

a friendly independence. We have no material objection to the English neighbourhood. Any serious disturbance of friendly relations between the two commercial sister countries, Great Britain and our Union, is an event not less impossible, now, or hereafter, than it would be to roll back the lapse of time, and resuscitate the passed and buried centuries. Nor is there any thing to be either desired or deprecated in the proximity of a kindred republic on the banks of the St. Lawrence. It could not influence, in the slightest degree, either our safety or prosperity. Nor would there be any benefit to them in a participation in our federal union,—at least no greater benefit than would attend a sovereign independence, provided they should follow, which would doubtless be the case, our great principles of republican freedom at home, and peaceful commerce abroad.

And yet we are not haunted with that idea, which we hear so frequently expressed, of 'the danger of extending our already overgrown territorial limits.' This is one of those false ideas which has been bequeathed to us by the Past,—that Past which was terminated when the American experiment first dawned upon the world as the commencement of a new era. That idea is evidently correlative to the one of strong central governmental action. A strong central government cannot, indeed, maintain the cohesion of extended territories, of diversified peculiar interests, beyond certain limits. They follow the mathematical law of all radiating forces—the strength of their action diminishes in inverse proportion to the square of the distance; beyond a certain circular limit it must be inoperative, except by such convulsive effort as must derange and disorganize the whole system. Such a territorial dominion, is then 'overgrown' and unmanageable. But those terms can have no proper applicability to a federal republican system, on the principle of diffusion of power on which ours is based. The peculiar characteristic of our system,—the distinctive evidence of its divine origin (that is to say, its foundation on those original principles of natural right and truth, implanted by the Creator, as the first moral elements of human nature)—is, that it may, if its theory is maintained pure in practice, be extended, with equal safety and efficiency, over any indefinite number of millions of population and territory. In such a federative system,—in which every individual portion is left free to its own self-government, and to the cultivation of its own peculiar interests, with the sole restriction, of respect for the equal rights of other portions, and under the protection of a federal union, of strictly defined powers, to give some degree of uniform national organization to the whole mass, in its relations with foreign powers,—every part has an equal interest in the maintainance of the system, and its great principles. The vitality is not forcibly propelled from the centre to the extremities, but is diffused equally throughout all the parts; and it is only necessary for the latter to contribute a suf-