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R E M A R K S

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BY THE PERUSAL OF A PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

“ Britain Independent of Commerce.”

BY P. WILLIAMS, Esq.

London :

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By J. D. Dewick, 46, Barbican.

1808.

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REMARKS, &c.

I HAPPENED to be, a few evenings since, in company with a gentleman, who, like most other young people, was a great admirer of whatever is uncommon, strange, and paradoxical. He had just finished reading Mr. Spence's pamphlet, entitled, "Britain Independent of Commerce, &c." and seemed to espouse the principles laid down by the author, and the consequences he deduces from them, with the confidence and ardor of an youthful partizan.

"Every friend to this country, and to the human species," he exclaimed in triumph, "must

exult at the cheering prospect which this incomparable author holds out to every true Briton— That the resources of the nation were equal to its difficulties, and that the national spirit, after a conflict of sixteen years duration, and unparalleled in the waste of blood and treasure, should, when abandoned by the continent, and at war with the united efforts of all Europe, still bear up against the overwhelming torrent of French ambition, and oppose an insurmountable barrier to the universal empire, which has long been the wish of the unprincipled Corsican, was a just subject of pride and congratulation. But the resolution and strength of nations, as well as of individuals, have a *ne plus ultra*, beyond which no abilities, stimulus, or exigence, can carry them. This was an alarming reflection to every considerate man.

“ For whatever fortitude and prowess the inhabitants of Great Britain may have evinced in their repeated struggles for national rights, liberty
 * and

and glory, every such exertion, when carried beyond the natural powers of the state, and particularly when of long duration, exhausts its native vigour, and resembles the successive flashes of a dying taper, which forbode its certain extinction. Great, indeed, then must be the fears and despondency of those persons that look upon external commerce as intimately linked with our national pre-eminence and prosperity, and even as the foundation of national wealth. But Mr. Spence has broken the charm, and proved that our national greatness is totally independent of foreign connexions, and rests upon the same foundations as our native island, inaccessible to every foreign foe, unassailable by every foreign storm."

I listened with attention mingled with that hesitation and doubt, which perhaps inveterate prejudice, and the degree of assent which the general sense of the nation, and of all mankind, founded upon the experience of ages, seemed imperiously

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to require from every individual. I expressed my doubts whether a nation, not engaged in mercantile pursuits, could support the expence of a formidable fleet, and furnish a sufficient number of hands, and that nautical skill and intrepidity, which is a necessary and exclusive consequence of the former, to enable them to act with effect; adding that a mode of action, so contrary to the dictates of common sense and experience, had never been adopted by any individual or nation, without producing the most disastrous consequences; and that the suppression of commerce, which nothing but national authority could project or enforce, would necessarily be attended by the loss of our colonies, of all foreign productions and improvements, and that intercourse to which the common Creator of the species seemed to invite all mankind. My friend, with a smile of pity, resumed the conversation.

“ That the plan of this ingenious author should meet with a violent and extensive opposition,
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is not a matter of astonishment to such persons as have examined the ordinary motives of human actions with a scrutinizing eye. Such curious observers of moral obliquity are well aware of the opposition which every discovery or refinement in the arts or sciences, history, the various branches of political economy, medicine, &c. has experienced from the ignorance, envy, caprice, or malice of rival empirics—and often from the greater number of those who were utterly unacquainted with the author or his discovery.

“ The applause and censure of such critics is certainly of very little importance. To form a just idea of the consequences which may naturally be expected from adopting the author’s proposal, we should examine it in its different bearings and relations to society, and to these islands, and from this general view anticipate the advantages that must result from it to mankind, and particularly to the inhabitants of Britain.

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“ The Moralist, the Natural Philosopher, and the Patriot, will unite to congratulate the author, their country, and mankind, upon this discovery, which will, no doubt, when generally understood, be looked upon as the best, and, indeed, the only substitute that has hitherto been found out for the long-sought philosopher’s stone, or the garden of Eden.

“ The Moral Philosopher will hail the advent of the Millenium upon earth, the period looked forward to with ardent expectation by many Christian writers, as well ancient as modern ; a period announced in every religious system, and so lately enlarged upon by the French economists, and a poet of our own nation. This favored isle, catching the first rays of the heavenly emanation, will, from her sea-girt cliffs, look down with mingled horror and pity upon the desolated plains and smoaking cities of her less fortunate neighbours.

“ With

“ With the decline of manufactures the rent of land must necessarily *fall*, which will bring the landholder and tenant more upon a *level*, and tend to produce the original *equality* of mankind—a prominent feature of man’s *native innocence*, and the *golden age*. The garden of Eden, the fortunate islands of Plato’s republic, and Sir Thomas More’s Utopia, will no longer be regarded as mere objects of *fancy*, or of difficult investigation. Every reader will then *feel* the truth of the panegyric written by an ancient poet :—

Insula prædives quæ toto vix eget orbe, &c. &c.

O happy nation, which no aid desires,
 But all the world supplies from her requires ;
 Able to glut King Solomon with pleasures,
 And surfeit great Augustus with her treasures !

POLY-ALBION.

“ The Natural Philosopher will anticipate the discoveries more peculiarly connected with his pursuits,

pursuits, which seem spontaneously to result from the adoption of Mr. Spence's plan. By keeping a *standing**, or floating fleet, in the latitude of the British isles, besides the probability of finding out the longitude, we may be enabled to solve many curious questions, which have hitherto baffled the researches of the learned: We may, perhaps, soon have it in our power to pronounce whether the Baltic Sea diminishes every day or not; and how far the report of the Swedish fishermen may be depended upon, who assert, that, at an advanced period of life, they have sat, with ease, to fish on rocks, upon which, in their youth, they could scarcely find room to place their hats: how far the inhabitants of Mecklenburg, in Germany, are in the right, who affirm, that anciently the Baltic Sea covered a considerable part of their country; to

* "We, if we were to lose our commerce, might maintain a *standing navy*, and a *fertile imagination* may easily conceive and point out abundance of important and *rational* occupation for such a fleet".—*Britain Independent of Commerce*, p. 63.

prove which they allege the maritime names of many towns in the duchy, which are now far removed from the sea, and still pretend to shew in their ancient walls the iron rings for the purpose of holding the cables which were fastened to them: whether the Aurora Borealis be the reflection of snows, long accumulating at the pole, or the electric fluid, which had been transmitted from the clouds to the earth during the summer months, and is recalled by nature to her atmospherical magazines, to furnish matter for new discharges. In the former case we may be able to determine to a considerable degree of precision, the yearly increase of cold in the polar regions, and how long the different countries in the neighbourhood of the Arctic circle will be able to produce vegetation and support animal life. The Patriot will view in the proper *division* and distribution of the fleet, the *national monopoly* of the true riches of ~~the~~ ^{the} liquid element, and the coasts of these islands produce their herrings; the northern ocean its whales, and the banks of

Newfoundland their cod fish, for the exclusive support of the British navy ; an effect which will tend to injure our natural enemies, to diminish the expense of our maritime armament, and promote population, by rendering the necessaries of life cheaper at home. Addison, in one of the Spectators, mentions a poet that discarded the letters successively, from the successive books or cantos of his poem ; and shewed them, as he humourously expresses it, that he could do his business without them. Mr. Spence pronounces a sentence of interdict, or excommunication, against every country under heaven at the same time, and boldly proclaims to an astonished world, that we can do without them better than with them. This is true philosophic independence ! The sage crossing the sands of Numidia exclaimed in the same spirit of learned independence and dignity, "*Omnia mecum porto.*"—I think, however, the author either was not aware of, or suppressed, the ulterior tendency of his argument. For had the ancient sage struck off to
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the south beyond the river Niger, or had the author alluded to the *civilized* and *respectable copper coloured nations* of North America, he would have discovered tribes still further *advanced in the scale of national independence and happiness!*"

The above rhapsody, or something very like it, uttered by an enthusiastic admirer of the pamphlet "Britain Independent of Commerce," led me to the perusal of it; while reading it these remarks were suggested, which were solely intended for the eye of friendship. The manner in which they were committed to paper (*currente calamo*) claims the indulgence and candour of the reader, and acknowledged inadequacy of ability in their author will, it is hoped, screen them from the severity of criticism. Though differing very materially from Mr. Spence, in my views of national wealth and greatness, I have not the arrogance to enter the field of controversy with a
writer

writer of his powers of mind and literary reputation.

I shall begin by observing, that it is not only a novel but bold doctrine which he promulgates, that "Commerce is of no utility to Britain, and that her riches, prosperity, and power, might and would exist were it even annihilated."

Happy for this country, did the clear-sighted, wily, and sagacious Talleyrand, the great master-spirit and director of French politics, conceive the same humble notions of commerce! In a career of success unparalleled in its rapidity and its consequences, master of an extent of territory, from the shores of the Atlantic and Mediterranean to the banks of the Vistula; the greater part of which conquest had made his own, the oppressor of the Continent yet sighed for "Ships, Colonies, and Commerce," the dearest objects of his ambition, justly estimating the importance

portance of trade and its effects on the prosperity and greatness of a people, and considering it the greatest possible source of the wealth of nations. Not merely a soldier, but a statesman, he appreciated every thing by its utility. Uneducated in the school of politics, still Buonaparte's penetrating eye discovered the mine whence we procure those supplies of riches, which have elevated us to unparalleled greatness, and afford the sole means of raising the barrier between the gigantic power of France and Universal Empire.

Though the Continent of Europe lies prostrate at his feet, and sovereigns themselves but execute the mandates of his lawless will, still "Trade's proud Empire," on the shores of Britain sets at defiance his menaces, which like "the pelting of the winter's storm," assail our ears, and are no more regarded.

The cry of "Perish Commerce," in the ve-

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hemence

hemence of debate, escaped the lips of a distinguished statesman; the surprise, not to say indignation, excited by the sentence in a full senate, evinced in a manner the most forcible the sense of the British nation on the subject. A similar doctrine propagated by Mr. Cobbet, in his Political Register, and so ably maintained by his coadjutor Mr. Spence, will scarcely make many converts, and that Commerce is the true source of national wealth will, I doubt not, continue to be the opinion of the thinking community. The President Jefferson's^x sentiments on the subject are well known; but *transatlantic* philosophy, I must observe, will not in this case apply to Britain. • *See 26*

In a moral point of view, long commercial habits are favorable to uprightness of conduct, integrity, and virtue, and the avocations of trade tend to tranquillise the clamor of turbulence, and temper the spirit of faction—like science

“Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros.”

Accustomed

X. In Jefferson's letter to the suspension of Commerce and consequent distress in which the case of Political Suicide the Embargo was placed the U. S. States "a state of dignified Repose".

Accustomed to pursue trade, and to gather its fruits, and reap the rich harvest of ^{the} comforts, the manufacturing classes of the community in Britain possess the temperance and sobriety of conduct consequent upon the discipline of industry; and when we pass on to the review of the higher orders of merchants, among a long list of names, which grace and adorn the annals of their country, with what rapturous admiration does the mind dwell on the princely charities, the unbounded benevolence of a Peele, a Baring, and a Goldsmid!

Cosmo de Medici, the illustrious Florentine, was the founder of a family, which rose from obscurity by its success in trade to a rank the most exalted. He was, we are told*, the most wealthy merchant ever known in Europe; in acts of public munificence, as well as of private ge-

* *Vide* Robertson's History of India; and Roscoe's Lives of Lorenzo de Medici, and Leo X.

nerosity,

nerosity, in the patronage of learning, and the encouragement of the useful and elegant arts, no monarch of the age could vie with him.

When we recollect, that to this great man we are indebted for the revival of learning and science, and the dissipation of those clouds of ignorance which overshadowed the earth in the middle ages, and which shed their baneful influence upon human intellect; surely the name of trade ought on this account to be ever dear to Literature.

In infant states before numbers and proximity invite the individual to supply one common want, every person, or at least every family, must depend upon its own exertions for the supply of the few necessary articles of domestic consumption; and in course of time, as population increases, and neighbourhoods are formed, every individual is at liberty to confine his exertions to that particular branch of industry, which his inclinations,

or

or his prospects point out as the most eligible and lucrative.

When the genius and industry of a nation has furnished more articles of necessary, elegant, or luxurious consumption than the natives want, or are able to purchase, the artist naturally turns his eyes to a foreign market, particularly when induced by the security afforded by regular governments, and by the expedition, convenience, and cheapness of good roads, and of water carriage.

Wealth, money, specie, or circulating medium, seem to me to be the same, and to rest upon Government security, as private bankers' notes derive their sole value from the responsibility of the individuals or firm; every other article convertible into money I should term goods, or personals.

No trade or barter can be carried on between
 D countries

countries independent of each other, or long between a paramount and dependent state, that is not founded upon mutual advantages arising from the diversity of climate, soil, political regulations, or national industry. As Nature has, in the distribution of blessings, bestowed different gifts in the productions of different climates, so she seems to have invited nations to an advantageous interchange of their respective commodities, and by this intercourse the elegancies of life have been imparted.

Were trade annihilated, the British sailor would never exhibit his unrivalled nautical skill, precision, and intrepidity; nor, I will assert, could the nation support the enormous expence of a navy superior to the maritime force of Europe united, under the auspices of Buonaparte. Deprived of this resource, it were impossible for Government to devise the means of supplying the public expenditure of the state. In every marketable commodity there are two very distinct
qualities

qualities to be considered, the physical or original value, and the artificial or superinduced, arising from durability, elegance of design, and superiority in execution. In the latter qualities, the English chiefly excel, and the wider the theatre on which our unrivalled mechanism is displayed, or in other words, the wider the extent of our commercial adventures and enterprize, the greater and more secure must prove the pecuniary rewards of our unparalleled ingenuity. In ancient times Egypt, Tyre, Sidon, and Carthage, and in modern Venice, Genoa, the Netherlands, Hans Towns, Holland, and England, have evinced a degree of opulence and power, that have astonished mankind; and it is worthy of remark, that most of the above-mentioned states were merely *cities*, which consequently could only engage in the carrying trade.

The disastrous consequences of the loss of Commerce are powerfully exemplified by comparing the present abject state of Holland, with
that

that envied superiority of wealth, freedom, and greatness, which she once so eminently enjoyed over the rest of her Continental neighbours, and which enabled her to dispute the sovereignty of the ocean with Britain itself. She undoubtedly was the most formidable rival this country ever encountered by sea, and religion, liberty, learning, and science were, in these her prosperous days, the associates of Enterprize, Commerce, and Opulence. Bereft of trade, and groaning under a foreign yoke, her present condition has been aptly described in these words: "Her coasts reduced to a barren asylum for fishermen, her interior a dreary marsh."

If, as Mr. Spence asserts, less than one fifth of the population of England is employed in agriculture, and the remaining four fifths were deprived of foreign commerce, would not property, population, and cultivation diminish, and the kingdom exhibit the same appearance that Poland, Russia, or Tartary at present display;

or recur to the substitution of noblemen's castles instead of towns, and revert to the chivalry, barbarity, oppression, and misery of the feudal system, from which it only emerged in the reign of Henry the Seventh, by the patriotic exertions of that Prince, the discovery of printing, of the compass, the Cape of Good Hope; and the New World? A nation that carries on no commerce, has no correspondents, consuls, agents, or factors at foreign ports. How can such a nation prevent the horrors of a present famine, or provide against the recurrence of a future one?— Without foreign trade no corn can be exported, and all the grain that exceeds the immediate wants of the inhabitants must prove a drug:— a circumstance which would render farmers careful not to raise too great quantity of so perishable an article, and which would, perhaps, not unfrequently plunge the country into all the miseries of famine.

Naturalists

Naturalists have remarked, that frequent inter-marriages in the same family deteriorate the breed; so has it been observed by politicians, that a seclusion from foreign intercourse extinguishes rivalry and competition in the pursuits of science, and of arts; and in mechanical and other discoveries, estranges one nation from another, tends to suppress the best and noblest feelings of human nature, and introduce in their place, the ignorance, bigotry, and pride, the adherence to established forms however ridiculous, unnecessary, and inconvenient, and the rejection of every foreign improvement, so peculiarly characteristic of the policy of the present Chinese Empire.

Britain, it is acknowledged, manufactures more than she consumes. Were her foreign trade annihilated, what is to become of her superabundance of manufactures, and of the persons employed in them?

If those persons engage in any other profession,
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the effects that would ensue would be an immediate and considerable reduction in the price of labour, and abject poverty, famine, and possibly insurrections among the great body of the nation and the people, would inevitably follow. Government, in this case, would be obliged to allow a famine to carry off the overflowing waste of a superabundant population, or have recourse to the Athenian and Roman methods of equalizing numbers and subsistence, by throwing the supernumeraries of national prosperity upon a foreign coast. On the contrary, by the encouragement of trade, the number of our population is cherished by the demand for men which our colonies must create, and which, as the nursery for our seamen, are of incalculable value.

What will the hospitable English nobles and gentlemen think of a plan, which, if carried into effect, will prevent them from offering a friend or guest at table, a glass of wine, spirits, or cordial,

or

or any refreshment better than malt liquor, Maidstone gin, or Irish whiskey? What will their ladies say to a scheme, which, by excluding East and West Indian, European, and other commodities, viz. spices of all kinds, Spanish wool, silks, sattins, cambrics, nankeens, &c. will lay them under the necessity of receiving or visiting their acquaintances in plain home-spun, woollen, worsted, or leather; and instead of coffee, green, or even black teas, and the display of their superior skill and taste, in the due proportions and adaptations of their spices, would reduce them to the choice of our homely English vegetation, ground-ivy, balm, sage, horehound, &c. sweetened by an infusion of honey, (not of *Hyblæan* quality) and this become an extremely scarce and dear article, and our only remaining saccharine substance after the exclusion of sugar, molasses, and treacle. We are as much dependent upon foreign intercourse for the most necessary ingredients of the *materia medica*, rhubarb, bark, aloes, &c. as of the pleasures of the table. “*Omnia cum feret omnia tellus,*”

tellus," then, and not till then, can we be independent of commerce.

All states that have attained a considerable degree of civilization, and whose situation has pointed out to them the advantages, and enabled them to taste the sweets of commerce, have founded colonies for the express purpose of a mutual and advantageous interchange of their respective commodities. Scarcely had the foundations of Tyre been laid by the Sidonians, when the former multiplied herself by establishing new colonies at Tangier, Cadiz, Carthage, &c. and the latter opulent and powerful state, though situated in a barbarous and hostile territory, was soon qualified and tempted to imitate her parent, and send new troops of adventurers to settle in Spain, Sicily, and other Mediterranean islands. She built New Carthage, which alone wanted the same opportunities to become the great European mart of commerce, which had rendered Tyre and Carthage the envy and admiration of Asia and Africa.

The polished, learned, and acute Athenians, were fully sensible of the advantages resulting from colonies and commerce. They founded Byzantium, Salamis, Corcyra, &c. and engaged in the most sanguinary and expensive contests, to defend them against foreign aggressors^{L, 117 2d}, and restrain them within the bounds of duty and submission, which they owed to the parent state.

The superiority of Greece over the rest of Europe, in arts, sciences, and literature, has by politicians been attributed to her situation; her proximity to the continents of Asia and Africa, her territory formed by nature into a very great proportion of small islands, and a continent indented by many large and commodious gulphs, inviting the inhabitants to export their domestic, and import foreign articles of commerce.

Poland, the most fertile, and one of the most extensive countries in Europe, from the want of that portion of property and independence of the
common

common people upon the nobles, that attended the progress of commerce among the other nations of this quarter of the globe, saw at the latter end of the last century her political existence, and even her name extinguished, and her territories partitioned and seized by the three neighbouring and imperial spoilers.

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“ Oh! bloodiest picture in the book of time,
Sarmatia fell, unwept without a crime;
Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
Strength in her arms, nor mercy in her woe!”

The natural advantages of soil, climate, and situation of Turkey in Europe, Turkey in Asia, and Japan, have been thrown away by their governments, and lost to the world at large, by the supineness, indolence, and neglect of commerce that prevail in those countries. It is remarkable that the piratical states of Barbary, that attack commerce upon *principle*, and scour the neighbouring seas in order to destroy it, are the most *unprincipled*,

pled, inhuman, and barbarous savages upon earth ; although they have been for ages subject to an established form of government, and neighbours to the civilized and Christian states in the south of Europe. Thus far have I attempted to prove that foreign intercourse, and external commerce, is indispensable to national prosperity and greatness ; but why, I would put the question, should Mr. Spence diverge (see his pamphlet, pages 42, 43) from his favorite subject, and assail the fame of that illustrious minister, whose loss these kingdoms can never sufficiently deplore ? It does indeed move my indignation that *Arthur Young's* remarks should be quoted as of sufficient authority to impeach the political sagacity of Mr. Pitt. In opposition to much greater and more weighty authority, I would maintain, that in whatever light we view the administration of this truly great man, and consider his measures, we shall find the most solid grounds for applause, admiration and astonishment ; and wherever there was a failure, that failure

failure was occasioned by causes, far, very far removed from the controul, the sagacity, and foresight of man.

Mr. Pitt assumed the helm of government at the close of the American war, when the congress had wrested the Thirteen United States from the dominions of Britain, which had carried on for many years the most expensive and bloody war recorded in the English annals against her rebellious subjects, assisted by a confederacy of the most powerful nations in Europe. This great man planned, combined, held together, and actuated the most formidable confederacy that had ever appeared upon the theatre of the world, though composed of the most discordant and jealous particles.

He adopted, on every occasion, the most appropriate and vigorous measures to give effect and ensure success to their combined and wide-extended efforts; swept the enemies' maritime force and
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commerce from every sea, * and attacked them in every foreign colony they possessed. During his administration the country was menaced, and at the same moment assailed by ~~the most~~ ^{an most} terrific display of hostility ~~that~~ ^{which} had ever before been witnessed, or perhaps ever entered into the human imagination. The National Assembly of France combined all the physical power and genius of the nation, unrestrained by principle or by conscience, disregarding the waste of human blood and happiness, lost to compunction, and every feeling of remorse, pity, and charity, poured forth her lawless, famishing, and desperate hosts, and levelled every obstruction to the hitherto chimerical scheme of universal empire. Mr. Pitt in vain summoned the continental powers to union, decision, and vigor. In vain he invited, and even *bribed* them to adopt the measures necessary for their common security, †

* He attacked France as a commercial rival, actuated by a love of empire and trade.

† Ipsorum per *biduum* militia fuit.

“ Quum in acie stare ac pugnare decuerat, tum in castra re-
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they fell successively one after the other, at Hohenlinden, Marengo, Austerlitz, Auerstadt, Jena, and Friedland, some the victims of precipitation, others of delay, some of a want of foresight, others of indecision, some of treachery and political depravity, all of a steady and vigorous co-operation in the plans of that minister who left at his death the coast of Britain the last dike of national freedom in Europe, and an impregnable barrier against which the designs and attempts of the French usurper have been shipwrecked and buried in the abyss of the ocean. Those persons who estimate ability by success, and who, incapable of tracing causes back through their effects, are still less competent to foresee and anticipate events, chequered, diverted, and counteracted as they neces-

fugerunt: quum pro vallo pugnandum erat, castra tradiderunt, neque in acie neque in castris utiles—Quum erumpere castris oportet, eunctamini ac manetis: quum manere et castra tutari armis necesse est, et † *castra et arma et vos ipsos traditis hosti.*"

Oratio T. M. Torquati—LIVIVS.

† The infamous surrender of Ulm by General Mack; and what was the Prussian campaign, with the battle of Jena, but the "*per biduum militia?*"

sarily are, when of great and national importance, entrusted to the execution of several individuals unknown to each other in different quarters of the world, of different characters and pursuits, depending, perhaps, upon the vigorous and united efforts of foreign powers jealous of each other, some of whom had been intimidated, and others seduced by the arms and arts of the common enemy of them all; whose political arithmetic is confined to the mere physical force of a nation, who can enumerate its fleets and armies, and describe its fortresses without adverting to the moral circumstances which invigorate or enfeeble its efforts, and totally change the complexion of public affairs; such politicians will not probably assign Mr. Pitt a very high situation in the list of the great public characters which this country has produced. Others, who are not of opinion that the talents of a statesman depend upon the glare of foreign conquests and triumphs, who view Mr. Pitt unappalled by dangers, and undismayed by difficulties, trampling upon disaffection and rebellion

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lion (*“diram qui contudit Hydrâm,”*) which were raising their envenomed heads through every part of the three kingdoms; and who beheld him at the same time holding together, encouraging and supporting the continental coalitions which could alone save Europe from being swallowed up in one common ruin; who viewed the British fleet victorious on every sea, and her troops emulate the bravery of her naval heroes upon every shore; such persons recognised in the resolution, activity, and decision of the minister the surest pledge of domestic tranquillity, and the only system that could preserve Europe and mankind from Gallic subjugation. From the proximity of the French and English coasts, and the constant intercourse between the two nations, Mr. Pitt foresaw that their political principles would soon come into contact, and that an union or collision would be the necessary consequence. The history of our country, the unsettled state of Ireland, the political disqualifications of a consi-

derable number of individuals, (the dissenters, a religious, moral, peaceable, and respectable body,) the struggles that have at successive periods convulsed the kingdom, place this truth in the most obvious point of view.

The internal situation of France, and her external relations, held out a fearful warning to the British minister, and he made the choice, or seized the alternative, which no person of religion, morality, humanity, or even *property*, will venture to reprobate. Mr. Pitt's disinterestedness is universally acknowledged, his integrity unimpeached. Perhaps no minister ever benefited a nation more by a single act than he did this country, by adopting the annual million of liquidation. His most zealous political opponents, now he is no more, do not refuse the tribute due to his exalted virtue, genius, and merit, and the sentence of Horace never was so appropriate as when applied to this illustrious character.

Urit

Urit enim fulgore suo, qui prægravat artes
 Infra se positas : extinctus amabitur idem.

But to return to the consideration of Mr. Spence's pamphlet—as the time for realizing his ideas, the Author has fixed upon the period in which Britain has already attained her present maritime superiority, and declines any attempt to shew either from natural causes, or from history, by what means a nation that carries on no external commerce can attain a degree of maritime skill and intrepidity peculiar to the inhabitants of these islands.

Indeed to a person of an ordinary capacity, it seems difficult to reconcile to any mode of reasoning, to analogy, or history, the possibility of a nation bidding adieu to foreign Commerce, and retaining the nautical consequence of extensive navigation. The influence of habit, or the ease, dispatch, and effect that result from it are universally

skill that has been acquired & to be the

versally acknowledged, and it will, I believe, be found upon enquiry, that nations ever have been more powerful at sea in proportion to the quantum and extent of their commercial speculations. The business of a mariner, like that of every other profession, is best learnt upon his own element, and it is well known that merchant vessels, and not King's ships, are the British sailor's choice. The low wages and strict discipline necessarily maintained on board men of war, the small proportion of prize-money, and the idea of confinement and slavery that is annexed to it, render the service an object of compulsion and punishment, not of choice.

Far be it from me to dispute the "*Aratro dignus honos.*" I merely assert that the cultivation of the soil to the suppression of manufactures would not only be impolitic, but ruinous. I would not recommend an exclusive preference, either to trade or husbandry ; but must maintain

that the true and natural character of this country is that of a commercial and manufacturing not an agricultural Nation.

“ ——— Felices nimium sua si bona norint
Anglicenæ! ”

In all those nations of Europe where property solely consists in land, the degrading system of vassalage and the most despotic forms of government are found to exist. In Britain, which is a commercial nation, there is more genuine liberty and independence, more private as well as public wealth and security, than in any other part of the world. We have nothing to dread from the vindictive measures and anti-commercial edicts of the enemy, the result of which will prove to be his own utter discomfiture and confusion. Enthroned in the waves Britain still maintains the sovereignty of the ocean, the influence of her navy pervades every part of the globe; it has been justly compared “ to the lever of Archimedes, which moves the world.”

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In fine, it is commerce which converts the labour and ingenuity of mankind to the greatest general utility, it lends wings to industry, and gives impetus to exertion, is the remuneration of our unex^{amplified}~~pected~~ maritime superiority, the glorious harvest of our naval triumphs, and as essential to our national greatness as is the air which we breathe to our existence.

Maueat quæso, duretque!

TACIT.

FINIS.