

C H A P. V.

The immediate effects of the River Police Institution, in the protection afforded to West-India Property— Exemplified by a comparison of the Old and New System, in delivering the Cargoes of Ships and Vessels with Sugar, Rum, and other Colonial Articles.

—The unaccountable conduct of a certain portion of the Ship Owners noticed:—Animadversions thereon.

—The injuries which Property sustained, by the disposition shewn to deny every countenance to the New Police System:—The success of the design evinced, by its surmounting all difficulties:—Its utility proved by the honourable testimony of 51 reputable Ship-Masters in the West-India Trade: By the public approbation of the Wharfingers: By the Resolution of the West-India Committee; and the public testimony of the Body of Planters:—A Statement of additional proofs of the benefits which have resulted from the Institution, by the general effect it has produced in over-awing and restraining the commission of acts of Delinquency, by those Classes of Aquatic Labourers who were formerly the chief Agents in facilitating the conveyance of Plunder; and by the Criminal Purchasers in the vicinity of the River:—

The utility of the Institution also proved, by the diminution of the Custom-house Sales:—By the Punishment of about 200 Offenders, and by the

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general vigilance of the System, by which in the course of the first Season, the Saving to the Individuals and the Revenue is estimated at 150,000l.

As in Military Warfare an enemy is intimidated by the power, strength, and superior position of the opposing armv so in the arrangements which are formed for the conquest of Delinquency, are impressions excited in proportion to the apparent energy of the design, and the features of vigilance, which it exhibits wherever danger is to be apprehended.

The various and extended ramifications of a System, calculated in its nature to attack at once the whole mass of Turpitude which existed, and to meet and oppose the hydra in all the different forms which it assumed, were contemplated by the enemy with a mixture of dread and malignity, which afterwards manifested itself by ebullitions of rage and disappointment.

Conscious however, of the insults which had been offered to the injured Laws of the Country, by a course of delinquency unparalleled in its extent and magnitude, the conquest became less difficult than in cases of Military Warfare.

The various classes of Offenders perceiving that every vulnerable point was guarded, felt for once the
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the power of the Law, when exercised under the influence of a well-regulated Police, and appeared resigned to the alternative of abandoning their evil pursuits. The result was, that the River Thames, from being crowded with Boats of all descriptions, during the discharge of the West-India Fleets, became unusually still and quiet.

The great engine of the Preventive System was put immediately in a state of activity by the delivery of West-India Ships, (whenever applications were made,) through the medium of sworn *Foremen* properly instructed, and Registered Lumpers, with the addition of Ship Constables for the protection of the Cargo, both in the Ships and in the Lighters. The effect of this cannot be better explained than by exhibiting the following comparative View, between the System that prevailed under the old regimen, and that which was adopted by the River Police.

*The Practice explained under
the Old System.*

I. LUMPERS.

Notwithstanding many excellent regulations which have been made by the West-India Merchants, and various expedients which have been tried within the last forty years, for the purpose of improving the System of working out West-India
Cargoes,

*The Practice explained under
the Marine Police System.*

I. LUMPERS.

Although it was no part of the original Plan of the Marine Police Establishment to undertake to find labourers to unload the cargoes of West-India Ships, yet with a view to a radical cure of a very enormous evil, it was afterwards determined to
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Old System. (*Lumpers.*) *New System.*

Cargoes, so as to prevent the enormous pillage and plunder which took place, these cargoes, with some few exceptions, have continued to be discharged under contract, by a class of men called Master Lumpers, consisting of publicans and persons of very doubtful characters, who, with the exception of five or six, are known to have betrayed their trust in the most shameful manner, and to have connived at the most excessive plunder, leaving their gangs, who were generally composed of the most desperate and suspicious characters, in many instances, to reimburse themselves from the plunder they obtained, while their employers, the Master Lumpers, pocketed, in many instances, the chief part of the Lumping dues received from the Ship-Owners, and hence it became their interest to connive at the most shameful breakage of casks, and a great and unnecessary expence in cooerage, which was created too often for the purpose of affording greater opportunities to the Lumpers, Coopers, Revenue Officers, and Watermen; and also in many instances to the Mates and Ships' Crews, to plunder the
Cargo

attach to the Institution a department for registering Lumpers, not only with a view to obtain, by degrees, a class of men that were more select, and to be able to exclude suspicious characters, but also that in working out the ships, these Labourers might be more immediately under the control of the Police Establishment. Accordingly, about eighty individuals, capable of acting as Foremen, and about eight hundred of that class of men who are accustomed to unload West-India Cargoes, were put upon the Registers of the Office, and gangs were assigned to as many of the Ships as were applied for.

The Master or Foreman of each of these gangs was solemnly sworn to perform the peculiar duty assigned him, according to his instruction, and particularly to permit none of the Casks or Packages to be wilfully broken—to prevent Pillage and Plunder, and to promote dispatch to the utmost of his power.

Six old Ship Masters, who were appointed River or Boat Surveyors under the Marine Police Establishment, had each a division of ships assigned them, which

Old System. (*Lumpers.*) *New System.*

Cargo to a very great extent, in proof of which the most incontestable evidence has been adduced, confirmed by a multitude of witnesses who have been examined at different times upon oath, and who developed a scene of systematic robbery and depredation to an extent almost beyond credibility; each Lumper carrying on shore two or three times a day, large quantities of Sugar, Coffee, Pimento, Ginger, and every other portable article, and this, independent of excessive plunder which took place in several ships during the night, in consequence of contracts made by the Mates and Revenue Officers, with certain Receivers, who sent a class of men, called Light-horsemen, who were permitted, for a certain sum of money, to plunder the hold, and who have been known, by means of black bags, called *black strap*, and made for the purpose, (holding each about 100lb. of Sugar) to have carried off to the extent of two or three tons of Sugar each night, for a length of time, during the discharge, besides large quantities of Rum in bladders, as well as Coffee and other articles. While, on such occasions,

which they visited regularly while under discharge, twice in the day, and once during the night. They inspected the work going forward in the hold and upon deck, and gave such orders and directions for the purpose of promoting œconomy and dispatch, and of preventing plunder, as their professional and nautical knowledge suggested, and they reported their proceedings every day to the Magistrates, at the Marine Police Office.

The effect of this system has been wonderful, and the saving to the Planters, Merchants, Ship-Owners, and the Revenue, must have been immense.

No plunder whatsoever could possibly be obtained under the system of vigilance which took place. The men were not permitted to go on shore during the day, by which a great inroad to pillage was prevented. The Watermen's Boats which were accustomed to hang upon the bows and quarters of West-India Ships under discharge on all former occasions, for the purpose of conveying plunder under the Old System, and the grappers and draggers for old ropes, called *Mudlarks*, who usually attended in

Old System. (*Lumpers.*) *New System.*

sions, the common Lumpers and Coopers, who worked out the ship in the day, were permitted to increase their pillage *ad libitum*, as a bribe, to prevent them from making a discovery of the nightly plunder.

II. COOPERS.

In all instances where West-India ships were discharging in the River Thames, journeymen Coopers have shewed a considerable predilection to be employed. And as double, and sometimes triple, the number went on board that was actually necessary, in most instances where there was not a vigilant Captain, or an attentive Mate, the expence was greatly increased; since the chief object of this class being plunder alone, they created work for themselves, for the purpose, not only of affording abundant resources for Pillage, by the spillings of the casks, but also to keep as many of them as possible on board, that all might share in the booty. The men generally had a boat to themselves, which constantly hung upon the ship, and as they were seldom searched, their depredations,

in the night to assist in conveying plunder, were no longer to be seen.—In short, an effectual check has been given by the Police, wherever it attached, to the shocking depredations which heretofore prevailed.

II. COOPERS.

Under the Police System, the journeymen Coopers, finding themselves unable to carry on the system of Pillage, which heretofore prevailed, not only demanded higher wages of their Masters, but it has been discovered that where *three* or *four* Coopers were formerly necessary, *one* is now, in most instances, sufficient, and frequently even this one Cooper has not had employment for half of the day. Because, wherever the Police System attaches, the casks are not permitted to be wilfully broken, as formerly, and there is now no inducement to multiply unnecessary hands, as there is no plunder to be obtained: hence a great saving in the wages of Coopers, as well as in nails, hoops, and staves, independent of the gain that arises from the effectual check to the enormous

Old System. (*Coopers.*) *New System.*

predations, in many instances, must have gone to a great extent.

enormous plunder which took place through the medium of this class of men.

III. WATCHMEN.

Since the vast extent of the Pillage and Plunder in West-India ships has been admitted to exist, and that many of the Mates and Revenue-Officers,* instead of being checks on this Plunder, have, in abundance of instances, been proved to promote it. It has been customary for Ship-Owners to employ Watchmen (composed, no doubt, of the best men they could select) to guard the cargoes against the enormous depredations to which they were subject; and as they were understood to be upon duty alternately day and night, they were generally allowed 4s. and 5s. per day: but it appears, although these men were employed, and although they were supposed to watch day and night, the plunder went on as before.

* This is by no means meant to convey a reflection upon all Mates and Revenue Officers, some of whom have certainly conducted themselves with great integrity and propriety, and have proved themselves worthy, in all respects, of the trust reposed in them.

III. WATCHMEN.

The Ship Constables, under the Police System, are composed of men who have not only had the best recommendations, but who were preferred, upon a full investigation as to character, ability, and fitness to execute the trust reposed in them.

Each of these Police Watchmen are solemnly sworn to execute a certain duty, and to follow specific and clear instructions which are given them. They are moreover armed with the authority of the law; and duly qualified to seize and apprehend all delinquents, which is already proved to have had a wonderful effect in preventing depredations. They are regularly surveyed by superior officers, both by day and night, who inspect into their conduct, and report daily to the Magistrates how far they have conducted themselves properly, and in conformity to their instructions. And as they derive their authority from the Magistrates, and are accountable to them

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Old System. (Watchmen.) New System.

If a Watchman happened to be an honest man, who would not connive at any depredation, being under the control of the Mate, he was sent to the Quays in the Lighters, that nothing might be communicated that was going forward. But even while on board, these watchmen being armed with no authority; having no person to control them, or to inquire whether they were faithful or corrupt; and being equally well paid, without any risque of dismissal, whether they acted properly or improperly; they naturally yielded to the force of bad example: (and more especially if such an example was exhibited by their superior Officers on board:) and hence it is, that they have connived at abuses, and that the evil had not diminished.

Nor is it likely that these abuses would cease, even if Watchmen, giving security for fidelity, were to be employed, since under the system which has heretofore prevailed, there are no means of detecting men thus employed, without any person to control them but those who are most likely to commit depredations themselves, namely,
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only for their conduct; and as they know they will be narrowly watched and minutely examined how far they have performed the duty assigned them, they stand in a predicament different from all other Watchmen. They must be *correct, vigilant, and faithful*, in the discharge of the trust they have sworn to fulfil, or they not only lose their bread, but are rendered infamous, and are punished in case of any criminal connivance. No check that can be devised, although strengthened by pecuniary penalties, or even by bond and surety, can equal that which attaches to a Marine Police Constable; which has in the result, been clearly evinced not only by the attention which has been manifested in completely protecting the Cargoes of the Ships under their charge from plunder; but it appears from the facts which have been stated upon the voluntary oaths of old Watchmen, now (on the recommendation of the Merchants) acting as Marine Police Officers, since the discharge of the ships in which they were stationed, that under the the Old System, it was impossible for them to prevent Plunder,
or

Old System. (Watchmen.) *New System.*

the ship's inferior Officers, who must not be offended, lest the Mate should withhold a certificate of good behaviour, and thereby occasion a difficulty in receiving payment for attendance; and therefore it is evident, that only those Watchmen who act independently of inferior Officers, can secure the Cargoes of West-India ships from plunder. This is proved in a multitude of instances by the affidavits of old Watchmen, who have heretofore been employed, and who have assigned the most unanswerable reasons why they were unable to protect the property under their charge, or to prevent the excessive plunder which in many instances took place,

IV. WATCHMEN IN LIGHTERS AND ON THE QUAYS.

Under the Old System, it was usual to send a Watchman to the Quay, with the first Lighter, to which he was constantly attached, for such length of time as the Craft remained under her cargo, (in some instances, perhaps, three or four weeks) to do *what was impossible for any man*

or to guard the Property in many instances from the excessive depredations which were committed upon it, for want of that authority which they now possess; and the assistance received from the precautions taken by the Marine Police, in causing a printed paper, entitled, "*A Caution against Plunder,*" to be nailed to the mast, warning all persons of their danger in case of detection. That being now armed with the authority of the law, and assisted by the countenance and protection of the Magistrates and Surveyors; and feeling moreover, that they act under the influence of a solemn oath to execute their duty with fidelity, they have found no difficulty in preventing depredations on the cargo.

IV. MARINE POLICE WATCHMEN IN THE LIGHTERS, AND ON THE QUAYS.

Under the New Police system a very different arrangement takes place. Each Lighter is loaded under the immediate eye of the Police Officers, and the number of Casks and Packages is inserted in a printed Way-Bill, which is carried by the Officer

Old System. (*Watchmen.*) *New System.*

to perform—to watch the property day and night until the Lighter was discharged. And hence arose the excessive plunder which has heretofore taken place both in the Lighters and upon the Quays, at the time when these Watchmen, if not parties themselves, were either asleep or absent, receiving high wages for performing a pretended duty, in many instances, without any check or control upon their conduct, or any means used by which it could be discovered, whether they did their duty or not. The most infamous practices have been generated, and the most shocking instances of carelessness have been manifested in consequence of the want of that general protecting system which now prevails with respect to these ships in the West-India Trade, which are placed under the protection of the Police.

Sugars and other perishable articles have been suffered to lie in the open air for weeks together, without covering, and without any person to give notice to the consignee of the particular situation of the property, so that great damage was often sustained, in addition to the pil-
lage

Officer who attends the Lighter, and delivered by him to the Marine Police Guards, who are in constant attendance upon the different Quays. The Marine Police Watchman, after taking a receipt for the cargo of the Lighter, returns immediately to his ship, and the Quay Guard takes the Craft under his charge.

This Guard is a distinct Establishment under the Marine Police. It consists of Thirty Sworn Officers and three Surveyors, as checks upon their fidelity. These Guards are stationed upon all the different Quays and Lighters, and their distribution depends on the number of Lighters in each situation which have come from ships discharged by the Marine Police Office. They watch constantly day and night. They are changed every six hours, and visited at different hours of the day and night by their Surveyors, as a check upon their conduct, and for the purpose of detecting acts of carelessness or infidelity.

The advantages of this system in point of economy are obvious, and with respect to security against Plunder, nothing can so clearly demonstrate the
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Old System. (Watchmen.) New System.

lage which must naturally be expected, from an exposure for such a length of time to men of the most depraved characters, both by night and by day, and who are constantly hunting about for this species of accessible plunder, as a means of subsistence: and hence arose the losses which Lightermen and Wharfingers have been occasionally compelled to make good to consignees, and which could not fail to increase, if the Marine Police Institution had not collaterally extended its protection to this class of men, as well as to Planters, Merchants, and Ship-Owners.

rior benefits of the plan now adopted, as the following voluntary testimony of a respectable Wharfinger:—His words are these, “ I am proud to say, I “ never saw the business of the “ Quays conducted with so much “ ease and comfort as it has been “ this Fleet; I proposed doing “ myself the honour to wait on “ you, to acknowledge the utility of stationed Constables on “ each Wharf, who act with such “ good authority, in keeping “ off idlers and long-apron-men “ who seldom or ever work”.

This comparative view exhibits, in a small compass, the effect of the System, wherever its protection was permitted to extend to specific Ships, discharged under the control of the Institution.

Notwithstanding the benefits, derived by the Proprietors of West-India Cargoes, have been rendered so indisputably clear and self-evident; and the Committee of Merchants, authorised to conduct the whole of the general affairs of the Trade, have so anxiously recommended it to Ship-owners and Ships' Husbands, to place their Vessels in this Trade under the protection of the Police, without any new expence being incurred; it is no less true than singular,

gular, that the Owners of, at least, one-third of the Ships, composing the Fleets which have arrived since the Institution was established, have not chosen to avail themselves of the advantages which it held out. Hence it has followed, that a certain proportion of the Freighters and Consignees have, in such instances, been deprived of that immediate protection which they had struggled, by their Committee, for so long a period to obtain; and their Property, for want of Police Constables, was not only exposed to pillage in the Ship, but unavoidably deprived of the chain of transit protection in the Lighters, and upon the Quays, which has been provided for the security of such cargoes as are placed under the cognizance of the Institution.

The System itself (as far as human Institutions can be complete) is competent in every respect to the security of Commercial property, wherever it attaches, as will be shewn in the Sequel by irrefragable proofs.

It is the indisputable interest of Ship-Owners to avail themselves of its advantages upon two grounds: *first*, as a complete protection to the *Tackle, Apparel, Stores and Materials* of their Ships: and *secondly*, as a security against a diminution of the Freight by the Plunder of the cargo, since the quantum is ultimately ascertained by the weight at the King's beam. (1) But such is the mistaken policy of men
eager

(1) The following is extracted from the Report of the Committee of West-India Merchants, June 26, 1798:

eager in pursuits of wealth that an evident benefit, with respect to the security of property, (often of great magnitude,) is sacrificed to save a certain trifling expence; and it is much to be lamented, that the proprietors of cargoes do not in general experience that attention and liberality from many Ship-Owners and Ship-Masters which they deserve.

Had the Marine Police Institution subjected Ship-Owners to any pecuniary expence for its support, there might have been some reason, (and even that too would have been of a slight nature,) for refusing to comply with the regulations of the West-India Merchants. But when it is shewn that no new expence whatsoever attaches to this class of men—That nothing was asked of them by their Freighters, the West-India Merchants, but to substitute Police Constables in lieu of the old Watchmen, which the usage of the Port had fixed as an expence on the Ship-Owners.—That the request thus made was not only with a view to the compliance with a moral obligation on the part of Ship-Owners to do their

“ It is with peculiar satisfaction that the Committee find themselves enabled to state that the expence of Lumping out a Ship under the New System will probably not exceed the average amount paid for Lumpers and Watchmen.—The whole of the freight on the quantity of produce usually plundered, will therefore be a clear profit to the Ship; and estimating this Depredation at the very low rate of one-quarter of a cwt. Sugar per hogshead, it is obvious that the saving to Ship-Owners in the Port of London only, will in one year, amount to £.10,000, on the single article of Sugar imported, exclusive of other Merchandise.”

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utmost for the purpose of protecting the property of the Freighters: but also to promote their own immediate interest, as has actually been shewn, by an increase of Freight, and the security of the Tackle, Apparel, and Stores of their Ships from Plunder.— It will appear almost incredible that an Institution originating in principles so admirably calculated to extend benefits to a class of men, who had long complained loudly of the injuries they were suffering by *Pillage* and *River Piracy*, should not have received the utmost countenance and protection.—But when it is further stated, that the original Projector of the design *not only laboured himself gratuitously*, but exhibited in the arrangements, (as has already been shown,)(*m*)which he established, a System of œconomy evincing in the actual expenditure the same minute attention to the interest of the Public, as if the whole had been a private concern of his own, (*n*) it would

(*m*) Cap. IV. page 159, &c.

(*n*) Extensive and numerous as the Establishment appears, and important and beneficial, in a commercial, financial, and moral point of view, as the advantages are proved to have been which have resulted from the System; although these are the strongest reasons to believe that in the West-India Importation also, the Proprietors of Cargoes have saved 100,000*l.* and the Revenue 50,000*l.*; yet the whole current expence for twelve months, exclusive of the first expence of the House Furniture, Arms, &c. has been defrayed as follows:

1st. By advances from the Treasurer of the West-

India Committee - - - - - £.1946 9 5

2d. By advances from Government - - - - - 2350 0 0

Total - - - £.4295 9 5

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seem that a design thus formed and conducted, would have experienced the universal support of every class of men, concerned in Shipping and Navigation.

It was however, speedily discovered, that this Institution had more to struggle with than the mere Delinquency upon the River, extensive and alarming as that appeared to be. There were secret springs which operated powerfully in exciting the most unjust and unfounded prejudices. Not a few of the old Master Lumpers, whose ill-gotten gain had perhaps, enabled them to afford pecuniary and other facilities, to some Ship-Masters, and Subordinates in the Counting Houses of the Merchants, appeared to have a certain degree of influence in exciting clamour, and in raising difficulties. Men who had long profited by Contracts for the Delivery of Ships, which the West-India Merchants had declared in their Public Report, (o) "*To be ruinous and destructive to the Port of London,*" could not easily relinquish a position which had been so extremely productive of money arising from the infamous System of Pillage, at which they had connived.

The laudable attempts therefore, which were made by the Body of the West-India Merchants, to have their Cargoes discharged by means of Lumpers, under the Regulations of the Marine Police Institution, (p) were, in some measure, defeated by the
intrigues

(o) See APPENDIX V.

(p) On the arrival of the first Fleet, after the Establishment of the Marine Police Institution, in addition to the Public Report of
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intrigues of not a few of those whose improper conduct had rendered these Resolutions necessary. Ship-Masters were assailed immediately on their arrival, and the strongest prejudices were attempted to be excited against that Department (*r*) of the Institution, which had been planned and recommended by the Merchants themselves.

The object of these intrigues was to induce Ship-Owners and Ship-Masters to adhere to the Old System, partly from parsimonious views in being eased of the expence of Police Watchmen, and perhaps, in some instances, from motives of influence arising from certain facilities which the Police System did not hold out.

the Committee of the West-India Merchants, the following Resolution of a General Meeting, bearing date the 26th of June 1798, was very generally circulated among all Ship-Owners and Ships' Husbands, &c.

“ RESOLVED,

“ That it be recommended to all Owners and Husbands of Ships, and to their Agents, to have their Cargoes discharged at this Port, by means of Lumpers, under the Regulations of the Marine Police Office, No. 259, Wapping New Stairs: and that the Captains of all West-India Ships be instructed by the Owners, &c. to grant an order on the Ship's Husband or Agents, for the amount of the Dues for discharging their respective Cargoes: such order to be given to the Clerk, authorised by the Marine Police, to receive the said Dues, according to the Rates, which have been settled by this Meeting, and which will be produced by the Clerk of the said Marine Police Office.”

(*r*) The Department for working out Ships by sworn Foremen and registered Lumpers.

The result was, that in many cases where the recommendation of the West-India Merchants was disregarded, the Cargo became exposed to Pillage, to a certain extent, both in the Ships and in the Lighters, and also upon the Quays, inasmuch as the West-India Produce, in this situation, was unavoidably deprived, not only of the benefit of the nautical Surveyors, in superintending the discharge, and controlling the Ship Constables, but the Chain of Security, which had been devised by watching the Property in, and from the Ship to the Quays, and until it was deposited in the Warehouses, could only apply to Cargoes placed under the charge of the Institution.

Under these mortifying circumstances, which, in spite of the laudable exertions of the Merchants, operated so powerfully in defeating in part the great preventive System which had been devised, there was no alternative, but to double the exertions of the Police in detecting the Offences, which were thus generated; since no power existed to enforce the means of Prevention, which had operated so favourably in all instances where it applied.

Accordingly by the vigilance of the Police Surveyors upon the River, instances frequently occurred where Lumpers and others were detected with Sugars, Coffee, and other Articles, stolen from unprotected Ships, who, but for this circumstance, might have been kept honest; and it must be lamented by those of humane feelings, that the

want of the influence of the Preventive System has given rise to some severe examples, which otherwise might not have taken place.

The object of the Institution is to render Punishment unnecessary, by making Confederacies for the purpose of obtaining Plunder impracticable.

However certain it is, that Crimes cannot, by any human contrivance, be entirely prevented, it is clear to demonstration, from the successful experiment which has been made, that it is practicable by opposite Regulations, correctly executed, to diminish them in such a degree as to secure the Community, in a great measure, from their consequences.

Under all the embarrassments which have been detailed, and in spite of the hidden opposition and intrigues, which operated through the medium of those who had profited to a great extent by this species of Robbery and Plunder, the perseverance and firmness, which were from the first moment leading features of the System, overcame many difficulties. The injunctions of the two Boards of Customs and Excise, by degrees operated in silencing the clamour and rage of the lower order of Revenue Officers, which was so peculiarly conspicuous at the commencement of the Institution, as not only to excite notice, but to demonstrate, that the primary object with too many of them, was not a faithful discharge of their duty. Had this been their only consideration, there could exist no cause of dissatisfaction, since the severest Punishment that could be legally inflicted, was held

out *in terrorem* to all Police Constables, who should presume to interfere with them, or offer them any insult in the fair execution of their duty. On the contrary, they were strictly enjoined to afford every assistance, and on all occasions to conduct themselves towards them with the utmost attention and civility, under pain of immediate dismissal.

But above all, the Commercial Body trading to the River Thames, is eminently indebted to the uniform countenance and protection afforded to this Institution, by his Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, *(n)* whose characteristic patriotism, stimulated by an ardent desire to do good, produced the most beneficial effects in the steady and uniform support, which he afforded as chief Magistrate of the Police; and the great attention he bestowed, (and still bestows,) in promoting whatever contributes to the efficacy, and general utility of this design.

Aided by the condescending influence of such high authority, and the consciousness of being engaged in a pursuit highly beneficial to the Community, those in the immediate direction felt encouraged to persevere under many accumulated difficulties, and the consequences were favourable in the highest degree to the cause of Public Morals, and the security of Commercial Property.

The eyes of many of the most respectable of the Ship-masters, were at length opened to the utility

(n) His Grace the Duke of Portland.

of the design ; and after its effects were fully understood, they bore the most honourable testimony of the benefits they had derived from it. (q)

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(q) CERTIFICATE.—Signed by fifty-one reputable Ship-masters, trading to the Port of London.—October 1798.

WE, the undersigned Owners and Masters of Ships in the West-India Trade, &c. having taken into our consideration the Plan of the Marine Police Institution, for protecting the Property of the Planters and Merchants on board of Ships and Vessels in the River Thames, and for discharging the said Vessels under the inspection of sworn Officers controled by the Institution, and also under the superintendance of Surveyors of reputable character, who have been Masters of Vessels ; and having each of us experienced the good effects of this Institution in the discharge of Vessels under our respective commands, lately arrived from the West-Indies, not only in regard to Pillage and Plunder, which it was formerly next to an impossibility to prevent, but also the great care taken in regard to unstowing the Cargoes, which it is well known have been wilfully broken, notwithstanding our utmost exertions to prevent the same, both by Lumpers and even Coopers themselves :

We feel it a duty we owe to the Merchants, Planters, and others trading to the Port of London, and the Public at large, in expressing our approbation and satisfaction of the Marine Police Institution, as a system which appears to us from actual observation, to be of the greatest advantage to the Mercantile Interest as well as the Revenue, both of which have suffered beyond conception, by the excessive pillage and plunder which formerly prevailed in spite of every effort hitherto made use of to prevent the same ; and nothing, in our opinion, could have operated so strongly as a check to the evil that prevailed in every department of the Lumping line, where the advantages are obvious, in having the Property protected by Constables sent on board, armed with the authority of the Law, to seize and apprehend every Delinquent daring enough to attempt any pillage or plunder ; the Surveyors over those see that they constantly perform their duty, and we find that if any neglect takes place, on a representation of their superior Officers to the Magistrates, they are immediately dismissed.

In testimony therefore of our full approbation of an Institution already

The Body of the Wharfingers, equally impressed with a sense of the advantages which they found to arise from the link, in the general chain of protection, which extended to the Quays, testified their highest approbation of the Establishment. (r)

Nor were the sentiments of the West-India Committee, who were more immediately interested in the benefits which arose from this Institution, less decided than those who preceded them. At a meeting held at the close of the season, when the Fleets had mostly arrived, and a clear estimate could be formed of the *effect of the System*, that respectable Body added their testimony, not only with respect

already proved to be useful, and from which greater advantages still may be expected, we have hereunto subscribed our names, and also the names of the Ships we respectively command, and likewise the date of our respective signatures.

(r) *Extract of a Letter from Edward Ogle, Esq. Chairman of the Body of Wharfingers, at a General Meeting: to the Magistrates of the Marine Police Office.—City Chambers, December 18, 1798*

“ In compliance with your request, I have had the honour of
 “ laying your Letter of the 21st *Ult.* containing certain queries
 “ as to the effect of the Marine Police Establishment, before a
 “ numerous meeting of the Wharfingers of the Legal Quays, held
 “ at Batson’s Coffee-house, for that purpose: and I have the satis-
 “ faction to inform you, that it was the unanimous opinion of the
 “ meeting, that the establishment merited every encomium that
 “ could be bestowed upon it, for the various and extended advan-
 “ tages derived from it to the trade of the Port; and they
 “ requested me further to inform you, that they feel themselves
 “ bound in honour, whenever called upon, to bear testimony
 “ thereto.”

to the advantages derived by the Trade in which they were interested, but also, by the Port of London in general; and likewise by the Public at large, in the benefits which resulted to his Majesty's Revenue. (s)

These documents, evincing the favourable opinion of the Public Bodies, who, from their peculiar situations, were best qualified to make comparisons between the state of morals among the labouring Class, and also the extent of the delinquency, as it applied to West-India Property, before and after the operations of the Marine Police, have been since confirmed by the body of West-India Planters; who, after a full investigation of the nature and effect of the remedies which had been applied, for the purpose of removing an evil, which had very long been felt as a serious pressure, and in the suppression of which, they were most of all interested, added their testimony of

(s) *At a Meeting of the Committee of West-India Merchants, relative to the Marine Police Institution, held at the Marine Society's Office, January 4, 1799.*

RESOLVED,

That this Committee are deeply impressed with a high sense of the singular advantages, which appear to have resulted to the Commerce of the Port of London in general, but particularly to the West-India Planters and Merchants, in the protection afforded to their Property, by the exertions of the Marine Police Institution, as well as by the general system established for the prevention of Pillage and Plunder, arising out of the measures for detection, pursued by the Magistrates presiding at the Marine Police Office, by which in the opinion of this Committee, great and extensive benefits have also resulted to his Majesty's Revenue.

approbation,

approbation, by a vote of thanks to the Author of the design. (t)

In addition to these proofs of the conviction, of those immediately interested in the prevention of the Plunder of West-India Property, of the utility of the Marine Police System, may be added the general Testimony of those who have had access, to know precisely the nature of the Protection afforded to West-India Property, before and since the Establishment of this Institution.

In the Ships, during the delivery of their Cargoes, under the cognizance of the Police, none of those infamous transactions with Receivers have been suffered, whereby excessive Pillage took place in the night, by means of a previous understanding with

(t) *Extract from the Minutes of a General Meeting of the West-India Planters, held by Public Advertisement, at Wright's Coffee-house, Sobo Square, London, June 13, 1799 — The Right Hon. Lord Penrhyn in the Chair.*

RESOLVED,

That Lord Penrhyn be requested to communicate the thanks of this Meeting to Mr. Colquhoun, for the zeal, ability, and perseverance with which he has endeavoured to form an effectual check to the system of Depredation, which prevailed on the River Thames.

Copy of a Note from the Right Hon. Lord Penrhyn to Patrick Colquhoun, Esq.

Lord Penrhyn presents his compliments to Mr. Colquhoun, and has the honour of transmitting him the enclosed Resolution.

Lord Penrhyn feels a very particular satisfaction, in conveying the sentiments of the Meeting, and their approbation of Mr. Colquhoun's plan.

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the Mates and Revenue Officers ; while the Lumpers, Coopers, and all others on board, were effectually prevented by the terror which the System excited, and by the vigilance of the Officers, acting under control of the Surveyors, and the risque of detection by the House-Constables on shore.

The Watermen were no longer observed hanging about Ships during their discharge, nor were the *Mudlarks* to be seen, as formerly, surrounding them at low water. It now ceased to be an object with both, since nothing was to be procured.

Not a few of the Journeymen Lightermen, finding no advantage could be obtained by forming connections with persons on board of West-India Ships, for the purpose of receiving and concealing Plunder in the Fore-scuttle, seldom attended until called upon to remove their Craft to the Quays ; and they were equally defeated in every attempt to renew their former practices by pillaging the goods in their passage to the Quays, as a Police Constable uniformly attended and remained in, until the goods were placed under the charge of the Quay Guard.

The *Scuffle-Hunters* and *Long-apron-Men* upon the Wharfs, were equally unsuccessful in their attempts to obtain Pillage after the goods were landed, by the vigilance of the Guards upon the different Quays ; while the Labourers in the Warehouses received a severe check from the vigilant eye, which was kept upon the well-known Receivers, by the Land Constables, and the detection of Offenders, in

the transit of the booty, and also by the Prosecutions and Punishments which afterwards followed.

As a further proof of the effect of the System, many of these Receivers have moved off: and the River is no longer infested by *Light-Horsemen* or Plunderers of West-India Ships during the night.

The Sales at the Customhouse, when compared with former years, demonstrated that the quantity of Sugar, Coffee, and other West-India Commodities, seized from Plunderers of every description upon the River, from being extensive, in former years, was greatly reduced during the period of the operation of the Preventive System: (u) and had it fortunately extended to all the Ships that arrived, little doubt can be entertained of the Depredations on West-India Property being almost completely eradicated.

	<i>Sugar.</i>	<i>Coffee.</i>
(u) Customhouse Sales for the year, previous to the Establishment of the Marine Police - - - - -	lb. 28,446	lb. 13,577
Sales for the year, after the Establishment of the Marine Police - - -	9,370	3,716
Reduction of Seizures - -	<u>19,076</u>	<u>9,861</u>

It is believed, that upon minute inquiry, it will turn out in point of fact, that little or no Sugar or Coffee was seized, in the possession of Thieves, during the year ending in March 1799, and that the Sales were chiefly composed of private adventures seized in the Ships, and not of Plunder as on former occasions.

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The Conductors of this design feeling strongly, however, the dangers which might arise from the want of that direct and immediate Protection of which the Proprietors of the Cargoes, who were to be the Sufferers, were in most instances ignorant, employed every means that could be devised for the purpose of watching these unprotected Ships, with a view to the detection of Plunderers during the night, and of searching the chief part of the Lumpers, on leaving the unprotected Ships where they were employed as Labourers; and it is believed the chief part was detected, since nearly two hundred were either imprisoned or fined for small Offences, while fourteen have been put upon their Trial for higher Crimes, of which number, it is to be lamented, that it became necessary to make some severe examples: which, when joined to the vigilance of the System, no doubt, operated powerfully as a collateral check wherever the recommendations of the Merchants could not be carried into effect, by the more immediate protection of Constables; and however much it is to be regretted, that any part of the Property of the Owners of West-India Cargoes should have been at all exposed to danger, while the means of Prevention existed; yet upon the whole, although the fact can never be accurately ascertained, there are strong grounds to believe, that the aggregate Plunder of West-India Produce on the River Thames, as it applies to the Importation from July 1798, to
March

March 1799, (x) does not amount to *One-fiftieth part of the loss that was sustained in former years*, and that the Saving to the Proprietors must of course have considerably exceeded *One Hundred Thousand Pounds a year in Sugar, Coffee, Cotton, Cocoa, Pimento, Ginger, and other articles, while the Revenue must have gained also a very large Sum.*

(x) Importation of Sugar and Rum, from the West-India Islands, &c. to the Port of London, from the 3d of July 1798 to the 25th of March 1799 :

	<i>Ships.</i>	<i>Casks-Sugar.</i>	<i>Casks-Rum.</i>
Jamaica	164	72,208	17,959
Antigua	14	5,258	715
St. Kitts	14	6,137	755
Barbadoes	17	7,961	65
Granada	18	6,806	443
Montserrat	6	2,742	568
Nevis	4	1,867	418
Dominica	14	4,152	400
St. Vincents	26	10,147	908
Tortola	3	789	109
Bermuda	1	171	0
Sundry Places	108	33,338	2,271
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Total	389	151,576	24,611
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