



The Volunteer Review

AND MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

A Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Military and Naval Forces of the Dominion of Canada

VOL. IV.

OTTAWA, CANADA, MONDAY, JULY 4, 1870.

No. 27.

THE REVOLT

OF THE

British American Colonies, 1764-84.

CHAPTER LIX.

Whig ambition and factiousness succeeded in rending asunder the British Empire and England received no compensation for the loss of her colonies in the exclusive possession of India—that she succeeded in retaining the greatest proportion of her commerce is due to the fact of the newly created nation being in no condition to contest the possession thereof, but up to the year 1861 the United States was a powerful competitor for commercial pre-eminence, and it is quite probable if the Southern war coupled with unwise legislation had not swept her mercantile marine from the sea she would have been still a rival of England for the trade of the world. England therefore secured a rival in commercial and manufacturing industries, and that rival's interest and ambition is to annihilate the commerce of Great Britain. Earl Russell has written an essay on this subject in his life of Charles J. Fox in which he clearly shows what England's direct loss has been, it is at page 301 vol. 1, and altho' coloured with Whig prejudice is the more valuable on account of the authority:—
"When Lord North was made first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer there was still time to conciliate America, Lord Chatham would have willingly concurred in any plan by which the right of taxation should be surrendered and the supremacy of the mother country retained. But neither the king nor his ministers had the wisdom to make with dignity and with effect concessions which they made three years afterwards without dignity and without effect. It cannot be denied however that in his resistance to American claims George III. had the full concurrence of his people, the national pride revolted from any submission to demands loudly put forth and accompanied with menaces of rebellion. The further question remains: Had Lord Chatham been called to

the councils of his Sovereign and had he succeeded by his supreme authority in England and his wide popularity in America in reconciling the two nations, would such a result have been permanently advantageous to both? On the one hand it may be said that so long as they kept united England and America might have led the civilisation of the world. Had they forbidden the invasion of France in 1792 that invasion would not have taken place. The fury of the Jacobin party in France, the massacres of the Reign of Terror, the bloody wars of Napoleon, might all have been spared to Europe. A powerful statesman like Mr. Fox united with Mr. Pitt might have said to Prussia and Austria 'you shall not interfere in the internal concerns of France,' and to the French Government 'you shall not invade the territory of any independent state.' A minister speaking this language with the resources of Great Britain, Ireland and America in his hand would not have spoken in vain. Europe in 1800 might have enjoyed the blessings which half a century later she reaped from peace and commerce. *England would have been spared the burden of seven hundred millions of her national debt.* If at the close of the eighteenth century the union of two such mighty states under one Government had been found to be incompatible with the prosperity of the American Provinces and the pretensions of American statesmen the knot might have been quietly untied. These great kindred nationalities nourishing for two generations sentiments of hatred, resentment, scorn and antipathy towards each other might have parted with a mutual desire to pursue by different paths the same end and to accomplish by different means the great objects of freedom, knowledge and christianity. On the other hand it must be confessed that the history of the world might have flowed in a different course. The settlement supposed to have been made by Lord Chatham might have been a hollow truce denounced as soon as the ashes of that great man were deposited in Westminster Abbey. The struggles of Europe during the French Revolution might have aroused America to assert her independence, and

Republican France might have had in her contest with England the strenuous aid of Republican America. The monarchy of England might have fallen; her influence might scarcely have survived the fatal war. These things are hidden from our eyes. We can perceive that Lord Chatham, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Burke excelled in wisdom Lord North and Lord Thurlow, but how long the separation of America from the Mother Country might have been prevented, and in what circumstances it might have at last occurred are matters on which science must fail, and even speculation must be vague."

The course of this essay has shewn conclusively that both parties had lost sight of the original ground of quarrel—the *navigational laws*—the right of taxation, on which the Whig party founded their mischievous opposition, which resulted in the evils sketched by Earl Russell, was adopted by the Colonists from the private letters, speeches and writings of the three prominent demagogues of that party, partly to destroy the power of the Tory party in the British House of Commons and partly because they dared not awake the prejudices of the mercantile class by a direct attack on the commercial relations of Great Britain. No effort at conciliation could succeed—the Whigs had taken care to make a return to the *status quo* impossible, and neither the king nor his ministers could make the concessions pointed out without the consent of Parliament, and that consent could not be obtained, as the rebellion was actually against its authority and rights—hence the steady support awarded to the king throughout six years of the contest, which, but for Whig violence, treachery and demagoguism would have been brought to an honorable conclusion even at the last moment.

Earl Russell calls the revolted colonies a nation at a time when they did not exceed three millions of people, and fully one half of that number were loyal British subjects,—and over-rates Lord Chatham's powers immensely—he was popular in the colonies as long as his diatribes against his sovereign furnished Franklin, Samuel Adams and the little Republican clique with weapons for