. Ever since those calamities, the suffering inhabitants have resided in miserable hovels, by no means a sufficient defence against the autumnal seasons, in confident expectation that the return of peace would enable them to procure materials for repairing their dwelling-houses, and the re-establishment of their mills and manufactories; and accordingly America, in the very first moment of reconciliation, hastened to their relief. How grievous then is their disappointment! yet this is but a very small part of the evil. It has been shewn in the state of the imports from North America, that the article of salted fish (viz. cod, mackrell,

* *Beech* from England has served to make sugar hog-heads, but will not answer for rum; nor any wood that I am acquainted with but *oak*.

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and shad) to the incredible amount of 150,000 quintals, and 30,000 barrels, constituted part of their annual consumption. It grieves me to say, that this, and herrings from Ireland, made the only animal food of the poor negroes. By the late proclamation, the future import of salted fish from the United States is not permitted *even in British vessels*. As it is impossible that Ireland alone, or conjointly with the fisheries of St. John's, and Nova Scotia, in their present state, can supply the deficiency, infatuation must have crept into our councils. Is it not enough that ruin will overtake the unoffending planter;—must the most wretched of all the children of affliction, his miserable slaves, also fall victims to our vengeance?

It was remarked by Mr Walker, in that admirable chain of evidence delivered by him, in 1775, to an unattending and unfeeling House of Commons, that “it is in trade, as in the human body, nothing suffers singly by itself; there is a consent of parts in the system of both, and the partial evil soon grows into universal mischief.” At present I shall confine the application of this remark to the African trade. Deprived of the means of procuring sustenance for the slaves they already possess, it can hardly be supposed that the planters will think of purchasing others. In lamenting this circumstance,

I speak now, merely as a merchant or stockholder, meditating on the present, and probably future, stability of the revenues of Great Britain, to which the African trade is doubtless of considerable importance. As a man, and a Christian, I hope I shall live to see the day (though a sugar planter myself) when this abominable traffic will be prohibited. I think I can clearly prove, that even the welfare of the planter concurs with the honour of government, and the interests of humanity, in wishing its total abolition. But, be this as it may, the system of Great Britain towards her few remaining colonies, is a system unexampled in the annals of mankind.—It is war, under the name of peace, against the most valuable of her plantations, who have not only given her no provocation, but whose welfare she knows and acknowledges to be the support of her own empire. Well, therefore, may the planters complain, that “they are suffering without blame, and incurring all the effects of resentment, without the slightest imputation on their obedience*.”

Whatever may be thought of the past or present conduct of America towards this country, the peaceful and loyal inhabitants of the West

* Petition from the assembly of Barbadoes to the King.

India islands are void of offence. Is it then consistent with policy, religion or humanity, to destroy the innocent, because their destruction may operate eventually as a punishment to the guilty; and are 500,000 persons to be starved, and a property of 60 million to be rendered unprofitable and precarious, that America may lose the advantage of selling them food and necessaries? Policy, religion, and humanity, reprobate the idea!

To conclude: in private life, it is not the man who is injured; but he that gives the injury, that seldom forgives. This, however, is the peculiar characteristic of base and ignoble minds; for such only are guilty of unprovoked and premeditated mischief. Mistake, indeed, is the lot of our nature, and the wisest and greatest of men are not exempted from it; but conviction on such minds produces not malignity or revenge, but acknowledgment and reparation. When unretracted error hardens into obstinacy, and disappointed ambition is degraded into malice—these are signs of a fatal degeneracy; of a conduct not merely erroneous, but proceeding from principles depraved and corrupt. It is with communities as with individuals. We were once a people renowned for generosity and magnanimity.—To the preservation of that character, exemption from
error

error never was supposed immutably necessary. Our public conduct has indeed been dreadfully fallible, and we have much to answer for and much to repair:—but if public virtue be not wholly gone from us, if we wish to be still venerable among the nations of the earth, let us, above all things, discard, in the fulness of disdain, that low vindictive principle of womanly resentment, which incites to secret malignity and revenge, when open and avowed hostility has failed of its purpose. Surely we are at this time sufficiently humbled, both in our own eyes and those of the world, to learn a lesson from the school of affliction. If misfortunes like ours will not teach us wisdom, we are indeed a devoted people, and fate has fixed her seal upon our ruin!

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A P P E N D I X.

THE FOLLOWING AUTHENTIC PAPERS CONTAIN THE OPINIONS OF GRAVE AND RESPECTABLE BODIES OF MEN, AS ALSO OF A CHIEF GOVERNOR OF HIGH CHARACTER IN ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OF OUR COLONIES, ON THE PRESENT SUBJECT, AND CANNOT FAIL TO HAVE THAT WEIGHT, WHICH MAY NOT BE ALLOWED TO ANY OPINIONS OR ASSERTIONS OF MY OWN.

At a Committee of the West India Planters and Merchants, held the 11th of April, 1783, in pursuance of the unanimous resolution and appointment of a general meeting expressly called for that purpose.

RESOLVED unanimously, that the following **REPRESENTATION** be made to his **MAJESTY'S MINISTERS**, viz.

THAT the proprietors of estates in the sugar colonies have been put to such enormous expences for their defence during the late war, and for procuring even the insufficient
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supplies they have been able to obtain of lumber and other American produce, and have been during the same period visited with so many natural calamities, that their situation is become truly distressful, and loudly calls for attention to every possible means of supporting them, and, with them the manufactures, commerce, navigation, and revenue of the mother country, under burthens which endanger their utter ruin.

It is with the greatest reluctance they make any representation concerning the very heavy and oppressive duties imposed on the staple articles of their produce by Parliament, being truly sensible of the urgency of the public necessities, and sincerely ready to make every exertion for supporting their share of them; but if such duties are imposed as must greatly lessen the consumption, whilst they proportionably increase the temptation to smuggling, the prospect of revenue will be defeated, and the sugar colonies ruined in vain. Such it is greatly feared will be the operation of the increased duties upon sugar and rum. Those on rum have operated in a great measure as a prohibition to the importation from the Leeward Islands. Those on sugar have been nearly doubled in the course of the last war; and, considering that the greatest part of the sugar

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is refined before consumption, the duties thereon are duties upon a raw material of manufacture; falling vastly heavier upon the substance consumed, because of the great waste in refining. The advance of money required for payment of the duty instantly on landing aggravates its weight upon the planter; and upon the whole, it is apprehended that no similar object of taxation has, under the pressure of the same public necessities, been dealt with so hardly; whilst few, if any of them from their connection with the most essential interests of this commercial country, stand so well entitled to a favourable attention. A relief from these duties may therefore become indispensably necessary; and such necessity can in the opinion of the committee be in no way prevented, but by the utmost assistance being given to the supply of the sugar colonies with the articles they stand in need of; and to the encouragement of the cultivation of other articles of their growth; together with the most vigorous exertion of every means whereby smuggling may be prevented, and foreign produce kept from being introduced to consumption in these kingdoms instead of our own.

The dominions of the United States of America, and his Majesty's sugar colonies, having been settled in the express view of supplying each

each others wants, it cannot be expected that the sugar colonies can subsist, in any degree of prosperity, without those supplies of lumber and provisions from America at the cheapest rate, in contemplation of which they were so settled, or without the consumption in North America of their produce in return; and, although the exclusive right to that consumption is no more, yet, under a just and reasonable attention to mutual interests, the committee entertain no doubt but such a share of the American trade may be preserved to the sugar colonies as will greatly tend to their support, and, upon every principle of true policy, and proper regard to the views and purposes of rival nations, be highly deserving of the utmost countenance and assistance from the mother-country. To this intercourse the committee apprehend, the permission of American ships, as heretofore, freely to bring the produce of the dominions of the United States to the sugar colonies, and take back our produce in return, is so obviously essential, that they need not adduce any farther arguments in support of that proposition.

In several of his Majesty's sugar colonies there are still great tracts of uncultivated land, of which, although a considerable part, would undoubtedly, under adequate encouragement, be settled with sugar works, yet there will remain

main considerable quantities which, from soil or situation, are unfit for the culture of sugar, though very fit for that of indigo, coffee, cocoa, and tobacco, if proper encouragement were given thereto; and such cultivation would at the same time afford the means of subsistence to great numbers of loyal Americans and others, whose property is not sufficient for the settlement of a sugar plantation, and would greatly increase the internal strength of the sugar colonies. For these salutary purposes it is submitted whether the bounty of 4d. per pound, which only expired last year, should not be revived, upon the importation of Indigo of the growth of his Majesty's sugar colonies; and the duties on coffee and cocoa be in a great measure taken off. Those on coffee, in particular, operate almost as a prohibition on the legal consumption, seeing that, notwithstanding their enormous rate, they only produce about 7 or 8000l. per annum to the revenue, whilst it is evident that very great quantities of coffee are consumed in these kingdoms, to the encouragement of the general practice of smuggling, and the support of the French West India islands by the consumption of their produce. By an experiment upon this article, therefore, the revenue can hazard little, and the committee most earnestly recommend it, in the firm persuasion that if the excise were wholly taken off, and that, upon

payment of a moderate duty of customs upon landing, to be drawn back on exportation, coffee were permitted to be consumed free from all farther restraint, a very small duty thereon would not only produce more revenue than is produced at present from the commodity itself, but would materially aid the consumption of sugar, and the revenue arising therefrom. A similar regulation of the duty on cocoa would, it is hoped, produce the like effects.

Among the defects of the present system of laws against smuggling, it is submitted whether some of the most striking and considerable are not the permitting vessels seized to return to their former employment; the want of punishment suited to the enormity of the crime, to be inflicted on such revenue officers as are either corruptly concerned in smuggling or in collusive seizures, or wilfully and knowingly connive at them; and the permitting commodities seized to be sold for home consumption free of duty. Under this practice every attempt made to smuggle, must of necessity produce all the evil to the state, which its success could produce; and the only question is, whether the smuggler or the custom-house officer shall reap the benefit; for by the one or the other of them the commodity is with certainty brought into consumption, free of duty, whilst the sale thereof

thereof upon the sea-coast at the same time, affords the means of recovering, by permits, the fraudulent conveyance of vastly greater quantities of smuggled goods than could be so covered if those sales did not afford the pretence. It is therefore conceived, that the abolition of this practice, and the sale of all seizures for exportation only, under the usual securities, is become essential to the support of our own colonies, under the load of duties with which the consumption of their produce in these kingdoms is burthened.

Every delay arising from the forms of the custom-house, and the limitations of the space in which business is required to be done, increases the opportunities, not only of defrauding the revenue by smuggling, but robbing the importer by pilfering the commodity on which the duty is payable. In this view, as well as in many others, it would be highly salutary to abolish holidays at the custom-house to the degree that they stand abolished at the treasury, admiralty, navy-office, and other great efficient boards of business; to consolidate the several perplexed and intricate branches of duties and drawbacks into one duty and one drawback on each commodity; and to extend the public quays of London, and no longer require the commerce of the metropolis to be carried on

in less space than is allowed at the principal out-ports, and in so crowded a way, as wholly precludes an effectual care of the commodities imported, and encourages villany of all denominations among the labouring people employed about them. And on all these topics the Committee beg leave to observe, that the interests of government, and of the planter and fair trader, fully coincide, and no regulation can serve the one without protecting the other.

The Committee farther beg leave to represent, that the tares allowed at the custom-house on sugars imported, require revision, being less than the real weight of the packages.

Under all the circumstances herein before set forth, the West India planters and merchants deem it their indispensable duty to make this representation to his Majesty's ministers, and in the most earnest manner to entreat, that their true situation may be submitted to his Majesty, and that on due consideration thereof, such measures may be suggested, and pursued, as shall appear best calculated to promote purposes so essential to the general welfare.

JAMAICA, &
 SAINT JAGO DE LA VEGA. } May 30, 1783.

To his Excellency ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, Esquire,
 Captain-General, Governor and Commander in
 Chief, in and over this his Majesty's Island of
 Jamaica, and other the Territories thereon de-
 pending in America, Chancellor and Vice-Admiral
 of the same.

THE HUMBLE ADDRESS OF THE GRAND INQUEST
 OF THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.

WE his Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects,
 the Grand Inquest of the County of
 Middlesex, beg leave to address your Excel-
 lency, with sentiments expressive of the sincerest
 satisfaction, on the prospect of security and ex-
 tensive commerce, those natural consequences
 of the inestimable blessing of peace.

We have every well-grounded hope, that a
 peace, which is professed to be established upon
 the liberal principles of equity and reciprocity,
 will be permanent, and universally beneficial.

We are induced, from the highest authority,
 to expect that a mutual and satisfactory inter-
 course, between the empire of Great Britain and
 the United States of America, will be establish-

ed

ed on the broadest basis; and we cannot but flatter ourselves that we shall be speedily relieved from those distresses, to which our local situation has more peculiarly exposed us, in addition to the burthen and expences of repeated martial laws, and encreasing taxes, during the course of the late war. It is within your Excellency's recollection that the town of Kingston has been in a great measure destroyed by a tremendous conflagration; that the whole colony was injured, and the Leeward parishes nearly desolated, by two most fatal hurricanes—From the scarcity of lumber and other necessaries, many valuable warehouses and stores of the most respectable merchants; the works and other buildings of the useful and industrious sugar planters, have remained to this hour in a state of ruin, or (for the mere purpose of present exigency) have undergone a partial and temporary repair. With the most heartfelt satisfaction, we have seen the earliest disposition, on the parts of the Americans, to supply us with those articles which we most required, on which the existence of our sugar works much depend, and which no quarter of the globe can afford with equal dispatch, certainty, and abundance. We cannot but hope, sir, that a branch of commerce so beneficial to the subjects of the British empire, will not be impeded, or in any respect obstructed, in its commencement in this country,

country, where it ought to be more especially encouraged. We cannot, sir, repress our uneasiness, at being informed that this intercourse is threatened with a check, in its very infancy, from difficulties arising in clearing out American vessels. We implore your Excellency's interference to remove any delays or impediment that may have arisen; and that you will be pleased to direct, that every encouragement and dispatch may be afforded to the citizens and vessels of the United States of America: we shall otherwise see, with a regret bordering upon despair, the trade of that continent directed into the channel of our natural enemies, and the enlivening gleam of returning conciliation and federal union obscured perhaps for ever! Thus, sir, we submit to you, that every principle of policy and humanity operate in support of this application; and we entertain but little doubt that the intercourse bill now depending in the British parliament, will warrant your Excellency in granting our petition in its utmost extent. We cannot conclude without assuring your Excellency, that we apply with the more confidence upon this occasion to a governor, who, (it is but justice to acknowledge) has ever, in the course of his administration, through a long period of accumulated difficulties and distresses, created a general respect from a generous disinterested line of conduct;

duct ; and impressed an universal consciousness of a perfect disposition to promote every measure that might most effectually ensure the welfare and interest of the colony he presides over.

HIS EXCELLENCY'S ANSWER.

Gentlemen,

I RECEIVE your address with much satisfaction, and sincerely congratulate you on the peace ; an event interesting to humanity, and from which I hope this island will reap the most salutary advantages.

Convinced that a mutual and happy intercourse between the British empire and the United States of America would soon be established on the most liberal principles, and be productive of beneficial consequences to the merchants and planters of Jamaica, I had anticipated your wishes as early as the 10th of April, by directing the officers of his Majesty's customs at Kingston, to give every encouragement to American vessels entering the ports of this island ; and for the more effectual support of these instructions, I summoned the Council to meet on the 3d of this month, persuaded that they

they will unite with me, in adopting some temporary expedient to remove the obstructions that are in the way of our trade with the United States of America, until full Authority is received from England.

My warmest acknowledgments are due to you for the very favourable opinion you are pleased to express of my conduct in this government, at a very interesting period of the war; the difficulties of which were, however, greatly lessened by the liberal support I experienced from the gentlemen of the Island.

Having no wish separate from the welfare of this community, I shall sincerely rejoice in every opportunity of promoting the prosperity of it to the utmost of my power.

To his Excellency ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, Esquire,
 - Captain General and Governor of this his Ma-
 - jesty's Island, Chancellor and Vice Admiral of the
 same, &c.

THE MEMORIAL OF THE CUSTOS, MAGISTRATES,
 - AND INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF
 KINGSTON,

Humbly sheweth,

THAT since the conclusion of Peace, fe-
 veral vessels from the Independent
 States of America have entered this port, with
 cargoes peculiarly adapted to give relief against
 the accumulated distress and inconveniencies,
 in which war, storms, floods, fire, and other
 public calamities, have involved not only the
 inhabitants of this town, but the island at
 large.

That notwithstanding these vessels have been
 suffered by the officers of the customs to enter
 and discharge their cargoes, yet their not hav-
 ing received from his Majesty's ministers in-
 structions on the business of clearing them out
 with such produce as they wish to take in re-
 turn, they are detained.

That

That one vessel is now actually loaded with the produce of this island, which, if not permitted to clear out, must be reloaded, and money given in its place. Your Memorialists aver, that a longer delay will operate unfavourably in the re-establishing an intercourse between this island and America; and your Memorialists are firmly of opinion, that the prosperity of this island much depends on a free and open trade with that country.

Your Memorialists therefore humbly pray your Excellency to give such relief in the premises as the case requires.

HIS EXCELLENCY'S ANSWER.

Gentlemen,

I HAVE great pleasure in receiving your address.

The happy consequences that must result to the British Empire at large, and to this island in particular, from the encouragement of trade with the United States of North America, upon the most liberal and extensive footing, were so evident, that I had, as early as the 10th of April,

directed the officers of his Majesty's Customs in Kingston, not to throw any unnecessary obstruction in the way of such commerce, but on the contrary, to afford it every possible encouragement.

To give more effect to those instructions, and that our intercourse with the American States should not meet with any unnecessary check in its infancy, I summoned his Majesty's Council to meet this day, in full persuasion that those gentlemen will cheerfully co-operate with me in adopting proper measures to remove, as far as may be, the difficulties which may occur in the way of this trade, until we receive from England such regulations as may be established by the British Parliament.

POSTSCRIPT.

P. O S T S C R I P T.

ADDRESSED TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD SHEFFIELD.

SINCE the first appearance of this little tract, Lord Sheffield has favoured the publick with a new and augmented edition of his Observations on the Commerce of the American States; in the preface to which his Lordship has condescended to mention my name in terms of politeness; but, at the same time, includes me in a general proscription of the several writers who have presumed to controvert his opinions: for he compendiously asserts that the facts which we have all stated *are not proved, and are fallacious*. To this nimble mode of reasoning I beg leave to oppose, for his Lordship's consideration, some additional arguments and proofs, in support of my former. If I have not the good fortune to convey conviction to the noble Lord, I shall hope to succeed

ceed better with the public at large. The subject is dry and not susceptible of ornament, but its importance will not be disputed, and I will endeavour to be concise. As to my anonymous Coadjutors they are well able to defend themselves.

I must, however, in the first place, repeat, that the question between Lord Sheffield and myself, is confined merely to *the West India trade with America*: I have hitherto purposely avoided entering into a larger field. Perhaps on the question of general policy, I might agree, in some respects, with his Lordship:—but, in regard to the free admission of American vessels into our West India islands, as heretofore, I am still clear and decided in my opinion of the propriety and absolute necessity of the measure; and I scruple not to aver, that some of the dearest and most valuable interests of this kingdom will be sacrificed to prejudice or party clamour, if the system of restraint recommended by Lord Sheffield is adhered to. The proof shall follow the assertion.

The reader will please to recollect, that in the preceding pages, I have expressed an apprehension, lest the American States, in consequence of their vessels being denied admission into our West India ports with supplies as
for-

formerly, might resolve to retaliate by a reciprocal prohibition towards British vessels trading to America. This supposition, Lord Sheffield is pleased to consider (p. 145) as "too ridiculous to be insisted on." It happens, however, to be a very serious fact, that the Assembly of Virginia, on the 9th of December last, came to the determination that I had apprehended; and, among the latest advices from America, is the following important intelligence.

New York, Jan. 7. "The Assembly of New Jersey, the 24th ult. taking into consideration the prohibition of the King of Great Britain of the produce of the United States of America from being sent to the West Indies by any other than British subjects, &c. and conceiving that it exhibited a disposition in Great Britain to gain advantages injurious to the rights of free commerce, resolved as follows:

"Resolved unanimously, that the United States in Congress assembled, ought to be vested with the exclusive power of regulating trade and commerce throughout the United States of America.

"Resolved unanimously, that the United States in Congress assembled ought to be empowered,

powered, and ought when so empowered, to prohibit British vessels from being the carriers of the growth or produce of the British West India Islands to these United States, or of the growth or produce of the United States to any of the said British West India islands, so long as the restriction in the said Proclamation expressed shall be continued by, or on the part of, Great Britain *."

Believing, therefore, as I certainly believe, that the measure of retaliation thus proposed, will be generally adopted throughout all the United States, I conceive the chief questions for our present consideration are these;

Can our islands in the West Indies be supplied with provisions and lumber elsewhere? and, if not, what probable consequences will result from the failure thereof to our planters, and also to the trade, navigation, and revenues of Great Britain?

* Vide also the circular letter of the merchants of Philadelphia, dated the 3d. of January last, reprinted in the Public Advertiser of the 9th of April.—In this letter they term the restrictive system 'an attempt to deprive them of the common right of being carriers of their own property.' See likewise the Address of the Assembly of New York to Governor Clinton, 31st of January.

On

On the first head I did hope that I had been sufficiently explicit already;—but Lord Sheffield is not satisfied. He calls for further proof—and he shall have it. Accordingly I have obtained from the Custom-house books, an exact account of the imports into the British West India islands from North America in 1772*, and have added an average estimate of their value at that time, founded on my own experience of 15 years, both as a merchant and planter. I make choice of the year 1772, as the latest from which a fair account of the usual annual importation can be formed;—for the intercourse between America and the islands being stopped in 1774, it may be supposed the expectation of that event in America superinduced a forced trade in 1773. From this statement the reader will judge whether my former assertions are fallacious or not. It is as follows;

* Lord Sheffield supposes that I meant to blame the late ministry for furnishing him with official information, and is at the pains of exculpating them from the charge. I declare that I had no intention of imputing blame to them on that account. On such questions as the present, I conceive, the publick has a right to demand the fullest and most correct information; nor do I believe that any administration, properly applied to, would withhold it.

An account of LUMBER, PROVISIONS, &c. imported into all the British West India islands from the colonies in North America, between the 1st day of January and the 31st of December, 1772, with an average valuation thereof at the ports of delivery, calculated in Jamaica currency.

	l.	s.	d.
17,211 hoghead packs, 7s. 6d. each	6,454	2	0
21,160,461 staves 10l. per m. —	211,604	0	0
27,138,507 feet of lumber 7l. per m.	189,969	10	11
20,936,188 shingles, at 45s. per m. (on an average) —	47,106	8	6
1,169,086 hoops at 5l. per m. —	5,845	8	7
365,300 Bushels of India Corn, 3s. 9d. per bushel —	68,493	15	0
26,280 ditto—pease and beans 5s.	6,545	0	0
126,300 barrels of flour of 2 cwt. each at 18s. per cwt.	227,340	0	0
4,960 tierces of bread of 1 ½ cwt. at 20s. per cwt.	7,440	0	0
7,656 half tierces of rice 2 ½ cwt. each 15s. —	14,375	0	0
5,377 tierces of ditto of 5 cwt. ditto	20,163	15	0
12,575 barrels of pork at 3l. 5s.	40,868	15	0
2,220 horses at 20l. on an average	44,400	0	0
1,296 oxen, 12l. —	15,552	0	0
3,693 sheep, 1l. —	3,693	0	0
21,185 hogshds. of 8 cwt. of salted fish &			
30,062 quintals of 1 cwt. do. 1l. p. ct.	199,542	0	0
939 dozen of poultry, 35s.	1,643	5	0
Total	1,111,036	0	0

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The above, reduced to sterling money, amounts to 793,597 l. 3s. nor are any of those important articles, bar-iron, pitch, tar, turpentine, lamp-oil, spermaceti candles and salt, from Turk island, included, though the quantity consumed of these articles is immense, and I am persuaded that 50,000l. sterling is a low estimate for their value. Instead, therefore, of having given a fallacious or exaggerated account in the preceding pages, I was under the mark, to the amount of 100,000l. sterling; and if the value of private adventures not reported at the Custom-house, and loose freights taken on board after clearance (neither of which appear in official documents) be added to the estimate, the amount of the whole annual importation of supplies from North America into the British West Indies, will not, I conceive, fall short of a million sterling. And now let prejudice evade and sophistry perplex: If any man of sense and character, acquainted with the soil, population and resources of Canada and Nova Scotia, will publicly aver that those provinces can, for years to come, furnish the West India islands with *one half* the supplies which have hitherto been furnished by the United States, on any terms short of ruin to the purchasers, and at the same time take the rum of the islands in payment; I will, as publicly, acknowledge that my arguments have been all along founded in error, and heartily

agree with Lord Sheffield that, on every principle of honour, humanity, and justice, the unfortunate loyalists of Nova Scotia are entitled to the preference of our custom.

But Lord Sheffield observes, (p. 147), "if the islands are really so helpless as represented, no man can say they will be subject to *any other inconvenience* than that of paying an advanced price for American supplies, at foreign West India ports." His Lordship, however, forgets that this happy alternative is an absolute prohibition to all who cannot afford to purchase on advanced terms. Even the miserable Gentoos of Bengal who perished by thousands in the famine of 1769, might have had rice in abundance, but for *the same small inconvenience*; of not being able to pay for it.

To mend the matter, at the very time that the islands are to be subject to an additional price, at foreign ports, for American supplies, they are to be wholly deprived of their chief market for rum; their great and almost only resource for the purchase of *any supplies whatever, at any price*. Lord Sheffield admits, (p. 156), that "the planters have little or no profit from sending rum to Great Britain *."

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* Every man, who knows any thing of the West India islands, knows that the rum of a sugar plantation, which commonly amounts to nearly a third of the value of the gross produce, is supposed to be sufficient to discharge the current expences and annual contingencies of the estate.

There

The system thus recommended by Lord Sheffield, is, I own, too much of a piece with that which lost us the dominion of America, to meet with my cordial approbation. We all very well remember, that about the time the Stamp Act was proposed, the then administration took uncommon pains to interdict all trade between our colonies and those of Spain, from whence only the colonists could hope to get money to enable them to pay the tax. This was a spe-

There are, however, but few planters who are able to confine their disbursements to so narrow a compass, and but few, therefore, receive common interest on their capitals. Deprived altogether of a sale for their rum, and obliged to purchase necessaries at an advanced price out of their sugar, the consequence to those who are in debt must be inevitable ruin.—But Lord Sheffield gravely asserts, (p. 114.), that “As our West India islands will be entitled to the monopoly of the rum-trade with our remaining colonies, they will be benefitted in this trade by the dismemberment of the American States.” A conclusion to which I beg leave to postpone giving my assent, until the noble Lord will condescend to tell me by what means the future expenditure of rum in two half-starved provinces, can exceed the past consumption of the same article *in those very provinces*, and thirteen great and populous states besides!—Even, by his Lordship’s own account, if all the inhabitants of Nova Scotia and Canada, (men, women and children) were to get drunk every day, as a defence against cold and hunger, it would avail the West India rum-trade but little; for the noble Lord informs us, (p. 110), that “New England rum, bad as it is, is preferred by the Canadians and lower ranks, being stronger and 25 per cent. cheaper than rum from the West Indies.”

cies of Egyptian tyranny, which, to the honour of human nature, the Americans resisted; and we know the result. Similar measures will produce similar effects, and I submit to his Lordship's consideration, whether the old trunk of our empire (thanks to the American war) is not sufficiently pruned already? The noble Lord speaks somewhat degradingly of the West India islands in more places than one; but I hope he does not seriously mean to recommend the project of lopping them off with our late overgrown provinces. There are I know, some persons among us who wish for a *snug compact* kingdom, like those of Prussia and Sweden, and we are, I think, in a fair way of gratifying their wishes. But really the subject is too important to be trifled with, and I will therefore seriously point out to the noble Lord the only effectual and permanent resource which the planters (at least those of Barbadoes and the windward islands) will have, for the supply of provisions, in case all intercourse with the United States is prohibited. "It is to change their system. They must abandon the cultivation of sugar, and apply their land and labour to the purposes of raising food. The undone remnant of the people who have not fallen victims to the intermediate famine, may thus provide for the time to come." And such is the effect which the restraining system, so vehemently recommended at this time will,

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in all probability, have in our West India islands; —for to tell the planter he may purchase food and lumber in the foreign islands, at the very moment that he is deprived of the means of payment, is to insult his understanding, and adds outrage to cruelty.

Let us now consider the question with respect to Great Britain. It has been said that the inhabitants of these kingdoms are sometimes seized of a sudden, with unaccountable paroxysms of *epidemick terror*. In the reign of queen Anne, a crazy parson took it into his head that *the church was in danger*. And he ran about, foaming at the mouth, and scattering his pestilential flaver, until he had infected half the nation with the same frenzy. I cannot but think the present alarm, so industriously spread throughout the kingdom, respecting the navigation act, has arisen from a similar *influenza*. Even many persons of sober sense, and a very temperate pulse, look pale, and are uneasy when the subject is started. It is a question which they confess they do not understand; and terror, (as children see goblins in the dark) prevents a calm investigation of it. I shall therefore endeavour to prove that if any proposition in the science of commercial polity is self-evident, it is this; that the admission of American vessels into our West India ports is strictly

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conformable to the true spirit and meaning of that act as it was adopted and improved in 1671*.

The aim of the parliament of Charles II. was the encouragement of our foreign trade, and the extension of our shipping by the exclusion of foreigners from a participation therein; and, considering the circumstances of the times when the Navigation Act passed, it was well adapted to those purposes: but if from the puerile and offensive affectation of styling the Americans a *foreign* people, and considering them as our rivals in trade and manufactures, which the Dutch formerly were, but which the Americans are never likely to be,

* This is a necessary distinction. "The rudiments of the act (says Blackstone) were first framed in 1650 with a narrow partial view: being intended to mortify the Sugar islands (which were disaffected to the parliament and held out for Charles II.) by stopping the gainful trade which they carried on with the Dutch." It received many material improvements afterwards, and its prohibitions were made general. I hope Lord Sheffield will forgive me if I hazard a suspicion that his Lordship has mistaken the system of the Republican Parliament, for the more liberal and refined policy which prevailed in 1671.—"The Navigation Act," say the authors of the Universal History, "was originally meant as a punishment to the planters." His Lordship seems clearly to understand and highly to approve its original intention.

we are determined in all cases, and under national circumstances no way resembling those of 1671, to treat them as such;—If this be our line of conduct, we may indeed apparently comply with the strict letter of the law, whilst we most grossly violate every principle on which the act itself was founded. I apply this remark to the present restraining project; for its plain and immediate operation must be to diminish, if not absolutely destroy, our bulky and important trade with our own West India islands. If the cultivation of sugar decreases, as I have before shewn it will if the restraint be continued, our shipping, our revenues, our manufactures, must decrease with it. He that does not see this, does not chuse to see it. But let us hear on this subject the accurate and intelligent Mr. Glover. “The gross amount of imports, at an annual medium, from these now unfortunate islands, exceeds four millions: 190,000 casks of sugar and rum, besides many other articles, the bulky loading for such a multitude of vessels, more than authorize my assertion. Of these annual four million the exchequer receives its proportion, the navigator and merchant theirs; the rest centres with the planter, and how distributed by him? In the purchase of 1,300,000*l.* of our exports direct, and the largest part of 700,000*l.* more in circuit

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through

through Africa: what is left is applied to home consumption, to investments upholding the price of land, and the credit of the publick funds. At the same time they are furnishing commodities to us of such necessary use, which else must be paid for to foreigners; they supply a superfluity for foreign consumption likewise. I avoid comparison; but judge from this state how valuable a subject is the planter! All these benefits, the healthy progeny of active trade, all, or part, must sleep as in a grave, during a total or partial stagnation." Is it now necessary to ask, which most truly conforms to the policy of our ancestors, the restraining system of Lord Sheffield, or the liberal intercourse with America, required by the West India planters * ?

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* Perhaps too the reader will pay some regard to the following authorities.

"No one is ignorant, that the Navigation of France owes all its increase and splendor to the commerce of its sugar islands; and that it cannot be kept up and enlarged otherwise than by this commerce."

Vide Memorials of the Deputies of Trade to the Royal Council of France, 1737.

Sir Josiah Child, in page 191, of his *Discourse of Trade*, says, "We may reckon that for provisions, clothes and household goods, seamen, and all others employed for building

In truth, Lord Sheffield, on the subject of the navigation act, deals so largely in general declamation, that it is difficult to discover from what precise and established principles he deduces his conclusions. He tells us, (p. 138), that "if the West India ports are opened to the United States, the French and Dutch will avail themselves of the American flag, and that our islands will soon be as much crowded with foreign shipping, as the port of Ostend has lately been." But the noble Lord does not say *what business foreign European shipping will have there?* This is a curious circumstance, and will repay the reader's attention. It will hardly be disputed, I think, that if foreign shipping solicit admission into our West India ports, it must be for one or the other of these purposes; either to carry goods thither, or to take goods from thence. If the former is their object, will Lord Sheffield be pleased to tell the world, what particular goods and manufactures besides French wines and cambricks, (and these to no great amount; at least, they are not, his Lordship admits, an object of national concern) are commonly in use among

ing and fitting of ships, every Englishman in Barbadoes and Jamaica creates employment for four men at home."

our West India planters which Great Britain cannot supply as cheap, or cheaper, than any other nation? The first 48 pages of the noble author's book, are, I think, appropriated to the express purpose of demonstrating, that Great Britain is the best and cheapest market in the world for manufactures of all kinds. On this ground his Lordship contends that we shall still have the custom of the Americans, notwithstanding their independency; and, could we be persuaded to pursue a liberal and equitable line of conduct towards them, I believe indeed, this might happen. Now can it be supposed, that the inhabitants of our West India islands, whose loyalty has never been questioned, who have no bias on their minds arising from passion or prejudice, and who have never yet, that I have heard, been charged with universal insanity;—can it be supposed, that they will be so much more inattentive to their own interest than the Americans, as to buy the same articles of foreign nations, which they can buy cheaper and better from Great Britain? Is such a circumstance in the smallest degree probable?—But this argument requires further illustration.

The principal manufactures and commodities of Europe in demand in our West
India

India islands are these;—WOOLLENS (particularly the coarser kinds) MANUFACTURED IRON AND STEEL, such as HOES, BILLS, &c. COARSE HATS and OSNABURGS for negro-cloathing to a prodigious amount, WROUGHT COPPER and PEWTER; SHEET LEAD, MANCHESTER GOODS, UPHOLSTERY, HABERDASHERY, MILLENERY, HOUSHOLD-FURNITURE, SADLERY, JEWELLERY, DRUGS, PAINTER'S COLOURS, &c. I beseech the reader, for the love of consistency, to recur to Lord Sheffield's book, and advert to his Lordship's observations on these several items. For instance, WOOLLENS. "In this great and capital article, says the noble Lord, Great Britain will have very little competition, &c. IRON AND STEEL MANUFACTURES---If a drawback or bounty equal to the duty on foreign iron should be granted when exported, these articles probably never will go to America to any amount, but from Great Britain.---We surpass the world in the manufacture of iron, steel, &c. HATS,---The Americans must import the felt and common hats; and as wool is cheaper in Great Britain than on the continent, the British manufacturers must be able to afford this article cheaper, &c." And in this manner his Lordship proceeds with all or most of the rest. Even as to LINENS, in regard to which the noble author allows there may be competition; he observes of the coarser kinds, that

that the consumption of GERMAN OSNABURGS (formerly an immense article) was become inconsiderable, owing to the demand for the British; and respecting EAST INDIA GOODS, his Lordship assures us, that "the peculiar advantages of our situation in India will enable us to undersel any other country."

This is a fair abridgement from the first part of Lord Sheffield's observations on the commerce of the American States, and I have pleasure in acknowledging the merit of this part of his Lordship's work. It displays a great and laudable industry, and a very extensive acquaintance with the trade and manufactures of Great Britain; but assuredly it holds out no encouragement, nor points out any inducement, to the ships of foreign nations to export foreign manufactures to the British West India islands. It is indeed evident, from what has been said, that if French and Dutch vessels go there, it must be for some other purpose than that of carrying goods thither, and the natural supposition would be, that our planters can afford to supply all the world with West India products, cheaper than the subjects of other nations;--for the profits of a homeward voyage should be very great, to compensate for the loss of an outward freight: but is this the case? The idea to those who know the price of West
India

India commodities in the islands, is truly ridiculous. Lord Sheffield himself assures us, (p. 150) that the foreign islands underfel ours from 15 to 25 per cent. and, in the next page, he observes "It is universally allowed that our planters cannot afford sugars at the price foreigners can."

As therefore foreign European nations have no temptation to smuggle foreign manufactures into our islands, so neither have they any encouragement to deal with our planters for West India productions; we may infer then they will have no concern in a trade by which much may be lost, and nothing can be gained*.

With

* It is evident the late administration were under no apprehension that foreign European states would interfere in our West India trade, nor was the restraining system adopted for the purpose of preventing such interference.—Their intention (at least the intention of those who advised the measures which they adopted) was evidently to aggrandize Canada and Nova Scotia at the expence of our islands, as well as to punish, through the sides of our sugar planters, the late refractory provinces.—That this was their intention, I no longer doubt, since I was furnished with a copy of the following proclamation, to which, (without questioning its legality) I venture to affirm, there is no proceeding similar, between states in amity, in the annals of mankind.

CUSTOM-

With regard to the subjects of America, the nature of their imports with our islands has been already sufficiently explained. They interfere

CUSTOM-HOUSE, KINGSTON, JAMAICA.

Nov. 8, 1783.

“Whereas, by virtue of a resolution of the honourable the Privy Council of this Island, bearing date the 24th ultimo, it is given in order to the principal officers of his Majesty’s customs in this port, that henceforward, no foreign vessel, whereon *flour or other provisions*, shall be imported, may be admitted to entry; but, as many vessels, under that description, already have been, and from their owner’s ignorance of this order, hereafter may be, brought into this harbour, these are to GIVE NOTICE, that from this day to the 20th of December next inclusive, all vessels so entering, will be at liberty to retire with their respective cargoes; and, that all vessels, under the above description, entering the said harbour, or any other harbour within this district, after the said 20th day of December, will be considered as objects of SEIZURE, and be accordingly seized to his Majesty’s use.

THO. DAVISON, Collector.
JOHN WOOLFRYS, Compt.”

I cannot but sincerely sympathize with the feelings of the members of the Council in Jamaica, who were obliged to give these savage orders, and of the officers who were directed to see them enforced. A long and intimate acquaintance with all or most of these gentlemen convinces me, that they received the instructions from this country, under which doubtless they acted, with astonishment and horror.

interfere in no respect with those from Great Britain, and are such as our planters cannot do without. I have, however, candidly confessed that there is *one* circumstance to be guarded against, in allowing the free admission of American vessels; they may sometimes enter into competition with British ships for freights to Great Britain. To obviate this danger, it has been proposed to limit the tonnage of vessels from America, and to admit single decked vessels only. I agree with Lord Sheffield that the first of these restrictions will be evaded, and both are unnecessary; because a simpler and better regulation is obvious, which is, to restrain the trade *from the West Indies to Great Britain and Ireland, to British vessels only, having British registers, and navigated according to the act of navigation.* And thus will the benefits of their ancient intercourse with America be restored to the islands, without the smallest interference in the carrying trade of Great Britain, — so much apprehended at present.

and horror. By the last advices it appears, that some of the islands to windward had not six weeks provision in store. If similar instructions are attempted to be executed in those islands, I anticipate the most dreadful consequences.

On the whole, no folly can exceed that of conceiving that any thing Great Britain can do will prevent the American states from having, *some time or other*, a commercial intercourse with our West India islands on their own terms. A chain of coast of 20 degrees of latitude, with some of the finest ports for the purpose in the world, all lying so near to the sugar colonies and the track to Europe, ready to receive ships from thence, if friends, in all their distresses---a country abounding in every thing the islands have occasion for, and which can be afforded at one third the expence the same articles would cost from any other part of the world—All these circumstances necessarily and naturally point out a commercial intercourse between our islands and them. It is true, we may nearly ruin our sugar colonies and ourselves also, in the attempt to prevent it; but it is an experiment which God and nature have marked out as impossible to succeed. You may burn their ships and their timber in their dock-yards, but you cannot burn their country nor their harbours. The present restraining system is forbidding men to help each other. Men, who by their climate and productions are standing in perpetual need of mutual assistance.

But our efforts are as futile as they are malicious: America will hold them in derision, and remind

mind us of the *viper and the file*. She will tell us, that a wise people would relinquish in time, and with a good grace, pretensions that can neither be justified on principles of reason, nor established by force—*sed sero sapiunt Phryges*, a proverb that ought to be our motto, for it has been always our fate.

I trust that I have now fully established the following propositions :

First, that our subjects in the West India islands have no other alternative for supplying themselves with food (if a free intercourse with America is denied them) than that of raising it themselves; the certain consequence of which will be, an immediate and alarming diminution in the growth and manufacture of their present staple commodities.

Second, That the consequence of such diminution must necessarily cause a proportionate loss to the revenues and commerce of Great Britain, as far as those revenues and that commerce is supported by those islands. For instance, we must either pay in money to foreigners the large sum for West India commodities, for which British manufactures (or money spent among ourselves) are now given in exchange, or the revenue will lessen in proportion to the di-

minished consumption of those commodities. The revenue from tea, without the accustomed plenty of sugar, will sink into insignificance: The provision-trade with Ireland will be lost, because the planter will not be able to purchase; and the African trade will follow.—But of all the various great branches of the mercantile system, which will suffer immediately or indirectly, the most important is the navigation—a navigation equal to the bulky products and supplies of a stock in trade of 60 million *, comprehending the trade to Africa, and making no inconsiderable part of that of England to the East Indies and the rest of Europe:—the nursery of our marine—the strength, the safety, the glory of our nation.

Thus by a plain deduction, level to the meanest capacity, we may see how absurd and ill-directed are the present apprehensions on the subject of the carrying-trade of this kingdom; and that those who are loudest in their clamours respecting the danger of violating the

* This sum is the estimate of the value of the West India islands, as proved at the bar of the House of Commons in 1775, by Mr. Walker of Barbadoes and Mr. Ellis of Jamaica, from whose evidence some of these arguments are borrowed.—They were men of great abilities—consummate knowledge, and unquestionable integrity. They are since both deceased.

navigation act, are themselves recommending measures which would cut it up by the roots.

One observation more, and I have done. The Irish are a generous and a liberal minded people. But is it not to their generosity and liberality that I would appeal on the present occasion? Let their prudence only be consulted. Let them well weigh and compare the advantages and disadvantages that will probably result to them from a disagreement with the West India islands, before they adopt the advice mischievously held out to them of late *to open their ports to foreign sugars*. I say *mischievously*, because it is impossible that such advice can be given with any other intention than to set the remaining parts of the British empire at variance with each other;—a very fit and natural employment, it must be owned, for those men whose pernicious councils have already rendered the greatest and bravest nation in the world the scorn and derision of Europe! This observation is not applied to Lord Sheffield, who was, for aught that I know, guiltless of any participation in those councils; but I apply it without scruple to those designing and pestilent spirits on whose secret suggestions the noble Lord has confessedly formed the opinions promulgated in his book. Should Ireland unfortunately concur in the project she

is advised to adopt, and lend her hand to make the ruin of the sugar islands compleat, where will she again find so ready and profitable a market for her provisions? This is a point which well deserves her most serious consideration. "Those who would have friends must shew themselves friendly."—This is the voice of scripture, and we owe it to the mercy of Providence, that, in most cases, a contrary conduct recoils on itself.

B. EDWARDS.

Albemarle-street,

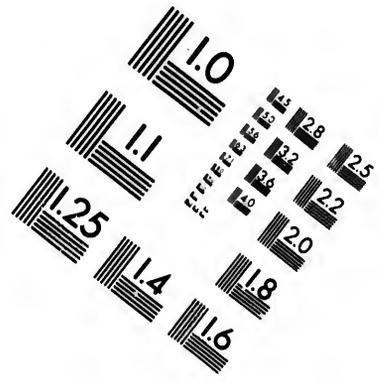
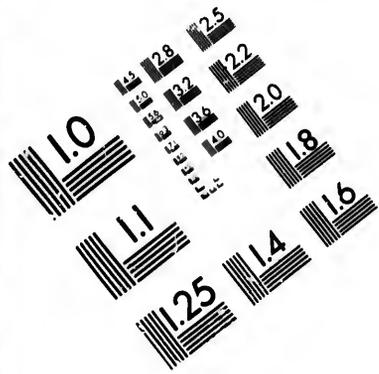
May 1, 1784.

+ Throughout the whole of this little publication, I have studied to observe towards Lord Sheffield all the respect which is due to his rank and character: Nevertheless I must remark, that his Lordship in many parts of his late treatise, speaks so contemptuously and unjustly of the British West India islands and their inhabitants, as might well provoke severe recrimination. But although it is not my intention to enter into a formal vindication of the West India planters, the reader will, I trust, excuse me, if I detain him a moment with a few short extracts from the last edition of the noble author's performance. I believe they will sufficiently demonstrate that his Lordship is not always very correct in his information, nor precisely accurate in his conclusions.

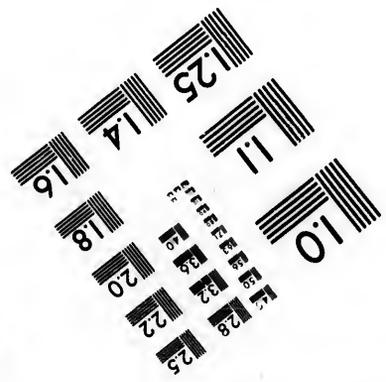
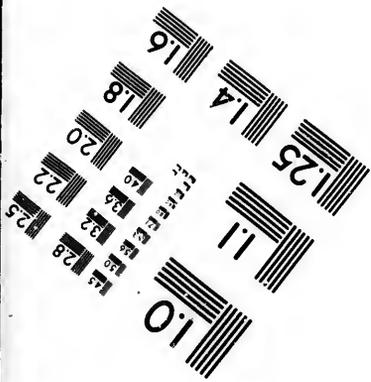
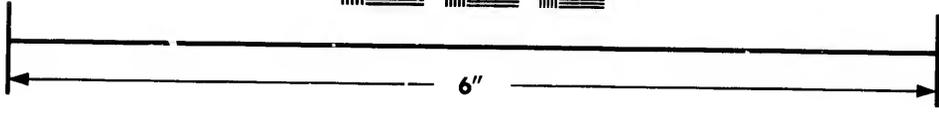
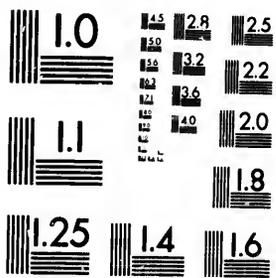
Introd. to 3d edit. P. 7, "The harbours of Nova Scotia are never frozen."

His Lordship in this assertion (which is meant too by way of correcting an assertion of my own) is unfortunate. If I am rightly informed there are at this moment in Great Britain, upwards of a thousand people who have walked or skaited over the harbour of Hallifax.—Even the harbour of New York, so much further to the southward, has been frequently frozen. In the latter end of 1779, or the beginning of 1780, the 17th regiment of Dragoons marched across the bay, from New York to Staten island, and 700 sleds of provisions were drawn over, about the same time.





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P. 68—"Timber has already become scarce in most of the American states."

This is mentioned to shew the importance of Canada and Nova Scotia; but when the necessity is pointed out which the United States will be under of dealing with Great Britain, we are told

P. 128 and 129. "The idea of their withholding their lumber from our shipping is too trifling to require attention. They have no other SUFFICIENT market. Before the war the Americans glutted the West Indies with lumber." (*The notion of sending a glut from an exhausted country is novel.*) Again,

P. 149. "Lumber for the use of the cooper, which is brought over as dunnage in tobacco ships, is now so plentiful in the London market, that it can scarce be sold for any price."

P. 129. "If Britain will grant a bounty upon lumber for a limited time, from our remaining colonies, they will soon supply our West India islands." Again, in P. 253, a bounty is recommended on the importation

tion into Great Britain of timber and plank from Canada, &c.

P. 184, "Nothing can be more weak than the idea of courting commerce?"

Quere. Whether granting bounties is not courting commerce?

P. 133, "Negroes are used better in some parts of America than in our West India islands, and the French use them still better than the Americans.

P. 160, "The French say that we (meaning the British West India planters) do not exact so much labour from our slaves as they (the French) do (from theirs) and that we feed ours at a greater expence."

According to these accounts those who give negroes most work and least food use them best,

P. 146, "The assertion that our islands must starve if they are not opened to American shipping, is a curious instance of the slight ground on which men will be clamorous."

As the truth of the assertion however is not denied, I suspect the noble author has but a puny appetite of his own, or he would hardly consider starving as a slight ground for clamour. The habit of eating is of great antiquity in the West Indies, as well as in Europe, and I doubt the inhabitants will not easily be persuaded to consider *the having nothing to eat* as a grievance of no account.—But there are persons in this kingdom who seem inclined to treat us poor sugar planters, as the mock doctor, in Moliere, treats his children, who were crying for bread, “ Give ’em the rod (says he) : when I have eat my fill, no part of my family shall presume to be hungry.”

P. 158. “ The reduction of the *price* (of sugar) would be the true and proper means of relieving that respectable body of men the West India planters and merchants.”

Erratum. In the above sentence for *price* read *duty*.

P. 119, “ Some are of opinion that on a medium, Great Britain and Ireland could supply our West India islands (with flour and bread) as cheap as the continent of America. Certainly *at this time* they can.”

P. 270, “ Above a million and a half sterling, in gold coin, may have been sent abroad *this year* for corn.” And again, “ upwards of
one

one million of quarters of corn have been imported (into Great Britain) in 1783."

As this supply of corn was obtained chiefly from America, it would seem the noble Lord is of opinion we can furnish our West India islands with bread, cheaper than the country from whence we are ourselves supplied,—notwithstanding too the expence and inconvenience of a double voyage!

And so much for Lord Sheffield's information and accuracy on commercial subjects. This collection of beauties from the noble author's book, might be considerably augmented; but it is an invidious employment, and I willingly drop it.

F I N I S.

