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SOME PARTICULARS

OF THE

COMMERCIAL PROGRESS

OF THE

COLONIAL DEPENDENCIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM,

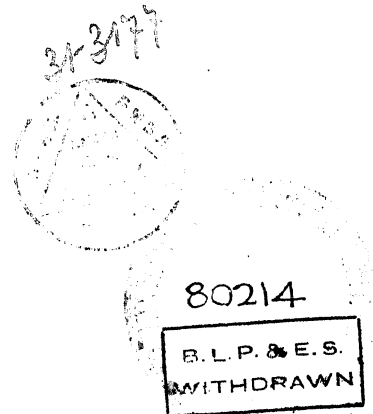
DURING THE TWENTY YEARS,

1827-46.

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[*Read before the Statistical Society of London, 19th February, 1849.*]

P R E F A C E.

This work is statistical ; not political.

The materials available for its compilation are, in many instances, imperfect ; but they have been collected and collated with care ; and every source of information relied upon is referred to.

J. T. D.

Reform Club, 21st May, 1849.

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The COMMERCIAL COLONIES, their Geographical distribution, Area, and Population, generally.

THE most obvious division of the British possessions abroad is that suggested by their immediate relation to the Home Government: the executive authority being exercised, as to those included in the East India Company's Charter, through the Board of Control, and as to the rest, through the Colonial Office. The present paper has reference only to those under the Colonial Office. These were, in 1826, as follows:—

IN NORTH AMERICA.	Area in sq. miles. (estimated)
Canada, Upper and Lower.	400,000
New Brunswick	30,000
Nova Scotia	18,000
Prince Edward Island	2,000
Newfoundland	36,000
	486,000

These possessions stretch from the 42nd to about the 50th deg. of N. lat. The rest of British North America—the whole being estimated at 2,500,000 sq. miles—is known as the Hudson's Bay Territory.

IN THE WEST INDIES.	Area in sq. miles. (estimated)
<i>Insular</i> —The Bahamas	3,647
Jamaica	6,256
The Leeward Islands, viz.—	
Antigua	107
St. Kitt's	68
Dominica	not ascertained (<i>a</i>)
Nevis	41
The Virgin Isles	not ascertained (<i>b</i>)
Montserrat	47
The Windward Islands, viz.—	
Trinidad	2,020
Grenada	not ascertained (<i>c</i>)
St. Vincent	not ascertained (<i>d</i>)
St. Lucia	not ascertained (<i>e</i>)
Tobago	897
Barbadoes	162
<i>Continental</i> —Honduras	not ascertained.
British Guiana, viz.—	
Demerara	} not ascertained (<i>f</i>)
Essequibo	
Berbice	

(*a*) Length 30 miles; greatest breadth 15 miles.

(*b*) Tortola, the principal British island, and containing nearly the whole of the British population, is about 12 miles long, with an average breadth of 4 miles.

(*c*) Length 17 miles; greatest breadth 9 miles.

(*d*) Length 17 miles; greatest breadth 10 miles.

(*e*) Length 35 miles; average breadth 12 miles.

(*f*) The territory claimed by Great Britain comprises about 76,000 square miles; but the greater part of this (about 64,000 square miles) is claimed by Venezuela; and a part of what is claimed by Venezuela is also claimed by Brazil. See Sir R. Schomburgk's Map, attached to his "Description of British Guiana," 1840.

IN AFRICA.

Area in sq. miles.
(estimated)

The Settlements on the Western Coast, viz.—

The Gold Coast	} area not settled, but estimated at	8,000
Sierra Leone . . .		
Gambia . . .		

The Cape of Good Hope 130,000

IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

Ceylon	24,700
Mauritius	676

IN AUSTRALIA.

New South Wales	area unsettled.
Van Dieman's Land	27,000

And also the following military or maritime stations; which, as they cannot be said, properly, to have any commerce are omitted from the investigation,—

Heligoland	Gibraltar	Ascension
The Bermudas	Malta	and
	St. Helena	The Falkland Islands.

In the interval between 1826 and 1846, there were added to the Australian settlements,—

Western Australia, in 1829	} area unsettled.
South Australia, in 1834	
New Zealand, in 1839	

86,000 sq. miles.

These will be introduced as successive extensions of the Australian group of colonies. The other additions during the same interval were—

Hong Kong, a maritime station on the coast of China, in 1842; and
Natal, an offshoot of the Cape colony, in 1844.

These do not seem to require further notice: Hong Kong, apart from its recent acquirement, being rather a maritime station than a commercial colony; and Natal, still more recently acquired, not yet affording materials even for a trustworthy estimate of its commercial character.

It will at once be observed, that these possessions, so far as they are actually occupied by Europeans, are all either small islands, or territories stretching along the coasts of large islands or continents. If there be any exceptions to this rule, they exist only where pastoral occupations, as at the Cape of Good Hope and in Australia, facilitate the profitable occupation of very large tracts of country by a small number of persons. The richest and most populous localities are, in *every* instance, those most easily approached by sea. And it will appear, on examining the nature of the commerce of these scattered communities, that they are also, generally, much more dependent upon supplies from without, than the inhabitants of any long-settled country. It seems to follow, therefore, that they are at once well adapted for commercial intercourse with the rest of the world, and peculiarly exposed to maritime invasion or control.

The geographical distribution of the whole territory may be roughly stated thus:—

<i>North of the Tropics.</i>	WEST OF GREENWICH. Area of sq. miles.	EAST OF GREENWICH. Area in sq. miles.
The North American Colonies	2,500,000	—
<i>Between the Tropics.</i>		
The West Indian Colonies	85,000	—
The African Coast Settlements	8,000	—
Ceylon	—	24,700
Mauritius	—	676
About one-third of Australia	—	1,000,000
<i>South of the Tropics.</i>		
The Cape of Good Hope	—	130,000
The remaining two-thirds of Australia, New Zealand, &c. —	—	2,100,000