addition is made to the price of the goods through the pre­vious advance of the duties. The total *gross* receipt of the customs-revenue of the united kingdom amounted, during the year ending the 5th January 1840, to L.23,508,681, collected at an expense of L.1,290,672, being at the rate of L.5. 9s. 91/2d. per cent. ; and we will venture to affirm, that no equal amount of revenue was ever raised in any country, or in any period of time, with so little difficulty and incon­venience.

Duties on imports and exports have been levied in almost every country which has had any foreign commerce. The Athenians laid a tax of a *fifth* on the com and other mer­chandise imported from foreign countries, and also on se­veral of the commodities exported from Attica.@@1 The *por­toria,@@1* or customs payable on the commodities imported into and exported from the different ports of the Roman empire, formed a very ancient and important part of the public revenue. They were imposed, as Tacitus has ob­served, when the spirit of liberty ran highest among the people. *A* *consulibus et tribunis plebis instituta, acri etiam populi Romani tum libertate. (Annal,* lib. xiii. cap. 50.) The rates at which they were charged were fluctuating and various, and little is now known respecting them. Cicero informs us (in ii. Ver. cap. 75), that the duties on corn exported from the ports of Sicily were in his time five per cent. Under the imperial government the amount of the *portoria* depended as much on the caprice of the prince as on the real exigencies of the state. Though sometimes diminished, they were never entirely remitted, and were much more frequently enlarged. Under the Byzantine emperors they were as high as twelve and a half per cent. (Burman. *De Vectigalibus Pop. Rom.* cap. v.)

Customs seem to have existed in England before the conquest. But the king’s first claim to them was estab­lished by statute, 3d Edward I. The inconveniences aris­ing from the multiplicity of the various separate acts re­lative to the customs, caused Mr Pitt to introduce a bill, in 1787, for their consolidation. This bill was passed into a law, and several similar consolidations have since been effected. The last was by a statute passed in 1834; to which are subjoined tables, containing lists, ranged in al­phabetical order, of the various articles of import and ex­port, with the duties payable on each, and the drawbacks and bounties allowed on the exportation of particular kinds of British goods. See these lists, with the subsequent mo­difications, in the Commercial Dictionary, article Tariff.

5. *Duties on the Coinage of Gold and Silver.—*For an ac­count of the incidence and effect of these duties, the reader is referred to the article Μονey in this Encyclopædia, cap. *Seignorage.*

6. *Stamp and Legacy Buries* Stamp-duties are laid on

the paper or parchment on which certain deeds, contracts, legal proceedings, receipts, acquittances, &c. are wτitten. They derive their name from the paper being impressed with a public stamp, stating the amount of the duty. Their ultimate incidence varies according to the nature of the deed or writing for which it is necessary to use stamped paper. Duties on the sale of land, or on the paper used in its con­veyance from one party to another, commonly fall on the seller. This arises, as Dr Smith has observed, from the circumstance of “ the seller being almost always under the necessity of selling, which forces him to take such a price as he can get. The buyer is scarce ever under the neces­sity of buying ; he will, therefore, only give such a price as

he likes. He considers what the land will cost him in tax and price together. The more he is obliged to pay in the way of tax, the less he will be disposed to give in the way of price. Such taxes, therefore, fall almost always upon a necessitous person, and must, therefore, be frequently very cruel and oppressive.” (P. 389.) It is obvious that the same reasoning must hold in the case of the duties charge-able on the granting of mortgages ; and that they will com­monly fall on the borrower or poorer party.

This, however, is not the only objection to duties on the transfer of property. M. Say and Mr Ricardo have observed that their tendency is to prevent its coming into the hands of those who would use it most advantageously. Every facility should be given to the conveyance and ex­change of all kinds of property, inasmuch as that is the most likely means to make capital find its way into the hands of those who will employ it with the best effect in increasing the produce of the country. “ Why,” asks M. Say, “ does an individual wish to sell his land ? it is because he has another employment in view in which his funds will be more productive. Why does another wish to purchase this same land ? it is to employ a capital which brings him too little, which was unemployed, or the use of which he thinks susceptible of improvement. This exchange will in­crease the general income, since it increases the income of these parties. But if the charges are so exorbitant as to prevent the exchange, they are an obstacle to this increase of the general income.”@@3

Taxes on law proceedings fall upon the suitors ; and con­sequently lay obstructions in the way of an injured party seeking redress in a court of justice. The impolicy and injustice of such taxes were ably exposed by Bentham, in his *Protest against Law Taxes.*

Stamp-duties on the voluntary sale of commodities fall, like other taxes on them, wholly on the consumer ; for, un­less such were the case, the commodities would not be otter­ed for sale subsequently to the imposition of the duties. Thus, the duties on cards and dice, on advertisements, newspapers, &c. are all paid by those who use them. Such, too, is the case with the duties payable on licenses to re­tail any species of goods, or to exercise any profession. The taxed party adds as much to the price of the articles in which he deals, or of the services which he performs, as is sufficient to indemnify him for the tax.

Stamp-duties were first levied in Holland. Most of the accustomed methods of taxation having been resorted to, the republic, in order to provide additional funds for carry­ing on her contest with the Spanish monarchy, offered a considerable reward to any one who should devise the best new tax. Among many other taxes, that of the *vecti­gal chartee,* or stamp-duty, was suggested ; and having been approved of, it was introduced by an ordinance is­sued in 1624, setting forth its necessity, and the benefits which it was supposed would result from its imposition.@@4 Since that period, stamp-duties have become almost uni­versal, and now form a very prominent branch of the re­venue of almost every country ; affording a striking ex­ample of the justice of Smith’s caustic remark, that “ there is no art which one government sooner learns of another than that of draining money from the pockets of the people.” (P. 389.)

Stamp-duties were introduced into England in 1671, by a statute entitled “ An act for laying impositions on pro­ceedings at law.” The duties were at first granted for only

@@@1 Anacharsis's Travels, iv. p. 375. Eng. Trans. The quantity of corn usually imported from the countries on the Euxine into Athens amounted to about 400,000 medimni. See Clarke on the Connection between the Roman and English Coins, p. 58.

@@@\* “ Huic vero proprie *vectigalis* denominatio convenit, quippe pro vehendis mercibus (unde *vectigal),* soluto.” (Burman. *De Vectigalibus Pop. Rom.* cap. v.)

@@@3 Ricardo, Principles, &c. p. 167. 3d ed. ; and Say, *Traite d'Economie Politique,* tome ii. p. 351.

@@@♦ Beckman's History of Inventions, vol. i. p. 479, Eng. Trona.