

by Great Britain, notwithstanding they themselves refuse to admit the British fishermen to fish on the coast of Florida.

Unless these conflicting pretensions and requirements can be reconciled, the conclusion of any agreement between the two countries is out of the question; and the point to which Her Majesty's Government wish to direct your Lordship's attention is the possibility of reconciling them.

The influence and authority which you so justly possess in the British provinces may afford you means for inducing the Colonial Governments to modify their extreme demands. On the other hand, there are considerations arising out of the existing state of affairs in Europe which may operate with the Government of the United States and induce it to desire to be well with England at the present time, if not from sympathy with the cause for which England and France are now arrayed in arms against Russia, at all events from the great material advantages which a commercial nation like the United States must derive from the unexampled liberality of the principles in regard to neutrals, on which those two Powers have announced their intention of acting during the present war.

It is not, however, desirable that your Lordship should appear at Washington in the character of an Envoy from Her Majesty, specially appointed to settle these troublesome questions. The mere suspicion of such a purpose would, of itself, suffice to render the Government of the United States still more inaccessible than heretofore to reason on the subject, inasmuch as it would conclude, however erroneously, that the British Government was prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of averting a discussion with the United States while engaged in an arduous warfare with an European Power.

Your Lordship, however, will very properly take advantage of any information which you may acquire before you reach Washington of the disposition of the Colonial Legislatures to moderate their demands, to ascertain from the Government of the United States whether it would be prepared to act in this respect in a spirit of reciprocity. If the Colonial Governments should be willing, for the sake of facilitating a settlement of the question respecting the fisheries, which is fraught with so much danger to the maintenance of a good understanding between Great Britain and the United States, to modify their demands on any of the specific points to which I have alluded and in which Colonial interests are mainly involved, Her Majesty's Government would have no objection to give effect to such an important disposition on the part of the local Legislatures; and it would then remain for your Lordship to ascertain how far the Government of the United States would be prepared to act in a corresponding spirit. If it should be so disposed, your Lordship will state to that Government that you are prepared at once to conclude an arrangement on the basis of mutual concession. If, on the other hand, the Government of the United States should be unwilling to accede to terms in themselves fair, and such as it would comport with the honour of the British Crown to admit, your Lordship will hold out no expectation of the British Government acquiescing in any such one-sided settlement.

Your Lordship will be at liberty to adopt any course which you may think expedient or safe, in order to discountenance any unreasonable pretensions on the part of the Colonial Governments, but Her Majesty's Government would, except in a very extreme case, be unwilling that anything like even moral coercion should be resorted to with that view.

Your Lordship will also steadily keep in mind, as a principle never to be lost sight of in negotiating with the United States, that no concession can safely be made to that Government, except in return for corresponding concession on its part; that any concession on which it may insist must be purchased by concession on its side, and that so far from being likely to arrive at a permanent and satisfactory settlement by the adoption of a yielding tone, the result in all probability would be the reverse. I do not mean to say that your Lordship should in all cases require concessions entirely equivalent in value; Her Majesty's Government would, for instance, be content to forego the Fishery on the coast of Florida, which the Americans decline to yield, in return for the withdrawal by the United States of the pretensions which they have advanced to the fisheries on the coasts of the British territories on the north-west side of the continent. But in either case the abandonment must be made on principles of mutual convenience, without any further specification of the grounds which regulate that convenience. Her Majesty's Government could not admit as a valid ground the objection founded on the slave character of the State of Florida, neither might the Government of the United States be disposed to admit the validity of an objection founded on the Charter given by the British Crown to the Hudson's Bay Company.

Her Majesty's Government are certainly desirous of settling the question of