NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER,

AND

WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

VOL. VI. WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. No. DCCCCXXIII.

FIVE DOLLARS PER ANNUM. FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1806. *PAID IN ADVANCE.*

WASHINGTON CITY.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12.

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

THOUGHTS *on the subject of* NAVAL POWER *in the* UNITED STATES *of* AMERICA; *and on certain means of encouraging and protecting their Commerce & Manufactures.*

No. II.

But if the most interesting and important considerations forbid the dangerous *war-creating*, and expensive instrumentality of a large navy to protect our commerce, and since trade is highly desirable, and indispensibly necessary to the planters and farmers, it is proper to devise a system of protection for it; and this is an object demanding the temperate investigation and careful reflection of every description of our citizens.

The following questions may help to lead us to the true ground:

1. Should the United States have any navy, and how strong or numerous should it be?

2. What should be the commercial pursuits of the U. S.?

3. By what means, other than a navy, can the U. S. promote and protect their commerce?

To the first question, requiring much calm investigation, it is conceived that the following ideas may serve as an imperfect answer. It is not by *force*, that we can protect our trade from the great navies of the primary maritime powers; for it is conceived that *we cannot at present* and ought not to establish a naval force equal to their's, on account of the monstrous expense, the danger to our civil institutions, and for the other reasons before assigned against the establishment of a great naval power in the U. S. But we may protect our trade by force from the petty and irregular states, whose commerce with us affords no means of acting upon them; such, for example, as the several states of Barbary. A fleet commensurate with such objects and no more appears to be that limited force, which we may establish without any of the objections to a great navy, which have been suggested. *If we are to go further in this dangerous and costly operation, it is respectfully recommended, that the subject be first thoroughly examined and well considered.*

The second question proposed is, what should be the commercial pursuits of the U. S.? To this it may be generally replied, that no trade whatever, internal or external, *which injures agriculture, or benefits the merchants only, at a great expense to the rest of the community*, should be pursued.

It is our interest to import implements and materials for manufactures, and manufacturers themselves, which will employ many vessels, rather than to import manufactured goods which will employ very few.

It is our interest to promote and establish internal trade, of which manufactures are a most valuable part, rather than external trade; because the raw materials and family supplies of the American manufacturers, fishermen and coasters are drawn from ourselves, or from our carrying trade, which last is very little promoted by the importation of compact foreign manufactures.

Every act of unlawful impediment, injustice, embarrassment, or injury to our foreign trade, and navigation, and to our navy ought to be a strong and animating incentive to promote domestic trade and manufactures, because they are less subject to those foreign injuries, and because the cultivation of internal trade and manufactures silently operates as *a fine or penalty* upon the foreign invaders of our maritime rights and the foreign violators of our commercial interests. We should render it perfectly manifest and absolutely certain to Europe, that so far as *the American commercial spirit* is checked or injured *at sea*, it will be unceasingly turned to and promoted *on the shore*. Our cities, towns, and villages must be scenes of commerce or of manufactures. If foreign nations interrupt us in a l*egitimate course and fair share* of the business of supplying ourselves from the cheapest and most convenient sources abroad, we shall, independently & of necessity, supply ourselves from existing or new sources at home.

We reasonably desire to secure to ourselves a share of the carriage of our own unwrought goods to the foreign manufacturers, and of their manufactures to our markets; and it is our wish to promote the foreign consumption of our products. So far as we prevent the American consumption of foreign manufactures, *not made from our own produce*, we promote our carriage of our own raw materials, our carriage of foreign manufactures, and the fabrication of our raw materials by foreign manufacturers. Thus, for example, the recent act of Congress on Mr. Nicholson's resolutions, by prohibiting certain articles of wool, linen, silk and leather, (which are made abroad *entirely* from foreign materials that we neither grow nor carry) occasions *cotton* gloves, hose, shirting, sheeting, towelling, tabling and furniture stuffs to be used, which are made chiefly from the cotton produced on our farms, and in the carriage of which to Europe, we largely participate.

And here we obtain a view of *a very important principle*, which may *assist* us in answering the third question, "*By what means, other than a navy, can we promote and protect our commerce?*" remembering always, that such commerce must be free from injurious effects upon *agriculture*, and not unreasonably burdensome on the nation, to be entitled to promotion and protection by our federal legislature?.

By well devised acts of Congress, it is firmly believed, that we can do much for the promotion and protection of our trade. It is conceived, that the principles of Mr. Nicholson's bill, rightly understood, are an example of that nature. G. Britain so interrupts and coerces our seamen, and embarrasses, obstructs, and blockades our trade, that we are compelled to increase the encouragements to our manufactures of certain articles; and in order to do this with prudence, & secure revenue from consumption at the same time, we take the same kinds of goods from other foreign nations (with little or no navy to incommode us or not so much in the practice) so far as they can supply them. It may be observed, too, that some among us heartily approved that law, because it would induce G. Britain to manufacture substitutes from our raw cotton for the linen, woolen, silken, and leathern goods prohibited; and because we should partake largely in carrying that raw cotton to England—two considerations of great and obvious importance.

Another set of provisions might be made by law for the encouragement of our shipping and commerce. We mean here explicitly to suggest, that we may now adopt many of the regulations of the British navigation act, since we have provided so great a quantity of tonnage, and are well able to maintain and increase our vessels. Before we had so much tonnage, our planters and farmers prudently feared every regulation, which might tend to diminish the number of vessels, which could be expected to carry off our produce, and import supplies. Things are now materially changed, and we have ships enough to carry all we raise, and much more. Those which might yet come hither with cargoes from their own ports, and in ballast, would be numerous and useful in the exportation of our crops.

We may adopt measures to replace the amount of the British four per cent. export or convoy duty imposed on the exportation of their own manufactures to the U. S. It is believed, that the merchants trading to other foreign countries do not pay that extraordinary duty in England, which is the more unsatisfactory because we are the principal consumers and venders of their manufactures, and because we cannot impose a similar duty on exports from hence for their account, the constitution of the U. S. forbidding all duties on exportations. We never asked the protection, for which the British four per cent. duty is charged, nor do we desire or receive that protection. We are willing entirely to rely on our own neutral flag and vessels under the law of nations. To replace the amount of that duty in the treasury of the U. S. we may either impose an equal duty of four per cent. on all imports from G. Britain by or on account of British subjects, or we may abolish the drawback on all goods so imported.

In the cases wherein we are not admitted, with a real reciprocity, into foreign ports, so as to exclude our ships from the freight of articles which are imported in foreign ships, to the injury of our agriculture and manufactures, as well as of our commerce and navigation, it will be wise deliberately to revise the list of imported articles. For example, we might advance the duty on spirits from the cane, or entirely exclude the entry from all places, into which our ships are not regularly admitted. We can procure liquors from our distilleries of domestic and foreign materials, and from those rum, brandy and wine countries, into which our ships are admitted to carry our produce, and from which they can bring away those foreign commodities.

It seems expedient for us to encourage the importation of sugars, coffee, cocoa, pimento, ginger, pepper, and other spices & groceries from countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, rather than cotton piece goods, which interfere with our growth of cotton wool, and with the European consumption of that superabundant American raw material. If no India cotton goods were imported, we should lade many ships for Europe with cotton wool, out of which the European manufacturers would make similar cotton stuffs. The American cotton is certainly capable of being wrought into every kind of goods made of that raw material in the E. Indian peninsula. It is the interest of the European manufacturers, and of the American planters and ship holders, that India should give us groceries, instead of piece goods.

A duty upon all goods consigned to foreign merchants, and imported from those colonies, wherein our citizens are taxed beyond their own subjects, merely for exercising *their profession of merchants* or restrained from commerce, would contribute to indemnify our supercargoes and trading sea captains.

The exclusion of colonial and fishing ships from entry in our ports, in the case of a power which excludes our vessels from their colonies and fishing ports would appear reasonable.

The exclusion of the produce of the fisheries of a foreign nation, which excludes absolutely or in effect nearly all our similar articles, seems to be equitable.

We may enact some laws to promote the foreign consumption of American produce, in order that the means of remittance in goods of our own growth may be afforded, and that we may have the opportunity to partake in carrying them abroad. We have no redundance of wool, flax, hemp, silk or leather to export, because we manufacture more than we produce and all we can import. Let us suppose, therefore, that our duties, *ad valorem*, upon all goods made of *those* raw materials were (for mere example) at 25 per cent. at a medium. We now grow forty or fifty millions of pounds of cotton wool, and can easily produce much more. Let us suppose, therefore, our duties, *ad valorem*, upon all goods made of that raw material from Europe were fixed (for example also) at 15 per cent. The difference of 10 per cent. would operate as a premium for the consumption of piece goods made abroad of our own cotton *in most instances*, in preference to goods made in Europe of foreign wool, flax, hemp, silk & leather—articles which we never produce for sale abroad. The duty of 25 per cent. upon foreign linens and woollens would be in favor of our own manufactures of flax, hemp and wool.

One more example will be offered, *cautiously premising that it is perfectly novel, and for that and other reasons should be carefully examined*. It is proposed *for consideration*, that every future injury, either *in person** or property, unlawfully done to any American citizen by any foreign power, officer or agent, shall be a subject of investigation and decision before a standing board of commissioners, to be created by law, and sitting *in foro conscientiæ*; that every such future injury shall be estimated in the form of an indemnification in money to the suffering citizen or his representatives; that evidences of the sums due therefor shall be issued, bearing interest from their respective dates; that the claim for which they shall be respectively issued shall be assigned to the government of the U. S; that an application for just compensation shall be made by our government, thus placed in the situation of the sufferer, to the government of the injurer; that if the demands of this nature, ascertained in any half year, shall not be satisfied within one year, the President of the U. S. shall be authorized to direct the collection of an additional duty upon the produce and manufactures of the injuring country to cover the same, and he shall be requested to cause the same to be reported to the legislature: and that a like process shall be pursued half yearly, in order to indemnify the injured citizens of the U. S. *out of the industry of the spoliators*.†

These remedies for the various commercial injuries we sustain, are cautiously suggested for timely consideration. They are merely intended *to exemplify the nature of the principles* on which we may proceed in consequence. If no such injuries were in existence, or in contemplation, we need not thus act for the indemnification and protection of our citizens, nor to secure our just share in the commerce of our country and of the world. We probably should not think of adopting these or any other measures *to force* manufactures, but for such weighty reasons as *the necessary support of our agriculture*, and *the employment of the injured merchants, mariners, and sea port artizans and laborers*. The U. S. for a long time, omitted to use the best defence of navigation, commerce and manufactures—*well provisioned laws*. The great object of this limited sketch is openly to submit to the country a respectful suggestion, that the whole circle of our commercial rights and interests, internal and external, can be more cheaply, more safely, and more effectually defended by wholesome statutes, than by a dangerous and costly establishment of naval power.

---

* *Including our seafaring citizens of course, and with a particular eye to their interesting case.*

† *It is respectfully conceived, that the case of* SEAMEN *might be immediately put upon this footing, including all under contracts, made as prescribed by our national laws.*

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

No. II.

"*Labor is the price at which the Gods sell us all the goods of life.*"

THE discreet politician, the wise and just legislator, ever sensible of the grand source, and basis upon which all human enjoyments are built, will be disposed to exercise the most lively attentions, and fostering care, for the rights, interests, & meritorious claims of the industrious, laborious part of the community. Those who labor not (who have placed themselves above the necessity, or obligation of it) having already found means to draw a revenue from their fellow citizens need not the encouragement of the laws, to invite their too frequent usurpations. According to the maxim; let the laws protect the poor; for the rich can always find means to secure themselves; the perfection of government, or civil institutions, would consist in such happy arrangement, as might enable each individual in society, to enjoy emoluments, proportioned to the usefulness of his labors. This perfection, altho' never attainable in a state of humanity, is nevertheless the sublime copy, towards the imitation of which, the most virtuous efforts of enlightened legislators should always be directed. And herein, they are not in danger of erring, or exceeding the bounds of discreet policy, by the utmost liberality towards the incalculable just claims of the all supporting husbandman: Whose sweat and toils, agreeably to our motto, constitute the price, and purchase of those indispensible materials, which go to construct and adorn the whole fabric of human happiness.

Some political writers of Europe, considering the state of wretchedness, indigence, and miserable dependence of poor laborers, who have no property of land, have expressed a doubt, whether equal and just governments be at all practicable, in a community composed of landlords and tenants. In this view, they have suggested the desperate remedy, of a general confiscation, and re-distribution of property. And, even in our own country, the school of republican equality, our laws contain many invidious distinctions between freeholders and others. If, therefore, such be the decided importance of a property of land, that a man cannot enjoy civil liberty, nor be in all respects a free citizen without it; if moreover, it be an obvious known truth, that no possession in society is more peculiarly adapted to maintain, and secure the independent and comfortable enjoyment of life; surely a wise and virtuous statesman will rejoice in the occasion of promoting an interest of such singular importance to humanity. But what shall we, or what will the enlightened world think of the conduct and principles of that government, which having power of the original distribution, denies to worthy citizens, the opportunity of attaining a right so indispensible? Not to mention the sacred duty, and high obligation of republican rulers, to support, improve & cherish our happy institutions; discreetly balancing, & opposing the general interest, common right, and invincible attachment of the many, as convenient barriers, against the usurpation of the few.

Those legislative measures, which are calculated to produce great and sudden changes in the value of property, without reason elevating some, and depressing others, should be carefully avoided, as discouraging to useful industry, & highly injurious to the commonwealth. Such dispositions are adapted to promote only the interests, and opportunities of speculation. This was the effect produced (and most probably contemplated, by the leaders of the prevailing faction) when the price of the public lands was suddenly raised, from one or two shillings, to two dollars per acre. The few were exalted; the many depressed; and the industrious poor man of the frontier, having all his hopes and prospects dashed at a single stroke, was rendered seven-fold poorer, and more dependent, than he had been. The circumstance of our state lands being laid open to actual settlers, about the same time, did indeed produce some mitigation, and temporary prospect of relief. But even this consolation quickly vanished from before his eyes, like an *ignis fatuus*, serving only to bewilder and lead the poor man astray. It is truely a subject of serious and painful regret, to such as can duly appreciate the cause of justice and humanity, that the honor of republican legislation should seem to require us, to pass over, in silence, the whole progress, and present state of that business!! However, as the general value, or estimation of property and possessions, by a natural tendency, is now regulated and adjusted to the federal standard of two dollars; and many worthy settlers have purchased upon this scale (not to mention the very great change of circumstances; and the propriety of a prudent attention to fiscal considerations) I am of opinion that no advantage, not even to the frontier inhabitants, could be expected to result, from lowering the price of the public lands, at this time—(still saving to every citizen his natural, just, and necessary right.) On the contrary, as unimproved land has generally been sold, at second hand, for three or four dollars per acre; I would propose to raise the price of that, which shall be offered for sale, to three dollars. Thus substituting the revenue in the place of the useless speculator; and deriving to the public treasury the whole profits, which can be raised from the savage desert state, to the actual occupance of the cultivator. For, these profits, arising solely from the increase of value, produced by the instant labors of cultivation, are, in effect, none other than a tax, or portion subtracted from the productive industry of settlers. But this, however just and reasonable it might be, as a public tax, in consideration of the due advantages of their situation, is nevertheless altogether injurious, and impolitic, when derived to the undue emolument of private individuals. In order, therefore, to supercede entirely the incentives to useless monopoly, it, upon a nearer view of the subject, it might be found expedient, we should not object to fixing the price at four dollars per acre. This might only protract a little longer, the commencement of sales: and that perhaps very conveniently, (preventing competitions) till the increasing population, and occasion of culture, would create a more natural & sufficient demand; and after this period, the sales would progress with equal steadiness, as if they had been set at any lower rate; and with proportionably greater productiveness to the revenue. Moreover, the holding these lands at a respectable price, might have a beneficial tendency to counteract any injurious fluctuation of the value of frontier possessions in general, which might be produced by the just, and necessary encouragement, and emigration of actual settlers. I say just and necessary, because I presume it may with reason be deemed altogether unjust and unnecessary, any longer to support, or augment the wealth, ease, and indolence of some; by inhibiting, and frustrating the rights, and most precious opportunities of others; thus consigning multitudes both of the present and future generations, to indigence and a degree of bondage, in this so blessed, and highly favored country; where politics, nature, and providence, evidently combine to indicate the sacred duty, & afford the abundant means of freedom, competence, happiness, and safety to ALL!—However, as it is easier to argue upon general principles, than to enter with success into the practical details of a legislative subject, (or as the proverb says; *It is much easier to find fault than to make a better of it*,) it may not be improper to describe more particularly, a few leading features of the mode of disposition, contemplated as desirable and which, it is presumed, may in some measure, comport with the just claims, and various interests of the whole community. This sketch, however imperfect, will nevertheless be consistent with our adopted motto; that in hearing the multitude of opinions there is safety. It were indeed to be wished, that, on a question of so great & general concernment, the more intelligent every where, would take pains to communicate their sentiments; and especially those of the western or frontier country, who, from their local situation and opportunities, may be better acquainted with the subject.

PLAN OF SETTLEMENT.

1. Let the country be laid off in townships, omitting the customary demarcation into sections, as superfluous, interrupting the natural connexion of lands; and not comporting with any convenient mode of settlement. And let suitable reservations be appointed for public purposes.

2. Let any citizen of the U. S (*male or female*) of full age, and unmarried, be authorised to take possession of any vacant spot (making due entry of the same in the proper office) and be entitled (*in fee*) to such quantity of land, not exceeding twenty-five acres, as he shall enclose with sufficient good fence, and clear fit for the plow, within one year, and put under actual cultivation within two years, after such entry, (which may be called *an improvement right*,) and also be entitled to such farther quantity, not exceeding one hundred acres, as he shall purchase at the office rates; to be surveyed contiguous to the said improvement. Provided, that the female, being resident in the vicinity, shall hold her right of twenty-five acres, unalienable, exclusive of actual improvement.

3. Let any citizen of the U. S. of 20 years of age and upwards, who having been married, has assumed the care of a family, (or any *Feme sole* in like situation) be entitled to a right of improvement, in manner as aforesaid. And also to 20 acres for himself, 25 acres for his wife, she being resident in the vicinity, and 10 acres for each child under age; to be surveyed to him free of all costs. This may be called "a family settlement right;" and shall be unalienable, until after seven years actual possession and cultivation, but may be legally exchanged for another settlement right, or for an equal quantity of other land,