

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.

But there are politicians, for whom, neither the welfare of these Colonies has any interest, nor the loss any alarm. Who, forgetting by what means, or under what circumstances, the present power of their Country has accrued; and preferring to the lessons of successful experience, the experiment of theories, which however specious in principle, may prove inapplicable to our condition, or produce unexpected results, would persuade us, that these Countries are an unprofitable burthen, that our naval superiority might be preserved without Seamen, or Seamen supplied without Commerce, or Commerce secured without Colonies; and have published a defiance to shew what one advantage the North American Provinces have ever rendered to the Parent State. And were they so utterly useless and burthen-some, as is asserted, one would still perhaps be rather inclined, in this instance, to approve the example of that old English Gentleman who wishing to reduce the expenditure of his household, when his Steward presented him separate lists of his dependants, distinguishing the useful from the superfluous, said, upon reflection, he would retain them all, "Those, for I have need of them, and these, for they have need of me." For these Colonies, we think, were not planted and maintained, upon merely a mercantile speculation, but a more generous motive, to do good to mankind, to replenish the earth and subdue it, and still more, to fulfil that higher obligation of every Government, to provide and secure the welfare and happiness of all its subjects, and to multiply and increase them. For however early or late may have been the period, and far or near the seat, of their emigration, they are nevertheless our fellow Subjects, members of the same community, and as they have never failed in any duty of allegiance, they have not forfeited any rights to protection. It may be said, indeed, that this cannot apply to the whole population of those Provinces, and it is true that their inhabitants are of two descriptions, and that nearly an equal portion are descendants of France. But so covetous were we once of their Territory, that we forcibly separated them from their own Country, we adopted them into our common family, and having imparted to them the privileges, have ever received from them the loyalty and support of British Subjects. However agreeable to our future interest, it would at least be little consistent with our former policy, to cast them off now; it would reflect no honour upon the constancy of the Nation; more especially as that cannot be done, without betraying also another description of settlers, whom perhaps it would be almost a shame to abandon. For formerly, when the injustice, or impolicy, of the Imperial Government, had excited a rebellion in the old Colonies of America, there were certain of the Inhabitants, and if inferior in number, they comprised a fair proportion of the wealth, talent, and character, of the whole, who either agreeing with the measures of Administration, or thinking that no oppression, or none yet experienced, could justify an insurrection, continued firm and zealous in loyalty to their Sovereign, and attachment to their Mother Country, and exposed themselves to proscription, exile, and death, in her defence; and when the King became unable, or the Kingdom unwilling, to protect them in their own Land, with a singular spirit of fidelity, as if they had transferred to

politics, that obstinacy and enthusiasm, which in religion had led their Forefathers to exchange their native soil for a distant wilderness, again came out and abandoned the seats of their birth and hopes; and, as no other asylum could be afforded, they removed, with desperate hearts, and ruined fortunes, covered with defeat and insult from their enemies, and regarded too much as a burthen by their friends, and took refuge in these Colonies of Nova Scotia and Canada. Such were the Refugees, or American Loyalists; an unfortunate race of men; for the cause in which they had staked all, was unsuccessful; and they exchanged home for exile, the comforts of a cultivated country for the inconveniences of a wild and inclement forest, literally beginning, not life alone, but the world, anew; and such has since been the change in the opinions of mankind, that the principles, to which they offered so rare an example of devotion, have become irrational, or inglorious, and their descendants must scarcely know, when in England at least, whether to avow their conduct as an honour, or excuse it as delusion. And yet, so far were they from being ashamed of their own fortune, or envying that of their Neighbours, (though they had sometimes seen that preference shewn to the new Republic, which could loyalty merit commercial advantages, seemed rather due to our own Colonists), that lately when an opportunity was offered for repentance, and the Mother Country was almost sinking in the struggle with Europe, and the United States would gladly have communicated, and proffered, and endeavoured to force on them the privileges of Independence, there appeared no symptom of diminished affection, but those who were attacked, armed and fought, and all were alike zealous and ready, had they proved less able to defend, again to abandon, their properties, and a second time seek an asylum in some country, if any could be found, within the protection of Great Britain, or beyond the reach of the Americans, where the latter would cease to covet, and the former to despise their possessions.

It cannot appear a very gracious, or even a very reasonable thing, to complain of the incumbrance of such a portion of our subjects, and demand of them, so soon, an account of the expenditure and advantages, they have occasioned to the Empire. For had the reciprocal duties of allegiance and protection been as diligently performed on our part as on theirs they had never been a burthen to the revenue. (But to insinuate an opinion of their disaffection, and talk of the probability of their union with the American Republic, must appear, to them at least, a conjecture of little reason, or a suspicion they have not deserved.) If such an account however is now to be rendered, it may perhaps be found on a fair consideration of their means and resources, not so utterly deficient, as is asserted, either in political or commercial advantages. For they certainly have retained and added to the Empire, 1,200,000 subjects, and 150,000 fighting men, who are posted in that quarter, in which we have most to apprehend, and stand in most need of support. They occupy, and preserve to us, a Country, of such extent and situation, that it is scarcely of more consequence that we should possess it than that another should not acquire. That an insular, commercial and manufacturing Nation, with a surplus and fast increasing population had better remove some of the supernumeraries by emigration, than suffer them to starve at home, or subsist by crime or donations, is a position which reason must immediately acknowledge, and which necessity seems likely to enforce. That it is better to plant the Emigrants within our Territories, and add to the power and wealth of the Common Empire, than dismiss them to a foreign State, to be numbered with our enemies, appears

no less evident. Now we do not possess, nor does the world afford, another country, so neat and inviting as this; so inviting, that the voluntary and unassisted emigration thither is already considerable and successful, and so near, that the political connexion must probably continue longer, and the commercial return be more profitable and immediate, than with any other Plantation. But there are other reasons, which render this Possession highly important, if not indispensably necessary, to the power and commerce of Great Britain. It lies between us and the United States, between the United States and our Fisheries, and either in geographical position, or political results, may be found to lie between the United States and the West Indies, and we think it not absurd to add, the United States and Ireland. It makes the Atlantic a Great Lake, for the domestic commerce of the Empire, and by shutting up the farther shore, enables the King to dictate, who may sail, and who may fish, and almost, who may wash their hands in the sea; a haughty and extravagant pretension, but which was nearly exercised in the late wars, and might be again repeated tomorrow, and as it must first be disputed, and has already been challenged, on that side of the water, so it is upon that side we should be most careful to secure its continuance. Newfoundland is too near, and naturally too dependent upon the other Provinces, to follow a different destiny; and we should find some difference perhaps, between giving the Americans leave to take and cure fish in those waters, and asking it of them. A difference scarce less essential might be also felt, in the premium on West India Ships, or the value of West India Estates, in case of war; and in case of peace, how are they, or how are we, to be supplied with wood and timber? From America or the Baltic? For if from either, who are to be the carriers? In fact, the loss of these Provinces could hardly fail to involve, or endanger, the loss of the most valuable portion, of all our Colonies, and Commerce.

But, for there are perhaps, to whom these advantages may appear of less certainty or importance, or who are unable to estimate a value, which may not be measured by a more unerring rule, the use and consequence of these Colonies, to our commerce, and navigation, may be no less demonstrated by figures, and the rigid balance of pounds, shillings, and pence. Let it be remembered, however, that "planting Colonies is like the planting of trees, in which a man incurs a certain expense, and waits long for his return," and that these Plantations were principally made by persons, whose fortunes were dissipated, and industry relaxed, by the long continuance, the miserable conduct, and ruinous termination, of a civil war, and who, till within a few years, have never received any assistance from British capital, (except indeed the short and limited credit of the Merchant). And yet, though the average of exports from Great Britain to those Provinces, upon six years, ending with 1774, previous to the war, amounted only to the scanty sum of £379,411 annually, on the like average for six years after the peace of 1783, they were raised, by the influx of the Loyalists, to £829,088. It is worthy of remark, that during this same period, our exports to the United States had decreased from £2,752,036 to £2,333,643, (on a similar average), a loss of £398,393 annually, which however was supplied, and more, by this increase of £449,677 to the Colonies. In 1799, the exports thither amounted to £1,066,396. In 1809, to £1,733,667. In 1819, to £1,970,257. And for the last year, they have reached the sum of £2,244,245. By a table annexed, (in the Appendix, No. V.), the increase of our Commerce with these Provinces will be

more fairly and accurately set forth. It will be seen that our exports thither, during a period of fifty years, ending in 1824, have gained an addition of four hundred and fifty five per cent. over and above their amount in 1774. With regard to the imports from them, it is enough to know, that all these exports are finally paid for, and though the balance against them must often have been, and still be, in arrear, yet in no quarter of the world are the debts so secure, and the losses, of the British Merchant, so rare and inconsiderable.

But it is far less for the advantages of Commerce, than of Navigation, that Colonies are planted, and their improvement valued, and it is chiefly by considering what the possession of these Provinces has added to the mercantile Navy and Seamen, that is, to the real strength and vital interests of the Empire, that their importance can be duly understood. For from the year 1772, to the year of 1789, (upon an average and medium of the vessels cleared and entered for the three preceding years), the tonnage employed between them and Great Britain, is found to have advanced from 11,219 tons to 46,106, being an increase of 34,887 tons annually, and which more than repaired the decrease, that had reduced our annual tonnage to the United States, during the same period, from 86,745 tons to 52,595. In 1818, the amount of British tonnage in this trade, on an average of the five preceding years, had further advanced to 179,317. And for the seven years since, ending with 1825, it has amounted to the average of 340,776 tons annually, and the number of seamen. And for the year 1825, the vessels cleared thither amounted to 411,332 tons, about one-fourth of our whole foreign tonnage exclusive of vessels to Ireland. By a Table in the Appendix, (No. VI.), this increase is more particularly stated.

Such has been the use, and so rapid the increase of these possessions, that they need not shew comparison, in commerce or navigation, either with any other portion, or with the collective improvement, of the whole Empire; and not even the United States, loudly vaunted, and justly dreaded, as their wonderful advance has been, have added more to their intercourse with Great Britain or with the World. For, in the year 1774, the exports from Great Britain to the United States bore the proportion of 14 per cent. of those to all other Countries. The exports to the West Indies, which are justly valued as the richest possession of the Crown, were at that time 778 per cent. And the exports to those Colonies were but 2 per cent. In 1824, upon an average of the ten preceding years, the whole amount of our exports was 235 per cent. more than it was in 74. The exports to the United States, on the same average, have increased 245 per cent. and are now a 14½ per cent. of the whole. The exports to the whole. The exports to the West Indies have increased 300 per cent., and are now a 92.8 per cent. of the whole. And the exports to these Colonies, on the same average have increased 455 per cent. and are now 3½ percent. of the whole. With reference therefore to our whole exports, the comparative increase of the proportion, which these several Countries now receive, above the proportion received in 1772, may be measured respectively by the following figures, viz. 4 for the U. States, 21 for the West Indies, and 12 for the Colonies. And with reference to the amount received, the comparative increase in 1824 above 1772, is respectively as, 49 for the United States, 60 for the West Indies, and 91 for the Colonies. In 1772, the proportion of British Shipping employed between Great Britain and the now United States was 78.10 per cent. of our whole tonnage cleared annually. The proportion to the West Indies was 9 per