

child nestles with fond dependence to the parental heart; one by one his habits of self-confidence are acquired as childhood merges into youth or manhood approaches. When at last the age of majority is reached, filial affection is not quenched, because the days of dependence are over. Nor could we plead the tenderness of the tie as an excuse for perpetual childhood. It is from such a point of view that the London "Times" speaks of Canada as "The eldest son of England."

But there are those who believe that the Independence of Canada would conflict with the Colonial policy of the Empire, and who, taking their inspirations from the traditions of the past, make England's glory to consist in the vastness of her colonial possessions. The motto of "Ships, Colonies and Commerce" belongs to an age that is past. Its mention summons the ghost of the old act of Navigation, and the celebrated 29 Acts of Parliament, for the maintenance of a Commercial Monopoly—"like melancholy ghosts of dead renown." It was a system of obstruction and restriction to Colonial enterprise, in which the Colonies were regarded as mere contributors to the wealth and glory of the parent State. Freedom has made rapid strides in England since those days, political economy has been remodelled, and political arithmetic has achieved new systems of calculation. England did not find that the loss of her original American Colonies dwarfed her industries, crippled her commerce or blighted her prestige as a nation. They have grown to be a greater people and more profitable customers. The young Colonies relieved from the restraints of tutelage espoused great principles and upheld them, thus ensuring their own greatness and, incidentally, the elevation of universal mankind. Englishmen have watched with a careful eye the progress of their kinsmen in the tried field of freedom and equality. Slowly and cautiously they have copied what seemed to be success, and have been warned of the distinctions between liberty and license; and thus for nearly a century the two great nations foremost in their devotions to the principles of popular freedom and constitutional government, have been a constant example and encouragement to each other. Sometimes there have been rivalries and estrangement. Quarrels among kinsmen are oftenest bitter and unreasonable, but the friends of peace and freedom have trusted, not in vain, to that palladium of common principles, which both peoples have cherished; and thus it has happened that the dismemberment of the Empire, which the matchless eloquence of Chatham and Burke foretold and deprecated, and honest but stubborn old George the Third believed impossible, has proved a great commercial and political blessing to England and the world. The old motto meant after all, nothing more than, "ships,

markets and commerce," and these, under the new relations of the colonies have been multiplied a hundred fold.

Now let us like men of nerve and comprehension apply this lesson to ourselves. What benefit are we to England? From what we have seen, it is manifest, that our sovereign independence would enhance our own growth and resources, and multiply the advantages she could derive from our trade. The commercial argument therefore from an English point of view is against the connection, and this is why our enemies affect to despise it. But how are we otherwise useful? Are we a source of strength to her in war? Do we recruit her armies and navies, or, failing to supply men, do we pour our means into her military coffers? We do not even afford a field for the political patronage of the British administration of the day, and there remains to England therefore, but the doubtful pretiges of nominal rule over vast American possessions. What wonder, that Englishmen are growing cold to this advantage, when they reflect upon the prodigality of blood and treasure it may one day cost them to maintain it? Faithful to her glorious traditions, England will act no dishonourable part towards us while we remain a portion of the Empire. Her oft reiterated promise to defend us in case of war, she will fulfill with her last man and her last dollar. But the obligation is not the less an embarrassment because it is blinding. And the more far seeing of her statesmen for the last fifty years, have looked towards a change of the conditions which imposed it. Step by step, in all the noble and unprecedented concessions they have accorded us, we have been led gently and cautiously, towards the paths of manhood and self-reliance; and they have explained to the British people, as they watched this problem, of a free government, growing out of their colonial jurisdiction, that the Colonial State was not what Burke called it, a "perpetual minority," but must expand into sovereign and independent powers. In the great Confederation debate of '65, the Hon. John Hilliard Cameron the leader of the high Tories of Upper Canada, declared, in denouncing the doctrines of the Manchester school, that Canada derives no important benefits from her connection with Great Britain, except in the matter of defence.

With this honest declaration of an untainted Conservative chief, I propose to open a brief discussion of the question. What benefit is England to Canada? I speak as to the future, and I am not unmindful of her generosity in the past, and the great heritage of free institutions she has bequeathed to us. These were our birthright, but a less magnanimous provincial policy would have denied them to us as Colonists. Sovereign or dependent, Canada will cherish for all time, a grateful