

ever, be admitted, that a considerable portion of our trade with our subject colonies, consists of goods sent to defray the cost of our establishments there. Making, however, every fair deduction on that account, still it cannot be denied that they are excellent markets for our goods. It is very unfortunate, therefore, that they cost us so much as 16s. a head of their population for government and defence, as that sum must absorb the greater portion of, if not all, the profit of our trade with those colonies.

To show the utility of colonies as outlets for our population, I may refer to the reports of the emigration commissioners, from which it appears that in the course of the last twenty years, 1,673,803 persons have emigrated from this country, of whom 825,564 went to the United States, 702,101 to the North American colonies, 127,188 to the Australian colonies, and 19,090 to other places. It would be interesting to know what has been the cost of this emigration, and how it has been defrayed. I cannot put it down at less than £20,000,000 sterling, of which about £1,500,000 were paid out of the proceeds of land sales in the Australian colonies. This emigration has varied considerably in amount from year to year; from the minimum of 26,092 persons in 1828, to the maximum of 258,270 persons last year. If averages of five years be taken, it appears to have gone on steadily increasing in amount; for on the average of the five years ending with 1832, it amounted to 60,000 persons a-year: ending with 1837, to 66,000 persons a-year; ending with 1842, to 86,000 persons a-year; and ending with 1847, to 121,000 persons a-year. Therefore the habit of emigrating is confirmed, and becoming more powerful every day; and therefore colonies are becoming more useful as outlets for our population.

Therefore, free trade with the colonies, and free access to the colonies should, in my opinion, be the sole end and aim of the dominion which Great Britain still retains over her colonies. By keeping these two objects distinctly in view, by bestowing upon the colonies all powers of local legislation and administration which are not absolutely inconsistent with these objects and the sovereignty of this country, I believe that our colonial expenditure might be greatly diminished in amount, and that our colonial empire would flourish and become of incalculable utility to this country.

I do not propose to abandon any portion of that empire. I only complain that it is so little use to us; that it is a vast tract of fertile desert, which costs us £4,000,000 sterling a-year, and yet only contains a million and a half of our race. Would it not be possible to people this desert with active and thriving Englishmen? To cover it with communities composed of men with wants, habits, and feelings, similar to our own, anxious to carry on with us a mutually beneficial trade? In this country, every trade, every profession, and every branch of industry, are overstocked; in every quarter there is a fierce competition for employment. On the contrary, in the colonies, there is an equally fierce competition for labour of every kind. Now, is there any mode of bridging over the oceans that intervene, so that our colonies may be to the United Kingdom, what the backwoods are to the United States? If such a plan could be devised, if it could be carried into execution, it might tend to solve the most difficult economical problems of England and of Ireland.

To carry such a plan into execution, two things would be requisite.