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AND

COMMERCIAL-MARITIME JOURNAL.

EDITED BY

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VOL. I.

" FAR. AS TRE BREEZE CAN BEAR THE BILLOW'S FOAM,  
SURVEY OUR EMPIRE, AND BEROLD OUR HOME."

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## PREFACE.

**PERIODICALS** are amongst the peculiar characteristics of the present age: emanating from the womb of circumstances, and imbued with the vitality of existing events, they direct the current of living thought into active energy, and give a form, a tone, and a hue to society, which, in a concentrated state, is productive of momentous results. Individuality of mind, like individuality of body, is comparatively feeble and **powerless**—in combination exercising an extraordinary influence, and governing or swaying every thing around. As, in a former age, conjoint physical strength served to build a pyramid, or construct a **colosseum**, so, unity of sentiment has now enabled the wise and the good to break the fetters of the slave, and to expand the principles of moral freedom among mankind.

Hence periodical literature is an instrument of vast but almost unseen power, which may be employed for the dissemination of good or evil, according to the conduct and motives of those who wield that singular element of social **life**—“the press?”

Actuated with an ardent desire **to** make the British public fully acquainted with the facts and information which are being daily developed in reference to our Colonies, Trade, and Marine, and convinced that one of the most **effectual** modes of procuring attention to these important subjects, is by the continued and periodic examination and record of such interesting topics, we have devoted much time, **labour**, and **expense** in founding a journal, the first volume of which is **herewith** submitted to the public.

In thus acting, we have but responded to the wants and wishes of the nation; and, relying on the nation for **support**—casting aside all mere party feelings—and seeking only the welfare and happiness of this great empire,—we have given a local habitation to the three staples of England — “Ships, **Colonies**, and Commerce,” and **endeavoured** to direct the power

## PREFACE.

thus organized, with a due sense of the awful responsibility attaching to those who seek to exercise an influence over mankind, in the direction of public opinion.

As yet we are only passing the threshold of the wide arena which is opening before us, and which requires all the prudence, foresight, and wisdom that the most experienced and expansive minds can furnish. In fulfilling the Herculean task commenced, we have to aid in maintaining the integrity and in advancing the prosperity of the largest empire that ever existed; we are called upon to assist in the removal of abuses, and in correcting the dilapidations which time may produce in the noblest structures : we are required to seek out new and profitable fields for the employment of the surplus labour and capital of the mother-country : we are urgently impelled to endeavour to retain the markets for our merchandise, that we yet possess, and to point out fresh channels for the disposal of accumulating stocks of every species of commodity that art and industry can prepare.

While competitive nations are rising around us, jealous of our superiority and impatient of our control, it is our bounden duty to watch their movements, and, when necessary, to circumvent any measures which may be adopted against the trade and maritime resources of England. Last, not least, we are bound, by every sacred consideration, to advance the moral and religious instruction of the myriads of human beings which it has pleased an Almighty 'Providence to place beneath the British sceptre.

Aided and sustained by those whose opinions, next to that of our own conscience, we most revere; we shall proceed cheerfully in the arduous career before us ; and relying on the purity of our motives, and the nationality of our objects, we trust that every succeeding volume will bear witness to the onward progress of principles which have truth for their basis, and justice for their guide.

LONDON, 26th March, 1840.

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PRESENT POSITION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS  
OF ENGLAND.

THERE is no subject of more momentous interest to every civilized nation, than an inquiry into the **present position of England**; there is no topic of higher importance (socially speaking) to the whole family of man, than an **endeavour** to ascertain the *future prospects of England*. The first branch of inquiry would involve an investigation of proximate and remote causes of almost indefinite extent, and, on this occasion, an exposition of results is all that can be expected, reserving for a subsequent period, more minute, and, perhaps, more satisfactory details.

One of the most prevalent existing opinions is, that England has witnessed the acme of her power, and, having passed the meridian, now hastens to decay. This inference is erroneously drawn, from observing, 1st, that individuals of the animal and vegetable kingdoms have **their** periods of youth, age, and death; \* and, 2d, that all the great nations of antiquity have perished, leaving scarcely a vestige of their name; the antiquary with difficulty tracing the spot on which the metropolitan cities of vast empires once stood.

But the inference is unsubstantiated in its premises, and not fairly supported in its conclusions. Examine one of the primeval forests of America—it has existed there for ages; its limits, defined from the

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\* “The world like the individual, flourishes in youth, rises to strength in manhood, falls into decay in age; and the ruins of an empire are like the decrepit frame of an individual, except that they have some tints of beauty which nature bestows on them.”—*Consolations in Travel. Dialogue I.* by **Sir Humphrey Davy**.

adjacent prairie by a broad and clear savanna, on which not a shrub is seen. True, the individual trees of the forest perish, but **their place** is immediately filled up ; ages roll on—tree succeeds to tree—the forest never becomes the **prairie**—and at the end of centuries is found in all its beauty, denseness, and vigour. The same principle is applicable to herds of animals, and to congregated masses of our fellow-creatures. Thus, also, is it with a nation : individuals die—the nation lives, and will continue to flourish for ages, so long as the elements of moral disease are subdued by virtue. The **analogy**, therefore, between the existence of an individual of a species, and the aggregate of a nation, is incorrect ; so also is the conclusion drawn from the supposed analogy.

Empires, kingdoms, and republics have risen from infancy to maturity, and then perished. No form of government, whether that of absolutism or democracy, has been found sufficient to save a nation from final extinction ; the seeds of dissolution were sown at birth, and were evolved when the physical and intellectual structure began to wane. Babylon and Nineveh—Egypt and Jerusalem—Tyre and Carthage—Athens and Rome—have all in succession risen from insignificance to power, and then vanished like the “baseless fabric of a vision ;” leaving scarcely a “wreck behind.” But because these memorials and records of mere **human greatness** are before us, does it necessarily follow that all nations must also have their rise and fall ? Sacred Writ most **fully** informs us of the cause of the destruction of kingdoms—because the people forsook the worship of the only true God, became idolaters, and were consequently destroyed by the very effect of their own vices and crimes. If Jerusalem, once the ark of a pure religion on earth, was destroyed, as oft foretold by the prophets, when the measure of its iniquity was full, is it reasonable to infer that any heathen nation could long uphold mere temporal power ? Rome, the mistress of the world, debased by the grossest idolatry, demoralized by the most fearful extent of slavery, corrupted by wealth, devoid of even the semblance of morality, —**could** no more expect perpetuity, than that city which was once the temple of the chosen people of heaven.

**As** a wicked man is frequently cut short in his career of **crime**, so was the fall of Jerusalem and of Rome ; both were alike the **persecutors** of Christianity and the enemies of truth. **The downfall of Jerusalem** was essential to the spread of moral freedom ; that of Rome, to the extension of civil liberty. Natural ‘causes, therefore, **produce** natural effects, as regards a man or a nation ; and **when** we find a **nation run-**

ning on in a career of vice and infidelity, we can no more be surprised at its destruction, than at the death of a man who has drunk deep of the cup of sin and wickedness.

Let us examine, if there be any resemblance between Rome and Britain-The one a constitutional free state-the other a military empire, where the sovereign power was sold to the highest bidder ;— the one a nation where all are personally free-the other, where **nine-**tenths of the people were bondsmen, serfs, and slaves ;-the one an insular-maritime power, whose colonial possessions serve to augment its resources, and to increase its oceanic supremacy-the other a territorial state, whose very extension of dominion served but to weaken its strength, and to diminish its capability for **defence** ;-the one enjoying all the arts and elegancies which adorn and refine social life, traversing land and sea with a celerity and certainty hitherto unknown, **and** using its wealth in the construction of immense works, which tend to benefit mankind-the other restricted chiefly in its mental efforts to architecture, and the showy and specious arts, making war its chief object ; and destitute of that extraordinary instrument for the extension of knowledge — the press. Finally —the one a *Christian*, the other a *Heathen* people.

In a future number, we shall endeavour to enter more at length into this important question, because no man of a reflective mind would struggle to advance and elevate his country, if he thought that he were hastening the period of its ultimate declension and death. The glory of a nation would then be similar to the fleeting fame of a selfish individual, both transient-useless to their possessors, and incapable of transmission to posterity. He who loves his country for the sake of the good which she accomplishes, and by reason of her Christian principles, will not, cannot, think that the meridian of her existence is passed, while there is aught of good to be fulfilled, and while Christianity exists on earth. Most certain is it, that a nation without true religion, is like a house built on the sand, which the winds and waves destroy ; and if England be that house constructed on a rock-which Revelation **predicts**—then may she defy the tempest, and the not less sure but more insidious effects of time.

We may now briefly advert to the present state of the British Empire, It is certainly one of peril, and fraught with imminent danger ; but still not without a bright and clear vista. The domestic condition of England, Ireland, and Scotland betokens the struggles of an industrious people to raise themselves from poverty, and to provide for those who are to succeed them. We behold a denser population in **propor-**