

CHAP. III.

A detailed account of the different Branches of Trade, which suffer by Depredations on the River Thames.—Depredations committed on the Property of Ship Owners, and the Proprietors of Craft and Boats in the River Thames:—On Merchandise imported and exported by the East-India Company:—On the Importations and Exportations of the West-India Merchants:—On the Trade to and from the British Colonies in North America:—On the Trade to and from Africa, and the Cape of Good Hope:—On the Northern and Southern Fisheries:—On the Trade to and from the United States of America:—On the Trade to and from the Mediterranean and Turkey:—On the Trade to and from Spain and the Canaries:—On the Trade to and from France and the Austrian Netherlands:—On the Trade to and from Portugal and Madeira:—On the Trade to and from Holland, Germany, Prussia, Poland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, and Russia:—On the Trade to and from Guernsey, Jersey, &c.—On the Trade to and from Ireland:—On the Coasting and Coal Trade:—On Prize-Ships:—On the Public Stores in the River Thames and Medway.—A general recapitulated View of the estimated Depredations on Commercial Property.—Concluding Reflections.

ALTHOUGH

ALTHOUGH it has already appeared, that certain particular branches of trade have been more objects of Plunder than others, yet it will be rendered evident from the details with are now to be given, that the monstrous System of Depredation, which has already been opened to the view of the Reader, pervaded the *whole Shipping and Commerce of the River Thames.*

In pursuing this inquiry, according to the plan laid down *of considering each subject separately*, it may be proper to begin with a General View of the

*Depredations committed on the Property of Ship Owners
in the River Thames.*

IN a trading Port, already shewn to be the first in the known world, from the circumstance of between thirteen and fourteen thousand Vessels arriving and departing in the course of a year, besides nearly seven thousand Stationary Craft and Boats of various descriptions, having Tackle, Apparel, and Stores constantly exposed to the Depredations of the hordes of Delinquents who infest the River Thames ; it must cease to be a matter of wonder, that Ship-Owners have suffered in common with the Proprietors of Merchandise, in consequence of the general System of Pillage which prevailed.

To men thus trained in the habits of iniquity, and disciplined in acts of Criminal Warfare, it may naturally be supposed that the Stores and Apparel of Ships, which are equally as accessible as Commercial Property, should be objects of attention; and the truth is, that the Depredations in this line have for many years been great beyond calculation.

The number of Junk and Store Shops in the vicinity of the River, have tended, in no small degree, to the encouragement of this species of Plunder, from the facilities afforded to Thieves upon the River, by the ready market which is thus established for every thing that is purloined or stolen.

The registers of the convictions under the Bumboat Act (the 2d of his present Majesty,) sufficiently demonstrate the extent of this evil, in consequence of the detection of so many offenders with Cordage, Stores, and Provisions, taken from Ships and Vessels in the River Thames, and the preamble of that Act sufficiently elucidates the anxiety of Ship-Owners,^(p) to remedy an evil which was felt to be enormous so early as the year 1762.

Since that period, and notwithstanding the efforts which have been used for the last twenty years, to

(p) An eminent Ship-Owner candidly acknowledged, at a late public meeting, to consider of the best means of extending the protecting influence of the Marine Police over the whole Trade of the River, that if it had not been for the terror excited by that Institution, and by the Perambulating Boats, during the night, that scarce an Anchor or Cable belonging to his Vessels would have been preserved.

carry this Act into execution, it is believed to be a fact generally admitted, that, previous to 1798, the evil had been progressively increasing every year, and that if a true estimate could be formed of the extent of the annual loss to Ship-Owners, it would be found to exceed all credibility.^(r) On a supposition that the pillage of *Tackle, Apparel, Stores and Provisions*, in the course of one voyage, averages only 3l. a Ship, and that the pillage of the Owner's property, in Craft and Boats, in the course of a whole year, does not amount to more than 15s. the aggregate will be found to exceed *Forty-five Thousand Pounds a year*. It is not however, meant from this to insinuate, that each Vessel losses to this amount, since it is known, that while some Ships, from superior vigilance, and from peculiar circumstances, escape unhurt, others are plundered to an enormous extent. It is not in the nature of things, in so crowded a Port, and where, at all times, from 1000 to 1400 Ships and Vessels, besides about 7000 stationary Craft and Boats are collected together, under the eyes of so many delinquents, constantly moving in different directions, that depredations should not be committed, while no River Police existed to restrain them. But besides the more bulky and ponderous Materials, consisting of Cordage and large Iron Work, purloined by River Pirates and others in the night, the more portable articles of Metallic Stores, such as *Copper, Brass, Lead*, and Utensils of every description, have been an object of

^(r) Vide General View of the Trade, p. 23.

attention

attention to Lumpers and others, who must necessarily be admitted on board of Ships for laborious purposes.

Vessels lying ungarded, after the delivery of their Cargoes, have often had the Running Rigging cut away, and the whole articles upon Deck, that were moveable, swept off in the course of a night.

The same system of pillage not only extends to Lighters, Barges, Punts, and smaller Craft, but even to the Wherries of the Watermen, from whence it is no uncommon thing to steal *Tilts, Oars, Sculls, Benches* and *Backboards*.

Nor are Ships, undergoing repairs in Docks, exempted from this universal system of depredation, particularly in cases where the operation of sheathing with Copper is going forward. This valuable article, consisting of light Sheets and Copper Nails, both equally portable, furnishes a prolific harvest for those who have been long in the habit of making Plunder a trade, and who seldom fail, on such occasions, to acquire a considerable booty. In consequence of the detection of a person, who was afterwards convicted, for stealing sheet Copper from a private Dock-yard, at Wapping, application was made to the Magistrates of the Marine Police, requesting that a sworn Officer, properly instructed, and armed with the authority of the Laws, might be appointed to guard a West-India Ship, during the operation of sheathing her with Copper. The same number of Sheets and quantity of Nails were ordered, which had been
found

found necessary, and which had been exhausted, when the same Ship had been sheathed on a former occasion, namely 1600 Sheets of Copper, and ten Bags of Nails. The Police Officer acted with great vigilance, and attended minutely to his instructions, which certainly prevented the pillage, which must have taken place upon the former occasion, since a surplus appeared after the Ship was completely sheathed, of

		£.	s.	d.
113 Sheets of Copper, weighing 896 lb. at 14d.		52	5	4
3 Bags of Nails 336 lb. at 14d.		19	12	0
		<hr/>		
	Saved	71	17	4
		<hr/>		

And thus, by the precaution of calling for the assistance, and protection of the Police, and thereby defeating the designs of these who are constantly on the watch to obtain Plunder, a considerable Property was saved.

The Owners of Ships and Vessels fitting out for Voyages, also suffer considerably on many occasions in the transit of their Stores and Apparel; and the pillage is often not discovered until the articles are wanted. The same system of Depredation is extended, even in a greater degree, to dismantled Ships, particularly *Prize Vessels*, which are always marked out as objects of plunder, under the idea that they are *fair game*, that there exists no means of detection; and, indeed, experience has shewn, that nothing but a well-regulated River Police, composed of a sufficient Civil force

force to overawe delinquents, and to pervade the whole range of the Port, where Ships and Vessels are exposed to danger, can ever be effectual, in protecting the Owners of this species of property from the extensive and reiterated losses, to which they have been heretofore subjected.

DEPREDACTIONS

ON THE

EAST-INDIA TRADE,

TO AND FROM THE PORT OF LONDON.

Notwithstanding the generally received opinion, that from the more accurate system of the East-India Company, their Cargoes are not subject to plunder; instances have occurred which sufficiently demonstrate, that this species of property, under all the guards which have been devised, is not exempted from the injuries which arise from the general delinquency so prevalent, wherever Merchandise, of any description, is in the operation of delivery from the Ships, or in a state of transit upon the River Thames.

The nature and value of many of the articles which are imported, render the possession of them peculiarly desirable; and numerous, indeed, are the devices to which men resort, who have such temptations before them, for the purpose of gratifying their covetous and criminal propensities.

Like

Like the property of the State, the moral turpitude of the offence does not operate as a restraint upon the mind, in the same degree as in cases which apply to individuals; and hence, the delinquency has a wider scope, and embraces in its operation classes of men, who would scarcely be disposed to yield to temptations differently circumstanced.

The only consideration therefore, with such men, is to be secure against the *risque of detection*. This object once effected, every difficulty is removed.

Illicit Trade is a great object with the inferior Officers. To accomplish a measure, on the success of which, the profit of the voyage is supposed chiefly to depend, recourse must be had to the persons employed by the Revenue. The connivance, at least, of those who are in inferior situations, is the more easily purchased, as they look forward to a certain emolument as often as they have such stations assigned them, and would feel disappointed if it was not obtained.

It has appeared in evidence, upon oath, that one of the Officers of an East-India ship, discharged at Blackwall, in November 1796, on the Cargo of which considerable depredations were committed, happened to be in habits of intimacy with a Port Surveyor, who, although not superintendant of the Ship, interested himself very much in getting his friend's private adventure on shore. To effect this, a quantity of Shawls were packed in Casks, filled at each end with spun-yarn and oakum, and conveyed
among

among the Boatswain's Return-Stores with the knowledge of the Officers. One of the sitters in the galley, however, who was not in the secret, examined the Cask and seized the goods. The Port Officer seeing the misfortune which had befallen his friend, found means to satisfy the Seizing Officer, and the goods were safely landed, with subsequent parcels consisting of Casks and Bales, which, on being examined by the Officers in the galley, were allowed to pass, on a promise of satisfaction next day; and for this service each of the sitters' watermen received a guinea.

Nothing can point, out in stronger terms, the utility of a Police to controul and check the corrupt practices which, it is to be feared, too generally prevail, to the injury of the Revenue, and to the increase of Crimes.

In East-India Ships, the Revenue Officers are generally numerous; their salaries are small; their families often large; their wants are therefore pressing, and, to use a prevailing language, they must *make hay while the sun shines*. Perhaps they look forward to a resource of this nature for the means of discharging their rent, or redeeming some useful articles in the hands of the Pawnbroker. The decrease in the value of money without any increase of *fair emolument*, must occasion pressures where the salary is not more than the earnings of a common labourer; who is not under the necessity of incurring the same expence for decent apparel, or of supporting an appearance suitable to a public station.

Under

Under all these circumstances, it is not difficult to account for the Abuses, Frauds, and Peculations, which have been discovered to prevail in the Ships of the East-India Company. The transition is easy in the human mind, once made up, in passing from a *smuggling* to a *thieving* transaction. The loss of situation, where the emolument is so small, has no restraining influence, and the system of the Revenue Boards does not, perhaps cannot, admit of the operation of those other restraints upon infidelity, which peculiarly apply to Officers trained and controlled by the Marine Police. If restraints operate at all on the minds of certain classes of Revenue Officers, it is those, and those only, which the Police Institution have created by the dread of punishment, under circumstances of ignominy which attach to offences, in consequence of the prompt means of detection, which form a prominent feature of the system. This dread it is which has acted so powerfully, *wherever it immediately attached*, in overawing delinquents, and in preventing the commission of Crimes.

It is certain that the assistance of the Marine Police Officers, in the vicinity of East-India Ships, and the successful Searches and Detection of Lumpers and others, coming from their Ships, produced in autumn 1798, a degree of caution and vigilance, on the part of the Revenue Officers, which was not apparent previous to the seizure of Teas in their presence, which had been pillaged by the Lumpers.

Innumerable instances might be adduced of the
 6 extent

extent to which the pillage and plunder of East-India Ships have been carried as well before as since the establishment of the River Police. The following may suffice as specimens.

In August 1793, an East-India Ship, from Bengal, was plundered to a great extent during her discharge :— It appears in evidence, upon oath, that no watch was kept by either the superintendant or his assistant : That the Officers received daily gratuities from the Lumpers for conniving at the pillage of large quantities of Pepper : That the Tidesmen themselves stole from the Gun-room, a large Case of Pepper, and many Bags of Rice : That the same Officers also stole, during the night, two whole quarters of Beef sent on board for the Ship's use ; also about 60 dozen of Bottles, from the Hen-coops on the poop. The whole plunder was carried on shore by the crews of the galleys, and sold. In this ship other extensive depredations were committed, and 26 Officers are stated to have shared in the booty.

It appears also in evidence, that in Nov. 1795, from a China Ship, lying at Blackwall, 35 Chests of Tea of 90lb. each, were plundered, and landed, with the assistance of two watermen, who are notorious receivers. The whole Revenue Officers and Lightermen, 37 in number, are stated to be parties in this plunder. Six other India Ships were discharging at the same time, surrounded by 12 galleys, yet nothing was detected. From one of the Craft, three more Chests of Tea were stolen in her passage from the
Ship

Ship to the Quays, by the Officers and Lightermen. The plunder, independent of what is here specified, is stated to have been enormous.

The same evidence states, that in July 1796, the Cargo of a Ship from Bengal was plundered to a very great extent, by the Superintendant and other Officers; respecting whom a detailed account of Fraud and Intrigue, relative to a Pipe of Bengal Spirit, is stated, which clearly developes the loose conduct, and shocking want of principle, which too generally pervades that class of men, who are employed as Safeguards to the Public Revenue, and the Property of the Merchant.

The influence of the new system of River Police, not being as yet directly extended to East-India Ships, opportunities still continue to be afforded for the same species of pillage. In spite of the injunctions laid upon the superintendants of the labourers employed in the discharge, to select discreet and honest men, they are found to be generally of the same class, and possess the same desire to obtain plunder, as those who are known to have carried their depredations to a greater extent.—This is proved in the case of a China Ship, which discharged at Blackwall in the Autumn of 1798.—A posse of Marine Police Officers receiving information, which excited a suspicion that the Cargo was plundered, watched the time when the Lumpers and Coopers came on shore. On attempting a search, which discovered them to be Officers, a violent opposition ensued,

ensued, and at that moment the whole surface of the Thames, round their Boats, was covered with Tea. The Officers with great difficulty seized two of the delinquents, before they had time to throw away their plunder.

But, besides what is obtained by these Aquatic Labourers, while working in the hold, it is stated, on the authority of a person who had the best access to know the evil practice which prevailed; “ that the “ chief depredations on the Cargoes of East-India “ Ships, are committed by Coopers, and inferior “ Officers stationed in the hold.” When once obtained, the sinner in the Revenue Galley and his Watermen, generally receive a certain proportion, as a passport of the Booty to a place of safety on shore.

Thirty-nine Chests of Tea were stolen from a China Ship in 1798, during the delivery of her Cargo at Blackwall; and notwithstanding the care which has been manifest in securing the Hatches of the East-India Hoys, and in the particular construction of the Vessels, with a view to prevent plunder, five Chests of Tea from the same Ship, were stolen and removed in the passage of the Craft, from Long Reach to the Company’s Wharf, at Botolph Quay.

It is further stated, on the most respectable authority, that a bale of Muslins, worth £.700, was stolen from another Hoy in her passage up the River in 1798, and that 40 chests of Tea, which had been purposely stowed in the cable tier of a
China

China ship, were afterwards feloniously conveyed away, and totally lost to the Proprietors.

It appears indeed, but too certain, that notwithstanding the apparently good system of prevention, adopted by the Commissioners of the two Boards of Revenue, and the East-India Company, pillage to a certain extent prevails in many of their Ships; and that this species of Depredation has been also reduced to a system, since *cant phrases* are in use for the purpose of holding criminal intercourse, in disposing of articles obtained in this manner.—In this cant language, Tea is known by the appellation of *Malt*.—According to the account given by a person of considerable intelligence, who derived his information from the inferior Revenue Officers themselves, the general pillage of Tea through that medium, takes place in small quantities *continually repeated*: and in cases, where any of the Officers of either Revenue are not of the class denominated *Game Officers*, matters are so managed as to keep them out of the secret. Individual Officers of this class, (*who, to use their own language, "have been at India;"*) have acknowledged to have profited to the extent of, from 20 to 30 *l.* by pilfering in a little way from a single Ship.

Under such circumstances, as in others, where the plunder is of greater magnitude, the connivance of the Officers in the Gallies is necessary; and as a recompence for the facilities they afford, a certain share of the booty is assigned them.

The

The Importation of Sugar from India affords a great resource for plunder, which did not formerly exist; and in the depredations on this species of Property, the lower class of Officers and Seamen are equally implicated with the Lumpers. — An instance recently occurred, where a Revenue Officer found a bag of Sugar in the Carpenter's tool-chest.

Where so many appear to be more or less implicated in offences of this nature, it ceases to be a matter of surprise, that such nefarious transactions are concealed and so seldom attract the attention, either of the Commissioners of the Revenue, or the East-India Company.

In an Importation, exceeding Six Millions and a half annually, composed of Merchandise of great value, and contained in an inconceivable number of different packages; passing through a great variety of hands, and no inconsiderable proportion of these in the habit of devising means to obtain plunder, the amount of the annual Depredations must be very considerable, although not easily to be ascertained:—But calculating only at the rate of £.500 a Ship, including the Craft, on an average, the aggregate amount of loss to the Revenue and the Company, will exceed *Twenty-five Thousand Pounds a year*. Exclusive of the losses which may be sustained by the pillage and plunder of Goods exported, respecting which it is impossible to form any estimate; although it is evident, that in the removal of nearly Four Millions annually, from the Repositories where

the Goods are collected, to the different outward-bound Ships, it is not to be supposed that so great a number of Packages can escape the effects of a system of Depredation, which extends its influence in so many directions; and is so completely organized for purposes hostile to the general security of Commercial Property.

DEPREDACTIONS

ON THE

WEST-INDIA TRADE,

TO AND FROM THE PORT OF LONDON.

WHILE most other branches of Commerce have been gradually acquiring conveniences and facilities applicable to their progressive increase, the Trade from the Sugar Plantations to the Port of London, seems to have remained in this particular nearly stationary for above one hundred and thirty years, without the advantage of those accommodations and securities which its rapid progress and great extent seemed to require. It has of course, as already appears, been a prey to the most enormous Depredations, perhaps not less than to the extent of *Seven Millions Sterling* in the course of the Century:—Since even at its commencement, it would seem that there existed a considerable resource for that species of Plunder, which has in the greatest degree excited the attention, and sharpened the ingenuity of the

H

hordes

hordes of Delinquents, who have progressively preyed upon this branch of Commerce.

In the year 1700, the Sugars imported into the River Thames, amounted to about one-fifth part of the present medium quantity.—In 1725, it must have been equal to *a third*.—In 1750, it was little short of *a half*: while in 1775, it approached nearly to its average extent for the last twenty-four years; during which period, it has varied from 105,000 to 147,576 casks—the quantity Imported for the year ending the 25th of June, 1799. (s)—For fifteen years

(s) Sugar and Rum Imported into London for a period of fifty years.

		<i>Cwt. of Sugar.</i>	<i>Gallons of Rum.</i>
1750	—	630,840	607,074
1760	—	1,047,796	669,358
1770	—	1,377,109	997,136
1780	—	1,176,371	1,236,579
1790	—	1,236,647	1,521,051
1792	—	1,345,559	1,631,020
1793	—	1,467,469	2,209,722
1794	—	1,809,908	1,911,646
1795	—	1,409,584	1,087,685
1796	—	1,581,563	1,985,347
1797	—	1,393,952	925,457
1798	—	1,737,939	2,392,015

Sugars Imported into all parts of England.

			<i>Hogsheads.</i>
In 15 years from 1700 to 1715	average		34,832
15	—	1715 to 1730	— 60,450
12	—	1731 to 1742	— 62,128
15	—	1743 to 1757	— 76,336
26	—	1764 to 1790	— 145,669
9	—	1790 to 1799	— 192,429
			subsequent

subsequent to the middle of the 18th Century, the productions of the West-India Colonies do not seem to have materially increased; and it was not till after the Peace of Paris in 1763, that by the acquisition of new Islands and the extreme enterprise of Individuals, a rapid augmentation became manifest.

From this period the evils of the Port became extremely prominent. The resort of so many additional Ships, and the great and sudden increase of West-India produce without conveniences adequate to the augmentation of this branch of Trade, created much confusion and the most vexatious delays, by which this valuable Property became exposed to that excessive pillage, which has already been in part developed in the preceding Chapter; and which is certainly unexampled in any Commercial Port in the World.

Amidst the various causes of this extensive plunder, the privilege assumed by the Mates of West-India Ships, of appropriating to their own use the Sweepings of the hold after the Ship's discharge, was productive of infinite mischief, by furnishing a pretence to the Criminal Dealers in the vicinity of the River, to cultivate their acquaintance for the purpose of bargaining for their Sweepings, and then not only to seduce them into the evil practice of staving Casks and Packages to enlarge, the quantity by excessive spillings of *Sugar, Coffee, and other articles*; but also to enter into confederacies along with the

Revenue Officers stationed on board, for the purpose of plundering the Cargo in the night, which will be hereafter shewn not only to have been an evil of the greatest magnitude, but also to have been felt as a pressure upon the Trade, for a period of from thirty to forty years, previous to the establishment of the Marine Police in 1798.

This appears from an Advertisement (*t*) published by the West-India Merchants so far back as the year 1765, and also by a Resolution of that respectable Body, dated the 6th of January, 1767, on the subject of the pretended perquisite of Sweepings ; (*u*)

both

(*t*) *Advertisement.*—The Merchants of London, trading to the Sugar Colonies, taking into consideration the wicked and felonious practice of stealing Sugars and other Goods, the product of the said Colonies, and the pernicious consequences attending it, think it highly incumbent on them to prevent the same as far as they are able, and have therefore resolved to prosecute with the utmost rigour of the Law all such Offenders ; and they do hereby give notice, that if any person, or persons, shall be discovered stealing Sugar, or other Goods, from on board any Ship or Vessel from the Sugar Colonies, or out of any Lighter or other Craft on the River Thames, or on any Quay or Wharf adjoining to the said River, or in any Warehouse, or other place belonging to such Quay or Wharf, every person making such discovery, shall be intitled to a reward of Forty Shillings, on the conviction of every such Offender. And that every person, who shall discover as aforesaid, any Buyer or Receiver of such stolen Goods, knowing them to be stolen, shall be intitled to a reward of Twenty Pounds, on conviction of every such Buyer or Receiver.

(*u*) *At a Meeting of the West-India Merchants, at the King's-Arms Tavern, Cornhill, January 6, 1767 : the following Advertisement was agreed to, viz.*

‘ Whereas it has been occasionally pretended, that the Mates of

‘ West-

both which sufficiently demonstrate the sense they entertained of the height to which River Plunder had arrived at that early period.

Yet still these efforts, although repeated at various intervals, had no effect :—With the increase of the Importations, the plunder of this species of Commercial Property also augmented.—The Orders and Resolutions of the Merchants were disregarded.—Sweepings became an article of extensive Trade, attracting the notice of all the Criminal Dealers

‘ West-India Ships, discharged in the Port of London, are entitled
 ‘ to the Sweepings of the Hold; and, under that pretence, great
 ‘ quantities of Sugar and other Goods have been clandestinely sold,
 ‘ to the great prejudice of the Owners and Freighters of such Ships,
 ‘ and of the fair Trader :

‘ The West-India Merchants, in order to put a stop to these bad
 ‘ practices, do hereby promise a reward of Twenty Pounds, to be
 ‘ paid on the conviction of every Mate, or other person, who
 ‘ shall sell Sweepings, or any part of the Ship’s Cargo as such;
 ‘ and all persons who purchase Sweepings will be prosecuted: and,
 ‘ for the conviction of such, the like reward of Twenty Pounds
 ‘ will be paid, as Receivers of stolen Goods.’

RESOLVED,

That the above Advertisement be published in the Newspapers, as long as it may be judged necessary, and be fixed up at Lloyd’s and the Jamaica Coffee-Houses.

That a sufficient number of Copies be delivered at the Houses of the West-India Merchants, to be by them sent on board their Ships as they shall arrive, in order that the same may be fixed up in some conspicuous part of the Ship, that no person may hereafter plead ignorance of the same.

That it be recommended to the Masters of Ships to discharge such Mates as shall claim any right or Title to the Sweepings.

JAMES ALLEN, *Secretary.*

upon

upon the River.—Mates and Revenue Officers were seduced by the lures they held out.—The evil extended to a vast proportion of the Ships in the West-India Trade, and attracted notice in so particular a degree as to produce an investigation, which gave birth to a system of Regulations, which were framed on the 12th of June, 1789, and afterwards revised, amended, and published on the following year, viz. the 27th of April, 1790. (x)

But

(x) *At a General Meeting of the West-India Merchants, London, April 27, 1790, Their Regulations of the 12th of June, 1789, were revised and confirmed with certain additions and alterations, as follows.*

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY :—

I. That it be recommended to the Captains to be on board their Ships as much as possible every day while unloading, especially in the Evening, to make observations on the people employed in the delivery of the Cargo, and to see the Hatchways, &c. well secured before it is dark.

II. That the present mode of working out Ships, by Contract with Lumpers, &c. be discontinued, as a source of immediate Plunderage and subsequent Waste.

III. That the Captains employ their own Crews as much as possible in the delivery of their Cargoes; and, where this cannot be done, work them out by persons hired by themselves, and kept under their own eye and command.

IV. That the persons who work out the Ships be not permitted to go on shore during the day, but be victualled on board, (which, it is presumed, may best be done at the Ship's expence, the wages being lessened in proportion;) and that they be searched by the Captain, or other person superintending the delivery of the Cargo, when they quit the Ship to go on shore at night.

V. That the Regulations, already in force, respecting the Sweepings of Sugars on board of Ships, be confirmed and continued.

VI. That

But although these regulations demonstrate great attention on the part of the West-India Merchants,
as

VI. That Gratuities be given to persons detecting and informing against Plunderers and Thieves; and also to any Custom-House Officer or other person giving authentic information to the Secretary, of any Vessel from which Sugars or other articles shall have been taken and seized as plundered or stolen; and that the name of such Vessel be published at the Jamaica and New Lloyd's Coffee-houses; the whole at the discretion and by order of the Meeting of Merchants.

VII. That it be recommended, that, where it is convenient, only the working Hatchway or Hatchways to the between-decks and Hold be open, and also that the passage through the between-decks and Hold be closed at the sides.

VIII. That no Boat, unless provided or permitted by the Captain, be allowed to be fastened to the Ship.

IX. That the Ship's Husband or Captain do appoint Coopers (to be victualled, and kept on board, and attended to, in like manner as the Labourers above-mentioned,) to give substantial Cooperage to the Sugar-casks on board the Ship; and do appoint Coopers also to attend the casks in the Lighters at the Wharf and at their landing, in order that the same may be delivered in good condition according to the Bill of Lading.

X. That the Ship's Coopers, wherever necessary, attend below in the Ships to give such Cooperage as may be requisite for bringing the casks upon deck with safety to their contents; and that they repair all damages done to the casks in the Lighters, before the Lighters quit the Ship.

XI. That the Captain or Mate see that each Lighter has a sufficient number of good Tarpaulins for the purpose of covering the Sugar-casks.

XII. That the Watchman belonging to each Lighter be well armed; that he attend the Lighter from the time of its loading to that of its unloading; that he give Bond, with a Security joined, for good conduct; and that the Society of Captains be requested to nominate such Watchmen when wanted.

XIII. That

as well as a thorough knowledge of all the sources of the evil, yet they too seem to have been totally disregarded, and like many excellent Acts of Parliament, speedily became a *dead* letter; chiefly because they provided no means of enforcing obedience, and it was assigned to no person as a matter of duty to see them carried into execution.—With some meritorious exceptions, Shipmasters, notwithstanding these regulations, left the charge of their Vessels chiefly to the Mates.—The mode of working out

XIII. That it be recommended, that the Sugars be drawn only once, and then for lotting; and that the quantity then taken be only One Pound and a half, in order to furnish two selling samples, one for the Seller and one for the Buyer.

XIV. That, as soon as the Sugars are drawn, the Drawing-Hole be closed, as in cases of Exportation.

XV. That the Wharfingers be desired occasionally to inspect the Samples; and that they be hereby authorised to stop all Coopers conveying Samples from the Warehouses, in cases where they suspect such Samples to exceed the weight or number allowed by the Regulations, and that they give immediate information to the Secretary thereof; and that no Boards of Sugar be carried away from the Warehouses, unless with the knowledge of the Wharfinger or his Representative.

XVI. That no Sweepings or Molasses from the Warehouses be allowed to the Gangsmen; that no Tubs or other Receptacles for Sugar or Molasses be permitted in the Warehouses, unless by order of the Wharfinger; and that the Wharfingers be desired to take all Sweepings and Molasses under their care, and to sell the same to defray the expence of keeping the Warehouses clean.

XVII. That no Sugars be drawn unless by the order of the Merchant, or of the Broker, or some other person deputed by the Merchant; and that no Cooper be allowed to draw Sugars, or to remain in the Warehouses, after Sun-set.

JAMES ALLEN, *Secretary*.

Ships by contract with Lumpers was not discontinued, nor were those Lumpers victualled on board by Ship Owners; and in many instances not searched but allowed to go on shore, three times a day, generally laden with Plunder.

The regulations respecting Sweepings, although again confirmed, were not carried into effect.—Gratuities offered for detecting Plunderers did not diminish the evil, since those whose evidence alone could convict offenders were themselves, for the most part, equally guilty.

The recommendations respecting *the Ships Hatchways, Watermen's Boats* fastened to Ships—*Coopers and Lighters* appear to have been equally disregarded.

Instead of armed Watchmen attached to each Lighter, as recommended by the 12th Article—it seldom happened that any Watchmen at all were appointed;—and at most not more than one for every four or five Lighters, *without arms*, and without requiring a Bond of 100l. for fidelity, according to the regulations of the Merchants; these Watchmen too (if such they could be called,) were seldom relieved, perhaps, for three or four weeks together, of course if they were disposed to execute their trust with fidelity, the rest which nature required rendered it impossible; and hence while an expence was incurred, it became a mere mockery, and a nullity, as it related to the protection of the Cargo. In many instances it operated as a facility,

and an inroad to Plunder, by the seduction of these inefficient Watchmen, whose necessities rendered them an easy prey to those who had designs upon the Property under their charge.

Nor were the West-India Merchants more successful in their regulations respecting the drawing of Samples, although a branch of the System more immediately within their personal Controul.

Instead of drawing Sugars only once, and limiting the quantity to *one pound and half* and no more, in order to furnish two selling Samples, one for the Seller, and another for the Buyer, (according to the 13th Rule of the Trade).—The Coopers continued the old practice of drawing Samples frequently twice, and some times thrice from the same Hogshead, seldom taking less than from four to six pounds each time.

Neither have the Merchants been successful in debaring the Gangsmen the assumed privilege of Drainings and Sweepings in the Warehouses, since it appears that under the colour of this, or some other pretence, their emoluments are very considerable, and the Deficiency and Plunder of the Sugars in the Warehouses, after they are supposed to be secure, have been found to be very enormous. A circumstance the more vexatious, as it is not only the original value of the article, as has already been noticed, but also the present high Duties and Charges which constitute the loss, and add not less than 35 per Cent. to its aggregate amount.

Such

Such has been the unsuccessful result of all the efforts used by the West-India Merchants to establish good regulations for the protection of West-India Property.—To these already detailed, were added an offer of very high Rewards in 1796 and 1797, for the detection and conviction of Offenders; but it only served to develop the vast and increasing magnitude of the Depredations by the evidence brought forward in Criminal Courts of Justice—where a most enormous expence was incurred without, in any respect, diminishing the evil.

The reason was obvious.—The Criminal Confederates engaged in these nefarious designs had become numerous, and powerful in pecuniary resource. Unrestrained by those principles of rectitude, which govern the actions of men in the innocent walks of life, they resorted to every criminal device which was likely to impede or embarrass the course of Justice, by intimidating or suborning evidence, and by other proceedings, having for their object the acquittal of their associates in iniquity.—They succeeded in part; and feeling encouraged by the triumph of a victory over the insulted Laws of their Country, they renewed their depredations as Stealers and Receivers of the property of the Planters and Merchants, rendered exceedingly valuable from the then great advance in the price, and the considerable augmentation of the Duties.

Under these peculiar circumstances—beset on all hands by hordes of Miscreants, eager to seize upon
their

their property, and defeated in every attempt to restrain or to keep them within bounds, the expedient of Wet Docks had been resorted to, as the only apparent means of relief.

As a prelude to this important measure, inquiries were instituted by a Committee of the House of Commons, before whom it appeared in evidence that the Plunder on West-India Produce alone, occasioned an annual loss to the Proprietors of 150,000*l.* (y) a year, and 50,000*l.* a year to the Revenue: but at that period, (viz. 1796,) opportunities had not been afforded of obtaining that full and extensive information, which has since arisen from the minute investigations which have taken place, and which seem to warrant a much higher estimate; and perhaps, the following view of the general state of those various Depredations, previous to the establishment of the Marine Police, may be hazarded as approaching tolerably near the truth.

1st. *Supposing that out of 385 Ships, (the average number in a year,) 1-5th part or 77 Ships have been, more or less, subject to night and day Plunder in the manner already explained; and that the Loss in Sugar, Rum, Coffee, and other articles, on this first Class of Game Ships, averaged 700*l.* per Ship. (z)*

2d. *That*

(y) A Committee from the Body of Planters in a late conference with the Minister, stated the amount of the Depredations to be more than double this sum.

(z) 1. It is ascertained by evidence upon oath, that from a Jamaica Ship

2d. That 2-5ths, or 154 Ships, had been subject to excessive Plunder, and that the whole Lumpers, Coopers,

Ship discharged in January 1794, Twenty Tons of Sugar were stolen, in consequence of an agreement between the chief Mate, four Custom-house, and two Excise Officers then on board on the one part, and a notorious Receiver on the other, who, with the assistance of two Light-horsemen, carried on shore about a Ton each night.

2. It also appears on similar evidence, that from a Jamaica Ship discharged in March 1794, no less than Fifty Tons of Sugar were plundered in consequence of a previous agreement with the Mate and five Revenue Officers.—Ten Hogsheads were completely emptied, and afterwards stowed in a part of the Ship where there had been much leakage, that it might appear the Sugar had been washed out during the voyage.—The result was, that the loss was borne by the Underwriters. From the same Ship three whole Puncheons of Rum were plundered, besides 300 Gallons pumped from different Casks, all which were sent on shore in Skins and Bladders.—From this Ship a large quantity of Coffee was also pillaged.—The five Revenue Officers are stated to have each shared 150l. independent of the money received by the Mate and Agents in this iniquitous business.
3. The same evidence states, that in August 1794, a small Vessel arrived in the River from Antigua, with 70 Hogsheads of Sugar; Five Hogsheads of which were actually plundered by three Tidesmen in conjunction with the Mate, and a well-known Receiver.—The Captain happened to be a stranger, who had expressed much apprehension of Lumpers, upon which the Revenue Officers proposed, in order to allay his fears, and prevent his employing Lumpers, that they would themselves discharge the Cargo.—The result was, that while he remained on shore, considering himself as secure, he lost 1-14th part of the whole.
4. Upon the same testimony it appears that in September 1795, the Cargo of a Jamaica Ship then discharging at the Quays near London Bridge was plundered of Ten Tons of Sugar by the Mate and five Revenue Officers, assisted by two Watermen in the Service of the Customs.

5. It

ers, Officers, Mates, and Ships' Crew, obtained on an average 250l. a Ship. (a)

5. It appears further by evidence upon oath, that the Cargo of a Jamaica Ship which discharged on the River in November 1795, was plundered of Sugar and other articles of the value of 500l. by three Custom-house and two Excise Officers, in conjunction with the Captain, Mate, and Ship's Watermen, with others.—The whole was landed by a notorious Receiver.
6. In September 1796, five Revenue Officers, the Mate, and a notorious Receiver stole Ten Ton of Sugar, and a whole Puncheon of Rum, from a Vessel from St. Kitt's, which then discharged in the River.

The information, upon oath, from which these Cases are selected, goes a considerable length further, and states many specific facts, strongly demonstrating the shocking corruption of Morals among various classes employed in different situations upon the River, and yet these instances are only a slight shade, when compared with the aggregate.—Specific details, such as these are only brought to light by accident, while the great mass is buried in oblivion.

In October and November 1797, a discovery was made of 12 Ships from the West-Indies, all discharging about the same time, which had been shockingly plundered. The detection and trial of some of the delinquents afterwards established in evidence the following facts, with respect to the extent of a part of this plunder, which authorized the following estimate of the Loss, viz.

	Tons.	Cwt.	Qus.			
Jamaica Sugar	81	10	2			
Leeward Island ditto	45	11	0			
	<hr/>					
	127	1	2			
Loss to the Crown at 17s. 10d. King's Duty				2,223	15	3
Loss to Ship-Owner's Freight				1052	0	0
Loss to Ship-Master's Primage				52	12	0
Loss to Merchants' Commission				400	0	0
Loss to the Planter or Owner of the Sugar				<hr/> 7,955	<hr/> 14	<hr/> 0
				Total ..	£.11,684	1 3

↳ Average Loss nearly One Thousand Pounds each Ship, exclusive of what was not discovered.

- 3d. That 1-5th, or 77 Ships, from having some attention paid on the part of the Ships' Officers, have suffered a loss from Lumpers, Coopers and others, only to the extent in Sugar, Coffee, and other articles, of 100l. a Ship.
- 4th. That 1-5th, or 77 Ships, from a still greater degree of vigilance, increased by the constant or occasional presence of the Ship Masters, may have only suffered on an average to the extent of 50l. each Ship.
- 5th. That in about 2,500 Lighters, employed in discharging West-India Ships, (including their repeated trips,) the average Plunder of Sugar, Rum, Coffee, Cocoa, Ginger, Pimento, Logwood, Fustic, &c. might amount to 6l. on each Cargo.
- 6th. That on 120,000 Casks of Sugar, 15,000 Puncheons of Rum, and 100,000 other Packages, consisting of Coffee, Cocoa, Pimento, Ginger, Turmeric, Cotton, Hides, Elephants' Teeth, Castor Oil, besides Mahogany, Logwood, Fustic, and other Dye Woods, and Lancewood Spars, landed on the different Quays and Wharfs—the average Pillage by Scuffle-Hunters, and others upon the Quays, may have amounted to 2s. a Package, on 235,000 Packages; and 20s. per Ton on the different Woods, (b) estimating

(a) In cases where Lumpers were either remunerated in part or in whole from the Plunder obtained, this average would appear to be moderate.

(b) It is well ascertained that the pillage of Dye Woods, particularly Logwood and Fustic, has been very excessive, both in the
Lighters.

estimating the average quantity in a year at 3000 Tons.

7th. *That on 100,000 Packages, comprizing Coffee, (c) Cocoa, Pimento, Ginger, Turmeric, Cotton, and other articles lodged in the Warehouses, the Plunder by Labourers and others in depositing, Sampling, and removing the same, may average about 3s. a Package; while on 120,000 Hogsheads of Sugar, deposited and removed in the same manner, the Loss by Sampling, Sweepings and Pillage, must, at the present price of Sugars, average at least 12s. per Hogshead.*

Upon these data, the estimate of the aggregate Depredations on West-India Produce, exhibiting the Loss sustained by the Revenue and the Individuals, is stated in the following

RECAPITULATION:

Lighters and upon the Wharfs. Indeed to so great an extent has it gone, since these articles have advanced so exceedingly in their value, as to render a serious inquiry necessary.

(c) The Plunder of Coffee in the Warehouses has long been felt as a most serious grievance. The injury sustained by the Imports and the Revenue by the Depredations on this article exceed credibility.

RECAPITULATION :

1st.	77 Ships denominated <i>Game</i> , average 7ool.	
	each (<i>d</i>)	£.53,900
2d.	154 Ships subject to excessive Plunder, 25ol. each	38,500
3d.	77 Ships subject to an inferior ditto, 1ool. each	7,700
4th.	77 Ships subject to slight Plunder ditto, 5ol. each	3,850
5th.	2,500 Lighters, average Plunder, 6l. each Cargo	15,000
6th.	West India Goods on the Quay, 235,000 Packages, average Pillage, estimated at 2s. per Package	23,500
	Dye Woods	2,550
7th.	West-India Goods in theWarehouses	
	100,000 smaller Packages, at 3s.	15,000
	120,000 Hogsheads of Sugar, at 12s.	72,000
		<hr/> 87,000

Estimated Loss to the Proprietors, Ship-Owners,
Ship-Masters, Consignees, and the Revenue, on
an average of years previous to 1798 . . . £.232,000

Although no estimate, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, can be expected to ascertain the precise fact; yet to those who have been in the habit of considering this particular subject with a knowledge of the nature and magnitude of the Depredations upon West-India property, the arrangement of the different branches of this System of Pillage,

(*d*) Supposing seven Fleets to arrive in a year, the average number of *Game Ships* to each does not exceed *Eleven*.

will not only assist the judgment, but may possibly produce a conviction in the mind that the calculations are not over-strained.

In an importation extending to upwards of Seven Millions sterling a year, and comprising at least 235,000 Casks and Packages of different kinds, delivered from the Ships and conveyed to the Warehouses, through the medium, agency, and intervention of such a multitude of individuals, the major part bent upon Pillage; and when to this consideration is added the ready access which is obtained to this species of Property, and the ease and facility with which it can be concealed and disposed of—large as the losses appear to be; yet when measured by the scale of quantity and value, and the risque attached to the transit of this immense floating Property, they will not appear to be over-rated.

To the defalcation of Property however, which has been thus detailed and explained, must be added the losses which arise from the Stealing of Goods exported to the West-India Islands. (e)—In Ship-

(e) Among the numerous instances of Depredations on outward-bound West-India Cargoes, one has been stated, upon the oath of the Informant, to have happened in August 1795, where two Tidesmen are charged with having seduced the Mate of a Ship bound to Jamaica, to break open two Cases of Nankeens and Callicoes, which was done with the assistance of a notorious Receiver, who purchased, at a very under price, 200 whole Pieces.—The produce was equally divided among four persons concerned in this Felony.

ments which extend to nearly Four Millions sterling a year, where numerous Packages are conveyed, through such a variety of points of danger, to above 370 different Vessels; it is not to be supposed from the instances which have already been stated of the Pillage of Dry Goods, and other Merchandise in the course of exportation, that a Commerce so extended can escape its share of the general loss. To what extent it has already gone, it is impossible even to hazard a conjecture.—It is sufficiently obvious, that Systems have been formed by Delinquents hostile to this species of Property, and that antidotes are necessary for the purpose of eradicating, or at least checking the evil, before it operates as a serious burden upon the Trade.

DEPREDATIONS

ON

ALL THE OTHER BRANCHES OF TRADE

TO AND FROM THE PORT OF LONDON.

I. BRITISH CONTINENTAL COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA.

This Commerce employed 68 Ships in the year ending the 5th of January 1798, and its Exports and Imports amounted to 1,638,144l. sterling, viz.

Imports 290,894

Exports 1,347,250

Total . . . £.1,638,144

It comprises the Trade carried on to Hudson's-Bay Nova-Scotia, New Brunswick, St. John's Island, Cape Briton, Newfoundland, and Upper and Lower Canada.—The articles imported are chiefly confined to fine Furs, Skins, Peltry, Fish, Oil and Timber, and occasionally some Corn.

The Furs, particularly in the Quebeck Ships, are known to have been an object of Plunder to a considerable extent.—Their great value has excited the attention of those classes of Delinquents who are generally the Purchasers.—It is a curious circumstance that among the Jews, almost the only Manufacture which is carried on is that of *Fine Hats*.—The materials they generally purchase at a cheap rate, and some of them are said to be upon the watch when the Quebeck and Hudson's Bay Ships arrive, and eager in their solicitations with those who have access to obtain this species of Plunder.—A discovery was made in 1798, of Pillage in a Quebeck Ship to the extent of 400l. in Furs; and wherever Lumpers are introduced, without proper controul, it cannot fail to be extensive. So sensible have some Ship-Owners been of the hazard to which they were exposed, that they solicited the assistance of the Marine Police, and *trained Constables* have guarded both the Ships and Lighters.—The ready means of disposing of *fine Furs*, renders this article, from its portable nature and great value, extremely subject to Plunder, and although it is not possible to be accurate as to the amount of the annual losses sustained in this branch of Commerce by Pillage, yet

it is to be considered, that Skins, Corn, Fish, and Oil, are also known to be plundered to a great extent; and that Timber, unlikely as it may appear, is an article upon which great Depredations are committed.—The Exports to the British Colonies, (also an object of Plunder,) amount to 1,347,250*l.* a year—contained in many Packages, and exceedingly exposed in their transit to the Ships, and afterwards. (*f*) So that upon the whole it may not be unreasonable to suppose, that the annual aggregate Loss to the Revenue, and the Individuals, by Plunder in this branch of Trade may extend to Ten Thousand Pounds a Year.

II. AFRICAN TRADE: INCLUDING THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

THE Commerce of Africa is limited to a few Ships—11 entered, and 24 cleared out from the Port of London, in the year ending 5th January, 1798.—The value, however, of Goods exported is

(*f*) When it is considered how practicable it has been to commit Robberies on Commercial Property, and how difficult it is to detect the Culprits, it is even a matter of wonder that so many specific facts have come to light; among others it has been stated on credible authority, and upon oath, that in March 1795, the Mate of a vessel, outward-bound to Newfoundland, with the two Tidesmen then on board, stole a large Bale of Woollen Stockings, which was bought and landed by a notorious Receiver, and the purchase-money divided among the three Delinquents.

considerable.

considerable. With respect to the Trade of the Cape of Good Hope, (g) it is yet in its infancy. It can only be said to employ about six Ships. The aggregate Exports and Imports, however, to and from all parts of Africa, appearing to amount to more than Half a Million a year, viz. 531,446l.—it may, perhaps, not be too much to suppose the annual loss by Pillage and Frauds upon the Revenue and Individuals in this branch of Trade, surrounded as it is in common with others by criminal Delinquents, may amount to 2,500l. a year.

III. SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN WHALE FISHERY,

THIS Trade employs 45 Ships out of the Port of London, viz. 29 in the Southern, and 16 in the Northern or Greenland Fishery; the Trade is confined solely to what is imported, which consists of Blubber, Oil, Whale Fins, and some Seal Skins. The total value is stated to amount to 314,831l. for the year ending the 5th of January 1798.—The Oil being a bulky article, is of course considerably exposed in its various transits, and partaking of the nature of

(g) It is ascertained on credible authority, that in March 1798, a large quantity of *Long Pepper* was stolen from a Ship from the Cape of Good Hope, by the Mate and Officers in a Ship from Lisbon, which then lay along side, assisted by a notorious and well-known Receiver, who conveyed it on shore. The whole was handed to him out of the Cabin Windows of the Lisbon Vessel, where it had been previously deposited, and concealed until dark.

Liquors,

Liquors, with respect to the ease with which quantities can be drawn off, and the facility with which it can be sold, it may possibly not be too much to suppose, that 2000*l.* a year may be the amount of the loss to the Revenue and Individual, by Pillage, where the scale of the Trade is so extensive, and where Exportation forms no part of the value.

IV. TRADE WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE Trade of the United States of America employs about 140 Ships, all of which are Foreign. The Imports consist of Tobacco, Rice, Cotton, Indigo, Corn, Oil, Skins, Naval Stores, and various West-India productions to the amount of 1,517,386*l.* The Exports in British and Foreign Merchandise are estimated at 3,898,864*l.* for the year ending the 5th of January 1798.

Tobacco (*h*) is an article exceedingly coveted by the Lower Orders of the People, and notwithstanding the excellent Regulations of Government, with respect to this article, the detection and conviction

(*h*) It appears from the evidence of a person well informed upon the subject of the Pillage of Tobacco, that considerable quantities are sent on shore in the Officers' Boxes. The pretence made use of is, that the Key is lost, and that the Box is sent on shore for the purpose of getting a new one to fit it. Considerable Robberies have been recently detected by the Officers of the Marine Police.

of

of Offenders prove, that the Pillage is still very considerable, and indeed, when the corrupt conduct of not a few of the Revenue Officers is taken into consideration, it is not unnatural to suppose, that the practices which had been found to prevail, in so great a degree, on board of West-India Ships (before an antidote was applied) extend also to those from the American States, since their Cargoes are not seldom composed at least partly of Sugar, Coffee, Cocoa, and other valuable West-India Produce, as well as the natural Productions of these States; all of which being of a nature, calculated to excite the attention of River Thieves, must consequently suffer in common with other branches of Trade; nor can it be fairly argued, that the security is increased by the means which the American Traders have of discharging their Vessels with their Ships' Crews, since abundance of proofs can be adduced, arising from actual and recent detections of their being nearly as eager for Plunder as the Lumpers, and equally open to seduction as the Mates and Crews of the British Ships. Indeed, it has appeared in several instances in judicial Investigations, that the Plunder of American Ships, by their own Crews, assisted, no doubt, by Revenue Officers, has been very excessive, especially when the Cargoes have been composed of West-India Articles.

The Copemen, as they are called, or in other words, the Receivers in the vicinity of the River,
are

are introduced through the medium of *Game Revenue Officers*, as often as they are placed on board of American Ships, who have even found means to seduce some of the Captains themselves to consent to permit, and to share in the general Pillage which takes place by means of such Criminal Confederacies.

When it is recollected, that to the same Individuals who have associated with Receivers and others, for the purpose of pillaging the homeward-bound Cargoes, the Merchandise exported is equally open to Depredation, and when it is clearly ascertained, that Packages have been opened by the connivance of Revenue Officers, and either wholly emptied of their contents, or pieces of valuable Muslins, Silk, and other Goods abstracted; and when in addition to this, complaints are constantly made of the deficiency of Goods exported, where the Furnishers or the Exporters are subject to considerable losses, the extent of which from the diffused state of the Commerce, and the immense scale upon which it is carried on, cannot be ascertained; it is not unfair to presume (combining the losses by Pillage, Embezzlement and Frauds,⁽ⁱ⁾ on the whole Imports and Exports from the Port of London to the American States, amounting in all to 5,416,250*l.* sterling.)

(i) Considerable Frauds on the Revenue have been committed, by landing Tobacco in secluded parts of the River, after it has been shipped for Exportation.

that

that the whole loss to the Revenue and the Individuals, may amount, on so extensive a scale of Commerce, under the peculiar circumstances which have been explained, to *Thirty Thousand Pounds a year!*

V. TRADE TO AND FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN AND TURKEY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the impediments which stood in the way of the Trade to the Mediterranean and Turkey, it employed 72 Ships and Vessels from the Port of London, for the year ending the 5th of January 1798. The Imports amounted to 390,794*l.*, and the Exports to 118,914*l.*—Both together exceeding Half a Million sterling.

The general Warfare on every species of Property, which moves upon the River Thames, subjects Goods, imported from the Mediterranean, to their share of the loss arising from the extended System of Pillage, which prevails both in the Ships and the Lighters, and also on the Quays and Landing-places. During the transit from the Ship's hold to the Warehouses of the Importers, the Plunder, on many occasions, is very considerable; but in this particular Trade the Pillage of the outward-bound Cargoes may perhaps be even more extensive, since East-India and other Foreign Articles exported to the Streights are known to have been subject to very great Depredations, particularly the article of Pepper, which is said to have gone to a length scarcely to be credited.

credited. A specific instance has been stated to the Author, upon which he can fully rely, of a Ship outward bound to Leghorn, where excessive Plunder took place, both by day and by night.

Upon this branch of Commerce, therefore, the evidence of the injuries sustained by the Revenue and the Individuals, seem to warrant an opinion, that they may fairly be estimated at *Seven Thousand Pounds a year*!(k)

VI. TRADE WITH SPAIN.

To the enlightened Policy of Government are we indebted for the very considerable Trade which is carried on between the Port of London and Spain, as well as other Powers with whom this Country is at present at War. It is by such wise arrangements, that raw Materials are procured for our Manufactories, and the Produce of the National Industry exported even to the Enemy.

The Exports and Imports to and from Spain and the Port of London, approached nearly to a Million

(k) In June 1795, according to the evidence of a person, who disclosed many Felonies and Frauds, which came under his own inspection, the Mate and Tidesman, on board a Vessel bound to Naples, in conjunction with a Waterman, a notorious Receiver, unshipped as much Pepper from the Cargo as produced 100*l.* besides a quantity of printed Goods stolen from a Package on board. An average Loss was made of the whole at Naples, including some damage sustained by the Ship on the Voyage; and the Underwriters were saddled with the Loss.

sterling,

sterling,^(l) for the year ending the 5th of January 1798, and from the nature of the Commercial Articles, which compose this Trade, joined to specific evidence of Pillage, there are strong grounds to believe, that it has been equal at least to other branches. Spanish Wool has been stated to be an article much subject to Depredation, not only from its great value rendering it desirable, but from the ease with which it can be carried on shore without suspicion.

It has appeared in evidence, that it is not an unusual practice with Revenue Officers to fill their Mattresses with fine Spanish Wool, and to send them on shore with all the appearance of a regular routine of Duty in moving from one Ship to another. An Officer, since dismissed for getting drunk, received 15*l.* for his share of Plunder obtained in this way. It may be naturally supposed, that it was equally productive to the others, and that the Ships' Crews and Labourers shared in the Booty.

Brandies also have suffered by the operation of the *Jigger*, and the facilities afforded by the Skins, and Bladders with Nozles, furnished by the Copemen or Receivers, who are ever ready to offer not only their own assistance, but also the assistance of the instruments they provide, for the purpose of carrying into effect, the nefarious designs they are constantly forming against Commercial Property.

Taking all circumstances into consideration, it may not be unfair to estimate the Frauds and De-

(l) Vide Chapter I. page 37.

predations, on the Cargoes of 121 Ships in this Trade, including Imports and Exports, at *Ten Thousand Pounds annually.*

VII. TRADE WITH FRANCE AND AUSTRIAN FLANDERS.

THE Trade to and from these Countries, notwithstanding the War, extended in Exports to 978,038*l.* and Imports 36,979*l.* for the year ending the 5th of January 1798.^(m) The whole is somewhat better than a Million sterling. The articles exported chiefly consisted of Tobacco, and East and West-India Goods. There are strong grounds to believe, that the Plunder, especially where *Game Officers* were on board, must have been considerable. Reflecting on the nature of the Articles, and the value, it may not be too much upon the whole to estimate the annual Frauds and Plunder, on the homeward and outward-bound Cargoes of 122 Ships in this Trade, at *Ten Thousand Pounds.*

VIII. TRADE WITH PORTUGAL.

THE Imports and Exports to Portugal, for the year ending the 5th of January 1798, amounted to 853,237*l.* and employed 180 Ships. For the reasons

^(m) See General View, page 22, and also page 37.

already

already assigned, the Plunder upon the outward and homeward-bound Cargoes, which, in point of value are nearly equal, may be estimated at 8000*l.* a year.

IX. TRADE WITH HOLLAND.

ALTHOUGH the War has abridged the Trade to the United Provinces very considerably, yet from the wise measures of State which have been pursued, it employed 329 Ships, and amounts to 2,211,360*l.* in the course of the year, ending the 5th of January 1798.

The Imports, which amounted to 673,241*l.* consisting of Grain, Seeds, Dye-Stuffs, Cheese and other Provisions, must, from the nature of the articles, have been subject to a good deal of Plunder. While the Exports, composed of Tobacco, Coffee, Cocoa, Sugar, and other West-India Goods, for the reasons already assigned, could not fail to have suffered in an equal proportion; Brandy and Gin in particular, have been always subject to much Pilgrage. An instance can be adduced of 1000 Gallons of Gin having been plundered in the course of a discharge from a single Ship; so that it may reasonably be concluded, that the aggregate Frauds and Plunder, in so large a value, could not be less than *Ten Thousand Pounds* a year.

X. TRADE

X. TRADE WITH GERMANY.

THE situation of Holland has contributed, in an eminent degree, to extend the Trade chiefly between Hamburgh and London, which had risen in the year ending the 5th of January 1798, to the unexampled height of 10,672,271*l*. Imports and Exports, in which Commerce, 63 British and 172 Foreign Vessels were employed.

The Goods imported amounted to	£.2,658,011
And the Exports of British Manufacture	1,621,142
The Remainder was composed of East and West-India Goods, &c.	6,393,118
Total	£.10,672,271

Both Imports and Exports, but particularly the East and West India Produce, have been proved to have been subject to excessive Pillage. Instances have been stated, of the Plunder of raw, and even refined Sugars, to a very great extent, together with Coffee, Cocoa, Pimento, and other articles,—an abuse and defalcation to be expected, not only from the vast Exportation that took place, but from the crowded state of the Wharfs, and the hurry and confusion which attended the Exportations in the whole of their progress, from the Warehouses to the Quays and Lighters, and from thence to the holds of the Ships, in all which stages, from the numerous class of Delinquents, which surrounded this Property, (and

which indeed, surrounds all Commercial Property in its various transits,) it is natural to suppose, that the Pillage must have been considerable, and it appears from a variety of facts, that in some instances it was carried to a very great extent, both with, and without the connivance of, the Mates and Revenue Officers. It would seem also, that their mischievous auxiliaries the Receivers, are equally alert in seducing persons having trusts in this Trade, as in that of the East and West-Indies. Its scale is now become so immense, and the articles which compose both the homeward and outward Cargoes are so easily disposed of, that it is scarcely to be wondered, that in this extensive branch of Trade conspiracies should be formed for the purpose of carrying on systematic Depredations, both upon the Commerce and Revenue of the Port, which are the more easily effected, as the Vessels in this line of Commerce have never been attended to, in the same manner as the East-India and Colonial Ships, and still, although the resource for Plunder has now become almost as great as in West-India Ships, they are not yet placed under the care of the Police.—That Jiggers, Skins, and Bladders with Nozles, are employed in drawing off large quantities of Gin and Brandy, when such articles compose the Cargoes, cannot be doubted, while every other article is subject, more or less, to the influence and effect of this nefarious System; especially since the vigilance of the Marine Police, in shutting out all means of obtaining Plunder in West-India Ships, has

has had the effect to increase the Depredations in the Hamburgh, and other Outward-bound Vessels, with West-India Produce, where it frequently happens, when opportunities do not offer for landing the Pillage, previous to the Ship's leaving the Pool, or on the way down, that means are found of carrying it to a place of safety, on reaching Gravesend.

From an important recent investigation it appears, that 1200 pieces of Bandana Handkerchiefs and six cases of Playing Cards, were, by the connivance of the Captain, and Revenue Officers, landed, from a Vessel bound to Embden, in April 1795.—In May following, 1500 pieces of Bandanas and seven cases of Playing Cards, were landed from another Vessel bound to the same Port; and in the month of June in the same year, 1200 pieces of Bandanas and six cases of Cards were unshipped, by the connivance of the Mate and Officers, from a Vessel bound to Hamburgh. The same persons broke open a case of Hardware, a part of the Cargo, and stole 150 silver-mounted Snuff Boxes.

Considering therefore, the magnitude of this Trade, and the immense scale upon which it is carried on, with all the other circumstances tending to increase the risque of Plunder, which has been already detailed, it may reasonably be concluded, that the Depredations, and loss of Revenue, upon so extensive a Property, circulating under such disadvantageous circumstances without Protection,

K

and

and enveloped in danger, cannot be less than *Twenty-five Thousand Pounds a year.*

XI. TRADE WITH PRUSSIA.

THIS Trade employed 608 Ships, for the year ending the 5th of January 1798, whereof 527 were Foreign, and 81 British. The Imports consist chiefly of Timber from Memel, and some Corn, amounting to 220,827*l.* The Exports consist of

British Merchandise or Manufactures	£.58,336
and Colonial and East-India Goods	153,326

Total . £.211,662

Strange as it may appear, it has been already observed, that even the unwieldy article of Timber is subject to considerable Depredations. A single Commercial House in this Trade estimate their annual loss by Plunder at 500*l.* which is found to be not more than sufficient to cover the deficiency which is discovered, when the annual Inventory is taken. Such is the scale, upon which this immense Trade, in a *coarse article*, is carried on, that the Pilgrage of four or five Logs from each Cargo, while exposed in Rafts in the River, would amount to Ten Thousand pounds : but upon the whole Imports and Exports, together making an aggregate of 432,490*l.* although it is known that many of the West-India

Articles, which form the chief value of the shipments from the Port of London, are much exposed to Depredation, the total Loss sustained by Frauds on the Revenue, and by acts of Delinquency, is estimated only at *Ten Thousand Pounds a year.*

X. TRADE WITH POLAND.

The extent of this Trade depends much on the demand for the article of Grain. In the year ending the 5th of January, 1798, it employed only 69 Ships. The imports consisting chiefly of Corn and Linens, were valued at £.207,477; while the exports only amounted to £.35,468.—Total £.242,945.

In the general system of Pillage, which has pervaded the River Thames, Grain, of all kinds has suffered by Depredations, in common with other articles; not only by the numerous Labourers in this branch, who are known to have carried the Pillage to a great extent, but also by River Plunderers, in general, who steal Bags of this article from Lighters, as often as opportunities occur.

In the detail of Depredations, recently given by a person, who disclosed a variety of specific Acts of Pillage, it appears, that in August, 1797, a Vessel arrived in the River, from the East Country with Wheat. The Tide Officers are charged with having seduced the Master and Mate, who were Foreigners, in consequence of which, 30 quarters of Wheat were unshipped, and sold at 20s. to a Receiver

ceiver at Rotherhithe, while the remainder sold for 3l. The produce of the Corn was equally divided between the Officers, Master and Mate.

The aggregate average loss, therefore, by Frauds and Plunder, on Goods imported from, and exported to Poland, may be estimated at *Five Thousand Pounds a Year.*

XI. TRADE WITH SWEDEN.

The importations from Sweden, for the year ending the 5th of January 1798,	amounted to	£152,707
And the exports of British Manufactures		73,766
And Colonial and other Foreign Articles		95,528
	Total . . .	<u>£.322,001</u>

The importations consist chiefly of Iron and Deals, both which articles are subject to much Plunder. The Trade is chiefly carried on in Swedish Ships, there being only nine British, out of 109, employed. Considering the portable nature both of Deals and Iron, and the peculiar circumstances applicable to this Trade, it may not be too much to estimate the loss of the Revenue, and the Individuals, at £.3000 per annum.

XII. TRADE WITH DENMARK AND NORWAY.

The importations from these Countries are bulky, and do not amount to a large sum: but the exportations

tions are very extensive; for the year ending the 5th of January 1798, they stood thus:—

Importations in 8 British and 194 Foreign Ships	£.94,821
Exportations in British Manufactures	218,891
. . . . In Foreign or Colonial Articles	492,191
	<hr/>
Total	£.805,903

The importations, consisting chiefly of inferior Timber, Deals and Naval Stores, are in the same situation with similar articles with respect to Plunder; and the Goods exported, are equally exposed to Frauds; though, perhaps, not so much to Depredations.— Upon the whole, considering the nature and extent of the Trade, the losses to the Revenue and Individuals, may be estimated at about *Five Thousand Pounds a year*.

XIII. TRADE WITH RUSSIA.

The Trade to and from Russia, has been rapidly increasing, and is now very extensive. In the year ending the 5th of January 1798, it employed 225 British and five Foreign Vessels;

The Imports, consisting of Linens, Hemp, } Tallow, Iron, Deals, &c. &c. amounted to }	£.1,565,118
The Exports in British Manufactures	178,303
. . . . in Foreign Articles, chiefly } Colonial produce }	273,804
	<hr/>
Total	£.2,017,225

The

The importations from Russia, have been certainly subject to much Plunder; particularly Hemp, Tallow, and Iron, of which, abundance of proofs have been adduced, not only in this Work; but also in various judicial proceedings against Offenders. In the exports too, there is considerable Pillage in consequence of the necessity of resorting to Lumpers, to assist in taking in the Cargoes, and to the criminal agency of Revenue and Ships' Officers. The extent of the whole loss to the Revenue and the Individual, may be equal to 20,000*l.* a year.

XIV. TRADE WITH GUERNSEY, JERSEY, ALDERNEY, AND ISLE OF MAN.

The importations from these Islands, consist chiefly of Brandy, Geneva and Wines, &c. For the year ending the 5th of January 1798, the Trade stood thus.

Amount of Importations in 42 British and	}	£.218,917
4 Foreign Vessels		
Exportations in British Manufactures		20,659
. in Colonial and other Articles		62,622
		<hr/>
Total		£.302,198

From the nature of the importations:—from the habit of many of the persons who navigate these Vessels; and from their connection, with various classes of people, hostile to the interest of the Revenue, and to the security of Commercial Property,
there

there are strong grounds to suspect, that there must be considerable Pillage of Liquors previous to the discharge.

In July 1797, (according to the information of a person upon oath, taken in consequence of a judicial inquiry,) a Vessel arrived in the River from Guernsey, laden with Brandy. Five Revenue Officers were placed on board of her, who, in conjunction with the Mate, concerted a plan for the purpose of plundering the Cargo. In one night they drew off 30 skins full; but they were detected in the fact by the acting Surveyor, who seized the whole.

The circumstance, however, of their discharging at the Wharfs, may possibly prevent much of the Plunder which might otherwise take place; and therefore, the extent of the loss to the Revenue and the Individual, is estimated at 2000*l.* a year.

XV. TRADE WITH IRELAND.

This Trade employed 273 British and three Irish Vessels, including their repeated Voyages, for the year ending the 5th of January 1798.

The Imports in that year amounted to . . .	£.1,878,971
And the Exports in British } Manufactures	£.213,958
. in East India } and Colonial Goods, &c. &c. }	445,965
	<hr/> 659,923
Total .	£.2,538,894
	The

The Importations from Ireland, consist chiefly of Bales and Boxes of Linens; also Provisions, comprising Beef and Pork, contained in a great number of Tierces and Barrels, and a vast number of *Casks*, *Tubs* and *Firkins* of *Butter*, to which may be added *Raw Hides*, and a few other Articles.

Above two-thirds of the Exports are composed of Sugar, Rum, Tobacco, and other West-India and American Articles; and Teas, Spices, and East-India Goods:—the remaining one-third is composed of British Manufactures.

Both the Imports and Exports of Ireland, from the very great number of Packages;—their portable nature, and the ready means of obtaining purchasers for whatever is stolen, must share the fate of other Commercial Articles, while surrounded by so much danger: and in the transit of such a variety of Packages, where the aggregate value appears to exceed Two Millions and a Half, in the course of a year, it may not be unreasonable to suppose, that the Frauds and Pillage may amount to *Five Thousand Pounds a year*:—especially when it is considered, that upon such an extensive Scale of Commerce, in so many hands, an apparently inconsiderable Pillage, which at the moment scarcely attracts notice, or is perhaps, not discovered at all, amounts in its total to a very large sum.

XVI. TRADE WITH THE OUT-PORTS OF GREAT BRITAIN; DENOMINATED THE COASTING TRADE.

The Commerce carried on between the River Thames and the Out-Ports, is extremely extensive, it employs the following Vessels, *viz.*

	Vessels.	Voyages a Year.
To 60 Ports in England	496	who make . . . 5692
To 7 Ports in Wales	32	ditto . . . 124
To 15 Ports in Scotland	97	ditto . . . 684
Total	82	625 (0)6500

The aggregate of these repeated Voyages, at the average of 86 Tons to each Vessel, amounts to 560,000 Tons, and the Merchandise, &c. which is Imported and Exported, (*n*) is estimated as follows, *viz.*

Imports 6500 Voyages	£.4,100,000
Exports ditto	2,500,000
Total	£.6,600,000

As however no aid is derived in this instance from the Revenue calculations, the amount which is now stated, is estimated upon a general view of the Tonnage, and an examination of the nature and value of the Articles imported and exported.—In both in-

(*n*) See pages 10 and 11, detailing the Coasting Trade between London and all the Ports in Great Britain.

(*o*) Vide General View of the Trade, pages 22, 23. stances,

stances, much valuable Merchandise is conveyed Coastwise, and a considerable proportion of the Grain and Malt consumed in the Metropolis, is conveyed in these Vessels.^(p) Under such circumstances the calculation of the aggregate value will probably be considered as not over-strained; for, although it certainly is not possible, without official documents, to ascertain the amount even with any degree of accuracy, it is clear to demonstration, that it must be *immense*; and equally obvious that from the nature of many of the Articles, the Pillage must also be very extensive, even without ascertaining precisely whether any loss has been sustained or not.

CORN.—The article of Grain, in particular, has been proved in numerous instances to be subject to excessive Plunder. The system of *Sampling*, and the assumed perquisite of Sweepings, have tended in an eminent degree to generate this Pillage and to promote its increase. Almost every Labourer in the Corn Vessels and Craft, considers himself intitled to a certain quantity under the pretence of Sweepings, or old Samples. The apparent trifle each obtains thus unlawfully, although not missed or accounted for, but attributed to shrinkage or mistakes originally in the measurements, amounts in the aggregate to a large value in the course of a year.

Instances have occurred where Corn Porters have

^(p) The Grain, Malt and Flour alone, which arrives Coastwise in the River Thames, even in cheap years, must amount to nearly Three Millions sterling.

themselves

themselves become considerable Dealers, by confining their purchases principally to the Pillage of their associates; and men who have long supported the best character in the opinion of their masters, have been detected in these practices.

The barrier of moral rectitude once broken down, the mind becomes reconciled by degrees to look even with satisfaction on actions that gratify their avarice, which at first they could not have endured. The want of an adequate Police upon the River, calculated to compass all objects, has tended greatly to the increase of the depredations upon Corn, and the security which offenders of all descriptions have experienced, has produced in this, as well as every other article, a rapid increase of crimes.

The transition from innocence to acts of turpitude, where great temptations are in the way of men in needy circumstances, is easy and obvious.—An indulgent Master, at first, grants the privilege of a few samples or a trifling quantity of foul Corn, on the solicitation of an industrious servant, under the pretence of feeding a pig, or a few poultry. The request is again repeated with equal success. The stock of poultry or pigs is increased, and additional quantities of grain become necessary. The indulgence of the Master in a few instances, is, at length, construed into a sanction to appropriate Sweepings of foul Grain. These Sweepings are presently increased by previous concert among the Labourers. Corn becomes foul, which might have been preserved in
a clean

a clean and Merchantable state, because the covetous disposition of the Labourers has increased. At length, they become Dealers in a little way, and their Customers must be supplied. The habit of abstracting a little, reconciles the mind by degrees to larger quantities; till at length, superior Grain is pillaged to a considerable extent under circumstances where discoveries become extremely difficult, and where the Trade is conducted on a large scale, not the least suspicion is entertained, that any thing is going forward, until, perhaps, a Labourer, who had heretofore been considered as a faithful servant, is, to the astonishment of his Master, discovered to be a great Receiver, and a considerable Dealer. These observations are founded on occurrences which have come under the cognizance of Magistrates, who have felt it their duty to penetrate into the nature and causes of an evil, which, if not speedily checked, will rise to an alarming and pernicious height.

But this is not the only mode practised in committing depredations on the Corn Trade. Grain is frequently open while in Craft to the ravages of River Pirates and Night Plunderers. The portable nature of the Sacks, and the ease with which they can frequently be removed from the Corn-Barge to Boats employed by River Thieves, joined to the facilities afforded by numerous Receivers, contribute in no small degree to the increase of this evil.

In addition, however, to the article of Corn, no
doubt

doubt can be entertained, since the moral principle has become so exceedingly relaxed among all classes of Aquatic Labourers, that the pillage in other articles conveyed Coastwise, must be very considerable during the operation of Landing, Removing, and Depositing the immense number of articles which are imported, and the Cartage and Shipping of a great variety, often of valuable Goods, which are exported.

Whatever check honest Revenue Officers may have on Depredations, this cannot apply to the Coasting Trade: which, therefore, affords a freer scope to those who have the opportunity to pillage and embezzle Cargoes.

Considering then all the circumstances of this case—the incredible number of Aquatic Carriers—the evil examples before them—the immense value of property in transit; and the various opportunities which occur, to commit depredations without the risque of detection—the aggregate value of the plunder on the Coasting Trade, may be estimated at *Twenty Thousand Pounds a year.*

XVII. COAL TRADE TO THE PORT OF LONDON.

It has been already stated “that the Coal Trade employs on an average about 418 Ships and Vessels, which make 3,676 voyages in the course of a year.” “That about 2,196 Coal Barges, averaging 33 Tons, are employed in the discharge of these Vessels, making an aggregate of 71,903 Tons.” “That each
Collier,

Collier, on an average, requires about 13 Barges. That 1,170 of these Craft are frequently laden with Coals at one time, while nearly as many are used as Floating Warehouses, above and below Bridge, waiting the calls of the Consumers, who require a monthly supply of 300 Cargoes of 220 Chaldrons each." That the monthly supply, being, therefore, 66,000 Chaldrons, it is not unlikely that about 50,000 Chaldrons, (with the exception of times of scarcity as at present,) remain exposed to depredations on the River all the year round. (p) Indeed, it has clearly been ascertained, that the plunder of Coals is excessive, and committed in various ways.— First, in the Ships during the discharge, through the medium of the Coal-heavers, where the property of the Owners, and the Public Revenue, suffer very considerably: sometimes by the connivance, and even (as has appeared in evidence,) the consent of the Masters and Mates of Colliers, in order to procure the advantage of additional labour, which ought to have been paid for in money; but, more frequently, from the thieving disposition and audacious conduct of the Coal-heavers, who being more powerful than the Ship's Crew, have been accustomed in many instances, to remove such Coals as remained on Deck by force: Nay, to such a height had these nefarious practices gone, previous to the establishment of the Marine Police, that a kind of

(p) Vide Chapter I. pages 26 and 27.

Public Market was held at Execution Dock, for the Sale of Coals obtained in this way.

The mischievous privilege granted to the Meter, and the Meter's man, of a certain quantity of Coals for their private use, while it robs the Proprietor and the Revenue (*q*) of a considerable sum of money annually, (*r*) establishes a precedent, which is pregnant with evils of the greatest magnitude, as it furnishes an excuse for the like illegal indulgence to the Coal-heavers, and generates that disposition to pilfer, which has been found to be so predominant

	<i>Per London Chaldron.</i>
(<i>q</i>) The average cost of Coals free on Board at Newcastle, is averaged at }	£. 0 12 7
The Freight to London, Light Money and Charges taken on an average }	0 10 6
The Duty, 9s. <i>per</i> Chaldron; Charges of Entry, 3d. <i>per</i> Chaldron.* }	0 9 3
The expence of the Delivery into Lighters, inclu- ding Metage, 3d. Coal-heavers, 1s. 6d. Factors' Commission, 4d. <i>per</i> Chaldron . }	0 2 5
The Lighterage }	0 1 4
The expence from the Lighters to the House }	0 4 9
Total	£. 2 0 6

(*r*) Supposing the Meters and Meters' men, (about 90 in number,) to receive only 5 Bushels each, as their privilege in every Cargo, on an average, the whole would amount to 1,020 *Chaldron*.

Loss to the Proprietors, at least 20s. <i>per</i> Chaldron, including freight }	£. 1,020 0 0
Loss to the Revenue, 9s. <i>per</i> Chaldron	459 0 0

Total £. 1,479 0 0

* The Total Revenue paid for Coals by the consumers in the Metropolis is above £. 360,000 a year.

among

among this very depraved, but useful, and frequently ill-used class of men; whose earnings, if they were provident, and a strict line of rectitude were pursued by all their Employers, might speedily place them in very independent situations; since it appears, that their labour, which is tolerably constant, produces from 7s. to 18s. a day, and some few instances have occurred, of its extending even to 27s. for the labour of fourteen hours.

Notwithstanding these apparent large earnings of Coal-heavers, it is a curious and interesting fact, that a very considerable proportion of these hard-working men, even since the late advance of the price of their labour, do not on the average of the year, carry home more than 15s. a week for the support of their families. The Coal Undertakers, about eighteen in number, who are their employers, are either themselves Publicans, or depute persons who keep Ale-houses to act for them; for which labour, instead of paying money, they generally receive a premium.

The Coal-heavers, (in number about 800,) are of course, wholly in the power of about twenty-four Publicans, who (with the exception of a very few of the more reputable ones,) prefer those who drink most liquor; and it is calculated, that they consume in Porter and Gin more than one-third part of their earnings.—Not always from choice but *necessity*; since, if the liquor which is sent them is refused, which is generally to the amount of 12s. *per man*
for

for each Ship, they lose the favour of their Employer, and the preference which he has it in his power to give them ; and also, the subsistence-money of 5s. a week, advanced them as a temporary loan, for maintenance when out of employment. Under such circumstances, they are completely in the power of the Coal Undertakers, who also, besides the 12s. a Ship for Gin, Porter, &c. demand and receive, (according to the information which they themselves have stated to the Author,) *One Shilling and Four-Pence* from each man in every Ship discharged, in name of Commission. Assuming this fact to be true, it will appear from the following calculation, that these poor people are very hardly dealt with:—

1. Supposing 3,676 Cargoes to require on an average 10 men each, paying 1s. 4d. Commission to the Coal Undertakers who employ them, or 13s. 4d. each Ship; the aggregate sum thus paid in a year by the body of the Coal-heavers, is	<table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">£.</th> <th style="text-align: left;">s.</th> <th style="text-align: left;">d.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">2,450</td> <td style="text-align: right;">13</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	£.	s.	d.	2,450	13	4
£.	s.	d.					
2,450	13	4					
2. Supposing 3,676 Cargoes discharged by 10 men each, who shall have 19s. in liquor, consisting of Gin and Porter, &c. sent them whether required or not, being equal to 6l. each Cargo; the aggregate taken out of the labour for subsistence while at work, is	<table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">22,056</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	22,056	0	0			
22,056	0	0					
Total	<table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">£. 24,506</td> <td style="text-align: right;">13</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	£. 24,506	13	4			
£. 24,506	13	4					

Being more than £.30 a year, on an average, from each Coal-heaver.

L

And,

And, supposing the twenty-four Publicans to gain 25 <i>per Cent.</i> on their Liquors, &c.	£.	s.	d.
their profit will amount to	6,126	13	4
To which, add the Commission before men- tioned	2,450	13	4
Total estimated profit	£.8,577	6	8

It would seem to be worthy of inquiry, under what authority a Commission of 13s. 4d. each Ship, on an average, is wrested from these poor ignorant people; and how far Publicans ought to prescribe rules, by which men shall be compelled to besot themselves with an immoderate and unnecessary portion of strong Liquors, while their wives and children at home are often in want of the necessaries of life.

But, (to return from this digression,) the chief pillage of Coals has been from the Barges which lie exposed in every part of the River from Limehouse-hole to Westminster-bridge. Estimating 13 Barges to each Cargo, it follows that 47,788 loads, must be exposed in the course of a year, to *River-Pirates, Night-Plunderers, Lightermen, Bargemen, Watermen, Bumboatmen, and Peter-Boatmen*; many of whom were accustomed to supply their wants from these Barges, while others followed the trade of stealing for the purposes of sale: and instances have occurred, of *River-Pirates* and others, having cut Coal Barges a-drift, and conveying them without challenge or suspicion, up and down the River
according

according to the plan settled by the Receiver, who had Carts ready at a convenient landing-place, where the whole have been carried away, while the empty Craft was not heard of for some days, until picked up drifting with the tide in the River.

It has not been customary for those who require Fires in Winter, while navigating Craft in the River, to purchase Coals for the purpose of fuel. When in want, they have generally supplied themselves out of the first convenient Barge that happened to be accessible.

In this course of Systematic Depredation, the loss has been sustained by the purchasers, wherever Coals are bought by what is called the *Room*. In all other cases the injury falls on the Coal Merchants, who have suffered severe and heavy losses annually, which nothing but an energetic Police pervading the whole River can prevent; and it is presumed, that the same expence which they incur by the employment of very inefficient Watchmen, amounts at present to more than their proportion of a competent Police Fund.

On a supposition, that out of each of the Cargoes of the 47,788 Coal Barges exposed to Depredation, in the course of a year, only six bushels on an average are purloined, the aggregate would amount to 7,965 Chaldrons, which, when added to the Plunder and unlawful allowances in the Coal Ships, seems to warrant an opinion, that the annual defalcation cannot amount to less than *Twenty Thousand Pounds a year*.

year. In the opinion however of some intelligent persons in the Trade, the aggregate Pillage amounts to double this estimate.

XVIII. DEPREDACTIONS ON THE CARGOES OF PRIZE-VESSELS IN THE PORT OF LONDON.

IN addition to these detailed estimates of Robberies and Pillage, committed on specific branches of Commerce, is to be added the excessive Plunder which has been found to prevail in almost all Cases where Prize Vessels are brought into Port. No estimate is made of the extent of this Plunder, from the circumstance of no vessels appearing upon the Revenue Returns of the particular year, which has been selected as the ground work of this inquiry. It is, however, certain that this species of Property is immediately marked out as an object of Depredation, not only by the general herd of Plunderers upon the River, but also by those of a class not so much to be suspected, in which is to be included, not seldom the Prize-master and the Crew of the Vessel, and also the Revenue Officers, whose duty it is to protect the Property.

An inquiry which has been recently instituted into Frauds upon the Revenue, has developed a scene of villainy carried on to a great extent on board of two of the Dutch Prizes in particular, which were discharged at Blackwall, in January and April 1796. The information upon Oath states, that the Prize-Master, six Revenue Officers, and a noted Receiver,

ver, entered into a conspiracy to Plunder the Cargo of the first mentioned Vessel, which was effected to a great extent, although several English East-Indiamen, and the Revenue Gallies were along side.

From the other Ship, specific mention is made of six whole Bales of Cinamon, four Bales of Callico, and two large Bales of Handkerchiefs, which are stated to have been plundered in the night by means of false Keys. The same information states, that the Lumpers gave *douceurs* to the Officers for permission to plunder the Pepper on board, which was carried off in large quantities; insomuch that two Tons of this Article, were seen at one time in a house at Blackwall, which had been landed by the Lumpers in the course of two or three days. It was afterwards conveyed safe to Town, in a Butcher's Market-Cart. The Officers are stated to have shared 100l. each.

In cases where adventitious wealth is thus obtained, it is astonishing with what facility the moral principle becomes relaxed, and with what ease the human mind is suddenly reconciled to acts of spoliation and waste. While those in immediate trust exhibit evil examples, and expose themselves to observation and discovery, a continuation of the same System of Pilgrage is suffered in others as the price of concealment.

Instances have occurred where one-fifth part or more of a Prize Cargo, has been embezzled, wasted, and rifled by men acting under these impulses; while

while others availing themselves of the security created by having their employers in their power, have gone lengths which exceed all credibility.

XIX. DEPREDACTIONS ON THE PUBLIC STORES IN THE RIVER THAMES AND MEDWAY.

NOR have the Stores belonging to His Majesty escaped Peculation, Embezzlement and Plunder, in many instances, under similar impulses arising from impressions "*that the Clandestine possession of Public Property injures nobody.*"

Avarice goads the mind frequently to acts in a moral point of view the most atrocious, while habit and example sanction Fraud and Dishonesty in transactions where the Property of the State is only to be affected.

Hence it is, that the Public Stores deposited in the Naval and Military Arsenals, and floating in Ships and Vessels on the River Thames, have been subject to such extensive Depredations. It is to be feared that the chief part of the culprits are so effectually guarded as to be beyond the reach of Detection, while hopes are entertained that they are of late considerably diminished, at least, since the influence of the Police has operated in developing and exposing the general System of Delinquency which prevailed.

Yet it is still to be lamented, that much remains to be done, to check and keep down this hydra-headed evil;

evil ; for the various Detections of the newly established Marine Police on the River Thames, joined to the numerous Criminal Trials in the different Courts of Justice, prove incontestibly that the mischief extends very far ; and so completely are the Chief Officers, who so worthily preside over these Departments, convinced of the importance of applying an antidote, that their attention has been directed to the framing of such apposite Legislative Regulations as shall operate as a remedy.(s)

It is not possible to ascertain the actual extent in point of value of the Peculations, Embezzlements, and Pillage of Naval, Victualing, Ordnance, and other Stores, which are deposited in the Arsenals, or move in transit on the River Thames and Medway. But certain it is, from the laborious investigations which various detections have invited on the part of the Magistrates of the Marine Police, that the influence of the relaxed morals and the systematic thieving which pervade the Mass of the Labourers of every description upon the River Thames, extend to the Public Property, perhaps in a greater degree, for the reasons which have been already assigned, than to the Merchandise and Naval Stores of Individuals.

(s) The Commissioners of the Navy deeply impressed with the necessity of improved Laws, and a System of Police, calculated to prevent the Depredations committed on His Majesty's Stores, have applied, through their Solicitor, to the Author of this Work for his assistance, in suggesting means for correcting the evils which have been found to exist.

The discovery of the devices which have been resorted to by the persons who navigate the Victualing Hoys, in abstracting Spirits and Provisions in their passage to His Majesty's Ships and the Russian Men of War in the River, and the facilities afforded them, by the numerous Receivers who are also discovered to reside in the Towns and Villages adjoining the River Thames and Medway, sufficiently indicate the existence of a regular System long established, and apparently fully matured.

And when the extent of the resource for this species of Peculation and Plunder is considered,—the number of Delinquents eager to devise means of obtaining Public Property,—the deficiency of the existing Laws, and of the means of putting them effectually into execution ;—joined to a total want of a systematic and preventive Police, applicable to the protection of Naval, Victualing, Ordnance and Military Stores, in the Public Arsenals, in Ships of War, and in their various transits in the River Thames and Medway ; and above all, the immense value of this Stationary and Floating Property,—no doubt can be entertained of the annual Loss to the Public being immense, in all the Ramifications of *Fraud, Peculation, Embezzlement and Plunder.*

HAVING thus endeavoured to develop the extent of the Depredations, to which each specific branch of Commerce has been exposed, in its transit from the Repositories of the Merchants to Ships and Vessels in the River Thames—and *vice versa* : Having also explained the various means which are employed in the embezzlement and spoliation of Commercial Property, in outward and homeward-bound Ships, Vessels, and Craft, in the River Thames :—Having likewise unfolded the various devices, which contribute in so eminent a degree, to the injury of the Public Revenue, and the diminution of the National Property by the Peculation and Pillage of his Majesty's Stores : It remains now to bring under the eye of the Reader, a collected View of the whole estimated Depredations on Commercial Property, in the order in which each branch has been considered ; to which is added, a Statement of the number of Packages, and the aggregate value in the following

RECAPITULATION:

RECAPITULATION;

Exhibiting in one View the Foreign and Coasting Trade of the River Thames:—The Tonnage:—Number of Packages:—Value of Goods imported and exported:—And the estimated Plunder on each Branch of Trade: amounting in the whole, to the enormous sum of *Five Hundred and six Thousand Pounds*:

Calculated on the Imports and Exports, of the Year ending January 5, 1798.

Specification of the different Trades.	Ships.		Tons including their repeated Voyages	Estimate of the number of Packages out & home.	Total value of Imports and Exports.	Estimated amount of Plunder on each Branch.
	Foreign.	British.				
East-Indies - - - -	3	50	41,466	300,000	£. 10,502,000	25,000
West-Indies - - - -	11	335	101,484	400,000	11,013,000	232,000
British American Colonies	0	68	13,986	65,000	1,638,000	10,000
Africa; and the Cape of Good Hope - - - -	0	17	4,336	20,000	531,000	2,500
Fisheries: Northern and Southern - - - -	0	45	12,230	20,000	314,000	2,000
United States of America	140	0	32,213	260,000	5,416,000	30,000
Mediterranean and Turkey	29	43	14,757	70,000	509,000	7,000
Spain; and the Canaries	119	2	16,509	60,000	947,000	10,000
France; and the Austrian Netherlands - - - -	121	1	10,677	20,000	1,015,000	10,000
Portugal and Madeira -	55	125	27,670	50,000	853,000	8,000
Holland - - - - -	329	0	19,166	60,000	2,211,000	10,000
Germany - - - - -	172	63	37,647	240,000	10,672,000	25,000
Prussia - - - - -	527	81	56,955	60,000	432,000	10,000
Poland - - - - -	31	38	17,210	70,000	242,000	3,000
Sweden - - - - -	100	9	14,252	50,000	322,000	5,000
Denmark - - - - -	194	8	48,469	60,000	806,000	5,000
Russia - - - - -	5	225	56,131	150,000	2,017,000	20,000
Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney and Isle of Man - - - -	4	42	5,344	15,000	302,000	2,000
Ireland - - - - -	3	273	32,824	160,000	2,539,000	5,000
Coasting Trade - - - -	0	6,500	560,000	900,000	6,600,000	20,000
Coal Trade - - - - -	0	3,676	656,000		1,710,000	20,000
	1843	11,601	1,779,326	3,030,000	60,591,000	461,000
Ship-Owners of 13,444 Ships and Vessels - - - -	Estimated Annual Loss in Tackle, Apparel and Stores					45,000
Total Depredations estimated at - - - - -					£. 506,000	

By contemplating this general State of the immense Commerce of the River Thames, in the particular light in which it is placed, the mind is assisted in forming a conception (which might otherwise be extremely difficult) of the existence and extent of the Depredations which have been committed.

It certainly exhibits a very unpleasant picture of the state of morals among the Labouring Classes, whose assistance is indispensably necessary in moving this immense Machine.

But while their profligacy is sincerely deplored, it is an act of justice to state, that the major part confine themselves entirely to this species of Pillage; and that many of this class of men, who, from early habits and the force of evil example, have become deeply implicated in offences of this nature, would shudder at the idea of committing a Burglary, or robbing on the Highway.

Hence a hope is entertained, which has indeed already been proved, and will be shewn in the sequel of this Work, not to be fallacious, that practicable means exist, whereby this excessive evil may be kept down if not nearly eradicated.

The leading cause of the evil is to be traced, to the total deficiency of any measures of Preventive Police, calculated gradually to check the progressive increase of Crimes: the constant and never-failing attendant on the accumulation of Wealth. In the course of the advance of the latter, which has been
already

already shewn to have been rapid beyond all example, nothing material has been attempted towards the suppression of the former; and hence it has followed, that *Commercial Riches* and *Criminal Offences* have grown up together. Preventive Police may be considered as a *New Science*, yet in its infancy, and only beginning to be understood. Its nature and the effects which it has produced, with respect to one great branch of Commerce, will be explained in the following Chapters.