

The Examiner.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY, WHEN FREEBORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC, MAY SPEAK FREE."—EURIPIDES.

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WHAT ADVANTAGE IS DERIVED BY ENGLAND FROM THE POSSESSION OF COLONIES?

England has been the admiration and envy of other nations, from the supposed advantages she possesses over all those countries which have no colonies.—She is accused of ambition and love of conquest, from the mistaken sacrifices she has made and the avidity she has manifested to seize and possess foreign territory in every part of the world, until she boasts that "the sun never sets on the British dominions." Doubtless there is great advantage in being able to exchange the surplus products of our industry for the products of our colonies; and so long as the trade was exclusive—for in this the advantage of colonies was supposed to consist—so long as other countries were shut out from participating in it, it was natural that they should be envious of our colonial possessions, and jealous of a monopoly supposed to be productive of wealth. But there is no longer any cause for jealousy of foreign nations on account of our exclusive trading with our colonies; they are now all freely open to trade with the whole world.—Foreign ships can enter the ports of our colonies on the same terms as British ships, and foreign manufactures at the same rates of duty as British manufactures. There is therefore no longer any necessity for foreign nations to desire, as formerly, to found an empire of colonies for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers. There are no advantages derived from trading with a colony which may be obtained from trading with any independent country. The colonies purchase manufactures in our markets at the same price as foreign merchants, and of course they will not take a less price for their produce than other countries.

If our colonies paid all the expenses of their defence and government, it is clear that, in the present state of things, England and foreign nations would be placed on precisely an equal footing, so far as regards the right of trading; but our colonies are a source of great expense to us, independently of the cost of defending them in time of war, the expenses of governing them in time of peace is enormous. France, Spain, and Holland, derive a revenue from their colonies; but our colonies have never yet contributed one farthing towards the defence of the mother country, or towards the expense of its civil government. On the contrary, they have not only been defended almost entirely at the cost of the mother country, but in many cases we pay for their Bishops, Clergy, Police, Magistrates, and Governors.—Our East India possessions maintain themselves.

The commercial value of our other colonies will be best seen by the official return of the "Total declared value of British and Irish produce and manufactures exported (to them) from the United Kingdom in the year 1847," viz. to:

Heligoland	£250
Gibraltar	465,845
Malta and Gozo	195,836
Ionian Islands	143,426
Cape of Good Hope	688,588
Ascension and St. Helena	31,378
Mauritius	223,663
Australian Settlements	1,614,170
North American Colonies	3,233,014
West Indies and Guiana	2,102,277
Honduras	170,947
Falkland Islands	2,088

Total Exports £8,902,382

Now, it is estimated that the naval, military, and civil expenditure of Great Britain, on account of her colonies, amounts to £4,000,000 per annum; and this is the sum she pays for free trade to her colonies! Foreign nations enjoy the like free trade to our colonies with ourselves, and costs them nothing! It is important to contrast our trade to our colonies with our trade to the United States of America, because these States were formerly British colonies, and governed in the same way, and at a similar expense, as our present colonies. It will not be contended that our trade with the United States is less important than that with our colonies, since it supplies us with the bulk of the raw material for our most important manufacture. According to the same official returns, the British exports to the United States amounted, in 1847, to £10,974,161, being £2,000,000 more than the whole of our export trade to all our colonial dominions, which we govern at a cost of

£4,000,000 a year; while the United States cost us for consular and diplomatic services about £15,000 a year; and not one ship of war is required to protect our trade with them. ADAM SMITH observed, seventy years ago, "Under the present system of management, Great Britain derives nothing but loss from the dominion which she assumes over her colonies." At that time, the colonies of Spain and Portugal were all closed against us, and if our own colonies were ever of any value it must have been then, when we could not, as now, freely supply ourselves with similar produce to theirs from other countries. But at the present time we carry on a trade with foreign colonies, without expense, almost equal in amount to that with our own; and that our trade with them has not been more extensive, has been solely owing to the prohibitory duties we have hitherto imposed upon their produce. By the official returns of exports in the year 1847, we find the following to foreign colonies, viz.:

Azores	£42,980
Maderia	33,853
Canary Islands	30,680
Java	357,870
Phillipine Islands	104,486
Cuba	896,554
Porto Rico	16,822
St. Croix	14,797
St. Thomas	386,599
Haiti	192,089
Mexico	100,688
Central America	86,933
New Grenada	145,605
Venezuela	182,279
Brazil	2,568,804
Uruguay	334,083
Buenos Ayres	156,421
Chili	866,325
Bolivia	22,375
Peru	600,814

£7,141,008

When ADAM SMITH spoke of loss on our colonies, he referred chiefly to the expense of defending and governing them; but we have long been suffering losses in another shape to an extent equal, or even greater, than the cost of maintaining them, viz., by imposing prohibitory duties on foreign produce, that our colonies might thus monopolise the supply of the mother country. Mr. PORTER, of the Board of Trade, in his valuable work, "The Progress of the Nation," makes the astounding statement, that "if we had made our sugar colonies at present of the whole value of our manufactures exported to them in 1840, amounting to about £4,000,000, we would have been gainers of £1,000,000 had we been allowed to buy the article of sugar alone in the cheapest markets!" Be it remembered these monopolies are not yet terminated. The loss to the country occasioned by the preferential duties on sugar, coffee, and timber (which continued for five years), must still amount to about £3,000,000 a year, which, added to £4,000,000, the cost of maintaining them, makes, at the present time, the total cost of our colonies £7,000,000 a year!

It is surprising that, up to the present time, there should exist in the public mind the delusion that our colonies have been and continue to be a source of wealth to the mother country, and that we constantly hear in parliament fearful prognostications of evil should we have the misfortune to lose them. We think there are few of our readers who have gone along with us in the consideration of this question but will have arrived at the opinion, that if we are to continue to pay £7,000,000 a year for the benefit of selling £9,000,000 of exports to our colonies, so far from regretting their loss, we cannot part with them too soon.

The more we inquire into and reflect upon the colonial system of England, the more we shall be astonished at the moment of blood and treasure we have expended to acquire and retain colonies, which, so far from having been a benefit to the nation, have wasted our strength and encumbered us with debt. To wars for our colonies may be attributed nearly the whole of our national debt. To retain them now we maintain an immense army and navy, requiring taxes to support them to an extent that threatens to pauperise the mass of the people of the mother country. To the next generation it will appear almost incredible that the nation should so long have submitted to these enormous sacrifices for the mere pride and glory of boasting of vast dominion. The insignificance of our trade with our colonies compared with our total trade to all the world, will be apparent when we look at the last return of British exports to various countries in the year 1847. Of our total exports amounting to £58,642,377, the exports to our colo-

nies were only £8,902,382. If we abandoned our colonies to-morrow our exports would be smaller when they became independent states than they are now, because the colonies at present can buy what they want wherever they please, and they only take our manufactures because they are cheaper than they can supply themselves anywhere else. Past experience, indeed, would lead us to infer, that as independent states, our colonies would be more prosperous, and as a consequence our trade with them would be increased. The increase in our trade with the United States after she threw off the yoke of the mother country was extraordinary. Our exports were—In 1776 at the commencement of

the revolutionary war £1,300,000

1784 To the newly recognised states 3,600,000

1847 the last years exports 10,974,161

That our exports to the United States are not 20 or £30,000,000, which they probably ere this would have reached, is entirely owing to our refusal for the past 20 years to take in exchange for our manufactures their corn, timber and provisions, and thus to force them to manufacture for themselves such articles as they were consequently unable to obtain in any other way.

If our colonies be of no advantage to us, but, on the contrary, a source of expense and weakness, the question arises, what shall we do with them? This question we shall probably take an opportunity of discussing hereafter.—Manchester Examiner.

THE NEW FRENCH CONSTITUTION.

An English paper gives the following abstract of some of the leading provisions of the new French constitution:—

The press cannot in any case be submitted to censorship. Education will be under the surveillance of the state. All citizens are equally admissible to every public employ without other motive of preference than merit. Nobility is forever abolished, and all distinction of birth, class, or caste. Each shall contribute to the taxes in proportion to his fortune and means.—The number of representatives to compose the National Assembly is to be 700—elected under very nearly the same conditions as the Charter sought in this country. No member of the Assembly can, during its sitting, be named or promoted to a paid public office. The election is to be triennial. The President of the Republic must be a native of France; aged thirty, at least, and who shall never have lost his qualifications of citizenship. He is elected for four years, and can only be re-eligible after an interval of four years. If any candidate for the presidency has not obtained more than one-half of the expressed suffrages, and at least two millions of votes; or, if the conditions (as to birth, citizenship, &c.) be not fulfilled, the National Assembly shall elect the President, by an absolute majority and secret scrutiny from among the five eligible candidates who have obtained the greater number of votes. The President shall dispose of the armed force, without power ever to take command in person. He shall see to the defence of the state, but cannot undertake any war without the consent of the National Assembly. His salary is fixed at 600,000 francs per annum. He has the power to name and revoke his ministers, diplomatic agents, naval and military commanders, the governors of colonies, and other functionaries of a superior order. The Vice President shall be named by the National Assembly and cannot be chosen from the kindred of the President, even to the sixth degree of relationship. Both criminal and political delinquencies, and offences committed by the press, shall be tried by jury. Every Frenchman shall be liable to military service, and can be liberated only according to the provisions of the law of recruit.—The territory of Algiers is declared French territory, and will be governed by particular laws till a special law shall place it under the government of the constitution now proclaimed.

A KING—NOT BY THE GRACE OF GOD.

Busied in editing the new constitution of Prussia, the Diet at Berlin has marked an era in the history of its country, in striking out of the Royal style and title the words, "by the grace of God King of Prussia"—who is King by the sufferance of his people.

Some critics in this country are scandalised at the proceeding, as a proof of irreligions feeling; but no construction could be more strained. The distinction now drawn is political, not theological. The Prussians, who permit Frederick William to resume his throne, very properly refuse to declare that he is placed over them by Divine tenure; recognizing him as simply the first political officer of the State, they need give him