

But most of his leading contemporaries were not of his way of thinking in this respect. When Charles II took over the Empire from Cromwell, in the forefront of the plantations was New England, a source of keen anxiety to those in old England who were deputed, in John Evelyn's words, 'to advise and counsel His Majesty to the best of our abilities for the well governing of his Foreign Plantations.' Evelyn was appointed one of the Commissioners of Plantations, when a Standing Council of Plantations was constituted in 1671, and he continued to serve when in the following year the two Councils of Trade and Plantations were combined under the presidency of Lord Shaftesbury. What troubled the Commissioners of Plantations was that the New Englanders, being in fact the stiff-backed citizens of Massachusetts, 'were able to contest with all other plantations about them, and there was fear of their breaking from all dependence on this nation,' and again, 'we understood they were a people almost upon the very brink of renouncing any dependence on the Crown.'¹ If there was likelihood that the seed of further New England would be sown, colonisation was not likely to commend itself to those whose temper had been shown by passing the disastrous Act of Uniformity at home. On the other hand, trade had everything to commend it, inasmuch as through the navigation acts trade was to be an instrument for keeping the plantations in subordination to the Crown.² Mr. Gladstone

¹ Evelyn's Diary, under dates May 26 and June 6, 1671.

² See the circular letter from the King to the Governors of all the plantations dated August 25, 1663: *Colonial Calendar, America and West Indies*, 1661-8, pp. 155-6.