NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER,

AND

WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

VOL. IV. WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. No. DCIII.

FIVE DOLLS. PER ANN. FRIDAY, AUGUST 17th, 1804. PAID IN ADVANCE.

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

To the Legislatures of the respective States.

LETTER THIRD.

Next in importance to the formation of a general plan of education may be ranked a liberal proviſion for internal improvements. This ought to be an object of attention under all governments; but eſpecially under thoſe excluſively inſtituted for the general welfare.—Nothing can be more congenial to the ſpirit of a republican government than the application of reſources derived from all to the benefit of all. There is, moreover, ſo intimate a connection between public and perſonal intereſt, that it is, perhaps, impoſſible, to advance the one without promoting the other.

In a country whoſe numbers are extending with an unprecedented rapidity, and which is ſo advantageouſly ſituated for an internal interchange of productions, as well as for external commerce, there can be no improvement on a liberal and prudent ſcale, whatever the expence, that will not eventually, and at no very remote period, indemnify the coſt, while it diffuſes benefits to an almoſt inappreciable extent among the community generally.

The experience of England on this ſubject is concluſive. In that country there has been ſcarcely a canal or a turnpike formed, which has not liberally rewarded the adventuring individuals, and in ſome inſtances there has been a remuneration in a ſhort period of above one hundred per cent on the capital expended; in addition to the incalculable appreciation of land bordering on the new canals or roads. It is true that, in ſome caſes, a conſiderable number of years have elapſed, before any material profit accrued; but the progreſs though gradual, has been ſure.

This would be the caſe in the exiſting circumſtances of our country. A road could not, perhaps, be judiciouſly laid out, and turnpiked that would not ultimately remunerate adventurers; though it is probable that in moſt inſtances, there would not be a competent intereſt immediately paid in the ſhape of tolls.

No canal or turnpike can be made that will not immediately draw the attention of land holders to the improvement of their property, that will not give riſe to ſeats of trade and manufactures, and afford convenient and regular markets for an interchange of productions. Lands in the neighbourhood will immediately increaſe in value, by being brought into the market, by ſettlements being extended, by emigration, and by the great convenience and accommodations which increaſed population can alone beſtow.

The enlightened author of the "Nature and cauſes of the wealth of nations," obſerves that "good roads, canals, and navigable rivers, by diminiſhing the expence of carriage, put the remote part of the country more nearly upon a level with thoſe in the neighborhood of the town. They are upon that account the greateſt of all improvements. They encourage the cultivation of the remote, which muſt always be the moſt extenſive circle of the country. They are advantageous to the town, by breaking down the monoply of the country in its neighbourhood. They are advantageous even to that part of the country. Though they introduce ſome rival commodities into the old market, they open many new markets to its produce. Monopoly, beſides, is a great enemy to good management, which can never be univerſally eſtabliſhed but in conſequence of that free and univerſal competition which forces every body to have recourſe to it for the ſake of ſelf-defence. It is not more than fifty years ago, that ſome of the counties in the neighbourhood of London petitioned the parliament againſt the extenſion of the turnpike roads into the remoter counties. Thoſe remote counties, they pretended from the cheapneſs of labor, would be able to ſell their graſs and corn cheaper in the London market than themſelves, and would thereby reduce their rents, and ruin their cultivation. Their rents, however, have riſen, and their cultivation has been improved ſince that time."

So great, however, is the expence of carrying into effect a liberal ſyſtem of internal improvements that individual reſources are inadequate to its ſucceſsful accompliſhment. It is one of theſe vaſt objects which not only intereſts the whole community, but requires likewiſe their united co-operation. There may be particular diſtricts, ſo ſituated, as to reward the enterpriſing citizen; and there may be a limited number of citizens ſo adventurous or public ſpirited as to encounter peculiar riſques; but ſo cautious, generally ſpeaking, is individual intereſt, and ſo circumſcribed individual reſource, that there is too generally wanting both the diſpoſition and the power to produce thoſe great reſults which a regular organiſed government is alone competent to effect.

There is no object, which to give it a fair trial, more peculiarly requires *ſyſtematic* arrangements. Moſt local improvements languiſh for no other reaſon than a want of ſupport from other improvements which ought at the ſame time to be carried on. It is extremely poſſible for ten diſtinct and diſtant canals or roads entirely to fail of producing a profit, while a few connected or adjacent ones ſhall make that profit abundant; as in the natural world a detached rill ſoon loſes itſelf, while a multitude of ſtreams, each equally ſmall, by junction, form the boldeſt rivers and the deepeſt oceans.

There is likewiſe one ſerious inconvenience attending the operations of individuals. They always pay a ſpecial, often an excluſive regard to the promotion of their own intereſt, to the ſacrifice, in a proportionate degree, of the public good; and they generally purſue plans which have altogether for their object an immediate benefit. Hence works which ought to be ſo deviſed as to ſubſerve the intereſts of the whole community, by being partial in their effects, prejudice what they would otherwiſe promote; and hence their execution in ſo imperfect a manner as to render them entirely unfitted for permanent utility.

Theſe and many other conſideration tend irreſiſtibly to eſtabliſh the concluſion that the great features of internal improvement ought to be laid out on a national ſcale, free from local influence, and calculated for parmanent duration.

It will not be improper here to meet an argument, which is uſually urged againſt the interpoſition of public reſources towards the promotion of the intereſts of individuals. It is ſaid to be the peculiar trait of our political inſtitutions to interfere as little as poſſible with the concerns of individuals; and that it is principally to this circumſtance that our unrivalled proſperity is to be traced. Of the accuracy of this remark there can be no doubt; but it is no difficult taſk to ſhew that it is inapplicable to the point under conſideration. The refuſal of the governments to eſtabliſh under pretext of the public good, monopolies, either of land, of trade, or of manufactures, has certainly left to the enterpriſe of our citizens a field well fitted to unfold and engage their greateſt exertions; and theſe exertions, having been made, free from all foreign interference, and under a conviction that no ſuch interference would take place, have undoubtedly added more to the common ſtock than all our public aſſociations with their united reſources could have done. This reſult is ſo univerſally acknowledged by economical writers, it is unneceſſary further to dwell upon it.

While, however, the fact is allowed in its fulleſt latitude, it is denied that it has any application to the great internal improvements of a nation. Theſe are road and canals. It is obvious that both theſe organs of intercourſe muſt be regulated by government, in the firſt inſtance, by deſignating their route, and in the next place, by preſcribing the manner in which they ſhall be made and kept in repair. The terms alſo, on which they ſhall be uſed by individuals, muſt neceſſarily be fixed by public authority. So far then as relates to their deſignation, to their formation, to their maintenance in repair and to the terms on which they ſhall be uſed, they are the neceſſary and inevitable ſubjects of legiſlation. Without the interpoſition of government individuals have no right to act. The only points that remain to be conſidered are, the creation of funds with which they ſhall be made and maintained, and the application of the profits reſulting from them.

It the neceſſary funds could be derived from individual contribution, ſome plauſible reaſons might perhaps, be urged againſt the uſe of the public treaſure; though even then, it would be unſafe to leave the entire management of the improvements made to the perſons concerned, and if it were taken from them, they would ſcarcely conſider their intereſts ſecure under an authority over which they had either no control, or one of a limited nature.—But it is a fact that the neceſſary funds cannot be obtained from individual contributions. With regard to the public roads, even the main road, travelled by the mail, ſo far from being fitted for rapid and eaſy progreſs, is, at all ſeaſons, in a ſtate of miſerable repair, and at ſome ſeaſons, impaſſable but with great perſonal riſque; while the ſtate of our rivers, and ſometimes the leſſer ſtreams, for the want of bridges, preſents inſuperable obſtacles to their paſſage. On the importance of placing this road in a ſtate of good repair there cannot be a diſſenting voice; and he who, for the accompliſhment of this object, confides in private enterpriſe, muſt be the victim of a prejudice oppoſed by long experience. Other roads of but ſecondary importance, are in the ſame deplorable ſtate; and promiſe to remain as they are, until the ſtate governments ſhall awaken from their apathy.

Canals, it is acknowledged, are not of ſuch indiſpentable importance, as roads. But, inaſmuch as the routes they open will eventually ſuperſede the neceſſity of roads in a ſimilar line, from the vaſt difference in the prices of tranſportation, it is important, that an early deſignation and execution of them be made, to prevent a uſeleſs expenditure of money on turnpikes, of little or no utility after the eſtabliſhment of correſpondent canals. Nor can the intereſts of a great ſeat of trade be more extenſively promoted than by the formation of canals leading into the interior country. Though the expence of canals is greater than that of turnpikes, the retribution more than keeps pace with it.

Another argument againſt all public works is that public money is generally waſtefully applied. Of the juſtneſs of this abſtract remark as little doubt can be entertained as of the former. But it is not thence deducible that all public works are inexpedient. If ſo, we ſhould have no jails, court-houſes, poor houſes, or other public edifices. All that can be reaſonably inferred is that we ſhould always leave to individuals the accompliſhment of thoſe objects to which they are competent; and not that we ſhould oppoſe the execution by the public of thoſe objects of utility, which they alone can effect. It would doubtleſs coſt a nation leis to name one man to make their laws, and to execute them, than to call together large bodies, in different diſtricts; but no one is ſo much of a mad-man, as thence to infer the preference of deſpotic to republican inſtitutions. The truth is, there is no human benefit without its attendant alloy. Every thing valuable has its price, and it is folly to revolt againſt a law of our nature.

But this argument may be eaſily diſarmed of more than half its force.—Though it be true that the diſburſement of public money on objects that require a vigilant ſuperintendance is often accompanied by a prodigal waſte, yet experience ſhews us that it may be ſo controlled by a connection with individual intereſt, as, if not altogether to overcome the evil, at leaſt greatly to reduce it. Several monied inſtitutions, ſuch as Banks and inſurance Companies, have been eſtabliſhed by an union of public and private contributions. The ſtate governments have contributed in ſome of theſe inſtances as much as one third of the capital; and the general government, in eſtabliſhing the Bank of the United States, took ſtock to the amount of two millions and a half, being one fourth of the capital of the inſtitution. In all theſe caſes certain portions of the general ſuperintendance of the inſtitutions were reſerved by the governments; and in none of them has it ever been ſaid that this public agency operated injuriouſly to the general intereſts of the incorporated bodies, or to the intereſt of the ſtates. On the contrary, it has invariably given a reputation to them; they have acquired more of the public confidence, and their ſtock has riſen higher than that of inſtitutions reſting entirely on private ſupport.

This feature may, without any difficulty, be introduced into any ſyſtem of national improvement. Inaſmuch as it is impoſſible to effect any part of ſuch a ſyſtem, without directly and immediately advancing the intereſts of a particular diſtrict of country, and generally of ſome ſeat of trade or manufactures to which it will be tributary on a facility of intercourſe, there will never be wanting thoſe who will make conſiderable pecuniary advances, which, in union with public contributions, will form a joint ſtock capable of being placed under the direction of public and private agents. By theſe means a reciprocal check will be created; the one on the prodigal expenditure of public money, and the other on the narrow views of perſonal intereſt.

(To be continued.)

From the ALEXANDRIA EXPOSITOR.

The friends of monarchy are conſtantly ringing in our ears the ſplendor which dazzles their judgments in the capital of England. Forgetting that where there is one Lord Courtney, who can expend in a ſingle feaſt 100,000 dollars, there are hundreds and thouſands incapable of procuring the neceſſaries of life and who are compelled to meet diſeaſe perhaps and famine, almoſt houſeleſs and naked. We acknowledge Republican America diſplays none of theſe ſcenes; we hope in God ſhe never may, for they are inſeparable from each other. The following fact as related by Dr. Lettſom, will we think intereſt the readers of the Expoſitor, and teach them to rejoice in the wiſdom of their government, which while it counteracts the accumulation of enormous wealth, in the hands of the few, renders it, we almoſt had nearly ſaid quite impoſſible for ſuch ſcenes of woe to be diſplayed within the territories of the United States.

"About the beginning of December on going out of my houſe," ſays the Dr. "I was accoſted by a tall thin man, whoſe countenance exhibited ſuch a picture of diſtreſs and poverty as fixed my attention, and induced me to enquire into his ſituation. He informed me that he was a day laborer, juſt recovering from ſickneſs, and that feeble as he then was, in order to procure ſuſtenance for a ſick family at home, he was compelled to ſeek for work, and to exert himſelf much beyond his ſtrength, and he added that he lived in a court called Little Greenwich, in Alderſgate ſtreet. This poor object ſeemed to feel diſtreſs too deeply to be an impoſtor; & I could not avoid beſtowing ſome means of obviating his preſent want, for which he retired bowing with tears in his eyes; but when he got out of ſight, his image was preſent with me: I was then ſorry that my generoſity had not been equal to my ſenſibility, and this induced me to attempt finding out his family. He had mentioned that his name was Poy, and by the information he gave me I diſcovered his miſerable habitation; with difficulty I found my way up a dark paſſage and ſtair caſe to a little chamber, furniſhed with one bedſtead, an old box was the only article that anſwered the purpoſe of a chair, the furniture of the bed conſiſted in a piece of old ticken, and a worn out blanket, which conſtituted the only couch, except the floor, whereon this afflicted family could recline their heads to reſt; and what a ſcene did they preſent! Near the centre of the bed lay the mother with half a ſhift, and covered as high as the middle with a blanket. She was incapable of telling her complaints. The ſpittle, for want of ſome fluid to moiſten her mouth, had dried upon her lips, which were black, as were likewiſe the gums, concomitants of a putrid fever, the diſorder under which ſhe laboured. At another end of the blanket was extended a girl about 5 years old; it had rolled from under this covering, and was totally naked except its back, on which a bliſtering plaiſter was tied by a piece of packthread croſſed over its breaſt; and tho' labouring under this dreadful fever, the poor creature was aſleep. On one ſide of its mother, lay a naked boy about two years old; this little innocent was likewiſe ſleeping. On the other ſide of the mother, on the floor, or rather on an old box, lay a girl about 12 years old; ſhe was in part covered with her gown and petticoat, but ſhe had no ſhift. The fever had bereaved her of her ſenſes, ſhe was perpetually moaning out, "I ſhall die of thirſt, pray give me ſome water to drink." Near her ſtood another girl, about 4 years old, barefooted; her whole covering was a looſe piece of petticoat thrown over her ſhoulders; and to this infant it was that her ſiſter was crying for water.*

"I now experienced how greatly the ſight of real miſery exceeds the deſcription of it.

"What a contraſt did this ſcene exhibit to the plenty and elegance which reigned within the extent of a few yards only, for this miſerable receptacle was oppoſite to the ſtately edifice of an honorable alderman, and ſtill nearer were many ſpacious houſes and ſhops. I have obſerved that the daughter, who was ſtretched on the floor, was ſtill able to ſpeak. She told me that ſomething was the matter with her mother's ſide, and aſked me to look at it. I turned up an edge of the blanket and found that a very large mortification had taken place extending from the middle of the body to the middle of the thigh, and of a hand's breadth; the length was upwards of half a yard, and to ſtop its progreſs nothing had been applied. It was a painful ſight to behold, and many not leſs painful exiſt in this metropolis. I procured medical aſſiſtance immediately, and for a trifling gratuity got a neighbour to nurſe the family. The churchwarden, to whom I made application, heard their hiſtory with concern and added his humane aid, to reſcue from death a poor and almoſt expiring family. I have, however the pleaſure to conclude this relation of their unſpeakable diſtreſs, by communicating their total deliverance from it; which I think may be juſtly attributed to the timely aſſiſtance adminiſtered.

** In Ireland this has been ſeen with aggravations; the family being ſick, naked, without food, or any help, and lying on dirty ſtraw.*—EDITOR.

FROM THE SALEM REGISTER.

AMERICAN COTTON SALEABLE IN CHINA.

In 1794, Mr. Jay made a treaty with England, in which he very imprudently ſtipulated that Cotton ſhould not be exported to the United States for 10 years. It is no juſtification to the negociator, whether he knew that cotton was produced in this country or not. His ignorance, in this particular, ought not to ſhield him from cenſure. A man inveſted with miniſterial or diplomatic powers is preſumed at leaſt to be well acquainted with the ſubjects on which he is to negociate; and if he ſacrifices the important intereſts of his nation, he lays himſelf open to that juſt reproof which weakneſs or folly deſerves when exhibited in a great public character. The wiſdom of Congreſs, or rather the juſt policy of the Southern ſenators, (for it is underſtood that ſome of the northern members had other and perhaps leſs liberal views) ſaved us from the diſgrace of accepting the injurious ſtipulations of the 12th article, and the exportation of cotton, ſugar and coffee has been moſt advantageouſly continued. Had the contrary conduct been purſued, the beſt branch of our carrying trade would have been loſt, and incalculable miſchief muſt have reſulted. Since that period the ſouthern ſtates have turned their attention to raiſing cotton, and already it forms the largeſt & moſt valuable article in our liſt of exports, and is deſtined to increaſe in a few years to *double* its preſent quantity. For the year ending the 1ſt of October, 1802, there was 27,501,075 pounds of cotton exported from the United States, and in 1803, for the year again ending on the 1ſt of October, no leſs a quantity than 41,205,623 pounds, making an *increaſe* of 13,704,548 pounds in the laſt year, which is equal to 50 per cent. on the quantity ſent out of the country in the former year. Great Britain conſumes the greater part of the whole quantity exported, and it may be preſumed ſhe will always require large ſupplies, but her merchants and manufacturers have it in their power almoſt to fix the price of what they purchaſe—from an idea that they are the principal conſumers, that there is little or no demand on the continent of Europe, and that no other great market can be found. They are ſuppoſed to have combined to depreciate its value, and it has often been reduced below its prime coſt in the United States, without reckoning the charge of freight or inſurance. And if theſe were not the cauſes of its depreciation in England, it might be expected that large ſhipments of the ſame article being made to two or three capital ports in the ſame country, the prices would neceſſarily be much leſſened, and advantages would be taken by the purchaſers of that circumſtance alone, diſconnected from every other. Every perſon the leaſt acquainted with commercial affairs, muſt know that merchants generally ſeize with avidity the leaſt cir-