

On the Conduct of the United States.

To trace the fluctuations of public opinion regarding the intrinsic value of our North American Colonies, were not only a subject of curious inquiry, but is in some degree essential to a right understanding of their real importance, as component parts of the British Empire.

Adverting to the known fact, that a dispute respecting the limits of Canada and the North West was the ostensible ground of the rupture between France and England, in 1756.

It is not, however, to be supposed, that the rupture was attached to the possession of those Provinces. Subsequent events have, however, clearly shown, that so long as our original American Colonies remained in subjection, the true value of the possessions we yet retain in North America, was either known to the Government of Great-Britain, or might have been ascertained by diligent inquiry.

This, however, being peculiarly the business of the British Government, it may not be uninteresting to observe, that the policy of retaining that country, was not the subject of discussion, until the success of our arms, against France, was anticipated.

It became a question of general discussion, whether Canada, or the Island of Guadaloupe, were the preferable acquisition to be retained by this country. Both had been wrested by us, from the French, the restoration of one was impossible, and the Administration of that day evidently hesitated in their decision.

At this juncture, the Earl of Bute addressed a letter through the medium of the Press, to Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle, strongly urging the expediency of retaining Canada. To that letter, an answer was published under the title of "Remarks," &c. as strenuously recommending the restoration of Canada.

The ground of argument on which this writer urged that measure, was, first, the impolicy of giving a pre-emptive extension of our American Colonies, which, by increasing infinitely in population, would eventually become dangerous to the Mother Country; and next, the increasing importation of sugar, that would call up old and new enemies, which would be as sharp as a long hair.

It is not, however, to be supposed, that the rupture was attached to the possession of those Provinces. Subsequent events have, however, clearly shown, that so long as our original American Colonies remained in subjection, the true value of the possessions we yet retain in North America, was either known to the Government of Great-Britain, or might have been ascertained by diligent inquiry.

This, however, being peculiarly the business of the British Government, it may not be uninteresting to observe, that the policy of retaining that country, was not the subject of discussion, until the success of our arms, against France, was anticipated.

It became a question of general discussion, whether Canada, or the Island of Guadaloupe, were the preferable acquisition to be retained by this country. Both had been wrested by us, from the French, the restoration of one was impossible, and the Administration of that day evidently hesitated in their decision.

At this juncture, the Earl of Bute addressed a letter through the medium of the Press, to Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle, strongly urging the expediency of retaining Canada. To that letter, an answer was published under the title of "Remarks," &c. as strenuously recommending the restoration of Canada.

The ground of argument on which this writer urged that measure, was, first, the impolicy of giving a pre-emptive extension of our American Colonies, which, by increasing infinitely in population, would eventually become dangerous to the Mother Country; and next, the increasing importation of sugar, that would call up old and new enemies, which would be as sharp as a long hair.

It is not, however, to be supposed, that the rupture was attached to the possession of those Provinces. Subsequent events have, however, clearly shown, that so long as our original American Colonies remained in subjection, the true value of the possessions we yet retain in North America, was either known to the Government of Great-Britain, or might have been ascertained by diligent inquiry.

This, however, being peculiarly the business of the British Government, it may not be uninteresting to observe, that the policy of retaining that country, was not the subject of discussion, until the success of our arms, against France, was anticipated.

It became a question of general discussion, whether Canada, or the Island of Guadaloupe, were the preferable acquisition to be retained by this country. Both had been wrested by us, from the French, the restoration of one was impossible, and the Administration of that day evidently hesitated in their decision.

At this juncture, the Earl of Bute addressed a letter through the medium of the Press, to Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle, strongly urging the expediency of retaining Canada. To that letter, an answer was published under the title of "Remarks," &c. as strenuously recommending the restoration of Canada.

delivered from our apprehension of a rupture, which, if early imposed, would have strained the connection of the Colonies with us; and although many collateral arguments are urged by Dr. Franklin in favor of the annexation of Canada, it cannot be doubted, that the anxiety of our Colonists was founded upon the hope and prospect of security against the Indians.

To appreciate the policy which led to the retention of Canada, and to rescue the advisers of that measure from the imputation of defective foresight, it is, however, necessary, to keep in remembrance, that the dependence of our West-India Islands upon a trade, which was the subject of political anticipation.

In our American Colonies, tobacco, sugar, and indigo, were the chief staples, and the chief staples of our West-India Islands were generally supplied from the American States; but two staples, the sugar and the indigo, were principally derived from Great-Britain and Ireland.

For the population of the parent country, it was not obtained that excess beyond a certain quantity, which was since rendered essential to the existence of the Colonies during several years between 1750 and 1760, produced a surplus of grain such as to admit the exportation of considerable quantities.

Hence, the vicissitude of political events has tended naturally to produce a fluctuation of public opinion, regarding the value of our American Colonies, and Great-Britain, which originally was deemed valuable, chiefly as a possession of security, must now be viewed as the great and invaluable resource on which CANALONE BE POSSESSOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF OUR WEST-INDIAN POSSESSIONS;—the independence of our NAVY against defective supplies of Timber from the BALTIC;—and as the certain means, if duly cherished, of increasing our COMMERCIAL WEALTH and MARITIME POWER.

To the UNITED STATES the resources and facilities of Canada present a different view, which will form the subject of a subsequent communication.

WOLFE.

BRITISH ACCOUNT

Of the capture of the city of Alexandria, &c. &c. having forced the populous city of Alexandria to capitulate, and having broken down the river in triumph, through a series of obstacles and determined opposition, a fleet of twenty-one of the enemy's vessels.

Capt. Gordon to Vice-Admiral Cochrane.

Seahorse, Chesapeake, Sept. 9, 1814. Sir.—IN obedience to your orders, I proceeded into the River Potomac with the ships named in the margin, on the 17th of last month; but from being without pilots to assist us through that difficult part of the river called Kettle Bottoms, and from contrary winds, we were unable to reach Fort Washington until the evening of the 27th. Nor was this effected but by the severest labor—I believe each of the ships was not less than twenty different times aground, and each time we were obliged to haul off by main strength; and were employed warping for five whole successive days, with the exception of a few hours, a distance of more than 50 miles.

The bomb-ships were placed on the evening of the 27th, and immediately began the bombardment of the fort, it being my intention to attack it with the frigates at daylight the following morning. On the bursting of the first shell, the garrison were observed to retreat; but supposing some concealed design, I directed the fire to be continued. At 6 o'clock, however, my doubts were removed by the explosion of the powder magazine, which destroyed the inner buildings, and at daylight on the 28th we took possession. Besides the principal fort, which contained two 52-pounders [Columbiads], two 32-pounders, and six 24-pounders, there was a battery on the beach of five 18-pounders, a martello tower with two 12-pounders, and loopholes for musketry, and a battery in the rear of 12 and six 6-pound field pieces. The whole of these guns were already spiked by the enemy, and their complete destruction, with their carriages also, was effected by the seamen and marines sent on that service, in less than two hours.—The population of Alexandria thus lost its only defence;

\*Seahorse, Euryalus, Devastation, Aetna, Meteor, Erebus, and Anna-Maria, despatch-boat.

and having hoisted the channel, I deemed it better to postpone giving any answer to a proposal made to me for its capitulation, until the following morning, when I was enabled to place the shipping in such a position as would ensure assent to the terms I had decided to enforce.

To this measure I attribute their ready acquiescence, as it removed that doubt of my determination to proceed, which had been raised in the minds of the inhabitants by our army having retired from Washington. This part of our proceedings will be further explained by the accompanying documents.

The Hon. Lt. Gordon, of this ship, was on the evening of the 28th, to prevent the escape of any of the vessels comprised in the capitulation, and the whole of those vessels were fitted and loaded by the 31st, by Mr. Baker, of the Fairy, bringing your orders of the 26th, having freight his way to the river past a battery of five guns and a military force, confident that the vessels which had already reached me, of whose capture having been taken to our hands, would not return; and therefore quitted the river without waiting to destroy the remaining stores which he had not the time to bring away.

The contrary winds again consisted in the laborious task of warping the ships down the river, in which a day's delay took place, owing to the Devastation grounding.—The enemy took advantage of this circumstance, to attempt her destruction by three fire-vessels, attended by five row-boats; but their object was defeated by the promptitude and gallantry of Captain Alexander, who pushed off in his own boats, and being followed by those of the other ships, chased the boats of the enemy up to the town of Alexandria. The cool and steady conduct of Mr. John Moore, mid-steward of the Seahorse, in towing the nearest fire-vessel on shore, whilst the others were removed from the power of doing mischief by the smaller boats of the Devastation, entitles him to my highest commendation.

The Meteor and the Fairy, assisted by the Anna-Maria despatch boat, belonging to the Euryalus, with a howitzer, had greatly impeded the progress of the enemy in their works; notwithstanding which they were enabled to increase their battery to 11 guns, with a furnace for heating shot. On the 30th, the wind coming from the N. W. the ships were again ordered there on the 31st, and the capitulation, which in her still remained 6 miles higher up the river. This was the moment when the enemy made its greatest effort to effect our destruction.

The Erebus being judiciously placed by Capt. Bartholomew in an admirable position for harassing the workmen employed in the trenches, was attacked by three field pieces, which did her considerable damage before they were beaten off. And another attempt being made to destroy the Devastation with fire-vessels, I sent the boats under Capt. Baker to her assistance. Nothing could exceed the alacrity with which Capt. Baker went on this service, to which I attribute the immediate retreat of the boats and fire-vessels. His loss, however, was considerable, owing to their having sought refuge under some guns in a narrow creek, thickly wooded, from which it was impossible for him to dislodge them.

On the 5th, at noon, the wind coming fair; all my arrangements being made, the Seahorse and the Euryalus anchored within short musket shot of the batteries, while the whole of the prizes passed betwixt us and the shoal; the bombs, the Fairy and Erebus, firing as they passed, and afterwards anchoring in a favorable position for facilitating by means of their force, the farther removal of the frigates. At 3 P. M. having completely silenced the enemy's fire, the Seahorse and Euryalus cut their cables, and the whole of us proceeded to the next position taken up by the troops, where they had two batteries, mounting from 14 to 18 guns, on a range of cliffs of about a mile extent, under which we were of necessity obliged to pass very close. I did not intend to make the attack that evening, but the Erebus grounding within range, we were necessarily called into action. On this occasion the fire of the Fairy had the most decisive effect, as well as that of the Erebus, while the bombs threw their shells with excellent precision, and the guns of the batteries thereby completely silenced by about 8 o'clock.

At daylight on the 6th, I made signal to weigh; and so satisfied were the whole of the parties opposed to us of their opposition being ineffectual, that they allowed

us to pass without further molestation. I cannot close this detail of operations, commencing a period of 23 days, without begging leave to call your attention to the singular exertions of those whom I had the honor to command, by which our success was effected. Our hammocks were down only two nights during the whole time; the many laborious duties which we had to perform, we executed with cheerfulness, which I shall ever remember with pride, and which will ensure, I hope, to the whole of the arrangements, your favorable estimation of their extraordinary zeal and abilities.

It is difficult to distinguish amongst officers who had a greater share of duty than others falls to the lot of any, and which each performed with the greatest credit to his professional character. I cannot omit to recommend to your notice, the meritorious conduct of Capt. Alexander, Bartholomew, Baker and Keane, the latter of whom led us through many of the difficulties of the navigation; and particularly to Capt. Roberts, of the Meteor, who, besides undergoing the fatigues of the day, employed the night in coming the distance of ten miles to communicate and consult with me upon our further operations preparatory to our passing the batteries.

Generally speaking, was the conduct of all the seamen and marines of the detachment. I cannot participate with justice to them; but I owe it to the long tried experience I have had of Mr. Henry King, first lieutenant of the Seahorse, to point out to you that such was his eagerness to take the part to which his abilities would have directed him on this occasion, that he even came out of his sick bed, to command at his quarters, whilst the ship was passing the batteries; nor can I ever forget how materially the service is indebted to Mr. A. Loubouin, the master, for both finding and buoying the channel of a navigation, which no ship of a similar draft of water had ever before passed, with their guns and stores on board, and which, according to a report of a seaman now in this ship, was not accomplished by the President American frigate, even after taking her guns out, under a period of 42 days.

Enclosed is a list of killed and wounded, and also of the vessels captured.

I have the honor to be, &c. JAMES A. GORDON, Capt.

To Sir Alex. Cochrane, Comr. in Chief, &c.

Return of killed and wounded on board the River, between Sept. 1 and 5, 1814. Total, 7 killed, 85 wounded.

J. A. GORDON, Capt.

Two first two guns pointed by Lieut. King, disabled each a gun of the enemy.

BOSTON Dec. 13. MILITIA EXPEDITION.

It is said, the President has issued orders to Maj. Gen. King, commanding a Division of Militia in Maine, to call into actual service 5000 Militia; and as requested this State to advance the funds necessary to defray the expenses, giving assurances of an expectation of being repaid them in 60 days. The object has been supposed to be the capture of Maine. That place is by nature so strong, that it would be difficult to take it on either side; but the rest of the District might be easily occupied. During the present war, the inhabitants may find it for their interest to be under the British; but in peace, the reverse would be the fact.

A gentleman from Nantucket informs, that the British privateers Rolla and Liverpool Packet were lying under the point, when he left, on Sunday morning, where they anchored the evening previous from a cruise in Long Island Sound. He does not know what they had captured. A 74 and brig of war were in Tarantula Cove.

Boat Fair Trader, Allen, from N. Bedford for N. York, was captured off Watch Hill, on Wednesday night last, by the Liverpool Packet, and ordered for N. Scotia—Her cargo was of small value. Capt. A. has reached home.

All the prizes (4 in number,) ordered in by the Militia privateer, have been re-taken. The Gleamer, of Haldam, a fine new sloop of about 70 tons, with a cargo valued at 10,000 dls. has been captured in Long Island Sound, by the privateer Liverpool Packet.

The privateers Liverpool Packet and Rolla were in the Sound on Saturday last, and captured 4 sloops from N. York, with flour and corn.—They were taken by a wood sloop, which the Packet captured and armed with about 20 muskets.

TEMPER OF MARYLAND. BALTIMORE, DEC. 21.—On Saturday last,