

CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
VALUE AND IMPORTANCE
OF THE
British North American Provinces,
AND
THE CIRCUMSTANCES ON WHICH DEPEND THEIR FURTHER
PROSPERITY, AND COLONIAL CONNECTION
WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

“SHIPS, COLONIES, AND COMMERCE.”

BY
MAJOR GENERAL SIR HOWARD DOUGLAS, BART.
K.S.C. C.B. F.R.S. &c. &c.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

MDCCCXXXI.

THE BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN PROVINCES.

THERE are two signs under which the Statesman may estimate the value and importance of the British North American Colonies. The one is positive, the other relative. The positive, or absolute value, consists in the shipping they employ, the seamen they form, the manufactures they consume, the supplies of which they are the home sources for the British market and our West India Colonies, and the mastings and spars which they ensure for our navy in the day of need. The sign under which the relative importance of the northern provinces may be considered, indicates the effect of placing all these elements of statistical greatness in the opposite scale of the beam, by which the statesman should carefully weigh the effects of measures which, though treated as fiscal or finance questions, reach, in fact, into matters of the very highest order of policy.

The permanency of the colonial connection between Great Britain and the North American Provinces, rests entirely on the manner in which their interests are dealt with by the British Parliament; it is therefore of the greatest importance to consider what effects are likely to be produced upon the interests of those colonies, by the proposed alteration in the duties on foreign and North American timbers.

Some of the passages now reprinted in these pages, appeared in a periodical work of last year, for the purpose of showing the value and importance of the British North American Provinces, not only to the commerce, manufactures and navigation of the parent state, but to the maritime greatness and security of the British empire; but, finding that, though those passages appeared in a work of the highest character and the greatest circulation, they may again be used with some advantage to invite attention to those facts, and appropriate observations, which it is necessary to bring to a full and deliberate consideration of the many theories by which it is proposed to divest ourselves of those colonies, or at least to shake the interests which bind them to Britain, I embody those passages with other matter in this pamphlet, intreating the indulgence of

the public for the hasty manner in which the brochure is composed.

Had I been aware that it was the intention of the Finance Minister to propose any alteration in the timber duties, I should have considered it incumbent upon me, as entrusted with the government of a province whose interests are deeply at stake, to represent forcibly to the Government, in a timely manner, that no alteration could be made in the ratio of duties, whether by raising those on British timber, or by lowering those on the foreign article, or in any way destroying the present scale, without injuring, or totally ruining the British North American timber trade; but as such an intention was not suffered to transpire, it would have been unnecessary, and indeed out of place, to renew the representations which I had previously made to the Colonial Department on this important matter. The measure being now, however, brought forward for discussion, there is no alternative, short of my neglecting to advocate those interests, but to submit, forcibly, in this shape, whether any financial or fiscal measures can be considered paramount to the great objects, in national policy, which we should pursue, by a continued protection of the Colonial Trade.

It will occasion me infinite regret should any member of His Majesty's Government,

and particularly the Noble Secretary in whose department I am now serving, consider or feel, that this step has thrown any unwarrantable impediment in the paths of its financial arrangements. I trust it will not be considered that, because I hold an official situation connected with the colonies, I should be restrained from coming forward at this time, to make public the information which I have acquired in the provinces so deeply concerned, and from submitting the impressions which, as a British subject, I am under, as to the effects of the proposed measure, on the interests of the British empire. Being on the spot, it was impossible for me to avoid expressing, in some way or other, these convictions: and the course I take is the only open and manly line of conduct I can adopt—namely, in my private capacity, to lay the following “considerations” before the public. If the facts which I represent, and the deductions which have been made from them, are not considered such as ought to occasion any deviation from the proposed measure, they will be over-ruled, (they cannot be disputed) by those ulterior designs, for greater objects, (if there be any greater,) which the government may have in view; and I shall have the satisfaction of reflecting that I have done my duty in representing the injurious effects which I apprehend, from any change, upon particular pro-

vincial interests which, in common with those of all British North America, I firmly believe to be of paramount importance to the British empire.

The population of the British North American Provinces was in the year 1828 about 1,000,000, and increasing in a higher ratio than that of the adjoining New England States; and the British Colonies consume in corresponding augmentations the manufactures and goods of Great Britain and Ireland, and take increasing quantities of West India produce, upon which the United States have laid heavy duties to encourage the production of their own sugars.

In 1828 the amount of British manufactures consumed in British North America, was about £2,000,000 value, so that those Provinces take about 40s. each person per annum of British goods.

The amount of British manufactures imported into the United States from the United Kingdom in 1826, (see Watterston's Statistics,) was 26,181,800 dollars, which at 4s. 6d. is £5,876,975; the population of the United States for that year being 12,000,000, it follows that the people of the United States do not take, per person, one-fourth so much of British goods as the people of the British Colonies.

The whole British tonnage trading to British

North America before the Revolution, namely, in the year 1772, was only 86,745 tons. The British tonnage trading to the British North American provinces in the year 1828 was 400,841 tons, navigated by at least 25,000 seamen, which is nearly *one-fifth of the whole foreign trade of the country*; and this prodigiously increased, and still active trade, should be considered *a home trade*. There is no doubt that the home trade should be preferred to foreign trade; but that position which, in argument or in fiscal arrangement, would consider the colonial trade not to be a home trade, brings the colonial interest under a wrong denomination.—Classed as it ought to be, the measure in question would appear in the proper light.

Whilst such has been, in point of fact, the happy effect of our colonial policy in that quarter of the world, to the manufacturing, commercial and shipping interests of Great Britain, let us see in what way this matter is viewed, and the possessions which aliment that trade are estimated, by our great commercial rivals; and what effect their attempts to countervail its eminent successes, have produced upon themselves. It appears* that the population of the British Provinces increased, between the years 1806 and 1825,

* Report on the Commerce and Navigation of the United States, by Mr. Cambreleng, p. 28.

more than 113 per cent., whilst that of New England increased only 27 per cent.: that the imports of the British Colonies have been almost *quadrupled* in amount, and the exports considerably more than doubled in that time;* while the exports and imports of the United States in 1828 were about the same in amount as they were in 1807: That while the whole foreign trade of the United States, with every part of the world, has remained stationary for fifteen years, the navigation of the British Colonies, with the mother-country alone, has increased, as the Report states, from 88,247 to 400,841 tons,† or about one half of all the American tonnage employed in its foreign trade, which in 1828 was only 824,781 tons, being an increase of only 253,528 tons, or a fraction less than 3 per cent. on what it was in 1820; while the increase of the foreign navigation of Great Britain from 1815 to 1827 was 741,840 tons, or nearly equal to the whole foreign tonnage of the United States in 1828! Again,‡ the whole tonnage of the United States with the British empire, had, in 1828, declined by 32,000 tons since 1815; whilst British tonnage employed in the direct trade between the United States and Great Britain, had, in 1828, increased 38 per cent !

Having stated these, and many other remark-

* Report, p. 28. † Report, p. 27. ‡ p. 26.

able facts, which bear, most forcibly, upon this subject, the Report proceeds to state, “ that whilst the British Provinces are making this signal and immense progress, the commerce and navigation of the United States have fallen far in the rear of their rivals for national power and naval ascendancy — that the rise or decline of navigation is the index of national prosperity and power—that the great object of a statesman, in a maritime nation, should be to lay the foundations of a great naval power in a hardy and extensive commercial marine; and that to prepare for war, it is palpably inconsistent for a maritime nation, to attempt to accomplish that object by a policy destructive of its commercial marine, the most efficient instrument of war, whether offensive or defensive.” Thus has our policy been eulogised, and the effects show with what justice, “ as one of a lofty, wise ambition, which never sacrifices the power of a nation to the meaner considerations of speculative wealth;” as never permitting any conflicting interest to interfere with the steady growth of our commercial marine; and that the paramount motive, in all our colonial and commercial regulations, has been the enlargement and encouragement of our navigation. Shall we continue to deserve this praise, and to perpetuate the effects which our colonial policy

has produced ? What it has accomplished are *facts*; what it may further do, is *assured*. Is there nothing speculative, nothing uncertain, in the notions and principles of change, which are proposed ?

Having soundly laid down these principles, the Report avows that the Northern British Colonies stand in a peculiar and dangerous relation to the United States, from the immense progress those colonies are making; and whilst we are treating of throwing them off, or *making* them independent, or not properly protecting their interests as British Colonists, by persevering in that line of policy which has produced these happy and most important results, the following will show in what way, and with what views, these possessions are viewed by the United States:—

“ It is very desirable that the people of the
 “ United States and of the British Provinces
 “ should become better acquainted and be led to
 “ take a more lively interest in each other. Their
 “ fathers were united by the bond of a common
 “ country; and it needs no spirit of prophecy to
 “ foresee, that the time must come, when, in the
 “ natural course of events, the English colonies
 “ on our borders will be peaceably dis severed
 “ from the remote mother-country, and the
 “ whole continent, from the Gulf of Mexico to
 “ the coast of Labrador, present the unbroken

“ outline of one compact empire of friendly confederated States.”— *North American Review*.

One should have thought that the sage doctrine of “ *Letting well alone*,” would have been observed, with respect to a course of policy which has produced positive and relative effects such as these, upon Britain’s “ best bulwarks,” and upon Britain’s maritime greatness. But it has of late become a favourite doctrine amongst political economists, that colonies are of no use; that the productions of any country may be procured at a cheaper rate, in commercial dealings with that country, as an independent state, than in a colonial connection, which forces, by protecting duties, the sale of its produce, on the parent state, at enhanced prices; and, applying this doctrine to our North American Provinces, it is asserted, that, inasmuch as the public is made to pay more for timber, than would be the case if the protection given to those colonies were taken off, so this protecting policy should be abandoned, for the purpose of lowering price. That protecting duties occasion higher prices to the consumer, is a truism, which applies to all subjects of taxation. But by what rule should we be justified in sacrificing or injuring national interests to mere considerations of price to the consumer? If the interests of the North American Colonies be not steadily protected, they may soon become disposed to seek a change of condition in the

federal family of those, who, as I have shown, know better how to estimate them, from a thorough conviction of their immense value to us, as well as what it would be to them. ' It never was intended that the trade of the colonies should be free. It was at least the intention of Mr. Huskisson that the importation of foreign goods into the colonies, should be made subject to duties sufficient to protect the productions of British industry, and that the colonies might enjoy the counter-monopoly, of supplying the United Kingdom with their productions. ' The economists assert that this mutual protection is an error in principle, and a failure in policy, and we are admonished to get rid, in toto, of the colonial monopoly, and likewise to take from the colonies theirs, as is now proposed in respect to their timbers. This would be, in effect, to render the colonies valueless to us, in the sense in which national policy should teach us to view them, and the colonial connection useless to them. In a word, to abandon our present policy, would be to lose our hold of the colonies altogether; and to do so would be to cut from ourselves, in the midst of all our difficulties, about one-third of the actual trade of the country.

According to this doctrine, as the Finance Minister has avowed, he proposes to double the duties on British-American timber, and

to reduce those on foreign timber. If this be carried into effect, the scale will be completely destroyed, upon which only it is possible for the North American Provinces to compete with the northern European countries. According to this proposition, there will still remain a nominal difference in the amount of duties, and this the Finance Minister says will still be sufficient to favour the North American timber trade. So it would, if the voyages were of the same length. Nor would our shipping interests be injuriously affected, or other national interests interfered with, if the transactions were, in all other respects, similar. But the comparative duration of voyage, and other essentially different circumstances, are such, that the North American timber trade, instead of being favoured, would be utterly annihilated, if this measure be carried into effect. To equalize the duties would be to favour decidedly, and at enormous sacrifices to the nation, the *Baltic timber* trade. It is assumed, that this equalization, or alteration of duties, would minister somewhat to cheapness in building houses, and in other operations in which foreign timber may be used ; but the statesman should consider with what materials, and how produced, and whence procured, a nation's greatness is constructed, and in what way it may be endangered. It would be a poor consolation,

should Britain's bulwarks feel the want of a hardy and well-trained race of seamen to protect the nation in the storms of war, that a fraction per cent. has been saved in the cost of our houses and the erection of our barns. There is not time to argue this case in detail. I avow, without fear of being found in error, and it may be depended upon, that the timber trade of the British Colonies can now barely compete in the home market with that from foreign countries. Foreigners, particularly in the Baltic, build and sail their vessels vastly cheaper (about one half) than that at which British vessels can be built and navigated. The average voyage from the north-eastern parts of England and Scotland to Norway, the Baltic, and back again, is from twenty-four to thirty days; whereas the voyage to the North American Colonies and home again may be calculated at about a hundred days, landing and discharging cargoes included. The former are chiefly performed by foreigners in foreign ships, the latter entirely by British subjects in British vessels; and if any alteration be made in the duties on foreign timber, compared with those on British timber—that is, if the modifications do not maintain the ratio of the present scale, the greater part of the timber trade will pass into the hands of foreigners.

At different periods, chiefly during the French

revolutionary war, large advances were made by British capitalists to the proprietors of forests in Norway, and the countries bordering on the Baltic, who gave to the former security upon the timber growing in those forests. Such speculations would perhaps now recur with great activity, should the proposed measures be carried into effect ; for it would become the manifest policy of the Northern merchants to afford every facility to the investment of British capital in their forests, and they would not concern themselves as to the effect this might have, upon the commercial and shipping interests of the British empire.

Even were British ships to become the carriers of timber from those countries, that trade would not be found so good a nursery for seamen for the British Navy as those formed in the North American trade, the hardy and healthy character of which, and the duration of its voyages, are known to form the best seamen in the world.

If, under the proposed duties, the North American provinces continue to carry on the timber trade, it will be in the shape of a forced manufacture of the raw material into ships, by which to save the freight home. This might for a time proceed ; but it would, in the end, occasion embarrassment to the colony, and be injurious to the British ship-builder.

The amount of British manufactures consumed in the timber countries of the north of Europe, is trifling, when compared with those consumed in the British provinces, and for which they have little else to pay than timber. If even the people in those countries had the means, and they probably never will have, of consuming as much of British manufactured articles as the people of the British colonies do, their own habits, as well as the policy of their respective governments, forbid the hope that they would consume British goods to an extent which would warrant a preference being given to the foreign trade. Their timber will be chiefly paid for in money; for the importation of British manufactures into the northern timber countries is known to be constant, and not to fluctuate with a greater or less consumption of their timbers in the British islands—whereas the whole population of British America draws its supplies from the manufactures of Great Britain, and these supplies must steadily increase to a prodigious extent, if the trade of those colonies be cherished and properly protected. With the loss of their trade, they would lose the means they possess of paying for British goods; they would sink into comparative poverty and insignificance; and, in place of thriving settlements, and of an active, increasing, and con-

tented population, there would soon be seen depopulated towns, a dispirited and discontented people ; and the large amount of British capital now usefully employed among a British people, would be withdrawn from the colonies into foreign countries, or those provinces would themselves become, in the worst of humour, foreign states.

The British Parliament has under its consideration the important measure of directing the current of emigration to the North American provinces, to relieve the mother country of the inconveniences and distresses of a redundant population; and to remove a portion of its people to a country in which they may better their condition, and contribute, by their labour, to the further prosperity of the colonies and the empire. Has it been well considered, in what way those philanthropic arrangements and prospects must be ruined by measures which shall consign the subjects of this experiment, to scenes and sufferings such as those which I have depicted, and which will assuredly follow in the train of the proposed alterations. The measures which the government has been taking for some years, with a view to promote the settlement and cultivation of the North American Provinces, have encouraged and stimulated a rapidly increasing population

to apply itself to the very labour, which the proposed financial measure will fatally check. The pursuits of the emigrant are, it is true, essentially agricultural ; but let it not be overlooked, that agricultural operations in a country covered with forests, must commence, and be accompanied, by the operations of the lumberer. The poor emigrant begins his labour with the axe ; and his greatest, his chief resource in earning money, wherewith to buy what he wants, is in manufacturing shingles, or staves, or in felling timber. Let this measure pass—let the British North American trade languish—let the inter-colonial trade with the West Indies be unprotected, and the miseries and the distresses, which the emigrant may have endured as a pauper at home, would be nothing to those to which he will be consigned in the wilds to which he has been removed. We have begun this work.—It originated in a desire to relieve ourselves ; if it turn out in a manner to reduce to misery, or in any way to injure the interests of those to whom we have held out the assurances of removal to a better condition—I know not the name, for the case has, happily, never yet occurred, by which to call such an act.

The prosperity of the North American Provinces depends not only on the activity of the

timber trade with the mother country, but on a substantial and permanent protection of those interests which were created in the North American provinces by a course of policy, which threw the West Indies upon their sister colonies in the north, for supplies.

It is unnecessary to say anything as to the stages through which the West India intercourse question has passed. But the measure of reopening the ports was adopted, conditionally, proposing that it should be accompanied by a scale of duties, which should substantially protect the interests which had been created in the British North American provinces, and still make it worth their while to continue the supply trade with their sister colonies in the West Indies. The continuance of this trade is, therefore, also a matter of policy of very high order, and cannot safely be lowered to any consideration of a mere mercantile nature, as affording supplies to the West India merchant, a shade lower in price.

This is so important a matter to the North American Provinces, that I must say a few words upon the subject. The very active trade which has been carried on, since 1826 in particular, between British North America and the West India colonies, is evidently calculated to cultivate, in the best manner, the internal indus-

try of the former, and ultimately to be productive of great advantage to the latter, and to the British empire; but if the interests so created are not protected, the late abandonment of that commercial policy under which the British Provinces have so signally flourished, will operate with ruinous reaction upon extensive enterprises, which commenced with the fairest prospects of success, and will be attended with commensurate loss of confidence in any measure of policy which may be adopted, upon however fair and apparently permanent a basis. The *real* question now to be determined, with respect to the timber trade, and in fixing a scale of duties on productions imported into the West India colonies from the United States, is not that of a mercantile character, as to the extent of relief which the late alteration in the course of trade is, either now, or prospectively, to afford to the West India interests, or to reduce the price of timber in the British market, but whether it is, or is not to be, the policy of the government to foster, and long retain, the North American colonies.

There is not at present any such difference of price in the supplies received in the West Indies from the British Provinces, compared with those formerly received from the United States, as should be admitted to be any con-

sideration to the Government, or to the West India proprietors, against the measure of protecting the North American Colonies in that trade. As a commercial measure, all that the West India interests ought to seek is—permanency as to the places of supply to which they are to look. They all see, and many have ascertained personally, the capabilities of the British Provinces to supply their wants, and the great advantage to them, as well as to the empire, of protecting the course of trade between these two sets of British Colonies. Price has not risen much since the measures of 1826 in the British West Indies; nor is price significant, when compared with the nature of the trade which has since been so beneficial: perhaps, too, the amount of West India produce taken off by the United States in return for their supplies, is by no means so great as is generally supposed; and whatever that amount may have been, it certainly cannot but diminish under the influence of the heavy duties levied in their ports on molasses (10 cents. per gallon), on foreign spirits (from 57 to 85 cents. per gallon,) and on sugars (from 3 to 12 cents. per pound,) and from the increasing production of sugars in Louisiana, which, though subject to some checks, already produces a very large proportion of the sugars

consumed in the United States. From all this it is clear, that however desirous the Americans may be of selling their productions to us, they are using every exertion not to be buyers, particularly of our sugars; and this is surely a very sufficient reason for cultivating those sources which we possess in our North American Provinces for the supply of the West Indies with lumber, and for the consumption of their sugars in return; and I am well persuaded that the West India merchants, and proprietors, would best consult their own permanent interests, by giving all their influence to a protecting course of policy, which would undoubtedly, if steadily adhered to, enable the British Provinces to supply more plentifully the wants of the British West Indies, in fish, lumber, and grain; whilst the prosecution of this great course of policy is encouraging and promoting a mutual interchange between all the colonies, by which each will be contributing to the wants of the other, and the whole minister to the wealth and power of the empire.

The Welland Canal, constructed in Upper Canada to connect Lake Erie with Lake Ontario, will be signally successful in transporting the produce of the vast regions bordering on the lakes, with convenience and at a mode-

rate rate, down the St. Lawrence to the ports of Montreal and Quebec for export. But these ports being locked up in ice for at least five months in the year, it becomes a matter of some importance to connect, by a canal, the waters of the Bay of Fundy with the Gulf of St. Lawrence, so that when the Schubennacadie Canal shall be finished, the ports of Halifax, St. John and St. Andrews, may become entrepôts, in which the grains and productions of the Canadas may be warehoused, before the winter sets in; and, reduced to flour with the abundant *water power* which the country possesses, be shipped off for consumption in the West Indies, with assorted cargoes, as required for use. There can be nothing more advantageous to the colonies, and to the empire, than this course of trade; whilst on the other hand it is needless to repeat, that the North American Provinces must all suffer the greatest distress, if they are not insured a market for their surplus productions.

The lands and waters of British North America contain inexhaustible supplies, just such as our West India colonies require, and for which they would become entirely dependent on foreign states, if we did not retain possession of our Northern Provinces. Giving up the one set of colonies, would therefore incur

the risk of losing both; it would at least oblige us to submit to whatever might be exacted as to the rates of supply, when we should no longer possess the means of competition. The fisheries in the British waters of America are the most productive in the world. If they were not ours, whose would they be? What would be the effect of the total abandonment and transfer to another power, of this branch of industry, upon our commercial marine, and consequently upon our maritime ascendancy? Can we be assured that we shall never again be shut out from the Baltic, by a northern coalition, and so have occasion to depend entirely upon our North American Provinces for the necessary supplies of masts and spars to enable Great Britain to maintain her naval superiority?

This question cannot be lowered to the consideration of anything of a financial nature; and it is not therefore my object to investigate whether the financial proposition would be very productive or not. This may certainly be doubted: but are the effects *in policy* correctly estimated, by which the abandonment of a protecting policy in our colonial trade, must be followed? There is no element of greatness, power, and influence, that would not be conceded, and made to minister to others, should we trifle with the interests of

the North American Colonies, or show any disposition to undervalue them, far less to divest ourselves of them. In those very regions, which policy, such as that which the new school professes, would assuredly be the means of severing from Great Britain, there are, besides many other valuable and inexhaustible resources, vast and boundless stores of the very article in which the manufacturing and chief shipping states of the American Union are most deficient, and the acquisition of which would be to strengthen that Union more than the addition of half a continent of mere agricultural soil, and enable them to proceed with vast advantages in their avowed ambition to contend with us for commercial ascendancy and naval empire. The British Colonies contain coal of the first quality, and in immense abundance ; and no more need be said to satisfy persons who look beyond the mere surface of things, that upon this account alone they are inestimable ; that this precious ingredient of their value may be made to bring them nearer to us, and cement them firmly with us ; and that to surrender such a boon to a rival nation, for that must be the consequence of our throwing them off, would be an act of political suicide.

It is useless to deny, that we have something to apprehend from the maritime pursuits and

ambitions of the United States; and it is our duty to countervail these by a fair and honourable course of policy, to protect the colonial trade, which, by their own showing, has flourished so signally.

Nor is it in a colonial sense only that the statesman should estimate the importance of our North American Provinces; for over and above their value as colonies, under the heads of *shipping employed, seamen trained, manufactures consumed, emigrants established*, and all the other advantages which might be enumerated, and exclusively, too, of the tremendous effects of putting all these elements of additional wealth, and power, and convenience, out of our reach and into the opposite scale—beyond these there are considerations of a higher order still, which the statesman should view with forecast—the influence which Great Britain may continue to exercise,—but which, by losing her possessions there, she would for ever abandon in the affairs of the Western World;—retaining those possessions, Great Britain may indefinitely improve her influence; but if she neglect this, she must submit to be successfully rivalled, and perhaps in the end overpowered.

The experience of all nations—the lessons of all history, teach the value and importance of colonies. America has been planted, peopled,

and enriched, but not by such schemes as those of the new school. The United States make no such experiments on themselves: nor will they meet any such propositions from others. If the duties protecting the colonial timber trade are lowered, and those on colonial timber raised, the North American Colonies would become, *pro tanto*, valueless. We might buy timber cheaper, but the greater part would be brought in foreign vessels, and paid for chiefly in money; and if, together with this, the course of trade were unprotected, which is rapidly forming a very beneficial intercourse between the West India Colonies and the North American Provinces, the latter would be entirely ruined in almost every expectation of advantage to which they can look, as dependencies of Great Britain. It is well for us, then, that the restrictions, which have hitherto protected the colonial and intercolonial trade, are not taken off. If that should ever happen, their industry, as colonists, would be ruinously injured; and the immediate consequences would not only be, a “turning of their skill, industry and capital, to other pursuits,” but a disposition to think seriously of turnings of another description.

The economists assume, that if we were now to divest ourselves of our North American Provinces, we might make them an independent

state, and that, in intercourse with them as such, we should have every commercial advantage, which we are now supposed to possess. First, we cannot make them an *independent* state; nor if we could, should we dispose them to be one friendly to us, by the act of throwing them off *prematurely*, for *selfish* and *narrow* reasons. We may train them to become such; but this must be by a mode of treatment very different from that which certain economists inculcate. There is no higher object of policy than to raise up, in that quarter, a powerful and finally independent state, as there is no doubt we may do, provided we continue to act on old-fashioned principles, which appear, however, to have been rejected by the political economists.

It is assumed that, if we had no colonies, we should be able to purchase from them, as independent states, at a lower price to the consumer, the articles which we now get from them as colonists. Treating this as a mercantile, and not a political consideration, is it not perceived that, by divesting ourselves of our colonies, we should render ourselves entirely dependent, for what we now get from them, on foreign states, and, consequently, be obliged to deal with foreign traders on their own terms? So long as we possess sources from

which to procure what raw materials we require, we can retaliate and compete; but without these, we must submit to take what we must have, upon such terms as it may please the seller to dictate.

It is undoubtedly a great deal cheaper to descend to be a feeble, and to submit to be an inferior power, than to be rich and powerful; and if perpetual peace could only be established, and we could persuade all other nations to adopt practically the new notions of commercial policy, the wisdom of retaining our foreign possessions might be doubtful. But how, without these, could Great Britain have gone through the late struggle against all Europe? The very sources of her industry, the raw materials of her manufactures, half the elements of her greatness, might have been cut off by such a combination as has been already witnessed among foreign nations—a combination which nothing but the colonial power of Great Britain could prevent their renewing, or enable her again to defy.

But why should the *doctrinaires* halt at the conclusion, that the *number* of colonies should be *reduced*? If this theory be true in principle, it is true universally, and would prove that *no* colonies can be so beneficial to the parent, as the same countries would be in the character of

independent states. According to this the *whole* should be declared independent; trade made perfectly free; ships and troops recalled and paid off. Ireland, by the same rule, should be given up to Mr. O'Connell; and then, at last, a general prosperity, a commercial millenium might be expected!

But even if this reasoning were unanswerable, is it safe for this country to act upon the theory, before others are equally convinced of its soundness, and adopt it accordingly? The old prejudices, that mankind are benefited by associations for the exchange of labour, under mutual compacts of a protective nature; and that it is impossible to apply pure and original theories, however true, to artificial statistical conditions, and to the infinite and peculiar varieties which may exist in productions and pursuits—these prejudices (as the economists take them to be) are still so inveterate, that there is danger, if we discard our colonies, of their forming a new confederacy, either with some rival power, or with each other, for the express purpose of adhering to the former system, to keep up the same kind of monopoly, as it is termed; and even if it could be shown that we gain nothing by having the colonial monopoly in our favour, it must be admitted that we

have something to lose in the case of one being formed against us. Foreign powers, without exception, still remain most obstinately attached to the old system. They seem to prefer the example by which our power has been created, to the theories by which we are told it *may* be increased; but by which, in my humble opinion, it is much more likely to be undermined and ruined.

So long as Great Britain is desirous of continuing a manufacturing, commercial, ship-owning country, and a first-rate power, colonies are essential to her; without such possessions, she would soon cease to be pre-eminent in any of these capacities. Founding colonies, is like planting trees; they must be fenced, nursed, and protected. The return may not be immediate; but it may be rendered certain, by good management: and so far from conceding, that the separation, which, through *bad management*, has taken place between Great Britain and some of her North American Provinces, must necessarily be followed by an abandonment of those which remain attached to us; or from admitting that the state and prospects of our trade with the former are such as should reconcile us to view with indifference the separation of the latter,—neither moral rectitude,

nor political wisdom could be more flagitiously violated, than by listening seriously to any such proposals respecting those loyal colonies which nothing but *bad treatment* can separate from us. High considerations of present interest, and considerations higher still as to the future, demand that our policy should be to cherish and protect the provinces that have remained faithful to us; set their interest apart from others; entwine them with our own; attach them by every bond that can be formed to protect their trade as colonists; provide for their defence against external force; assist them in fostering and developing their vast natural resources—and advance with paternal solicitude their moral condition. By such a course, we shall not only *enable*, but *dispose*, our American colonies to take upon themselves, in due season, such expenses as we shall have given them the means of sustaining—until at length, strong enough to stand alone, they come forward to act the part of a son who has been kindly treated, well educated, protected, and liberally provided for in his youth; and who, when ‘set up in the world,’ and enabled ‘to do for himself,’ would scorn to be a burthen to the parent who has so treated and formed him. Let not this be considered a romantic expectation; so far it is felt, very generally, in the

North American Provinces ; and, so far, to such a happy issue is this conduct tending—There are such sentiments in our nature, and why should there not be such principles in our policy?—What a power should we thus raise !” But to effect this, we must not be so ungenerous as to withdraw any provision which has been hitherto made, and which is essential to maintain the colonial connection, until by a distinct understanding, and by a permanent arrangement with the legislatures of those countries, we may, with safety to these views, make that saving. The colonial connection can only subsist in the monarchical form of government, and whatever is essential to that, should be considered as contributing indispensably to the chief political bond of union. At present, the British Provinces which have not yet taken upon themselves the expenses of their civil list, are totally unable to do so with due regard to the internal improvement of the country. The time will come when they may be disposed to take these charges upon themselves ; and we should endeavour to accelerate that period, by so protecting their interests in the colonial connection, (which can only be by protecting the colonial trade,) as to furnish them with the means of doing so. This, therefore, is another question which should be considered as one of imperial

policy, and not one of finance. To save £6000 upon a parliamentary estimate for a few years, and thereby to throw abroad a question which should be settled upon safe and suitable previous arrangements, would be destructive of the great views which the statesman should steadily regard, and which the British parliament, if these were forcibly put to it, would not break down. Is, or is not, the colonial connection to be maintained? If it is, let nothing be spared that can be proved to be essential to it. If not, let the other course be taken. But it will be one that would be considered as a proclamation made by Britain, of fearful import to herself. If even she were in such difficulty as to require such paltry economy as this, let her be persuaded that these are not the items upon which retrenchment can safely act. If she be in difficulty, let her persevere in the course which made her the first maritime power in the world. Let her not, recreant like, unrig and dismast herself, and drop anchor in the midst of a stormy ocean, and in a stormy time; but with a steady hand at the helm, and a gallant, resolute crew, let her continue to spread her wings to the gales which waft her vessels over all the oceans of the world. Let her keep rigged for the storm, and ever ready to arm and animate her bulwarks for the fight, when needful, per-

suaded that the course of policy, which made her a great maritime power, will maintain her in supremacy; but that in proportion as she deviates from that course which made her great, she will become feeble.