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# **Navigation Laws.**

## **OBSERVATIONS**

ON THE STATE OF THE

MARITIME POWER OF GREAT BRITAIN;

WITH AN

## **EXAMINATION**

OF THE

DESTRUCTIVE BUT INEVITABLE EFFECTS

OF THE

# **RECIPROCITY LAWS.**

By WILLIAM WILLIAMS MORTIMER.

TO WHICH ARE APPENDED,

THREE LETTERS TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE  
WILLIAM HUSKISSON, M. P.

*In reply to the Speech delivered by him, in the House of Commons,  
on Friday the 12th May, 1826, on the present state of*

## **THE SHIPPING INTEREST.**

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1827.

**To ROBERT GLADSTONE, Esq.**

*Chairman of the Liverpool Ship-owners' Association.*

Sir,

*It is not the less in compliance with the wishes of several Members of the Association over which you preside, than it is in accordance with my own inclination, that I dedicate the following pages to you, as a small testimony of the gratitude, your unwearied attention to the interest of the British Ship-owner, has inspired.*

*To you, however, with whom the effects of the New Code of Navigation, are so familiar, this work will be of little value; but there are some, whom its contents may awaken to that sense of duty, every Englishman owes to himself, and his Country; a duty that imperatively calls upon all, to unite in endeavouring to procure a Repeal of those Laws, which threaten the destruction of the Maritime Supremacy of this Country.*

*I have the honor to remain,*

*Sir,*

*Your faithful and obedient servant,*

**WILLIAM W. MORTIMER.**

*Liverpool, 4th January, 1827.*

IMPORTANT as the prosperity of a mercantile marine must be to all powers, no proposition appears more firmly established, than, that to any state claiming naval superiority, it is indispensable. To an island, a strong and well-disciplined navy is as essential to its existence *in freedom*, as that that navy is dependant on its mercantile marine. The history of the world presents no record of the navy of any free nation having flourished, or perhaps even existed, without a correspondent maritime commerce in its own shipping.

If these maxims be true, how especially do they apply to this country! Every one knows the feelings of rancorous hostility which the more powerful kingdoms of Europe have, at all times, evinced towards England; and so long as the difference exists in their religion, laws, and constitutions, it is to be apprehended that that animosity is not so much subdued as the ability to show it. This feeling has not been confined to late years; it appears to have existed for centuries; and with it, a correspon-

dent desire on the part of the Rulers of these realms, to take the only efficient means—if not to curb those powers—to prevent this country being made the theatre of their wars, by affording every encouragement to its subjects to enter into commerce,—and more particularly into such branches of it as were connected with navigation.

The recent material alterations in the maritime code of this country having drawn general attention to the subject, a short sketch of the rise and progress of the maritime commerce of Britain is here presented, in order to show how intimately its welfare has been connected with that of its navy:—thereby demonstrating the danger of any concession to the mercantile shipping of other states, and the manifest impropriety of further relaxing in the “preservation of that palladium of our national independence, without whose tutelary aid, these realms must sink into a state, which, how specious soever the appellation that may be bestowed upon it, they would soon fatally experience, to be that of provincial subjugation.”\*

Amusing as it might have been, to have inquired into the earliest histories of commerce and of ships, and to have marked the distinction,

\* The words of a foreigner, written sixty years since.

yet intimate connexion, between those for war and trade, in this brief notice, we must pass over the early voyages of the Phœnicians and of the Carthagenians,† the traffic of the Egyptians and the Romans, and proceed at once to the commerce of this country. Its earliest records are, however, so buried in oblivion, that it must suffice to say, that its first trade was confined to the coast between Kent and Cornwall, for metals and skins; that this was afterwards extended under the Romans from the Thames to Bristol, and that the traffic consisted of the exchange of metals, lime, chalk, cattle, dogs, pearls,‡ and slaves, for various articles of brass, ivory, trinkets, bridles, &c. &c.§

Though the vessels of the Britons, mentioned by Cæsar, are described as being made of hollowed trees, withies, or osier,|| covered with skins, it is more than probable they had better; for he speaks of an engagement in which they and the Veneti had 230 large and strong vessels. They, however, were unable to resist the Romans, by whom they were defeated. This may account for the latter more easily passing into England the following year, since

† Some idea may be formed of their extent, when we read of the number of persons sent under Hanno to found colonies, being 50,000 or upwards.

‡ See Pliny, Nat. Hist. lib. 9, c. 35. § Strabo, lib. 4, and Cæsar, lib. 5, 12.

|| Boats of this description are yet frequent in Scotland and in Ireland; they are also occasionally seen on the Severn and the Wye.

it would seem the Romans had not very powerful vessels; for, though they left France with a fair wind, their infantry were ten hours on the passage over, and their cavalry could not be got across for some days.\*

During the continuance of the Romans in this country, its commerce slowly but gradually increased;—their departure, and the subsequent inroads of the Scots, retarded all marine adventure, and consequently there was a decrease in the Britons' shipping; which, built in so fragile a manner, soon decayed. Under the division of the Saxon heptarchy this could hardly be expected to improve, though, among the early institutions of the Saxons, a law had been passed, that if any Ceorl made three voyages beyond the seas in a ship of his own, and with a cargo belonging to him, he should be advanced to the dignity of a Thane, a minister, or honorable retainer.

By the middle of the eighth century, Offa, of Mercia, had so powerful a marine, that he ventured to dispute the sovereignty of the seas with Charlemagne, previous to his intimate alliance with him: and in the reign of Egbert, (827) London, Exeter, Bristol, and some other towns, are recorded as considerable trading places. The vessels must, however, have been

\* See Caesar, *lib.* 4, c. 18, 19; they landed at Dover 26th August, A.C. 55.

still of a most defective description; the rapidity of their decay is proved by the great variation in their numbers at different periods. Alfred, soon after his coming to the throne, (875,) had only six vessels; these, by the greatest possible efforts to increase the traffic of his country, in which he partially succeeded, he raised to 120 (in 900.) Following the steps of his illustrious grandfather, Athelstone in 932 exerted himself to the utmost to extend the commerce of the kingdom, and revived the old Saxon law, conferring nobility on him who had traded to a certain extent abroad. His example was followed with such zeal that Edgar in 970 equipped a fleet of some hundred if not thousand vessels;\* of which, however, only the very largest could carry 50 men. It was the greatest England ever possessed, (Chron. Sax. p. 137,) and its owner, priding himself on its magnitude, styled himself "Emperor and Lord of all the Kings of the Ocean, and of all the Nations which it surrounds."

The first establishment of German merchants in England, took place in 979, in the reign of Ethelred. They were permitted to buy ships, and to trade in every thing; but not to forestall the merchants of London. Their tolls, which were the origin of the Customs, were three

\* Dr. Henry supposes the number to have been only 360. Other writers vary it from 3000 to 4000.

pieces of cloth, five pair of gloves, ten pounds of pepper, and two vessels of vinegar. In 1007 a fleet was raised, by a levy on the land, of 800 vessels, which were however soon dispersed by the Danes, whose force at sea was far superior to that of the Saxons or Britons. The latter entered into an engagement with the Danes that they should receive a tribute for abstaining from ravaging their coasts, equal to 1s. at first, but gradually advanced to 2s. a 7s. per hide (or 100 acres) of land, which was made payable at Greenwich under the name of Dane Gelt.† Thus having no longer any marine enemy to oppose, naval affairs were so neglected, that William the Conqueror, in 1066, landed at Pevensey, in Sussex, without any opposition from some hundred vessels and boats. Aware of the disadvantages to which the want of a naval force, superior to that of the opposite coast, exposed these kingdoms, he, in 1077, founded the Cinque Ports, obliging them, on forty days' notice, to provide him with fifty-seven ships, and to give their crew fifteen days' pay. His introduction of the feudal system was injurious to commerce, which would doubtless have decreased much more but for the establishment of the Flemings in 1100. On the whole, however, the naval shipping of England continued to increase, and before the death of Henry the Second, English sailors were so

† See Roger de Houeden, p. 603.

much approved of for their dexterity, that they were forbidden to enter into foreign service. The fleet which conveyed Richard the First, in 1190, to the Holy Land, is described as having surpassed all others in magnitude, having, in addition to many tenders, 53 row galleys, 150 bussæ or ships of the second class, and 13 dromones or those of the first class. There is, however, great reason to believe that part of these were hired, particularly some of the larger, one of which, from her then amazing capacity, was called *The World*. On his return he promulgated the code of maritime laws of the Isle of Oleron,‡ which was speedily followed by those of Wisby, governing the cities of the Hanseatic League.

In the following reign was fought the celebrated battle between John and Philip the Second, when 500 ships were engaged, whose crews excelled, says William of Malmsbury, all others in the art of navigation, though their largest could not have carried more than 40 men. The result of this engagement was, that the English fleet burnt 100 French vessels, and carried off 300; and even more would have been taken or destroyed had not Philip, hastening from the siege of Ghent, obliged the English to leave the combat; not, however, till

‡ To these Laws, Chief Justice Abbott in his book on Marine Insurance says, the greatest respect continues to be paid; not so much from them having been formed by an English Monarch, as from their intrinsic merit.

he had destroyed many of his own vessels. So elated was King John, that he thenceforward expected from all nations obedience to his *maritime ordinances*, having, in the second year of his reign, ordered the vessels of all nations to lower their colours at his command, and to pay that respect generally to his flag.

In 1346 Edward the Third required 738 ships for the siege of Calais. The roll of this fleet is very curious, as it exhibits the relative proportions of the naval force of the different seaports in the kingdom. The *King's own fleet* (probably, however, composed of hired vessels) consisted of 25 with 486 seamen; London is fixed at 25 only, whilst Fowey at 47; Dunwich at 49; *Liverpool is not noticed*; Gosford (now unknown) at 13; Spain furnished 22, and Flanders 15; Ireland contributed one vessel only. The largest ship mentioned had only 60 men: the average is under 20.†

Thirteen years afterwards the whole shipping of England is recorded at about 1100, so small and so weak that the greater part of them were ordered to be drawn on the beach, and none to leave port without a license, except they were able to defend themselves. But the kings of this country seeing how essential to its prosperity was its commerce, imitating the example

† See Record in Tower of London, as published by Hacluit, Lediard, &c.

of other states, were anxious to promote it. The coal trade had become then of such importance as to bear a duty of 6*d.* per ton on its export; and the commerce of the country was gradually extended to Spain, and even to Italy. In 1381 Richard the Second laid the foundation of our Navigation Laws, by "declaring" that none of the king's subjects should carry "or bring in any merchandise, but only "in ships of the king's allegiance." This would have had the effect of increasing the number and strength of the English shipping, had there not been several associations of foreigners, which were allowed to trade in their own ships. Against these the English merchants were unable to enter into competition with any prospect of success. The parties who availed themselves with the greatest advantage of these privileges were the German merchants, a branch of the Hanseatic League, who were associated at the Steelyard-house. Henry the Third, in consideration of the many services they rendered him, presented them with several further immunities. The complaints of the British merchants, of so much of their trade being destroyed by this company, at length induced Edward the Sixth to take away their exclusive right of trade. The good effects of his revoking their charter were immediately felt: the export by the *British* merchants rapidly increased, and the trade came nearly

all into their hands. The former privileges of the League were, however, temporarily restored by Queen Mary, who was married to Philip, the son of the Emperor ; but an entire stop to their traffic took place in the reign of Elizabeth. Mistaking their own power and the spirit of the Queen, they directed the banishment of all the English merchants from the cities of the League, with a view to enforce a renewal of those immunities, which she had suspended on her coming to the throne. Instead of granting their wishes, she ordered, that the very day any of her subjects were obliged to leave Germany, on that day the Steelyard-house should be closed, and the right *even to trade at all* taken from them. She had before reduced them to the same footing as her own subjects.

Up to this time the history of the commerce of the Hanseatic League nearly comprehends that of this country and of the world. Possessing establishments in all the principal ports of the Baltic, of Germany, of the Netherlands, in Portugal, in Spain, in Italy, and in Sicily—the interchange of all commodities was nearly confined to them—their vessels were the general carriers of all Europe—their ships, and those of Genoa and Venice were the largest in the world, and the most ably navigated. The discoveries of the compass and of America

made a great alteration. Sovereigns then saw their true interest was commerce ; and that to protect their subjects from the monopolies of the Hanse Towns was more valuable than to waste their treasures in useless wars. The fall of the League is justly attributed to its becoming warlike instead of commercial, and it sunk into insignificance when the monarchs of Europe turned their attention to trade. Twelve years of continued war, in the middle of the fifteenth century, completed their ruin.

About this period (1386) the French naval power appears to have been considerable ; for we read that Charles the Sixth, having revived the project (from which his predecessor had been dissuaded,) of invading this country, he equipped a fleet of unexampled force. The people contributed one fourth, and even one third, the produce of their land, and the nobility rivalled with each other in their exertions. Arms, soldiers, and provisions, abounded to superfluity : † but delay and indecision brought this mighty fleet to ruin, and an expense of three millions of francs thus fell on the French. In the engagement which occurred between the French and English fleets, cannon appear to have been used for the first time at sea. Quick lime was till then a favorite article of marine warfare.

† “ Ever since God created the World there were never seen so many ships and “ such large vessels together,” (says Froissart, l. 3, c. 36.) “ From Seville to Prussia “ there was not left on the sea one large vessel, that was not at the service of France.”



Henry the Fifth, the victor of Agincourt, encouraged the ships of England, and had actually some of his own, of which the two best had purple sails. He gained several great naval victories, and benefitted his navy by building after the model of some ships that he took from his opponents, hired by them from the Genoese, more powerful than any belonging to this country. His reign is remarkable for disputes with the Dutch, which continued, with little interruption, to the time of the Protectorate. In the reign of Edward the Fourth the navy continued to improve, though, in the time of his immediate predecessor, it had declined. He had several vessels of his own, used both in trade and in war. The first ship built solely for war was by Henry the Seventh, (perhaps the first ever built of two decks;) her burthen 1000 tons; she had *four* masts; cost £14,000; and named Harry Grace de Dieu.

Henry the Eighth must be considered as the greatest encourager of our naval force. He built the dock-yards of Deptford, Portsmouth, and Woolwich; and to him we are indebted for most of those rules which at this day constitute the basis of our present naval government. Though he had many ships, it would appear they were more for parade than any thing else; as he was obliged to hire those of Lubec,

Hamburgh, &c. At his death, the tonnage was only 12,000 tons, which declined, during the reign of his successor Mary, to 7000 tons, in 27 vessels, navigated by 3565 men.

The reign of Elizabeth will ever be memorable in the annals of the English marine. Finding the sea was the element of her subjects, she did all that could be done to increase the naval force of England. She well deserved the title of the "Restorer of the Naval Power of England, and Queen of the Northern Seas." With the money, her economy enabled her to lay apart from other purposes, she built vessels of war; and truly might the French ambassador, Castelnau, say, (l. 3, c. 1,) "such were the *palaces* the Queen "erected." At the same time she gave a bounty upon the building of ships above 100 tons burthen.

The great success of her fleet under Drake, consisting only of 20 vessels, with 2300 volunteers, against St. Domingo and the coast of Florida, inflamed the spirit of the nation to future enterprise, which the destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588 was not likely to abate. Probably to the support the Hanse Towns afforded it, may be attributed the destruction of their exclusive privileges in England. The history of this expedition is so well known,

as hardly to admit of recapitulation. The Spanish force consisted of about 150 ships, many of them of 1200 tons, and of 50 to 60 guns each; manned by 8350 seamen, and 2088 galley slaves, and mounting in all 2660 cannon; 37,000 soldiers were ready in Flanders and Normandy to join the 19,290 on board the fleet; there were also about 350 volunteers, from whose exertions so much may not have been expected as from the chosen tribe of 100 Monks, under the especial command of Don Martin d'Alarçon. To oppose this powerful fleet, the Queen had only 34 vessels, of 12,590 tons, and 6279 men; but all parties were eager to contribute to the defence of their country. London furnished 38 ships at her own expense, and the nobility and gentry hired and equipped 43; which, with a variety of small coasting vessels, increased the total number to 176. The result is well known. Immediately England became the aggressor, and her fleets are found harassing the Spaniards.

At the Queen's death her navy was 42 ships, of 17,055 tons, and 8346 men; 8 of these were under 100 tons, 8 above 800, and only 2 above 1000 tons. At the death of James the First, though the number was decreased to 32 vessels, their tonnage was about 20,000 tons. This is easily accounted for. James (1615) commenced building larger vessels,

capable of taking longer voyages than formerly. This, joined to his continuing the bounty granted by Elizabeth, and issuing an order in council, on the petition of the merchants of London, prohibiting the export of British commodities in any but British bottoms, had such an effect on increasing the numbers of English ships, that, though in 1615 there were not 10 vessels belonging to London of above 100 tons, in seven years after there were upwards of 100 in Newcastle alone.—The British vessels thus became of a better and larger description, and, at this period, they were first seen in the Mediterranean. Charles the First paid much attention to the navy; in the early part of his time England had not more than three ships of 300 tons, at the death of Charles the Second there were 400.† These vessels were chiefly launched at Newcastle, Hull, Yarmouth, and the ports opposite the coast of Holland, whose builders may be supposed to have learned the art of building from the Dutch, whose principal yards were at Saurdam.† To the first Charles we are indebted for our first three-decker, of 118 guns, called the Sovereign of the Sea, burthen 1637 tons. He also gave a bounty of 5s. per ton on the building of all merchantmen above 200 tons; and had, at the commencement of the rebellion, 42 vessels of 22,411 tons; which,

† Child's Treatise of Commerce, page 88.

from Prince Rupert's carrying off 25 vessels in 1648, were reduced to about 20 only. The measures of Cromwell not only replaced those the Prince had taken, but increased them to upwards of 150; of which, about one-third were two or three deckers: at his death he left 157 vessels, of 4390 guns, and 21,910 men. All who are acquainted with the history of the Protector, are aware of his inveterate hatred of the Dutch. This is the more easily accounted for, by the connexion between the house of Orange and the family of the unfortunate Charles the First. By a separate article of the treaty, enrolled 4th May, 1654, it was stipulated, they should not invest the young Prince of Orange with the title of Stat-holder or Captain General. His father, William, Prince of Orange, who died in 1650, was brother-in-law to Charles the Second, having married the Princess Mary, his sister.

Having been so successful as to bring all Ireland and the Colonies to subjection, Cromwell apparently turned his attention to peace, and despatched St. John, the Chief Justice, to Holland, in 1652, to propose an offensive and defensive treaty; and even if there were a prospect of success, to unite the two republics. The Dutch, finding the advantages would be all on one side, refused to do more than renew their former alliances; upon which, St.

John returned to England, and Cromwell, to avenge himself, framed the far-famed Act of Navigation†, accompanying it by the issuing of letters of reprisals against the Dutch.

Charles the Second profited by the regulations of Cromwell; and, on coming into power, caused several of the declarations of the Protector to become the law of the land, among which was the Navigation Act.

If these regulations originated in the animosity of Cromwell to the Dutch, (which was doubtless increased by the use of their ships to carry the King and his followers to Scotland,‡ and by the other services they rendered him,) it might have been expected that, on coming to authority, Charles the Second would have been inclined to more friendly relations with them:—but it appears that he also entertained a violent dislike to the Dutch, which was not at all decreased by his great predilection for Naval affairs. Charles possessed an advantage Cromwell did not; Cromwell had lost many of his ships in war, and for a time the English could not do without the assistance of foreign vessels—a rigid adherence to the strict letter of his celebrated Navigation Act would have entirely destroyed the trade of these countries—hence arose the exceptions in Sections 12, 13, and 14, of the Act of Charles.

†The resolutions of the Commonwealth were dated October, 1651.

‡ Charles the Second left for Cromarty on the 23d of June, 1650, accompanied by seven Dutch ships of War.

In proceeding to review this celebrated Law, (the 12th, Charles II. chap. 18,) we cannot but be struck with the peculiar propriety of its title, which so justly called it "An Act for the increase of Shipping and encouragement of the Navigation of this Nation, wherein, under the good providence and protection of God, the *Wealth, Safety, and Strength*, of this Kingdom is so much concerned."

Its first Section enacts,\* *That from and after December, 1660, no Goods shall be imported into, or exported from, any of the Colonies in Asia, Africa, or America, but in such Vessels as are built in and belong to England or its Plantations, and of which the master and three-fourths of the mariners are English.*

Though this enactment might be nearly new to England, it was no invention in the art of legislation. The Spaniards had long before acted upon it, the Dutch invariably; and the Portuguese likewise refused to allow other nations to visit their Colonies. In thus confining the traffic of our settlements to our own vessels, we only followed their example. No ill feeling could be excited towards us by this measure. These Colonies were exclusively our own; their defensive establishments supported

\* In quoting these Clauses, the words have not been exactly copied; the law phrases are abridged, but the meaning is preserved.

at our cost. The people of this country were taxed for their benefit; it would, therefore, ill have become even the colonists to complain of those regulations, which confined their trade to the shipping of that country, by whose liberality they were maintained and defended.

Section 3d. *No Goods, produced or grown in Africa, Asia, or America, shall be imported into England, &c. or her Colonies, but in English vessels, built and navigated as before.*

After the restrictions levied upon our own Colonies, in whose welfare we were so much interested, it was but natural we should direct correspondent enactments against the Colonies of foreign countries, (for such were all the ports of Asia, Africa, and America, then considered;) more especially when the effect of those regulations would be the increase of that shipping, which the preamble of the Act had just before declared to be so essential to the *Wealth, Safety and Strength* of these Realms.

If the expense, which was borne by England in victualling and defending her Colonies, was by Section first, to a certain extent, thrown on those Colonies, by the carriage of their produce being confined to English shipping; so, on the other hand, this Section gave them an advan-

tage over the settlements of other States, by obliging the latter to send their produce, if at all to this country, by English ships. As English shipping were excluded from these settlements, the monopoly of the markets of this kingdom was thus secured to our own Colonies.

*Section 4. No Foreign Goods shall be imported into England, &c. even in English built and navigated shipping, but by such as come directly from the ports of those countries where the Goods are produced, or the usual ports at which such Goods are first shipped for transportation.*

This clause, though in such general terms, is particularly levied against the Dutch: they were then, as indeed they have been to a very late period, the carriers for all who could employ them, and were possessed of decidedly the best vessels of that day. It will be seen by Sect. 8, they were prohibited bringing to Great Britain about twenty-eight of the more bulky articles, except in their own vessels, and direct to this country, such goods being the produce of their own states in Europe. Their great carrying trade from other ports on the Continent to England was thus at an end. The owner of any goods, residing in Prussia, &c. who might formerly have sent them to the free ports

of Holland as a depôt, to be ready for the first market in England or the south of Europe, was, by this clause, excluded from all chance of afterwards forwarding those goods to this country even in English vessels. He would of course hesitate in consigning them to Holland, and thus the Dutch vessels were entirely deprived of the carrying of *any* goods, so far as England was concerned, except such as were the produce of their own states. The limited extent of these territories, and their own considerable consumption, made the quantity of those goods they could spare for export very trifling.

*Section 5. All Fishing was confined to British vessels and crews; and by Section 6, All Coasting Trade to British vessels.*§

The wisdom of these regulations is sufficiently proved by the fact of their being continued among all the changes which have latterly distinguished the present system.

The Coasting trade, the Coal trade, and the great Sea Fisheries have ever been the best nurseries for seamen: and it was our duty to confine so much of them to our own shipping and our own sailors, as was essential to the wants of the

§ Smith's Wealth of Nations, b. 1, c. 3. and Philips' Inland Navigation, fully demonstrate the necessity of these enactments.

country. These exclusive regulations appear to have met many admirers even on the Continent. A French writer says, "Far from censuring these articles, or considering them unjust, we cannot too much admire them."

Section 7. *No Ease or Abatement of Duties granted to English ships, except three-fourths of the seamen were English.*

As at this time the number of English sailors was small, it was a wise measure to endeavour to enforce such steps as would tend to their increase. At subsequent periods this law was obliged to be altered, from the absolute impossibility of obtaining a sufficient number of English seamen; and at one period, by George the Second, even three-fourths were allowed to be foreigners. Centuries before this the value of British seamen was so well known, that the Kings of England, solicitous for their increase, prohibited them entering into the service of any foreign state. Richard the Second, who framed several commercial regulations for the benefit of the shipping of this country, was particularly anxious they should not be employed, except on board of English ships.

Section 8. *No Goods of Russia, no Masts, Timber, Boards, Salt, Pitch, Tar, Rosin, Hemp or Flax, Raisins, Figs, Prunes,*

*Olive Oil, no sorts of Grain or Corn, no Sugar, Pot Ashes, Wines, Vinegar or Brandy, should be brought into Britain, &c. in any ship or vessel, but in such as did belong to the people thereof. And no Currants or produce of Turkey, but in English built, owned, and navigated vessels and no other, excepting such as were built in the country of which the goods were the produce, or vessels of such ports where the goods can only be or usually are first shipped for transportation; under the penalty of Forfeiture. And Section 9, apprehensive that endeavours would be attempted to evade the former Section, levies penalties, (viz. raising to the Duties which alien's goods had to pay,) on any such importation, except by British ships.*

The intention of Section 8 appears to have been to have excluded all the goods named, previous to Currants, from being imported in any vessels except British. But the enforcing of the double duties, enacted by the succeeding clause, seems to have raised a doubt whether they might not, on the payment of such duties, be imported in foreign vessels. As the duties were then trifling, it is more than probable they did not operate as a sufficient preventive to such importation: for we find that shortly afterwards, in the Customs' Act, 13—14, Chas.

II. chap. 11, section 23, a clause inserted to amend and explain what the vague language of the preceding Act had left uncertain, viz. "That no Wines but Rhenish, no Spices, " Groceries, Tobacco, Pot Ashes, Pitch, Tar, " Rosin, Salt, Deal Boards, Fir, or Olive Oil, " shall hereafter be imported into England or " Wales from the Netherlands or Germany, " upon any pretence whatsoever, in any sort of " vessel." This clause was strictly consonant with the general principles of the Act; for, as few of these articles could be produced in Holland, it was only enforcing more strongly the intentions of the legislature, as shown by those previous enactments, forbidding the importation of goods, except direct from the places of their production:—a measure which most vitally affected the coasting trade, at that period so extensively carried on by the shipping of Germany and the Hanse Towns.

Section 12, gave an exception to *English vessels loading Levant goods*, which were allowed to be brought from the usual places of shipment, though not of production; and the 13th Section also *excepted certain portions of the East India trade*.

Section 14. *English vessels may load at any of the ports of Portugal, Spain, Azores, &c.*

*all goods the produce of any of them or their dominions.*

Desirous as England was of engrossing all foreign trade, from the limited number of her ships, she could not. She was obliged to make this and other exceptions; and even two or three years afterwards, much of this Act was disregarded; for, as d'Estrades (in his letter to Colbert, 8th Nov. 1663,) says, "the English " employ, in the trade to the Canaries, Le- " vant, and the North, Dutch vessels—an in- " fraction of the law, which is unavoidable, and " is connived at." It is also more than probable that to distant countries the trade was still continued by Foreign shipping, in preference to English. The merchant would naturally feel less anxiety in entrusting valuable cargoes to the Dutch ships, which he might have employed for many years in those particular trades, than to the vessels of his own nation, whose captains were unaccustomed to them. On this head there is great difficulty in arriving at the facts, from the different points of view in which the subject is presented by different writers. This will be however readily excused, when we see even an official gentleman, a Vice-President of the Board of Trade,\* rising in his place

\* See the speech of Mr. Charles Grant in the House of Commons, 12th May, 1825, when Mr. A. Baring appears to have stated, at the same time, "that nine-tenths of the trade of Liverpool was carried on in foreign vessels."

in Parliament, and gravely detailing the reasons why the British ships in the trade from this country to the United States now meet so much greater encouragement than those of the Americans—why the English ships are always preferred to them, and even at higher freights too!

Various successive Laws were passed to permit the importation of Silk, Drugs, &c. until the number of these enactments rendered their compression into one Act almost indispensable. It is strange that the inconvenience should not have been remedied till so late a period as the third year of his present Majesty's reign.

Section 18. *After April, 1661, no Sugars, Tobacco, &c, should be carried from any English Colony to any place except England and her dominions.* (The clauses relative to the Colonial Trade, were further explained by 7th and 8th William the Third, chap. 22.)

The previous enactments applied only to the *shipping*. This is the first, applicable to the *country* to which the produce of the Colonies should be carried; and without a strict attention to this clause, they would have been of little use to the nation, how profitable soever they might have been to individual proprietors. Though these colonies, or (as then stiled) plan-

tations, were dependant on this country, if their trade had been left as free as that of other powers, they would not have been of any value to Great Britain, so long as that unlimited trade enabled them to carry their produce direct to foreign countries. Those nations alone would have been benefitted by the lower price at which the colonists would have laid down their goods, from saving the charges incidental to bringing them to this country. In the early state of the Colonies, the monopoly thus enforced could however have been of little consequence to them, as this kingdom required far more produce than they could furnish.

Such were the provisions of the old Act of Navigation. They promoted the mercantile marine of England, by confining all her Fisheries, her Colonial trade, and the more profitable branches of the European trade to British shipping. The beneficial results of these regulations are best proved by the fact, that in a very few years the commercial marine of England was doubled, and with its increase came that accession of force, of vigour, and of character which gave to our navy the superiority it yet possesses. As the defeat of the Spanish Armada transferred the sovereignty of the seas to the Dutch, (whose maritime power was far superior to that of this country) so the laws of Charles took from the Netherlands that trade



without which their previously possessing naval superiority was of little avail. The Dutch made most violent efforts to oppose the effects of these laws; their exertions were useless: the only slight deviations which were permitted, owed their origin to our own necessities—not to their importunities. The alterations, which necessarily took place when our Colonies in North America became free States, were of course considerable; but they may be briefly disposed of, by stating they only tended to place the United States in the situation of the more favored powers of Europe.

The subsequent wars of this country obliged its West Indian Colonies to have recourse to those States for supplies, which otherwise could hardly have been obtained at all. Orders in Council were therefore issued by ministers, allowing them to draw their stores from America. For a time this was sanctioned by the Americans, until finding the great value of this trade to us, they prohibited it, except in American shipping. This gradually led to the Acts of 1822, which permitted a trade between the Colonies and the United States. (This intercourse has been suspended by Order in Council since the first December, in consequence of the restrictions and charges imposed in the United States on British shipping.) Until that year, the principle of the Act was adhered

to as closely as possible; and in the European trade, little if any alteration was allowed.—With such protection, our maritime commerce could not fail to succeed, and with it our naval power. We accordingly find, that, although our navy has had alternately to contend with those of all Europe, since the time of Charles the Second,\* it has continued to rise superior to their whole collective force. During the same period, our commercial shipping, unchecked by so many wars, though burdened with the heavy taxation which the expense of those wars incurred, and by the independence of the United States deprived of many of its original privileges, has attained the highest pinnacle of mercantile greatness. It has supplied the means of keeping up the Navy;—a navy to which it has been indebted for obtaining so many fresh branches of commerce in the New World;—a navy, which alone has prevented this country from having had to endure those miseries of war, that the superior military force of the Continent, under the command of the late Ruler of France, successively carried into every country of Europe, and which we have seen were formerly inflicted on England before her increased naval power enabled her to keep that force from the shores of these islands.

\* He allowed (per Act 13, 14, Charles II. c. 11, s. 37,) one-tenth of the Amount of all Customs collected on goods in vessels of a certain size to the owners, as a further bounty for building them so large, which allowances were continued for seven years.

A decided alteration took place in the character of the British shipping soon after the commencement of the late war. Previous to that period, the shipping in the foreign trade consisted of vessels belonging either to the owners of estates abroad, or to those persons who were in the habit of importing their own goods. The coaster alone was in the habit of seeking cargoes on freight. If the coasting vessel obtained one cargo to the Baltic in the summer, it might be considered as the extent of the trade to foreign parts in hired vessels. The tonnage of this country, in 1792, was only 1,540,145 tons, in 16,079 vessels. About that time more vessels were required to supply the increasing wants of the foreign merchant. Many were then first built by persons who had no regular trade in which to place them, but sought for their employment in the freight market. They were, in fact, common carriers, at the service of the best payer. So profitable was this business found to be, that the number of vessels belonging to this country was, by 1816, raised to 25,864, of the burthen of 2,783,940 tons. This was probably the most profitable period of employment to the British shipowner; certainly, the mercantile marine was at its greatest height at the close of that year.

Let us now proceed to an examination of the leading features of the *New Navigation Act*, the

6th Geo. IV. chap. 109. Its indulgences have destroyed those privileges which, for years, the English shipowner was taught to consider as an indemnification for the risk he had to encounter in competing in the carrying trade with the low-priced Foreigner. That Foreigner is now admitted to the enjoyment of almost all the Foreign and Colonial trade open to the shipping of this country. In some respects, the Foreigner is more favored than the Englishman. He is indeed excluded from a direct intercourse between England and her Colonies, but he has the liberty and avails himself of the right of trading *direct to China* from our ports; and, more than once, goods on Liverpool account have been sent thence to China by American ships.

Its *first* Section fixes its date to commence on the 5th Jan. 1826; and its *second* enacts, *That the several sorts of goods commonly known as the enumerated articles, shall not be imported into this country, to be used therein, except either in British ships, OR in ships of the country of which they are the produce, OR in ships of the country from which they are imported,*

Note.—These are Masts, Timber, Boards, Pitch, Tar, Salt, Tallow, Rosin, Hemp, Flax, Currants, Raisins, Figs, Prunes, Olive Oil, Corn or Grain, Pot Ashes, Wine, Sugar, Vinegar, Brandy, and Tobacco.

It will at once be observed, that as the importation is only forbidden for home use, they may be imported to be warehoused for *exportation* in any ships. This was formerly prohibited by three regulations, the removal of each of which must have the effect of lessening the employment of British shipping. First by allowing them to bring these goods (which from their great bulk are considered as especially valuable, and, being subject to peculiar restrictions, are called *enumerated*;) from any port where they may find them, contrary to the provisions of the old Act, which confined their import from the countries of which they were the produce. Secondly, by allowing their importation in any foreign vessels, it promotes the employment of such vessels in the trade to this country; and thirdly, by making the markets of the Hanse Towns, or any other place near ours, the depôt for the goods of the Northern States of Europe, (from whence they may at any time be brought, either by vessels of the country where these goods are deposited, or belonging to the country where they were first produced, or by any British vessels,) it encourages the carrying to those towns in Foreign shipping.

All former restrictions on the import of any goods were, by 6th Geo. IV. c. 106, repealed. At the moment of the date of that Act, all

goods might freely be admitted: this still continues, except in so far as the Provisions of the Law now under consideration do not enact the contrary; and so far as articles *for exportation only* are concerned, it remains in full force. The 21st Section distinctly permits *all goods of any sort*, or the produce of *any place*, (not otherwise prohibited than by the Act of Navigation) to be imported from any place in a British ship; or from any place, not a British possession, in a Foreign ship of any country; to be warehoused for exportation only, without payment of duty thereupon.

Section 3. *Goods, the produce of Asia, Africa, or America, shall not be imported from Europe into the United Kingdom, to be used therein, excepting Goods from places within the Straits of Gibraltar, which may come from ports in the Mediterranean, or those of the East Indies; which, having been imported in British ships into Malta or Gibraltar, may be imported from thence, Prize Goods, Bullion, and Precious Stones.*

Section 4, enacts, *No Goods of Asia, Africa, or America, shall be imported into the United Kingdom, to be used therein, in Foreign ships, unless they be of the country of which the Goods are the produce, and*

*from which they are imported; except all Goods, the produce of Turkey in Asia, or Africa, which may be imported in Turkish ships from Turkish dominions in Europe, and some articles in the same ships from the Levant, and Bullion.*

By an other Act, (7th George IV. chap. 5,) the ships of Columbia and Rio de la Plata, no matter how built or acquired, are, for seven years, to be considered as the ships of those states, in all things connected with the British Navigation Laws. The high-priced ships of England can hardly look for a sale there, or at the other States in South America, to which this privilege may be granted.

The 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Sections, *restrict the trade between Great Britain and the Colonies;\* also the Islands of Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, Sark, and Man; as also the Coasting trade, to British vessels; as does the 10th Section, trading from one Island to another. The 11th declares that no Foreign Goods shall be imported into the British Colonies in Foreign ships, except such as belong to the places of which the goods are the produce, proceeding direct from thence.*

\* Vessels of the United States of America may, however, clear out in this Country, with or without cargoes, for Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, &c.

In these few regulations will be found all the enactments relative to the Navigation Laws. Comment upon them is unnecessary, for their intentions are too clearly shown; their effects too severely felt.

Let us next compare the privileges that English ships formerly possessed with those they now enjoy; always bearing in mind, that the difference in their price and in the subsequent expenses is very nearly the same. There has been no relaxation of any of the duties or charges that exclusively attach to British shipping; indeed, so far as charges of Dockage, Pilotage, and Lights extend, the privileged Foreigner is to partake of the benefit of any reduction that may be granted to the former.

In order to prevent the carriage to, or transshipment from other ports on the Continent, no European goods could be imported into Britain, but in English ships, or those of the countries where produced, and coming directly from thence.

Discriminating Duties were charged on all goods brought by Foreign vessels to this country.

At this moment *all* such goods may be brought into Britain *for exportation*, in any shipping, and from any Country. And nearly every article for home use, in any Foreign shipping on the same terms as British.

All which Duties are now at an end, on goods from such States as do not impose extra duties on British shipping.

The enumerated, or more bulky articles, could not be imported (even by a British vessel) from any countries, to which they had been previously carried by other shipping; they could only be brought direct from the place of their production.

All Foreign commerce with our Colonies was prohibited. They neither could import nor export, but by British shipping, *trading direct with this country.*

No productions of Asia, Africa, or America, were admitted, except in British vessels.

These goods may now be admitted, *for exportation, in any ship*; and in British ships always for home use; as well as in Foreigners', belonging either to the country where they are produced or from whence they are shipped for England.

With the exception that Foreign ships are prohibited from coasting between our Colonies or Settlements, and from trading *direct* between them and this country, the trade is now as open to Foreign shipping as to those of England.†

The United States being no longer Colonies, most of their produce is now imported in American shipping; and any of the other States of that Continent may send their goods to this country, for home use, in their own shipping. As regards Columbia, it is no matter

† This only applies to such States as, having Colonial Possessions, give to England similar privileges.

how those shipping are acquired. All such goods may be imported for *exportation*, even from Europe, in Foreign ships.

In order to promote our own Fisheries, high Duties were charged on the importation of Foreign Seed, to prevent its being imported for crushing. A Bounty was given to vessels in the Greenland trade, and Oil from Newfoundland admitted *free*.

The employment of British shipping was extended, by prohibiting all intercourse with those States that did not grant the greatest possible freedom of trade to them.

Nineteen-twentieths of those Duties on Seed are now withdrawn. The Bounty is taken from the ships in the Whale Fisheries; and a Duty of one shilling per ton is levied on Oil imported from Newfoundland.

At this moment permission is given to Foreign vessels to import goods, on the most favourable terms, into this country; though, by some of the Treaties,‡ which confirm to them those privileges, British shipping are excluded from importing into their country, the only goods which could afford valuable employment.

‡ The produce of the Mediterranean may be imported into England by Swedish ships excepting the enumerated articles; but English vessels cannot take the Salt, Wine, Brandy, &c. of Spain or France into Sweden.

Such are the humiliating enactments of the British Navigation Laws as they now stand, compared to what they were a few years back. Let us next glance at their effects.

British shipping are at this moment unable to obtain such freights as leave any prospect of profit to their owners. Foreign ships can make the same freights pay well; and we accordingly find, that the increase on their inward employment last year was, upon that of 1822, (when they had inwards 200,755 tons) upwards of 400,000 tons; the increase of English (upon 290,396 tons in 1822,) was only 128,000 tons. Thus in four years, from the *privileged countries*, Foreign ships have trebled, while English have not increased one half. In the trade from *all* parts, English shipping has not increased one-sixth, Foreigners in the same time have doubled. The registered tonnage in 1816, the year after the war, was 2,783,940 tons; last year it was less by nearly one tenth. Building is falling off in as great a proportion. The average number of vessels *built* in the four first years after the war, (to say nothing of *men-of-war* and *transports* added to the *mercantile marine*,) was 1045, and during the four last 1003 only; leaving out the two last years of each average; the numbers were 1066, against 901. One-fifth the number of vessels employed in the Northern Whale Fishery are now driven

out of it. The competition with privileged Foreigners has reduced freights, from the Mediterranean to England, one-fourth; while in the European trade generally, they are one-third lower. Thus so many vessels are thrown into the Irish and Coasting trades, that, joined to the competition of steam boats, their freights are reduced one-half. This is very different from what it ought to have been. With a decreasing number of British shipping, and with a declining commerce in them, opposed to an increasing and profitable employment for Foreigners' shipping,—how can that sovereignty of the sea, upon which we have so justly prided ourselves, and to which we are indebted for our present situation among the nations of the world, be maintained? Without that superiority, this nation cannot continue to preserve the high rank she now holds. Yet, all those protecting regulations which elevated our commercial marine to this station, are now withdrawn; and it does appear impossible that we can retain our present situation, without their restoration, or the adoption of some other legislative enactment for the support of our shipping.

It has been asked, do the shipowners of England wish their individual interests to be maintained at the expense of the general interests of the kingdom? Certainly they do not. They do not pretend that their personal wel-

fare should not give place to national prosperity. But they ask, how can that prosperity be maintained, without a paramount support being given to that interest, whereby this country is alone enabled to keep itself great and independent, amidst those vicissitudes which have attended the Continental States? When in the season of war, year after year the shipping of England was marked out for exclusive taxation, their owners did not complain, because the safety of their country required those exertions. They do, however, complain that now, after so many years of peace, their property is selected, without any previous remission of their exclusively heavy taxation, for the first victim to what is stiled liberal principles. The ships of England are constructed either of English grown Timber, kept at a high price by a monopoly, much similar to that of Corn; or of Timber imported from abroad. To the first cost of this Foreign Timber has not only to be added the freight and the other charges incidental to transhipment, but a heavy duty; from all of which the untaxed Foreigner is exempted. These duties or taxes, therefore, operate as a further premium on the untaxed ships of northern Europe. The seamen of these latter States are as good as ours. There are few qualities estimable in an English seaman which the Continental mariner does not possess in an equal degree; and there are

many points of view in which the seaman of the Baltic is preferable to ours. Yet the wages of the Foreigner are only 18s. to 27s. per month, while the Englishman receives 45s. to 60s. per month. The difference in the expense of provisions or diet is still more remarkable. It may be safely affirmed that the expense of navigating an English ship exceeds that of a Foreign one in a greater degree, than even the first cost or equipment of the former does that of the latter. From the accounts furnished by Government, through their agent Mr. Jacob, and from those of individual shipowners, the cost of navigation may be stated at treble. Wages and provisions he \* estimates, for a voyage from England to the Baltic and back, or three months, in a foreign ship of 580 tons, at £121 4s. 5d. In an English ship, the same would cost £320. The difference in the cost of Sails, Cordage, Ship Chandlery articles, and other incidental repairs, is equally great; to say nothing of the Insurance, and Interest upon the greater value of the English vessel.

To form some idea of the importance of the mercantile marine of this country in a mere statistical point of view, (though this is certainly the least valuable,) let us take the total tonnage

\* Mr. Jacob states, the diet of the crew of a Prussian ship, (from actual accounts which he details,) consisting of captain and nineteen men, for three months, to be £39 19s 11d. In an English ship, these twenty persons could not by any means have been fed under fifteen pence per day for each man; or £115 for three months,—the smaller the vessel, the greater the expense.

of 1816, or 2,783,940 tons, at the average value of twelve pounds per ton. This will give the total amount then, as being worth £33,000,000 ; exclusive of which, the capital employed in their building, and repairing yards ; by the smiths, sailmakers, &c. cannot have been less than several millions more ; raising the total value to at least *Thirty-six Millions of Pounds*. The average rate of freight then could not be under 25s. a ton per month ; but even at 22s. 6d. which was a very low rate, their earnings would have been *Thirty-seven Millions* per annum. This immense sum thus received by them, had to be divided amongst a great variety of almost every description of tradesmen ; and a very large proportion went to the farmer, the miller, and the grazier, for provisions.

The tonnage of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies, is now less than in 1816 by 241,724 tons ; and valuing the remainder at eight pounds per ton, the deficiency in the value of British shipping is already upwards of *\*Thirteen Millions*. The average rate of ships' earnings was at least 22s. 6d. per ton, or £37,583,190 : it is now hardly 16s. which, on 2,542,216 tons, would give £24,405,270. This difference, upwards of *Thirteen Millions*, is lost to the various interests that formerly profitted by its disbursement among them.

\* 2,783,940 tons at £12 per ton, gives £33,407,280  
2,542,216 .... £8 ..... £20,337,728

It must not be supposed, that this deficiency in the receipts of British shipping is in any manner caused by a want of employment for them. On the contrary, there is sufficient employment ; but the rates at which it is to be obtained are those which will afford no profit to the English, though they amply repay the Foreigner. The natural consequence is, that English ships are driven out of the trade in which they are more immediately in competition with the Foreigner. Hence arises an excess of British shipping in those trades which are yet exclusively their own.

The annual expenditure being thus decreased upwards of *Thirteen Millions*, to discover to whom this will be lost, let us examine from Blackwood,† page 443 ; “ The trade and employment created by the building of one “ single vessel. First, a large quantity of “ timber, British and Foreign, has to be cut. “ Then this timber has to be conveyed, much “ of it from beyond the sea, to the builders’ “ yard ; then there is the labour of the ship- “ wrights and joiners. Then a great quantity “ of iron has to be made and conveyed to the “ smiths ; then there is the labour of the ship- “ smiths. Then a quantity of copper has to “ be worked into bolts and sheets ; then there

† See Blackwood's Magazine for September, in which is a most valuable article, entitled “ The Shipping Interest.”



" is the labour of coppering, not forgetting the  
 " conveyance. Then a great quantity of hemp,  
 " tar, &c. has to be fetched from beyond the  
 " sea; then there is the labour of the rope-  
 " makers; the weaving of the sailcloth, and  
 " the sailmakers. Then there is the convey-  
 " ance of the materials; and the materials, and  
 " the labour of the block, the mast, and the  
 " pump makers, and the boat-builders. Then  
 " the materials and labour of the ship-chandler,  
 " cooper, &c. &c." And when thus equipped  
 for sea, follows an immense outfit of flour,  
 bread, beer, beef, pork, butter, peas, groceries,  
 &c. to supply the daily consumption.

Such are the variety of persons that profit  
 by the expenditure of the shipowner. The  
 shipowners' interest is one which interferes  
 with none, while it benefits all. Every other  
 interest but that of shipping is protected, either  
 by restrictions or duties against Foreign com-  
 petition. The effect of these regulations is to  
 enhance the price of every article used in the  
 construction of the vessel, the labour of her  
 crew, and the cost of their provisions. Look  
 at the two great articles of Corn and Timber.  
 The operation of the Corn Laws increases the  
 price of labour here materially; and the expense  
 of victualling a ship is, from the same cause,  
 much greater in England, where Bread is 17s.  
 per cwt. than on the Baltic, where it is from 7s. a

9s. per cwt. The duty on Pine Timber from the  
 Baltic is 55s per 50 feet, double its first cost  
 there; and the freight nearly the same. The  
 duty and freight, therefore, raise the price of  
 Timber to about four times its cost on the  
 Baltic. Salt provisions are also double. Yet  
 the British ship, built of the one and provisioned  
 with the other, has hardly any advantages  
 beyond what are possessed by the Foreigner,  
 who is exempted from the operation of those  
 duties and freights.

We will next compare the value of the trade  
 to our North American Colonies, with that to  
 some of those Northern States of Europe, to  
 whom the advantages of the new Navigation  
 Act have been confirmed by treaty. Let us  
 take Sweden, Norway, and Prussia, as an  
 example. The total import from these three  
 countries, in 1824, was only £721,384, and in  
 1825 was £863,743. The exports in the former  
 year were £968,354: in the last they declined  
 to £725,700, of this, the amount in British  
 and Irish produce and manufactures exported  
 was only £241,082, but of Foreign and Colo-  
 nial produce £484,618. This is the sum total  
 of that immense trade, the necessity of which  
 is so strongly insisted upon by Government.  
 What proportion does the benefit this Country  
 receives from this trade bear, to that which  
 Sweden, which Norway, or which Prussia

obtains from this new and unrestricted intercourse? Yet the Chairman of the Board of Trade tells us, in the authorised edition of his late speech; (page 35,) that he "believes "the Baltic can do to the full as well without us, as we can do without the Baltic," and he holds up to ridicule those who doubt his assertion. The trifling import (which, however, far exceeds the export,) is comprised of articles for which they could find no market but this. Except England had purchased these goods, they must have remained on their wharfs or in their granaries: More than two-thirds of our exports to these States consist of Foreign and Colonial produce. Salt and Cotton Twist form the greater part of the value of the British goods. This trade, therefore, is hardly worth preserving, to the injury of our Colonies; and these Colonies are injured by every pound's worth of produce, similar to theirs, that is consumed in England, being drawn from any other quarter. Every article we purchase from Sweden, Norway, &c. could be supplied by the British Settlements in North America. By circulating in those Settlements the money we spend in the Continental markets, they would have so much the more to invest in our manufactured goods; the importation of which into Prussia, &c. is nearly prohibited by heavy duties.

The trade to these privileged countries is still more prejudicial as regards the employment of British shipping. The Foreign vessels which entered Great Britain from these three kingdoms, in 1822, were of the burthen of 129,341 tons; and in that year, 130,586 tons of British were also employed. But then, the Reciprocity Laws were not at that time in force, and discriminating duties existed. Last year, when this new pernicious system was in operation, the British shipping was of 206,867 tons burthen, and the Foreign of 364,400 tons.

Now the trade of our North American Colonies, direct with England, &c. is entirely British, on British account, in British shipping. Of its magnitude an idea will be formed, by a reference to the accompanying table. By this we perceive that our exports to our North American Colonies last year, or rather for the year ending in January, 1825, was £2,241,666, (namely, £413,024 of Foreign and Colonial produce, and £1,828,642 of British manufactured goods,) and our imports £925,699. These imports nearly amount to the aggregate value of those from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Prussia; but the exports are more than double what is sent to those countries. The exports to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Prussia, are principally of Foreign or Colonial produce; not above one-third consists of British

manufactured goods ; but to the Colonies, four-fifths are comprised of these manufactured articles. The tonnage employed in the import of produce from these four Northern States certainly far exceeded what was engaged in bringing goods from our American Colonies ; but then, about two-thirds of that tonnage was Foreign. Of British shipping from these Continental kingdoms, only 222,025 tons entered, against 415,343 tons of Foreign, in the year ending January, 1826. In the trade from our American Colonies, no vessels are engaged but British, and by the returns presented to Parliament, it would appear 427,515 tons entered Great Britain from thence last year.

Although Government profess to be desirous of giving every support to the shipping interest, a striking contrast will be found in that protection which the agricultural and manufacturing interests receive, when compared with that which is afforded to the ship-owner. Of this, the silk trade may be taken as an example.—Previous to last July, Continental manufactured silks were prohibited to be imported for home consumption into this kingdom at any duty, and raw silk was charged on importation with a duty of five shillings and sixpence per pound weight. But, in July, when manufactured silks were first permitted to be brought for home use, they were charged with a duty, in no case

under *thirty per cent. ad valorem* ; and further, to assist the British artisan, the duty on raw silk was reduced to *one penny* per pound. How different is this treatment to that which has been extended to the shipowner. No duties are remitted to him,—no protection is afforded to his property,—the trade, which he so long enjoyed, has been thrown open to Foreigners, who are, comparatively, untaxed in their own country ; and who, even in this, are entirely exempted from many charges, which exclusively apply to British shipping.

It is, indeed, expected, that His Majesty's Ministers will submit some measures to Parliament, which they consider will satisfy the shipping interest. It is apprehended that they will propose the repeal, or some reduction of the duties, on the import of certain articles used in the construction and equipment of shipping ; or, that they will suggest some drawback on the amount of duties paid on the timber, iron, &c. used in the building of vessels, to be paid on their being registered. This measure would, in its effects, be ruinous to those who already have ships. It could be desirable only to such as intend to build new vessels. The shipping now in existence would, by the endeavour to equalise the value of the vessels to be built with those belonging to the Foreigners, be utterly ruined. Their owners would then find a rival at home as well as abroad.

There are, indeed, a variety of duties which may be taken off;—that, for instance, now charged upon African Oak, imported for ship-building. As this oak, it is said, “does not interfere with other interests,” the duty, it is understood, will be removed, if the shipowners press for its repeal. The duties on hemp, tar, naval stores, &c. all operate to the prejudice of the British shipowner; but above all, he is oppressed with a variety of frivolous yet expensive enactments, from which he ought to be relieved. In the second letter, which follows these pages, more particular notice is taken of several of these vexatious regulations, in which there has been no late reduction.

The repeal of the duty upon the importation of timber from the British Colonies in North America, would be the means of greatly extending the consumption in this country. At present, the duty operates as a bounty upon the import of Baltic Fir timber, the carrying of which is nearly confined to Alien ships: the difference in the wages and provision of these and British vessels is at least eight shillings per load in favor of the Foreigner, though the whole freight is not above thirty shillings per load.

The duty on coals keeps many vessels out of the coasting trade. The remission of this tax would cause a great increase in the number

of colliers. Many valuable vessels would then seek employment in the coasting trade, rather than trust to the more uncertain chance of profit abroad. It is difficult to discover why an article, which is only produced in certain parts of the kingdom, but which is essentially requisite to all, should, for taking it to such places, whereby it incurs an expense of carriage equal to its first cost, be also charged with a duty of nearly one half;—from both of which, persons resident in the neighbourhood of its production are exempt.

The measures of which the shipowners now complain, are generally called the Reciprocity Acts. It is, however, improper to designate them by any name that would imply fair and honorable competition:—rather should they be called unjust and oppressive. So long as the great difference continues in the expense of British and Foreign shipping, no real reciprocity can exist. In their effects, the late regulations, however they may be denominated, are decidedly injurious. Since they have become law, every thing connected with shipping has been a continued source of loss and disappointment. It is very difficult to discover any prospect of amendment; yet Ministers appear desirous of still further extending these laws, and of inducing other Powers to join in similar Treaties. There is little hesitation shown by

other States in accepting the invitation. As they sail their vessels at two-thirds the expense of ours, in the European trade, equal privileges are of the first importance to them. They have no Colonial trade to give us—none to even share with us; but we have Colonies, the traffic to which is most valuable to them.

From the pertinacity with which Ministers contend for the propriety of their system, it may be assumed, they are determined to maintain it as long as they can. Upon Mr. Huskisson appears to have devolved the task of defending the New Code of Laws. This he did at length in a speech, since published in an authorised form. His speech professes to be a reply to “a variety of Petitions, that had been presented to Parliament early in April; and more particularly to one from the ship-owners of North Shields, complaining that “the Shipping Interest was in a state of decay,” and attributing that decay to the alterations in the Navigation Laws of this Country. The defence of Mr. Huskisson was delivered on the 12th of May. But the papers to which he frequently referred, as proofs of his assertions, were not printed till the 17th or 19th; and then it was found impossible to make up some accounts to a later date than 5th January, 1825.† Parliament was dissolved

† See Note to paper No. 372, dated 12th May, 1826, signed “William Irving.”

before the end of May, and the accounts are not yet made public. This circumstance is to be the more regretted, as much of the argument of the Right Honourable Gentleman consisted in charging the distresses of the ship-owners, not to the effect of his measures, but to the over speculation, and too excessive shipments of the year 1825;—a year in which, we were told, “the unbridled rage of speculation”\* had carried so much wealth out of the country. But what is the fact? In the “quiet and regular trading year of 1824” the exports were £58,218,633; whilst in 1825, that year “when “a universal mania appears to have seized upon “merchants and manufacturers, not of this “country only, but more or less upon those of “other countries,§” the exports were only £55,623,586. The production of these accounts would at once have shown the fallacy of this Right Honourable Gentleman’s argument.

The generally depressed state of trade in 1826 had little to do in augmenting the distress of the British shipowners. They had, or at least they might have had, ample employment, but that employment yielded no profit; for they were obliged to reduce their rates of freight to about the same as the Foreigners gladly received. The distress of the British shipping was solely attributable to a useless, a quixotic

\* See Mr. Huskisson’s Speech, page 52.

§ Ibid.

liberality, in giving to Foreigners privileges they had no right to expect, and which, in fact, they did not in the least anticipate:—Privileges that were so far above their hopes or their expectations, that, having nothing to offer in return, they did not even attempt to negotiate for them. It is true, Prussia, because her ships were “indeed all going to ruin,” (according to Mr. Consul Gibson, as quoted by Mr. Huskisson, page 38,) insisted upon the removal of the extra duties upon her shipping. But, if we were obliged to yield to her wishes, (for such is the humiliating fact, if we believe the statement of the President of the Board of Trade,) does it follow, that we were obliged to give up to her not only our Colonial trade, but also a free importation from the Mediterranean? If the apprehension of Sweden’s raising the duties upon British shipping entering her ports, induced this Government to remove the discriminating duties from her shipping; was it necessary, while Sweden continued to prohibit the importation of the salt, wine, and brandy, of Spain and the Mediterranean by British ships, that we should allow Swedish shipping to enter our ports, on the same terms as our own, with the madders of France, the shumac of Italy, and the brimstone of Sicily; and were we also obliged to give her a share of our Colonial trade?

† See Mr. Huskisson’s Speech, pages 42 and 43.

Let us next examine our maritime relations with a Country which is not content with that reciprocity, of which Sweden, Prussia, &c. have so gladly availed themselves.

The example we will take shall be France; our oldest, our greatest, our, almost, natural enemy. France is a powerful state, and her trade with England considerable. It is of greater value than the aggregate of some three or four of the Northern powers. After the conventions France had witnessed us making with Sweden, Prussia, the Hanse Towns, &c. it was but natural that she would wish to make a good bargain for herself. Her Ministers knew the men with whom they had to negotiate. They, therefore, hung back to get more favourable terms, and in this they succeeded. They have got a treaty; and though the signatures of “Geo. Canning” and “W. Huskisson,” which are affixed to it, might at first lead us to expect that in it the interests of England would have been respected, a perusal will speedily dissipate that idea.

The restrictions formerly existing in the importation of her brandy and wines, are in a great measure removed, and they are now admitted by French ships at considerably reduced rates. French ships may bring into England, from any place, all European goods, (except those called enumerated,) for home use; even the enume-

rated goods are allowed in French Vessels direct from France. But the French Government have prohibited the importation of European goods in English vessels, except *direct* from England. A considerable trade, long carried on between France and the Islands of Sicily and Sardinia, and other parts of the Mediterranean, is thus lost to the shipping of England.

The French will not suffer a neutral vessel to call in England for orders. At this moment the American ship UNITED STATES is discharging a cargo of cotton in Liverpool; so is the CONCORDIA; both from New York, but last from Havre, where they went for orders, whether to discharge in England or in France. It would have been more convenient to have called at Cork or Falmouth, as a *French ship* would have done! But the French government will not permit goods to be landed from any vessel that may have even *called off* an English port. By the English Navigation Laws, American goods may be imported into England from France, for exportation, in French, English, or American vessels; but if once goods are landed in England, the ports of France are for ever closed against them. A few articles, essential to her manufactures, are indeed excepted: they may be carried into France,—but not from England direct.—No, they must be sent to Holland, for the purpose of being introduced by some more favoured state.

The French are allowed to export in their ships, from our Colonies in America or the West Indies, all goods produced there; and by Order in Council, dated Carlton House, first of June 1826, it is announced, that although the French Government have not fulfilled the conditions required by the Acts of reciprocity, yet His Majesty has been pleased to declare it expedient and lawful to continue to permit French vessels to carry away goods from our Colonies, and also to permit the import of certain articles by French vessels into them!! French vessels are allowed to sail from any Port belonging to the King of France, to the English Colonies—a privilege which is confined in the trade to the French Colonies, to such British vessels as leave the dominions of this country in Europe. Their cargoes may be the produce of “*any Country* under the dominion of France;” the cargoes of British vessels must be of “the growth and manufacture of the United Kingdom.” In a word, they do not want to trade to our Colonies, and therefore they will hardly give us a share of theirs. But is it by France alone, that England, the Mistress of the Seas, is thus treated? By no means. Our commercial relations with the United States of America are in a most unfriendly and unsettled state. For a great length of time they have subjected our ships, trading between the West India Colonies and their ports, to heavy duties.

When his Majesty, last July, was pleased to direct, by Order in Council, a suspension of that intercourse, they took no notice of our threats; but calmly referred to their own Laws, whereby an English vessel, entering their ports from our Colonies, is, with her cargo, confiscated. Let us read the words of the President of the Board of Trade—of Mr. Huskisson.\*—“An American ship,” says he, “trading to this country, has a great advantage over a British ship trading to America. The American vessel, on her voyage to England, is freighted with a cargo wholly produced in the United States. She has nothing else to bring here.† For her return to America, she may load in the ports of this Country with a cargo, partly the produce or manufacture of Great Britain, and partly of any other Country. The British ship is debarred from this advantage. For instance, an American vessel at Liverpool may make up her cargo with the wines, brandies, or other Foreign produce, to be procured at Liverpool. But if an English ship, proceeding to the United States, were to take a single pipe of wine, or a single cask of brandy, she would be liable to seizure and forfeiture.”

Can we, however, wonder that such privileges are calmly yielded to Foreign States, when we

\* See his Speech on the 12th of May, pages 15 and 16.

† Mr. Huskisson might have added, he and his colleagues had provided for this; when they can find other goods to bring here, they will find the English Laws permit their import.

see our Reciprocity Ministers absolutely giving to Foreign shipping indulgences, which they refuse to our own. Of this, the trade between England and China is a sufficient specimen. By the existing laws, no English ship can clear out for China, or import a cargo from thence, except in the employment of the East India Company. To the private shipping of England the trade to this empire is therefore lost. American vessels can take cargoes out from hence to China, on British account; and Chinese goods (excepting tea,) may be brought from America, for home use, in American or English shipping; and thus imported, they only pay the duties chargeable when imported by the East India Company. These goods may even be brought from France or Holland, and warehoused for exportation. The carriage of these goods is, however, either by charter or by law, kept from British private mercantile shipping. True, they may be employed for a few hours in bringing these Chinese goods from France,—a few days in carrying them from Holland,—or a few weeks in importing them from America; while the shipping of those Countries are employed for more than as many months in the long voyage from China.

Parliament has already met; but it has done little more than pass the Corn Indemnity Bill. The shipping interest has hardly been named.



No further accounts have been presented relative to the exports and imports, as ordered last Session. Any papers, Government might have ordered, would hardly have been presented in sufficient time after the recess, to have had them examined or discussed during the approaching Session. Fortunately, this seems to have met the view of the Honourable and Learned Member for Ilchester, who accordingly moved, a few hours previous to the adjournment of Parliament, that a variety of accounts connected with shipping should be presented to the House of Commons, made up to include the quarter ending 5th January, 1827. Ministers, however, opposed the motion, stating it was impossible they could be got ready. The Learned Mover ¶ was, therefore, obliged gladly to accept of those accounts made up to the 10th October last.

In the situation in which the mercantile marine of this country is now placed, and with the disposition thus evinced by His Majesty's Government, the necessity of great exertions to endeavour to obtain some amelioration of the present unexampled state of distress, in which the shipowners are placed, is apparent. The attempts, though arduous, must be made. It will be difficult to make any impression on Ministers, with the feelings they now entertain.

¶ Mr. John Williams, who was supported by General Gascoyne.

The last Parliament could hardly be roused to any notice of the subject. The Chairman of the Board of Trade was "aware of the reluctance of the Honourable Gentlemen to approach this subject;" because his statements were "in their nature necessarily dry and tedious."§ Not, indeed, that he was particularly anxious to draw attention to the subject; for, he appears to consider the shipowners are doing well enough, or if they are not, that it is their own fault. He says, † "that several measures have been introduced to the House, which have led to a relaxation in those (the Navigation) Laws, highly beneficial to the commerce of the Country; and in no way injurious to our strength as a maritime power." Yes; such is the language Mr. Huskisson applies to measures, which have already ruined hundreds of shipowners; and yet he wants no alteration. He is, indeed, anxious that we should persevere in them, and he exclaims, "For the sake of Freedom of Trade and Industry, and for the sake of England,—let England be the field of trial for our system."|| If, by these measures, the expenses of British shipping were likely to approximate to those of Foreigners, in the same manner as their freights have already done, then it would be possible to anticipate some benefit from *our*

§ See his Speech, 12th May, page 4.

† See Speeches of Messrs. Williams, Huskisson, and Canning, on the Silk Trade, page 48. || Ibid.

*system*, as it is so fondly called. But, of this, burthened with heavy and exclusive taxation,—constructed of high priced timber,—navigated at high wages,—victualled with taxed or duty-paid provisions,—there can be no chance: and the declining state of the English mercantile marine,—the present ruinous rates of freight,—the absence of all prospect of amelioration,—the decrease in the actual number of vessels,—and the still greater decrease in the building,—prove the baneful, the pernicious, the destructive effects of the Reciprocity system.

The trifling remission of duties which the Deputation\* of the Liverpool Shipowners' Association were led to expect might probably be granted, will be but of little value. The different regulations, from the effects and expenses of which they solicited relief, are more fully detailed in the second of the three accompanying Letters. These Letters originally appeared in the Liverpool Commercial Chronicle. They are on the subject of the Reciprocity Laws, and more particularly in reply to the statements of Mr. Huskisson. In compliance with the wishes of several, they have been added to these pages; in the expectation they may render their contents more useful.

The shipowners of London, of Liverpool, of Cumberland, of Newcastle, and the other ports

• Mr. Brocklebank, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Mortimer.

on the eastern side of the land, have already had meetings on the subject of their distresses. They have agreed upon Petitions, in which they unanimously attribute their present difficulties to the alterations in the Navigation Laws. On the re-assembling of Parliament, these Petitions will be presented, and their prayer supported by delegates from various parts of the kingdom.

But the shipowners are not the only parties that have cause for alarm: they will only be the first victims. They are now the sufferers by these theoretic measures,—but that which destroys them, will ruin the landed, the commercial, and the manufacturing classes.

The ruin of the shipowners, and the sacrifice of their property, will be but a trifling injury compared to that state of calamity in which this country must be involved, if a blind—a bigotted perseverance in this new and pernicious system of philosophical Reciprocity, be permitted to exist to become the ruin and destruction of the Mercantile Marine of Great Britain,—that RIGHT ARM of her power, to which alone she is indebted for the support of her NAVAL SUPREMACY.

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Upon the correctness of the annexed Table, every reliance may be placed, It is drawn out from the official returns, printed by order of the last Session of Parliament. It will be of use, in estimating the proportionate value of our Foreign commerce; and the Tonnage columns exhibit the difference in the burthen of the vessels that entered this kingdom in 1822 and 1825. The *total* amounts of the other columns are correct—the slight discrepancy that may at first appear, is caused by the rejection of the shillings in the additions.

It is to be regretted that correspondent returns for the year 1825 have not yet been published. They are usually laid before Parliament at a late period of the Session. Those for 1824 were only presented on the 17th May, 1826, when the Inspector General stated, it had been impossible to prepare those for 1825.

Of the vessels that have entered the port of Liverpool during the past year, 1826, from the Continent of Europe, a very large proportion are new, and of superior construction:—this has been remarked in various parts of the Kingdom. They are, in general, of heavy burthen,—and with regret it must be added, that several Englishmen have availed themselves of the advantages possessed by shipping built and navigated abroad, to have vessels equipped for them on the Continent.

A COMPARATIVE TABLE of the TONNAGE that entered GREAT BRITAIN in the Years ending 5th January, 1823 and 1826.—The IMPORTS, and particulars of EXPORT, for the Year ending January, 1825.

	Inward Tonnage in 1822.		Inward Tonnage in 1825.		Imports. 1824.		Exports, 1824.	
	British.	Foreign.	British.	Foreign.	Value.	Total Value.	British.	Foreign.
Russia .....	215,766	16,363	334,445	34,216	£2,606,531	£1,521,079	£717,061	£2,238,140
Sweden .....	20,630	11,753	15,511	52,166	149,081	34,782	106,360	141,142
Norway .....	9,772	67,793	9,734	135,435	94,375	67,555	48,540	116,095
Denmark .....	6,679	3,910	15,158	50,943	136,674	163,495	168,579	332,074
Prussia .....	100,184	49,795	181,622	176,799	620,287	138,744	329,720	468,464
Germany .....	84,233	9,664	108,402	79,250	1,505,456	5,454,728	2,097,449	7,552,177
Holland .....	68,898	57,840	87,405	110,937	1,096,128	1,352,632	664,658	2,017,290
Flanders .....	99,899	49,727	77,493	55,205	462,147	1,148,079	1,069,439	2,217,518
France .....	55,719	1,377	72,150	3,743	1,536,240	259,727	864,501	1,124,228
Portugal, Azores, and Madeira .....	34,631	3,421	43,044	8,513	450,730	2,594,016	76,175	2,670,191
Spain, and the Canaries .....	3,116	3,180	2,718	594	845,339	464,238	220,569	684,807
Gibraltar .....	29,881		43,856		59,512	2,424,722	371,622	2,796,344
Italy .....	876		1,395		1,127,093	3,750,796	648,985	4,399,781
Malta .....	4,505		6,152		63,084	295,459	79,838	375,297
Ionian Islands .....	7,660		35,230		132,117	9,573	6,411	15,984
Turkey, and the Levant .....	815,435	3,726	759,375		746,848	1,267,302	130,195	1,397,497
Ireland .....	81,296	100	83,540	543	5,591,162	3,688,370	1,318,069	5,006,639
Guernsey, Jersey, and Isle of Man .....	12,116		77,311		208,512	280,816	91,358	372,174
Asia .....	313,000		34,151		7,363,727	3,832,249	778,261	4,610,510
Africa .....	223,259		427,515		324,374	439,048	236,611	675,659
British Northern Colonies .....	34,982	144,045	219,545		925,699	1,828,642	413,025	2,241,667
United States .....	38,903		37,852	181,033	8,655,538	4,549,791	321,044	4,870,835
Brazil, Columbia, Mexico, &c. ....	48,204		57,553	1,576	3,925,609	6,760,076	381,210	7,141,286
Buenos Ayres, and Monte Video .....	11,825		42,736		1,500,041	6,007,365	271,004	6,278,369
The Whale Fisheries, & Prize Goods .....			12,901		498,654	1,550,393	31,382	1,581,775
Foreign West Indies .....				1,648	392,896	124	2,940	3,064
Total .....	2,330,238	419,694	2,786,844	892,601	£41,737,609	£51,712,608	£11,506,664	£63,225,272

## LETTER I.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM  
HUSKISSON, M. P.

*Liverpool, 16th June, 1826.*

SIR,

I make no apology for addressing you, conceiving that every inhabitant of this town has a claim upon your attention, on matters of Trade, especially as, to your official situation, you now again add the no less honourable one, of our Representative in Parliament. I rejoice in your success, and I feel pride that your return to Parliament is, as the Member for Liverpool. Your attentions, perhaps unequalled attentions, to the interest of individuals, have deservedly given you a strong hold on the affections of many, which I should have been glad to see confirmed by the results of your recent public measures, relating to the Commercial and Navigation Laws. That this is not the case, I need hardly affirm; the reception given to your name at the day of nomination, and every subsequent opportunity the populace have had of displaying their feelings, must have proved it, even to you. To what are we to attribute the difference in the attention shown you now, and in 1823, when you first appeared among us the favourite of all, and more especially of the Mechanics, except to that distress, which, in this town, has thrown hundreds of those Mechanics out of employ; which, in the Manufacturing part of the Country, has reduced thousands to a state of pauperism, and which, according to your own assertion, is not confined to this neighbourhood, but extends to Staffordshire, Nottingham, Gloucester-

shire, Somersetshire, and even the whole of the West, and most of the North-east of Scotland? Were this distress confined to one branch of trade alone, it might, perhaps, be correctly attributed to over-speculations in that particular branch; but, who will affirm that, it was over-speculation which destroyed the Silk trade—which has so materially injured the manufactures of Hardware, Woollens, and Earthenware—so much affected every other, and caused that frightful havoc in the Commercial world, of which the Gazette weekly affords such incontrovertible evidence? I am not now about to enter into an examination of the causes which have led to those difficulties, so far as Manufactures are concerned; these may be the subject of another letter; but, as you have lately visited, and now represent a seaport town, I shall, in addressing you, confine myself to those difficulties against which the Shipping Interest has to contend. These are not ideal; look at our docks, and see the number of Vessels there laid up for sale. Ask the respectable master Tradesman, and he will tell you how small a proportion of the usual number of his workmen are now wanted. Ask the most respectable of our Shipowners and Brokers; they will tell you that hundreds of Vessels are now at sea on Ship's account, their owners well knowing, when they sailed, that the current Freights would leave no profit, having endeavoured to obtain one, by joining the chance of Importer or Merchant to that of carrier.

As Merchants, and as Shipowners, then, we feel this distress; we have ventured in our petitions to Parliament, to point out what we consider its causes; and to solicit relief from its effects. Our reiterated complaints have met, in most instances, attention,—in

none, alleviation. You are the Minister to whom we look for relief. All parties naturally turn to him who first introduced those measures; measures, which, how pleasing soever in theory they may appear to their projectors, have, in their effects, been most ruinous to those for whose benefit they were avowedly brought forward. You appear to have felt the necessity of defending these regulations, for the votes of the House of Commons, some time back, informed us of your notice for the production of papers, relative to the number of Ships built during the last ten or twelve years; papers, which, we were told, would demonstrate the beneficial effects of the New Laws, and convince the country there was no well-founded cause of alarm as to the present state of the Shipping Interest. These documents were ordered on the 12th of May, after a long speech, with which you then favoured us, for the purpose of elucidating their contents. In this speech, after a most careful perusal, I confess I am unable to discover any thing to dispel the apprehensions entertained by many, that the Shipping of this country, with its carrying Trade, is in a state of rapid decline. I believe it is generally admitted to have been one of the most unsatisfactory statements that has lately appeared. Since, however, you admit that the subject is one of the greatest importance, and requiring "the utmost attention of the Country;" that it is your duty to give to these "alarms" your most serious consideration,—maintaining, "that were the interests of Commerce and Navigation to interfere, to the injury of each other, Commerce must give way to the paramount necessity of keeping up our Mercantile Marine;" and, as you subsequently avow your readiness to retrace your steps, if not to cancel your measures, should they appear to have a different

tendency, your apparent defence of them becomes the greater source of disappointment to us. That defence shows your fond attachment to this New Code, in opposition to what you justly call "the great Charter of our Marine Glory"—the old Navigation Laws.

In venturing a few remarks upon this celebrated speech, I fear I am asking too much, when I solicit your perusal of them. I know how valuable your time is, and that the hurry of an election is not the moment to devote to a dry investigation of tedious figures; on which account, I shall be as brief as possible. There are, however, some whose occupations these measures have so much reduced, that may be inclined to give them a few minutes more attention. Rely, however, upon this:—your notice will be drawn to this subject again; at least, when the new Parliament meets, if not before, for by that time, the mischief must have reached many more. With a view to avert the impending evil, let us examine the data by which you defend your new system, in the speech to which I have referred, which, I am assured, is as unsatisfactory to thousands, as it is to me; although, we are told, its delivery, or rather, its conclusion, was greeted with the most enthusiastic shouts of applause, which lasted several minutes,—emanating, I presume, from Mr. Charles Grant, and the ten or eleven others (for there is some doubt as to the precise number) who remained to hear it to the end.†

The main object of your motion, I take to be, to prove that no real ground of alarm exists as to the

† The authority for this will be found in a Report of the Proceedings of the London Shipowners, held at the City of London Tavern, on the 30th May last:—a Report well deserving of attention.

present state of our Commercial Marine, (to which we must always look for the support of our Naval superiority,) and, that none need be apprehended from the changes effected by the late Reciprocity Acts, which were first announced in 1822, passed in the following year, and came into operation in 1824,—Acts, of which, you are well aware, it has been most truly stated, by an eminent Minister, that he could "*not* pretend to say they were the *result of wisdom*." The necessity for these "changes," which, though not the result of wisdom, were yet "unavoidably adopted," you labour hard to prove, by a minute examination of the old system, as it stood until a few years after the close of the first American war. To do this, you divide the Act 12 Charles II, into five parts, for which divisions I have to thank you, as they enable me the more readily to point out the degree of support you give to each.

The purport of the Act of 2d Charles, was the support, or rather the creation of our Naval Power, by encouraging our Mercantile Marine, to the almost total exclusion of Alien Ships. This was effected, *first*, by giving the utmost protection to the Fisheries,—a protection from which you declare no prudent man would withdraw any part.—*Secondly*, by entirely confining the Coasting-Trade to British Vessels; and I at once take leave of this branch, by expressing my cordial concurrence in your wish never to see it altered; at the same time, tendering you and your colleagues my warmest acknowledgments for the many improvements which have been introduced into the manner of conducting it, so far as the Revenue is concerned. *Thirdly*, in the European Trade, by allowing all European Shipping (excepting the Dutch) to bring

into this Country all goods, with the exception of such as were called "enumerated," which, being those of great bulk, requiring much Shipping, were allowed only in Ships of Britain, or of the Countries of which they were the produce. *Fourthly*, by allowing all Goods from Asia, Africa, and America to be imported into England in British Shipping only;—and *fifthly*, by the carrying to and from the Colonies, being entirely confined to this Country, in our own Ships.

Such were the intentions of the celebrated Act of Navigation, under the protection of which our Trade had increased and was increasing, whilst our Naval Power had risen to the highest pinnacle of eminence. Though a variety of circumstances concurred to make some alterations in it, your predecessors tenaciously adhered to its principles, wherever possible. The Commercial Treaties entered into with the infant States of America, upon the acknowledgment of their independence, made the first grand inroad upon the carrying Trade of Goods from the United States to England; and the subsequent conduct of that Government has obliged us to alter many of our enactments, relative to the Colonial Trade. This was unavoidable; the United States were, in the reign of Charles, only Colonies, and we treated them as such. They are now free, have adopted Laws similar to ours, and with such success, that I am told their tonnage is now upwards of 1,680,000 tons.

All writers on political economy coincide in placing the Fisheries first in importance to a Marine Country. "To Britain," says a distinguished author, "an Island circumscribed in extent, and, therefore, limited in point of subsistence, and population which depends

on the means of subsistence,—the encouragement of the Fisheries is a peculiar object of importance, and ought to be one of particular solicitude." With this sentiment, I find you appear to agree; for your declaration, as to the inviolability of the Laws relative to the Fisheries, is supported by your subsequent remarks, as to the late Slave-Trade; when you say,—“It was urged, as a most important branch of our traffic—it was even considered as essential to the existence of our Marine, as the Fishery of Newfoundland now is.” Such being your opinion of the Fisheries, let us look to the support you have given to the Vessels employed in them.

The Fisheries of England consist of four:—the Home, the South Sea, the Northern Whale Fisheries, and those of Newfoundland.

The Home is entirely confined to British Vessels, the trifling exception in favour of Foreigners, with Eels, Lobsters, &c. being too trivial to mention; nor am I aware that the South Sea Fisheries are affected by your late Regulations, further than by the general depreciation in the value of all Shipping which those Regulations have caused. Of the other two I have more to say.

You will not have failed to observe, how rapidly the Greenland and Davis' Straits Trade is decreasing, and how soon the numbers fell off, after the first announcement of your measures. You must have perceived that though the price of Oil was very good, at the time of the last outfit to Greenland and the Straits, such was the indifference of those interested in it, to encounter the risk in their high priced Ships, that fifteen Vessels less went this year than last;—no trifling quantity out



of one hundred and ten, the number that went last season. You are aware, that five or six years ago, the number of Vessels employed was one hundred and fifty to one hundred and sixty; in 1820 I perceive one hundred and fifty five, amounting to 49,394 tons. Thus, when the Trade appeared to want every support, your inclination to afford it is proved, by taking from it that bounty which it had enjoyed for years, and by reducing the duty on Foreign Seed, for crushing, about one-half;† in a word, many must be driven out of the Trade altogether, as appears already to be the case with your constituents, not one of whom now has a Vessel employed in it.

The Vessels employed in the Newfoundland Trade are more numerous. From this Port, last year, there went upwards of one hundred and thirty; laden principally with Salt, Provisions, Bread, Butter, Pork, Flour, Clothing, Naval Stores, &c.; and this year there is said to be quite as many going, but their cargoes are of very diminished value; no Bread, no Beef, no Pork, no Flour, no Butter, is found in their cargoes. These articles are now conveyed out from Bremen, from Germany, &c. and even in Foreign Vessels.

It is well known that the right of fishing about a large portion of the Island of Newfoundland, has been ceded to the French. They participate in all its benefits; and now, to encourage our Marine, you permit the Germans to supersede us, in the carrying of our Provisions, &c. without any extra duty whatever. I am not aware that I can point out the difference in the manner the carrying system is now conducted from what it was, better than by stating the fact, that about

† The reduction was more, see Letter II.

five years since, a British-built Vessel, belonging to this Port, with her cargo, was actually seized, condemned, and sold by auction, in Newfoundland, for carrying out Irish-cured Pork, the property of a house in London, from another British Settlement to that Island.‖ This was done under the old Navigation Act, because it was supposed one voyage had been omitted, (viz. bringing the Pork to England first,) and consequently less employment had been given to British Shipping. But, now, German Sailors, at one-third wages, are navigating German Ships, at one-half cost, laden with German Provisions, direct from German Ports, to our British Settlements. Of this fact you are well aware. How to reconcile it with your avowed support to British Shipping, employed in these Fisheries, I have yet to learn. Few of the Colonists regard it, I am told, as an advantage; it is more than probable the smaller houses will be injured by it; whilst the difference in the export of Pork and other Provisions, from Ireland, must be very great. Yet all the extra profit falls into the hands of Germans, &c. some of whom, I believe, are forming establishments there, for the sale of their produce; every part of which, provided they will swear it is intended for the Fisheries, will now be admitted free of duty; many of our Shipping are, by this competition, excluded from carrying Stores to our own ancient Colony. No necessity appears to have existed for these measures, which seem to have been adopted to hinder the American States from becoming the sole carriers, by preventing them having undue advantage over the Ships of other, viz. the Belgian States. These you encourage, by creating

‖ The Mary Ann, of Liverpool, was seized and condemned, and sold by auction in St. John's, for taking from Gibraltar a quantity of Irish cured Pork, that had previously been sent there from Cork. The bonds given for the amount of the sale were, however, afterwards cancelled, by order of the Lords of the Treasury, after very considerable expense, and the vessel being detained a whole summer.



for them employment; thus, giving to the Hanseatic Shipping what the United States forced from us. Surely this was not "*unavoidable*"—beyond all doubt, it has not been beneficial.

Most of the remarks here made, relative to Newfoundland, will apply to the other Colonies. Their increasing population, and consequent growing demand for supplies, obliged us frequently to resort to Orders in Council, to permit that Trade, to which, since 1822, American Vessels have been freely admitted, provided they went home direct. The necessity for which you contend, of not giving the Americans a preference over the Hanseatic and other Shipping, caused the total repeal of your fifth division of the old Navigation Act in 1824; and the fourth having been destroyed, excepting as regards Asia and Africa, long since, there now only remains to be considered the third, or what regards European Trade. To this I would urge your most particular attention, feeling assured that a close examination of the statements you made, of the quantity of Shipping employed in the Northern Trade, will hardly bear out your conclusions as to the alleged prosperity of our Commerce. Nor do I conceive the argument relative to the number of Ships which have passed the Sound by any means a good one.† You bring it forward in support of your assertion, that, under the new Acts by which a Trade is granted on equal duties to several powers, British Shipping has not diminished in

† The greater part of English Vessels trading in the Baltic, belong to Ports on the Eastern side of the Kingdom. Many of these, particularly those of Yarmouth, &c. are owned in Shares:—of these Shares the Captains, or their near Relatives, generally have several. Employment to them is essential, as their wages constitute a profit or means of existence, and their number of course greatly increases the Sound Returns. The Returns would be more valuable if they exhibited the *tonnage* of the Vessel,—the Dantzic Vessels average upwards of 400 tons, and those of England, that arrive with Corn, will not reach 150 tons.

the Trade with those Countries. You well knew, that by far the greatest portion of the increase of our Ships to the North, last year, was with Russia—not then a privileged Country, with which our Commerce then remained on the old footing, and the great part of the Shipping, trading to that Country, necessarily passed the Sound, and swelled the number in a very great degree. But even the protecting duties on Russian Shipping are now withdrawn. §

You tell us that the Naval Force of Spain exists no more—and that of France is far inferior to what it was at the beginning of the war; from these Powers, we can, therefore, fear nothing. But, in answer to the question you so triumphantly ask, what have we to fear from the Commercial Marine of the Northern Powers? I shall endeavour to show that the course we are now driven to adopt, in employing their Vessels, is so rapidly increasing their Shipping, and diminishing the value of ours, that we have to fear every thing. How can it be otherwise, when our Government withdraws from us that protection, upon the faith of which we invested our capital in Shipping; with which Shipping we are now obliged to contend against others, costing not one-half, and manned at one-third the expense? Under such circumstances, the Shipping of Britain must decline.

Here let me congratulate you on that felicity of argument, so peculiarly your own, which enabled you to find cause for rejoicing in the number of Vessels built last year, (1825) being 1312 equal 171,900 tons, whilst only 888 of 95,900 tons were launched in 1814; the year when, as you had before told us, the Trans-

§ See Letter II.

ports were first thrown out of employ, in such numbers, that in that and the following year 1266 of them, measuring 270,383 tons were given up by Government to their owners. The major part of these, being then first introduced on the freight market, ought to be reckoned as then first built, for they caused in those years an increase in our Mercantile Marine of that amount: in like manner with the 333 old Ships of war, of 150 to 400 tons each, which were sold with leave to navigate, and many of which now belong to this Port. A very large portion of the Vessels built last year are still for sale, and offered at a great reduction from their first cost. The number now building is much less than what it was.

I am very nearly correct when I state that there came into this Country from Sweden, Norway, Prussia, Germany, Belgium, and Denmark, in

1822—290,396 British, and 200,755 Foreign tons.

1823—254,775 ditto      294,423 ditto.

1824—256,818 ditto      468,652 ditto.

This exhibits an extraordinary proof of the support this Country is deriving from the new principles; for it shows that from 1823 to 1824 there was an increase of 2043 tons of British Shipping, against 174,229 tons in Foreign Shipping. Comparing 1824 with 1822, it shows a decline in the British Shipping employed in Trade to these *privileged Countries*, of 33,578 tons, and an increase of Foreign amounting to 267,897 tons! I am bound to admit that the advance upon 1824 during the last year is nearly the same in the one as the other; being 417,832, against 615,530; but, contrasting last year with 1822, we find British Shipping has only advanced 127,436, whilst the increase in Foreign amounts to the almost incredible quantity of 414,775

tons! And it is well known that very many Foreign Vessels were detained last winter with their cargoes on board, which did not happen to the English, that left earlier. Even, at this moment, I believe, you will find in our Queen's Dock, Vessels from Prussia, with their cargoes laden late last autumn; and you may now get these (timber) cargoes for nothing, with a handsome deduction from the freights, for taking them.—Speaking of Prussia, I am reminded of the proof exhibited of the benefit to our *Commerce* from this new system of reciprocity: our exports were less last year than the preceding one by £290,171, while our imports exceeded those of the former year by £243,000.

You further instance, as a proof of the increase in our Shipping, that the number of Vessels which entered Britain from all parts, in the year ending December, 1824, was 19,164 British, measuring 2,364,000 tons, and 5280 Foreign, measuring 694,900 tons; in 1825, British 21,786, measuring 2,786,844 tons, and 6561 Foreign, measuring 892,000 tons. Observe, however, this is not from the privileged parts; it is from *all* parts, and even this statement shows the Foreigners to be on the advance. For, the proportions taken on the *arrivals* of 1824, should have given only 818,000 tons; the difference of 80,000 tons is therefore against us. But, in another place, I find the increase on Foreign Ships, employed in 1825, is stated by you at 197,000, upon the tonnage of 1824 (694,000); let us then inquire what it ought to have been, in British, in the former year when 2,364,000 tons were employed. There should have been an advance of 671,000, yet it was only 422,000. How puzzled would any one else have been to have found, in this deficiency of 249,000 tons, reason to exclaim, "as long, there-

fore, as the Shipping of the Country thus goes on, I see no cause of complaint!"

The United States are privileged too; but, as we were obliged to cede to them those benefits, I shall not complain. Their Ships cost much less than ours, even though they have to obtain some articles from hence. They enter our Ports free from any charge, which does not apply to our own; and mark the results.

There arrived in—  
 1823—61,074 tons British, & 153,453 tons of American,  
 1824—43,892..... ditto..... 132,618..... ditto.  
 1825—37,852..... ditto..... 181,033..... ditto.

We have belonging to this Port as fine Vessels as theirs, as good sea-boats, as well built, and as handsome too; yet we find that, though the tonnage in 1823 and 1825 was nearly the same in amount, British Shipping had decreased 23,000 tons, and American increased 28,000 tons; a decided proof how much Mr. Charles Grant, and the Hon. House (who then cheered him too) were deceived when he affirmed, on the authority of some persons examined before the Committee on Foreign Trade, that though the freight in English Ships cost more than American, merchants preferred to give them the higher freights, because of the superiority of the British build—navigation, seamanship, &c. It is lamentable to think how grossly he must have been misinformed. There is not one person, connected with the American Trade, who could not convince you to the contrary in one moment. The fact is, British Vessels can hardly get employ, even at reduced rates, to America.

At Hull, from the 1st January to 30th April, 1825, there entered 217 British Vessels—32,892 tons, and

in the same months this year only 90 British Vessels of 10,694 tons. Of Foreigners, during those four months of this year, there arrived 204 of 17,000 tons, and from Jan. to April, 1825, 263 of 24,487 tons. Thus the British Ships entered inwards at Hull, exceeded in January, February, March, and April, 1825; those of Foreigners by 8,400 tons; while this year they do not amount to so much by 6,300 tons. And I apprehend they are not singular there; for, at Newcastle, I find the arrivals from Europe during the same period of 1826, consist of 10 British and 56 Foreign Vessels; and the entries outwards at their Custom-house exhibit 60 British and 80 Foreign Vessels. In this Port it will be found the number of Foreign Shipping is greatly on the increase; but as it would be unfair to take them at this moment, when so many of our Vessels are yet absent on their first or spring voyages, I shall not go into the detail.

I need not multiply proofs. I have shown enough, from your own statements, to demonstrate that British Shipping is on the decline, whilst that of all other Powers is on the increase; and I do think, we are now fully entitled to call for that relief, of which you held out some prospect, provided we could show a case requiring it. The benefits of the Warehousing Act too are considerably lessened, by the necessity no longer existing of making this Country the great depôt of European goods for our Colonies.

With regard to your curious argument—of the Shipping of Foreigners being wanted, because the people of England have not enough of their own,—I shall only observe, that I am convinced, as you *must* well know, that Britain, with all her spirit of enter-

prise, would have Vessels sufficient belonging to her, if there had been protection, afforded by her Legislature, adequate to their support. During the late war, our Shipping increased from 1,549,145 tons, in 1792, to about 2,480,000 in 1815; which is not far from the present tonnage, though it is below that of 1818 by about 200,000 tons. May I inquire, when you state the reason that Foreign Ships were so greatly employed last year, to have been the then inconveniently high rates of Freight; how you account for their increasing employment now, when the Freights of British Shipping are so inconveniently low, that very many of them are laid up in our docks, in the absence of any prospect whatever of profit from present rates? Freights, indeed, are now reduced in a greater degree, perhaps, than any thing else. The ordinary Coasting Freights exceed what at present can be obtained from many Foreign Ports; and the Freights to this Port from Ireland, a year or two back, far exceeded what is now current from the Netherlands, the lower Ports of the Baltic, &c. To what are we to attribute the reduction in the rates of carriage, excepting to the increasing number of Foreigners who are enabled to obtain beneficial employment, from their reduced cost, at terms far below ours?—Some idea may be formed of their trifling cost by a reference to Mr. Jacob's Corn Report, in which he tells us of some contracts being taken at about £6 to £7 10s per Prussian last, which, as an English Vessel of 140 tons measures about 100 lasts, I take to be very nearly £5 per English register ton. Some Stettin and Archangel Vessels, now here and new, have cost 90s to 98s per ton; whilst to build Vessels in England requires £12 to £13 13s for the hull alone,—actually more by £5 to £6 per ton than the price of these Northern Ships when fully equipped

for sea—their total outfit being £8 to £9 per ton.—Vessels of equal quality with the Foreigners' might be equipped here at £14 to £15 per ton, but it would take £20 to £22 for the better description of our Shipping.

A Carpenter in the Baltic Ports will do far more work than one of our Liverpool Carpenters performs, although his pay is 10d to 1s per day only, whilst here 5s is required, with extra allowances for particular work. In their current expenses they have advantages as well as in their first cost. The Captains' wages are only £4 to £6 per month, including all allowance, save hatmoney and caplaken; their Mates have 40s to 60s. Our Captains have £8 to £12, and with, generally, one-fortieth of the Ships' gross earnings, as primage; our Mates, 75s to 100s; their Carpenters 40s, ours 100s; their Seamen 20s to 27s, ours from 55s to 65s, and on the other side the land, 70s to 75s per month; beef there 40s per tierce, here 110s; bread 6s to 10s per cwt. here 15s to 20s.

Under these circumstances, I maintain no equality of Trade can exist: it must be against us. That fair reciprocity for which you contend, can only exist in theory, till something like an approach is made to equality in the terms of building and navigation. If their expenses be not one-half, it is manifest they can sail for one-half the cost that we can. It is equally clear, that, as our present rates of Freight will not in most cases cover our expenses, our Shipping must decline,—whilst theirs will continue to increase, so long as they continue to enjoy, as at present, a beneficial and profitable employment. This they will do so long as your measures give them as free admission to our Ports, and in other respects privileges as great as our

own Shipping enjoy. Very different was the Law when the far greater part of the Shipping of Great Britain was built. They were then protected by exclusive Laws, which ought never to have been withdrawn, without a recompense for the injury or the substitution of others.

You have told us it would be unbecoming our greatness not to give to small interests, that which great ones have been enabled to obtain. Why not apply this doctrine in the Government of which you are a Member? Government dare not attempt to take off the Corn Restriction Laws; you dare not propose to withdraw all protecting duties upon Grain: why are you not equally jealous of the rights of the Shipowner? He is equally as much entitled to a continuance of the protecting Laws under which he invested his money, as the Landholder. Why not, in this instance, defend the weak as well as the strong?

In the singular display of inconsistency which His Majesty's Ministers exhibited, when, on the 1st ult. they announced their intention of doing, that which, ten or twelve days before, they declared it would be most injudicious to attempt, "as it could only terminate in disappointment and inconvenience;" their first step was to assure the Landed Interest that they considered their claims to protection most sacred—that they never would withhold support from them. Yes, though thousands and tens of thousands of starving Artisans were then crying for food, not one single quarter of Wheat should be taken out of the warehouses for their immediate subsistence until a tax of twelve shillings had been paid upon it, as a protection for the English Corn-growers. But when the protec-

tion was withdrawn from our Shipping, not one word was said about recompense to their owners, although their claim was equally as well founded, nay, more so. The property of the Landowner might not injure by time, whilst the Ship, from its limited duration, must decay. Our Ships have been obtained at an immense cost, built of a variety of articles, each of them heavily taxed; yet because certain theories were incomplete without their sacrifice, that sacrifice must be made, and all protection at once taken from them, to place them on an equality, though costing £20 per ton, with others of £8 to £10: thus exhibiting a complete deviation from that system, by the support of which our Navy has risen to its present power,—a system which all our Rulers since Cromwell, by whom they were originated, to a very late period, have invariably maintained. Unprofitable as other of your measures may now appear, there can be no possibility of amendment here.—Who will venture to commence against such fearful odds? If goods are now safely conveyed by Foreigners, at half the Freights of English Vessels, there is no inducement to employ the latter.

Having thus shown that the tonnage of the British Shipping which entered our Ports latterly, has been proportionately less than Foreign; and that, though it is greater now than at any former period, this addition cannot be taken as any proof of their comparative increase; that, in point of fact, the tonnage of British Shipping is less now by 232,000 tons than it was in 1818; that building cannot fairly be considered as increasing, because, though 424 Vessels, of 76,000 tons, were launched last year more than in 1814, there were in and immediately following the year last mentioned, 1599 Vessels, of upwards of 360,000 tons,

added to our *Mercantile* Marine, which you correctly tell us "gradually grew into competition with our then Marine;"—that Foreigners are rapidly extending their Carrying Trade to the exclusion of British Shipping, so much so, that between 1816 and 1825 the advance on the tonnage of British arrivals is only 40 per cent., while on Foreign it is actually 180 per cent.; I venture to press these points upon your notice, not doubting that you will, ere long, be inclined to think us entitled to relief. What that relief is to be, we leave you to decide; it ought to be sufficient for us to convince you our present distress is such as to render it absolutely necessary.

A BRITISH MERCHANT.

## LETTER II.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM  
HUSKISSON, M. P.

*Liverpool, 31st July, 1826.*

SIR,

WITH reference to the Letter I had the honour of addressing to you in the *LIVERPOOL COMMERCIAL CHRONICLE* of the 1st instant, I have to express my first great pleasure at having just been informed, that the most lively attention of yourself and your colleagues is fixed upon the present depressed state of the Shipping Interest; and that you would gladly adopt any measure for its relief, not inconsistent with the general welfare of the Country. What a pity that this attention and sympathy did not exist at an earlier period,—when those treaties were making, to which we attribute the present distress.

The haste with which I prepared that Letter, has since caused me to regret one or two trifling points of your Speech of the 12th May having escaped my notice. However, I have examined every statement or argument, to which any importance could be attached; but having, by some accident, omitted to forward to the Editor the following remarks on the subject of the Sound Duties, I must beg to insert them here. I had been speaking of the fallacy of your argument relative to *our*† great share of the Baltic Navigation being proved by the *number of Ships passing the Sound*, and had stated that a great portion of the British

† See Note to the preceding Letter, page 80.

Shipping consisted of Vessels trading to Russia—not then privileged,—when I said, “But even the protecting duties on Russian Shipping are now withdrawn,” and should have continued—“with what intent it is most difficult to discover, save it be, by giving them encouragement to increase their hitherto limited number of Shipping. All their Vessels last year met with sufficient—with great employment; but now, having received from us privileges to which they could have no pretensions, they are rapidly building more in every place where they have accommodation; particularly in Archangel, in Wyburg, in Fredericksham, and the ports of Russian Finland—thus raising the total of their Shipping to numbers, which, if they last year had had, the Sound returns would have exhibited far different results.—Britain is the great purchaser of Russian produce. To that Empire our export is not considerable, but in England alone they find a market for their Timber, with which we may be amply supplied from our North American Colonies—(as well as with Tar, Pitch, and Ashes, for which we are now annually paying so much to Russia;) for their Hemp, Flax, and Seed, which Ireland could produce in sufficient quantities; and for their Tallow, the use of which our Fisheries ought to supersede. With an Empire thus dependant on us for the sale of its great staple productions, we ought to have made our own terms. Instead of which, by the alterations in the Navigation Act, they are raised to privileges once exclusively ours, while their Commercial Tariff prohibits exportation to us of several articles very valuable to our Manufactories, and forbids the importation of very nearly two hundred articles of our production—such as Printed Cotton Goods, Lace, Blankets, Woollens, Hats, Buttons,

Glass, Earthenware, Watches, Cast and Wrought Iron-work, excepting always such as new Machines for the benefit of their own Manufactures, and these they admit free of duty. I also said, when instancing that singular sort of support, you appear so anxious to give to our Whale Fisheries, that you had reduced the duty on Seed, for crushing one-half; it should have been nineteen-twentieths—the duty was £10 per last, but it is now only ten shillings per last—thus enabling the Crushers to produce Oil at very reduced prices.

Having supplied this omission, and noticed this error, I should here have concluded, had I not been desirous of remarking that among the many with whom a Commercial life obliges us to have intercourse, we meet with few who have attempted seriously to impugn the conclusions that have been drawn of the baneful effects of your reciprocity measures. There were, indeed, some who desired us to pause ere we formed a judgment upon the statements,—that have been so widely circulated;—and it was declared that a week would produce an answer, showing how incorrect I was. That reply has not yet appeared. I court investigation; I am anxious for inquiry; I wish, indeed, that we should be proved wrong; but, unfortunately, the depressed state of our Trade proves we are not;—and whilst we suffer from the effects of your system, be not surprised, if, at least, we exercise our right of complaining of it. In what manner you have explained and defended your measures, I have endeavoured to show; the difficulty of believing your Speech of the 12th May, was seriously intended for the purpose it professes, may have kept many from replying to it: nor by me would it have been noticed—it would have been left to the praises of the Treasury



Press—had not some of your friends here, all it once discovered its “unequalled excellence,” sounded the pœans of its victory, and cried it up as the clearest and most luminous explanation of your system—the best exposition of your principles,—the most decided proof, of the wisdom of your measures, and consequent benefit of those measures to your Country. It therefore became necessary that this, your statement, should be examined, in order that the delusion, in which it was calculated to involve the Country, should be dispelled—the injurious effects of your policy unveiled, and an additional proof furnished of the inadequate manner, in which the Shipowners of England are represented in the House of Commons. There are, indeed, some who think that if any part of it be demonstrative, it is the whole,—which gives such admirable proof of the affirmative of a doubt you have more than once hazarded,—whether your situation as Minister of the Crown, was not incompatible with your duties as Member for the great *seaport* of Liverpool.

Your system has had the benefit of five weeks' more experience, and mark the result:—in that time, there have entered Liverpool, from the Northern privileged Ports, seventy-two Foreign Vessels, and eighteen British; of which latter, seven have arrived with Grain this last week, very small trifling cargoes, the whole of which, two of the Foreigners would have carried. *Fourteen* British Vessels have cleared out in the same period, and sixty-nine Foreigners. Can it be forgotten that every Freight given to a neutral Vessel in which British capital is employed, or for which British Shipping could be substituted, is precisely so much taken from ourselves, to give to our opponents; yet we see

every measure successively adopted to give them increased employment, to our injury. The Navigation Act of this Country is, or rather was, the foundation upon which the colossal monument of our victories—our glory—and our national power was erected; every thing, hitherto, had been,—every thing should continue to have been done to promote our Mercantile Marine, for upon it depends our superiority as a Naval Power; destroy, as your policy must do, the one, and what will then become of the other? It must cease to exist. Granting that that augmentation of our Trade,—that improvement of our Commerce, of which you were speaking at the Goldsmiths' dinner, a few days back, should take place, we cannot be much benefitted, for the great portion of our Carrying Trade is now passed away to Foreigners. Our Shipping is declining; it must, under your system, continue to decline. It is useless to disguise the truth. We are, we have been, falling off, but the Shipping of all other Powers are on the increase. It is difficult for an individual, situated like the writer, to get access to the official documents of other Countries; but it would appear from the pamphlet of that patriotic nobleman, the late Lord Sheffield, that in 1790, the Merchant Ships of America, were only 450,000 tons, and in 1800, about 939,000 tons: you inform us that they have now 1,680,000 tons. With regard to European Shipping, knowing that all their own Coasting Trade is confined to their own Ships, and that in their intercourse with this Country, they last year increased their numbers, compared with 1824, in the proportion of very nearly one-third, whilst we have only increased ours about one-fifth; it is manifest they will soon exceed us. But I have not here instanced the privileged places\* alone, I have taken *all Foreign Vessels*;—

\* Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Prussia, Belgium, and Germany.



the former would have shown, that in 1825, they had more than trebled the tonnage of their Shipping (605,530 to 200,755) over the quantity they employed in 1822, while we, in the same period, have increased ours only 45 per cent. (viz. 290,396 to 417,832.)—Opposed to which incontrovertible argument of their regular and progressive increase under the protection of your measures, we find that on the 30th Sept. 1816, the registered tonnage of Great Britain was 25,864 Vessels, measuring 2,783,940 tons; but that on the same day, 1824, it was only 2,559,587 tons, in 24,776 Vessels. I have no official document of a later date, but you stated a few weeks since the exact number of British Vessels, at the close of the last Christmas quarter, to be 24,174, and their burthen 2,542,000 tons.

Thus the subject assumes a very different aspect—it is now no longer a mere matter of profit or loss; the question becomes of another and a far more serious nature. It is now the question of our existence as a Marine Power—and of our means of defence from external foes. “As defence is of much more importance than opulence, the Act of Navigation is, perhaps, the wisest of all the Commercial regulations of England;” so said Adam Smith; (no great authority, perhaps, with you,) in his book 4, chap. 2, and he further says,—“its provisions are as wise as if they had been all dictated by the most deliberate wisdom.” But this Act is now no more; its boasted provisions all swept away, superseded by others, of which even their projector has declared, “He could not pretend to say they were the result of wisdom,” an opinion in which the whole Country joins. I will not here attempt to aggravate those feelings, the influence of which alone could have extorted such an admission;

but, as you now admit our complaints to be well founded, and agree in the necessity of relief, I call upon you to apply that relief quickly, and to alleviate our anxiety and alarm, by pointing out the mode by which you purpose to recompense us for the destruction of those privileges which have been considered as the birthright of the British Shipowner.

We do not, however, call upon you to break faith with Foreign Nations, as you have done with us;—no, your treaties, such as they are, must remain—but give us, at least, the liberty to be on equal terms; let us, at least, have reciprocity here. I complain, Sir, of the following charges and impositions which are exclusively levied on British Shipping, all Foreigners being exempted from them in England and elsewhere.

*Stamps on Apprentices*—which by Act 4, Geo. IV. chap. 25, we are obliged to take in numbers proportioned to the size of the Vessel—the stamp on each indenture is 20s; and they have nine times out of ten to be renewed every voyage. I believe it is optional in all other trades to take apprentices or not; but the Shipowner, who is obliged to take them, is likewise obliged to pay this tax of one pound each.

*Stamps of Ship's Articles*, which, from the manner in which they are usually signed, are, I apprehend, of no value in Law, although we are, under a penalty, obliged to take them, cost 35s each. These are, of necessity, required for each voyage, and it is a charge which I do not find imposed by any other Nation.

*Stamps on Charter-Parties*, costing 35s each, are of course renewable each voyage, and no attention is

paid to the amount of Freight, whether it be £50, (the present rate of a small Vessel out to Lisbon, Malaga, &c.) or £5000; still the tax of 35s is alike to both, though the smaller Vessel makes three or four voyages for the larger Ship one.

*Mediterranean Passes.*—By what right Messrs. Keith, Douglas, Clerke, Cockburn, and Co. are authorised to require £5 5s for each pass, is as little known as the purposes to which these guineas are applied. It, however, deserves your attention, as if it be solely for fees, it ought to be abolished instantly; and if it be not, the tax should not fall upon Shipping, which are not exclusively benefitted. The Vessels in this Trade are small, (their average value under £1200,) yet these three or four Admirals contrive to pick up from them £2 12s 6d per voyage, except their owners will pay them down £5 5s per Vessel.

*Stamps on Policies of Insurance* are a heavy tax; they are due on each Insurance effected; and a Vessel making four voyages per year, for example, to and from Havre, Bourdeaux, or the near Ports of France, Portugal, &c. pays 40s per cent. on her value for stamps alone. Now, for argument sake, suppose any man could make £10 per cent. per annum profit out of his Vessel, that Vessel value £1000; his profit of £100 will have had to pay for the policy-stamp on his Insurance £20, or one-fifth of his gains: no other trade is taxed like this for Insurance, or rather for the stamps on effecting it.

*Detention in Quarantine and Expenses of Release.* It has been stated by some of the gentlemen who waited upon you during your late visit to this town, that you

assured them the charges of release from Quarantine were reduced to £3 10s, (it had, with the expense of agent's fee for obtaining it, been £8 to £10;) but this is not the case; £4 14s 6d is the lowest sum received at the Custom-house here; and I am glad of this opportunity of mentioning (as there are some who believe one guinea is charged by the Collector as a fee) that the whole is transmitted to London,—being thus charged to the Liverpool establishment, £3 13s 6d for Council fees, and £1 1s for Treasury fees. However, Sir, even the £3 10s would be far too much; you must see how hard it presses on a Vessel from Gibraltar, for instance, and perhaps in ballast too.

But the *Detention in Quarantine* is an additional proof of the hardship of those measures, consistent only in oppression, which pursue all British Shipping. The Shipowners are anxious that the Collector and Controller of the Ports at which the Vessels may arrive, should be furnished with power to liberate them, without applying to London, when it should appear to them that there was no probable danger of infection, and the Ships furnished with unquestionably clean bills of health. This power, at present, the Council have; the liberation follows, in London, as a matter of course; we ask for the same privilege in Liverpool. You have stated, as the reason why it should not be granted, that Foreign Powers may retaliate and cause extra detention to British Vessels, as was the case some years since. But the fact is, when the health officers at Genoa, Trieste, &c. laid the fourteen days' Quarantine on our Vessels, it was done under the impression that there was a general and unlimited introduction into this Country of Goods from the Levant, from Egypt, &c. Had the permission been

granted, as we now ask it, only to Vessels arriving with clean bills of health from Spain, Sicily, &c. and the Western part of Italy, or for Vessels from the Western part of the European side of the Mediterranean, it is more than probable we should never have heard of their retaliatory restrictions. Each of the great cities in Italy, &c. have health-offices established in them; why not give to our Custom-house the same authority.—You have recognised the principle: by Order in Council, of the 16th November last, the Collector and Controller are permitted to allow the landing of Fruit out of Vessels from Spain, whilst they are in Quarantine. Yes, the Fruit may be absolutely landed and consumed, whilst if the Master of the Ship dare to set his foot on shore, he is liable to very heavy penalties; he and his Ship must remain,—no matter how healthy the place whence he comes, or the length of time he has been in coming, if he presume to partake of the festive dessert he furnishes his wife, his family, or his friends, he is hurried to the punishment of fine or imprisonment.

*Exorbitant charges of Foreign Consuls here.*—The oppressive charges and vexatious regulations levied on British Ships by the Consuls of some of the Southern States, have been a source of great complaint. It is essential something should be done immediately; reciprocity here is all nonsense. An English Ship goes to the Brazils where the British Consul verifies her cocket, if required, for a dollar, and perhaps a Ship may have four to six or even ten of them, for one cocket will serve for five hundred bales of Cotton; whereas no Ship receives on board here more than a very few tons of Goods per each cocket; so that there have actually been paid for a Vessel of less than

200 tons, more than £20,—more than double the tonnage-duty we formerly paid to our own Government. Apprehending, however, this subject is more immediately under the direction of the Secretary of the Foreign department, if early relief be not obtained, and no other public notice be taken of the subject, I shall hereafter draw his attention to the imposition.†

*South Sea Duty.*—This is a singular but very oppressive duty, from which I believe you think with us, the Shipowners ought to be relieved to a greater extent than they have been by the Acts 47, 55, and 56 of Geo. III. or the 1st and 2d of his present Majesty. The principle of the propriety of ceasing to oppress the Shipowner is, I take it, recognised by the 55th of the late King, which states, that when the Lords of the Treasury announce the guarantee-fund to be complete, then the collection of the duties, it imposes, shall cease. When that may be, I am utterly at a loss to conceive; but in the mean time, it is as difficult to discover any reason, why a growing Trade should be cramped by duties, amounting to two per cent. on the valuation of the cargoes, and three shillings per ton, on the registered tonnage of the Vessel for the voyage, which are the duties from the Oronoko, round the Cape

† The charge made by the Brazilian Consul is four shillings and sixpence for each cocket, but he also levies other fees on the English Vessels clearing out to the Brazils.—The following are his charges upon the Brig Mary, of 198 tons, bound from Liverpool to Rio de Janeiro:—

" Consulate on 93 cockets at 4s 6d per . . .	£20 18 6
" Bills of health . . . . .	0 9 0
" Manifest . . . . .	0 9 0
" Bills of Lading . . . . .	0 4 6
	£22 10 0

The writer of this note mentioned this case to Mr. Huskisson, and it was afterwards detailed in a Memorial to Mr. Secretary Canning, from the Liverpool Shipowners' Association. This Memorial Mr. Huskisson transmitted, but to it no answer has yet been received; although the subject could hardly have escaped the attention of Mr. Canning, during the subsequent correspondence that took place a few months since; on the appointment of the new Consul for the Brazils.

Horn, to the most Northerly part, of the West coast of America, (excepting the territories of the Portuguese and Dutch;) such being the limits fixed per 9th Queen Anne.†

*Duty on Hemp and Flax.*—The latter last year produced £19,888, the former £178,156—half being at 9s 2d and half at 4s 8d per cwt. The total reduction of duty would be a great relief to Shipping, first in their actual expenditure, and secondly in its destroying the bounty which is now given on the Sail-cloth and Cordage sent to the Colonies: thus enabling them to equip their inferior Ships lower than ours. As these bounties have to be deducted from the above amount, the loss to Government would not be great.

Do not, however, conceive we should take the remission of these duties as the full recompense, to which we are entitled, for the privileges that have been taken from us. The great question of the Timber duties from the British Colonies must be agitated; it is of the greatest importance, and must receive every attention. It must not be introduced, unless the parties are prepared to urge it, in every possible shape and form; for we know the Baltic Interest, rich, strong, powerful, and united, in the discussion of every Commercial question gain some advantage. The Timber Trade is the more valuable, than perhaps any other,

† The South Sea Company was incorporated by 9th Queen Anne, chap. 21. It is well known that the *Bubble* caused their property to be placed in the hands of Trustees, who made little if any opposition to Trade to their limits being carried on by persons, not free of the Company;—until in the case of *Toulmin v. Anderson*, it was decided, that no Insurance was recoverable on a Vessel trading to their limits, without a License from the Directors.—By 55th George III. chap. 57, the Commercial privileges of the Company are abolished for ever; and when the guarantee-fund shall amount to £610,464 3s, bearing interest at three per cent. per annum, the same shall be transferred to the Company, in full payment for the surrender of their Charter.

from the greater bulk of Shipping it employs; £100,000 in manufactured goods would not more than fill one Ship of 500 tons, the same sum invested in Timber would fill two hundred Vessels.

Knowing the difficulty you must experience in inducing any Power to cede those privileges, you have yielded to them, let me, in conclusion, urge upon you, to beware how you grant more. You are now negotiating a treaty with Portugal, the last having expired on the 19th June. Its commerce in our Woollens and our Fish has been most valuable; Oporto has alone taken 160,000 quintals of Fish per year, from Newfoundland. Even the Portuguese appear to be again sensible of the advantages of Shipping; in their trade with England, their Shipping has rather proportionately increased, in tonnage over ours, and in the trade with Ireland, the returns exhibit, in four years, an increase of British tonnage, about equal only to one-fifth, of the increase of the Portuguese. You will have to treat with the Netherlands. Some other ports on the Baltic have not, I believe, yet obtained treaties; with these do not bind us, as you have with Sweden, &c. I mention Sweden more particularly, having just seen landed out of the *Carpen*, of Stockholm, Captain Ludegreen, a quantity of Madder-roots and Madders, of which she had brought 161 packages from Marseilles,—and another is coming from Spain; while, it is well known, no English Ship could take into Sweden, from France, Spain, or the Balearic Islands, *Salt or Wine*, nearly their only Produce.—Here then I pause; for the manifest injustice done to the British Shipowners needs no further exposure; nor can I, or any other, detail the wrongs, under which they labour, more forcibly, than this plain matter of fact exhibits.

A BRITISH MERCHANT.

## LETTER III.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM  
HUSKISSON, M. P.

*Liverpool, 19th Sept. 1826.*

SIR,

I presume this will be the last Letter I shall have the honour of addressing to you on the present Navigation Laws; not because the subject of the distresses against which your system has obliged the British Shipowner to contend, is by any means exhausted, but because it is useless to attempt to carry conviction to a quarter, where political existence depends upon the continuance of the offensive measures;—measures, the defence of which, it is singular, no one can be found hardy enough to undertake. Since your speech four months back, not one word appears to have been said or written in their favour, save something like the following:—"A correct report of the speech of Mr. Huskisson in the House of Commons, on the 12th May last, when the Right Hon. Gentleman entered into his luminous exposition of the system of our Navigation Laws, has just been published. Such a combination of extended research—of philosophical argument—and of logical deduction, deserved to be rescued from the perishable columns of a newspaper. An appendix is given, containing several official accounts referred to by Mr. H. in his speech, either for the purposes of illustration or as the basis of his conclusions." Upon perusing these paragraphs, I obtained a copy, in hopes the tables thereunto affixed, might throw some light on the subject; but the

most careful examination of these "Official Accounts" only confirms the opinion, I have before expressed—an opinion, in which nearly the whole of the Country joins—and which is aptly summed up in few words, in a late number of the most Ministerial Journal of the day, where, speaking of this your speech or defence, it is described as "the very worst that ever was delivered." The quotation I have made evinces the view, some parties yet take of the subject; for my own part, I confess, the greatest value I affix to this new publication, is the expectation that it may invigorate some of your friends, or supporters here, and induce them, if any human being can, to defend your plans; or, perhaps, to show what benefit may be even expected from them: else what can be the use of such a Pamphlet now, when every conclusion and argument it contains, has been laid quivering at your feet, by the powerful reasoning of the popular writers of Blackwood's Magazine—the Glasgow papers—and others of the Northern Journals?

Your reply to the Liverpool Memorial (now published in many of the Newspapers) is still kept private; but I understand, it states that the distresses of the British Shipowners are equalled by the Northern privileged States—that your system is not yet fairly in operation—that these measures of reciprocity were forced upon this Government—and that there is a trade permitted, to certain French Islands. But all this is so much more fully detailed in your parliamentary statement, than in your dispatch from Earham, that your answer is, in a word, only a reference to the former, with the amazing discovery, that the British Shipowners are not suffering more than Foreigners.

Now, if this be the fact, (and if it be not, who are to blame, for any distortion of the reasoning of your Letter, but those who have suppressed it?) if it be indeed true, that this is all, or the spirit of your reply, it is one equally undeserving notice or answer, except that it comes from you. With all the "information you may continue to receive from the best quarters," it must be allowed that we, who are in daily, and in active correspondence, with these Countries, have means equally as efficient of judging, as those who may deem it their interest to give you such information. I know that during some late discussions in this town, on the subject, it was deemed desirable to get, from some parties in the German Trade, the actual expenses of Dantzig, &c. Shipping. Their statement was found very far from the fact, as was proved, by actual examination of the captains, and even by a comparison with Mr. Jacob's report. As for the Consuls on the Baltic, &c. if they are paid any thing near what you suffer the Brazilian and Portuguese Consuls, to be paid in this Country, it is so clearly their interest, to represent every thing in the manner most likely to continue the present system, that we may, I hope, be excused from placing implicit reliance in their statements.

A walk round our docks, or a moment's conversation with any intelligent and uninterested person, conversant with the state of the Continental Seaports, must convince you, or any man, that the number of Foreign Vessels is greatly on the increase. From every inquiry we can make, we feel assured that building is going on, to a great extent in many parts of the Continent: this would not be the case were their distresses equal to

ours. Their Shipbuilders are quite occupied—their yards are full, and many contracts offering; but I do not know of one single contract for any of our builders here, who, when the Vessels, now on the stocks are completed, will, from present appearances, have as little to do as many of the Journeymen at present have; how little that is, I need not tell you, for we have it on record that you and your friend "Mr. Wilmot Horton, were elected Members of the Carpenters' Club, amidst most deafening cheers." You will, therefore, doubtless, be aware of the distresses of such of your brother Freemen, as are also Members of the Society, to which you belong.†

But if, in point of fact, the distresses of the Northern Foreigners are so great, (as to their equalling ours, it is quite ridiculous) how much greater must that of the British Shipowner be, when it is remembered that his Vessels are sailing at about treble the expense of theirs? If they feel the "pressure of the times," how much more acutely must that pressure be felt by those who, on a capital of twice the amount, and an expenditure of three times the sum, can only produce the same gross Freight, nett Freight being to the latter nearly out of the question? The Carrying Trade is necessarily given to that Carrier who will take the goods the lowest, and as these Northern Powers can, of course they do get all the employment, till they are fully occupied; then comes the demand for British Shipping, which, perhaps, may obtain a small advance on Freight in the absence of those Foreigners.

† It is not a little strange that Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Wilmot Horton were present at, and elected Members of, the Liverpool Carpenters' Club, within four-and-twenty hours of the time, the former Gentleman received a Deputation, from the Shipowners' Association, complaining of the evils inflicted by such Clubs!

I have before me a letter from Dantzig, just received; after announcing the probable discharge of a Liverpool Vessel, the writers add "when we hope to advise, having made some engagement for her at a saving rate, as there are some orders in our port for Grain, and not many of our own Country Vessels here unchartered." Thus, my view of the case is amply borne out by my correspondents', who seem to think the only chance of a saving Freight, is the absence of so many of their own Country's Shipping.

Great quantities of Grain are coming to England; we know it is nearly all on British account, and is it not hard, that we, the purchasers, cannot choose our own Carriers? If a Manchester Cotton-spinner buy his Cotton here, he tells us by what Company to send it home; why? because no principle is better understood, or more generally acted upon, than, that the owner of goods has a right to convey them as he likes. The English Merchant now chooses the Foreign Ship, which takes at a low Freight; for you cannot expect him to give any more for the carriage in British Vessels than in Foreigners, provided the latter can do it as well. To force this, our ancestors had recourse to discriminating duties,—under the protection of which our Marine became the first in the world—but those duties are now no more.

If this country be the sole purchaser of the Corn and Timber of Prussia, we ought to have had the preference of carrying it continued to us; but Prussia, you tell us, would again have raised, as before she did raise, her duties on our Ships and our Goods.† Let her do

† This, indeed, would have been no novelty; the same has often been done;—but those Northern States finding our Government treated their Ordinances with contempt, were too much alive to their own interest to continue them, when their

so. Would it have been less, for the interest of England, to have had her Commerce cramped by the open imposition of duties, than to have it crippled or destroyed, by the baneful effects of your reciprocity measures? Let us look at the great, the mighty interest that was at stake. It was a Trade, an injurious Trade, of only about half a million per annum. I am wrong to say *it was injurious*; it was only when your system came into effect, that this Trade ceased to be beneficial—for in 1824 we exported £634,074 to Prussia, and imported £504,140. Your measures, being in the following year, (the over-trading year as you call it,) in operation, the official returns exhibit a reduction of exports to £468,463, while the imports are increased to £620,287.

It is curious, that the Trade to all these Northern Countries, appears to be getting so much against us. I mention their amounts, however, only to show how trifling is their value to us.

IMPORTS.		EXPORTS.	
1824.	1825.	1824.	1825.
Sweden £130,751	£149,081 ..	£202,685	£141,142
Norway 86,493	94,375 ..	131,595	116,094
Denmark 35,881	136,673 ..	380,132	332,073

Why, Sir, we sent last year, to our own Port of Gibraltar alone, five times as much as the whole of

effect was only an accumulation of their own productions in their own Ports, and consequently to their own loss. In 1648 this feeling of hostility was so strong against Great Britain, in Russia, that the English were absolutely banished from that Empire; but the Russians feeling the injurious effect of this edict, speedily annulled it, and allowed them to trade on as liberal footing as other Nations.

Surely even the conduct of Queen Elizabeth to the Hanse Towns, when in reply to their threats, she said, "ignorance or want of respect in their Secretary must be their only excuse, for that their menaces were of no consequence to England," ought to make certain Ministers blush, when they reflect on the attention they have paid to the complaints or threats of Prussia, a State insignificant now, compared to what the Hanse Towns then were.



them put together; and our imports from two of the South American Towns,—say Buenos Ayres and Monte Video—exceed the whole of them by one-third; (see Parliamentary Paper of last Session, No. 372. †)—Our exports to these two Ports, exceeded those, to the three Kingdoms above named, by about one million of sterling pounds per annum.

Further, as to the forcing of these measures upon us, and the singular argument, that it was because you did not wish to withhold from Prussia, Sweden, &c. privileges, that were yielded to the United States—that you granted the reciprocity treaties to the former; it is a matter of notoriety, that though many of those privileges had for some time before been given to the Americans, they did not avail themselves of them, (except with our Colonies,) because their Ships are built at a considerable expense, and approach much nearer in price to ours, than any other Nation's; consequently, where we had no profit, they could not have much. The competition in the European Trade is not, between the Ships of the Northern Powers and America, but between those Powers and us. They (Russia, Sweden, Norway, &c.) have no Colonies to open to us; they have reciprocated all they could; they gave us all they had to give—a free admission to their Ports, and we did the same. So far all was equal, without giving them the Trade of our Colonies, and the importation of Mediterranean Produce, to this Country, as a sort of voluntary donation.

To the complaint that you make, (and here it is that your friends alone appear to support you, as it is

† The columns of Imports and Exports in the Table, at page 69, is extracted from this Paper.

the only vindication they offer,) that your measures are not fairly in operation; I would ask, when is it intended they shall be? Are we to wait until the Commercial Fleets of England cease to exist, or those of the Northern States of Europe cover the Ocean, to give a fair trial to your system?

The average number of Ships built during the last four years was only 1003; in 1814-15-16-17 it was 1045. Deficient as the former appears, it was only raised to its amount, by the great number of Vessels built in the North American Colonies last year; and as you have such a great objection to 1825, we will, if you please, strike from the above average, each of its last years, say 17 and 25, and the result will give you only 901 for the latter, against 1066 for the former period. So much for your boasted increase in building, to say nothing of the 1559 Vessels of 363,912 tons, which “were set free by Government to compete “with the Commercial Marine of the Country in “1814, 15, and 16.”

The total number of Ships belonging to Great Britain in December 1825, (24,174 Vessels, 2,542,216 tons,) was less than in 1816, (25,864 Vessels of 2,783,940 tons,) by 1690 Vessels of 241,724 tons. The decline in building, shows that this decrease in their actual amount will continue, except there is some prospect of improvement in their employment; that there is no such prospect, every one is aware. In my letter to you of 31st July, I proved the Ships of the Northern Nations were increasing, (a proof not at all affected by your subsequent remarks,) and as the decline in British, appears regular and progressive, how are we to discover the proper time at which your



system will be fairly in operation? Certainly, as it never was pretended these alterations in our Navigation Laws, were proposed to increase the employment, or number of British Shipping, it might be supposed the most favourable moment to note their effects, would be the earliest after their date, before that encouragement, they are calculated to give to our opponents, is in full operation. That these Foreigners now enjoy that bounty which, by your negotiation, is taken from the British Shipowner, is clearly proved by the fact, that the former are rapidly increasing, to the injury and consequent decline of the other.

You are understood, too, to have stated in your reply, that a Trade was open to the French West India Islands, in British Vessels, to a certain extent; in conformity with which, his Majesty had, some little time back, been pleased to permit French Vessels to trade to our Islands, on, as nearly as possible, the same terms, and in similar articles.—It would have been more candid to have stated what those articles were, than to imply we were ignorant or inattentive to our own interests. But this anxiety to remedy the effects of our ignorance and neglect will be duly appreciated by such of your friends as, grateful for your attention to their interests, are willing to trade to these French Islands, in any of the twenty-nine articles named in the Order in Council of 1st June, not one of which can be produced in this Country (if at all) at any thing near the price in France. Thirteen of these articles consist of Grain and its Manufactures; six are of Wood; and the rest present a curious assortment of Live Stock and Cotton Wool, Coin and Straw, Salt and Fruit, Hay and Bullion, Fresh Vegetables and Diamonds!

This is something like a fair specimen of your ideas of reciprocity, which I have been the more particular in mentioning, as your attention to the Shipping Interest has, in this instance, found some admirers!

You devote some pages (19 and 20) of your speech of the 12th May, 1826, to proving that a smaller number of Ships can, in peace, perform as much work, as a greater number in war, on account of Convoys. A return from the Admiralty, of the total number of Ships that sailed with Convoy in one year, compared with the total Trade of the same year, would have placed the matter at rest at once; as it is, your argument is very inconclusive. The exertions that were formerly used, to save Convoy, were so great, that they would fully counterbalance the delay of waiting. In fact, to our North American, and Sugar Colonies, our Vessels went quite as often then as they do now,—an immense proportion of our trade never went with Convoy at all,—in the Coasting and Irish Trades it was never heard of,—and at the same time, we were excluded, from an intercourse, with most of Europe, &c. But who would conceive, after all your speculations on this head, that you were alluding to the actual tonnage that entered—repeating the tonnage of each Ship, each and every time she entered? So that, in point of fact, the delay of Convoy, if any, was not of the least use to your argument or purpose, except that it might tend to avert inquiry, by deluding that large portion of the community, who never take the trouble to examine Parliamentary details, considering, if they come from a Minister, and especially if backed with “cheers,” &c. they must be quite true. Nor are they, in this view of the case, perhaps, altogether to blame; our Ministers, at all events, will never scold

them for it, or wish them to leave it off; except, indeed, just now, when its claims to antiquity may be prejudicial in their eyes; as it is not to-day that we have read, for the first time,

'Tis from high life, high characters are drawn;  
A saint in crape, is twice a saint in lawn;  
A judge is just, a chanc'llor juster still;  
A gownsman, learn'd; a bishop, what you will;  
Wise, if a minister; but, if a king,  
More wise, more just, more learn'd, more ev'ry thing.—

I am desirous of knowing, under what authority payments are made, to the Clerks of the Pilot Office, and to the Receivers of the Light Duties, which, together, amount to a very considerable sum per annum. The afflicted and distressed Manufacturers, have little idea that, at a moment like this, thousands are annually given away, to reimburse the owners of private Light-houses, and Pilots, for the injuries they would otherwise sustain from the baneful effects of your system. About fifteen hundred pounds were last year, distributed among the eleven Boats belonging to this Port, by the Custom-house. For though the strangeness of the language of Foreigners, and the difficulty of managing their Ships, fully, in the opinion of our predecessors, authorised their paying more; no, says the wisdom of our modern Statesmen, you shall only pay the same as our own Vessels: come you once a year, you shall be only charged as our own (which may be there four or five times,) are for each voyage; true it is, our Pilots may lose their lives from your inability to execute their orders, and consequently they ought to be better paid; but no matter, you shall pay no more,—we will make up the difference out of our own pockets—from our own taxes.

Whatever may be done,—and something, for the amelioration of the Shipowners, must be done when

Parliament meets,—I am anxious to guard against a delusion which is spreading among them, that the projected alterations of the Corn Laws will be for their benefit. It will, I am convinced, be found to be of no service to them: it will be of no more use to English Shipping, than the Carrying Trade of Baltic Timber is; for as the Foreigners can carry both at a much lower rate than the British, they will do so.—The remarks you make on this subject (page 20) read well; but, practically, we cannot expect benefit, from any improved system of the Corn Laws; since the rates at which the Prussian Ships bring it, render it impossible our Ships can compete with them.

Though the tables you have affixed to your speech are frequently referred to in its delivery, they will be found of little assistance, in analysing that strange admixture of figures, you have so ingeniously worked together. One instance may suffice, and one it may be necessary to give, as a specimen, to show the degree of confidence, to which your statements are entitled. In making your comparisons between the Trade in British and Foreign Shipping, for the years ending 1824 and 1825, (see pages 23 and 24) you state the actual tonnage that entered Great Britain in the former year—to be British 19,164, equal to 2,364,249 tons—and Foreign 5280, of 694,880 tons;—and that in the following year, the British Shipping amounted to 21,786, of 2,786,844 tons, and Foreign only to 6561, of 892,601 tons. Who would have thought, after your professions of candour, desire of the fullest investigation, &c. &c. you had not only contrived to mix up all the Countries of the World—no matter whether privileged or not, but had absolutely included the Trade to Ireland, and our Colonies;—Countries exclu-

sively our own—to which no Foreigner can trade. No matter how or where the increase is got, or made up, so as there is one—'tis all well. But even with this, the increase on British Shipping, employed in the two years, is only 422,595 tons, on a total of 2,364,249 tons, and Foreigners, on the comparatively small number of 694,880 tons, had got an increase of 197,721 tons. I know not how great a portion of the increase of British tonnage is in its Commerce, with its own possessions ; but I do know that from Ireland alone, there was an increase of 100,621 tons, and from our North American Colonies nearly half as much :†—deducting these then, from your boasted calculations, they leave an advance of Foreign Shipping in 1825 upon 1824, of about two-sevenths, and of English about one-fifth. There is another instance (page 22) where you assure the House, of your satisfaction, in being enabled to affirm “that taking the last thirty-seven years, the number of Ships annually built in Great Britain, instead of decreasing had increased,” when you must have known, that with the exception of the two last years, they had been regularly decreasing since 1814 or 1815. (See Parliamentary Paper, No. 338 ; and page 111.)

The great impetus given to the Shipping, in the two last years, exists no more—and with our present system and increasing difficulties, we seem rapidly approaching to that situation, which the French Minister, Talleyrand, appeared so earnestly to wish—when in showing to his Government, how alone France could effectually ruin Britain—he exclaims, “What would Germany, Italy, Spain, and France, combining their

† The arrivals from Ireland and the Northern Colonies, in 1824, were 1,041,210 tons ; and in 1825, 1,186,890 tons.

“strength, do against England ? They might assemble  
“in millions on the shores of the Channel, but there  
“would be the limits of their enmity, without Ships to  
“carry them over—without experienced Mariners to  
“navigate these Ships—Britain would only deride the  
“pompous preparation. The moment we leave the  
“shore, her Fleets are ready to pounce upon us, to dis-  
“perse and destroy our ineffectual armaments. There  
“lies her security :—in her insular position and her  
“Navy, consist her impregnable defence. Her Navy is  
“in every respect the offspring of her Trade. To rob  
“her of that Trade, is therefore to beat down her last  
“wall, and to fill up her last moat. To gain that Navy  
“ourselves, is to enable us to take advantage of her  
“deserted and defenceless borders, and to complete  
“the humiliation of our only remaining competitor.”

These sentiments appear to have been forgotten, in the late Parliament. Laws have been passed, destroying nearly all that protection, which, hitherto, has maintained our Mercantile Marine, in a state so effective, as to enable our Navy to “deride the pompous preparations” of all the world. Your frequent professions on this subject, (in pages 5, 6, 55,) relative to the first and paramount Law of every State, are of no value. If you still entertain those sentiments, and are not now convinced, of the injuries under which the British Shipowner labours, we shall find it the more difficult to gain that relief, to which we are entitled, when a professing friend opposes it. You tell us that every attention is due—but we receive none—it is not conceived worth packing a house for us—there was not even, at one time, a dozen Members present to hear your speech ; nor would it, I apprehend, ever have been published, had not some defence been

deemed absolutely requisite. It is, however, to be hoped that some more satisfactory explanation, of the intentions of His Majesty's Ministers, will soon appear; else the Shipowners will have to reiterate their well-founded complaints, in order that the Country may decide, whether it is prepared to witness their ruin and destruction.

If it be asked, as indeed it often is, why you are selected as the individual of whom we complain? I, for one, freely confess, that it is not, because you, alone are the Minister, who, as Chairman of the Board of Trade, recommended these measures to the consideration of the Legislature; but because in all our meetings here on the subject, when we propose to request the support and assistance of the Members of our Borough—we are asked—How can we think of soliciting you? We are told you are a Minister, pledged to a certain line of conduct—which, as a Minister, you must support; although, as our Representative, we consider we have a prior claim to your services, in that House of Commons, where you are bound, it is true, to promote our interests. In this situation we must look to others for assistance; and it is pleasing to find that we are likely to receive it from many Honourable Gentlemen, who, left unfettered by the trammels or duties of office and connexions, can conscientiously exert themselves, for the interest and protection of those Shipowners, whose claims have been so feebly urged by your obedient servant,

A BRITISH MERCHANT.

As the *Printed* Speech of Mr. Huskisson differs so materially from that which was *Spoken*, it is necessary to observe, that the two first Letters were written before the publication of Mr. Huskisson's Pamphlet.