

COMMONWEALTH OR EMPIRE

GOLDWIN SMITH

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Commonwealth or Empire

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# Commonwealth or Empire

A BYSTANDER'S VIEW OF  
THE QUESTION

BY

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## COMMONWEALTH OR EMPIRE

IN the last Presidential election issues were mixed. The verdict consequently was uncertain. Which issue was paramount was a question greatly debated among Americans. Some said currency was paramount, and voted against a debasement of the coin which would no doubt have led to commercial disaster, and could have attractions only as a measure of partial relief, at a period of depression and suffering from mortgage debt. Alarm was at the same time created and votes probably were determined by language menacing to the Supreme Court and judicial authority in general, as well as by denunciations of the action of the Federal Government in the suppression of labour riots. But let the paramount issue for Americans be what it might, for the world at large it

was and is that between the Commonwealth and Empire. Shall the American Republic be what it has hitherto been, follow its own destiny, and do what it can to fulfil the special hopes which humanity has founded on it; or shall it slide into an imitation of European Imperialism, and be drawn, with the military powers of Europe, into a career of conquest and domination over subject races, with the political liabilities which such a career entails? This was and is the main issue for humanity. Seldom has a nation been brought so distinctly as the American nation now is to the parting of the ways. Never has a nation's choice been more important to mankind.

Against the Commonwealth three forces, distinct but convergent, are now arrayed. They are Plutocracy, Militarism, and Imperialism. The three instinctively conspire; to the plutocrat Imperialism is politically congenial, while he feels that militarism impregnates society with a spirit of conservatism, and may in case of a conflict of classes furnish a useful force of repression.

Puritan New England could not last, though

it formed the foundation and has left traces of itself in the moral force which in this election offered a notable resistance to the tidal wave. The Puritan settlement and the United States in general were bound to undergo the influences of the world's progress, share the advance of thought, and be embraced in the world-unifying influences of electricity and steam. Before the close of the seventeenth century, in fact, vital change had set in. The original elements were largely diluted by foreign inflow, though this has been assimilated to a wonderful extent. Still, the American Republic was the home of democracy and the hope of labour. It promised to do something more than the Old World toward correcting the injustice of nature, equalizing the human lot, and making the community a community indeed. The eyes of the masses everywhere were turned to it. To the enemies of equality and popular government it was an object of aversion and alarm. Loud, almost frenzied, was the shout of exultation with which, at the outbreak of Secession, Aristocracy and Plutocracy in Europe hailed its apparent fall. It had remained

free from Socialism, other than imported, thus proving the soundness of its principle, which is that of freedom, self-help, and self-development under the necessary restraints of the law.

Nowhere is English life better or more attractive than in a country parish, with a kind and conscientious squire, good ladies, an active pastor, a well-to-do tenantry, and a contented peasantry. Yet passing from this to an American village, an observer felt that he had come to something which had more of the true spirit of a community. He felt that by the social equality and general friendliness which prevailed, by the spontaneous obedience to law which had no force to support it but that of a single constable, by the general intelligence and the common interest in public questions, one step at least had been made towards something like the fulfilment of the social ideal. In the great cities, besides the special influences of city life, there were unassimilated immigration and de-Americanized wealth. But, setting aside these two elements, there was more of the community in an American than in a European city, and this in spite of municipal mis-

government carried in some cases to an extent which all deplore.

If the Commonwealth partly lost its old Puritan support in the East, in the West there had been developed a social and political element more energetically democratic, while it was entirely free from ecclesiastical restraint. The thoroughly American spirit of the West was shown by the part which it played on the side of the Union in the Civil War. Its temper is radically opposed to anything monarchical or aristocratic; and if it has on this occasion voted for a policy of aggrandizement and war, the cause seems to be rather a vehemence of character still breathing of frontier life, than anything which would render the West more prone to Imperialism than New England.

There appeared to be the best reason, at all events, for hoping that humanity had here been finally rid of two of its greatest banes in the Old World,—standing armies and State Churches. Of State Churches it had apparently seen the last vestige depart when religious liberty and equality finally triumphed over the

lingering vestiges of Puritan ecclesiasticism in New England; though the intermeddling of Churches with politics, which is another phase of the same evil, unhappily had not ceased. Of the growth of a standing army, it seemed, there could be no danger when there was no danger of war; the only military force necessary being one sufficient to secure at need the ascendancy of order in a Commonwealth which was daily receiving foreign elements little imbued with the freeman's respect for law. The vast army called out in defence of the Union against Secession remained in spirit an army of citizens; the war over, it was disbanded with perfect ease, and fell back into the ranks of industry, much to the amazement and not a little to the disappointment of European ill-wishers of the Republic, who, looking to European experience, fancied that a despotism founded on the support of the victorious soldiery must be the outcome of the war. It seemed that peace might be preached to all nations and governments more effectually than any International Conference could preach it by the spectacle of a mighty nation thriving beyond the other

nations by industry and living on friendly terms with all its fellows, yet respected by the world, and influencing the world by its example. If the national life which had produced and which sustained the institutions, civilization, and wealth of the United States was not "strenuous" in the way of aggression and destruction, there was another way in which it was strenuous in the highest degree. If compared with old war powers it lacked the glory of war, at least of wars of rapine, it did not lack the glory of peace and home.

But a new force has come upon the scene, that of Plutocracy, which, if its power continues to increase, must work a serious change in the spirit of institutions, though it may be without disturbing Republican forms and names. The productions of a new and immensely rich continent, rapidly developed and manipulated commercially by master hands, railway and telegraph construction on the largest scale, financial speculation on a scale equally large, combined with the action of protective tariffs, which have enabled groups of capitalists to take toll of the consumer,

have given birth to fortunes unprecedented in their magnitude, and having, through the influence wielded by their possessors over the financial and commercial world, a constant tendency to increase. There is now an apparent prospect of still further concentration, and of fortunes still more swollen, since the forces of commercial and industrial aggregation have begun to work, creating gigantic Trusts, the largest share of the profits of which fall to those by whom the Trust is organized and managed. The revenues of one of the multimillionnaires already exceed those of kings. They far exceed the revenues of that Thellusson estate, the magnitude of which frightened the British Parliament into an Act restricting accumulations for the future.

The power of wealth in the present age is great. Nor can we easily see what there will be to balance it. Religious aspirations, which hitherto have formed at least something of a counter-charm, are visibly losing their force. If Humanitarian aspirations are destined ever to supply their place, as the votaries of a religion of Humanity believe,



that hour has not yet come; nor is there anything at present to herald its speedy coming. Wealth, with little regard to its source, is becoming almost an object of our social worship. Intellect, literary or scientific, culture, and art may still keep up a struggle against riches for social ascendancy, but they will hardly be able to hold their own. Popularity the multimillionnaire purchases with ease, at a cost which to him is no sacrifice; while the community, even when the munificence is the noblest, is put rather too much in the attitude of receiving alms.

That money can command Legislatures and Municipalities is too well known. Of this every day produces proofs. Over tariff legislation the nation seems to lose control, so great is the power of a group of protected interests bringing their pressure to bear in concert upon Congress. The influence of money in elections is not disguised. A Senatorship of the United States has been almost openly bought. To carry a Presidential election, the party of the rich puts a vast fund into skilful hands. Wealth can take posses-

sion of the organs of the press, and through them influence opinion; for though a journal, to keep up its circulation, must study public sentiment, it may reciprocally mould that sentiment, not only through its editorials but perhaps still more through its version of the news. Very great, notoriously, has been the power of Railway Companies in California and elsewhere; and this power is practically wielded by a few hands. We should be most unwilling to believe that the Universities, as seems in some quarters to be feared, are in danger of plutocratic domination.

There is no use in raving about anything. At the same time there is no use in denying that the inordinate accumulation of wealth, with the irresponsible power attached to it, in a few hands, is dangerous to society and to the State. We are told that this tendency is natural; that it is the result of economic forces against which it is vain to contend. Other things are natural which yet are not blessings, and which, if we could, we would avert. The present tendency to overcrowding in cities is natural, desirable it is not.

Only an economical anarchist will desire to array class against class, labour against capital; to interfere with the discharge by the capitalist of his necessary function in the conduct of industry; to withhold from him his fair gains; or to deprive him of his just influence in the political sphere. To the capitalist, as society now is, we must owe the organization of great enterprises and the execution of great works. Yet it would surely be an evil day for the community on which supreme power should pass into the irresponsible hands of accumulated wealth. To some such consummation, however, things seem now to be tending as they tended to territorial lordship at the opening of the feudal era.

Much of this wealth has unquestionably been made by undertakings beneficial to the community. Some has been made in ways not so beneficial. But the best of millionnaires has heirs, whose characters, cradled in idleness and luxury, would be ill trusted with power over the State. The feudal Lord had duties, social, political, and military, so on-

erous that in the opinion of an eminent historian their mere burden shortened life. The modern British land-owner has local duties which, if not so onerous as those of the feudal Lord, still help to save him from becoming a mere sybarite. The heir of a financial millionaire has no such salt of necessary duty to save his character from corruption.

It is vain to rail at a class for following its natural bent. The plutocratic class, after all, is doing no more. But its natural bent is anti-democratic. Its ostentatious prodigality and luxury are a defiance of democratic sentiment and subversive of democratic manners. At heart it sighs for a court and aristocracy. It worships anything royal or aristocratic. It barter the hands of its daughters and its millions for European titles. It imitates, and even outvies in some things, the gilding of European nobility. Its social centre is gradually shifting from America, where its inclinations are still in some measure controlled, to England, where it can get more homage and subserviency for its wealth, take hold on the mantle of high society, hope perhaps in

the end to win its way to the circle of Royalty, and even, if it becomes naturalized, itself to wear a coronet or a star.

Pitt tried to transplant aristocracy to Canada. He failed, as Fox told him he would ; the plant would not take root in the soil of the New World. Yet a way of introducing aristocracy into the New World without actual transplantation has been found. British Peerages, Baronetcies, Knighthoods, and minor badges of rank, besides showers of military decorations, are conferred on Colonists. Americans naturalized by a residence of two years in Canada become eligible to these distinctions. More than one of them has been knighted. Nor does the little Court of Ottawa fail to attract American courtiers to its shrine. The Canadian Calendar comprehends a list of titled Canadians which forms a miniature Peerage.

The craving for aristocracy goes so high that the furniture of a house in an American city, because a duke has lived in it, fetches extraordinary prices, while there is special eagerness to buy a chair in which His Grace can be proved to have sat. There is an Amer-

ican "Burke" containing, we are told, upwards of seven hundred coats of arms of American families, with their lions rampant, helmets, men in armour, and feudal mottoes. On the other hand British aristocracy opens its arms to the new aspirant, particularly when its acres are mortgaged. The American who offered a large fee to any English lady of title who would push his daughter in high society, might have saved his money. His bank account would have sufficed.

The political colours of American plutocracy were plainly shown on the occasion of the South African war. The drawing rooms of New York at once declared themselves on the side of the drawing rooms of London, and a concert, given practically in aid of the war, was attended, we were told, by the whole world of New York fashion.

Of the furtive extinction of popular government without change of constitutional forms by the action of wealth, we have at least one historic example. It was thus that Florence was converted from a Republic into a Principality under the absolute government of the

Medici. The head of the house of Medici accumulated an enormous fortune; won popularity by the crafty munificence with which he expended a part of it; bought up all the springs of government; and was thus enabled to bequeath a virtual despotism to his son. His usurpation, it is right to say, was aided by the unwise and unrighteous ambition of his countrymen, who, by trampling on the liberty of Pisa and other sister communities, had impaired the spirit of liberty in themselves, as well as by the factious turbulence of Florentine democracy which made quiet citizens long for repose. The example and the warning of Florence are on a very small scale; so was the fortune of Cosmo de' Medici compared with those the influence of which is now growing in the American Republic.

We can see how wealth might, in a mercenary age, without any formal change of the American constitution, practically possess itself of supreme power. The process may almost be said to have already begun. Power is evidently settling in the Senate, which is more permanent than the popular

House, less unwieldy, and better organized; the House, owing to its unmanageable number, the shortness of the tenure, the consequent inexperience of members, and the lack of efficient organization, being comparatively unable to bring its force to bear. It is manifest that elections to Senatorships can be controlled by wealth. By the equality of the small to the large States in representation, an oligarchical character is given to the body. The mode of election, not by popular vote, but by a conclave, facilitates personal corruption. The people may desire to change the mode, but the Senate has practically power to withhold the question from their vote, while the equal representation of the small States, which would naturally be the most venal, is placed beyond the power of amendment. The President may be and indeed has been brought greatly under the sway of the Senate. If to anyone such a forecast seems visionary, let him ask himself whether a few years ago he could have dreamed that the principles of the Declaration of Independence would be discarded and almost derided; that



dominion over other races would be forcibly assumed; and that American citizens would be heard passionately calling upon their Government to shoot down as rebels people struggling for their independence against a foreign yoke.

Millionnairism was for some time disunited and timid, shrinking from any visible exercise of its influence and even from bringing itself under the public eye. It is now becoming at once bolder and more united. It is learning to turn its wealth into power. In the late contest its union seems to have been almost complete. Even a Silver King obeyed, against the bias of individual interest, the stronger bias of his class.

The violence of the rupture between the American Colonies of Great Britain and their Mother Country was in itself infinitely to be deplored; but it had a redeeming feature; it preserved American originality, which, had the filial connection continued, might have been gradually lost. The American Colonies, after all, were shoots thrown off from a full-grown civilization. The general indication of history

is that greatness comes, not from such offsets, but from the wild stock which has the germ of independent life in itself. The Greater Greece was much the lesser in everything but bulk. So far as we can see, Carthage, though an enlarged, was an inferior Tyre. Little, except of a material kind, has hitherto come of colonies in later days owing their birth to adult civilization, such as those of Spain, Portugal, Holland, or France. The American Colonies of Great Britain were founded, not merely by emigration, but by secession, religious, political, or social, and were ultimately torn away from the Mother Country by a political convulsion. These things together seemed to give them a life of their own. A marked and even bitter antagonism was for some time the result. This, so far as the American Plutocracy is concerned, is now giving way to the force of social attraction. That the ancient antagonism should cease, that all its traces should be effaced, and its bitterness be replaced by perfect amity, is what right-minded men on both sides desire and do their best to bring

about. But it is not desirable, either for America or for humanity, that American civilization should be reabsorbed into that of the Old Country or that the original and independent life of America should be lost.

The rapid growth of plutocratic influence is peculiar, in intensity at least, to the United States. But America is also struck by the sudden gust of Militarism and Imperialism which threatens to reverse the progress made by reason, economical government, and international morality during the last half century; to give the world up again to the demon of war; to arm every nation against the rest; to take the bread from the mouth of labour and spend it in the apparatus of destruction. There seems to have come over us a sort of satiety of civilization, a hankering for a return to robust barbarism with its reign of force and disregard of moral ties. Churches, most of them, are carried away by the prevailing impulse, and lend the sanction of the Gospel to the love of war. The change of sentiment

extends even to sports. Prize-fighting comes again into vogue; and a prize-fight has been attended by women. Of each of the principal European nations a vast proportion is in arms, withdrawn from productive industry, the fruits of which it consumes; though between the people of one nation and the people of another there is no assignable cause of quarrel. Those who hold the theory of tides in human history, may point to this as a tidal wave. But the chief cause of the cataclysm probably is the weakening by scepticism of our allegiance to religious principles of humanity and fraternity which hitherto have not only been formally held sacred, but retained a certain amount of real force. In the age of Machiavel an eclipse of religious faith was attended by a loosening of morality. The present eclipse of religious faith seems to be producing a similar effect. A writer, defending the annexation of Cuba in defiance of pledges, says that "if morality is outraged, it must look for compensation elsewhere." He gives frank expression to a growing sentiment.

We all know that war is, and till human

nature shall have been greatly changed, will be necessary for self-defence or for the police of nations. We all know that the profession of arms is consequently indispensable. We all know that the character of the soldier has its special virtues, with which society could hardly afford to part; though the soldier's unreasoning submission to discipline is a different thing from a freeman's reasonable submission to law; while the idea that the discipline of the camp is the only discipline is belied by the service of our railways, our mercantile marine, and all our great industrial establishments. But now come teachers, ecclesiastical dignitaries among the number, who tell us that war is not only an occasional necessity, but a good thing in itself, and a moral tonic "saving nations from the eating canker of those vices which too often grow up in a long continuance of peace." The words are those of an eminent English ecclesiastic who does not shrink from quoting such lines as, —

"That God's most perfect instrument,  
In working out a pure intent,  
Is man arrayed for mutual slaughter  
Yea, Carnage is His daughter."

“War,” says the same writer in a high-strung passage, “is but the collective form of the age-long, unceasing conflict of the human race against the usurpations of tyrannous evil. It is a fraction of that Armageddon struggle, described in the Apocalypse, in which the Son of God rides forth at the head of all His saints to subdue the machinations of the devil and his angels.” Such language held in such a quarter surely warns us of the existence of an extraordinary excitement against which we shall do well to be on our guard.

“There are whole books of the Old Testament,” we are told, “which ring with the clash of conflict.” There are books of the Old Testament which ring with the shrieks of the people of Canaanitish cities butchered without regard for age or sex by an invading tribe, or with the groans of the inhabitants of captured towns tortured by the conqueror in brick kilns or under harrows of iron. There are also passages of tribal or priestly ferocity, such as the murder of Sisera or the slaying of Agag. But the ideal Hebrew polity is not militarist. It is much the reverse. The Jew is bidden, trusting

in God, to do his duty in battle for his country, which was threatened on all sides by aggressive powers; but there is to be no standing army, only the national militia called out by the officers of the tribes, with captains appointed for the occasion. Nor is service compulsory; the man who has built a new house and not dedicated it, the man who has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it, the man who has betrothed a wife and not taken her, are discharged; so is any man who will plead that he is fearful and faint-hearted (Deut. xx. 1-9). There is no special exaltation, as at Rome, of prowess in war; no heaven like that of the Koran for those who die fighting for the true God. National defence is a duty; but the blessing, even of the Old Testament, is Peace.

We are told that in the New Testament Christ and John the Baptist recognize war and the soldier's trade. No doubt they do. Their object was to change, not institutions, but the heart. If they had succeeded in changing the heart of all mankind, there would have been an end of the soldier's trade.

Again a learned professor writes:—

“War, therefore I would define as a phase in the life-effort of the State towards completer self-realization, a phase of the eternal *nisus*, the perpetual omnipresent strife of all being towards self-fulfilment. Destruction is not its aim, but the intensification of the life, whether of the conquering or of the conquered State. War is thus a manifestation of the world-spirit in the form the most sublime and awful that can enthrall the contemplation of man. It is an action radiating from the same source as the heroisms, the essential agonies, conflicts, of all life.”

You declare war upon people, you invade their country, kill thousands of them, deport the survivors, sack and burn their homesteads, deprive them of their independence and of their existence as a nation, set your foot upon their necks in the insolence of conquest; all this for the purpose of intensifying their national life as well as your own! Again, it must be said that a spirit strange and almost delirious is abroad.

There is a disposition on the part of some of these closet warriors to treat with levity those



who think that there is enough of misery, pain, and bereavement in the world without adding the horrors of war. If they had only seen the contents of a field hospital after a battle! However, in those who fight, the battle calls forth heroic qualities. What sort of qualities does it call forth in those who do not fight, but stay at home gloating over telegraphic reports of carnage, or making night hideous with the orgies of victory?

Tennyson, in a well-known passage of "Maud," inspired by that Crimean war which has now not a single defender, gives rapturous expression to his belief that the mean vices which peace has bred will be banished by the ennobling influence of war. Is there the slightest reason for believing that in that case or in any case war, as war, ever did banish the mean vices? A struggle for a noble cause no doubt ennobles a nation. But then it is the cause that does it, not the mere war. So, a just war may unite a nation; though the war of 1812, which American historians say completed the union of the American confederation, was attended by a

violent party struggle, and gave birth to the Hartford Convention. Besides, we have no right to heal our own dissensions by breaking our neighbour's head.

That a nation, if it is not in a constant state of preparation for war, and of appeal to the martial sentiment, must become enervated and lose its warlike qualities, can hardly be maintained after the War of Secession, in which an industrial nation, after a long peace, displayed an aptitude for war unsurpassed in history.

It is needless to say what is the relation of Militarism to political liberty. It has been the same ever since the military power enslaved Rome. England owed the preservation of her liberties to her immunity, as an island realm, from standing armies. She had nearly lost them when the mercenaries of James II. were encamped at Hounslow. They would, in fact, have been lost if William and his Dutchmen had not come to their rescue, perhaps even had Marlborough adhered to the King. The French Republic the other day narrowly escaped being for the third time subverted by its army. Had either Boulanger or Zurlinden

been politically daring, the Republic would probably have fallen. The American army of the War of Secession was not a standing army, but a nation in arms for self-preservation. The war over, it returned to industry. Yet it has given birth to a great military interest, and to a Pension List against which, though it exceeds the cost of the great standing armies of Europe, neither political party has entered a protest.

Since the time of James II. there has been in England no serious conflict between the Government and the people. Yet in the period between the end of the French war and the passing of the Reform Bill, Government, in its resistance to reform, may be said to have rested on military force, and had not the Duke of Wellington been, as he was, thoroughly constitutional, military force might have been more openly displayed. Fear of this caused an outbreak of popular feeling against the Duke, of which the iron shutters of Apsley House long remained the monument.

Clay made the war of 1812, and wished the fact inscribed on his tomb. But he lived to

deplore its consequence, the dictatorship of Jackson, and to modify his bellicose tone. He voted against a pension for the mother of Perry, the hero of Lake Erie, on the double ground that the pension system must be restricted, and that military distinction must not be made supreme. "As a friend to liberty and to the permanence of our institutions," he wrote to Francis Brooke, "I cannot consent in this early stage of their existence, by contributing to the election of a military chieftain, to give the strongest guaranty that the Republic would march in the fatal road which has conducted every other Republic to ruin."

Prussia had to put on her helmet for the purpose of uniting Germany and protecting the union against France. But what have been the consequences of her prolonged Militarism? Some Germans at all events complain that it rests like a curse upon her; that it deprives her people practically of a free constitution and extended suffrage; that it enslaves the Legislature, gags opinion, and fills the gaols with political offenders. If there is any measure of truth in these complaints, we

see once more how institutions formally free may be practically nullified by a predominating influence.

Military parade and glitter are in themselves a seductive counter-charm to political aspiration. British Toryism perceives this and acts on the perception. It is noted by American historians that there was nothing military in the demonstrations and processions which celebrated the acceptance of the Constitution and the birth of the American nation. But the parade of Queen Victoria's Jubilee was highly military, even the House of Commons having no place in it. A grand feature of it was the display of a magnificent war fleet. Its aspect was not so much that of the harvest-home of a reign of peaceful prosperity, as that of a show of war power. The nations responded by a general increase of war navies. With this passion for military show has gone a marked tendency to political reaction.

Military distinction seems always, for some reason which is difficult to divine, to have had a singular fascination for the American people. The British nation once put a famous soldier

at its head, but Wellington was not a mere soldier; he was a great European statesman, an oracle of conservative Europe. America has had five soldier Presidents besides other elections or nominations partly on military grounds. General Jackson on his prancing charger before the White House symbolizes the tendency.

In a navy there is no political danger. Not a word can be said against the creation of a navy strong enough to protect the widespread commerce of the United States, to guard American coasts from insult and forever put an end to all threats of bombarding New York. Nor can a word be said against the provision of such coaling stations as the navy may require.

Man, it seems, after all, must have a religion. Belief in Christianity and even in a God growing faint, he is taking to worshipping the Flag. Strict laws are to be made against the profanation of the sacred emblem by any common use. More than that, its unfurling, no matter in what quarrel, is to be held to constitute morality, so as to bind and at the same time to absolve the conscience of the citizen. Be the cause good or bad, the flag must be carried

on to victory, and everything done with that purpose is to be deemed right. With this worship of the flag goes the maxim, "My country, right or wrong," — Decatur's doctrine which was revived for President Polk's Mexican war. Of the superstition, which is the offspring of primitive ignorance or of blind tradition, we have had examples enough; this seems to be the first superstition consciously imposed on ourselves. Attachment to the flag as the symbol of the nation is right and natural; but the present transport of adoration leaves that sentiment far behind.

Nobody has conspired. Nobody need be suspected of any evil intentions. There is no design, perhaps not even a desire. But there is a tendency, against which loyal liegemen of the commonwealth may do well to guard.

"There is nothing," says the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, "more adverse to nature and reason than to hold in obedience remote countries and foreign nations, in opposition to their inclination and

interest. A torrent of Barbarians may pass over the earth, but an extensive empire must be supported by a refined system of policy and oppression; in the centre, an absolute power, prompt in action and rich in resources; a swift and easy communication with the extreme parts; fortifications to check the first effort of rebellion; a regular administration to protect and punish; and a well-disciplined army to inspire fear, without provoking discontent and despair."

Empire is the result of conquest, and conquest is the appetite of the savage man, who preys upon his fellows as the tiger preys upon the herd. In the case of the utter barbarian, the Assyrian, the Mogul, the Tartar, or the Turk, it is mere rapine and does nothing but destroy. In the case of the Saracen or the Spanish adventurer, it is less merely destructive and may partly compensate for its havoc by deposits of value, though the ruin of Mexican and Aztec civilization by Spanish conquerors is to be deplored. The Macedonian sowed the seeds of Greek culture, albeit of a culture far inferior to that of Athens. The Romans



extended the dominion of Latin law and government. Not that either Alexander or the Roman conqueror had any definite idea of a civilizing mission, or of anything but his own aggrandizement. The savage appetite reappeared in the Corsican Napoleon, who burned with a lust, not of conquest only, but of war. As civilization advances, the primitive passion loses its force. Even in military statesmen of the better class, such as Washington and Wellington, it ceases to exist. Policy conspires with humanity in its extinction, mere extension of territory being seen to bring not increase of strength but of weakness.

If you have Empire, you will, in one form or another, as Gibbon says, have absolute power. So it has been, from days of the Assyrian Empire down to the days of the Empire of Napoleon. So it will always be. In gaining a vast Empire abroad, Spain forfeited liberty at home. Already the President of the United States has, over the subject Filipinos, powers from the assumption of which Washington would have recoiled, and which would have filled Jefferson with dismay.

The adoption of Imperialism by Americans can hardly fail to carry with it a fundamental change in the moral foundations of their own Commonwealth. Other polities, such as that of England, may be based on constitutional tradition. That of the United States is based on established and almost consecrated principles. The Declaration of Independence, it is true, was a creation of the eighteenth century; its abstract doctrine of human equality belongs to the political philosophy of that era. But it has living force when it says, as in effect it does, that man shall not exercise lordship over man. When the people of the United States, after recognizing the Filipinos as their allies, bought them with their land of Spain, as they would buy the contents of a cattle-ranch or a sheep-fold, and proceeded to shoot them down for refusing to be delivered to the purchaser, they surely broke away from the principles on which their own polity is built, and compromised the national character formed on respect for those principles.

It is instructive to mark the political effect that Imperialism, with its inevitable consort,

Militarism, has already begun to produce in Great Britain. The party of Liberalism and Progress lies prostrate. That of Aristocracy or Plutocracy and reaction triumphs. Tories even begin to hope for fulfilment of the vision of Bolingbroke, afterwards reproduced by Disraeli; personal government in the shape of a patriot king, supported by monarchical masses against the democratic intelligence of the middle class, as the Bourbon despotism at Naples was supported by the multitude. There has unquestionably been, since the outbreak of Jingoism, an inflation of monarchical sentiment, and a perceptible disposition to revive the personal power of the Crown. Constitutional Conservatism, such as was that of Canning and Peel, is at a discount, and the political work of the last century seems in danger of being partly undone. The personal worship of Royalty and the parade of Royal state are being carried to a height unprecedented of late years. It is proposed to change the wording of the National Anthem, and for "our gracious King" to replace "our lord, the King." Imperial designations are creep-

ing into the place of those of constitutional Monarchy. There is perhaps a still more ominous sign of reaction. A Minister of the Crown, called to account for having had British citizens tried for treason by court martial, in a Colony where the courts were open, feels himself safe in answering with bravado.

The American Commonwealth had the largest population of freemen in the world, and one which was rapidly growing. Its heritage reached from Arctic regions to regions almost tropical, with a range of production embracing nearly everything needed or desired by man. The world was full of its inventions and its manufactures. It was the tutelary power of this continent. It was in the van of political progress. Its influence was felt more or less in the politics of all nations. If such a state was isolation, it was an isolation the influence of which was as wide as humanity.

But a tempter crept to the ear of the Commonwealth and whispered that all this was narrow and mean. The time, the tempter said, had come for an ampler life, for ceasing to listen to the saws of Washington's senile

prudence, for doffing the trader, and claiming a seat in the grand council of aristocratic and military nations. An appeal was made to something like the craving of the American girl for entrance into high European society, not without risk of the mortification with which the newcomer into a patrician circle is apt to meet.

At the same time, the world in general was being filled with the spirit of Jingoism, that curious reaction against peaceful and industrial civilization, as well as against international morality, already noted, which may perhaps be said to have partly had its source in a philosophy of materialism; Darwin's doctrine of the Survival of the Fittest being misconstrued, as if the strongest were the fittest, which, though true in the case of brutes, is untrue in the case of the moral and intellectual being, Man.

Commercial greed, however, has been a powerful factor. Over-production, which seems to prevail in the manufacturing countries, begets a general craving for new markets. The objects of the predatory attack on China were "spheres of influence," the command, that

is, of sections of country in which the predatory power might force the Chinese to buy its goods. For this, under the mask of punishing Chinese outrage, massacre and havoc were let loose upon that hapless land. Americans may well congratulate themselves on having been kept as a nation clear of these doings by a Government not yet thoroughly initiated in Imperialism, or emancipated from the ties of humanity. The South African war, again, was brought about largely by the desire of a commercial interest for more complete possession of the mines, though with that influence was blended national desire of Empire and of revenge for Majuba Hill. "The British flag," says Mr. Cecil Rhodes, "is the greatest of assets."

Capital is attracted by the prospect of exploiting new and rich fields of enterprise with servile labour, and this tendency to employ servile labour is a fact of which free labour, which would be in danger of suffering by the competition, would do well to take note.

Will commerce find in the end that it has best promoted its own interests by filling the

world with havoc? Will the Chinese market, for instance, be improved by a carnival of slaughter and destruction, with inevitable famine in its train? Will not the price of conquest in itself be a formidable offset to the profit? Last year's profit of trade with the Philippines is miserably small as compared with the expenditure on the conquest. It is true, the expenditure falls on the public, the gain accrues to the trader, who is active in support of a policy which serves his interest, while the public yawns over the dry details of national finance. As Adam Smith says: "To found a great Empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers, may, at first sight, appear a project fit only for a nation of shopkeepers. It is, however, a project altogether unfit for a nation of shopkeepers, but extremely fit for a nation whose government is influenced by shopkeepers. Such statesmen, and such statesmen only, are capable of fancying that they will find some advantage in employing the blood and treasure of their fellow-citizens to found and maintain such an empire."

How, in what circumstances, and under what inspiration, was the nation launched on this new career? Was the voice of its deliberate reason heard? Were wisdom and forecast at the helm? An attractive personality and a tragic death have encircled with a halo the head of President McKinley. But those who compare him to Lincoln are surely mistaken. Lincoln was a man of fixed principles and a settled policy. In applying his principles and giving effect to his policy, he wisely consulted the popular sentiment, with which he was, above all men, familiar. But he did not yield to pressure, or veer with the gale. Though open to counsel, he was an independent, almost a lonely, thinker. His religion was a simple belief in the God of righteousness, simply expressed. Admirers of President McKinley will tell you that he went unwillingly and under party pressure into the Spanish war. That eminent member of the Republican party, the late J. M. Forbes, of Massachusetts, has left on record his conviction that the war was made to keep a party in power. The American people,



as to one who was among them at the time it appeared, while they rightly wished to see Cuba free and Spanish power withdrawn from this hemisphere, neither desired nor expected war. The actual cause of war, so far as the people were concerned, it will be generally admitted, was the belief that the *Maine* had been blown up by the Spanish authorities. An unscrupulous Opposition set England on fire, and forced Walpole into a war with Spain, by the story of Jenkins's ear, which Jenkins said the Spaniards had cut off, but the incredulous said had been cut off in the pillory. Burke tells us that the authors of that war, which broke the peace of Europe, coolly washed their hands of it, and spoke of it with total unconcern. Territorial annexation having been disclaimed by the President, must have been accidental, not deliberate. The annexation of the Philippines was evidently the accidental result of Admiral Dewey's naval victory at Manila, not sanctioned by the deliberate judgment of the nation. When it had taken place, an appeal was made to the pride of the people, who

were called upon to uphold the flag, and keep what they were said to have won.

Timur the Tartar and Gengis Khan meant conquest and avowed it. They meant slaughter and avowed it, raising triumphal pyramids of heads. They had no philanthropic pretensions. The Imperialist of to-day, when he attacks the weak, burns their homes, takes possession of their land, and if they "rebel," sends "punitive expeditions against them," laps himself in the delusion that he is the elect instrument of destiny, or if he is pious, of God. What is his "destiny" or his "God" but the shadow of his own rapacity projected on the clouds? What had destiny or God or anything but human greed to do with the atrocities perpetrated in China?

Does the white man, in his overflowing philanthropy, want a burden? He has it at his own door. If he is a member of the British Parliament, let him step out into Whitechapel or Houndsditch, or let him read "The White Slaves of England," and see how in his own country the alkali-worker, the nail-maker, the slipper-maker, the wool-

comber, the white-lead maker, the chain-maker live.

In the United States the white man has a burden, such perhaps as no other nation has been called upon to bear. It would be hard, at least, to find any instance of a problem so arduous as that of the two races in the South. Where intermarriage is out of the question, social equality cannot exist; without social equality political equality is impossible, and a Republic in the true sense can hardly be. When hatred of race has mounted to such a pitch that the people of one race go out by thousands to see a man of the other race burnt alive, and carry away his charred bones or pieces of his singed garments as souvenirs; when they even photograph and phonograph his dying agonies; how can it be hoped that the two races will ever form one commonwealth? Can it even be hoped that they will ever dwell side by side in peace? Even the hospitable reception of a black man by the President is enough to call forth a storm of Southern indignation, and from a Senator a threat of massacre.

All ideas of the negro's dying out, all ideas of deporting him or corralling him have manifestly come to an end. Some of the firmest among English friends of the North at the time of the Civil War could not help viewing with deep misgiving the reincorporation of the Slave States. How is this problem to be solved? How is it to be solved by a Government which has practically no power of coercion, which cannot afford to estrange Southern votes? President McKinley, while he was preaching the love of law to the Filipinos with fire and sword, stood in the midst of a country where lawless lynching was going on, yet could not venture to protest.

To the black population of the Southern States is apparently soon to be added the black population of Cuba, while even the white population of Cuba is not American or truly Republican in character. Should expansion pursue that course, San Domingo and the West Indies, with their black millions and their alien civilization or barbarism, will probably be annexed. Grant strove hard

to bring about the annexation of San Domingo. The Isthmian canal will act as a lure to expansion on the continent southward. The slave-owner's dream of an Empire extending south may thus be practically fulfilled. What, then, will become of the American Commonwealth? One of two things apparently must ensue; either a radical change in the character of the nation and in the spirit, if not in the form of its institutions, or a second disruption. Have Expansionists looked ahead? Have they made up their minds what direction their expansion shall take, and considered, if it takes a southern direction, what is likely to be the effect? The decision cannot safely be left to traders, who are apt to care little for national character, or for anything but the immediate extension of their trade.

Mystical fancies about destined preëminence of race are invented to sanction conquest. The Anglo-Saxon race, we are told, has been marked out by Nature for universal rule, and commissioned to impose peace, that is its own supremacy, upon the world. Those who can cherish such an idea have little right to

sneer at the political metaphysics of the Declaration of Independence. The blood of the tribe which came from Germany with Hengst and Horsa, has been enormously diluted, even in the British Islands. Four-fifths of Ireland, the Highlands of Scotland, Wales, and much of the extreme west of England are Celtic. There must be millions of Irish or their descendants in Great Britain. The Scandinavian, Fleming, and French Huguenot have also their share in the compound. The British constitution is no doubt Teutonic, but though cast in the mould of aboriginal circumstance, it is not a mystical gift of blood. In the British Colonies, there is the same mixture. In Canada, there is a large body of French. In the population of the United States, the restlessness and enterprise of half a dozen races are blended. It belongs not to a tribe but to humanity, and to humanity, not to a tribe, ought its aspirations and its policy to belong. If the dream of Anglo-Israel is fatuous, hardly less so is that of Anglo-Saxon domination.

Never, surely, was a term more misapplied

than is "Expansion," when it is applied to the annexation of a country so many thousands of miles off, inhabited by a totally alien and probably restive population, and presenting not a source of military strength but a point of military weakness. Expansion is extension without breach of continuity, either territorial or of any other kind. Such was the incorporation of Louisiana; such was the incorporation of California. The clearest and happiest of all cases of Expansion would be Continental Union, if ever, with the good-will of Canada and her mother country, Continental Union should take place. Not only are the countries conterminous and interlocked, but their population, the bulk of it at least, is identical, while in their products they are complements of each other; Canada supplying timber, minerals, and water-power, the United States manufacturing on a large scale. The soundest and most conservative element of the United States would be reinforced by the fusion. But the two reproaches of statesmanship are the dealing of British statesmen with the Irish question and the dealing of

American statesmen with the question of Canada. Protectionism has now laid its grasp on the policy of the United States, and while nature proclaims a union, Tariff forbids the banns.

If Americans go into partnership with British Jingoism, will they not find themselves involved in an undertaking at once extensive and foreign to their interest? After the war with Napoleon and the destruction of the European navies Great Britain was left absolutely mistress of the sea. This position, no longer maintainable since the other navies have grown up, Great Britain is still struggling to maintain. Her widely scattered possessions, the fruits of her former predominance at sea, compel her to make the effort. For anyone of her rivals she may be more than a match; by greatly straining herself and burdening her people, she may be a match for any two of them; she cannot be a match for them all. They will combine to assert the independence of the seas. The Mediterranean, as England already forebodes, is likely to be the first scene of



such a conflict. Would it be possible to draw the American people into a tremendous struggle for the purpose of keeping the Mediterranean under British control?

Commercial gain would be the real object, commercial cupidity would be the sustaining principle, of the league. But in their commercial policy the two nations at present are diametrically opposed to each other, Great Britain being for free trade, America being for protection. That Great Britain will ever renounce free trade, under which her wealth has increased threefold, seems as unlikely as that the Thames will reverse its course. Mutterings of reaction, political rather than economical in their source, and local rather than national, are heard from time to time, but they die away.

A league between two States in different parts of the globe, bound together merely by origin or language, yet sworn to fight in each other's quarrels, whatever the cause was, would be a conspiracy against international morality and the independence of all nations such as would soon compel the world to

take arms for its overthrow. Nobody would be cajoled by such phrases as "spreading civilization" or "imposing universal peace." The world does not want to have anything imposed on it by an Anglo-Saxon league or by a combination of any kind.

The American Constitution is not suited for playing the British game. In England foreign policy remains in the same hands enough to preserve its continuity and the general identity of its aims. A Foreign Minister, retiring from office, still sits in Parliament, and still has his voice in the councils of the State, while the Foreign Office is largely in the hands of permanent officers of the highest class. But an American Secretary of State, retiring from office, hardly ever takes his seat in Congress, so that the thread of an Imperialist policy would be abruptly broken off every four years, and there could hardly be community of design or continuous coöperation with the Foreign Office of Great Britain. Instead of unity of counsels, angry divergence might result.

Other incongruities subversive of union

would be likely to crop up among the members of this vast Anglo-Saxon league. Great Britain is conservative. The United States are not socialistic. In Australia and New Zealand legislative socialism is strong and apparently on the increase. An English journalist, visiting a British colony, could say that he had never felt himself in so foreign a country; and though the expression was, no doubt, rhetorical, there was in it at least a grain of truth.

At this particular juncture, from pretty obvious motives, the aristocratic and plutocratic party in England is enfolding in a loving embrace the American democracy as a long-lost member of the family, whose relationship was unfortunately hidden from view at the crisis of Secession. At the same time it remains unchanged and propagates its political sentiment in Canada through its Canadian organs not less actively than before. This sudden impulse may be transitory as well as sudden. It is said that the Tory Government of Great Britain took the part of the United States in the councils of Europe at the time of the

war with Spain. If it did, the occasion was special and the motive here again was one on which no permanent reliance could be based.

The American people have generally gone rather to an extreme in their avowal of sympathy with struggles for independence: South American, Polish, Hungarian, or Irish. To their sympathy with the Irish struggle for independence they even sacrificed their gratitude to John Bright. Why has the expression of sympathy with the struggle of the South African Commonwealths for their existence been less heard? The answer given to that question by an Anti-Expansionist was: "The blood of the Filipinos chokes us."

The Republican party must have undergone a curious transformation. Who would have supposed forty years ago that it could become Imperialist and lean towards alliance with a party in England, identical with that which took so vehemently the side of the South at the time of the War of Secession? Party government in the United States seems to assume the singular form of two great standing organizations, recognized by the law and

almost overlaying the Constitution, which remain always on foot, but vary their attitude and policy before each presidential election.

If the Commonwealth yearns for a grander part, a grander part may be found, not in partnership with aggressive power, but rather in morally upholding against aggression human independence and the rights of every member of the family of nations. In the East, the influence of the Republic must be greater if she stands aloof from European powers to whose aggressive attitude this uprising of Chinese nationality with its murderous consequences is due.

A part of the dream is that the language of the Anglo-Saxon race shall become universal. It is a trader's idea. The English language, with all its noble qualities, the tongue of Shakespeare, Bacon, and Burke though it is, was shattered by the Norman Conquest, and has no terms of its own for science or philosophy, but is compelled for these purposes to borrow, and very awkwardly, from the Greek. Should we be gainers if the dream could be fulfilled, if all litera-

tures save one could be extinguished, and all diversities of mind attendant on varieties of speech could cease? What is the object of rolling everything flat?

It was beginning to be thought that the time had come when small nationalities were to be swallowed by great Empires. Against this the Boer and Filipino have entered protests of which humanity will hereafter take account. Upon what, except mere cupidity, territorial or commercial, does the assumption rest? Which of the two, dead uniformity or emulous variety, is most likely to conduce to human progress and to enrich the human store? Athens and Florence were small States. So was Judæa. So was even republican Rome. Holland is a very small State compared with the great monarchies of Europe. Sweden is a small State, yet, under Gustavus Adolphus, she saved European liberty. England herself, after all, apart from Scotland and Ireland, is not very much larger than the State of New York. Philip II. of Spain thought that she ought to be appended to his colossal realm.

This Imperialism threatens with destruction the wild stocks of humanity. A camp service of silver plate was dug up near an old battle-field in Germany. It was supposed to be the camp service of Varus, the armed missionary of Roman civilization and despotism, who had there been defeated by Arminius, the champion of barbarism and national independence. Suppose civilization had triumphed on that field and slain in its embryo the nation of Luther, Leibnitz, Lessing, Goethe, Von Humboldt, and Bismarck. Who shall say that the uncivilized or half-civilized races now being crushed by predatory powers in different parts of the world, may not have in them the germs of something which, spontaneously developed, would be as noble and worth as much to humanity as any of the powers themselves? The Boers were set down as barbarians standing in the path of a superior civilization, to which it was in the order of Providence that they should give way. Have they not shown themselves the equals of their conquerors in all that makes not only the thews and sinews, but the heart of a nation? And to what sort

of civilization is it that they are to give place? Johannesburg is described by a perfectly trustworthy witness as a city of gambling-houses, saloons, brothels, and prize-rings, exceeding even the ordinary depravity of gold-seeking settlements.

To open areas of territory, nature beckons the settler, and there ambition has a blameless and beneficent sphere. Unluckily, the areas are seldom so open as not to contain a native population. Then, there is too apt to be cruel work. 'The first business of the Colonist,' it was once said, 'is to extirpate the wild animals, and of the wild animals the most noxious is the wild man.' Natives have been killed with poisoned food. The civilized power sets up its flag. If, after that, the native presumptuously attempts to keep his land to himself, a "punitive expedition" goes forth with fire and sword. The effect on the character of the Colonist is not good. Some of the African tribes, no doubt, the Ashantis for example, are detestably savage. Whether their savagery in any case may have had its origin in the tribal wars kindled by the slave-trader, we can-



not tell. But the Maori, in New Zealand, seem to have been not less capable of improvement than the bands of Hengst and Horsa, or those of Clovis. Yet the Maori narrowly escaped extirpation. Supposing the Filipinos to be admitted to the advantages of peaceable intercourse and commerce, is there any reason for assuming that they would be incapable of advance in civilization? Japan was fortunate enough to get an independent start; otherwise she might now be classed among countries which "Duty taking the hand of Destiny" has marked for civilization by the sword.

Have we real ground in reason or experience for believing that any nation can succeed in forcibly imparting its political qualities to another nation, or in bringing another nation by force up to its own stage of progress? The instruments through which the tutelary nation must act are almost sure to be vitiated by the very process of their employment. Americans, President McKinley said, would not change their character at the tropics. He probably had in his mind a delegation of the best American morality.

But Boston does not go to Manila. To Manila go rough soldiers and commercial adventurers probably of the most adventurous class. There have been complaints of the multiplication of the haunts of dissipation and vice, while in the coarser minds contact with a subject and despised race in itself breeds insolence and, too often, inhumanity. So long as West Point governs the dependency, order may be maintained and material improvement may be enforced. But West Point cannot govern forever.

Empire and Emperor are Roman names, and the tradition of Roman Empire still floats before the fancy of modern Imperialists. It evidently floated before the fancy of Napoleon with his Senate, his Eagles, and his Legion of Honour. Yet nothing can more completely belong to the past. The Roman Empire had the world, the civilized world at least, or what was the same thing, the world round the Mediterranean, to itself. Its domain, though vast, and embracing a variety of races, was within a ring fence. The circumstances of its growth and organization were such as

have never since existed, and can never again exist. It united all the nations within its pale, albeit more in the way of common subjection than of brotherhood. It thus, no doubt, paved the way for the spread of Christianity, though the Gospel owed its success largely to the general misery which made men, despairing of this world, turn their thoughts to the Kingdom of Heaven. Its great merit was that it maintained peace, a peace, however, broken by the German war, the British war, the Jewish war, and the civil wars in the time of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, as well as by border wars with the Parthians, Dacians, and other tribes. Jurisprudence owed much to the Empire, but not its birth; it was born with the Twelve Tables, and might trace its origin to questions of right between different orders which arose in the early centuries of the Republic. Monuments of a less salutary influence than that to which we owe the Pandects are the huge substructions of the palace of the Caesars with their memories of colossal vice, and, hard by, the vast amphitheatre which was the scene of gladiatorial butcheries,

and the centre of similar butcheries throughout the Roman world. Literature languished and died. The people of the Imperial city became a debased, debauched, and mendicant rabble. The place of nationalities, some of them richly endowed and promising, which had been sacrificed to pile up the Empire, could not be filled by the satellites of a central despotism. The end everywhere was decay, moral, political, and social. At last over the wide expanse of Imperial corruption bands of uncorrupted barbarians stalked as conquerors to found new nations.

Contrast the work done for humanity by Rome with that done by Tyre, a city on an island less than three miles in circumference, which, as the soul of Phœnician enterprise, linked by commerce India, perhaps China, to the extreme West, and if it did not give us jurisprudence, gave us the alphabet, that is, the possibility of literary and intellectual life.

Is the British Empire an object of American envy and emulation? British Empire is a fallacious term. The relation of Great Britain to the self-governing colonies, Can-

ada, Australia, and New Zealand, is not imperial. This the colonies have plainly shown by laying protective duties on British goods. Australia is now showing it by proposing to exclude British contract labour, and to close herself against all the coloured subjects of his Majesty, that is, about five-sixths of the population of his Majesty's dominions. In the self-governing colonies Great Britain retains only the appointment of a Governor, who represents the King, and, like the King, reigns, but does not govern; a precarious command of the militia; an appellate jurisdiction, the bounds of which are being constantly narrowed; and the distribution of Peerages, Baronetcies, Knighthoods and military decorations. The most effective of the prerogatives is perhaps the last. The Imperial country was till lately burdened with the entire defence of the colonies, while with their entire naval defence she is burdened still; and in regard to military defence they still fall far short of anything like an equal contribution. As dependencies, colonies have been to Great Britain a heavy financial loss. "The expense

of the peace establishment of the colonies," says Adam Smith, "was before the commencement of the present disturbances [the quarrel with the American colonists] very considerable, and is an expense which may and, if no revenue can be drawn from them, ought certainly to be saved altogether. This constant expense in time of peace, though very great, is insignificant in comparison with what the defence of the colonies has cost us in time of war. The last war, which was undertaken altogether on account of the colonies, cost Great Britain, it has already been observed, upwards of ninety millions. The Spanish war of 1739 was principally undertaken on their account, in which, and in the French war that was the consequence of it, Great Britain spent upwards of forty millions, a great part of which ought justly to be charged to the colonies. In those two wars the colonies cost Great Britain much more than double the sum which the national debt amounted to before the commencement of the first of them." Many millions were expended in Kaffir and Maori wars, which the colonists would probably have

avoided by wise treatment of the natives, had the Imperial troops been out of the way. A thousand millions of dollars are spent, thousands of British lives are sacrificed, the power of the nation is overstrained, and a perilous amount of odium is incurred for an extension of dominion in South Africa from which the Imperial country will not derive pecuniary tribute or military strength. Yet all the time a vague belief that the colonial dependencies were sources both of strength and profit has kept possession of the British mind.

We are now dreaming of Imperial Federation, but our vision has not yet taken any practical or even definite form. We have never been told, at least with any sort of concurrence or authority, how the Parliament of the Empire is to be composed; what are to be its functions; how its edicts and requisitions are to be enforced; what are to be its relations to the British Crown and Foreign Office; or by what tribunal its constitution is to be interpreted and preserved. Nor have we been told what is to be done with India, to hand which

over to a great Federal Assembly, comprising ultra-democratic delegations, would be a desperate measure indeed. Australian Federation, instead of being a step towards Imperial Federation, is a step the other way, since it enlarges and consolidates Colonial self-government. However, nothing analogous to the relation between Great Britain and her self-governing Colonies is likely to be formed in the case of the United States. The example is useful only as a warning against Imperial illusions. Everything that Great Britain has got from the Colonies as dependencies, and more, she might have got from them as independent nations, without the danger and the enormous expense.

To India the relation of Great Britain is really Imperial. In the dissolution of the Mogul Empire, a trading company armed, as trading companies at the time and in those regions had need to be, acquired territorial dominion, which its servants at first grievously abused. The British Government stepped in and placed the Company, as a political power, under control. At the same time, Parliament



emphatically abjured and prohibited the extension of British dominion in India. British dominion in India nevertheless continued to be extended, chiefly by collision with anarchic and predatory powers, till Lord Wellesley, an ambitious Governor-General, formally founded the Indian Empire. Extension still went on in the same manner as before, and was completed by the defeat of the invading Sikhs and the conquest of the Punjaub. There followed the great mutiny of the Company's soldiers, the Sepoys, provoked by a careless infraction of their caste. After the suppression of the mutiny, the Company was abolished, and its dominions were taken over by the Imperial Government and added to those of the Crown. This measure was viewed at the time with misgiving by Liberals like John Stuart Mill, who feared, on one hand, the contagious influence of the vast dependency on British institutions, and on the other hand, the interference of British politics with the affairs of the dependency. By the wise policy which gave India a ruler entirely separate, though responsible to the British Parliament and Government, and

a Civil Service of its own, appointed not by patronage but by competitive examination, these fears appeared to have been laid to rest. But the Queen desired the title of Empress, which was given her by Disraeli, and the result has been a perceptible, though indefinable, accession of strength to the Imperial idea. There is a growing tendency in certain quarters to substitute the character of Emperor for that of King. The title itself, which at the time of its assumption, Parliament was assured, would never be introduced into the United Kingdom, is creeping in, that promise notwithstanding. The fears of Mill and other Liberals who looked with misgiving on the change from the Company to the Crown, may after all prove not to have been wholly unfounded.

To strike the balance of profit and loss, either on the side of the conqueror or on that of the conquered, would not be easy. India has long ceased to be to the conqueror a field of plunder. She has never paid tribute; but she has furnished honourable appointments, with high salaries and pensions, to a great number

of Englishmen. Her public works have given employment to others. English capital has been profitably invested in her railways. Her trade, though opened by the liberal policy of Great Britain to the whole world, has been practically for the most part in British hands. That she has supplied England with great men has been said, but is not the fact, since the man who has spent the prime of his life in India is not good for much when he comes home. Some British generals, Wellington among the number, have been trained in Indian fields. On the wrong side of the balance-sheet are the expense and danger of holding and guarding this distant, and in itself defenceless, Empire. In this item must be comprised, in large measure, not only the Crimean War, but this war in South Africa, since the only real interest which Great Britain has in that quarter is secure possession of a port on the route to India, in case of the Suez Canal being closed by war. England has plenty of fields for colonization elsewhere, and she has no use whatever for the veldt. For the sake of India, Russia has been made

an enemy when she was, and might have remained, a fast friend. In case of war in Europe, it would be necessary to send a part of the British navy and army to the other side of the globe for the defence of Hindostan. Nor is it a matter of slight account, that British regiments are constantly exposed to the evils, moral as well as physical, of quarters in a tropical climate amidst strong temptations to vice. So shrewd a judge as Nassau Senior, the author of "Conversations with European Statesmen," when he was told that the strength of England was deemed to be in India, replied: "There cannot be a greater mistake. If we were well quit of India, we should be much stronger than we are now. The difficulty is how to get well quit of it."

To the conquered, the conqueror has given peace, and since the repression of the early abuses, a pure, skilful, and benevolent administration, with upright courts of justice. Nothing in the policy of conquerors vies in good intentions with British administration of India. Mistakes there were at first. Zemindars, who were merely district farmers of taxes, were

mistaken for landlords like those of England, and the peasant-proprietors were saddled with a landed aristocracy of extortionate drones. But of late, native character and ideas have been carefully studied, some of the best intellects of England being devoted to the task. Natives have been admitted to the administration, both municipal and general, as well as to the judiciary, though not to a share of the supreme power or to military commands. Efforts have been made by the foundation of colleges and schools to introduce into India the science and learning of the West. A surprising amount of freedom has been conceded to the native press. The native religions have been strictly respected. At the same time, Christianity has been zealously preached. Vicious customs, such as Suttee, have been abolished, and criminal associations, such as Thuggee, have been put down. Infanticide has been prohibited and reduced. Something has been done in the way of sanitation. Manufactures have been developed, though they compete with those of the Imperial country. If the conqueror were now to depart, railroads,

telegraphs, and irrigation works would remain the beneficent monuments of his rule. On the other hand, the annual drain on Hindostan must be heavy. There is reason to believe that the cost of the foreign government and of its public works is too great for the country, which, though gorgeous, is poor. The state of the peasantry is by most independent witnesses described as generally unhopeful. The land tax is said to bear hard on them. It would seem that they can have no savings or property, since a drought suffices to reduce so many millions of them to an utter destitution, with which the government heroically contends. The participation of natives in the government is by some observers described as unreal. Those educated in the colleges, cultivated Baboos as they are called, are said to be merely an artificial caste of intellect little sympathizing with or acting on the masses. The people in general seem to be human sheep, without power of self-guidance or self-help. Native effort, like native art, has lost its spring; there can no more be another Akbar than another Taj. If the aim of British rule

is to turn Orientals into Europeans, it has so far been a glorious disappointment. Christianity has made comparatively little progress, nor is it likely to make more, when belief in it fails at home. Union of the races is impossible, as the ruling race is incapable of acclimatization, and the social gulf between them has been widened since rapid communication has kept the Englishman in more constant connection with his home. The Englishman looks down upon the Hindoo; the Hindoo fears and respects the Englishman, but loves him not. All British reverses seem to be cherished in the native memory. If the British were now to withdraw from India, a murderous anarchy, ending in Mahometan tyranny, would probably be the result. Yet British officials do not pretend to believe that the dominion of a race incapable of acclimatization over a distant Empire can last forever. What the end will be, none of them undertake to foretell.

The Sepoy Mutiny and its suppression brought out with terrible clearness the antagonism of race and the cruel contempt of the conqueror for the conquered. The atroc-

ities committed by the Sepoys at Cawnpore were repaid with fearful interest. Not mutineers only, but people of Oudh, then a newly annexed principality, who had risen in the cause of their native dynasty, were put to the sword. Lord Elgin, the ex-Governor-General of Canada, was at Calcutta at the time. In his journal, he says:—

“—— tells me that yesterday, at dinner, the fact, that Government had removed some commissioners who, not content with hanging all the rebels they could lay their hands on, had been insulting them by destroying their caste, telling them that after death they should be cast to the dogs to be devoured, etc., was mentioned. A reverend gentleman could not understand the conduct of Government; could not see that there was any impropriety in torturing men's souls; seemed to think a good deal might be said in favour of bodily torture as well! These are your teachers, O Israel! Imagine what the pupils become under such leading!”

Part of an order issued by the British Commandant at Cawnpore for the punishment of Sepoys implicated in the massacre was:—

“Each miscreant, after sentence of death is pronounced upon him, will be taken down to the house in question under a guard, and will be forced into



cleaning up a small portion of the blood stains. The task will be made as revolting to his feelings as possible, and the Provost Marshal will use the lash in forcing anyone objecting to complete his task."

The same officer, a man of high character, not otherwise noted for inhumanity, proposed impaling and burning alive.

Lord Elgin says:—

"It is a terrible business, however, this living among inferior races. I have seldom from man or woman since I came to the East heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world. Detestation, contempt, ferocity, vengeance, whether Chinamen or Indians be the object. There are some three or four hundred servants in this house. When one first passes by their *salaaming* one feels a little awkward. But the feeling soon wears off, and one moves among them with perfect indifference, treating them, not as dogs, because in that case one would whistle to them and pat them, but as machines with which one can have no communion or sympathy. Of course those who can speak the language are somewhat more *en rapport* with the natives, but very slightly so, I take it. When the passions of fear and hatred are engrafted on this indifference, the result is frightful,—an absolute callousness as to the sufferings of the objects of those passions, which must be witnessed to be understood and believed."

If nothing so horrible as the Sepoy Mutiny and its repression has yet occurred in American subjugation of the Filipinos, it seems to be well attested that Filipinos have been tortured to make them give up their hidden arms, while the language of some of the soldiers engaged in the work of subjugation has been reckless and ruthless in the extreme. On the other hand, the Filipinos are accused of burying American prisoners alive. Is this the promised reign of "law, liberty, and justice"? Will the character of the conquerors remain untainted by this competition in cruelty with a half-civilized race?

For a further lesson on the subject of Empire in its dealings with the weaker or more backward races, we may follow Lord Elgin to China, whither he is sent, as an emissary of Empire, to enforce demands in connection with the war waged by Great Britain to satisfy the cravings of her Indian exchequer by forcing opium upon the Chinese,—another item on the wrong side in the account of British Empire in India. Lord Elgin, a man eminently honourable and humane, executed his com-

mission as mercifully as he could. Yet the innocent and unresisting city of Canton, with its dense population, was bombarded for twenty-seven hours. Some passages in Lord Elgin's journal are suggestive, and have a special interest at this time.

"December 22d [1857].—On the afternoon of the 20th I got into a gunboat with Commodore Elliot, and went a short way up towards the barrier forts, which were last winter destroyed by the Americans. When we reached this point, all was so quiet that we determined to go on, and we actually steamed past the city of Canton, along the whole front, within pistol-shot of the town. A line of English men-of-war are now anchored there in front of the town. I never felt so ashamed of myself in my life, and Elliot remarked that the trip seemed to have made me sad. There we were, accumulating the means of destruction under the very eyes and within the reach of a population of about one million people, against whom these means of destruction were to be employed! 'Yes,' I said to Elliot, 'I am sad, because when I look at the town, I feel that I am earning for myself a place in the litany, immediately after "plague, pestilence, and famine."' I believe, however, that, as far as I am concerned, it was impossible for me to do otherwise than as I have done. I could not have abandoned the demand to enter the city after what

happened last winter without compromising our position in China altogether, and opening the way to calamities even greater than those now before us. I made my demands on Yeh as moderate as I could, so as to give him a chance of accepting, although, if he had accepted, I knew that I should have brought on my head the imprecations both of the navy and army and of the civilians, the time being given by the missionaries and the women."

"H.M.S. *Furious*, Swatow. — March 5th [1858]. — . . . The settlement here is against treaty. It consists mainly of agents of the two great opium-houses, Dent and Jardine, with their hangers-on. This, with a considerable business in the coolie trade, — which consists in kidnapping wretched coolies, putting them on board ships where all the horrors of the slave-trade are reproduced, and sending them on specious promises to such places as Cuba, — is the chief business of the 'foreign' merchants at Swatow."

". . . I do not know that I carried much away with me, except the general impression that our trade is carried on on principles which are dishonest as regards the Chinese and demoralizing to our own people."

"The state of Ningpo in this respect furnishes their favourite and, perhaps, most plausible argument to that class of persons who advocate what is styled a vigorous policy in China; in other words, a policy which consists in resorting to the most

violent measures of coercion and repression on the slenderest provocations."

"March 29th [1858].— I shall be a little curious to see my next letters. The truth is, that the whole world just now are raving mad with a passion for killing and slaying, and it is difficult for a person in his sober senses, like myself, to keep his own among them."

"Unless I am greatly misinformed, many vile and reckless men, protected by the privileges to which I have referred, and still more the terror which British prowess has inspired, are now infesting the coasts of China. It may be that for the moment they are able, in too many cases, to perpetrate the worst crimes with impunity; but they bring discredit on the Christian name; inspire hatred of the foreigner where no such hatred exists; and, as some recent instances prove, teach occasionally to the natives a lesson of vengeance, which, when once learnt, may not always be applied with discrimination."

Lord Elgin's words have the greater weight from his having been not a British politician so much as a servant of the Empire.

One after another these Empires are formed. One after another they pass in long procession over the scene of history to their inevitable

grave. The same end awaited the Empires of the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Mede, the Persian, the Macedonian, the Roman, the Frank, the Saracen, the Spaniard, the Bourbon, that of Napoleon. All were artificial, and, whatever transient purposes they might serve, had in them from the beginning the seeds of decay and death. But to the life of a nation nature seems to have set no bound. It may languish, but it does not expire, and one day its vigour returns.

Spain was once what England is now, the mightiest of European nations and the terror of the world. She sank into impotence under the weight of despotism, a dominant priesthood, and a multitude of dependencies. Historians begin the reign of Philip II. with the resounding roll of the kingdoms, provinces, colonies, and fortresses of which he was lord in all parts of the globe. "He possessed in Europe the kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, and Navarre; those of Naples and Sicily, Milan, Sardinia, Roussillon, the Balearic Islands, the Low Countries, and Franche Comté; on the western coast of Africa he held the Canaries,

Cape Verd, Oran, Bujeya, and Tunis; in Asia he held the Philippines and a part of the Moluccas; in the new world the immense kingdoms of Mexico, Peru, and Chili, and the provinces conquered in the last years of Charles V., besides Cuba, Hispaniola, and other islands and possessions; while marriage with the Queen of England placed in his hands the power and resources of that kingdom. So that it might well be said that the sun never set in the dominions of the king of Spain, and that at the least movement of that nation the whole world trembled." It is needless to rehearse the tale of decay, ruin, and degradation which is opened by this proud page. The vaunted magnitude of the Empire was draining away the life-blood of the nation. Only since the Empire was lost has there been something like a return of national life to Spain.

To British Empire, as to the rest, a term is probably set by fate. Its dominions, unlike those of Rome, are widely scattered, and include, with other varieties and repugnances of race, three hundred millions of unassimi-

lated and unassimilable Hindoos. England is being overstrained in the desperate effort to remain, as she was when the other navies had been annihilated at St. Vincent, Camperdown, Trafalgar and Copenhagen, mistress of all the seas. Her people will awake from their dream of imposing peace upon the world. The military power which she has created in Egypt will some day strike for itself, and she will retire, leaving, however, behind solid monuments of a beneficent administration. The Mediterranean nations will assert the freedom of their waters, and Gibraltar, the value of which is already being seriously called in question, will return to the nation to which it naturally belongs. The colonies, following each of them its own destiny, will become free nations, the genuine glory of their parent, still, perhaps, remaining united to her by a tie of mutual citizenship, so that a Canadian landing in England may at once enjoy the British franchise. The people will return to peaceful industry, and their earnings will no longer be taken from them for the objects of a chimerical ambition



and the barren service of war. There will be an end of such phrases as "Greater Britain" and "Little Englander." It will be seen that the true greatness as well as the happiness of England is not in dominion over subject races, but in herself.

In these last pages the writer may seem to have turned aside from his subject. But no speculative arguments of his can have half so much weight as the lessons of experience; nor is there any experience so apposite or so instructive as that of the British Empire, of all Empires the best administered, and on the whole the most successful. The tribes of the Philippines do not appear to be more tractable than the mild Hindoo. That insurrection among them can find leaders has been proved by the career of Aguinaldo. American institutions do not lend themselves, like British institutions, to the vice-regal government of dependencies with a separate civil service, and there would be greater danger of political corruption. There would also be a far greater

shock to the principles of the republican than there is to those of the monarchical nation.

The sun of humanity is behind a cloud. The cloud will pass away and the sun will shine forth again. The aged will not live to see it, but younger men will.

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