

THE
EDITOR'S
REMINISCENCES

OF THE YEAR
1826.

[Concluded.]

THE BOUNDARY LINE.

In having devoted the unofficial part of our Paper to those copious Extracts we have made from the Pamphlet which appeared in this and the Sister Province about the close of last year, on the North Eastern Boundary, we availed ourselves of the privilege we possess, to give publicity to any occurrences wherein the general welfare is concerned, to the exclusion of other matter that might involve a particular, though more limited share of public interest.

We are aware that those Extracts have, for many weeks past, occupied a very considerable portion of our columns; but not, we feel satisfied, without producing adequate fruits. The merits of the work—the facts it embodies—and the valuable information it develops—together with the universal approbation of its Author—all concur to assure us, that we have neither wasted our own time, in having given our attention to its publicity; nor imposed upon that of our readers the perusal of a work, the great anticipations of the contents of which, arising from the nature of its title, have not been abundantly and satisfactorily realized.

That "Great Britain still possesses the most valuable portion of the American Continent," is a point which a steady perusal of this Pamphlet, and the Tables that accompany it, are quite sufficient to establish; but that the "questions now pending between her and the United States" are likely to 'impair' the 'value' of that 'possession', we think it highly necessary that those persons to whose particular office it belongs to decide upon their several merits, should take the subject, at once, into their most serious deliberation, and not for an instant defer it again, beyond the time that mere necessity may require, until they shall have finally adjusted this vitally important matter. For it becomes evident upon reading this Work, that the Americans themselves have felt great irritability in the postponement of the question; altho' if they had wished to maintain a spotless reputation in the business, they should never, certainly, have determined "that possessory acts on their part should be resorted to" as a means of getting rid of any further 'delay'; and which of course was assuming at the same time that the right to the disputed territory had already been decided in their favor. This was a step, also, in which they were by no means borne out by their repeated professions of a conciliatory disposition towards Great Britain!

The Author of this Pamphlet says, there are "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."

So far as this goes, it must be clear to the most casual observer, that the advantages which would result to England from the undisputed ownership of this territory, are, in point of Emigration only, of very material consequence: and no person can therefore doubt that that object must be forever sacrificed in conceding to the United States the possession of this disputed Land.

"Secondly. An object of higher importance is a *defensible line of Frontier*. To establish an *arcifinus* 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 the 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 between 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 Fundy, on 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 Stream. The St. John's, by one of the greatest curi-

osities 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 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 Isthmus 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."

To the startling circumstances herein set forth, it is hoped Great Britain has, ere this, directed her particular attention. Here are a mass of statements brought together in a page or two, which, if they cannot be controverted, must inevitably leave the Inhabitants of this and the Sister Province, but of New-Brunswick more especially, in a most restless condition as long as this Boundary question remains unsettled: for as the veracity of what has been asserted, under this second head, does not, we think, admit of the smallest doubt, (if we make one exception); surely our future prospects will wear the gloomiest aspect, from our consciousness of the adversary's immense power, if he should now obtain the object of his ambition. The 'exception' we would make, relates to what is said respecting "the nature of the Bay of Fundy," which, it is stated, "renders the assistance of ships of war uncertain in summer, and in winter, their very presence impracticable." Now if, as is the fact, Merchant ships of from 500 to 700 tons can, as they do, almost every year, during the winter as well as summer, navigate the Bay of Fundy, we confess we see no reason why a vessel of war, even were she to be a little larger, (taking at the same time into consideration the experienced and well-disciplined seamen they possess,) should not be able to do so likewise. It is also well known that more accidents happen to vessels, comparatively speaking, on the coast of Nova Scotia, generally, but at Cape Sable in particular, than in the Bay of Fundy: and many of the disasters that do occur in the latter place, are attributable to circumstances by which ships of war, (always prepared, both from habit and experience, to encounter most of those calamities that sometimes take a Mer-

chantman by surprize, or catch him in a

defenceless state,) could not be in the same degree affected. To this it may be added that *Campo Bello* affords an excellent *depot* for ships in cases of emergency. That the passage is sometimes attended with danger, and by circumstances generally subject to it, we admit: but to say that it is "impracticable" for "ships of war" to navigate the Bay of Fundy, even at any season of the year, is in our opinion a statement which requires some alteration. "3rd. The third consequence involved in the settlement of this Boundary, is the Connexion together of the British Colonies, and their Communication with each other. That *Wedge of territory, which the United States are endeavouring to drive up between Canada and New Brunswick*, will most effectually separate the upper and lower Divisions of our possessions in America, and expose the Frontier of the former Province, no less, than it commands the occupation of the latter. A long and narrow strip of land scarce thirteen miles in width, along the shore, at the entrance of the St. Lawrence, (which is all they would here leave us, in this quarter, on the right bank,) cannot be considered a very tenable possession. The navigation of the river becomes endangered, and the very passage of the Mails extremely circuitous, and extremely precarious. The situation of New-Brunswick renders it the centre of our Empire on that Continent, and the Territory in question is the very point of union; and as a prudent Commander would reserve his chief force and vigilance, for the protection of that position which secures the connexion and support of each extreme, no less anxiety should be shown by a wary Government, along the Line of its dominions, more especially if so critical a part has already attracted the desires, and even the attempts, of our Adversary. In a commercial as well as political view, this Connexion has now become of consequence, and the course of future events may prove it far more important. For if the Union of all those Colonies under one General Government, as is sometimes suggested, should ever take place; or if by any unforeseen exigency, the ties between them and the Mother Country should ever become less intimate, or less effectual, such a Communication and Connexion would become to them an important bond of Union, and would create and secure a community of feeling and interest, and prevent their falling separately into the hands of that neighbouring Republic, whose power and commerce already threaten the rival Great Britain, and to whose increase, except in the present instance, we do not know what other opportunity will be ever found to prescribe a limit.

"4th. But if these considerations appear of remoter interest, there are others more immediate, and perhaps more important. For it is not merely the communication between the Colonies themselves that is at stake, but the communication, between the Canadas and the Sea, between the Canadas and Great Britain. During eight months of the year, from the first of September to May, not even an answer from England to any intelligence from Quebec, can be there received, except through the United States, or through the Province of New-Brunswick. Supposing the latter communication interrupted, (as it will be most effectually, if any other Boundary is accepted, but that claimed by His Majesty's Commissioners,) it may easily be conceived what advantages an enemy in that country would possess, who should commence hostilities a little before that period, in the month of August or July, and thus have nearly a twelvemonth to overrun those Colonies, before they could receive the assistance of a single man, or a single musquet, from the Mother Country;