CONSIDERATION

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

Continued.

There were others, on the contrary, who considered this the language of the inveterate Apologists of Great Britain, and suited rather to their former dependence, or the infancy of their freedom, than its present maturity of strength and wisdom: who refused to understand how the law of nations could be more violated by possessory acts on their part, than on hers: who denied that any apprehension or argument could be derived from ancient examples of British spirit and policy, for time, while it had developed and matured the resources of America, had been adding to the burthens of England; and however high had been her courage, and successful her dictates, to the Slaves and Despots of Asia, and Europe, nothing had yet been seen of it, on this side of the water, that seemed equal to her power, or worthy of her fame; whether it was that history had exaggerated the prowess of her arms, or that her spirit cowered, and her destinies declined, before the ascendency of American valour. It was not by such temporizing policy that the Floridas had been added to the Union, but by boldly occupying with force, what Spain delayed to concede by treaty, and doing ourselves that justice, which, if we are to wait upon the pleasure of Courts in Europe, we may for ever expect. Nor could it be answered that a different measure of respect might be found expedient for the King of Spain, and the King of Great Britain; the acquisition of Moose Island had originated in no other means than these now to be adopted; that example was sufficient to prove, either that possession was not so sacred a thing as by some is imagined, or that Great Britain was accustomed to its violation, and knew how to bear it with better temper, than her admirers have supposed. Then cease to threaten us with what is due to the dignity of her Empire, but consult rather the character of our own, and if you can remember the war of 55, do not forget that of 76, unless perhaps we defied and vanquished that kingdom fifty years ago, to tremble now at her displeasure, or be less forward to assert our right at this day, and take possession of our own. The Territory in question belongs neither to Great Britain nor to the General Government of the United States, but to the Commonwealths of Massachusetts and Main; why should we expect the negotiation of two parties, to either of whom we deny the right?

Whatever may have been the language used, we feel assured it was on the balance of such motives and arguments, that these resolutions were approved and enforced. Upon which side the reason lay, remains to be decided by the event. Communications, it seems, have been made by the Lieutenant-Governor of New-Brunswick to the King's Ministers at Washington, and in consequence of his remonstrance, the further execution of the measure has been for the present suspended. How soon it may be resumed, and to what extent carried, will depend upon the degree of patience with which the past shall be endured.

The Constitution of the United States, as the undoubted perfection of political economy, has many other claims to our admiration, and particularly this also, that the difficulties it presents with regard to foreign relations, however annoying to other Powers, are extremely convenient for themselves. A Treaty ratified by their Executive may, it seems, be rejected by the Senate; accepted by the Senate, the Representatives in Congress may refuse laws necessary for its execution; confirmed and sanctioned by the Laws of Congress, the obedience of the several States is voluntary and uncertain, for the authority of the Federal Government appears to be sometimes unsettled and disputed in theory, and, in fact, always destitute of compulsory force. In the present instance also they can hardly fail to have recourse to such expedients. The General Government will probably disavow the measure, and deny the power of the two Commonwealths to usurp this Territory; the two Commonwealths will deny the power of the General Government to concede it. In either case Great Britain feels the inconvenience, and the United States the advantage. The House of Representatives in Congress, and still more the *State Legislatures*, are mostly composed of men, who seem to entertain no very accurate, or very scrupulous, ideas on the Law of Nations. The Puritans of the North find nothing about it in their Bibles, and the Freethinkers of the South would not regard it if they did.

Certainly a more barefaced aggression, so solemnly resolved, so boldly executed, and so openly proclaimed, has been seldom suffered, or suffered with impunity, between two Nations. Not that the United States have never before sent emissaries to seduce the subjects, or usurp the dominions of a friendly Power, but always with some pretexts to excuse, or in a manner to palliate the intrusion, or, at least with secrecy to conceal it. But here no circumstance of injustice and contumely appears to be waiting. A People, with whom we are no terms of the most confident amity, with whom the King has been long endeavouring to settle, by reference and negotiation, questions of Boundary and every other difference, are not afraid, nor ashamed, by the deliberate acts of two of their Legislatures, to declare an extensive Territory, (of which, to say nothing of the right, we are in possession, a possession too, older than their existence), to be their own public undivided Lands; to affect to consider and treat its Inhabitants and Authorities as trespassers and criminals; order them to be dispossessed, and brought to justice; send thither their public Agents to cut and seize the King's Timber, to resume and sell the land he had granted, intrigue with and seduce his subjects, supersede his Government, establish the civil jurisdiction and military organization of their Republic; and, in short, completely transfer to themselves, without further ceremony, the full sovereignty and propriety of the whole Country. The attention of the Public in England is so constantly engaged by objects of more immediate, or more alluring interest, that it can hardly for a moment be directed to a matter so remote and so imperfectly understood; but in that quarter of the Empire, this event has been beheld with astonishment and indignation by all classes of the King's Subjects. In the most solemn manner their situation and constitution admit, they have hastened to send home their humble Representation, of the injury done and threatened, to their properties, and their Sovereign's rights, and lay at the foot of the Throne, their earnest prayers for protection; and are now looking with anxious eyes to the conduct of the Imperial Government, to learn whether they will still suffer their facility or indifference to be cajoled by the fair professions of that Republic, or will, at least, be awakened to its real character, of turbulence and aggression, and convinced of the necessity of never yielding an inch to a Nation, whose demands rise upon every concession, and whose strength is increasing with every demand. For it is indeed a melancholy thing, particularly for British Subjects in those Colonies, to see Great Britain, their Mother Country, that once possessed the whole Continent of North America, driven in this manner, from the Kennebec to the Penobscot, from the Penobscot to the St. Croix, from the St. Croix to the St. John's, and now, finally, from the St. John's up to the very verge and shore of the St. Lawrence, not by conquest or the decline of her power and Empire, but through the mere address and cunning of a People, who seem ashamed of no means in advancing a pretext, and regard neither the rights, nor the common courtesies of Nations, in asserting their claims. Still more humiliating must it be, if Great Britain has now to endure from that Republic, on the eastern extremity of their dominions, the same violation of Territory, which they inflicted with so much insult and triumph, on the King of Spain, in the South. "*The Americans have no conscience, Father,*" said the Indian Chief, in his *talk* to Sir George Provost, "*they have no heart; they will drive us beyond the setting Sun:*"—*and they will push you into the Sea*, he might have added; for unless a stand be now made to prevent it, they eventually will.

The decision of the present question may be found to involve no less a consequence. For there appear to be four principal objects to be secured, or compromised, by the settlement of this Boundary.

First. A Tract of Land, highly valuable for its extent, quality, and situation. It comprises upwards of 10,000 square miles; is covered with a thick and lofty growth of the finest timber; (the native beauty of the Country has not escaped the observation and praise of the American Agents); it is watered by frequent lakes and rivers, the St. John's, and its numerous branches, communicating with the sea, by safe and uninterrupted navigation, (with the single exception of the Grand Falls, which may be easily overcome,) and flowing into and through our actual Territories, of which they are naturally, and almost necessarily, a portion. This Tract is at present very partially cultivated, and thinly peopled: but the pretensions of the United States once removed, it would immediately be occupied. No part of our foreign Possessions offers more encouragement to the emigrant than this district, and if Government will at last be ever persuaded to take up and conduct the business of Emigration, in a manner worthy its results to the Empire and mankind, there is no place where it should sooner be our care to establish a body of loyal and industrious Settlers, who, ceasing to be a burthen here, would there add strength to our dominions, and in a very critical point.

Secondly. An object of higher importance is *a defensible line of Frontier*. To establish an *arcifinius* Boundary between the two Countries in this quarter, was as clearly the intention of the Treaty, as it is indispensably necessary for our security. If the present claims of the United States are conceded, and they pass the River St. John's, or even if they reach and possess its western Bank, the whole Province of New-Brunswick lies at their mercy. Occupying the upper part of such a stream, the country below could never be protected, from contraband trade, in time of peace, nor from invasion in time of war. All the difficulties of preparation and transport, for attack, will then be overcome with security within their own Territory, and their descent into ours will only offer increased facilities in proportion as they advance. The only Line of division, which can distinctly separate the two Countries, and secure the weaker, as in this quarter Great Britain must be considered to be, against the aggression of the other, is to divide the Heads of Rivers, agreeably to the principle of the Treaty, by the High Lands from Mars Hill. Indeed, it is not too much to affirm, that this is the only practicable Frontier, which the relations of the two Powers, and the geography of the Country, can admit. The Boundary must be either Mars Hill, or the Isthmus of Cumberland, or the Penobscot. A meridian Line over such an extent of territory, intersecting Rivers in such a manner, can never exist. A division, full of inconvenience for two Parishes, and almost impracticable for Counties in the same Kingdom, can hardly answer beteen two Nations. Between two Nations, having a common language, opposite maxims of government, incessant intercourse, conflicting interests, and a mutual and undisguised jealousy and rivalry of each other, such a Frontier can only produce continued collision and endless disputes, and must sooner or later end in a struggle, which, if there be no other recourse, Great Britain had better anticipate than defer.

It will be in vain that the possession of Grand Manan has confirmed to us the controul of the Bay of Funday, or that by again seizing the mouth of the Penobscot, that controul may be secured, and extended along the adjacent American Coasts, if the United States are thus to acquire in our rear the command of a River, which flows through the midst of New-Brunswick, and whose various branches communicate by an easy navigation, with almost every quarter of the Province. The immediate consequence to be apprehended, must be, the case of a rupture with that power, the attack and conquest of this Colony, and it may not be without use to anticipate the remoter, but no less important, and no less probable, consequences. The neighbouring Province of Nova Scotia becomes exposed at almost every point to attack from the mouth of the same Streams. The St. John's, by one of the greatest curiosities of nature, presents difficulties at its entrance, which might be easily so strengthened, that no force from Sea could penetrate it. Here then the enemy would have every convenience and security for preparing their Flotilla, and would expect in safety their opportunity for crossing, by a few hours course, to the opposite shore. Nor could any naval superiority prevent the occurrence, or repair the effects, of such opportunities. The nature of the Bay of Fundy renders the assistance of ships of war uncertain in summer, and in winter their very presence impracticable. Thus the natural defences of the Isthums of Cumberland would be turned, taken in the rear, or become useless, and instead of a long, difficult, and circuitous march to the strongest, and perhaps an impregnable, entrance of that Province, the enemy gain the choice, and access, of the weakest, and in five days, an American army from the mouth of the St. John's, might be cannonading the forts and ships of Halifax Harbour. But it is hardly necessary to inquire how long Nova Scotia could be retained, were New-Brunswick lost, or how long Halifax or any other Place defended, were Nova Scotia overrun, or how the American Coast could be blockaded, or even a superior Fleet maintained in those waters, with no Harbour for shelter, or repair, to the northward of Bermuda, and westward of Ireland; (though perhaps one might reasonably extend the consideration of these consequences so far, as to question the safety of our West India commerce, or even the possession of those Islands, and still more the security of Newfoundland, and the Fishery on its banks:) it is sufficient, that without any pretension to military science, it must be obvious to any one, who either has any acquaintance with the country, or even considers its situation on the Map, that the acquisition of such an advantage by an enemy, and its loss on our part, must greatly increase their chances of conquest, and the cost and difficulty of our defence.

3rd. The third consequence involved in the settlement of this Bonudary, is the Con-