

**Landesbibliothek Oldenburg**

**Digitalisierung von Drucken**

**Vermischte Aufsätze in englischer Prose**

**Ebeling, Christoph Daniel**

**Hamburg, 1777**

**VD18 13177109**

Remarks On The Present State Of The Trade Of Massachusetts-Bay, &c.

**urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-15506**

difficulty: for the five last days, his ideas seemed to be more clear than when he was in health. This disease soon proved fatal. — At the time of his death, he was measured thirty-three inches.

---

REMARKS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE  
TRADE OF MASSACHUSETTS-BAY, &c. \*)

The other governments of New England, \*\*) sixty or seventy years ago, imported no English goods, or next to none, directly from England; they were supplied by the Massachusetts trader. Now although our trade with Great Britain, upon the whole, is supposed to cause no addition to our wealth, yet at least so far as we are the channel for conveying supplies of goods to the other colonies for their consumption, a benefit undoubtedly accrues. New-Hampshire, by their convenient situation, were induced to become their own importers in a great measure some years before the alteration of our currency.

They made their returns by shipping lumber, &c. easier than we did. At present they probably import English goods equal to their consumption. Connecticut, until we abolished our bills of credit and theirs with them, continued their trade with us for English goods, but soon after turned great part of their trade to New-York, and some persons became importers from England. They soon discovered their error. The produce of New-York is so much the same with that of Connecticut, that the Massachusetts market will always be the best. The importer finds it more difficult, to make his returns to England from Connecticut, than from the Massachusetts. Connecticut trade therefore soon returned to the state it had formerly been in.

Rhode-Island in part, became their own importers also, which they still continue.

For the other colonies on the continent, between South-Carolina and the Massachusetts, there never has been any considerable trade. The chief benefit from that colony has been the affording freights for our ships in the European trade.

North-

\*) Governor Hutchinson's History of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay. Vol. 2. Lond. 1767.

\*\*) Viz. Connecticut, Rhode-Island and New-Hampshire.

North-Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, the Jerseys and Pensilvania, untill within twenty or thirty years, used to furnish us with provisions, for which we paid them in West-India and sometimes English goods and with our own produce and manufactures. Philadelphia of late is become the mart for the grain of great part of Maryland, which they manufacture into flour, and supply the Massachusets, Rhode-Island and New-Hampshire, and take little or no pay in return but Money and bills of Exchange. It seems agreed that the southern colonies as far as Virginia are designed by nature for grain countries. It behoves us therefore, either like the Dutch for the other nations in Europe, to become carriers for them with our shipping, or to contrive some articles of produce or manufacture for barter or exchange with them, rather than in vain to attempt raising to more advantage than they do, what nature has peculiarly formed them for.

Our trade with the West-India Islands was much more profitable to us from the beginning of King William's to the end of Queen Ann's war with France, than at any time since. Ever since the peace of Utrecht it has been continually growing worse. Barbadoes required then, more northern produce than it does now. The other Islands, except Jamaica, have very little increased their demand. From the growth of the northern colonies and the new methods of living, the produce of the Islands is more than double the price it used to be. Perhaps tea and coffee, alone, cause as great consumption of sugar as all other uses, to which it was applied, did formerly.

The produce of the northern colonies is as low in the Islands as ever it was. Formerly their demand for northern produce not only afforded us in return, rum, sugar and molasses sufficient, for our own consumption, but left a surplus which, in war time especially, every year gave freight to ships from Boston to England, and paid our debts there or procured a supply of goods from thence, whereas, at this day, the whole supply of northern produce to the British Islands will not pay for one half the West-India goods consumed or used in the northern colonies.

The trade to the Dutch colonies, it is true, is since increased, and our goods from time to time find their way into the French Islands, sometimes through the Dutch,

at other times, when French necessity calls for them, by permission or other contrivances, and by this means we are able to procure the West-India goods we want for our consumption over and above what we can obtain in pay for our produce from our own Islands. Britain herself suffers, with her northern colonies, and pays dearly by the advanced price of sugar, rum, &c. The West-Indians, notwithstanding, are continually endeavouring to restrain our trade with the foreign Islands and colonies. If they could take of our produce as much as we have occasion for of theirs it would appear less unreasonable, or if, by our trade with the foreign colonies, the price of the produce of our own Islands had fallen below the former rates they might have colour for complaint; but when the vent for northern produce by means of the great increase of the northern colonies, bears no proportion, from any one of them, to what it did formerly, and yet the produce of the Islands is double the price it was formerly, and their estates raised to more than five times the value, it must be unreasonable to burden not only the inhabitants of the northern colonies but of Great Britain also with a still farther advanced price of West-India goods, and all to aggrandize the West-India planters. Such a burden would infallibly be the effect of a rigid execution of the laws restraining or incumbering our trade with the French and Dutch colonies. But this is not all. If our trade with the foreign colonies be suppressed, and our supplies of West-India goods are confined to our own Islands, the balance above what they require of our produce, must be paid them in Silver and Gold or exchange upon England, either of which must lessen our returns to England, and will probably lessen our consumption of their manufactures.

*Charlevoix* says the French of Canada live well if they can get fine cloaths; if not, they retrench from the table to adorn the person. I think the English colonists would rather abate from their dress than from their punch, tea, coffee, &c.

If the question be, which is most for the interest of the British dominions in general, to restrain the French American trade or to give it all possible encouragement, it must be given in favour of encouragement. The speedy settlement of this vast continent is generally supposed to be advantageous to Great Britain. Every new house, new farm and new subject adds to the consumption  
of

of British manufactures. Nothing more contributes to this speedy settlement than a vent for the lumber, a great help in clearing the lands near the sea and upon navigable rivers, and for provisions the produce of settlements when made. But, on the other hand, admit that raising the price of West-India produce tends to increase the number of plantations in the Islands, yet those plantations, although more valuable, will never bear any proportion in number to the plantations and settlements upon the continent, and the increase of white subjects will be still less in proportion, Blacks eat and drink nothing and wear next to nothing of British manufacture.

There has been a great alteration in our trade with Great Britain. At the beginning of this period, and till within 30 or 40 years past, merchants and manufacturers in England shipped goods upon their own accounts, which were sold here upon commission, and although there was appearance of profit from the sales, yet, by the loss upon returns, most adventurers in a course of years were great losers. Discerning persons in London, when they saw a man going deep in trade to the colonies, would pronounce him short lived.

The trade is now upon a more certain footing for the people of England. Few goods are sent to be sold upon commission. The manufacturer depends upon the Merchant in England for his pay. The merchant receives his commission and generally agrees with his correspondent, for whom he is in advance, in the colonies, that after six or nine months credit, if payment be not made, interest shall be allowed.

Bad debts must be expected more or less upon all extensive trade. Perhaps they are not more frequent in the colonies than among the like number of traders in England.

The cod and whale fishery are in a more flourishing state than formerly. The vessels employed in cod fishing have been more numerous, but they were small shallops, and one of the shooners now employed in that fishery takes as much fish in a season as two shallops used to do.

The French are supposed to maintain a Fisherman at less expence than the English. Be it so, the English catch and make their fish at less expence than the French notwithstanding. Five or six well-fed Marble-head or Cape-Ann men catch as much fish as ten or twelve meagre Frenchmen in the same time. The French find their ac-

count in taking what they call a muid or mud-fish when the English cannot. This is owing to the vent which the French market afford for that sort of fish. In what they call a *sedentary* and we a short fishery we shall always outdo them, unless the ports of the other nations in Europe as well as those of the French should be shut against us. If every family in Britain should make one dinner in a week upon New-England codfish, it would cause an amazing increase of the consumption of British manufactures.

It is certain that before the war of 1744 the French fishery declined. They used to go from Louisbourg to Canso and buy the English fish for the French European markets, because it came cheaper to them, than they could catch and make it.

The increase of the consumption of oil by lamps as by divers manufactures in Europe has been no small encouragement to our whale fishery. The flourishing state of the Island of Nantucket must be attributed to it. The cod and whale fishery, being the principal source of our returns to Great Britain, are therefore worthy not only of provincial but national attention.

Formerly the trade of Newfoundland was valuable. The increase of the northern colonies has carried from us great part of the supplies we used to make. Our late-began commerce with Nova-Scotia is valuable, but will not compensate for this loss.

The manufacture of pot-ash promises great benefit to the colonies. It is to be wished, they may meet with no discouragement. Frauds in packages and adulteration cannot be of any long continuance. The least that can be done by every government, where it is manufactured is a law to compel every person to set his name and the name of the town where he lives upon the cask in which he packs his pot-ash. This will go a great way towards preventing fraud. Should the Russia traders combine to undersell those who import from America, yet it will be considered that the Russia trade is drawing every year from the nation a large ballance in bullion, whereas the increase of imports from the colonies only tends to an increase of national exports, and the body of the nation will combine against the Russia traders.

I remember one advantage from paper money. Upon the depreciation, from time to time, the wages of seamen and the rate at which coasting vessels and others were  
hired

hired did not immediately rise in proportion to the rise of silver and exchange with London and other parts of the world. We were thus led to employ our vessels as carriers to and from many parts of the continent, the West-Indies and Europe, because we let them upon cheaper freight and hire, than any other colony would do. The war in 1744 gave a twin to this part of business, but we may learn from what happened then, without any premeditated plan or design, what we are capable of, viz. navigating our vessels, especially if further improvements be made in the construction of them, with so little expence as, like the Dutch in Europe, to become carriers for America. The advantage, in this particular instance of the reduction of the price of labour shews us what improvements might be made in other branches of trade and manufacture, if ever it should be reduced in proportion to the price of the necessaries of life. It was hard parting with a free open trade to all parts of the world which the Massachusetts carried on before the present charter. The principal acts of parliament were made many years before, but there was no customhouse established in the colony, nor any authority anxious for carrying those acts into execution. It was several years after the new charter, before it was generally observed. If we are under no other obligations, we certainly enjoy and cannot subsist without the protection of our mother country, over our trade at sea, our personal estate ashore, the territory itself, our liberties and lives. It is owing, in a great measure, to the taxes, duties and excises, the consequences of an enormous load of debt, that the manufactures in England come dearer to us, than those of other countries. Great part of this debt was incurred by our immediate protection. Shall we think much of sharing in the burden when we have been so great sharers in the benefit? There is no way in which we can more effectually contribute to the national relief than by submitting to regulations and restraints upon our trade, and yet no way in which we should be so little sensible of it.

It has been the general voice that our trade to Great-Britain should be contracted, and that our inhabitants should be employed in the same kind of manufactures we import from thence, the materials for most of which we have or may have within ourselves.



The great creator of the universe in infinite wisdom has so formed the earth that different parts of it, from the soil, climate &c. are adapted to different produce, and he so orders and disposes the genius, temper, numbers and other circumstances relative to the inhabitants as to render some employments peculiarly proper for one country, and others for another, and by this provision a mutual intercourse is kept up between the different parts of the Globe. It would be folly in a Virginian to attempt a plantation of rice for the sake of having all he consumes from the produce of his own labour, when South-Carolina, by nature, is peculiarly designed for rice, and capable of supplying one half of the world. Old countries, stocked with people, are ordinarily best adapted to manufactures. Would it be the interest of New-England, whilst thin of people, to turn their attention from the whale, cod, mackerel and herring fishery, their lumber trade and ship building, which require but few hands compared with many other sorts of business, to such manufactures as are now imported from Great-Britain, or to take their sons from clearing the land and turning an uncultivated wilderness into pleasant and profitable fields, and set them to spinning, weaving and the like employments? I do not mean to discourage any persons who cannot improve their time to greater advantage, from employing themselves and families, in any branch of manufacture whatsoever. Idleness is the certain parent of vice. Industry, introduced, will ordinarily tend to produce a change of manners. A general philanthropy will induce us to delight in and contribute to the happiness of every part of the human race, by which we ourselves are no sufferers; the state from whence we sprang and upon which we still depend for protection, may justly expect to be distinguished by us, and that we should delight in and contribute to its prosperity, beyond all other parts of the globe.

---

#### AN ACCOUNT OF ALGIERS. \*)

This place, which for several ages hath braved the greatest powers of *Christendom*, is not above a mile and a half in circuit, tho' computed to contain about 2000 *Chri-*

\*) D. Shaw's Travels or Observations relating to several parts of Barbary and the Levant. Ed. 2. Lond. 1757. gr. 4.