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FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

Thoughts on the true path to national glory. By an old whig to his friend.

(*Continued.*)

In the *second place*, it is supposed that our liberties will be endangered by *an extensive territory and population*. This fear has arisen from attending to the circumstances and fate of other nations, and concluding that when our territory and numbers shall have equalled theirs we shall experience the same fate. But we have already seen that the American people have started under auspices, so different from those under which other nations have been founded, as to render altogether inapplicable to us many of those maxims which are applied to them. Of this complection is, we apprehend, this ground of alarm. With regard to the extent of territory which a republican government may embrace, our own experience has already falsified the declarations of all European writers on the subject. We have in truth presented to the world a system of government, of which philosophers had not even dreamt. We have more than realised every vision of the philanthropist in laying the basis of our governments on the principle of a representation founded on equal rights. Though the idea had been indistinctly conceived, it had never before been adopted in practise by other nations. We have, moreover, divided power, so that the local interests of particular portions of the confederacy shall be guided by those who alone represent those sections; while the general and great national interests are guided by representatives from every part. By these means an equal mass of power is given to every section of the union possessed of equal numbers; and the sources of local collision arising from the distraction of local interests are altogether withheld from disturbing the general councils of the nation, where measures involving the welfare of the whole are alone pursued. Is a measure proposed by a particular interest that would interfere with the good of the remainder of the confederacy, it will not fail to be opposed with success. There is only one case indeed, in which any oppression of a part of the confederacy can be imagined, and that is, where the majority enter into a combination to oppress the minority; for let it be recollected, that the very nature of the government removes the possibility of the oppression of the majority by the minority, which species of oppression is that which has been the most prevalent in the world. The oppression of a minority by a majority is what may occur under any kind of government, because the majority is possessed of the greatest portion of physical power. But it is a fact, that just in proportion to the extent of a confederated republic are the chances against the occurrence of such oppression, or its extension to any serious length or duration. In a community in which the rights of all are equal, the interests will not essentially vary. Such has been the result of our experience. A unity of interests will be eminently promoted by the various pursuits of the citizens of different districts. The south will for many important articles depend on the north, while the north for others will depend on the south. Their habits of intercourse, and a sense of mutual benefit, will unavoidably interweave their interests; and this will be greatly aided by the general spirit of emigration. Just too in proportion to the dissimilar habits and characters of the several sections will be the difficulty of uniting them in any unjust union invasive of the rights of others; while, on the contrary, a common sense of oppression will, in most cases unite the aggrieved. Whence have sprang the chief aggressions on communities? From the inordinate ambition of an individual. The division of America into states will form the strongest shield against this danger. However the people of a state may be devoted to a popular leader, unless his virtues and talents are uncommonly eminent, his influence will be confined to its borders.

It is very easy to account for the prevalent sentiment among European writers that the territory of republics must be small, when we consider the manner in which other nations have been governed; when we consider that they have almost invariably been governed by force, by the aid of standing armies. Were this to be the case with the United States, then indeed we might consider the union as in peril. For it is most evident, that a republic as extensive as the United States will soon be, could no endure, without the loss of her liberties, provided the government required the constant application of force to carry the laws into effect; as the armed force would be totally incompatible with the secure enjoyment of equal rights. But as no such thing is now required, and as no such thing is likely to become necessary, to execute laws which alike promote the interests of all, or which, if partial, are easily changed, so there is no danger to be apprehended from evils which can only flow from such a state of society.

We may then confidently affirm that there is nothing to fear from the extent of our territory. It would, on the contrary, be no difficult task, to shew that we shall probably be indebted for many high blessings, and among these the enjoyment of peace and plenty, to this very circumstance.

It is not, however, meant to insinuate that many evils may not arise from local jealousy, though it be not probable that they will endanger our liberties. As they are more or less the bane of all communities, it is probable we shall have a share of them. To keep them down, to view with a penetrating eye those who foment them, to discourage, by a manifestation of the public indignation, their first indications, will be among the preservatives of the national glory. The demagogue, who fears the frowns of the nation, for such conduct, will be careful to avoid it. We shall consequently live in harmony among ourselves, and thereby, more than by any other means, command the respect of the foreign world.

(*To be continued.*)

ANSWER
TO
LORD SHEFFIELD's PAMPHLET,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE NAVIGATION SYSTEM:

Proving, that the acts deviating therefrom, which his lordship censures, were beneficial to our trade and navy, in the last war, and ought to be renewed in the present.

[*Continued.*]

The second of his lordship's reasons is that we are not to be vindicated for adopting at the end of the eighteenth century, or the beginning of the nineteenth, commercial regulations contrary to those which were adopted in the middle of the seventeenth. This argument proceeds upon a principle that would militate against every legislative change. What is the purpose of legislation but to enact, repeal, amend, or modify laws, according to the circumstances of the case! In suiting either the continuance, recession or variation of laws, to the times and circumstances, consists the perfection of legislative wisdom. This is the true boundary between the superstitious veneration for antiquity, which would enforce laws when the reasons for making them have ceased to exist, and that restless spirit of innovation, which would change for the sake of change, without any moral certainty of advantage. Mere conformity or contrariety to the navigation system of the times of Cromwell and the Stuarts, can be no argument either for or against a commercial regulation of the present times: the criterion of policy or impolicy must be conformity or contrariety to the public welfare in the circumstances of the present times; and in this view I have no doubt of demonstrating that the changes in question have been, and are conducive to national wealth, revenue and force; and consequently to the public welfare.

Although his lordship assumes that the laws in question are contrary to the spirit of the navigation system, yet, as explained by himself, they are entirely conformable to its objects and the views of its framers. The navigation system sought to promote trade and naval power: the laws in question did promote trade, by admitting into the country valuable merchandize which we had no other means of importing; and did promote naval power, by allowing us to employ such a number of British sailors in war. The proof that the laws in question did not impede trade and navigation, and therefore that they are not adverse to the objects of the navigation system is, that since their enactment British trade and navigation have flourished, and do flourish, more than at any former period, as is well known to lord Sheffield, and every other intelligent man conversant with commercial and political affairs; but which, lest any one should deny, I shall amply prove, not only by arguments, but by facts and official documents.

The suspension of the navigation laws which lord Sheffield censures, afford to the merchant abroad encouragement to send goods to Britain, which before he could not venture to convey in ships not belonging to the country, how much soever the articles might be wanted. Under the strict rigors of the ancient system, he was apprehensive that he must pay an import duty where he could find no market, or have his goods returned in the same ship. By the relaxation of that rigour, under the laws in question, he could send his goods without fear; because he was now assured, that if they did not enable him to discharge the duties immediately, he would not be obliged to pay them, but might deposit the goods in a British warehouse, under the joint lock of the consignee and the crown, until the consignee should find a profitable market. The wisdom of this policy is manifested by its result, in the vast augmentation of merchandise which has been imported into this country under the operation of the dispensing acts. British merchants have possessed much more commerce since 1795, than they ever possessed before, as themselves will admit, and the custom house books prove. How then can these acts be injurious to the British merchant, as lord Sheffield contends? Is it injurious to the commercial body that the quantity of imports profitable either for home consumption or for exportation is very greatly increased? Is it injurious to a trader to augment his profits? The enlargement of gain is the only species of injury which British merchants have derived from the suspended rigor of the navigation laws. His lordship though asserting that they could not be vindicated allows that they might admit of some apology during the time of war, but of none since the peace. I think, that being found conducive to trade, they required no apology, but deserved praise, during the peace; (but we are not at peace now, and the same reasons exist in equal force as during the last war;) and that their renewal is equally necessary when our shipping and seamen are so fully employed, as at their first enactment.

His lordship is at great pains to prove that they are injurious to our shipping interest, by greatly increasing the quantity of foreign tonnage employed in our carrying trade: "and all the advantages thus held out to foreign shipping were peculiarly calculated to establish that trade in the hands of the Americans." This is a mere repetition of the assumption concerning the carrying trade, without any proof that our shipping interest was actually injured, because foreigners were, for our purposes, allowed a certain share of the carrying trade. But how does the author attempt to prove this injury to our shipping interest? Not by an induction from facts and documents establishing that the British ships, sailors and tonnage, are now less than before these laws were enacted; but by prediction of future consequences. He says; "therefore, what was to be the probable result? Those ships were to be laid up by discouragement in our ports to rot, and those seamen, together with the numerous classes of persons occupied in ship building were to be dispersed abroad in search of employment, and many to be seduced into the services of other nations, or to pass over to America, and, consequently, they and their progeny to be lost to their native country forever." In answer to these prophecies, I shall simply adduce facts and documents. The employment of foreign ships and sailors, if at all injurious to the shipping interest of Britain, must be so by diminishing the number and value of ships, and the number of sailors belonging to this country employed in mercantile service. In war there is necessarily a much greater demand for British shipping and sailors for the service of government, and therefore a much smaller number may be expected to be employed in trade. Besides in war, many ports are shut to British sailors and shipping, which are open in peace; therefore, this is another cause of probable diminution. In the last years of the peace, which ended in 1793, British trade and navigation were far superior to what they had been at any former period, from many causes; but one of the most efficient was the commercial treaty with France. In the last year of the war, when France had, within either her power or her influence, almost the whole maritime continent of Europe, many more ports were shut against us than in common wars; thence it might naturally be inferred that as the British shipping and sailors, in the last years of the peace, must very far exceed the number of British ships and sailors usual even in flourishing periods of peace, the number of British ships and sailors employed in trade, in the last years of the war, must very far fall short of the number employed usually in trade during wars: that they must fall much more short, then, of the three last years of the peace, which were so transcendent in commercial prosperity. Therefore, it was to be inferred that the shipping and sailors employed in the mercantile service in 1799, 1800 and 1801, would be at least one half less than the number of ships and sailors employed in 1790, 1791, and 1792; and that the decrease would be greater in proportion to any injury that might be sustained through a deviation from the navigation system. But what was the actual state of the case in these two periods? The answer to this question may be found in the statement of mercantile ships, sailors and tonnage, inward or outward bound in 1790, 1791 and 1792, and of mercantile ships, sailors and tonnage, inward and outward bound in 1799, 1800 and 1801.

The result is that, in 1790, the British ships inward bound were twelve thousand one hundred and forty-one; the tonnage, one million four hundred and twenty eight thousand three hundred and seventy six. [At this time no official account was kept of the number of sailors.] Of these inward bound ships one thousand two hundred and fourteen were from France; nine hundred and thirty six from Holland; two hundred and seventy seven from Spain; with an equal proportion of tonnage and men.

In the same year, the outward bound British ships were twelve thousand five hundred and sixty; the tonnage one million three hundred and ninety nine thousand two hundred and thirty three; [the number of sailors wanting in that year.] Of these ships eleven hundred and eighty eight were bound to France; nine hundred and seventy one to Holland; and one hundred and sixty eight to Spain. And thus, of the British ships inward and outward bound in 1790, the number from France, Spain and Holland, amounted to two thousand four hundred and twenty seven in the inward, and nearly as many more in the outward; that is, to little less than one fourth of our shipping.

In 1799, the number of inward bound British ships was ten thousand five hundred and fifty seven—tons, one million three hundred and seventy five thousand one hundred and sixty nine—sailors eighty four thousand six hundred and one. The outward bound ships were eleven thousand and eighty five—tons, one million three hundred and two thousand five hundred and fifty one—sailors, eighty eight thousand six hundred and eighty six. The number of British ships & sailors employed in the trade in 1799, is very little short of the number employed in 1790—but to and from France, and her dependencies, Spain and Holland, there were no British ships employed except a few as cartels; whereas in 1790 one fifth of the British shipping had been employed in commerce with those countries. In fact, therefore, British shipping and trading sailors were one fourth increased; and this notwithstanding the call upon both for the purposes of government.

In 1791, the number of British ships inward bound, were twelve thousand four hundred and ninety four; tons, one million, four hundred fifty-two thousand, four hundred and ninety-eight; sailors, seventy-seven thousand five hundred and thirteen. Outward bound, the ships were thirteen thousand five hundred and fourteen—tons, one million, five hundred and eleven thousand two hundred and ninety four; sailors, eighty-six thousand, five hundred and sixty seven; the proportion of these from France, Spain and Holland, was nearly the same as in the former year, one fifth.

In 1800 the inward bound ships were ten thousand four hundred and ninety-six; tons, one million three hundred and seventy-nine thousand, eight hundred and seven; sailors, seventy four thousand, four hundred and twenty-seven; of these (excepting a few cartels,) not one was either from France, Spain or Holland; so that if their trade had been added, a fifth more of British ships and sailors would have been required.

In 1792, the inward British ships were twelve thousand and thirty: tons, one million, five hundred & eighty seven thousand six hundred and forty-five: sailors, ninety thousand and seventy.— The outward bound British ships were thirteen thousand, eight hundred and ninety one: tons, one million five hundred and sixty three thousand seven hundred and forty four: sailors, one hundred thousand, two hundred and twenty one. Of these ships and sailors, about one fifth, as in the two former years, were employed in traffic to or from France, Spain and Holland.

In 1801, the number of British ships inward bound was ten thousand three hundred and forty seven: tons, one million three hundred and seventy eight thousand six hundred and twenty: sailors, eighty eight thousand and thirty five. The outward bound was ten thousand two hundred and eighty two: tons, one million three hundred and forty five thousand six hundred and twenty one: sailors, eighty seven thousand three hundred and four: including a few, this year, from France and her dependencies.

How much more numerous would the shipping and sailors of Britain have been to carry on trade with France and her dependencies? And thus we see that even in years of war succeeding these dispensing acts, the employment of foreign ships in part of our carrying trade, was so far from diminishing our own shipping and sailors, that many more were wanted than could by us be supplied. In fact, the immense increase of our trade, as well as the calls of our navy, rendered the employment of foreign carriers necessary. Britain had more commerce than she could spare her own ships and men to carry: she was obliged, by the very flow of her prosperity, to employ an extraordinary number of carriers.

While it is thus manifest, that the number and tonnage of British ships, employed since the acts in question, have not been diminished, but greatly increased; let us next see, from the same source of fact and document, what were the number and value of foreign ships carrying imports to or exports from Britain, in the one period of three years, and in the other. In 1790, the foreign ships, bound to Britain, were two thousand three hundred and twenty one; tons, two hundred and twenty seven thousand five hundred and ninety nine. Foreign ships bound from Britain, were eleven hundred and thirty; tons, one hundred and forty eight thousand nine hundred and seventy four.

In 1799, the foreign ships bound to Britain, were three thousand and twelve; tons, four hundred and seventy six thousand five hundred and ninety six. The foreign ships bound from Britain, were two thousand three hundred and ninety two; tons, four hundred and fourteen thousand seven hundred and seventy four.

In 1790, the number and tonnage of foreign ships carrying commerce to and from Britain, was one fourth less than the number and tonnage of ships carrying commerce to and from Britain in the year 1799. But in the year 1790, one fifth of the ships were from Holland, Spain and France.

In 1799, there was no intercourse with those countries. Therefore, in 1799 the rise of Britain, in foreign ships ministering to her exports and imports, was in all above the amount of 1790.

In 1791, the foreign ships bound to Britain, were two thousand six hundred and eighty six—tons, three hundred and twenty one thousand three hundred and sixty four. The foreign ships bound from Britain, were one thousand three hundred and six—tons, one hundred and eighty four thousand seven hundred and twenty nine.

In 1800, the foreign ships bound to Britain, were five thousand five hundred and twelve—tons, seven hundred and sixty three thousand two hundred and thirty six. The foreign ships bound from Britain, were four thousand eight hundred and ninety three—tons, six hundred and eighty five thousand and fifty one.

In 1800, the number of foreign carrying ships, from the more complete operation of the dispensing acts, exceeded the number of 1791, much more than 1799 exceeded 1790; notwithstanding the exclusion to and from Holland, France and Spain.

In 1792, the number of foreign ships bound to Britain, were two thousand four hundred and seventy seven—tons, three hundred and four thousand and seventy four. The number of foreign