

THE GLEANER

AND

NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

VOLUME III.]

"Nec araneorum sane texus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes."

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THE GLEANER.

FROM THE MONTREAL GAZETTE.

THE QUESTION OF TIMBER DUTIES

INDEPENDENT OF COLONIAL INTERESTS.

It is really surprising in the present state of society, with all the means of acquiring information, arising from the public discussion of matters relative to trade and finance, that any person the least conversant in the science of political economy should, for an instant, be misled by the fallacious reasoning of interested parties, and dabbles in theoretical opinions, some of them as absurd in their assertions, as they are unwarranted and destructive in their tendency to all authority, both human and divine. In tracing the source of these new lights, it is amusing to find the affinity of reasoning that exists among this party, emanating with certain enlightened reviewers, as re-echoed in the House of Commons by Baltic traders, and their partisans, and out of the House, by writings that possess much of Cobett's style of reasoning, who, in his late account of the British North American Colonies, boldly asserts that they possess neither freedom of government, nor any soil worth cultivating, except a small strip of land bordering on the United States. This affinity of reasoning would lead one to suppose, if the contrary were not known, that they were hired by foreigners, to traduce and revile Possessions, from whence Great Britain derives some of those powerful resources by which she is enabled to triumph over the machinations of her enemies.

This being the state of the question on the important subject now under consideration, it is only necessary to put forth a few strong facts, which, if duly weighed, must carry conviction to every mind not warped by interest, prejudice, vanity, or a determination to alter every thing, let the consequences arising therefrom be what they may; the present state of the north of Europe comes in most forcibly to shew the great danger of depending on foreign supplies alone instead of Colonial: disease as at present may threaten a suspension of trade, to such an extent as would of itself cause a rise, were the Colonial trade crippled or destroyed; that would be of greater loss to the British consumer than the present duties—and where would the British empire find supplies, were the present crisis to lead to a war with the principal Powers who supply Baltic lumber? It is said, 'Oh, it will be an easy matter to revive the Colonial trade,' this may do with those who have said that saw-mills might easily be turned into grist-mills, as by the same parity of reasoning, it will, I suppose, be inferred, that grist-mills may be again converted into saw-mills!!! But really the question is of serious and national importance, and should not be treated with any levity of argument, otherwise it would be very amusing to sport with those made use of by many of these unfledged pupils of the new school. Without recurring to such weapons, let it be remembered, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, (for I find there are not wanting those who can make them, without any foundation, whenever it suits their purpose,) let it be remembered that it has taken at least twenty years to form this great Colonial timber trade, and if destroyed or materially depressed, how could supplies be obtained to meet the emergencies of the Empire; if obliged to return to the Colonies, what would they find there? A people ready to give up all these fine agricultural pursuits, which the great moralists of Reform are so much inclined to cherish at the expense of the present flourishing timber trade, and turn their attention again to the hazardous, demoralizing, and unprofitable business which these writers make out the timber trade to be, all for the sake of serving the parent state, who had, by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, withdrawing its pledges, broke up all their lumber establishments and saw-mills, and where would be the assurance if this were done once, that it would not be repeated after their turn had been served? But, perhaps, these economists infer that, as the Colonists have endured equal hardships they will put up with any thing, and as to the ship-owners, who have suffered the greatest sacrifices, owing to the changes arising from a war to a peace establishment, fraught with many plans detrimental to their interest, it cannot be of any vital importance if only four hundred ships were thrown out of employ, this being the number that would suffer, as admitted by the advocates of the proposed change. And should an extra number of ships be again required for the Colonial timber trade, or transport service, the present owners, if they are not all ruined, or others if they are, will gladly come forward and build ships, as they have had ample assurance of the value Parliament set upon such property, by the pretention afforded to it after the late war.

Thus far the question relates to the difficulty of reviving a trade of such vast importance, and of simultaneously creating a commercial navy, if its true interests are, by mistaken notions of policy, frittered away in trying theoretical plans of political economy, just at a time when the shipping interests are beginning to revive and flourish; after many years of ruinous depression, which hundreds of families can attest. As to the manufacturing interests, towns and landed property in the Empire they would all feel proportionately depressed, when it is considered that a blow would be struck to a rising trade in the North American Colonies amounting to £6,000,000 of annual traffic, which will in a few years be doubled, if the present scale of lumber duties are left untouched; independent of the great relief afforded by emigration, which this trade so greatly tends to promote, which to Quebec alone up to

this date, since the opening of the navigation, 47,000, add one-fifth for children not included in this return, is 56,400 souls, in four months and a half. In this item there is a saving on emigration of at least £100,000 by reason of the low rate of passage which ships coming in ballast for timber are induced to take—now when it is considered that every settler, when domiciliated in the Colonies, contributes twice as much towards the support of trade and manufactures by producing raw materials of great bulk, taking in return manufactured goods, thus employing ships on a long voyage, diffusing life and spirit to all he has left at home, therefore the landed interest of the Empire need not be apprehensive of any decay, should population and wealth leave their estates, as it will only invigorate and promote the health of those that remain, and cause a return of interest, by reason of the immense fleets that are, and will be employed, in conveying the produce of the Colonies to the Mother Country and taking her manufactures in return. If a doubt is entertained on this head, let the situation of most classes in the Colonies be compared with the same class in the Mother Country, and it will be found that they consume more and afford greater supplies for the support of trade and navigation, than they possibly could if remaining in the Parent State. Witness the efforts of a disabled pensioner of the Navy sending down to Quebec 50,000 feet of better and larger red pine timber, than can now be procured in the Baltic, whilst a half-pay Captain will often send from 300 to 400 barrels of flour, (superior in quality to any made in Great Britain or Ireland,) another 1000 bushels of wheat. But these inquiries are not necessary, the fact is that population is redundant in Great Britain and Ireland, and must spread, and where can it more efficaciously expand itself, than in the North American Colonies, when facts prove it will there render greater support to the Empire than if provided for in the Mother Country?

Is it possible under this view of the subject, that the confidence and faith, placed on a reliance and expectation of the fostering care of the State, under which many have come out, are daily arriving, and have been taught and led to expect from their infancy to look up to, as things almost sacred, is to be thus trifled with; and feelings, which spread a glow of patriotic ardour, hardly known to those who have never left home destroyed?—Witness the effect of such feelings as displayed during the late contest in defence of the Canadas, when many sacrificed all they had in support of British interests. Can it be possible that all this will be endangered, for the sake of promoting the interest of a few individuals trading to the Baltic; under the flimsy plea of supplying timber and deals, at a lower rate than the consumer pays at present?—It is again urged, the flimsy plea, that timber and deals would be lower; this to men conversant with the nature of trade, and a knowledge of the rise that must ensue, if the North American Colonies are not supported in their competition by protecting duties, is really childish. That this protection is not too great is left for the shipping interest to prove, to the satisfaction of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

All this is so evident that it hardly needs explanation, as it is well known, whenever such an extensive supply as the Colonies afford is withdrawn, there must be a rise even in the price of labour in making the extra quantities in the Baltic, independent of the quickness of traders to create one, wherever there is a constant demand and no great competition—finally would the owners of Baltic forests, Baltic mills, and foreign ships, resident in England, be idle in grasping at, and making combinations with foreign merchants to create a rise, if not greater at last equivalent to the present rates,—where then would be the gain?—Let these things be considered, and if the Imperial Parliament can be blindly deceived, by the specious arguments of certain reviewers, and would-be-political economists, it will not be of much consequence to the North American Colonists, for it will be a proof that the happy ascendancy which the Empire possesses is on the wane, and that she is no longer able to protect them. If otherwise the question reverts to the head of the argument, and must be considered one of great national importance, independent of Colonial interests.

JAMES GEORGE.

FROM THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

MECHANISM AND ITS MARVELS.

This is the age of mechanical invention, and we have no doubt, that before its course has run out, we shall have made a prodigious advance in the power of man over nature.—The railway system is of itself a great triumph. We are not to be discouraged by the accidents; which from time to time occur in its use, for in every instance of those accidents the misfortune has been fairly earned by the folly or rashness of the sufferer. Two or three things of this kind have lately happened on the Liverpool railway. But what is to be expected, if a clown who thinks he can outrun a vehicle flying thirty miles an hour, is crushed in consequence. Another fellow gets drunk, and will choose no place to sleep off his drunkenness but the middle of the railway: the engine comes, with the rapidity of a shaft of lightning, and before the engineer can see that there is any thing before him but the sky, the body is cut in two.

Another clown chooses to hang on the engine, at full speed, as he would hang on the shafts of his cart; warnings is of no use to him, he drops off, and is ground into powder at the moment. But those are no more impeachments of the system than the possibility of breaking one's neck by a fall from the first floor window is an argument for living on the ground. Even the more serious doubt whether the railway be in reality the cheaper, as it is decidedly the more rapid and powerful mode, vanishes before just consideration. The expense of the Liverpool railway has been heavy, and like all commencements, there have been errors, and even some unnecessary expenditures in the undertaking. A railway too, on which the chief articles of carriage must be the bulky products of manufacture, or the still bulkier raw material, must have dimensions that can scarcely be required for the usual intercourse of the country. There may have also been a rather ostentatious attention to magnificence in the design, which, however laudible and even fitting in a great national monument, is not required in a mere instrument of connection between two trading towns in a remote part of the kingdom. But this is of all faults the most venial. We hope that no London railway will be constructed without a view to the national honour. It is a nobler monument than all the triumphal arches of Rome.

We say then that the Liverpool railway is an experiment no longer; that it has fully succeeded. The profits may be less than the sanguineness of speculation imagined. But the facts are ascertained that a steam-engine can carry weights to which no animal power is equal, with a rapidity that sets all animal speed at defiance; and that it can do this without intermission, without regard of night or day, frost or sunshine, the height of summer, or depth of the most inclement season of the year. If the Liverpool railway were not to pay its own expenses, all that could be rationally said would be: There has been some rashness or clumsiness in the details, but you have got all that an inventive people can require. You have got a new and mighty power of nature; such things are not vouchsafed for nothing; and your business is now to bring to it the observation and ingenuity for such purposes, and to bring this noble principle, this new revelation in mechanics into the active and manageable employment of man. One of the curious and useful results of the railway will probably be some improvement in the communication of sound. Every body knows the contrivance, which has now become so common in the shops of workmen and tradesmen, the tin tube by which a message is conveyed through all parts of the house, at the moment, and which of course saves the delay and trouble of sending a servant. Those tubes are capable of a much more general application, and might be very conveniently applied to every house. The principle is now to be tried on a larger scale. It is proposed, by means of a small tube throughout the length of the Liverpool and Manchester railway, to convey information as quickly as in conversation. The length of the longest tunnel of the Liverpool and Manchester railway, is about six thousand six hundred feet, but it is thought that articulate sounds could be transmitted not only through the tunnels, but along the whole length of the railway. Its convenience on the railway would be obvious, as by a few men, stationed at regular distances, even miles apart, warning could be instantly given through the speaking-pipe of any obstruction or accident. But the probability is, that it will be discovered that not only can the words of a speaker at Liverpool be transmitted to Manchester, but that they can be transmitted through any distance however great, and with an almost instantaneous rapidity. The progress of sound through the air is well known to be eleven hundred and forty two feet in a second, and it is a singular fact that the feeblest sound travels as rapidly as the loudest, thus a whisper has the speed of a burst of thunder. But by all the experiments on tubes, it appears that