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TRACT FOR THE TIMES;

BEING A

FEW THOUGHTS

UPON A

NORTH AMERICAN NATIONALITY.

BY JOEL CARPENTER, LONDON, C. W.

LONDON, C. W.:

FREE PRESS STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT, NORTH-ST.

1865.

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TRACT FOR THE TIMES.

FRIENDS, FELLOW-CITIZENS AND COUNTRYMEN,—It is with feelings of the deepest concern that I am impelled at this time to address you by this means, upon the present state of our common country. If I am not able to please everyone, I shall perhaps have a kind of pleasure in pleasing myself. If I am unable to make you see just as I do, I shall, rest assured, not be disappointed, but my end shall be attained if I lead you to think, if not just as I do, yet just according to the light, I may say the peculiar light, which you may have. It's a happy thing in the construction of human society that there are varieties of intellects and thinking powers—just as there are various colours in nature. It is also a pleasant reflection that those colours can be blended and grouped together so as not to hide each other's perfection, but rather each one to help the other, and thus together to form an imposing, beautiful and powerful harmony. It is not by appealing to sectarian or sectional feelings, by awakening old party strifes, or stirring up old grievances that I would desire to ask you, along with me, to take matters of a most serious nature, concerning our selves, our homes, and to be the homes of our children, into consideration. It is not my design to censure one more than another, for I cannot see but we are all in a lesser or greater degree responsible for the state of things we find ourselves in.

RESPONSIBILITY AS SEPARATE INDIVIDUALS.

In a Constitutional Government, such as the one we live under, it is every man's duty, as well as privilege, to contribute the fruits of his mature thought in the general structure of the Government and institutions of the country. Then, first, do you think the best ends have been served by making a man's being a lawyer the passport into our Legislature and Government bodies!—the fact being that about nine-tenths of our members of Parliament are of that profession. Let us suppose a case:—Do you think the best ends would be served for the general benefit of your Municipality if you should call from a distant Municipality as many tailors as you have Reeves, Deputy Reeves and Councillors, to transact your local municipal business, instead of selecting those who are likely, from their practical knowledge, to know the wants of your particular section? But in our case let us go farther:—Do you think that if, instead of nine-tenths lawyers, we had nine-tenths doctors of medicine, do you think this would be in accordance with practical common sense? or that you should make all wheat speculators your Legislators, and that when you had not one at home you would send to a distant place and get one. Why, the theory is absurd; yet not more so than the present House of Parliament. I do not mean to censure lawyers for this state of things, for those are to blame who put them there. What have the fruits of legislation been for the last number of years? Nothing but a patching-up of laws—no sound, solid measure of material interest has been advanced or passed. Long debates about abstract questions, which it mattered but little, so far as the real interest of the country was concerned, which way they were decided. It's a remarkable fact but two men who have more than any other left the indelible marks of genius upon our country were not lawyers. I refer to William Hamilton Merritt and Francis Hincks. The people are to blame for this. Is it to be expected a House full of lawyers are to be so disinterested, so lifted above self-interest, and so much purer than any other class of men that in making laws, and doing the whole thinking for the country, passing the whole of the taxes and revenue through their hands, that they will ignore all selfishness, and legislate without reference to themselves or their own interest? Indeed, I have been told that a bill has been brought into the House by the Hon. John Hillyard Cameron, to the effect that no man shall draw a deed, mortgage, or any law document, save and except a lawyer, under a heavy penalty or fine. I say this is an unhealthy state of things, and it would be absurd to suppose that good, sound legislation could be possible upon all the diversified and extensive interests, trades and professions by any such mode. This is one of many causes that have contributed to our present state of paralysis. The farmers of this country have not yet felt the trouble that seems to have shown itself in the towns. Every train from every town in Canada is bearing away from us more or less of our mechanics, labourers and others, and indeed from the Counties of Huron and Bruce many

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young, strong, athletic men, the very ones of all others needed to develop and make our country. The fruits of legislation has been rather to create an emigration from our country than to it.

CANADA COMPANY.

This organization, by getting hold of large tracts of our best lands, and holding them at such high prices as to put it out of the power of emigrants from being able to obtain lands in this country, whilst the Western States are in the market at so much lower figures. I need not enlarge upon this, for most of people are acquainted with the baneful influence this has had upon the country, whilst the man who clears at a high price, paid in the first place for his land, an hundred acres, enriches the Company, who never expends a single farthing in developing and improving, but simply till others by hard work, have made their land valuable. They are only taxed at the rate of Wild Land, whilst the man who improves his farm, and redeems it from a state of nature, has to pay taxes upon his improvements, and also expends all he makes in the country, whilst the Company just draws off to a foreign country our life's blood in the shape of gold. It is a fact that there have been large lots of lands, numbering some hundreds of thousands of acres, held by parties, some as long as twenty years or more, in the shape of scrip, that taxes have been accumulating for years back. Last year a bill was passed exempting those lands from the taxes. Suppose a settler, as many had done, took the land up twenty years ago, cleared it up, and paid taxes upon the first cost of the land and the improvements. The large speculator reaps the benefit of the settler's improvements, and, at the end of twenty years, he has his taxes forgiven. Yet this is the fact, and the bill only passed last Session.

ONE OF THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF DEPRESSION.

The writings of many of the English Journals, and the debates in the English House of Commons, has had the effect of making men of capital, as well as Companies, withdraw their investments from this country, many thousand pounds having left already, and, no doubt, this state of things must continue. Our weakness has been exposed; our indefensible position bruited to the world far and wide, from the great thunderer of printing house square, to the smallest penny-a-liner, has told the English public that we are no use to England, and it has been said that the whole power of the British Empire could not defend us against the United States. Unless we desire connection with the mother, enough to tax ourselves for the raising, equipping and keeping in readiness to take the field from one to 200,000 men—enter into obligations to make useless defences upon a line of 1,600 miles, whilst Great Britain will look after Quebec and Montreal. I ask is their any one insane enough to think that we can carry out the terms of this contract in the face of the following reasons?

1st. We are in debt now for one hundred millions in round numbers.

2nd. Our best customers are the people whom we are asked to put ourselves in a belligerent attitude to.

3rd. Our canal and railway system, being fed from the commerce of these people, are of no use without social commercial intercourse. Of this we had a trial last winter in the passport system.

4th. The total abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty. Under certain circumstances, this Treaty may be called a great benefit; under others, questionable. Hence this would require to be discussed in all its bearings, at much greater length than is contemplated lengthening this pamphlet to. I will, however, just ask the people whose recollection goes back to the times when sales of produce used to have to be made in England, and let them answer if there has not been higher prices and quicker returns since the American market has been open to our products. We will now proceed and see if, commercially, the connection of Great Britain with this country is a mutual benefit. In the discussion of this question, we shall treat it just as a matter of business, leaving out all the fine rhetoric of loyalty to be discussed by others. In doing this, we think we have as much right to discuss the matter as the English public, we being as deeply interested, and they having taken the initiatory step. No contract that is not mutually beneficial to the contracting parties alike, with justice alike to each, can last. We think when the mother country adopted the Free Trade policy, and made the Colonies the same as strangers in her markets, that she separated from us as effectually as though she gave us notice that we were no more a part of the British Empire, and that she said, in effect, "It is a matter of dollars and cents with us, and you must sink or swim as best you can; we know you henceforth as strangers and foreigners." It certainly has cost her something to keep up her civil and military establishments in this country, but the reformers of the time believed it to be the interest of the millions of the British Islands that Free Trade should be the future policy. Therefore, the Colonies could not be taken into account. What would have been the consequence if the Colonies had followed in the wake of Great Britain, and persisted in Free Trade? Simply this, we should have raised wheat alone, along with our wool and other raw material to send to England, and have them manufactured and sent back to us in the shape of manufactured goods. Our lands, by being thus drained, would become impoverished, and in the end we would die out of starvation. Every bushel of wheat that leaves our shores, the farmer in this country takes less the price of freight from his door to London, Liverpool and Glasgow, and *vice versa* on what is returned or taken in exchange. To have followed in this wake would have been entirely for the benefit of Great Britain, but would have been death to us. But England's policy has been liberal toward us, and while she had taken from us protection, she allowed us the widest latitude of self-government.

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The result has been a protection of our own manufactures to some extent, at which a strong party is growing up in England; who demur at this course, and thus clamour for a reduction of our tariff, or separation, or the responsibility and cost of defence, in case of war, being borne by the Colonies. Here comes the trouble: Some say, in this country, if England gets up a war with the United States it's none of our affair; let her fight the battles and pay the bill. Here is the anomolous and incongruous state of things. We are one in name, but we are not one in reality, because the interests, naturally being opposite, we have only the shadow without the substance of connection. As long as we float the British flag, and that flag is insulted, we are its defenders as much of right as any man in the British Islands. For example: Any Colonist in a foreign land is under the protection of that flag and Power it represents as much as any man from the British Islands, and Great Britain would protect and go to war as quick on his account as a "Colonist British Subject" as the other, so that we cannot share one thing without the other. To be the same and a part of the British Empire the same protection that is on and against foreign nations in Britain should be in this country, and there should be no protection here against manufactures in England, and there should be protection in our favor in Britain to make us prosperous. So that, have it as you may, you cannot have the two interests to be alike as at present constructed. The separation here is complete, and seems to be just a beginning of what had and has to come—a separation in every other way, as two distinct and separate peoples, each one striving to do the best they can for themselves.

We assert, without fear of contradiction, that a European and American policy are the antipodes of each other. In America, we want their labourers to clear up our lands and develop our resources, and create a home consumption. We want to build up a manufacturing interest, so that we can exchange at home instead of having seven thousand miles of freight, insurance and profit to the manufactures of other countries; and also to be able to keep at home the virtue of our soil instead of sending it away. To do this, we cannot without protection, because England's cheap labor and trained bands of operatives, as well as her having the best stand in the world for a shop, would swamp our manufactures, and we should never come to anything. I think I have here shown that, commercially, our interests are not the same, and that separation, in fact, took place at the time that separate tariffs and legislation was inaugurated by England; or else England must give up Free Trade, and sacrifice the interests of the many for the few—a thing she won't do.

MILITARY POSITION.

We now come to consider the connection in a military point of view. From what we may infer, "not being military men, of course," we have to gather from those who make that branch a profession. It is just this: That all west of Montreal it is

doubtful if it can or could be defended, with the aid even of Great Britain. No doubt England, with her powerful fleet, could inflict great damage upon the United States sea ports and shipping. As far as we are concerned, this would be the battle ground, and, for this reason, it is England's weakest point, and would require more men and money to defend than any other portion of the theatre of such a war, and by no possibility of means could we come out any other way than, as Jonathan would say, considerably, if not wholly, "chewed up." Now, from all that I can see in the premises, we are England's weakest and most assailable point, and this very connection to England would be a means of perhaps humbling Great Britain, or else of rolling up her national debt to an enormous size—already considered quite large enough. And for what purpose? to keep up a connection that nothing can be seen in that is worth fighting about. A cause of quarrel, let it spring up here, in Japan, or China—this is the spot for the belligerents to play their war game out upon.

There may be points in this connection that I cannot see, but if there is, let them be shown by some one, for the people of this County. Many of them are beginning seriously to think, and for the next short time, at any rate, Canadian statesmen will have to betake themselves to some other work than discussing abstract principles; "real, serious, solid work is before them," and like a military staff in time of peace, when war comes in earnest, many a gay uniform that done well to strut in will go under, and to the surface will rise the men of action and capacity suited to a state of realities rather than of show and form.

RELATIVE POSITION WITH THE UNITED STATES.

The British press and people have exercised themselves much about the chances, probabilities and certainties of a war arising with Great Britain about Canada. I do not think this has been the feeling here, from the simple fact that we failed to see what it could arise from. From lying side by side with them, their and our interests must be the same, and the more they would mutually benefit each other the nearer they must come together. We want to trade with them, and they with us, always premising that the contracting parties must be mutually benefitted thereby. The time is not far distant when, with the rate emigration is pouring into the Northwestern States, that that section alone will contain as many inhabitants as the whole United States does now. The route to the Ocean must be down the great chain of Northern Lakes to the sea, and through the St. Lawrence. The enlargement of our canal system must take place, and the Georgian Bay Canal will become a fixed fact, no matter at what cost. And thus the teeming commerce of this mighty people must roll on through our waters, distributing prosperity and life to all on its route. We have nothing to go to war about; as neighbours, we desire to be friendly, occupying the same tenement. Our mission is the same, or ought to be—to benefit mankind. We have mine-

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rals of untold wealth, waiting for the hand of enterprise to develop, and for these we want a market. The facilities for manufacturing in this country are second to none upon the face of the globe. Where we can buy one dollar from England now, we could then buy five, and pay for it. It does seem to me that reason, common sense and honor demands that our paths should separate. We have no right to be a tax, a burthen, and a weakness to our brethren of the British Islands. And can any one suppose that the wise men of Britain do not see this in all its bearings!—they certainly do.

The United States, Great Britain and France would become the contracting parties to our separate nationality. A war with either of the two latter Powers is simply impossible. Ours and our neighbour's interests would become so blended by trade and commercial treaties that a war with them would day by day become more and more an impossibility.

It is most astonishing to me how some of our journals and people seem, by their action, to court a war. Loud-mouthed braggadocia, continual knawing and bickering at what our neighbours are doing. Surely there is enough for people to do, especially journalists, to set their own matters right; many reforms are needed, and it certainly is our interest to rather strengthen the bonds of friendship than to weaken them with a people so near at hand as the Americans. The late lamented Cobden will live long in the memory of his countrymen for the part he took in making a treaty with the ancient enemy of England, and thereby extending trade and promoting commercial intercourse between these two peoples.

Many of us talk about war as a light matter; but, perhaps, there is not another people just as unfavorably situated as this country for such a state. A long thread of country, at every part of which the United States has a powerful base extending back the length of the continent, while at no one place have we one deeper than a hundred or two miles. So that this becoming the theatre of war, we have no place to fall back upon, save the frozen, inhospitable regions of the North. The mere concussion of forces meeting upon this belt of country would destroy us—would make us one blackened mass of ruin. Take the Power of Great Britain, and call it, as the *London Times* said, fifty times a stronger Power than the late so-called Confederate States, and picture the destruction there must be had with two such powerful antagonists meeting in deadly conflict and strife. Yet, apparently, to some, who attempt and set themselves up as leaders, this is nothing. Go farther: Overrun with common soldiery driven out in our rigorous climate, troops of helpless women and children would perish by thousands—our whole male population in the war. Why would they thus be more than in any other country, simply because our country is so circumscribed in breadth, one can be nowhere but in the front, we being all front. Who can describe the horrors of war, with the tread of armies, numbering almost millions, rolling the tide of slaughter over this land! We could scarcely have room to bury the dead out of our sight—the

conflict over. On the other side of the lines, great destruction has been made; cities, towns and country laid waste, for we have damaged them as much as they us, but they have lost a part whilst we have lost the whole. And those that are left come back, to what? To a desolate waste, full of sad remembrances of the fearful scenes we have passed through. We have but little certainty left us as we are, but that little is our all; and, however small it may appear to others, to us it is everything, short of dishonor, and yet people here rave. There is one class of people who always clamour for one or any state of things that will allow them to appropriate that which is not their own, being too idle to work to obtain it for themselves; consequently no state that changes but must be the better for them. There is another class who talk most and do the least when it comes to fighting, and when these classes get too numerous, then there is danger.

THEIR POSITION POLITICALLY.

When our delegates come out are they to be allowed to go on at an expense of adding millions to our debt in erecting fortifications that there is every chance we shall not want to use in generations, without appealing to the country for its sanction or disapproval? If the English Government even spent ten millions to our one, is it right that this should even be permitted without a fair understanding. Let the question be fairly put and fairly answered on both sides. Hitherto there has been a misunderstanding; many have thought we could talk as loud, bully as much, and fume as though we stood in the position of disinterested parties, whilst the mother country would do the fighting and pay the bills. But they have been taught different, and well they should be. We should be self-supporting, and not dependant upon others for an existence. In penning the foregoing, I claim it as a free subject for discussion; that it is our duty, as well as privilege, and that we are asked to do it by the temper the English people have shown; certainly, in all friendliness, and good-will, and mutual understanding, things seem hastening to the disastrous pitch they did in '57, long years of over importation. Something must come to wipe off this indebtedness, for it cannot be paid but by bankruptcy and ruin. This point we reserve for a future paper, in which it will be necessary to go into the currency question, the position of our present banking institutions and the advocacy of a different basis of circulation. To do this effectually, it will be necessary to expose the fallacies of the old as well as the advantages of the new. Our design is that it shall be in such a simple shape that he that runs may read. The advantage of this mode of publication is this, that there are few, if indeed any, papers but what are so hampered by partizan influence of fear or favor that we cannot as independently express ourselves upon these subjects. By this means we can make our little pamphlet reach every hamlet; to do the good we desire, we must speak to the masses. It is only from these the pressure can come to make

our people in official high places understand their lease of power is up unless they meet the present difficulties as statesmen desiring really the country's good.

As we remarked in the outset, we do not desire that every one should think just as we do, but that they may be led to think, and that the result of general serious thought may be united and concerted action upon the vital questions that are upon us, the action upon which will affect us for weal or for woe for all time to come.