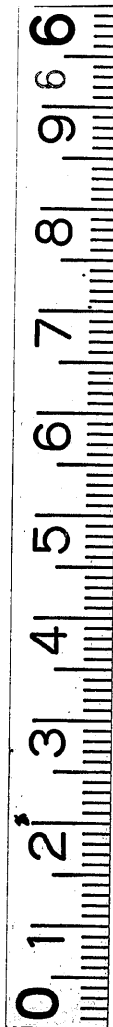


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SOME *n*
CONSIDERATIONS

Humbly offer'd upon the

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Now depending in the

House of LORDS,

Relating to the

Trade between the Northern Colonies
and the Sugar-Islands.

In a LETTER to a Noble PEER.



M DCCXXXII.

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M Y L O R D,

THE favourable Notice your Lordship was pleas'd to take of the Letter I had the Honour to write you the last Session, in relation to the Contest between the Sugar Planters, and the Inhabitants of the Northern Colonies, together with the good effect which the publishing of it (by your Lordship's Approbation) had in the House, gives me the confidence to address your Lordship once more on the same Subject; since the Islanders are again soliciting your Lordships to pass a Bill, which would be extremely injurious to the Colonies on the Continent.

But not to trouble your Lordship with a Recapitulation of all that has been said on both sides of the Question, I would only beg leave to expose to your View, the Weakness and Illusion of the principal Arguments, which (for want of better) the Gentlemen of the Islands have been constrain'd to invent for the Support of their unreasonable Project, and which, I hope, I shall be able to refute to your Lordship's Satisfaction; and also to convince you, that the Prohibition propos'd to be put upon the Northern Colonies, would in its consequence prove very prejudicial not only to them, but also to the trading Subjects of *Great-Britain* in general.

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The heavy Complaint of the Island Gentlemen arises from the *French* selling their Sugars at a lower Price than (as they pretend) the *English* Sugars can be afforded; by which means they have beaten us out of the Trade of selling ours in foreign Markets: which, as they would persuade us, they could not be able to do but for two Causes; the one is, That the *French* Lands are fresher and more productive, but that the *English* are worn out, and require a greater Expence in the Cultivation. The other is, That the Northern Colonies supply the *French* with Lumber, Horses and Provisions, taking Sugar, Melasses and Rum in return; and that by restraining this Commerce, the *French* would be so much distress'd, as that they could not carry on their Plantations, without raising the Price of their Sugars.

As to the wearing out of their Lands, the Islanders have the least reason of any People in the World to ask for Relief on that Consideration; because the vast Profits which have been drawn out of them for so long a course of Years, have infinitely exceeded the Value of them; which is apparent beyond all Contradiction: for notwithstanding that they have always affected to appear in the greatest Grandure, and liv'd in a Profusion far beyond any of their Fellow-subjects of equal Rank, yet 'tis visible, that many of them have, from small Beginnings, acquir'd very ample Fortunes, which they enjoy at this day, both in *England* and the Islands. But the most proper Remedy for this depends upon themselves; let them spare a Part of their Lands till they recover their former Strength, which they will naturally do in a few Years (as we have seen by the *French* Part of *St. Christopher's*) they would then sell off a proportional Part of their Negroes,

groes, and have that Money to employ to advantage in some other Way; and tho' their annual Profit should be less, they might very well abate as much of their superfluous Expences, and still have enough to live in Plenty. If then they would but practise this Good-husbandry, their Lands would never be worn out, and their Estates would become more solid and stable. But they say the *French* Lands are fresher, and more profitable: it is then because they have not (like our Islanders) torn out the Heart of them, but have gone on to settle new Ground; and if ours have a mind to enlarge their Improvements, let them imitate the Prudence and Industry of the *French*; there's still fresh Land enough for them in *Jamaica*. And thus, I hope, it will appear plainly to your Lordship, that this Part of their Grievance deserves no manner of regard in Parliament; they brought it upon themselves, they have largely reap'd the Profit of it, and 'tis in their own Power to repair it.

But they say 'tis by the help of the Northern Colonies, that the *French* have been enabled to supplant them. And to make this look like a matter of some Moment, they have insisted much upon the Advantage the *French* have had by being supplied with Lumber from them; when after all, it has been sufficiently prov'd, that the *French* do actually make much of their Sugar Cask (which is the most considerable Article, because 'tis an annual Expence) with Timber growing upon their own Islands; and that for the rest, they are able to furnish themselves with whatsoever they need, from their own Settlements on the Continent: nay, that if they were reduced to the necessity of bringing it from *Europe* (from whence their Ships come for the most part empty) the Difference of the Price would not

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not add Two-pence *per Cent.* more to the Charge of producing their Sugars; neither would our refusing them Horses put them under any great Difficulty, because they have been frequently supply'd with Mules from the *Spaniards*, and from their own Part of *Hispaniola*. And as to Provisions, the Difference of the Price between *Europe* and *America*, is not so great, but that a *Frenchman's* Frugality would enable him to carry on his Business without raising the Price of his Sugar above the Market; and even the Islanders themselves seem to be so far convinced of the looseness of these Suggestions, that tho' they continue to make it a Clamour in their arguing, yet they have left out this Prohibition in the Bill, which they are now solliciting; which yet would have the Effect of a Prohibition, if the *French*, as 'tis probable, would not deal with them, if they would not take off their Rum and Melasses in exchange; and are contented to confine it to Melasses and Rum, because (say they) the *French* will throw away their Melasses, if our People don't take it from them, and then the Loss of that Profit will reduce them to a Necessity of raising the Price of their Sugars.

However, since they seem to lay much weight upon this Topic, I believe it will prove much too light, to obtain upon your Lordship's Judgment. Permit me then to state the Argument (as the Fact is) in this manner: The *French* have found the Benefit of Distilling their Melasses into Rum, have erected Stills, and are actually in the Practice of it in their Sugar Islands; and the Use of Rum is much encreas'd of late Years, and still encreases not only in *America*, but also in *Europe*. But the *English* of the northern Colonies, are the only People who have hitherto bought the greatest
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Part of their Melasses and Rum: therefore if the Northern Colonies are prohibited from trading with them for those Commodities, the *French* will throw away their Melasses, and never more trouble themselves to seek for any other Market; nor would any other People buy it of them. *Credat Judæus Apella—non ego.* But 'tis well known, that the *French* are no such Slugs; they would be too apt to find a Vent for their Rum amongst our Fisheries, which would be difficult, if not impossible for us to prevent: and there's no doubt, but the *Dutch* would be glad to buy all the Melasses they would sell them, to distil it themselves into Rum; for which Commodity, as I am inform'd, they have of late found a great Vent all up the *Baltic*, and even to *Petersburgh*. If then they propose to obtain no other Relief by this Prohibition, but as it might constrain the *French* to throw away their Melasses, and have indeed pleas'd themselves with so fond a Conceit; I hope your Lordships will never be prevail'd upon to consent to a Law, which in all appearance could have no other Effect, than the putting the *French* upon distilling all their own Melasses, or selling it to others for that purpose; and at the same time depriving the *English* Subjects of a Manufactory, which is very useful and advantageous to them.

But supposing (tho' against all Reason, and only for Argument sake) that the *French* should act so foolishly as to throw away their Melasses, 'tis yet demonstrable, that even this would not put them under such a Necessity, as that they must either raise the Price of their Sugars, or else quit their Plantations: for we know that the Profits arising from the Sugar Plantations are so great, as that our first Planters did for many Years value their *Muscovadoe* Sugars at no more than ten Shillings *per Ct.* notwithstanding

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standing they had in those Times, all the Difficulties of a new Settlement to struggle with, and made little or no Profit of their Melasses, (the Improvement whereof they did not find out 'till much later;) and yet even at that Price, they rais'd good Estates: If then the *French* Lands are so productive, as the Islanders have represented them, I see no Reason to think, that they might not thrive as well as our Planters did, if the Price of their Sugars were reduc'd to the old Rate or lower.

But, my Lord, I can by no means entertain so mean an Opinion of these Gentlemen's Understanding, as to think that they themselves do really believe, that such a Prohibition would indeed oblige the *French* to throw away their Melasses: on the contrary, it seems plain to me, that with their usual cunning in their other Arguments, they only endeavour to amuse us with this Hobgoblin; whilst the true Point in view, is what might, if they could obtain it, turn to their Advantage: I mean, to have it in their power to restrain the Northern Colonies from getting any Rum or Melasses, but what they should take from them at their own Prices. 'Tis this, my Lord, this is the Mystery which lies hid under so much subtil Contrivance, as your Lordship may plainly see, by taking the following Survey of the whole Scheme.

The Price of their Sugars is to be rais'd by any possible means: they cannot be so ignorant in the Affairs of the World, as to imagine that 'tis in our Power to make any Laws, which can restrain the *French* from enlarging and improving their Plantations, wherein they receive all suitable Encouragement from their Government; and this must naturally encrease the Production of Sugars, and consequently lower the Price by degrees in *Europe*: and that Nation which will sell it

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it cheapest must certainly gain the Trade of serving its Neighbours, who have no Plantations; if the *French* undersell us, we shall certainly re-export none, which will confine the Expence of what our Islands produce to our Home Consumption. If then the Islanders send us the same Quantities they did formerly, the Commodity must lie upon their hands, and the Price would fall to the lowest Degree: to prevent this, they have no other way, but to make a less Quantity of Sugar, and so to feed us from hand to mouth, with no more than what will suffice for the Home Expence. Nor is it irrational to suppose, that People will be content to lessen the Quantity of their Product, if they think they may by that means heighten the Value; this we have seen practis'd by the Tobacco Planters; but the Sugar Planters will have no need to lessen their Crop, they have only to vary the Species; for both the Sugar and Molasses, and afterwards the Rum, are produc'd from the very same Cane. Now it is well known, that the Islanders do at present make use of all the Juice which the Cane yields, and throw away nothing; and that they find a Vent for all the Melasses and Rum they make: which is so far from answering the Demands of the Northern Colonies, as that they make many thousand hogheads of Rum more than they can get from our Islands, out of the Melasses they buy from the *French* and *Dutch*; and yet these Gentlemen do confidently affirm, that they are able to furnish the northern People with the whole Quantity they want. But your Lordship knows, that 'tis impossible in Nature to make any thing yield more than its All; and therefore you may see, that their Craft is to blind us by a double Entendre; they would impose upon us the Idea of their being able to enlarge their quantity of Rum in their usual way of work-

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ing ; whereas their *Subterfuge* is, that they can do it, by distilling what Part of their Syrups they please into Rum: but then 'tis evident, that they will make so much the less Sugar, and expect to sell it the dearer.

And thus your Lordship may see clearly into the inside of their Project ; and that it is not founded on a real Belief, that the *French* would be oblig'd to raise their Sugar, (for they know better ;) but as they find, that the Expence of Rum is continually encreasing, as well in *Europe* as in *America*, and they think, that if they could restrain the Northern Colonies from buying any Melasses from the *French*, they would not be able to carry on the trade of distilling Rum on the Continent ; for 'tis not to be supposed, that the Islanders would sell them any Melasses, because they would then convert it all into Rum themselves, and so get into their own hands the Monopoly of that Commodity. And if they should succeed so well therein, as to find more Profit arise from their Rum than from their Sugars, they would certainly, as is before noted, distill more of their Syrups, and make less Sugar ; and if by this way of working they should be enabled to raise the Price of their Sugars, they must raise it upon the *British* Subjects only, for they could raise it upon no-body else. And thus these modest Gentlemen are humbly petitioning, only for the small Favour of a Law, which, if it should succeed according to their Expectation (for they have declared publicly, that they hope to advance their Sugars three or four Shillings *per Ct.*) would put it in their power to lay (in effect) a Tax upon the Nation, which would amount to much above a hundred thousand pounds *per Annum*.

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The next thing I would observe to your Lordship is, that these Petitioners are not a poor, indigent, distressed people ; so far from it, that many of them have Plantations that have yielded one thousand, two thousand Pounds *per annum*, and some much more. Their extravagant way of Living is so well known to all the World, that it might seem invidious (which I would avoid) to particularize upon it, and therefore I shall give but one instance in that of their numerous Attendants ; having been credibly inform'd, that there are among them such, who keep twenty, thirty, forty, to fifty (as they call them) House Negroes, that is Menial Servants ; and I should think, that the Labour of such a Number, well employ'd, might be sufficient to maintain a Man very handsomely, and enable him to provide well for his Posterity. But what would we say to a Man who should ask our Charity in an embroider'd Coat ?

It appears then, my Lord, that these Gentlemen are not in so deplorable a Condition as they would represent themselves, nor that their Importunity is occasioned from any real Exigency they lie under ; the true State of their Case being, that as they formerly sold their Sugars for no more than ten Shillings *per Ct.* (at which Price they rais'd their Estates) they have taken the Advantage, occasion'd by the Encrease of the Use of that Commodity, to advance the Price by degrees to more than double ; but since the *French* have so much enlarg'd the Production of Sugars, as to supply the foreign Markets at a lower Price, they find themselves mightily aggriev'd because they can't attain their usual Prices ; whereas in reality, this Abatement will only reduce them from an exorbitant to a moderate Profit.

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For, if it be true, what they themselves have declar'd, that the Profit of their Melasses and Rum would support the whole Expence of their Plantation; if the Price of their Sugars were brought down to ten Shillings *per Ct.* (or even lower) that would yield them a much greater Profit than can be rais'd by any Improvement (that I have ever heard of) of the Lands in any other Part of the *British* Dominions.

But they would make us believe (the *Barbadians* principally) that they are already upon the very Brink of Ruin, and that if they are not reliev'd in this Way, they shall be forc'd to quit their Plantations, and leave the Island to the *French*, or any one that will take it. This sure, is so extravagant a Way of Persuasion, that it deserves some Animadversion. Let us suppose then, that an industrious Man had gain'd an Estate out of the Sea, which brought him in five Hundred Pounds *per Ann.* and that his Son had further improv'd it to a Thousand; but that in the Grandson's Time, the Sea had again overflow'd it, and reduc'd it to one half, nay, to but one quarter Part of that Sum; can it be imagin'd, that this last would be so foolish as to quit the whole, because he could not recover it to its former Value? Again, these Gentlemen, to shew their Importance, have in a printed Pamphlet given us the Valuation of the Island of *Barbadoes*, which they make to amount to five Millions and a half; and all this in the Hands of less, probably, than five hundred Owners, (poor Men, not above eleven thousand Pounds a-piece) in which Account, their Buildings and Immoveables, relating only to the Sugar Business, (and without reckoning their four Towns, and their fine Dwelling-Houses) are rated at a Million, and their Lands with the growing Crops, at above two Millions. Can it be believ'd then,

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then, that ever Men in their Wits would voluntarily run away from such a Capital; or that they would not rather try to make as much as they could, tho' they could not make as much as they would of it?

But, on the other hand, if your Lordship will consider the Case of the Inhabitants on the Continent; their Lands yield them no Product comparable to the Value of Sugars. The chief Growth of *Virginia* and *Maryland* is Tobacco; a low Commodity, with which the Markets are sometimes so overstock'd, as that it will hardly pay the Freight and Duty. Rice is the principal Product of *Carolina*: the *New-Englanders* have a considerable Fishery, and a Manufactory (as I may call it) of Rum; besides which, they, with the rest of our Colonies on the Continent, depend mostly upon the breeding of Cattle and Corn, together with the Profit they raise from their Timber; and this has led them into a Navigation, for the carrying their Lumber and Provisions to such Markets as they could find. They are generally a laborious, frugal, industrious People, and may properly be said to earn their Bread with the Sweat of their Brows, so that they have been able to raise themselves to the Condition of living comfortably; but are so far from attaining to any Degree of what we account Riches, that (excepting perhaps some few Merchants and Traders) there are scarce any to be found among them who possess Estates, which may be valued at as many Hundreds *per ann.* as the *Islanders* do of Thousands. That their Commerce is much more profitable to us, than that of the Islands, is evident to a Demonstration; for, ten times the Number of People in a very cold Climate, must certainly use more of our Woollen as well as all other Manufactures,

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tures, than a few People in an extreme hot Climate; besides, we know that the greatest Part of what they gain, they lay out with us, because of the great Difficulty there is to get Returns from thence, in so much that they are often forc'd to send us their Money: whereas it has been prov'd on the contrary, that our Merchants have sent their Money in Specie to *Barbadoes*, to purchase Rum; and 'tis most certain that we get nothing (of national Wealth) by the *Islanders*, but when they afford their Commodities at such Prices, as that we can re-export them.

As then these People have by their Industry found out a Vent for their own Product to Foreigners, and take in return Commodities which are very beneficial to them, in contributing much to the carrying on their Fisheries, to their Trade with the *Indians*, and to their own Subsistence, and wherein some hundreds of Vessels, and thousands of Men are employ'd, and which is in no wise prejudicial, but in many respects advantageous to the Commerce of *Great-Britain*; would it not be great Imprudence in us, as well as putting a cruel Hardship on them, to deprive them of a Trade which now affords a Maintenance to Hundreds of Families? who, if they should be turn'd out of their usual Way of Livelihood, would be brought into the utmost Distress; and this only to indulge some other of the Subjects, who wallow in Wealth; and to whom that Scripture-Saying might fittly be applied, *Jessurun waxed fat and kicked*.

But if these Gentlemen's Eyes were not dazled with the glaring Appearance of the Profits they hope for, methinks they might be convinc'd that they are striving against the Stream, and labouring at an Impossibility; for as the *French* have within these

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these few Years much increas'd the Production of Sugars, and are yearly enlarging their Plantations; 'tis manifest that the greater Plenty of that Commodity must make it become cheaper in *Europe*; and they having found the Way to foreign Markets, will constantly keep them supply'd. So that this imaginary raising the Price can obtain no where, but (as I have said before) upon the *British* Subjects; and whenever that comes to be observ'd, surely the Legislature will never suffer us to become the Dupes of the Sugar Colonies, but rather open the Sluices of the Laws, and let in even the *French* Sugar upon them, 'till they would serve us at least as cheap as our Neighbours are serv'd; so that by one means or other, they would be forc'd to conform themselves to the governing Price in *Europe*. And thus when they had procur'd an irreparable Mischief to their Fellow-Subjects, and perhaps lost a Branch of Trade, which might never be recovered, they would find at last that they had done themselves no good.

I shall trouble your Lordship but with one Instance more of the Disingenuity of these Gentlemen, in their representing this Business of distilling of Rum, by the *New-Englanders*, as a new Thing introduc'd within these fourteen or fifteen Years, and since they have fallen into this Trade with the *French* Islands; whereas in truth they have practis'd it for above fifty Years, and were supply'd with Melasses from the *Dutch* at *Surinam*, as well as from our own Sugar Islands, till the Vent of that Commodity encreasing on them, they were necessitated to seek out a farther Supply from the *French*.

This Debate, my Lords, is of great Consequence to the Trade of the Nation, and I doubt not,

not, but it will be maturely considered in your House; and that their Lordships will be fully convinc'd, that any Measures tending to the advancing the Price of Sugars, would prove very fatal to our Commerce; because it would deprive us of the only Means by which those Islands could become profitable to us, (I mean by contributing to the national Wealth) which is, when they afford us their Product at such a Price, as that we can re-export it to our Neighbours. But at the Prices they have impos'd upon us of late, we have not been able to send out any, and so have wholly lost that Benefit; which the *French* have gain'd by underselling us, and will certainly hold it, 'till our Planters find means by a better Oeconomy to undersell them: which I am persuas'd they might be able to do, if they would content themselves with a moderate Profit. But whether they will chuse to manage their Affairs wisely or otherwise, I am sure it becomes the Wisdom of the Nation, to countenance all such Measures as may encrease the Production of Sugars, and enable us to render them cheaper than our Rivals, for that will be the only Way to regain the profitable Trade of sending them to foreign Markets; in order to which, I would humbly offer the following Thoughts to your Lordship's Consideration.

In the first Settlement of our Sugar Colonies in the lesser Islands, most of the Planters were Men of small Fortunes, and consequently they clear'd, according to their Ability, many little Plantations; which, when they had pretty well worn out, and rais'd a Competency to remove themselves elsewhere, were bought up by the wealthier Planters, and so almost the whole Lands came to be engross'd into the Hands of a few rich Men; where-
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by they have been enabled for a long Time to raise and keep up the Price of their Commodities by Combinations among themselves; and as the Strength of all other Countries depends chiefly upon the Numbers of the common or middle People, these Colonies have very few of the latter, and consist mostly of a small Number of Lordly Masters and a Multitude of Slaves, which renders them much less capable of defending themselves in Time of War.

As then there are great Quantities of Land yet unimprov'd in *Jamaica*, it wou'd certainly prove a great Advantage to this Kingdom, if the Government wou'd use all Means possible to promote the fuller Settlement of that Island; nor would the Money be ill bestow'd, if sufficient Encouragement were given for industrious People of the lower Rank to transport themselves thither, by assisting them as far as was requisite at the publick Expence; by which Means the Colony would come by degrees (as those on the Continent are) to have a competent Mixture of the Yeomanry sort of People, which would add great Strength to the Islands, multiply the Sellers, and keep the Commodities at a moderate Price. Proper Regulations should also be made in the Distribution of the Lands; that none might be suffered to engross much larger Tracts than they could conveniently cultivate. I have been thinking also, that as our Settlement of that Island, after the Conquest of it, was begun in good part, by the Soldiers who were employ'd in that Expedition; it might be worth Consideration, whether, when the two Regiments which are now there have performed the Service they
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were sent for, it might not be adviseable to give suitable Portions of Land to such of the Officers and orderly Soldiers that might be willing to settle there, in whose Places Recruits might be easily raised in *England*.

To conclude, I do assure your Lordship, That I have no manner of Interest in the Colonies, nor in any Trade whatsoever, and that nothing but my sincere Regard to the publick Welfare has induced me to concern myself in this Dispute; to which I thought myself in some measure oblig'd, because my having been formerly (tho long since) well acquainted with the Commerce and the Circumstances both of the Islands and the Continent, had led me into a competent Understanding of the whole Affair. I am no Enemy to the Sugar Islands; I know they have been, and may again be made very beneficial to this Kingdom. I think indeed that they ought to be indulg'd with the Liberty (under proper restrictions) of carrying their Commodities to foreign Markets upon an equal Foot with the *French*: And tho' I shall not make the Gentlemen the Complement of begging their Pardon for some Expressions which perhaps may seem somewhat harsh to them; because I think the Unreasonableness of their Attempt, and their own Arguments have required and extorted them from me: yet I shall always be willing, and as ready to serve them, as far as my small Abilities and Interest will reach, as I have been to serve the Northern Colonies, in any thing that may be consistent with the true Interest of the Subjects in general. I must now beg your Lordships Pardon for having trespass'd so much upon your Patience by the Length
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of my Letter, and that you'll permit me to have the Honour to subscribe my self,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's Most Faithful

And Most Obedient

Humble Servant.



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