

Original.

[Egremont to Sharpe.]

Whitehall 9th July 1763

Sir,

It having appeared, that the Publick Revenue has been greatly diminished, and the fair Trader much prejudiced, by the fraudulent Methods used to introduce into His Majesty's Dominions, (contrary to the Act of 12th Charles 2^d for encouraging and encreasing Shipping and Navigation; and that of 15th Charles 2^d for the Encouragement of Trade; and the Act of 7th and 8th of William 3^d for preventing Frauds, & regulating Abuses in the Plantation Trade;) Commodities of foreign Growth, in national, as well as foreign, Bottoms, by means of small Vessels hovering on the Coasts; & that this iniquitous Practise has been carried to a great Heighth in America; an Act was passed the last Session of Parliament, intituled, An Act for the further Improvement of His Majesty's Revenue of Customs; And for the Encouragement of Officers making Seizures; and for the Prevention of the clandestine Running of Goods into any Part of His Majestys Dominions; by which the former Laws relative to this matter, are enforced, and extended to the British Dominions in all parts of the World; And the King having it extremely at heart to put an End to all iniquitous Practices of this Nature, by a due, punctual, & vigorous Exertion of the Laws made for this salutary purpose; And His Majesty having been pleased to order, that the most effectual Steps should be taken for obtaining that End; the Commanders of His Majesty's Ships stationed in America will, in consequence thereof, be vested for the future, with the necessary & legal Powers, from the Commissioners of the customs, for carrying into Execution the several Acts of Parliament relative to the seizing & condemning any ships that shall be found transgressing against the said Acts; I am to signify to you the King's express Pleasure, that you do, as far as shall depend upon you, not only cooperate with and assist the said Commanders in the due and legal Execution of the Powers & Instructions given them by Commissioners of the Customs; but that you do also use your utmost Endeavours, by the most assiduous and impartial Exertion of the Laws enacted for this Purpose, to put an effectual Stop to the clandestine Running of Goods into any place within your Jurisdiction; And that you may be fully informed of every particular in an Affair of this Importance, you will find inclosed herewith a Copy of the Act passed last Session of Parliament, referred to above; together with His Majesty's Order in Council, made agreeable thereto, for the Division of the Seizures; to which I add a List of the Ships stationed in America, dis-