

endency of British Canadian sisters. The loss of these colonies would involve the loss of the valuable fisheries, the most prolific nursery of hardy seamen, and would thus not merely deprive the British fleets of a friendly shelter on the coast of North America, but would sap the very strength of the British Navy in all quarters of the world. LOWER CANADA IS THE KEYSTONE OF THE COLONIAL EMPIRE AND OF THE MARITIME SUPREMACY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM. But a most important political consequence of the independence of British America is that, besides positively crippling Britain, it would negatively do so to perhaps as great an extent by relieving the United States from their only formidable neighbour and doubling the political strength of that gigantic republic. The Union, it is true, cannot last forever, but the very prospect of a speedy dissolution should make Britain cling with tenfold tenacity to her American colonies. When the Union does fall, the crash will be much greater than unreflecting men are willing to imagine. It will be dissolved not into states arbitrarily and in many instances artificially bounded, but into geographical sections marked out by the strong and inelible lines of nature herself; and the permanent settlement of the country on this new basis and the thorough amalgamation of conflicting interests can hardly be achieved without the horrors of anarchy and war. It requires not the supernatural intelligence of a prophet to foresee that the basin of the St. Lawrence from the head of Lake Superior to the Atlantic Ocean will form one mighty system, federative or consolidated; and Britain by her power and her influence, if she then retain the Canadas, may do much as well for her own interests as for the speedy adjustment of local differences, and may hold, if not by direct authority, at least by the moral obligation of gratitude, a perpetual alliance and friendship of an empire, fertile, extensive, populous, wealthy and powerful.

It is probable, however, that the economical politicians may attach more importance to the commercial than to the political results of Canadian independence. The trade of Canada confessedly employs a very large portion of British shipping, and, being susceptible of indefinite extension, will employ from year to year a still larger portion. By an adequate improvement of the navigation of the St. Lawrence, and by a judicious and liberal system of tolls, the Canadas, without permanently sacrificing a shilling, can concentrate in Montreal, which is destined to be the largest city in the new world, the trade of the whole basin of the St. Lawrence and the lakes. For many years at least this trade would be carried on in the ships of the domestic empire, for vessels, though built and registered in Canada, cannot winter in the river under the penalty of being crushed by the formation or the removal of the ice. With the raw materials of shipping, growing almost as weeds, this country cannot aspire, without very lavish expenditure on docks and basins, to stand high among the shipping powers of the world.

But were the Canadas independent, they would undoubtedly, like all other nations but England, attach a national importance to the possession of a mercantile navy, and would, from political motives, cheerfully undergo an expense, which, perhaps on merely commercial principles, would be scouted as unprofitable and unproductive. Not merely does Canada employ the shipping of the mother country, and that portion of it too, which is unfit for any thing but the timber trade; but by that trade she supplies the United Kingdom with naval stores, the sinews of its security and its grandeur. Much has been spoken and written against the encouragement of the timber trade, in regard to its bearing both on the mother country and the colony. So far as the mother country is concerned, the objections are purely economical, and, if admitted in their full force, cannot be