

THE

# CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL.

VOL. III.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 2, 1846.

No 2.

## FREE TRADE.

We have often been surprised that the advocates of free trade in Canada, could support such a principle consistently with their profession of attachment to British connection. So long as it is found necessary to retain restrictions in the British isles, it must be equally necessary to retain them in her Colonies. The principle we have constantly advocated was,—that Canada should be considered and treated as a distant Province of the Empire, with the same protection from foreign competition that her fellow subjects enjoy in the Mother country—that the inhabitants of this country should be encouraged to produce what they could exchange with Britain for her manufactures; thus giving the most suitable and profitable employment to the inhabitants of both countries, according to their respective circumstances—the inhabitants of Canada raising a surplus produce of corn, cattle, cheese, butter, hemp, flax, &c., upon rich, fertile, and unexhausted soils; and the manufacturers of British towns employing their skill and capital in the production of such articles as the Canadian agriculturists may require, and be able to pay for with his own productions. Any laws that will have even a tendency to encourage and extend this sort of production and trade, will be highly favourable to both countries; and, on the contrary, any system or principle that will discourage this production, of what is actually necessary to carry on a healthy and profitable trade between Britain and this Province of her Empire, will undoubtedly check improvement, and prevent general prosperity in Canada, and will also be very injurious to the working classes in the British isles. When nations will consent to abrogate *generally*, all restrictions on trade, we may be satisfied that England will be as willing to do so as any other country; but she cannot do so in justice to herself, until there is a general consent to act upon this principle. Are we proud, as we certainly ought to be, that we are a province of this glorious empire; and de-

sirous that the connection should continue for ages to come? If we are so, we should be anxious that our laws and institutions should be as similar to those of the Mother country as the circumstances of this province will admit. It would be absurd to advocate free trade here, while it would not be the law in England, and it would also be a great injustice to the vast majority of the people here, and in the British isles. We never did advocate, and do not wish that any one class should be protected, or favoured at the expense, or to the injury of any other. We would rejoice to see all restrictions on trade removed, and the productions of the earth, and of man's industry allowed to circulate as freely as the wind; but we have always been opposed, and ever shall be, to partial, or a one-sided free trade, that will allow freedom only in agricultural productions, while there is ample protection and encouragement to all other productions. The farmer is expected to sell his productions without any favour, preference, or protection from foreign competition, to the very persons who sell to him under ample protection from foreign competition. The great amount of capital employed in the British Commercial Navy, is amply protected, and acts as an indirect tax upon importations, and affords protection to commercial interests, that perhaps few persons think of. This protection, however, we would be sorry to see taken away, though it is one of the most effectual protections to British trade and commerce, and not by any means in favour of agriculture. We do not desire, however, to oppose free trade, as agriculturists; but as members of the great British family, we conceive that we should be perfectly content to follow the example of the Mother country in this and in every other great principle of law and government. When we desire to introduce any other, we certainly do not strengthen the bonds of connection between us and the parent state. There are many laws necessary in England that are not required here at present, particularly Poor Laws, Tithe Laws, and Game Laws; but in