

Sir William Young's *Essay on the commercial and political importance of ye island of Tabago, 1810*

This PDF contains a full transcription of the *Essay*, undertaken by Special Collections intern, James Hatherill, in Spring 2017.

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To The Kings
Most Excellent Majesty
This Report
“on the Commercial & Political Importance
“of His Majestys Island of Tobago”
Is most Respectfully submitted
By His Majestys
Ever Dutyfull Subject
and Faithfull Servant
W.Young
Government House, Tobago
Oct. 23rd, 1810.

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An Essay on the Commercial and Political
Importance of ye Island of Tabago.
By Sir Wm Young Bart Gov.
Octobr. 1810.

[images from pages 3 and 4]

<http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/specialcollections/youngs-essay-on-tobago/introducing-the-essay/introducing-the-island-of-tobago-pages-3-4-and-5>

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Introduction

From the Chart prefixd to this Essay, the relative situation and Bearings of the Island of Tabago will distinctly appear.

The Map, - on however small a scale will exhibit the extent and form of the Island, - its line of Coasts indented with frequent Bays and Harbours, and the course of Rivers which in each disembogue. – The Dorsal ridge of Mountains is tracd on the Map, -but the wild and Romantic Nature of the interior Country, as from its line of summit, 1700 feet above the level of the sea, it falls abruptly to form precipices on the Northside, or as it more gradually sinks and undulates to the Southern Coast, is so varied with wide rocks, verdant swells of Ground, Ravines, Ridges, and isolated Cones of Hill, covered with wildnesses of shrubbery, or with lofty Groves, through which sparkle frequent Rivulets and occasional cascades of water, - That the best drawings could only represent the scenery in detail,- and no art of topography or of language could convey a clear and general idea of the face of country.

Of the stations for shipping, and particularly of such, as may contribute,- ‘ to the Commercial & Political Importance of Tobago’ - some further Account and description may be necessary

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The Line of almost continuous Bays on the Southside of the Island, affords shelter and anchorage for merchant vessels which arrive with stores, and to load with produce from the Plantations; - But, this is not the Coast, which renders suitable accommodations to ships of war;- or has the bearings the most

favorable, for the directions of a general Commerce:- it is however and specially laying to advantage for one important branch of Trade, by the Channel of the Oronooko.

The Northern Coast of Tobago, is on every consideration of uses, in War or Peace, of the Greatest Import: - a sketch of its line of Country, as seen three leagues at sea, will give a general idea, of its range of highlands, for twenty of Thirty two miles, its entire length on the Geographic base:- The Inequalities of the Ground, would make the distance to the Traveller much greater. The Plain reaching from near Courland to the western extremity of the island is so level, that from the one side, the feathered heads of the mountains Cabbage trees may be descried on the opposite coast:- at the western end, four miles across and bearing direct, on Trinidad, only six leagues distant, is a deep Bay, opening two miles on the chord[?] of entrance, and shelterd from the prevalent winds by the entire length of the Island: - It has good anchorage for ships of the line, - and the station Commands Trinidad.

[image from page 7]

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This extensive plain, is a singular contrast in Nature, to the towering hills and broken and rumpled surface which imediately on the confines of this level district, from coast to coast, and for more than twenty miles to the Eastern Bluff head, of – ‘Gracias a Dios’ (as named by Columbus) – exhibits a succession of difficult passes and commanding stations, and in a military view, The strongest

Country possible:- Peaceable and undisturbed travellers must wind round ravines, and up and down, The steeps of Hill by zig-zags and circuitous paths:- and Troops will have every

resource for defence, and for a war of Posts.- whatever Power possesses and makes Tobago a place of armed Depôt, - will hold it sure against whatever attack.

The Eastern bold Headland of Tobago, which juts forth as the Southern promontory of the vast Bay, which indents and divides the Continents of North and of South America, - as it meets and catches the Eastern Breeze or Tradewind, gives it to the continuous mountain ridge, on the summit of which passing westward, it freshens in force and temperature; and as it thence rushes down the lateral ribs of Hill, it ventilates the entire Island with a really delightfull, as healthy breeze: This combined with the frequent showers, from Clouds collecting on the heights; and with the agitation of air from the many rapid rivulets there having their source, - may in some degree

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account, for a cooler and more salubrious climate in Tabago, than might be expected in Latitude 11. – at my Government house, two hours P.M. Farenheits Thermometer shows the the [sic] heat, to be in ordinary , from 80 to 82, and in the morning to be from 74 -- to 78. – I have not once in nearly 4 years known the quick silver rise higher than to 86, - and this but rarely, and in the months of September and October.

That in Tabago, comparatively with Barbadoes, or Antigua, Europeans enjoy a pleasant climate, I appeal to my late visitors, Admiral Sir Alexr. Cochrane, and B.General Sir Charles Shipley; - that They enjoy an healthy climate, I appeal to the military monthly returns. – in the year 1808, the Garrison consisting of 15 officers, and 360 men, lost but one officer and 15 men; - and in the year 1809, - lost no officer, and only 14 men from 372, - or one man in 27. This fact is so important, in recommendation of of [sic] Tobago, as a military station, that I shall authenticate it by an insertion of the Garrison Returns.

On the median of 27 returned sick in Quarters or Hospital,
 It is to be observd, that in the number are comprized worn out &
 invalid soldiers, with sore legs other chronical complaints, and
 Other from Punishments – ‘unfit for Duty.’

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1808

Monthly Returns	Officers		Europeans ye Royals & 24 artillery						Africans			Garrison		
	No	Died	[Sjts?]	[Dms?]	Rank & File	Total	Sick	died	Total	Sick	Died	Totals	Sick	died
January	15	-	17	5	241	264	23	2	86	-	-	350	23	2
February	16	1	17	6	237	260	27	4	86	1	-	346	28	4
March	17	-	17	6	236	259	21	1	86	1	-	345	22	1
April	17	-	21	7	226	254	21	-	87	1	-	341	22	-
May	16	-	20	7	226	253	15	-	88	4	-	341	19	-
June	15	-	20	7	226	253	15	-	88	3	-	341	17	-
July	14	-	18	7	229	254	15	-	88	4	-	342	19	-
August	16	-	16	7	276	299	45	1	88	7	-	367	52	1
Sepr	16	-	14	7	282	300	33	2	87	4	1	392	37	3
Octobr	11	-	14	7	280	301	31	1	84	10	-	385	41	1
Nov	11	-	14	7	277	298	32	3	83	11	-	381	43	3
Decembr	13	-	14	7	277	298	45	-	85	3	-	383	38	-
Median No	15	1	17	7	249	274	27	14	86	4	1	360	31	15

1809

Monthly Returns	Europeans						africans							
	No	Died	Sjts	Dms	R & File	Total	Sick	Died	Africans	Sick	Died	Total	Sick	Died
January	12	-	14	7	276	297	32	1	87	7	1	384	43	2
Feb	12	-	16	7	269	292	46	4	91	9	-	383	55	4
March	14	-	16	7	269	292	28	-	91	-	-	383	28	-
April	14	-	16	7	268	291	24	1	91	3	-	382	27	1
May	14	-	16	7	266	289	34	1	91	4	-	380	38	1
June	17	-	16	7	265	286	24	1	89	3	-	375	27	1

July	15	-	16	7	262	285	19	1	89	4	-	374	23	1
August	17	-	16	7	261	284	12	1	89	5	-	378	17	1
Sept	16	-	16	7	261	284	21	-	90	2	1	374	23	1
Oct	16	-	16	7	261	284	38	1	89	4	-	373	31	1
Nov	13	-	13	7	212	233	12	-	89	2	-	322	14	1
Decembr	12	-	12	7	209	230	29	1	89	4	-	319	33	1
Median No.	14	-	16	7	260	283	27	12	89	4	2	372	31	14

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For the support of whatever number of soldiers or sailors, no west India Island, can show greater fertility & general resource. The Luxuriant plants, shrubs, and fine timber growing to the very summit of its loftiest hills, sufficiently designate the richness and depth of soil. – The Mountains ridge arrests cloud and dispenses rains; - and the springs, and source of water formed in its heights, pour forth considerable streams to fertilize a Country: no Island is better waterd than Tabago.

Having stated the Island to be fertile, in the Growth of whatever the Earth may produce for the use and subsistence of man; - I should not omit, what the Seas actually do produce:- The Fisheries are abundant and inexhaustible on every part of the Coasts;- and on the north side, half o' League at sea, and immediately in the offing of Manowar Bay, - There are Banks swarming with the finest fish, which the west India seas anywhere produce.

All the requisites inviting to form a principal Depôt and post of arms in the Island of Tabago, seem collected to a point and situation, for convenient subserviency to the very place, which Nature hath strongly markd,- and which military Genius & sagacity, would select, - fur such purpose.

The Courland Bays may be considered, as places of rendezvous

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for Transports & store ships, and as Ports of Commercial resource to The important station – ‘of Manowar Bay’: - and here for watering, is the large and powerful stream of Courland River, which turns no less than seven water mills in its course to the sea.

The Coast from Courland to Manowar Bay 22 miles distant, is but partially and in few places inhabited:- It is indented with several small bays, a rivulet pouring into Each; - and on this range of shore, Rich plots of ground, might advantageously be allotted by Grants, - to stock rearers, Gardeners, & Fishermen, comprizing in this useful description of settlers, discharged soldiers & sailors, whose industry might furnish articles of subsistence for the Hospitals, Barracks, & shipping at 11° Quarters.

The Rivulet in Bloody Bay, is for some hundred yards inland navigable for small boats; - and timber from the declivities of Hill, ‘twixt which it flows, might be let down to the stream and floated to the sea, for conveyance, where such materials for buildings, and shipping, are required.

The entire line of the Northern coast of Tobago, seems by Nature adapted to the subordinate service of a principal station of naval & military force;- as That principal station is by nature formd to maintain and protect its Deposit;- and

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to admit, the most direct and extensive uses of it,- In conquest or Command.

Man ‘o’ war Bay,- is the station I advert to;- It is the great feature of Tobago, on which I most rely in suggesting the important and imperial uses, which may be derived from the Possession of this Island,- if turnd to full Account.

The annexd sketch was taken, on my last tour of survey, descending from the Eastern Heights,- when on the brow of the observatory Hill, the view suddenly open'd of the noble

Bason of Manowar Bay shining beneath, smooth as a mirror. The drawing will give a just idea of the Nature of the Country [environing?] the Harbour, & of its strong headlands: and I add a Chart of the Bay,- with the Soundings taken by the French Captains Dubrüys & [Duciet?] in the year 1785. Two Rivulets flow into the Bay,- and further, for watering, a pure and perennial Spring gushes out within an hundred yards of the Beach:- on the Table of the Highest Hill towering behind the Bay, is a small lake of fresh water, for the supply of that Commanding station.

East of the line of soundings from the Entrance, the curve markd “The Pyrates carenage” from Capt Roberts, and other noted Buccaneers, Having there resorted in the beginning of the last

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<http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/specialcollections/youn-gs-essay-on-tobago/natural-resources-of-the-island/strategic-advantages-of-man-o-war-bay-pages-13-14-and-15>

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last century, affords the best grounds for anchorage, and under the most perfect shelter;- on this windward beach the water is smooth as a mill pond, yet has no inconveniences of calm; the Current setting in round Telescope point, courses the depth of the Bay and runs out by the opposite headland, facilitating the departure of ships in all seasons, and under all circumstances.

-as, with proper Batteries & works, in the Commanding headlands, the Entrance of the Bay cannot be forcd, - so neither can the Bay be blockaded:- The Currents in the offing, and for a great extent of sea, are so shifting and violent,- as to set all reckoning by the log at defiance; and the ablest navigator will often find his vessel drift to Leeward, notwithstanding every exertion to keep his course. – It is not from mere speculation,

-It is from intelligence given me, by every Master of a ship long engaged in the Trade of this Island, and best acquainted with its seas, that I derive the opinion, -“that no vessel, can for any length of Time, Lay off and on, on the North side of Tobago; -and that Manowar Bay can never to effect, be blockaded. This circumstance induces a reflection, on the leaving this important station in its present open, and defenceless state: -‘ might not an ennemys Squadron, enter and take possession of this Harbour, as a Post for Cruize and hostile enterprize? and,

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and raising Batteries on the headlands, secure the lodgement for annoyance

of British Trade & Dominion;- at least secure it for a considerable time, and at a Critical season, against whatever Island Garrison was at Scarboro,- having to march through thirty miles of rugged country impassable by Cannon, and on the narrow paths & defiles of which, a Resolute piquet, might stop an Army.

In the moment not considering the active and greater uses of the situation,- yet, merely as a measure of precaution or defence,- ‘The Station should be preoccupied’:- The Ancient Pyrates Carenage, should not be left, as it is, open as a resort, and easily to be made a strong hold, for the Pyrates & Marauders of ye present day.

Their Great Captain,- has already had his eyes on the Spot: -The red lines on the Chart, denote the Barracks, Batteries, and other works, intended by the Engineers of Napoleon, when in 1802, possessing the Island:- how I gained my intelligence of these designs will be explained in the following essay.

It occurs, that if a force from Scarboro, can little annoy the strong hold at Manowar Bay;- The force at manowar Bay can as little extend a timely protection to the rich Country, and fertile plains west of Scarboro’.- my Political arrangements for Tabago, would direct,- ‘ To the fixing the head Quarters, at

Mano'war Bay:- ' to the retaining a detached Garrison on the Fort Hill covering Scarborough, the seat of Government;- 'and to

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the establishing, the firms of Trade and Commerce, and there with, the Custom house and post office, at Courland on the opposite coast:- it is not necessary,- it is not safe or proper, that a place of trade should be a place of Arms:- a military Port, is a Port to be attacked,- and then whatever is in its immediate vicinities must suffer from the attack,- or perhaps be levelled to ruins for the very purposes of Defence:- surely it has been an advantage to the Commercial Town of St Pierre in Martinique that,- on successive attacks, and final conquest of that great Island, its mercantile warehouses & shipping have been safe, as being distant, from the scene of warfare & Bombardments, at Port Royale. All that is required at Courland, is a Battery and Town Militia to protect the shipping in the Bay from marauding enterprize;- on more serious attack, Manowar Bay to windward, might dispatch immediate succour.

I shall give a sketch of the fort-hill on which the present Garrison is now stationd,- and of the Town of Scarboro, and of its Bay;- observing that the Bay has not water or safe anchorage for ships of the Line.

Lastly, and to complete the documents, on which my inferences In the following essay will have to rest, I shall exhibit a Chart of the particular Bearings of the Island of Tabago to Other Countries and Places,- for juster estimate of its qualifications,- to be a Depôt of Trade,- or to be a Post of enterprize and Command.

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<http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/specialcollections/youn-gs-essay-on-tobago/tobagos-relative-position/scarboro-town-fort-and-bay-pages-19-20-and-21>

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- The Representations, which the previous Introduction conveys, of Harbours, woods, and Rivers;- of the salubrity of climate;- of the fertility of soil; and of the natural strength of Country,- are to be referd to and combind with, -the exterior advantages, from relative situation and Bearings to other Islands and Countries which, I now exhibit;- and then on the general Premises,- shall Infer, -‘ The Commercial and Political Importance of the Island of Tobago’- the subject of discussion, in the following essay.

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‘The Commercial & Political Importance’
of The Island of Tobago’

- Mano’war Bay,- in the Island of Tabago, is situated in Lat:- 11°-#16:- Long: W.G.- 60° - #29;- and, as appears from the Charts exhibited in this Book,- is to windward of all the Antilles with the Exception of Barbadoes, the present head Quarters of the army & Navy of Great Britain, in these seas.- But,- with the exception of Its being the most windward Island,- Barbadoes is not thought to possess from nature or situation, any one requisite, of accomodation or Security, fitting it to be a Place of Depôt, and the Principal station of British Force.

- Yet,- Considering the enterprizing spirit of the ennemy whom we Have to contend with,- and His new resources of equipment at Antwerp, for armd expedition, north about, and to the west India seas;- Sudden attack

is at some time to be expected, and at all times to be
be [sic] prepared against.
It will be the purpose of this essay, to examine if

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'If Tobago does not offer the Security, with all other Requisites of military Depôt, which from the Nature of its Country and Coasts,- ' Barbadoes' can by no Art of the engineer be made, equally to afford.

- At the distance of four thousand miles from Gt Britain and in a quarter of its Dominions so Rich, and assailable, and so assuredly a scene of warfare or Quarrel with France, -a Principal station of Force, and Place of Depôt for naval and military stores, is indispensable.

Such Depôt for warlike maintenance and service, is an Imperial Treasury of value & Import, far beyond any of money or jewels:- It is an hoarded Resource, for the feeding and the arming Soldiers, and Sailors;- and for the providing and refitting ships of War.

Such national Deposit, should be within the strongest Hold;- and at the same time be so placed, that it may readily be resorted to,- and deliveries from it be made to the greatest advantages, for the public uses and service.

- On the first of these Qualifications,- 'That of Safe Keeping,- I have sufficiently, however briefly, stated in the introduction to this essay,- the Internal resources of

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the Island,- its natural strength of Country,- and the magnificent Harbour on the Northern Coast of Tabago, which no storms ever Trouble, and which No ennemy can either attack, or Blockade.

-Considering Manowar Bay, as a safe Place of Depôt, It remains to show that “It is a convenient One”;- and to Invite the making it a place of arms,- by the shewing it by Nature,- to be a Port of Enterprize.

The Tropical Winds being in this Latitude prevalent from E.S.E.- a vessel from Tabago, may run direct for Barbadoes, with the wind on the Beam;- and to all other west India Islands, with the wind most favorable. Trinidad, lays due west, at only six Leagues distance, and Tobago commands, and is the very Key of that Important Island, as its Governor Picton well represented. Currents and Eddies cooperate with the prevalent Trade winds to favor the voyage to Trinidad;- and to Impede that of Return:- From Courland, a vessel may run by the Boccas to Port d’Espagne, in a few hours;- The vessel, for Return must take a Northing,- and, as the sailors express it, “-go “to sea to fetch Tobago,”- nor then make the landing in less days, than it took hours for the Leeward Voyage.

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In times of war, supposing Tabago ‘Ennemy’,- not a British merchant vessel could clear out from Trinidad without risque;- I might say, ‘without the certainty of capture, if not protected by Convoy:- a vessel beating from the Boccas, in ordinary Course to windward, must be descried from the highlands of Tobago;- and Sloops of War, or other Cruizers, from their proper station at Courland, might by signal, start for a Certain Prize.

The British Government aprizd of the relative situ=
=ations of the Islands, will never consider Trinidad to be a safe and desirable possession;- without retaining that of Tobago.
-In general terms, it is said, ‘that the wind between the Tropics, at all seasons of the year, blows from the East;- but this is, with one or more points of Northing or Southing in different months

of the year, in the Latitude of Tobago, for the six months from June to December, the prevalent wind is E.S.E.- in January February and March, often, to the North of East;- and in the remaining three months of the year due East, varying occasionally to points N. or S.- but rather to the South.

The Natural effect of this prevalence of Breeze, from E.S.E. and from East,- is a heavier surf on the southern coast of

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the Island:- on the North side, the swell of the sea is less:- the surge is not so heavy, and fewer Banks & shoals have in the course of nature and time been formed:- The vessel at Anchor rides easier, the Bottom is less foul, & the Landing is safer.

Adverting to the Chart of Bearings,- these advantages of the Northern Harbour, and especially of Manowar Bay, & of the two Courlands, and Sandy Bay, are happily combined with those of more numerous & Important lines of Communication,- whether in Commerce,- or intending 'Armed Expedition.'

The Trade-winds prevailing, as has been represented,- The Facilities of Navigation to, and from, Tobago, are to be estimated and a further consideration of the Currents;- which on the surface of Sea environing this Insulated Promontory of South America, and to many Leagues distant from the Land, are of great force;- take various directions; & have often Baffled, the ablest navigator. In general description, the Currents may be said to course With the Tradewinds;- the Water below, as the Air above;- But the fluid of water, when given motion, changes not its direction so readily, as that of Air;- and then an opposite tendency and conflict of Elements, checks, or diverts the Course of stream:- further the water Current, is subject to eddies, or reflux from meeting Repulse or turn by Headlands;- or when diverted by a more commanding stream
wether

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whether at sea, or by the outflowing of Great Rivers.- The Current running leeward on the southside of Tobago, as it approaches the Spanish Main, gets a new force and direction, from the powerfull out-stream of that vast River the Oronooko, which forces it northward

thro' the Channel dividing Tabago from Trinidad, rapidly carrying a vessel six knots in 1 hour, and in equal degree obstructing ye Return.

The main Current from the Eastern Ocean, striking on the S.E. Promontory of Tabago (by Columbus named Gracias a Dios')- whirls Northward round the Bluff head,- disturbs Tirrels Bay with its Eddies,- and having cleared that end of the Island, resumes its Course to Leeward, at half o' Leagues distance from the Coast,- with back, or counter stream, near to the shore.

Masters of vessels, ignorant of the force and direction of The Currents in these seas, are frequently driven to Leeward; -to Trinidad, or to Grenada, in make Tobago;- or weathering its Eastern Headland to fetch Scarboro', are hurried on to the Spanish Main. It is not long since, that the 'Cove' a British merchant ship of 350 Tons, well mannd & Commanded by an able Seaman (Captain Westley) – who had long been in the Tobago Trade, and was fully acquainted with its Navigation, having left Queens bay, to complete his lading of produce

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at Courland, in attempting the passage during the night, lost his course and reckoning in the currents, and was first heard of, from the Carenage in Grenada.

From circumstances which I have stated, and supported by this and other cases in Point, I may be warranted in the assuming, that no Squadron, can for any length of Time lay off and on, within sight of Tobago;- and, when, e'er I

close this essay, I shall come to the Political division of my Subject, and have to represent Manowar Bay, as a fit station for Troops and ships of war,- I may be allowed the assertion,- "That no force there can be Blockaded."

-First,-in a Commercial view;- Taking into consideration Winds, Currents, Harbours, and Bearings of Coast,- The Reasons are obvious, why Vessels from other Islands of the west Indies, -or from North America, or from Europe,- should in preference communicate with Tabago at Courland:- in this Bay or the Northern Coast, Generally ships of war, -and Often the Packets come to anchor;- altho' the Seat of Government and the Post office, are on the opposite side at Scarborough;- and business and the delivery of Letters require a further journey by Land.

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Running from Courland westward to the Isles of Margarita, and Curacçoa,- to Cumana, and the entire range, of the northern coast of South America, within the Bay,- the Course is before the wind:- for Return, the vessel must beat up, and it is not the navigation the most favorable to Commerce;- The obstructions to the voyage back, being in ratio with the facilities in going. -Looking directly westward, to Trinidad, and to Islands and Countries beyond,- Tabago appears rather as 'a Port of enterprize & Command', than suited to the interchanges of Trade. For Trade on mutually advantageous Terms, (by which alone, It can be carried to great extent & be sustained,) we must turn our Regard to Northern Countries, and to places and Ports, in a direction not far varying from the Meridian of Tobago.- in this course of favorable navigation are comprizd all the west India Islands,- The British Provinces in North America, and Those of the united States, from Kenny-bunk to Virginia;- to Each and all of which,- Crossing with a side breeze to the Northern Tropic, where the winds become variable,- the voyage going, or for Return, has no difficulties or dangers but such as one Ordinary at Seas.

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From the southern coast of Tabago, and specially from Scarboro', it has been observd in the introductory Chapter, that the preferable course of Trade, is with, and by the channel of The River Oronooko.

My enquiries on the subject of this direction for the extending British Commerce, have impressd me with a strong opinion, 'that the channel of this, great and navigable River, winding to the sea, through an immense tract of Rich and Populous Countries in the Interiour of South America, might open a trade the most advantageous to the manufacturers of Gt Britain, If the Spaniards were thereto conciliated;- and for ye accomplishing of which, the Political Crisis, is at this Time most favorable.

The following sketch of the Course of ye River, noting the settlements which appeard on its Banks, is taken from the minutes of a voyage describd to me by Mr Jefferies of Demerara, who went to Guiana, to purchase Spanish Horses,- and arrivd at Tobago from Angusturas,- august the 8th 1810, after a passage of 9 Days.

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The adventure of Trade by the Oronooko, being directed with Intelligence, and a Competent Capital assigned, and assortments of Merchandize properly selected,- I am confident would succeed; and I shall submit my informations on the subject, and suggest a procedure the most likely to ensure success.

I anticipate a Remark, which Those who best know and appreciate the intelligence and Spirit of the mercantile character of Our People, may plausibly make in discredit of the Speculation which I propoze:- and the Remark extending to create a distrust,' of any Trade whatever being carried on to advantage from Tabago,- should be previously and satisfactorily answered, to entitle the suggestions in this essay to a favorable,- or indeed to any, consideration whatever.—'It

will be said,--“is Tabago hitherto unknown to our British merchants?,- or if known, can it be supposed,- that had the Island, the advantages for an extension of Commerce pretended in this essay, They would not have been availed of, and long Eer this, have been taken up, and pursued, with that ingenuity and Ardour of adventure, which have reachd to the most remote & hidden sources of Gain, and placd Firms of British Trade, in every Corner, of every Quarter of the Globe?

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--The ‘Reply’ is obvious, to those acquainted with the History of Tobago:- “Its advantages from Nature and situation, are well known;- but too,- it is known,- that the island has by Treaties, been surrenderd to France, successively in 1783 and in 1802:- what has happened, is again feard;- and under presumed uncertainty of the Tenure, Great Capitalists will not risque their fortunes in a Bank, which may soon & suddenly pass, from the Power which protects,- to the Power which confiscates.’—These apprehensions should no longer operate;- I think, Great Britain will not in the wisdom of its Councils, again give up Tabago to France;- and, why I think so, will appear from the facts and statements, which I shall have to exhibit, in the course of this essay.

Having so premised, I resume the subject of a Trade with the Spanish main.

The Banks of the Oronooko, to a very considerable distance from the sea, exhibit a low and marshy Savannah on Each side, occasionally and in parts flooded by its waters. on these extensive levels, numerous Herds of Cattle, Horses, and Mules, constitute the chief, or only, wealth of the People,- or rather of Their Priests;- who in fact, unite to that of their sacred

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sacred Office,- the character of a Paramount Proprietary, Gentry, and rulers of the Country;- for in this wide district distant from the Capital of the Province, with no attractions to Spanish Hidalgos,- The Influence of the Priest is left delegate for the Power of the Governer.

Guiana Vecchia, on transfer of the seat of Government, to its present station higher up the River, and on the more elevated & healthy Country, on its southern shore, was, a Century passd, abandond by the Spaniards to a poor and mixd race of Creole Inhabitants;- and this place of little consideration apart, there are no Towns other than Indian, nor any places of Trade on the Banks of the Oronooko, untill 350 miles from the mouth of the River, The vessel reaches the Citadel & Town of Nova Guiana, with its commercial suburb of Angusturas: Nova Guiana is the seat of Government, for the Provinces of Guiana, Venezuela, [Cariacar?], & other Provinces in the Interior, to which the Oronooko is represented as navigable, for Six Hundred miles above Angusturas, or to nearly one Thousand miles from the sea.

Below Angusturas Commerce can be little extended to more than a Barter for mules and oxen, in which a few British Cloths & Cottons might be taken, for supply of the

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Lower, mixd race of Spanish and Indian People:- but their masters the Priests, will ever, as I have experiencd, require from their Supercargoes, a proportion of Dollars or Doubloons in payment for the Cattle;- and a Trade limited to lower Guiana can only be deemd profitable, as it is found usefull & necessary, for the supplying Horses Mules & working Oxen to the British Plantations.

But,-- a Trade for Dyes,- for drugs,- for other rare and valuable articles,- and above all,- 'for Bullion',- to be carried on with the Provinces above Nova Guiana, where the precious metals are

represented to be in abundance, and the medium of every dealing to be 'Gold', -- might be instituted and carried to an extent, in progress & advantage, beyond the most sanguine expectation, considering the greatness, produce, wealth and vast population of the Interior Provinces adverted to.

In the result of much enquiry,-- 'for the Institution of such course of Trade, I should propose, the Treating with the Spanish Government, for a Commercial settlement, which might be favorably considered, and under present circumstances, allowed.

In such Case I would suggest the establishment of a British Factory, and the appropriation of warehouses, at Angusturas, to be

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to be supplied from, and deal, for British commodities, through a Dépôt, to be formed at Scarborough, in Tobago:- The Country vessels being the best suited to navigate in the Orinoko, a deposit between these and the ships from the united Kingdom is requisite,-- and no place can be better situated for the constant & ready intercourse, The prevalent trade wind Equally favoring the voyage to the Orinoko, and the Return to Scarborough.

The Speculation merits an experiment;- and I recommend it to the Government of my Country, and to its opulent merchants,-- strongly myself impressed with an opinion of its probable success.

In other directions of Commercial intercourse, from the Southern Coast of Tobago, The Course of Voyage, is more or less to windward, as the Continent of South America swells out to the East;- The facilities of navigation to and from, Essequibo Demerara, Berbice, Surinam, and far as the River Amazon, are to be estimated, on referring the respective meridians, to the Incidence of the Prevalent Trade winds in each Latitude. The conveyance is allowed, six days to reach Tobago from Surinam: -The Voyage from Tobago to Surinam, may be taken at 10 days.

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In the Result of the above statements, - Tabago, considered as a British Island, has many advantages for Trade, and for the Becoming an Emporium, and Depôt, of British Commerce, in the west-India Seas;- on the South side by traffic by the Oronooko, -and on the North,- with Great Britain and Ireland;- with Canada, Newfoundland, & nova Scotia;- with the British west Indies;- with the united States of America;- and, last not least, with Margarita, Cumana, and the long Range of Coast within the Great Bay.

The Port of Courland, has lately on my Recommendation been legalizd, as a Port of Entry;- the appointments of Custom house are arranged;- and on its Establishment being secured, by present measures, declaratory of the intent, however indirectly, and not by proclamations, (unwise, if premature,) but Equally announcing its being a determind possession of the British Crown, and the tenure of its subjects to be secure;- and Every vestments in its concerns Of Trade, to be good & safe;- I am of opinion,- 'that in, and from the Port of Courland, this Island, will rise to an high Comparative Importance, in the Scale of west india Commerce:- Vessels from every Quarter, will in their course westward, often touch at Courland, and leave assortments of Cargo;- Plymouth Town will have new

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new dwellings for Merchants & others;- and new warehouses & shops;- and become a Depôt of British merchandize;- and a Surplusage of of [sic] Commodities and of trading profits, will pass over to Scarboro, in aid of Adventure by the Oronooko, & for the Interior Marts of South America.

In whatever light may appear these Prospects of national advantage from a future extension of British Commerce, - I have yet another, and Greater Interest to explain, as appropriate to the

sovereignty holding the Possession of Tobago,-- an Interest of 'Eventual Command and Power,'—of higher consideration, than any to be derivd from mere Profits of Trade, or from Returns of Revenue.

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'Mano'war Bay – on the North side of Tobago, and near to its eastern Headland, is in Lat: 11-16#-Long: 60-29.# W.G.

Noting the Bearings of Tobago to other Islands & Countries, and observing the Trade winds, as prevalent at different seasons of the year,- It Appears-----

- That,-' a Square-riggd Vessel may sail, to and fro' between Tobago & the mouth of ye Oronooko, with the wind on the Beam.

- That,-' Tobago, distant only seven leagues, and directly to Windward of Trinidad, is the port of Command, and the very Key of that Important Island.

- That,-' westward a Force from Tabago, might suddenly bear down, on the northern line of settlements of South America, on Cumana and ulterior Provinces within the Bay, and hold at mercy, the Islands of Margarita and Curaçoa.

- That,-' Tobago, laying to windward of all the Antilles, with The exception of Barbadoes,- a Squadron might run from Manowar Bay, with the Wind on the Quarter, for any other west india Island,- the object of Protection, or of Conquest.

- That,-' with the Advantages of a windward situation, Tabago has others in point of Latitude, and relative Position, which

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which designate it, as a station of Command,- and a Port of enterprize, against whatever is assailable in ye Westindia Seas.

- That,-' two degrees South of Barbadoes, and the exterior link of that Chain of Islands, which hence bending to the Nor-west covers the vast Bay, which indents and divides the Americas; -'a Squadron from Europe, might reach Tobago, steering far South

of the usual track of voyage, nor meet or pass a Vessel, to Report its force and destination;- and arriving, and arranging expeditions in Mano'war Bay,- no Communication of the Armament might reach any other Island, 'till by its effects of Seizure & Conquest.

- That,-' Manowar Bay is a station equally favorable for Cruize, as for regular expeditions.

- That,-' it is a fit rendezvous for preparation to bear down, on any Squadron of the ennemy arriving in these seas;- and is a Sure Asylum, on a retreat from superior Fleets, and for the awaiting Reinforcement;- for the Headlands of the Bay being properly fortified it cannot be attackd;- or more correctly speaking, -It is safe from attack,- if any place, of strongest Defence by Nature, when Improved by Art,- can so be safe:- at the same time ships, to which the Harbour is appropriate, may have at all seasons a passage open to go forth;- or to resume the station:

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- for the Harbour cannot be blockaded.

Repeating this assertion, I should candidly state,-' that one Respectable officer commanding a sloop of war, with the Gloire and two other H.M. Ships, in August 1810, examining the Coasts and Soundings,- told me, -"that good anchorage had been found "under shelter of the st Giles's Rocks;- and that He thought, Guard "Boats, might thence row during the night to watch the entrance "of the Bay":- The worthy Captain was not aware of the occasional force of our Currents,- or He would justly have apprehended,-' that He might never again see,- or Boat or Men!- it is but lately that a Boat with nine able negroe sailors, belonging to Dr Warner drifted to, and was first again heard of from, the Isle of Margarita: The Currents have at times a force, which cannot be stemmd by the Oar, and their occasional Eddies make a short, and breaking wave, dangerous to boats:- as to the anchorage reported I doubt not that the Ground is, as reported, good; and the shelter, at the time taken,- sufficient;- But often the Trade

wind from ye open Ocean, blows a very gale, and the swell round St Giles's: Rock becomes tremendous;- The safety of the station

can be only occasional;- and I must yet retain the Opinion, -"That Manowar Bay cannot be blockaded to effect."

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In this view of Its importance during periods of war,- the Island of Tobago, was reported by the late Marquis de Bouillie, and the Report attended to, by the minister of Louis the 16th in 1782:- myself was officially employd at Paris in the nego=ciations, then pending;- and I am convincd, that it was under impressions of the political uses to made of the Island, suggest'd by that able Officer,- The Sovereignty of Tabago was by France then Insisted on, and made an article of the Definitive Treaty in the year 1783;--- and to my own knowledge, (as I shall briefly shew)- this view of the Importance of Tobago, for the holding and extending, Dominion in the west India Seas, has not been lost sight of, by the Great Military Genius which rules the Empire of France, in the year 1810.

Surely the projected uses of the possession intended by France, should make great Britain cautious of ye Surrender!-

Whether in the consideration of commercial or of Political purposes;- of relative locality of circumstances favorable to, friendly intercourse;- or to Hostile expedition;-- whether regarding Tobago, as a Depôt of Trade;- or as a Post of Command and Enterprize;- the Island has, in the descriptive introduction

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to this essay, been shown to have in itself and from Nature, all the Requisites for either purpose, which may cooperate with the advantages of situation above describd, and advance our estimation of its value and importance.

From the Account which has been given elucidated by

maps, and sketches from Nature;- It appears that even large Fleets, arriving at Tobago, may commodiously be stationd in Manowar Bay;- That ships may be there careend, refitted and repaired, by fine Timber, the growth of the Country;- That Troops may be there Quarterd in the most healthy situations;- -and soldiers & sailors be subsisted, from abundant fisheries, and a fertile Country;- That the Bay is environd by a Country so strong, as with little art of the engineer to be renderd unassailable;- and that whilst heavy Batteries on the bold Headlands may defy entrance and attack;- The winds and currents combine to facilitate the Sortie, and render Blockade Impracticable:- lastly in manowar bay, is never to be apprehended the most dangerous of all ennemies, to shipping in this Quarter of the Globe,- the Rush and whirl of Hurricanes;- which in the autumnal Season, menace destruction, to Buildings,

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to Buildings, ships, and People, in all other Islands of the west Indies; even the general & spreading Hurricane of the year 1780,- which coverd the Land with ruins, and the sea with wrecks, from the Bahamas, to Grenada & Barbadoes -reachd no farther South, and spared Tobago;- It is not in the memory of man, or on Record, or from Tradition, "That this favord Isle ever sufferd by Hurricane."

To avail of its advantages from Nature, and turn Tobago to Imperial Account, undoubtedly Labor and Expense, must in the first instance be employd, by the Government concernd: -Docks and arsenals must be Built;- Batteries must be raisd; -other works of service or defence be constructed;- and hospitals and barracks be erected;- in brief,- to form a naval & military establishment, the incidental charges must be incurrd.

In the Present state of Europe, and Policy of warfare widely extending to every Quarter of the Globe, whilst- "ships, Colonies, & Commerce" are most strenuously contended for, as the Sources of wealth, and means of sustaining the Contests of Gt Britain

and France, for immediate interests and safety, at risque on
The very thresholds of their respective seats of power &
Governments

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- 'Ships, Colonies, and Commerce',- will be attackd, & defended;
and the west Indies for a course of successive wars, must be a
scene of Hostilities:- for if the ambitious Napoleon continues
Living, and enthroned,- that wars between Gt Britain and
France will be successive, and with short intervals of Peace,
can be little doubted. If then the west Indies, as now, - so
again and often may be a scene of action;- some station of
Force and power is indispensable to the Conservation & attainment
of the British Empire, in parts so essential to the support of its
Commerce, and of its Navy;- its best and dearest Interests:- and
at this Crisis,- more especially viewing the continents of America,
-The factious Spirit of the North,- and Revolutionary Temper
of the South,'- I will add,'- it is from this station,- that ere
long, an active interposition may be required, and be most
advantageously directed.

The Question alone Remains,- 'whether Tobago is comparatively
and the best suited, to be such station of resource & adventure;
such Post of arms and enterprize?- so the Emperor Napoleon con
siderd, and considers it to be:- during the short period 1802-3 in
which

he last possessed the sovereignty of the Island, His Orders came out
for the preparations to give His plans effect.

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-Having at the time some property in the Island, I availd myself
of the Treaty of Peace made with France in 1802, to visit Tobago
in the month of January following:- a recommendation, left

from Mr Otto, the French Plenipotentiary in London, having preceded my arrival, I was received with favor and distinction by the French Governor de Marguenat;- and He invited me to accompany Him on a Tour of Inspection, & to Manowar Bay: an officer of Rank, and Captain Michaud of the Engineers attended us; and a Sloop of war coasted to meet us at the Bay.

In result of the Communications on this journey, I learnt - ' that Mano'war Bay had been recommended to Special attention by the military Council at Paris;- and that the Business of this Party,- was, 'accurately to sound the depths of water, and nature of the ground for anchorage, in each part of the Bay; -to take the elevations, & make plans of ye bordering Country; -to mark the line of beach suitable for Docks and Quays; and to select situations for all necessary public works, and in particular for Barracks to accomodate seven Thousand Men.

as a Subordinate resource for the intended erections, I remember,' it was suggested and minuted down,"- that

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"no merchant vessel should be permitted entry at Tabago, but on the condition, of being Ballasted, with stone, Bricks and Iron, for the projected works at Mano'war Bay.

'Surely,-the Use of Tabago intended by France, should make Great Britain doubly cautious of its surrender.

'Fas est, et ab Hoste doceri.'

Tabago Octr. 1810

W. Young Gvr.