

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.

With regard to the civil and military expenses of these possessions, taken at their largest estimate, at £500,000 per annum, that can hardly, we think, be considered equal to even the commercial advantages received. For if they supply employment to the amount of £3,000,000 annually, (perhaps the real value of our exports thither the last year), to the stock and industry of the Merchant and Manufacturer, and £1,000,000 more (the probable amount of freights) to the Shipowners and Seamen, (to say nothing of the revenue of £300,000, the amount in 1825, we believe, of the duties upon timber,) it would be difficult to point out another way by which this £500,000 could be made more productive, or shew what item of our whole appropriation yields a better return. For it cannot be said that equal benefits would have resulted from the same, or some other quarter, had we abandoned these Colonies, or shewn them less preference. On the contrary, had they been ceded to the United States, it is far more probable that our intercourse with them would have increased only in the same ratio as it has with that Republic, and instead of our exports thither being 455 per cent. greater than in 1774, they would be only 245, and our tonnage thither, instead of increasing 2370 per cent., would have diminished more than 5, and amount now to 10,658 instead of 411,332 tons, and the difference have been added to a Foreign Power. And although, exports to the same amount might have been made to the Baltic, and Timber thence procured at a cheaper rate, (except indeed the intercourse with those Powers had been restricted by monopoly and combination, as in 1703, or interrupted by war, as in 1809), yet had such a trade been far less profitable. For there are three great advantages in the Colonial above the Baltic Trade. 1st. The former is domestic instead of foreign, and consequently of twice the value of the latter, as the profit by the exchange, on both sides, is all within the Dominions, and by the stock and industry, and added to the common wealth, of our own Empire. 2nd. It is direct instead of circuitous. Nor that timber may not be brought from the Baltic in half the time required from America, but to pay for that timber, or the greater part of it, we have first to carry our manufactures beyond the sea, and bring back some foreign or colonial article, and principally indeed gold and silver, and ship that to the Northern Merchant. To these possessions, on the other hand, nearly all our exports are the immediate production of our own industry. The Colonial Trade, therefore, in reality yields a quicker return. 3rd. It is carried on in British, instead of foreign bottoms. By which we not only save the freight, but most essentially promote an object, which it has ever been the undoubted interest of the Nation to keep principally in view, the support of our Seamen and Navy. And if these advantages should still appear unequal to the objection, so strong to a superficial observer, that Timber is dearer by the present system, it must yet be a consolation to know that the difference is not only divided among ourselves, but as the prime cost is about the same, is nearly all given as a bounty to the most useful branches of our productive industry, the Shipping and Manufacturing interests, or applied to the necessities of Go-

vernment, and substituted for so much taxation. But without the competition of our Colonies, are we sure we should obtain Baltic Timber on the present favourable terms? Great Britain has long been, and for ever must be, dependent upon other Countries for Naval Stores and wood. The Coasts of the Baltic possess, and formerly alone afforded, a near and abundant supply of both. Why did we ever derive either by a long voyage to America? The Coasts of the Baltic unfortunately are not our Colonies. Their Merchants combined in 1703 to raise the price of the former, and to monopolize its transport, and we were driven to give bounties on its importation from our Colonies. In 1807, their Governments combined to exclude us from the latter also, and we began to enquire with some anxiety whether there was any other quarter of the world from which we might be supplied; and what had then been our situation, if on turning to America, we had found its Northern Provinces in the hands of a Power, which was about to pass acts of Embargo, Non-intercourse, and War? That which has already happened, may again be repeated.

If to these commercial benefits, already so considerable, and capable of such future increase, be added the political results derived to our power, from our possession of this Country, and the dangers to be apprehended from its possession by another, it can hardly appear too dearly purchased at the price of its establishments; especially to a Nation, which is too conscious, that her influence in the World is beyond the proportion of her territory or population in Europe, to confine her views to a single Kingdom, or to one Hemisphere; which has not garrisoned for so many years the Rock of Gibraltar, nor maintained her Forts in Africa, nor conquered or planted many other posts or Islands, for the immediate return of their trade or revenue; nor refuse to the subjects of her very Capital the necessary fuel of life, unless brought by sea from a distant port, because the Coals of Newcastle are cheaper than any elsewhere; but which, having established an Empire, on whose dominions the sun never sets, and whose equal he has never seen, has judged no expenses heavy, which were necessary to secure its general prosperity, no prosperity secure without a superior Navy, and no Navy superior without Colonies and Commerce.

Inconsiderable however as this sum appears upon such a comparison, it may yet be well to examine, whether all of it could probably be saved to the revenue by the proposed abandonment. The expenses of the Civil Government of these Provinces, as much as are borne by the Mother Country, amount only to about £45,000. All the rest is incurred by the Military establishments, which are not required to secure the obedience of the Inhabitants, for that is most voluntary and devoted, but for the safety also of other possessions, the fear of neighbouring rivals, and the general interests of the Empire. Were these withdrawn, must not the garrisons in other places be augmented in Bermuda, and the West Indies? Or would our fears diminish with the increase of our enemies, or our forces be lessened with the increase of our fears, or any saving gained in the health or cost of our forces by this change of station? Two hundred men would possibly cease to be a sufficient protection for Newfoundland; nor would perhaps the uneasiness felt for Ireland be any thing allayed for the intimidating supposition, very suggested by a Catholic Barrister, of an American Fleet in the Irish Channel, may not prove eventually to have been so very remote, as the Orator, it is hoped, himself imagined. Were the obstacles on that side of the water removed, the Americans

know the way over to this, and they would soon learn how to throw 100,000 muskets into Ireland, which they have already learned how to make; and were it the expedition of mad men, and fools, they could bring 10,000 United Irishmen with them, who are both one and the other. It must be better, one would think, that these men and arms should be sent, without return, to Canada, and the United States exhaust their means in imbecile attempts to invade a country, which they never can conquer, as in the last war, or, as it will, or should be, in the next, in protecting their long and defenceless coasts, of the Atlantic in front, and the Lakes in their rear, (neither of which could be endangered without our occupation of this Territory,) rather than to remove every domestic annoyance, and leave their undivided attention and resources to be applied to, their maritime force, and the attack of more valuable, or more valued possessions.

If indeed the power and consequence of a Nation does not depend upon the extent of its dominions and number of inhabitants, but the less we possess and expend abroad, the richer and securer we are at home; if the cheapest market be an object of such paramount importance, in political economy, as to exclude the distinctions of subject and alien, friend and enemy, security and dependence, and trade with foreigners be as permanent or profitable as domestic commerce within ourselves; we might by the same reason give up the beautiful and fertile Islands of the West Indies, to the Abolitionists, if Heaven so please, for an experiment upon negro industry and intellect, (since there are, who refuse to be satisfied with the experiment that has been making since the flood upon the whole Continent of Africa,) we might sever Ireland from Great Britain, or Scotland from England, or resolve England again into an Heptarchy, and would mankind remain at peace, and obey the dictates of right reason, all parts perhaps would be benefited, and we might safely contract our Empire, or even dissolve it: but as force has unhappily been found the best or only means of securing, either the ends of justice, or the advantages of amity and commerce, the same reason that induced men to form societies, must suggest and compel their enlargement, and the greater the proportion of the earth included under one good government, the stronger, the richer, and happier, must that nation be. The increase of production in the Mother Country has of late so far surpassed the increase of consumption, that the grand object of her economy is now, to multiply her customers, and open new markets. No class of consumers, it is allowed, is so safe, so constant, and profitable, as we are to ourselves; and if there are causes at home which retard or limit their multiplication, in the Colonies nothing, but our own negligence, can oppose their rapid and almost infinite increase. Had a tithe, had an hundredth part, of the capital lately sunk, in abortive schemes, imaginary mines, and irrecoverable loans, been diverted to the planting and encouraging these possessions, to open Canals for example, between the Bay of Fundy and the Gulph of St. Lawrence, the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic at Halifax, Lake Erie and Ontario, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence, the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain, the benefit would have been great and permanent to the Empire, and the profit satisfactory to the adventurers. So inviting are these undertakings, that the capitalists in the United States have long been anxious, and have offered, to perform them, but from a laudable feeling of pride and jealousy, the Colonists have preferred waiting, till they could get assistance from the Mother Country, or till the time is not distant, they could ex-

fect it of themselves. Indeed some of these enterprises are already in operation, and the rest about to be begun.

To pursue further the resources and prospects of the British Empire in America, would be long and inapplicable to the present purpose. It is already seen that the Colonies, which remain to us, are now of more value to our commerce and navigation, than were all the Provinces of the United States together in 1774, though these then contained twice the number of inhabitants, and though they have met no obstacle to their improvement, except the war of their own choosing, our colonists have gained rapidly upon them in comparative increase.

It would perhaps be difficult to mention, or almost to imagine, a country, the result of whose industry and commerce could afford a more unmingled satisfaction, at once to the philosopher, the statesman, and economist. Trees, which bear no fruit, which contribute nothing to our support, which even cumber the ground, are cut down, to make room for population and subsistence; and are sent and exchanged, in this great mart of the comforts and conveniences of life, for commodities which these could be neither made nor spared; the tillage and pasture, which succeed, supply exports of higher value, and more general demand; the barrenness of rivers and the sea is made to yield the luxuries of either hemisphere; and the very stones are turned to bread. To all concerned, the advantages, seem surprisingly great and mutual. On the one hand, articles, which have received the last labour of human art, are purchased by things useless or even burdensome; on the other, the superfluities of production are given for the necessary materials of future industry; the bulk of which is the most disproportioned to value, and value the least derived from manufacture; while the nature of the voyage, and the size and quantity of ships for the transport, are such, that if they bring but a small addition to our wealth, they contribute largely to the security of all we have. In the meantime the face of a vast country is changed from a wild and silent forest, to the fair improvements of culture and habitation; villages and towns spring up; the poor emigrant is received with welcome and a ready engagement; and with the increase of capital and numbers, new resources are discovered, or the old more available. Add to this, that they thus supply employment of £4,000,000 annually to the productive industry, and something besides to the revenue, of Great Britain; and add also the present advantages of the territory they occupy, and its future prospects, in commercial and political importance, and perhaps the inhabitants of no country have less reason to be reproached with what they have done for themselves and the empire, for posterity and mankind. All of which, it may be affirmed, had been lost to us, and worse, added to our rivals, had the Colonists been a little less faithful to the Mother Country, or the Mother Country a little more indifferent to the Colonists.

From these facts and arguments, the conclusion to be drawn is, not, we trust, (in the words of the Edinburgh Review, No. 86.) "That it had been better for Great Britain had Canada, Nova Scotia, &c. continued to this hour in the possession of their aboriginal savages." An assertion which discovers perhaps no great benevolence of feeling, if accuracy of judgment or calculation. On the contrary, something, it is hoped, may be collected to justify, or excuse, the position hazarded in our commencement, that Great Britain still possesses the most valuable portion of North America, and does not know it. Or, whatever it may be, that value at least must be greatly impaired by the compromise of the present question