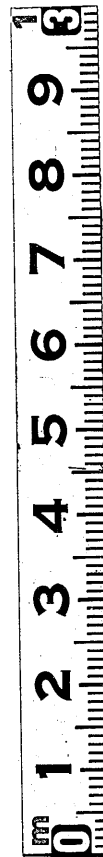


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AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
LEGISLATURE OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM
OF
Great-Britain and Ireland.

By JOHN VAN VOORST,
Member of the Society of Merchants trading to the Continent, &c.

Price 1s. 6d.

AN
ADDRESS
 TO THE
**LEGISLATURE OF THE UNITED
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 OF
Great-Britain and Ireland.

SHEWING
 THE NECESSITY OF IMMEDIATELY TAKING THE
 MOST ACTIVE AND EFFICIENT MEANS OF
 RENDERING THIS NATION
**INDEPENDENT OF THE POWERS OF
 THE BALTIC,**
 AND THEREBY SUPERINDUCING
 A SAFE, AN HONOURABLE, AND A PERMANENT
P E A C E.

"Materials infinite, but idle all."

"They (the Northern Powers) have not learned Wisdom by Experience, but we ought to learn it, and seek for new Sources from which we can obtain Supplies of every Sort of Naval Stores. This Conclusion is indeed so evident, that it would be useless to insist farther on a Subject that is so plainly demonstrated from past Experience."

ODDY'S *European Commerce.*

By **JOHN VAN VOORST,**
Member of the Society of Merchants trading to the Continent, &c.

LONDON:

Printed by COX, SON, and BAYLIS, Great Queen Street,
 Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.

Published by J. RIDGWAY, Piccadilly; C. CHAPPLE, Pall-Mall; and J. M.
 RICHARDSON, Cornhill, opposite the Royal Exchange.

1810.

BRITISH

PRESENTED TO THE

MEMBERS

OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

IN THE YEAR 1857

BY

THE

SECRETARY

OF THE SOCIETY

AND

OF THE

MEMBERS

OF THE SOCIETY

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SIR,

THAT I should be induced in the sacred name of friendship to dedicate to you the following pages, will not appear surprizing to those who are acquainted with the circumstances of my early life, or who, like me (and they are numerous) know how highly to appreciate your worth and abilities.

To the share you voluntarily contributed towards the cultivating my youthful mind, after my return from the Continent and the cessation of those studies, which I have daily reason to deplore that, by circumstances, I was not permitted more closely to follow and (by the superior advantage of education which our country possesses) to improve, I am bound to attribute that slight portion of philosophy, which I may perhaps, (having had the happiness of your tuition,) be permitted to flatter myself I enjoy.

Gratitude would have induced me to offer to you a better proof of her existence than this trifle, did it not frequently happen that the most excellent Mentor finds but an indifferent Telemachus. I am nevertheless induced to take this liberty, recollecting the parable of the acceptability of the widow's mite.

I apprehend that neither of us will ever be able to look back to the many felicitous and rural hours we have formerly passed together, without a sort of half-melancholy regret, to be effaced only by the humble hope, which derives its confidence from the all-sufficient mercy of God, and which induces us to flatter ourselves that we shall possess in futurity that state of beatitude which, after protracted and happy mundane existence, is most fervently wished to you by,

SIR,

Your obliged, obedient, and faithful

Friend and Servant,

JOHN VAN VOORST.

WALWORTH,
31st January, 1810.

AN ADDRESS.

THE impossibility of ruining a powerful nation, as such, has long been asserted amongst the most experienced of mankind, and unfortunately we, of the present generation, have lived to see this happy truth most miserably, but practically established, at the expence of oceans of human blood.

That this truism will hold good as applied to continental nations, we have seen as clearly demonstrated, as is the difference between the annihilating a nation, and the overthrow or revolutionizing of governments.

Happily for this country, its insular situation duly improved (although we flatter ourselves yet far from the state of cultivation to which Providence may have decreed her), hath in a wondrous degree, considering the small extent of the mother

mother country, tended also to illustrate this cheering assurance.

To those whose more bounded views of the British Empire and interests induce them simply to look to our relative European situation, compared against that of an hostile continent, it must appear strange how this nation should have been able, during so many years of protracted warfare and unprecedented exertions and expence, not only in men, money, and commerce, but in the maintenance of perhaps the largest force, taking into consideration the military and nautical parts of it, that any people, in proportion to its numbers, ever had on foot (not to mention the immense distance from each other of the component members and vast expanse of the realm); and after having alternately subsidized and withstood nearly all, and certainly all the great Powers of Europe; that under such circumstances it should have been able not only to maintain, but even to improve its relative superiority, must appear astonishing to the bulk of mankind. There exist, however, amongst us many able, patriotic, and estimable characters, whose more enlarged views enable them better to appreciate the resources

sources of this most powerful Empire; and who, although they deeply deplore the evils arising from heavily-accumulated taxation, still in individual pressure, see little of national decrepitude. Indeed, it is a fact, upon which, however, (circumstanced as is this country from its artificial, but, as the *Moniteur* once truly asserted, *inexhaustible* finances,) few or no politicians will presume to pride themselves, that in some measure the poverty of the individuals constitutes the riches of the government; or, perhaps, conversely, that the repletion of the public coffers impoverishes from time to time the individuals of the commonwealth. The Author is far from thinking this an wholesome state of society; but feels with how much less difficulty a disease may be pointed out in a constitution far advanced in age, than under such circumstances, not exactly a painless, but even a salutary remedy proposed.

It appears to the Writer (himself connected with the commercial and monied interests), that these, however benevolent and loyal, and, in very many respects beneficent, have of late been making undue inroads upon the old-established respectable aristocracy of the landed gentry; and that

that the only remedy against such undue preponderance, supposing it to exist, would lie in the bringing about a fair, an equitable, and a generous peace; whereby small capitals would be more effectually brought into play, and monopolies rendered more difficult.

We are the more inclined to recommend this experiment, foreseeing that the continuance of the war will, in all human probability, tend still further to desolate the Continent, and ultimately, perhaps, to bring on a state of semi-barbarism, which must prove fatal to all dealings in the usual, established, and honest, and honourable mode of modern commerce. This last event has, indeed, already taken place to an alarming extent, as the oldest and most respectable establishments trading to the European continent can testify, having experienced the same to their bitter cost. Scarcely, indeed, can any but smugglers now exist, the fair trader having been beaten out of the market by hungry adventurers; who, on any change of circumstances, having no particular ties here, will not fail to quit this country, as they have done their own, for the purpose of following their illicit and perjured avocations.

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That it is the interest of this great commercial and manufacturing country to have "Good will towards men," must be evident even to the superficial; and is, indeed, so well understood by those who, from habit or education, have the means of forming a correct opinion on the subject, that nothing need be urged here in confirmation of, or to elucidate the fact. Unfortunately, however, peace does not lie in the power of one party only; and it is much to be feared, that many amongst ourselves even, are far from praying for this grand desideratum with sufficient sincerity, or fervour. After the many years of fluctuating warfare in which this country has been most justly, but unhappily engaged, the minds of men, actuated frequently even unknown to themselves by self-interest, become habituated to war, and accustomed to hear of a victory, on either side, with pain or pleasure, as it affects their interests, without once considering its concomitant horrors, or the direful effects produced in the families both of the victors and the vanquished. At the same time, experience ought to have taught us, that by this long-continued and fatal contest between Great Britain and France, nothing has yet been obtained by either party, any how worth

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weighing

weighing against the distresses occasioned by war, or the enviable blessings of peace, *national independence*, first on the part of France, and latterly, of this kingdom, *only* excepted.

Now all men are agreed, that the surest and speediest mean of putting an end to this greatest of all evils is, to make the domestic and timid feel its pressure, as well as the more exposed and the brave; and perhaps nothing could tend so effectually to shorten the period of the present gallant, but lamentable contest, as to produce in the minds of the leading men of the Cabinet of St. Cloud, and of their more Northern *Dependents*, a conviction that this United Kingdom, with her colonies, is independent of the rest of the world for every commodity, for the supply of which we have been in the habit of relying upon others. It is difficult to conjecture, what may be the consequences of the Northern Nations being compelled to forego their trade with these islands, which forms so immense a part of the whole of their foreign commerce, and is indubitably the principal mart for their inland productions; and to which must be added, the formidable impediments which Great Britain, by her invincible navy, can,

can, doth, and will continue to create, to the maritime commerce of her opposing Belligerents; which powerful hostilities amount nearly to an annihilation of their every means of barter and commercial intercourse. Whether under such afflictive circumstances we ought to expect a new eruption of the starving Barbarians of the North, upon their more luxurious and effeminate Southern Neighbours, or a slow and snail-like-moving attention to, and cultivating of their own wants (perhaps under such a concatenation of evils physically impossible), or a renewal of one of those sad and ever-to-be abominated tragedies which have so repeatedly deprived the principal of the Northern Powers of its Monarchs, and a consequent peace with a nation, having no interest in continuing the war: which of these, or what other effects may follow, it is difficult, if not impossible, to foresee, and must therefore be left to the solution of time and the development of the will of the Divinity! As none, however, of these consequences appear to rest entirely with us, the most wise part for England to take would seem to be, to cultivate within herself every resource she, (including her colonies,) possesses, and which

it is presumed that she can do, to an extent utterly unknown to the world at large.

The Author of this humble Address would beg here, in returning his thanks to J. Jepson Oddy, Esquire, to accompany them with his tribute of admiration and praise for his indefatigability, and most liberal and enlarged commercial and general knowledge; and to apprise the reader, that he (the Author), is indebted for much of the information he is now enabled thus humbly to produce to the British Public and to the World, to this Gentleman's "European Commerce," without which this lowly attempt must have assumed a form comparatively insignificant.

After an attentive perusal of the following facts, which are in unison with the public records, no doubt will remain of the immense advantages and savings which will result to this country from consuming its own natural and colonial productions, provided these can be brought into the market, some in the state in which they are now used, and some to be manufactured to

answer

answer as temporary or permanent substitutes for the articles mentioned. That we have, or may have these products within ourselves in inexhaustible quantities, and that they are as valuable and satisfactory in quality as in quantity, will be likewise made to appear.

HEMP, FLAX, HEMP SEED, FLAX OR LINT SEED, AND YARN.

THESE articles are placed under one head, partly because of a similar condensation, in one part of Mr. Oddy's masterly work, and partly on account of their close affinity, being frequently applied to similar purposes, and the produce of two vegetables bearing so near a resemblance to each other. Further, the Author being bound in duty, particularly at the present eventful period, to study the inestimable value of the time of those to whom this Address is more immediately submitted, is anxious to be as brief as the nature of his subject will any how allow; being confident, that from the very title page he must have been anticipated in a variety (perhaps most) of his observations, by many of those who, as Legislators, and better informed individuals, have

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an undoubted right, to every indulgence in this respect. It appears, that the official value of these articles imported upon an average of seven years, ending 1803, was not less than £1,700,000, probably, in real value, not less than £4,000,000!— That we could grow the whole of these importations amongst ourselves, admits of no doubt, because of the immense quantities of waste lands in this island, and her sister one of Ireland; and the value of so doing must be evident, when we consider also that the growth of these crops, little, if at all, impoverishes the soil, and that they may be grown between other crops; besides, that by employing in their dressing and manufacture the poor and the aged, who otherwise remain a burthen on the land, the poor rates would be greatly diminished, which would go far towards rewarding the farmer and land-holder, for their increased industry and perseverance. A moderate premium (to be easily and speedily recovered), might be allowed by Government, at — per acre, *planted* with flax or hemp, and not as hitherto for a certain *quantity* produced: as in case of a good crop, the quantity pays for its own production; whilst hitherto, in cases of failure, when the remuneration has been wanted, it has
been

been withheld. This premium from Government, on so valuable a crop, would be called for only in the infancy of its introduction, during which time an increased duty on import would be adequate to the payment of the bounty on the home production, and the consequent high price would tend also to produce the necessary supply. The quantity on hand being immense, no danger could follow from this experiment; more especially, as it appears from the Transactions of the Adelphi Society for the Encouragement of Arts, &c. that an excellent substitute for these articles can be produced by manufacturing rigging, &c. from wool. Neither need the farmer fear any depression in price from the want of a demand, since the sail and cordage of a ship of the line, of the first rate, require at the least 80 tons of raw hemp, for the purpose of sending her to sea. To produce the whole of our imports of these indispensable and costly articles, it would only require about 200,000 acres of land to be brought into cultivation, supposing none to be grown upon the lands already in that state; and it is pretty accurately ascertained, that in England alone the uncultivated land amounts to 22 millions of acres.

BRISTLES.

BRISILES.

THESE and other inferior articles can, for reasons already alleged, be but cursorily touched upon, and the export of articles of the very first necessity from these islands, will always afford an adequate supply, notwithstanding any prohibitory laws our inveterate enemies and most execrable Corsican adversary may be enabled to enact, not to mention those substitutes of whalebone, or other articles, which British ingenuity will not fail to supply.

TALLOW.

THE prodigious increase in the consumption and consequent necessary importation of this article, has become great, beyond the possible expectation of those whose knowledge of the fact and its causes, is not founded upon practical, oral, or acquired information. The great increase in the population of these islands, and the increasing luxury of their habits, have contributed, together with the increase of our different
manufactories,

manufactories, to swell this to a most tremendous amount. Indeed, few but those in the habit of attending to matters of this nature, would believe that it costs this kingdom between two and three millions of pounds sterling per year for the importation of this one article. The fact is, however, incontrovertibly established, and it is notorious, that this sum is principally paid to Russia; the quantity imported from the Spanish and Portuguese American colonies, or elsewhere, being, even since our alliance with the mother countries, comparatively trivial. The quantity of tallow imported by this kingdom from the city of Petersburg alone, in 1806, amounted by the Custom House returns, to no less than 86 millions of pounds weight! The benefit of light, particularly in countries so far from the equator as we are placed, is, however, so inestimable, that few (particularly of those advanced in life), would think much of any reasonable expence to procure so inestimable an advantage: if, however, it can be made to appear, that the whole of this expenditure can be saved, and that advantageously to us and to those from whom we import, whose price of the commodity will be reduced by its abundance in their country, it is hoped that the Author
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will be excused for touching upon an object of such great national importance.

Certainly upon no subject have the practices of mankind differed more, or their prejudices run higher, than upon the different means of procuring artificial light. The savage nations seem to have but a very slight knowledge of this inestimable discovery, and are obliged to rest satisfied with the faint glimmerings of their scanty embers. A little farther advanced from barbarism, we find some tribes of the Russians, purchasing this luxury at the expence of ever-dying matches; whilst some are so fortunate as to be able to procure scanty supplies of fish oil. If we advance another step, we find tallow in use; and, amongst the highest classes, the still more pure light from spermaceti and wax tapers. Here our latest parents would have thought that refinement ceased; but no: such is the infinitude of Nature and the Arts, that it has been long discovered, that the inflammable air contained in the different sorts of fuel may be separated from the other component parts thereof, and that being an elastic fluid, it may be conveyed in different directions, *ad libitum*: and yet, although this

this has been known for nearly a century, it was reserved for our days to bring this most valuable discovery into practical effect; and it is now recorded in the Transactions of the Royal Society, that inflammable air may be so conducted, as to light houses and manufactories in the best of all manners, the light being purer, better, and more wholesome than any yet produced, and that free of all expence, the erecting of the necessary machinery only excepted; and that expence will be saved in a few months. It is curious, that this discovery should be in practical use in nearly all the great manufacturing towns of England and Scotland, the metropolis excepted. From this pure elementary light no spark can issue, an advantage evidently material.

TAR AND PITCH.

THESE, as articles of commerce, are very inferior in point of extent and value to the one preceding, but as indispensable to the maintenance of our naval superiority, or existence, of infinite consequence; and although every one is acquainted with the fact of a considerable quantity of these being produced by our coke and tar

manufactories, yet few can be supposed to be aware, that the coals imported into London alone, are capable by decomposition, of producing upwards of 60,000 barrels of these articles, of 300lb. weight each, annually, and that of superior quality to any now in the market; as has been established in evidence by the Gas Light Company, before a Committee of the Honourable House of Commons, during the last Sessions.

IRON.

OF this valuable mineral the Writer has certain information, that the importation is upon the decrease; but it appears from Mr. Oddy's European Commerce, p. 555, that upon an average of seven years, ending 1803, we did not pay less to foreigners than £700,000 per annum for this commodity. It is certain, that our own stores are inexhaustible by some hundreds of generations: the Writer therefore humbly submits, that a heavy tax on the importation, *from places at war with us*, would not occasion any want of the article, but would prove in the first instance a source of revenue, and, at the same time, give great encouragement to British industry and productiveness.

TIMBER.

TIMBER.

THIS has been placed as the last article, because of the Writer's anxiety to prove our own resources to be immense; here, however, he fears we must have recourse to importation. Timber is so vital an article to these realms, that the only reason of one's lamenting the immense sums paid to the Baltic Powers for wood is, that we have inexhaustible supplies in our North American possessions. Of these the Author has hitherto forbore to speak, for the purpose of shewing that, to use a common phrase, 'we have two strings to our bow:' for every one will recollect, that of every article which has been touched upon (tallow perhaps excepted), immense supplies might be obtained from Canada, Nova Scotia, and the other British North American dominions. In respect to the article of timber in particular, the Author would recommend the same regulations, as to duties, as under the preceding head. This would give immense weight to those colonies; and, surely, every possible attention and encouragement should be given to them; for, were only one tenth part of the money sent out of the kingdom

dom to the ungrateful Barbarians of the North, to reach British America, this American Empire of ours would not fail to be wonderously improved and cultivated, and cleared, and peopled, and employment and lands might be found for all our immense emigrations, and those to the colonies or territories of our enemies, or pseudo-friends, prevented: nor would there, if proper encouragement were held out by Government, be wanting some generous spirits like the beneficent Lord Selkirk, to accompany, uphold, encourage, and cherish, these hardy and most valuable men in their Transatlantic emigrations. The British American colonies might then bid defiance to the utmost efforts of their restless and violent neighbours, should they ever presume to carry their insolence to the length of positive hostilities; nay, perhaps we might be thus enabled by land to shew the same boundless generosity and forbearance, which we now shew towards them on Britain's own element. It is due to the Government here to observe, that the substance of these remarks, has not been altogether overlooked; but that Surveyors are now sending out, and other measures taking and in contemplation, to encourage and cultivate this valuable part of the British Empire.

CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN the hints above given shall be to any extent, or fully carried into practice, we may expect to see our gold coin return to circulation, for the effect will cease with the cause, and the true cause of its disappearance, is undoubtedly the miserable depression of the European exchanges, occasioned by the folly of attending to every application, principally made by, or at the instigation of parties already alluded to, for Licences to import immense quantities of articles of convenience or luxury, whilst nothing is taken from this country in return, but those of *the very first necessity*; and the balance of course, is always, in BULLION. In the whole of frenchified Europe, which but for our repeated timely and kind phlebotomy, would long since have expired of a plethora, (and the relaxation in the Berlin and Milan Decrees, subsequent to the late official declaration of the farmers being *unable to vend their corn*, prove her again to have been in serious danger); and in America, (equally gorged,) the language seems to be, "Let us export all we can, and notwithstanding any inconveniences we may suffer, import nothing, and
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England will soon be drained of her last guinea:" and yet poor John Bull is too much worried by quarrels and party dissensions at home, to perceive the deep game playing against him abroad; but proceeds sluggishly on, "straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or a fool to the correction of the stocks."

The Author, in Conclusion, not having taken any pains to ascertain the amount of the *Fees* payable on the granting the Licences in question, begs to assure the reader, that they either understand, or *practice* "these things better in France;" aye, and in America likewise; and that unless some modification takes place in this latter respect, we shall have no gold or silver coin left, either for subsidies (so generally over-rated), or to help ourselves in case of a failure in our crops of corn, or otherwise. The effect which will be produced, should the present system be suffered to continue, upon our paper currency, has been explained by far abler pens.

THE END.