

THE STATUS OF CANADA IN THE EMPIRE.

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no doubt we should all have been forced, in the general interest, to try and re-create her. And if such be the necessity of a France in the intellectual life and the political economy of Europe, such also is the position of Britain in that larger field, the international life of the world.

The exact nature and the uses of these two forces, and their benefit to mankind, are as dissimilar as their individual characters and their national idiosyncracies; as different in their activities as the Grand Fleet and the Army on the Rhine. Their efforts combined, by land and sea, were essential to save our modern civilization from an onslaught—the most dangerous it had ever faced. While the fleet bottled him up from sweeping over the world, the land forces merely blocked him for the time from sweeping over Europe.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

The British has been properly called "the Mother of Parliaments." Other nations, the French, the American, the Italian have done their best to follow and to copy or imitate that system. But with indifferent success. The Dominions alone have the secret, because they have the character and the necessary temperament.

What is it they chiefly admire there? It is not the rapidity with which the British broach abstract theories, nor the readiness with which they form or reform constitutions. No; on the contrary they know that we resist innovations until assured of their beneficial tendency. What other countries admire is our stability. Their statesmen often come and study at our Empire school of political liberty. They find our race slow to make reforms. But they know that when we make a step forward we keep it. They see that there is some reality and strength about our proceedings. They see that on mere popular clamour, excitement or emotion, we do not proceed to enact new measures to interfere with personal liberty; such as the sumptuary laws which faddists import into some of our provinces, along with stock swindles of the L. R. Steele type. Why can we not produce our own swindlers in this country?

ACQUISITION OF EMPIRE: CANADA'S EXPANSION

Do not let us be afraid of the term Empire, or Imperial. The word now only connotes territorial dominion or political sovereignty. But not military despotism as it formerly did. The word Emperor in the King's title does not change his limitations as a constitutional ruler. His realm is an Empire. So is that of France. So is the United States. And although these are republics in name, as Des Moulins says Britain is a republic in fact.

Now let us inquire how has this Empire grown, of which we form such an important part? This Empire has grown, not from settled public policy, but almost in spite of ourselves—or, as some one has said, it fell to us in moments of absent-mindedness—until spreading itself out over both hemispheres it has become the parent and protector of new nations. Just so has this old Canada of our own on the banks of the St. Lawrence, spread itself out into nine provinces and covered a continent, finding in unoccupied lands an outlet for the natural overflow of an energetic population. So the British people, being restless and adventurous, have stumbled, one may say, on the best parts of the world, and blundered into their imperial inheritance.

THE GROWTH OF EMPIRE

Then again the wars, by the spoils of which the Empire has been largely created, were for the most part forced upon us by unprovoked aggression—as in the case of the spoils of the late World War. Philip of Spain, Louis the Grand, Napoleon, the Dutch Republic, the Mad Mullah, President Kruger, and the Khedive—all were aggressors. India, also, was largely forced upon us. We are guardians there over a num-

ber of mutually hostile races, who had to be protected and dominated by France or England, by Clive or Duplex; who always had alien masters while we are simply the best masters they ever had. And there the weaker would again be trampled under foot by the stronger if we vacated India tomorrow.

So it is well to remember that England, as a general rule, did not deliberately set about the territorial acquisition of a Colonial Empire; nor make wars to obtain it. The Colonies fell to her in two or three ways. For the most part by colonization of unoccupied lands, or the need of expansion. For Anglo-Saxons are a composite and a roving race. We are not sedentary but nomadic, and cannot easily be held down to any fixed territorial allocation.

Because the British learned by their own political blunders and colonial losses, and profited by that experience, that is the reason why, today, when all the other great colonial Empires of the world have gone, the British Empire remains. Why have Rome, Spain, Portugal, Holland and Germany—great ambitious overseas Empires—gone glimmering through the mists of things that were? Their Empires they lost, because they deserved to lose them, as we did part of ours, because we did not sufficiently appreciate the value of it. And because the rulers of that day were not good psychologists. They did not take the human element sufficiently into account nor remember the breed of men that these colonists had sprung from. For men must be governed in one of three ways:—By Force or by Fraud or by Good-will. The latter is now our imperial method. And it is the only durable and permanent, the only true and correct one.

There is no reason now for apathy in Britain, nor for discontent overseas today. There are no revolutionists here; no little Englanders there; no serious separatists, I believe, anywhere. No one now talks as a certain political school did once, both there and here, of "cutting the painter." The Manchester school idea was that the best way of governing an empire was to begin by the principle that you had no interest in keeping it. That is the school which would give more preference to Germany than to Canada. But happily it is not the school that governs.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION.

One of the most convincing proofs of the governing power of the British people is the confidence they inspire in those races they have assimilated or subdued. For the British assimilate easily but are not easily assimilated; and the peculiar attachment they inspire in those they have supplanted, or those they have subdued is unique.

Rome acquired her Empire by the sword and held it by the sword. To her modern successor has been left the glory of reconciling what most of Roman subjects found incompatible—liberty and Empire. For never before has such an empire been held together by the slender basis of mutual consent. A constitution which secures liberty for all under the folds of one flag is unique, and has given a new meaning and a true one to the old motto "Imperium et Libertas."

And if we act on the principle of—"What we have we hold," it is because we hold it not for the purpose of being formidable but from the necessity of being free.

THE TIE THAT BINDS

British blood is often referred to, here and elsewhere, as the essential binding tie of a powerful and prosperous empire. But is it? It was British blood that rebelled and broke away from the Parent State in North America, and lost thereby to all of us the most magnificent potential Empire the world had ever seen.

In South Africa it is not British blood that dominates and holds the balance of power and maintains the great imperial domain from the Cape to the Zambesi. In Canada the connection depends more perhaps on the French Province than on the others.