

**CONSIDERATION**  
**Of the CLAIMS & CONDUCT of**  
**the UNITED STATES, respect-**  
**ing their NORTH EASTERN**  
**BOUNDARY, and of the value**  
**of the BRITISH COLONIES IN**  
**NORTH AMERICA.**

(From a Pamphlet lately published in London.)

THE dominions of Great Britain are so vast in extent, so divided in situation, and so various in their relations, that their general and respective interests must often distract, and sometimes perhaps escape, the attention even of the ablest and most vigilant government. The internal economy of a highly civilized and redundant population, and the foreign policy of war or peace in Europe, whose political questions are generally more important, and always more inviting, than those of distant and less cultivated Countries, so entirely engross the public mind, that it is not surprising, if the concerns of some remote and obscurer Provinces of the empire should sometimes meet with less consideration, than is due, perhaps, either to the claims of that part, or the ultimate results upon the whole.

Examples of this kind are no where so frequently to be found, as in the history of our relations with America. The mistakes committed in the former management of that country, the disasters received in making war, the still greater disasters in making peace with it, may all be imputed to a false estimate, of its character and importance, its resources and increase. For a different degree of political foresight seems necessary for the old and new hemisphere, and anticipations, which would here be thought presumptuous or remote, have there proved comparatively certain and immediate, till it is now generally acknowledged, that the future destinies of our own country must, for good or evil, be principally connected with, or materially influenced by, those of America.

It is indeed an easy thing to console ourselves by turning to the unexampled successes, that have placed the Empire in the proud situation it now holds; but if we wish to consult the real power and permanence of that Empire, and not merely to flatter the nation's vanity on past achievements, it would be well perhaps to look more narrowly to that quarter, which offers least occasion for congratulation; where however, we may yet profit by experience, and if we cannot remedy the consequence of former errors, at least prevent their repetition. For Great Britain still possesses the most valuable portion of the American Continent, and does not know it: and questions are now pending between her and the United States, by which, not only may that value be greatly impaired, but the very possession eventually lost.

There was once a time, and within the memory of the present age, when almost the whole of North America belonged to the Crown of England: in 1783, the King renounced his rights of propriety and government to a certain portion, which has since formed the United States; but the exact limits of that portion have never yet been ascertained. By the extraordinary increase, as well of the ceded Provinces as of those retained, what was considered of little moment in 1783, has now become of vital importance. Of the differences which have arisen between the two Governments, respecting their common Boundaries, some have been arranged by discussion before Commissioners, others are ready, on our part at least, for reference to a friendly Power; and some (the object of the present inquiry) having being referred, are directed by the umpire to be settled by negotiation. The pretensions of the two Governments are

widely at variance, and, on the part of the American at least, most tenaciously maintained. In the present state of the question, it can be of little use to consider the arguments, on either side, in support of those pretensions: (negotiation, particularly with America, too commonly involves the idea of compromise;) but it may tend to the right understanding of the difference, to give a short statement of its origin, before entering upon the consequences.

The Provisional Treaty of 1783, by which the independence of the thirteen revolted Colonies was acknowledged, was negotiated on their part, by the profoundest statesman that country has ever produced; a man who, to a thorough acquaintance with the character and interests of America, united the deepest political sagacity, an impetuous cunning, and most plausible address. It was not without reason perhaps, that he styled the statesmen of that period, as 'too ignorant to judge, and too proud to learn'; for he was able to obtain of our Ministry terms, which exceeded the expectation of his own Countrymen, and astonished their Allies. In compliance with his suggestion, or agreeably to his wishes, the Commissioners first sent to meet him, whose knowledge and penetration might have proved less favourable to the objects had in view, was recalled; and another substituted, whose qualities were the most opposite and most unequal to his opponent's, and whom, of all mankind perhaps, could he have chosen, he himself would have first selected. It is interesting to learn with how little disguise or moderation the crafty American proceeded to practise on the simplicity of his English admirer. The Loyalists, who had been plundered, persecuted, exiled, ruined, were easily given up, because they had misled the Government, or the Government had misled them. Their claim for compensation was met with demands of satisfaction for the damages done by them, and by the King's troops. Rights of fishery, which the most friendly nation in Europe had never the assurance to ask, were conceded, as a boon indeed, but a most politic one, to efface the memory of the past, and ensure a sincere reconciliation for the future. Whatever could not be demanded for the right of his own nation, was claimed for the benefit of ours. It was urged, (a remarkable coincidence with the opinions of certain economists of the present day,) that the real interests of Great Britain would be best promoted, by the surrender to the new Republic, of Canada and Nova Scotia; and it was even suggested, as a corollary to the same argument, that to secure her permanent prosperity, on that side of the Atlantic, it was only necessary to throw in the West Indies. The figure Mr. Oswald presents, at such a game, surrounded by the four American commissioners, Franklin, Adams, Jay, and Laurens, recalls the story lately circulating in the morning papers, of Lord Nottingham among the Sharpers; one of whom reproached his companions with wasting their time in gambling with such a flat, 'pick the fool's pocket at once and send him home.' How easy had it then been for Great Britain, to have prescribed such limits as she thought fit. The Kennebec on the east; the Ohio on the west; and such a Line of boundary on the north, as should have secured to us the vast tract of vacant land between their settlements and the Lakes. They had no reason to claim, nor ability to enforce, a pretence to any thing more. Their ally, the King of France, it is now known, was well disposed, both to confine them to narrower limits, and to exclude them from the fisheries. But Mr. Oswald's mercantile ideas were alarmed with the threat, that though peace indeed might be procured on such terms, a good understanding, and above all, a renewal of commercial intercourse, could never be obtained,

without more liberal concessions: as if either nations or individuals could long be induced to trade from any other motives, than reciprocal advantage, or any advantages were elsewhere to be found superior to the British market. Accordingly a Boundary was settled and described, by which a vast extent of territory, exceeding that of the whole revolted Colonies together, already valuable for its trade in furs, and which has since become populous and powerful, was given, as a premium to rebellion, to establish the new Republic, and furnish, as it has ever since, an important part of their financial resources, and the means of almost infinite increase. A faint attempt was indeed made, to reserve some part of the western territories, as an asylum for the exiled Loyalists; but Dr. Franklin did not like such neighbours, as he haughtily says; and Mr. Oswald thought it better to offer all, as an atonement to our enemies, than retain any, as provision for our friends. It may be that the wounded pride of the Country, or Government, found some consolation in sending a man of this description to treat with the Americans, as though the disgrace of negotiating with Rebels could be alleviated or concealed by the obscurity of the negotiator; (or was it that an Administration, every member of which had protested in parliament that the war was unjust, found themselves bound to act in office, consistently with their opinions in opposition?) but such unworthy indulgence either to the contempt, or indifference, or the party-spirit, of that period, has cost much to the best interests of every other. The boundary is thus described in the second article of the treaty:

"From the North-west Angle of Nova Scotia, viz. that Angle, which is formed by a line drawn due north from the Source of St. Croix River to the Highlands, along the said Highlands, which divide those Rivers that empty themselves into the River St. Lawrence, from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean, to the north-western-most head of the Connecticut River; thence down along the middle of that River, to the forty-fifth degree of north latitude; from thence by a line due west in said latitude until it strikes the River Iroquois or Cataraguy; thence along the middle of said River unto Lake Ontario, through the middle of said Lake until it strikes the communication by water; between that Lake and Lake Erie; thence along the middle of said communication into Lake Erie; through the middle of said Lake, until it arrives at the water communication between that Lake and Lake Huron; thence along the middle of said water communication into Lake Huron; thence through the middle of said Lake to the water communication between that Lake and Lake Superior; thence through Lake Superior northward to the Isles Royal and Philippeaux, to the Long Lake; thence through the middle of said Long Lake and the water communication between it and the Lake of the Woods to the said Lake of the Woods; thence through the said Lake to the most north-western point thereof; and from thence on a due west course, to the River Mississippi; thence by a line to be drawn along the middle of the said River Mississippi until it shall intersect the northern-most part of the thirty-first degree of north latitude;—South, by a line to be drawn due east from the determination of the line last mentioned in the latitude of thirty-one degrees north of the Equator to the middle of the River Apalachicola or Cathouche; thence along the middle thereof to its junction with Flint River; thence straight to the head of St. Mary's River; and thence down along the middle of St. Mary's River to the Atlantic

Ocean;—East, by a line to be drawn along the middle of the river St. Croix, from its mouth in the Bay of Fundy, to its source; and from its source directly north to the aforesaid Highlands, which divide the rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from those which fall into the river St. Lawrence; comprehending all islands within twenty leagues of any part of the shores of the United States, and lying between lines to be drawn due east from the points where the aforesaid boundaries between Nova Scotia on the one part, and East Florida on the other, shall respectively touch the Bay of Fundy, and the Atlantic Ocean, excepting such islands as now are, or heretofore have been, within the limits of the said Province of Nova Scotia."

Mr. Oswald returned to England, to weep, (he burst into tears), when convinced of what he had betrayed; and Franklin, to exult, and tell his English friends, they had now nothing to do but send deputies to the American Congress; a jest, which excited but a smile in those days, would provoke a sneer in these, but which yet may have tears for posterity.

This Treaty was scarcely more injurious for its enormous concessions, than its uncertainty in defining the limits of what was still retained. The questions that necessarily arose were many and difficult, and the subtlety of the American government has contrived to add others, less obvious perhaps, but more vexatious. Of these, some have been settled, greatly to the dissatisfaction of our fellow subjects in that quarter, but among those which are still undetermined, is the NORTH-EASTERN BOUNDARY, which involves the most serious consequences, and towards which it is the object of these pages, to solicit some attention. On this side, the first difficulty was, to ascertain which River was meant by the designation of ST. CROIX, and what branch of that River was its source; for our politic statesman had commenced his Boundary from a point altogether unknown, to be discovered by reference to another point equally uncertain, a River, whose mouth, and source, and name, were in dispute. By the treaty of 1794 this difference was referred to Commissioners. They disagreed. In that case, they were to nominate an umpire. A most unequal compromise was suggested and adopted. The British Commissioner was to have the nomination, but the umpire to be a Citizen of the United States. A person so chosen could hardly have been expected to decide otherwise, than that the Schoodic was the river St. Croix, and its most eastern branch the source; though, if the ancient boundaries of Nova Scotia deserved any consideration, its charter had in express and very forcible terms appointed, the most Western fountain or spring.

The labours of this Commission extend no further than to ascertain the River St. Croix, and the point of commencement for the North line; The termination at THE HIGHLANDS, that is, the North-west Angle of Nova Scotia, remained unexplored.

(To be Continued.)

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