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A MAP OF THE PORT OF LONDON AND THE RIVER THAMES FROM LONDON BRIDGE TO SHEERNESS.

Engraved for the Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames Published May 1800.



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TREATISE
ON THE
COMMERCE AND POLICE
OF THE
RIVER THAMES:

CONTAINING AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE
TRADE OF THE PORT OF LONDON;
*And suggesting Means for preventing the Depredations
thereon, by a Legislative System of*
RIVER POLICE.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE
VARIOUS MAGISTRATES AND CORPORATIONS
EXERCISING JURISDICTION ON THE RIVER;
AND A GENERAL VIEW OF
THE PENAL AND REMEDIAL STATUTES
CONNECTED WITH THE SUBJECT,

BY P. COLQUHOUN, LL. D.

Oculos ad Legislatores nos convertere oportet, ut sanciant leges in hoc opere commendatas. Quæ unica via est confirmandi simul et stabiliendi proposito quo criminibus numerosis et enormibus, suâque naturâ societati nocivis occurratur. Regis annui reditus et merces omnigenæ muniantur adversus fraudem et deprædationes; malaque ingentia arceantur, quæ à longo tempore maximum commercio et Tamesis navigationi afferunt detrimentum.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOSEPH MAWMAN, IN THE POULTRY,
SUCCESSOR TO MR. DILLY.

MDCCC.

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A

THE TREATISE

ON THE

COMMERCE AND POLICE

OF THE

RIVER THAMES:

CONTAINING AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE

TRADE OF THE PORT OF LONDON;

AND SUGGESTING MEANS FOR IMPROVING THE DEPARTMENT
OF THE RIVER THAMES.

RIVER POLICE

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRESS OF THE

VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS AND CORRECTIONS

MADE IN THE POLICE OF THE RIVER;

AND A GENERAL VIEW OF

THE PRINCIPAL AND SECONDARY STATUTES

RELATIVE TO THE RIVER.

BY R. GORINGHAM, B.L.D.

Printed by R. Goringham, at the Office of the River Police, No. 1, St. Dunstons Church Lane, London.

LONDON

PRINTED FOR R. GORINGHAM, IN THE HOUSE

OF COMMONS, AT THE SIGN OF THE

SHIELD,

IN BERNARD STREET, NEAR ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH.

TO those who, by their influence in the State, stimulated by true Patriotism and a Love of their Country, shall, at the present, or any future Period, carry into Effect the Designs which are proposed for giving Permanency, Utility, and Success to the Institution of

A RIVER POLICE,

for securing Commercial Property, in the Port of London, against the unexampled Depredations which have been heretofore experienced, and improving the Morals of the Maritime Labourers,

This Work is humbly, and

Respectfully dedicated, by

THE AUTHOR.

To that end, by their request in the State
mandated by the Parliament and a force of their
Country, shall at the present, or any future River,
carry into effect the Design which are proposed for
giving Permanency, Utility, and Security to the
situation of

A RIVER POLICE

for securing Commercial Property, in the Port of
London, against the unexampled Depredations which
have been heretofore committed, and improving the
Method of the Marine Labourers

This Work is shewn, and

Proposals, and such, by

THE AUTHOR

P R E F A C E.

THE importance of the Work now offered to the consideration of the Public, can only be appreciated by a General Review of the various matter it contains.

The Subject is in many respects new ; while the Details which are given will be found interesting in no common degree ; inasmuch as the renovation of the Morals of a numerous body of Individuals, and the protection of vast masses of Commercial Property against Fraud and Depredation, is the principal object in view.

In discussing a great variety of topics, which will come under the review of the Reader in this Treatise, almost every rank of Society will find beneficial Information ; but particularly those Classes who are concerned in Navigation and Commerce, and who follow Nautical Pursuits.

From the numerous ramifications of a Commercial intercourse of unexampled extent and magnitude,

a

multitudes

multitudes of Individuals concerned in different kinds of Property exposed to danger on the River Thames, become more or less interested. In fact, it may be said to affect a considerable proportion of the men of Property in the whole of the Metropolis, and almost every person engaged in Commercial and Nautical Pursuits in every part of the British Empire, since all are exposed, more or less, to the injuries and inconveniences which the suggestions contained in this Work are meant to remove and to prevent.

To judge accurately respecting the numerous Public wrongs, which are detailed in this Volume, the Reader is referred to the unexampled magnitude of the Navigation and Commerce of the Port, as exemplified in the First Chapter; and also to the account of the nature and extent of the Depredations and Injuries as recorded in the Second, Third, and Fourth Chapters. For the purpose of forming an opinion of the remedies which have been applied, and the success of an experiment attempted under many disadvantages, recourse must be had to the details which are given in the Fifth and Sixth Chapters. It will be seen in the Seventh Chapter, that it is not the Port of London alone which has experienced the injuries arising from Depredations on Commercial Property, but that it prevails in a considerable

siderable degree wherever Trade is carried on. The Legislative System therefore, which has been proposed to prevent these Depredations, and which is particularly explained in the Eighth and Ninth Chapters, cannot fail to be interesting and useful to every Commercial Port in the British Empire, inasmuch as the remedies which are suggested, are in many respects applicable to every situation, and to most circumstances which are likely to occur.

A source of general information, (in many respects new,) respecting the various authorities under whose jurisdiction the Police of the River is conducted, will be found detailed in the Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Chapters; while the Penal Laws which attach to Maritime Offences, and particularly to Local Injuries, as they relate to the Thames below and above London Bridge, cannot fail to be useful and interesting; and to those who follow Nautical Pursuits, the Abridged View of the Statutes applicable to these affairs, detailed in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters, and the General Laws and Regulations of the Port of London, which are comprised in the Seventeenth Chapter, (a Compendium never before published,) can hardly fail to be acceptable, since every material duty to be performed, and every evil to be avoided, is brought within a very narrow compass.

For the purpose of securing purity, and regular and proper conduct on the part of the Officers under the Marine Police Establishment, a perusal of the Instructions under which the various Classes act, as detailed in the Appendix, No. VII. will shew the labour which has been bestowed in systematizing this part of the design, for the purpose of rendering their services effective and useful.

The Author has endeavoured in this Work, to draw a circle round every object that can be considered in any degree useful to the Commerce and Navigation of the River Thames; and under an impression that all that can be considered important or necessary will be found within this Circle, he humbly hopes, that his anxious labours to promote the interest and extend the security of the Public, will not prove in vain.

He has only to regret, that in an investigation so laborious and extensive, where much time and attention is necessary, the numerous interruptions he has experienced in consequence of the various Public Duties he has been called upon to perform, may have unavoidably occasioned imperfections, which, under other circumstances, could neither have occurred nor furnished an excuse for soliciting the indulgence of the Reader.

With

With respect however to the legal part of the Work, where the danger of misleading the Public is not only obvious, but would in this or any other instance be unpardonable, the utmost attention has been bestowed with respect to the accuracy of the Abridgements of the Statute Laws, these being stript of many of those terms which are not familiar to common Readers, it may be hoped, will prove beneficial in conveying that species of useful knowledge to Commercial and Nautical People, which could not otherwise be easily obtained, while it furnishes a kind of Index to the principal Statutes at large, which relate to Navigation, Commerce, and Nautical Offences, in all instances where interest or curiosity impels the mind to pursue more elaborate researches.

Where Offences are exposed, and various classes of Individuals implicated in the details which are given in this Work, it is from a genuine desire to warn those whose errors and vices are brought under the review of the Public, against a repetition of the same evil courses.

It is not punishment in any case, but prevention in all, which has stimulated the Author to record those various proceedings which constitute the mass of turpitude, which has so long afflicted the Trade of the River Thames.

A hope

A hope is to be indulged, that in many cases it may serve as a beacon to forewarn the unwary, and to arrest the hands of not a few of those who have been implicated in Offences of this nature.

If these objects shall be attained by a correct System of Nautical Police, and by a sense of the dangers arising from the various ramifications of turpitude recorded in this Volume :—If it shall tend, as the Author anxiously hopes, to prevent a repetition of the distresses attached to Punishment, and the inexpressible sufferings of the families and relatives of those who might otherwise have been betrayed into the commission of Penal Offences, he will feel himself amply rewarded in having contributed not less to the cause of Humanity, than to the preservation of Morals and the prevention of Crimes.

Let it not be supposed by those who may feel the force of the Strictures which apply to acts of Delinquency in which they themselves have been engaged, that such Strictures do not immediately proceed from motives connected with the future comfort of themselves and families.

If in recording such a variety of Offences, the turpitude of a part of the Inferior Officers belonging to his Majesty's Revenue, and other branches of the Public Service, have been brought under the review of the Reader, let it be recollected that the Author
while

while he has exposed their errors and crimes, has felt for their condition ;—has offered palliatives, and even pleaded earnestly for an increase of emolument as a means of augmenting their comforts, and of removing the temptations to do wrong which are too often excited by extreme poverty.

Property obtained by criminal and unlawful means is the never-failing source of ultimate evil to the parties concerned; and he who contributes to secure those who are likely to be betrayed into a train of miseries, cannot be considered as unfriendly even to the worst of the human race; since the object in view is to establish an antidote against calamities which do not terminate in the wretchedness of the Individuals concerned alone, but intails distress and obloquy on an innocent offspring.

Every feeling mind must deplore the fate of those who are thus unhappily circumstanced, and it is a painful duty indeed when Magistrates are called upon to execute their Functions in cases so peculiarly calamitous, while the distress thus felt is always augmented by the reflection, that such an unpleasing task might have been rendered in a great measure unnecessary, by the measures of prevention which are suggested in this Work.

To live to see such measures adopted and successfully carried into effect, will prove to the Author a

source of the most genuine gratification: Nor ought he to be suspected of insincerity or motives of a personal nature, since the efforts which are exemplified and explained in this Treatise, have attached to him no personal advantage; while at the same time, he is not a candidate for any situation however elevated, in the System he has proposed.

Whether his efforts relate to the formation of the important design of a River Police, or to the Work now offered with all possible deference to the consideration of the Public, he can only in general state, that he has spared no labour to render both as far as circumstances would admit—beneficial to the Commerce, Navigation, and Revenue of the Port of London, and (he hopes) generally useful to his Country.

Westminster,
May 20, 1800.

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INTRODUCTION.

WHEREVER evils and crimes exist in Society, which have not only been felt by the innocent and useful part of the community to be noxious and oppressive, but also declared, by the Laws of the Land, to be objects deserving punishment—Where such evils are even found to increase, notwithstanding Legislative Regulations established with an immediate view to prevention, the conclusion to be drawn is obvious.—Something is wanting in addition to the mere letter of the Law, which shall operate more effectually to the relief and security of Society.

To no local department does this observation so pointedly apply as to the depredations, embezzlements, and frauds, which have so long afflicted the Commerce, Navigation, and Revenue of the Port of London.

The progressive, and (of late years) the very rapid increase of its Trade, and the consequent influx of Wealth, without such checks being regularly applied as are necessary to restrain the progress of vicious inclinations, has certainly tended, in an eminent degree, to production of crimes.—Hence it happens, that in the flux and reflux of Commercial Property, greater in point of magnitude and extent than is known to exist in any River in the Universe, the Thames has exhibited to the mind of the patient inquirer, scenes of delinquency and turpitude, certainly unparalleled in any district of the same extent in the known World.

To explain how these evils have arisen, and to suggest effectual remedies, is the chief object of this Work.—The

inquiry is no less interesting than useful, whether it respects the immediate advantage of the individual, or the welfare of the State.

To those whose property is exposed to danger, and who have been long suffering under the yearly spoliation which has been experienced, the subject cannot fail to be important. Nor is it less so to the Nation at large, when the benefits are contemplated, which must result from a species of protection, shielding the useful and industrious part of the Community from injury, while it, at the same time, improves the Revenue, and renovates the morals of a great body of the lower classes of Society.—Nor are these benefits, as they apply to the individual, confined to one *Spot, Nation, or Country*.—They may be said, with truth, to extend to *Navigators, Traders, Manufacturers, and Agriculturists*, in every part of the civilized World, who have commercial intercourse with the Port of London, since it will be seen that all are, in some degree, affected by the extended evils developed in this Work, and of course are immediately interested in the success of any remedy which may be applied.

The advantages however which, it is to be hoped, Commerce in general is to derive from the details, and the informations now laid before the Public, are not confined to one object *alone*.

The peculiar circumstances of this great Commercial Port, have ever rendered it difficult to obtain a perfect knowledge of the nature of its Government and Police.—A general and collected view of the manner in which both were conducted, was no where to be found.—The various regulations of Trade, and the Laws and Rules which governed the Shipping concerns, were little understood even by not a few of the Merchants and Ship-Owners themselves, and far less by Navigators and Strangers frequenting the Port.—

The

The information, which it has been the object of the Author to collect and to arrange under various distinct heads, although highly important to be known, has not heretofore been, in many instances, accessible, and hence many inconveniences have been experienced, pecuniary losses suffered by pillage and embezzlements, and even penalties incurred, which a better knowledge of the abuses and evils of the Port, and its Customs and Laws, might have prevented.

In discussing a subject therefore, which was so little understood, and which in some shape or other may be said to be useful and interesting to the whole Commercial World, and certainly to every Port in the Kingdom, it became necessary to methodize the design by a variety of subdivisions.

The Work therefore commences with a general view of the state and progress of the Navigation and Commerce of the River Thames for a Century. Its magnitude and importance is not only explained in the first Chapter, by a reference to authentic documents, but also its various subdivisions, whether they relate to Shipping or Merchandise, in the foreign or coasting Trade.—In these different departments, specific details are offered to the consideration of the Reader, illustrated by Tables not less curious than interesting, both to the political Œconomist, and Persons engaged in Commercial Pursuits, as well as those in the Nautical Profession.

The Moralist will probably find matter for contemplation, in the view which has been given of the causes that have produced a species of systematic delinquency, which, in its different ramifications, exhibits a display of turpitude as singular as it is unparalleled; and each class of Traders will not only discover to what extent in the aggregate the respective branches they carry on, has suffered by *plunder* and
embezzlements—

embezzlements—but also the remedies which have been suggested for their future security.

From this view of the subject, the mind is led to a consideration of the numbers composing the various classes of delinquents, through whose medium these extensive depredations have been committed, in which is exhibited a melancholy, but interesting picture of the state of morals among the lower classes of the People employed on the River Thames.

These details will afford an useful lesson to Nautical and Commercial Men, as well as to those whose province it is to provide for the security of the Public Revenue.—To the Patriot and the Philanthropist, a wide field is opened for the gratification of that bias which tends to promote the general good of Society.

Nor can those who really love their Country, and seek anxiously to promote its prosperity, avoid experiencing that species of satisfaction which is peculiar to ingenuous and benevolent minds, when, in the progress of this Work, it is discovered that a partial remedy has already been applied, with a considerable degree of success, in removing many of the evils which exist. This satisfaction will be increased, when it is demonstrated that a few apposite Legislative Regulations, with a very moderate pecuniary fund to support a well-regulated River Police, is all that is necessary to extend the protecting influence of the design, not only to every species of Commercial Property upon the River Thames, but also with the same advantages to the National Revenue, and to the Public Stores, whether floating or in his Majesty's Arsenals.—While, from the vigilance of the system, the evil designs of incendiaries, who meditate ruin and conflagration among the Shipping, will also be defeated.

It may be truly said to be the triumph of reason and morality,

rality, when institutions are formed, and regulations sanctioned by the Legislature, to renovate mankind in a course of criminal turpitude. Thus rescued from the severe penalties of the Law, the powers of mind and body which had been employed in pursuits of delinquency, are turned to objects of useful industry.

Wherever this can be effected, it is also the *triumph of humanity*, since it promotes, in an eminent degree, the happiness and the comfort of the human race.

Through this medium is discovered the utility of a correct and well regulated Police; without which, in those days, and in the present state of Society, and particularly since this Nation has been blessed with such an influx of wealth, and the temptations arising from the circulation and removal of such masses of Commercial Property, have become so strong, it is not possible to controul and keep within bounds the tumultuous and ungovernable passions of those who are unawed by a sense of moral duty, and in no respect restrained by religious principles.

It cannot be too often or too powerfully inculcated, that Arrangements which have for their object the Security of Innocence and the Prevention of Crimes, ought by no means ever to be considered as an Infringement of the Liberty of the Subject; since the effect of the System is in reality to extend, and by no means to abridge, those Privileges which are secured to every member of the body politic, who has not forfeited his natural rights by Offences against the Laws of his Country.

In restraining and preventing the Commission of Crimes, the natural Rights of the Innocent become more extended and protected; the security of the unoffending individual is strengthened, and the general State and Condition of Society is improved.

In order to promote this important object, the Author has ventured to submit this Work to the Public; and as the suggestions offered by him for correcting a variety of evils which in their progress and extent threaten the most alarming consequences, are strengthened by the result of actual experiment, and by no means rest on speculation, he ventures to indulge a hope, that they may claim the support, and excite the attention of those whose province and interest it is to assist in administering a remedy.

That it is a matter of the highest importance to guard the Morals of the numerous Classes who are employed, and by whose labours the extensive Trade of the River Thames is carried on, is not only evident, from the unexampled magnitude of this trade; but from a view of the number of individuals who compose these classes.*

White

* The Commerce of the River Thames *employs*, and gives Employment to at least 120,000 Individuals of different ages, who may be divided into two Classes, and estimated as follow :

1ST. THE EMPLOYERS.

1. Merchants and Ship Owners in all branches	-	-	4100
2. Factors and Agents	-	-	450
3. Brokers of all denominations	-	-	570
4. Wholesale Warehousemen	-	-	560
5. Manufacturers for Exportation	-	-	2200
6. Finishers and Packers	-	-	370
7. Ship and Boat Builders [35 Docks]	-	-	35
8. Rope-makers	-	-	35
9. Scul-makers	-	-	30
10. Block-makers and Ship-chandlers, &c.	-	7	25
11. Master Lightermen, including Coal-lighters	-	-	270
12. Wharfingers, including Coasting-trade	-	-	55
13. Tackle-			

While this trade, unparalleled in point of magnitude, supports at least 120,000 individuals of different ages, and perhaps
500,000

13. Tackle-house Porters	-	-	22
14. Caroons or Carmen [420 Carts]	-	-	100
15. Master Coopers	-	-	120
16. Master Trunk-box-makers	-	-	90
17. Master Lumpers for unlading Ships	-	-	140
18. Coal Undertakers for unlading Ships	-	-	25
19. Coal-merchants and Dealers, &c.	-	-	430
20. City of London [principal Officers]	-	-	15
21. Trinity Corporation [principal Officers]	-	-	8
22. Revenue Boards, including principal Officers	-	-	600
23. Sundries, Merchants, Owners, &c. &c. already inserted.			
			Total 10,250

2D. THE PERSONS EMPLOYED.

1. Seamen and Boys, Riggers, &c.	-	-	33,000
— Clerks and Labourers	-	-	12,000
2. Clerks and Labourers	-	-	1100
3. Clerks and Labourers, &c.	-	-	1250
4. Clerks, Apprentices, and Labourers	-	-	1500
5. Clerks, Journeymen, and Labourers	-	-	40,000
6. Clerks and Labourers	-	-	1500
7. Journeymen Shipwrights	-	-	1100
8. Journeymen Rope-spinners and Boys	-	-	600
9. Journeymen Sail-makers	-	-	500
10. Journeymen Block and Oar Makers, &c.	-	-	450
11. Journeymen Lightermen	-	-	3000
— Watermen in Wherries	-	-	5000
12. Gangsmen	-	-	290
— Labourers	-	-	1000
13. Ticket Porters at the Water-side	-	-	500
14. Journeymen Carmen	-	-	500
			15. Journeymen

500,000, including the families of those who derive subsistence from the Navigation and Commerce of the River. While it furnishes a resource producing more than one-fourth of the public revenues, it becomes a matter of deep interest in a political point of view, that every avenue to Fraud and Delinquency should be shut up, and the most perfect system adopted in the Police of this great commercial port; not only as it may relate to those facilities and accommodations which Commerce requires, but also with respect to the discipline and morals of the labouring people.

Towards attaining both these objects, it is humbly hoped that this Work may prove of some considerable utility. The most prominent evils are here placed under the review of the Public, together with the remedies which have been conceived best calculated to remove them. A record is thus made of the quantum of Iniquity *which* has too long distressed the Commerce of the River Thames, and which, unless ar-

15. Journeymen Coopers	-	-	-	750
16. Journeymen Trunk and Box Makers	-	-	-	450
17. Working Lumpers, &c.	-	-	-	1400
18. Coal Heavers	-	-	-	800
19. Coal Porters	-	-	-	450
— Coal Carters	-	-	-	450
20. Coal Meters and Meters' Men, about	-	-	-	200
— Corn, Salt, and Fruit Meters	-	-	-	155
21. Pilots, about	-	-	-	200
— Ballast Lightermen, &c.	-	-	-	120
— Bumboatmen	-	-	-	155
22. Inferior Officers on River Duty	-	-	-	1400
23. Watchmen	-	-	-	1000
24. Fishermen of various classes	-	-	-	1250
Total				120,000

rested

rested in its progress by being exposed and laid open to public view, might have insensibly arisen to such an excessive height as to have rendered it impossible to have accomplished a cure by the common Arm of the Law.

The utility of this species of knowledge to all ranks of commercial and nautical men, not only in London, but in every port or place where Trade is carried on, must be evident to those who peruse this Work ; since in some shape or other the information which is conveyed may be turned to advantage.

The Digest given of the different Laws, but particularly the penal Statutes, as they apply to nautical affairs, will be found important to those who follow such pursuits ; while the specification of the material parts of those Laws which relate to *Coals, Fish, Watermen*, and other matters immediately connected with the common and domestic affairs of every family, widens exceedingly the sphere of utility, by rendering the Work interesting to almost all classes in the community.

To excite attention, by thus placing objects of general Interest in a prominent point of view, by shewing the extent in the aggregate of great evils, heretofore little understood, and only contemplated in detail,—to exhibit a faithful display of the magnitude and enormity of numerous wrongs, which, from the malignity of their nature, threaten to sap the foundation of all morals,—to warn the Public at large, and those more particularly interested, of the growing danger before it is too late to apply an antidote,—and, finally, to suggest practicable remedies, calculated in their nature to improve society, and better the condition of human life, is the sole object of the Author, in again imposing upon himself a very laborious task.

Should his humble and persevering efforts produce in any degree that removal of the evils which he has anxiously and

disinterestedly struggled to accomplish, he will of course experience at least that reward, which arises from a consciousness of having successfully applied his time and attention to the benefit of his country.

And should it so happen that such public benefits are not obtained in his own days, he will rest satisfied in the confidence, that by thus placing upon record matters of deep importance to society, which cannot fail to claim attention at some period or other; the gratification which may have been denied to himself, will unquestionably, in the result, be transferred to his posterity.