b.
3.
500·114

28

THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EVIDENCE ON THE PETITION

Presented by the

WEST-INDIA PLANTERS and MERCHANTS

TO THE

Hon. HOUSE of COMMONS,

As it was introduc'd at the BAR, and summ'd up

By MR. GLOVER

On THURSDAY the 16th of MARCH, 1775.

LONDON:

Printed by *H. S. Woodfall*,

For T. CADELL, in the Strand;
And sold by J. WILKIE, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

ERRATA.

18, l. 25, *add* s *to* ſubject.
22, 9, *dele* if.

The HUMBLE PETITION

Of the PLANTERS, &c.

With the

SUBSTANCE of the EVIDENCE, &c.

ON the ſecond day of February, 1775, the following Petition was preſented to the Houſe of Commons:

To the Honourable the COMMONS *of* GREAT-BRITAIN *in Parliament aſſembled.*

The HUMBLE PETITION of the Planters of his Majeſty's Sugar Colonies reſiding in GREAT-BRITAIN, and of the Merchants of London trading to the ſaid Colonies,

SHEWETH,

THAT your Petitioners are exceedingly alarmed at an Agreement and Aſſociation, entered into by the Congreſs, held at the city of Philadelphia in North-America, on the

5th day of September, 1774, whereby the members thereof agreed and aſſociated, for themſelves and the inhabitants of the ſeveral provinces, (lying between Nova Scotia and Georgia,) that from and after the firſt day of December, 1774, they would not import into Britiſh America any Melaſſes, Syrups, Paneles, Coffee or Pimento from the Britiſh Plantations; and that, after the 10th day of September, 1775, if the Acts and the parts of Acts of the Britiſh Parliament, therein mentioned, are not repealed, they would not directly or indirectly export any merchandize or commodity whatſoever to the Weſt-Indies.

And your Petitioners moſt humbly repreſent, that the Britiſh property or ſtock veſted in the Weſt-India iſlands amounts to upwards of thirty millions ſterling: That a further property of many millions is employed in the commerce created by the ſaid iſlands; a commerce comprehending Africa, the Eaſt-Indies and Europe: That the whole profits and produce of theſe capitals ultimately center in Great-Britain, and add to the national wealth,

while

while the navigation neceſſary to all its branches eſtabliſhes a ſtrength, which wealth can neither purchaſe nor balance.

That the ſugar plantations in the Weſt-Indies are ſubject to a greater variety of contingencies, than many other ſpecies of property, from their neceſſary dependance on external ſupport; and that therefore ſhould any interruption happen in the general ſyſtem of their commerce, the great national ſtock, thus veſted and employed, muſt become unprofitable and precarious,

That the profits ariſing from the preſent ſtate of the ſaid iſlands, and that are likely to ariſe from their future improvement, in a great meaſure depend on a free and reciprocal intercourſe between them and the ſeveral provinces of North America, from whence they are furniſhed with proviſions and other ſupplies, abſolutely neceſſary for their ſupport and the maintenance of their plantations: That the ſcarcity and high price in Great-Britain, and other parts of Europe, of thoſe articles of indiſpenſable neceſſity, which they now derive from the Middle Colonies of Ame-

rica, and the inadequate population in ſome parts of that continent, with the diſtance, danger, and uncertainty of the navigation from others, forbid your Petitioners to hope for a ſupply in any degree proportionate to their wants.

That if the firſt part of the ſaid Agreement and Aſſociation for a Non-importation hath taken place, and ſhall be continued, the ſame will be highly detrimental to the Sugar Colonies; and that if the ſecond part of the ſaid Agreement and Aſſociation for a Non-exportation ſhall be carried into execution, which your Petitioners do firmly believe will happen, unleſs the harmony that ſubſiſted a few years ſince between this kingdom and the provinces of America, to the infinite advantage of both, be reſtored; the iſlands which are ſupplied with moſt of their ſubſiſtence from thence will be reduced to the utmoſt diſtreſs, and the trade between all the iſlands and this kingdom will of courſe be obſtructed, to the diminution of the Public Revenue, to the ruin of moſt of the Planters, and to the great prejudice of the Merchants: not only

by

by the ſaid obſtruction, but alſo by the delay of payment of the principal and intereſt of an immenſe debt, due from the former to the latter.

Your Petitioners do therefore moſt humbly pray, that this Honourable Houſe will be pleaſed to take into their moſt ſerious conſideration that great political ſyſtem of the Colonies, heretofore ſo very beneficial to the Mother Country and her dependencies, and adopt ſuch meaſures as to them in their great wiſdom ſhall ſeem meet, to prevent the evils with which your Petitioners are threatened, and to preſerve the intercourſe between the Weſt-India iſlands and the Northern Colonies, to the general harmony and laſting Benefit of the whole Britiſh empire; and that they may be heard by themſelves, their Agents, or Council, in ſupport of their Petition.

And your Petitioners, &c.

The Petitioners were referred to a Committee of the whole Houſe, and on the 16th day of March enſuing were admitted to a hearing; which was opened in the following manner by their Agent, Mr. Glover, Merchant of the city of London.

The

THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EVIDENCE, &c.

SIR,

I Appear in the behalf, and by the appointment of the Planters and Merchants concerned in the Weſt-Indies, who have preſented to this honourable Houſe an humble Petition, ſetting forth the great danger to themſelves, to the navigation, revenue and commerce of theſe kingdoms, in conſequence of an Agreement and Aſſociation entered into by a meeting, held at Philadelphia, on the fifth day of September, 1774.

I bend under the weight of a ſubject ſo awful; a weight increaſed by my own thoughts anticipating calamities, in which every inhabitant throughout this extenſive empire, more or leſs, may have a ſhare: at the ſame time, conſcious as I am, that a nation is behind me generally unfavourable

to

to my undertaking. But above all, I am fearful of a wide difference in ſentiments between this great auditory, and the inconſiderable individual at their bar.

I reſt, however, upon one conſolation, that whatever may be the ſtate of your minds and of all beſides; in every ſtate, whether of dejection or elevation; in every conjuncture, whether adverſe or proſperous; let me ſay, in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, information hath its uſe, knowledge is ſalutary; and when preſented in their genuine ſimplicity, untainted by prejudice, paſſion, or party; not looking towards any one quarter in preference to another; without courting any; meaning to offend none; but ſoliciting the attention of all; information and knowledge in ſuch a ſhape cannot be unacceptable to any aſſembly, and I am confident will be acceptable here.

To throw lights into the Committee is the ſole object of your Petitioners, limiting themſelves to the line of facts, which from their peculiar ſituation none can fully explain, but ſuch as themſelves. I ſhall aſk no opinion

nion from witneſſes, and if aſked from any other quarter, the anſwer will be, that to eſtabliſh facts is their part, to judge and decide is yours: Opinion therefore might be conſtructive preſumption in them, like an interference with the counſels and meaſures of the ſtate; whereas they entertain but one expectation, that the information, delivered this day, if not in the preſent juncture, may be found of ſome utility at ſome future period during a portentous ſeries of events, whoſe final iſſue is known only to him, who alone knows all things.

I proceed, Sir, upon another conſolation, in thinking myſelf ſecure of one merit with the Committee; that upon the preſent ſubject the variety of matter, already lying before you, might by a variety and multitude of witneſſes be prolonged, perhaps, for twenty days; and that I can pledge myſelf ſo far, as reſts upon me, to diſpatch the whole in leſs than half that number of hours. I ſhall call but two witneſſes, from whoſe evidence, and from a very few papers reſpecting the colonies out of the large quantity, tranſmitted

mitted by office to the House, it shall be endeavoured to give you a clear insight into the two capital branches of Colony-trade, the West-Indian, the North-American, and the immediate dependent upon both, the African, with the relations and proportions of each towards the other, and towards the several great interests, the manufacture, commerce, navigation, revenue and land of Great-Britain.

After the examination of Mr. Walker and Mr. Ellis, the whole was summed up, as follows;

SIR,

HAVING closed the examination of witnesses, I must recur to my introductory proposition; that from the evidence at your bar, and the official papers upon your table, it shall be endeavoured to give the Committee a clear insight into the two capital branches of Colony-trade, the West-Indian, the North-American, and the immediate dependent upon both, the African; with the relations

and proportions of each towards the other, and towards the ſeveral great intereſts, the manufacture, commerce, navigation, revenue and land of Great-Britain.

Finding my auditory ſo much diminiſhed in number, I muſt ſupply the void by imagination, preſenting to my view the genius of the place, the majeſtic genius of parliament, holding a balance to weigh the future fortunes of kingdoms, with an impartial hand ready to receive the weights peculiar to each ſcale; and conſcious, that the welfare, perhaps the being of a whole empire depend on the turn.

I begin with inveſtigating the general ſyſtem of that empire, not only in deſcription, but illuſtration by compariſon.

Ancient nations were poſſeſſed of the wideſt dominion, not with commercial helps. To be brief, I ſhall confine the enquiry to one, to the Romans in their ages of purity. Cultivation of their ſoil, rude manufacture juſt adequate to their neceſſities, ſeverity of manners, ſuperiority in martial diſcipline, enthuſiaſm for the very name of Rome, and

the

the *dulce & decorum pro patria mori* made them maſters of the world. War was conducted with little expence, and the weightieſt arms in the moſt ſkilful hands prevailed. Commerce flouriſhed among others, whoſe affluence ſubmitted to the ſteel of Rome.

What is the ſyſtem now? All over Europe the ſame weapons, the ſame diſcipline, the ſame military arts are in practice; war is attended with a profuſion of expence; and the deepeſt purſe is the beſt aſſurance of ſucceſs. Hence the encouragement of manufacture and trade is the purſuit of every nation in this quarter of the globe except two; who derive the treaſure, which Europe wants, from diſtant mines with a facility, enervating their own induſtry, while the reſt are exerting theirs, each for a ſhare in that wealth, which the other two introduce, and can only be obtained through the commercial channel. By this Holland with a territory inſufficient to nouriſh her inhabitants, hath in her day ſtood forth a bulwark againſt tyranny and ſuperſtition. An artificial ſtrength, created by commerce, enabled her to make head with

numerous fleets and armies againſt powers immenſely her ſuperiors in natural force. Above all in commercial arts and advantage is Great-Britain. Her purſe, kept full by her credit, the reſource of a trading nation, an annual expenditure at length of ſixteen to eighteen millions recently ſupported ſo long, ſo extenſive, and ſo vigorous a war. Had her purſe been ſcanty, ſhe never would have ſeen a navy, which bore little ſhort of ninety thouſand men, could never have engaged a potent ally, nor furniſhed ſuch troops, as acted ſo efficiently, and at the ſame time in ſuch different parts of the globe. Hence it is evident, her ſyſtem is commercial; her ſtrength and reſources are wholly derived from trade. I allow, the firſt intereſt in rank among us is the landed, but interwoven altogether with trade. Pay no regard to a doctrine from me, but pay all to the ſupreme authority of the cleareſt luminary, this country ever produced, the great Mr. Locke. His words are theſe, " The decays, that " come upon, and bring to ruin any country, " do conſtantly firſt fall upon the land; and

" though

" though the country gentleman is not very
" forward to think ſo, yet this nevertheleſs
" is an undoubted truth; that he is more
" concerned in trade, and ought to take a
" greater care, that it be well managed and
" preſerved, than even the merchant him-
" ſelf."

On the firm ground of ſuch authority let enquiry be made, whether we ſhould not remain content with the lot aſſigned us, which hath raiſed us ſo high among the modern nations, where all are in rivalry for manufacture and trade; whether we ſhould degrade our refinements by a parallel with an unpoliſhed and rugged race of old, and contaminate the delicacy of modern ſenſations with thoſe primitive and ſtern principles, which impoſed ſuch a yoke on mankind as the *majeſtas populi Romani:* or whether, confining our ſpeculations to the placid ſphere of enjoyments with more quiet, and leſs hazard, than the reſtleſs purſuits of their ambition, we ſhould not have in contemplation upon all extraordinary convulſions, how far the means of thoſe enjoyments may be affected, that

influx

influx of wealth, the creature of commerce, which ſolely conſtitutes our envied power and rank in the preſent world.

To elucidate by facts a ſyſtem ſo eſſential to our being, your Petitioners have appeared at this tremendous criſis; when Great-Britain and America, the parent and the child with equal irritation are menacing at leaſt, what barely in words, what barely in thought is horror—to unſheathe the ſword of parricide, and ſever the deareſt ties of conſanguinity, of mutual aids, and general proſperity.

Your Petitioners preferr'd but one ſupplication to the All-merciful Being; their own reaſon ſuggeſted no other, than to be heard by you. He hath inclined you to hear, truth enables us to ſpeak. Truth in its nature is healing, and productive of reflection: reflection leads to compoſure of mind, and ſtrengthens in our breaſts a hope, that an hour may come, when this humble application may not be found altogether ineffectual: if too for that auſpicious purpoſe it may prove my good fortune ſo to collect, and combine the various evidence from your bar, and from the

copied

copied records of office upon your table, as to eſtabliſh a ſyſtem of the whole, and found that whole upon truth; whoſe efficacy upon the mind I have deſcrib'd before, and with ſome fervour of hope anticipate now.

Here, Sir, I entreat your acceptance of a clew through the ſeeming labyrinth of accounts. The ways indeed are all unadorn'd, but the leaſt perplex'd of any to a little attention; and to make them ſhort ſhall be mine.

You have before you official accounts of the exports from England to the Weſt Indies from Chriſtmas, 1739, to Chriſtmas, 1773. Of theſe thirty-four years the firſt ſeventeen, ending at Chriſtmas, 1756, form a period, which cloſes in the firſt year of the laſt war. The whole value exceeds twelve millions, and gives an annual medium of more than 700,000*l.* The laſt period of ſeventeen years ends at Chriſtmas, 1773, and renders a total of more than nineteen millions, and more than 1,100,000*l.* at the annual medium. I only obſerve in this place, that the increaſe of the latter upon the former is in the propor-

tion

tion of eleven to ſeven; and of the value in both two thirds are Britiſh goods, and one third only foreign.

A ſecond ſet of accounts contain the exports to North-America. The firſt ſeventeen years yield more than ſeventeen millions in the whole, and than one million at the annual medium. The laſt period renders more than forty millions in the whole, and largely more than 2,300,000*l.* at the annual medium; an increaſe upon the former in a proportion of twenty-three to ten, with a value in both of three fourths Britiſh goods to one fourth foreign.

The third account relates to Africa, whoſe commerce with England owes its exiſtence to her colonies. The firſt ſeventeen years reach nearly to three millions, and to an annual medium ſomething ſhort of 180,000*l.* the laſt ſeventeen years nearly to eight millions, and an annual medium of 470,000*l.* an increaſe upon the firſt in a proportion of forty-ſeven to eighteen, with a value in each of two thirds Britiſh goods to one third foreign.

On this augmentation of exports to your Colonies, irrefragable proof is founded, that

through whatever channels riches have flow'd among them, that influx hath made a paſſage from them to the Mother Country, and in the moſt wholeſome mode; not like the daſh of an oriental torrent, but in ſalubrious, various, placid and copious ſtreams, refreſhing and augmenting ſober induſtry by additional employment to thouſands and ten thouſands of families, and lightening the burden upon rents by reducing the contribution of pariſhes to poverty unemploy'd.

But this requires a further explanation. The date of the laſt period is the commencement of the laſt war. The expenditure of public money was one ſource of wealth to the Weſt-Indies. That temporary acquiſition being ſoon exhauſted by its return to England, ſufficient ſums were procured upon credit after the peace to cultivate new land, and improve the old, ſtill further enlarging the conſumption of our commodities there and in Africa, that from the year of the peace to Chriſtmas, 1773, the import of ſugar only to England, who without her Weſt-Indies muſt purchaſe that immenſe article from fo-

 reigners,

reigners, hath riſen from 130,000 to 170,000 hogſheads, an augmentation in value of 800,000*l.*

The public expenditure, being much larger in North America, produc'd a proportionate effect on the conſumption of our manufactures through that continent. This money return'd from its peregrination to the Mother Country by 1764, or 1765 at the furtheſt. But, as the Weſt-Indies had a ſuccedaneum, ſo had North-America through a new opening of trade, which converted the misfortune of England into a bleſſing. Though I am convinc'd, that the ſame number of hands at leaſt is devoted to agriculture here, and that the earth at a medium of years hath yielded the ſame increaſe; as we have been diſpos'd to conſume it all among ourſelves, or as our preſumption may impute the ſcarcity to Providence, reſtraining the fertility of our ſoil for ten years paſt, in either caſe we could not ſpare, as heretofore, our grain to the foreigner; a reduction in our exports one year with another of more than 600,000*l.* The American ſubject took place of the Britiſh in

markets

markets, we could no longer ſupply, extended their vent from ſeaſon to ſeaſon, and from port to port, and by a circuition of freſh money, thus acquir'd by themſelves, added freſh numbers to your manufactures, the rents of land increaſing at the ſame time, till the amount of exports to North America for the laſt three years, ending at Chriſtmas 1773, ſtand upon your papers at ten millions and a half, or three millions and a half at the annual medium; add 1,300,000*l.* the medium of the ſame three years for the Weſt-Indies, and 700,000*l.* for Africa, and the total value of exports to the colonies, nearly in a proportion of three fourths Britiſh to one fourth foreign goods, is five millions and a half at the medium of theſe three years, ending at Chriſtmas, 1773. A ſlight matter this to the great queſtion before you, ſays the general voice without doors, and readily admitted without the ceremony of proof. This I mention by way of preparation to introduce the moſt material account of all; which will demonſtrate, that the magnitude of five

millions and a half, exported in the Colony branches, the Weſt-Indian, North-American and African, is not to be conſidered as an object ſo ſtriking in itſelf, as in compariſon with the whole export of England to all countries whatſoever. The annual medium for twelve years back ſtands on theſe papers at leſs than fifteen millions; but as I have limited the Colony branch to 1771, 2 and 3, I ſhall take the general exports during that period, which renders a medium of ſixteen millions. What part is the Colony branch? Five and a half is rather more, than a third. Does the magnitude appear in a ſtronger light by the compariſon? Or hath it been admitted in this view, before it was ſtated? Be it ſo. I have ſomething behind, perhaps enough for the keeneſt appetite of admiſſion to digeſt.

Sir, one part of our exports to foreigners is ſupplied by Colony produce, tobacco, rice, ſugar, &c. through Great-Britain, for a million ſterling at a low eſtimation. Add two millions more, exported of all kinds from

from England to her principal Colony, Ireland, and both to the former five millions and a half; your whole Colony branch will then exceed the half of your whole export in the proportion of eight and a half to ſixteen.

Thanks to the care and forecaſt of our forefathers one hundred and twenty years ſince. In the circle of ancient trade, narrow in compariſon with the modern, the great trading ſtates, Carthage pre-eminent to all, ſuffered but little from rivalſhip. All in Europe are our rivals, all devoted to manufacture and traffic, as capital purſuits of policy: while we, ſtruggling with ſuch competition, have in ſome inſtances already experienc'd its hurtful effects, and muſt prepare for more; we had always one conſolation left, that our colony-trade, kept to ourſelves by old and ſalutary regulations, hath been augmenting from period to period, till at preſent it conſtitutes more, than half of the whole, with a proſpect of further growth, rather than diminution, unleſs we create our own rivals.

One

One more obſervation remains of all the moſt important, ſo far as ſafety to a ſtate is a conſideration above all others. Of this trade the part, which depends on the aſſociated provinces, contributes in naval ſtores, in other low pric'd and bulky commodities more to the Britiſh marine, than triple the preſent exports in commodities of ſuch higher value, and if ſhipp'd ſo largely in foreign bottoms to the the foreign market. Such was your ſituation.

Upon the preſent queſtion I will not take that larger half before-mentioned for my ground. I will deduct the two millions to Ireland, and the odd 500,000*l.* furniſh'd to provinces not of the combination, though they did not receive more than 400,000*l.* in value, at the medium of theſe three laſt years; when there will remain ſix millions out of the eight and a half: Nay, I will further reduce the ſix by nearly 700,000*l.* to remove all ſuſpicion of exaggeration, and to make an exact third of the ſixteen; and which is the part immediately affected by the aſſociation in North-America.

From

From this ground ſee, what is put in hazard; not merely a monied profit, but our bulwark of defence, our power in offence, the arts and induſtry of our nation. Inſtead of thouſands and ten thouſands of families in comfort, a navigation extenſive and enlarging, the value and rents of land yearly riſing, wealth abounding, and at hand for further improvements, ſee, or foreſee, that this third of our whole commerce, that ſole baſis of our empire, and this third in itſelf the beſt, once loſt, carries with it a proportion of our national faculties, our treaſure, our public revenue, and the value of land, ſucceeded in its fall by a multiplication of taxes to reinſtate that revenue, an encreaſing burden on every decreaſing eſtate, decreaſing by the reduc'd demand of its produce for the ſupport of manufacture and manufacturers, and menac'd with a heavier calamity ſtill, the diminution of our marine, of our ſeamen, of our general population, by the emigrations of uſeful ſubjects, ſtrengthening that very country you wiſh to humble, and weakening this in the

ſight

ſight of rival powers, who wiſh to humble us.

Having been hitherto merely general, I muſt now deſcend to a detail, but of parts ſo large, that each is ſeparately big with ſufficient evils to draw the utmoſt ſtretch of your attention. I begin with thoſe, which threaten the Weſt-Indies.

To recapitulate the heads of that material evidence, delivered by Mr. Walker and Mr. Ellis, would be tedious in me, unneceſſary in itſelf. Leaving it therefore to its own powerful impreſſion, I here add only in a general mode of my own, that of the inhabitants in thoſe iſlands above four hundred thouſand are blacks; from whoſe labour the immenſe riches there, ſo diſtinctly prov'd at your bar, are deriv'd with ſuch immenſe advantage to theſe kingdoms. How far theſe multitudes, if their intercourſe with North-America is ſtopp'd, may be expoſed to famine, you have heard. One half in Barbadoes and the Leeward Iſlands, ſay one hundred thouſand negroes, in value at leaſt four

millions

millions ſterling, poſſibly, it grieves me to ſay probably, may periſh. The remainder muſt divert to proviſions the culture of the produce ſo valuable to Great-Britain. The ſame muſt be the practice in great part through Jamaica, and the new ſettled acquiſitions. They may feel a diſtreſs juſt ſhort of deſtruction, but muſt divert for ſubſiſtence ſo much labour, as in proportion will ſhorten their rich product. In fact, why ſhould they raiſe the latter, if lumber ſhould be wanting for its package to Great-Britain. How vague, how uncertain, how nearly impracticable would be a ſupply of theſe neceſſaries through any new channel, I need not repeat; but ſhall cloſe this head with another ſhort general ſtate in confirmation of Mr. Walker's moſt accurate detail. 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 authoriſe my aſſertion. Of theſe annual four millions the exchequer receives its portion,

the navigator and merchant theirs; the reſt centers with the planter; and how diſtributed by him? In the purchaſe of 1,300,000*l.* in our exports direct, and the largeſt part of 700,000*l.* more in circuition through Africa for a conſtant ſupply of negroes. What is left, conſiderable, as it may be among reſidents here, is applied to home-conſumption, not with a ſparing hand, and to inveſtments, upholding the price of land, and the credit of public funds. At the ſame time they are furniſhing commodities to us of ſuch neceſſary uſe, which elſe muſt be paid for to foreigners, and with 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.

Upon the North-American imports I ſhall only remark, that the moſt conſiderable part of their bulky productions is bought by the foreigner, and of the amount, conſumed in Great-Britain, the Exchequer hath a capital

ſhare.

ſhare. Nor will I take North-America for a companion in my preſent melancholy walk, becauſe ſhe may prove the only gainer, and as a community become more ſound and healthy, while every other member of the empire lies bleeding. But my heart bleeds, when, renewing my gloomy progreſs, I turn a view towards one kingdom, a great member, which may unhappily be diſtinguiſhed above all ſufferers in the preſent conjuncture; I mean the kingdom of Scotland: and among my honourable hearers, they, whoſe particular attention, I may now engage, have no cauſe to doubt the ſincerity of my feelings. I have taken equal pains with the accounts of exports from that kingdom, as from this. The papers, I could collect, begin at Chriſtmas 1748, and end at Chriſtmas 1772, with two years wanting, a circumſtance however, which will not in the leaſt impede me in illuſtrating the progreſs and improvement of the North Britiſh trade. A firſt period ſhews an annual medium of about 500,000*l.* In a ſecond it riſes to 860,000*l.* In a third to 1,150,000*l.* and in the laſt for 1770, 1771 and 1772 to 1,700,000*l.* of which about

 400,000*l.*

400,000*l.* is colony-export exclusive of Ireland, and the far greater part to the tobacco provinces; where many of my most worthy friends have a property lying much larger, than I chuse to conjecture. To this I add a known export of linen, exceeding 200,000*l.* supplied to England for American use. The whole may be little short of 700,000*l.* but calling it 6, I ask, if Scotland can well endure a stagnation of such a value for twelve months to come. Whether their export to Ireland of 3 to 400,000*l.* will be affected, and how far emigration of late so prevalent may be extended by the pressure of a new calamity, I will not forebode. Sir, I feel—Sir, those feelings forbid me to expatiate further—I chuse to drop the subject. Observing only, that the colony-export from Scotland is to their whole much in the same proportion with ours, I will now pass over to Ireland.

That kingdom takes from England and Scotland little short of 2,400,000*l.* annually in goods. How doth she pay for them? A large part in linen and yarn, the remainder in cash,

acquired

acquired by her foreign traffic. In the printed report to this Houſe from their linen committee it appears, that in 1771 the linen made, and brought to market for ſale in that kingdom for its own uſe and ours, amounted to 2,150,000*l.* and the yarn exported to about 200,000*l.* This immenſe value, the employment of ſuch numbers, hath its ſource in North-America. The flax-ſeed from thence, not worth 40,000*l.* a trifle to that continent, forms the baſis of Ireland, and reverts largely in manufacture from her to the original ſeat of growth. In reply, what is the cry of my magnanimous countrymen without doors? Dignity! Supremacy! The evil hour is advancing, not yet come; no ſooner come, than felt, it may produce a diſcovery too late, that high-ſounding words imply no food to the hungry, no raiment to the naked; and that theſe throughout our empire may amount to millions in number— But new channels of ſupply ſhall be found; our potency can ſurmount all difficulties. It is full time to begin the eſſay in Ireland, leſt, during the experiment, emigration ſo con-

ſtant

ſtant there ſhould change to depopulation in the Proteſtant quarters.

I now return to England, not a member, but the head. Her ſorrows I will leave to the contemplation of that ſuperior claſs, which muſt be the ultimate and permanent ſufferer. The ſage Mr. Locke would tell the country gentleman, that his viſible property muſt re-place the loſs of public revenue; that he muſt provide for a nation of hungry and naked, or ſink into utter debility and deſpondency; when the ſun riſes no more on this once flouriſhing iſland, but to ſee the deſertion of inhabitants, and a wretched remnant, wandering unclad and unfed in lamentation over a wilderneſs.

I have mention'd the revenue, and ſhall now be very conciſe upon that head. Deducting bounties and drawbacks, the neat receipt at the Exchequer from duties and exciſe on Weſt India productions I venture to ſet at more than 700,000*l.* and another receipt in the North-American branch, at juſt ſo much, as with the former may render a total of one million. To that amount the public

public revenue is immediately concern'd. Confequential loſs, for inſtance in the great article of tea for want of the uſual ſupply of ſugar, or in any other articles, I do not dwell upon here, but leave to reflection.

Thus far, Sir, I hope, that I have proved what was your ſituation, happy in receiving from your colonies all the poſſible advantage attainable in the nature of things. Could our forefathers, the authors of ſuch a ſyſtem, which excluſive of foreign profit could bring the numerous ſubjects of the ſame ſtate in ſuch diſpers'd habitations over the earth, thouſands and thouſands of miles aſunder, to a concurrence in the extirpation of idleneſs, in promoting the comfort, and calling forth the faculties of each other; could thoſe venerable founders of a ſtructure ſo ſtupendouſly great ariſe, and ſeeing it brought to ſuch perfection by time and experience, yet find it within the laſt ten years ſo roughly handled in a conflict with finance; what looks would they caſt on their blinded poſterity, almoſt the whole Britiſh people, who on every ſtart of pecuniary contribution from America have

under

under three Adminiſtrations been open-mouth'd, and are ſtill for American taxation? Let the three Adminiſtrations have all the juſtification of *defendit numerus, junctæque umbone phalanges.* But I, an unconnected man, firmly pronounce, that the conſenting voice of all mankind cannot make two and two more, or leſs, than four; that the *Vox Populi* is not always the *Vox Dei*, and among us upon the preſent ſubject reſembles the popular cry in old Jeruſalem of crucify, crucify.

Yet, Sir, I likewiſe ſincerely wiſh, that the gloomy aſpect, I have given to our future ſituation, may be all nugatory, all miſrepreſentation, unintended, but not therefore leſs the reſult of error and blindneſs. Hitherto I have look'd on one ſide of the queſtion only; permit me now to contemplate the other.

It is the general acceptation, that the aſſociated provinces will ſubmit in conſequence of the meaſures taken. The meaſures I allude to are public facts; and with ſome relief to my own dejection I apply them to introduce another fact inconteſtable and bril-

liant; whereon I gladly dwell for a while: it is a ſubject of praiſe, requiring but few words, becauſe it is true. I have nam'd the Romans; we have among us a ſelect body, whom I compare with them, as their equals at any the moſt diſtinguiſh'd epoch of their martial ſcience and proweſs. I will not hazard a panegyric. The grateful ſenſations of all our memories retain the illuſtrious and recent atchievements of the Britiſh military by land and ſea, with a warmth, which would render the moſt elaborate encomium ſpiritleſs and cold. But themſelves, letter'd gentlemen of England, and vers'd in hiſtory, will allow, that the peculiar ſuperiority, deriv'd from diſcipline, poſſeſs'd by them in its higheſt excellence, is but the effect of human art; that there are left at large in human nature certain ſparks, whoſe occaſional concurrence produces operations not to be circumſcrib'd, or controul'd by art or power, and hath caus'd ſuch wonderful viciſſitudes, recorded in times paſt, but, I hope, will make no part of our future annals. I allude to that violent agitation of the ſoul, enthuſiaſm. Such vi-

 ciſſitudes,

ciſſitudes, not to be ſhunn'd by art or power, merit the moſt attention, when moſt is ſet upon a caſt.

Many without doors have treated the exiſtence of this uncontrollable ſpirit as imaginary. I did not reaſon with thoſe, who either feel no enthuſiaſm for any thing ſerious, or retain juſt ſo much, as may be requiſite in the eager purſuit of diverſions, pleaſures, or profit. I would have accompanied others more ſpeculative through their ſeveral gradations of hope, ſtill diſappointed, and ſtill reviving, but for one obſervation, which I have generally kept conceal'd, but will ſoon reveal to you. But for this obſervation I might have concurr'd with the public belief, that the capital of a province, now declared in rebellion, would have ſubmitted on the landing of a few regiments; this failing, that other provinces from ancient jealouſy and diſguſt would not have interfer'd, rather ſought their own advantage out of that town's diſtreſs; this failing, that they never would have proceeded to the length of conſtituting a certain inauſpicious aſſembly among themſelves;

ſelves; this failing, that the members of ſuch aſſembly would have diſagreed, and not fram'd a ſingle reſolution. This laſt hope having prov'd abortive, a new one is popularly adopted, that the firſt intelligence of enforcing meaſures, at leaſt the bare commencement of their execution will tame the moſt refractory ſpirits. I will here ſtate the grounds of this, and all the preceding hopes; afterwards with your indulgence the ground of my original and continued doubts.

Our trading nation naturally aſſum'd, that the preſent contention would be with traders in America. The ſtock of a trader, whether his own, or in part, and often the greateſt part a property of others, confiding in him, is perſonal, lodg'd in a magazine, and expos'd in ſeaſons of commotion to inſtantaneous devaſtation. The circumſtance of ſuch property, the conſiderations, ſuggeſted by common prudence, by the ſenſe of common juſtice to thoſe, who have given a generous credit, rarely make room for that intrepidity, which meets force with force. Hence I admit, that the mere traffickers would have

ſubmitted at firſt, and will now, whenever they dare. The reaſon, why they have not dared, is the foundation of my doubts.

I am ſpeaking to an enlighten'd aſſembly, and converſant with their own annals. In thoſe ages, the reverſe of commercial, when your anceſtors fill'd the ranks of men at arms, and compos'd the cavalry of England, of whom did the infantry conſiſt? A race unknown to other kingdoms, and in the preſent opulence of traffic almoſt extinct in this, the yeomenry of England; an order of men, poſſeſſing paternal inheritance, cultivated under their own care, enough to preſerve independence, and cheriſh the generous ſentiments attendant on that condition, without ſuperfluity for idleneſs, or effeminate indulgence. Of ſuch doth North America conſiſt. The race is reviv'd there in greater numbers, and in a greater proportion to the reſt of the inhabitants; and in ſuch the power of that continent reſides. Theſe keep the traffickers in awe. Theſe, many hundred thouſands in multitude, with enthuſiaſm in their hearts, with the petition, the bill of rights, and the

acts

acts of settlement, silent and obsolete in some places, but vociferous and fresh, as newly born, among them; these hot with the blood of their progenitors, the enthusiastic scourges at one period, and the revolutional expellers of tyranny at another; these, unpractis'd *in frivolous dissipation, and ruinous profusion*, standing arm'd on the spot, deliver'd down from their fathers, a property not moveable, nor expos'd to total destruction, therefore maintainable, and exciting all the spirit and vigour of defence; these under such circumstances of number, animation and manners, their lawyers and clergy blowing the trumpet, are we to encounter with a handful of men, sent three thousand miles over the ocean to seek such adversaries on their own paternal ground.*—But these will not fight, says

* The following remark might have been trite to the honourable hearer, but may not occur to every common reader; that, if there are any seeds of talents and genius in a country, they are drawn into action and vigour by public ferments and troubles: but might have remained in times of tranquillity for ever useless and unknown, perhaps at the plough, under a shed, or among the lowest class of mechanics.

ſays the general voice of Great-Britain. Agreed. I deſire to meet my antagoniſts in argument upon no better ground.

That exports to the aſſociated provinces have ceaſed for months is a fact. May not their non-importation agreement ſingly be a weapon ſufficiently effectual in their hands without ſtriking a blow? Why ſtrike without occaſion?

To overſet this ſuggeſtion an aſſertion is brought, that neceſſity will break the combination. I take this freſh ground to ſhew, that neceſſity in conjunction with enthuſiaſm may produce a directly oppoſite effect. I throw but a tranſient glance on the extraordinary ſtock of goods, laid in by the coloniſts laſt year, though ſaid to be ſufficient for the conſumption of two. The arguments I ſhall uſe, carry their own evidence with them. Let the population in the aſſociated provinces be three millions, as delivered into the Congreſs, or be reduced to two and a half white and black. At a moderate computation per head the quantity of goods, including all uſes beſides apparel, is not adequate to

half

half their conſumption, which I ſtated before to the amount of three millions ſterling, without ſeparating ſome conſiderable articles for the month. This annual ſupply they never did annually pay for, but always remain'd under a heavy debt to the mother country, a capital advantage to her, as ſhall be explain'd in its place. How is the other half of their conſumption, unſupplied from hence, provided with the ſeveral articles for cloathing and other neceſſaries? What is introduc'd through illicit trade with the foreigner muſt be paid for in ready money, and is chiefly for the rich and the few. How is the multitude ſupplied, diſpers'd over that vaſt continent, and at conſiderable diſtances from the ſea? Sir, by the ſame means, and neceſſarily ſo, as are practis'd in moſt counties of theſe kingdoms. There are two kinds of manufacture; one active and ſyſtematic, collected under a ſuperintendance, and brought to the markets of ſale. The other is ſedentary and domeſtic, obſcure but large, could the ſmall and ſcattered parcels be gathered up for computation, as may be made of the former

from

from the records of public marts. The latter lies among the wives and children of rural, of ruſtic families; is applied to domeſtic uſe, and rarely ſees a market for ſale. In the ſame mode the American yeomenry are furniſhed among themſelves. The domeſtic manufacture muſt in courſe be large for the uſe of ſuch numbers; the active for ſale is far from maturity among them: but neceſſity, urg'd againſt them, may extend the arts and materials, already indubitably poſſeſs'd; and enthuſiaſm may ſtamp on their home-ſpun all the value, all the pride of ornament.

Sir, I foreſee, theſe differences with America will be compos'd, and how——There ſilence becomes me beſt——It will be ſo late, that Great-Britain muſt receive a wound, which no time can heal—A philoſophical ſenſe of dignity muſt ſtep in under the ſhape of conſolation.

This reflection I wiſh to obviate, and will ſtate a ſtrong queſtion from the other ſide. Admitting, if I pleaſe, the practicability of the coloniſt ſupplying his wants with his own

homely

homely manufacture, improveable too by time and experience; yet will not an interruption to the vent of his own produce, and to the profits of his trade, be a loſs of ſuch magnitude, as may quickly, and with an intermediate ſtagnation too ſhort for us ſenſibly to feel, reduce his mind to a ſtate of humiliation? The interruption, I allow, will be a loſs to individuals, large to ſome, ſmall to many, and operate in degrees proportionate to ſituations and tempers. The trading claſs foreſee it already, and are humbled enough to ſubmit, if they could. Thoſe, who keep them in awe, the multitude of ſmall, but independent proprietors of land, may feel their part of the loſs ſo light, as not to relax the reſtif ſpirit, which they have manifeſted down to this day; and may be ſtrengthen'd by a truth too obvious, that America, as a public, muſt be a gainer by ſuch interruption.

She always hath been, and is now largely indebted to the Britiſh merchants; a proof, that the neat value of her annual produce, and remittances through the circuitions of

her trade hath ever been ſhort of her purchaſes here. So far, as this difference reaches, whether ſmall or large, ſo far, as ſhe ſubſtitutes more of her own labour in the ſtead of ours for her own wants; juſt ſo much will be on a general balance a clear profit to her community, while the intercourſe with ours is ſtopp'd; and a loſs to Great-Britain irrecoverable ſo far, as during the melancholy interval the arts of manufacture may be better eſtabliſh'd, and more extended in that continent; but if extended beyond frugal uſes, the yeomenry there will ſink into futile and enervating enjoyments, the ſource of venality and diſcord, and in their turn verify a celebrated axiom in politics, that diſcontent, murmurs, profuſion and outward ſhew are the ſure ſigns of a ſtate in decay.

Sir, you have repeatedly heard before this day of the large debt from the coloniſts to our merchants; an uncontrovertible truth to the permanent amount of millions. Griev'd, as humanity muſt be, at any occurrence, which puts ſuch a property, and ſo many meritorious ſubjects in peril, or even under a temporary

anxiety;

anxiety; yet ſuch being the courſe of that trade, the effect of a voluntary conduct, public policy hath cauſe to rejoice, at the ſame time to acknowledge a high, though unſought obligations to the merchant, who by this practice holds in his hand the principal bond of colony dependence, enforces the act of navigation, and becomes in the public behalf the true guardian of that half divine law, the work of penetration and wiſdom equal to the great men, who fram'd it. Illicit traffic is common to all regions and governments, nor to be avoided in any, but by a ſtrict care not to lead into temptation. Upon the whole, no commercial regulation hath been more accurately obſerv'd, than the act of navigation, to which the American Congreſs moſt intelligibly ſubmits, and which in their deprivation of capital privileges and liberties, enjoy'd by their fellow-ſubjects here, comprehends their contribution for protection; an act, which hath generally been well obey'd by them, and the merchant at home hath made it their intereſt. A foreign correſpondent might account moſt juſtly for the neat proceeds of

 tobacco,

tobacco, rice, ſugar, &c. but will not give credit for a ſtiver more; and for that reaſon doth not receive ſuch conſignments even from the leſs ſcrupulous obſervers of the law. The Britiſh merchant on a hundred pound, neated from a conſignment, readily ſupplies the American's wants for a hundred and twenty, thirty, how far is immaterial. This accommodation he hath not, and through long habit doth not try to have from any quarter out of Great-Britain, and therefore chuſes to ſend his produce through her channel; nor will a few exceptions invalidate the argument: and till the awful volume of earthly viciſſitudes ſhall diſcloſe the fatal page, where that Omnipotent Hand, which hath lifted up and caſt down the proudeſt dominion of old, may have written the deſignation of empire to the child; till then the merchant of Great-Britain will keep the child in all poſſible dependence on the parent.

Sir, after all, though my fellow ſubjects riſe more and more in the flattering confidence, that the colonies will not adhere to their agreements, I do not commit myſelf in

aſſerting the contrary; I do not pronounce, that they will: I only ſuggeſt, that they may; and on that ſuppoſition have attempted to ſhew, what England, Scotland and Ireland ſtake on the conteſt; nothing leſs, than a long-approved and ſucceſsful ſyſtem, embracing every circumſtance of national ſtability, proſperity and luſtre. For what this is put in hazard, I humbly hope, is a queſtion too ſerious for caſuiſtry; and, I humbly believe, ſolely to be meaſur'd by expediency and practicability under the direction of that great council, which holds the guardianſhip of three kingdoms, and their boundleſs dependencies.

Right, authority, ſovereignty, dignity, ſupremacy are admitted to the utmoſt extent of their ground. Is there not another ground antecedent and original, that from the nature of mankind, there never was, nor is, and never will be a community, who after the poſſeſſion of benefits, delivered down from father to ſon for more than a century, will be perſuaded to relinquiſh ſuch poſſeſſion by any plea of law and right, urg'd with all the

the eloquence of advocates? A force superior to argument is requisite, which brings the question back to expediency and practicability.

Conceive not, Sir, that our very thoughts have presumed to interfere with the counsels or determinations of the state; but as the present subject of deliberation and measures is too pregnant with events not to run far into the future, we submissively hope, that the facts, we have produc'd, and the deductions from them, if not in the present hour, may prove of some utility hereafter.

You in your future deliberations will separate the frivolous from the important, the specious and the plausible from the sound and the true. You, searching the depths of human nature, will not be misled by trite and popular opinion; and, when the force of self-interest is alleg'd at this momentous crisis, you will discover, that interest is not the predominant ruler of mankind—I repeat, that interest is not the predominant ruler of mankind. The few indeed are under that frigid influence; but the many are govern'd by passion,

paſſion, whoſe train I need not arrange. Perſeverance in acts of violence from one quarter, and perſeverance in another to ſuffer, may be in both the reſult of paſſion. Paſſion can miſinterpret words, give ſolidity to empty ſounds, and convert ſhadow to ſubſtance. Paſſion could give weight to the cry of the church, when Sacheverell infatuated a nation, renown'd above all others for ſolid ſenſe, and depth of thought.

To conclude: if, Sir, in any future operation this honourable Houſe may condeſcend to a moment's remembrance of us, our appearance may prove not altogether in vain. Although there is ſtill much remaining to offer, permit us now to withdraw, unreprov'd, we hope, by you; but ſurely ſo by our own conſciencious feelings in thus attempting our diſcharge of a duty to the public—Over the acts already paſs'd and paſſing I do not breathe out a word—only a parting ſigh.

FINIS.