

THE BRITANNIC EMPIRE.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESTINY OF ITS VARIOUS STATES—GREAT BRITAIN (Continued).

V.

The British Government is pledged not only in honour, but from a just sentiment of national pride, to defend her Empire. To quote Mr. Gladstone once more: "She would never suffer her colonies to be torn from her, and would no more grudge the cost of defending them against such a consummation than the father of a family grudges the expense of the food necessary to maintain his children." This does not, however, involve the obligation to adopt the dread alternative of war on account of every small aggression or trifling misunderstanding which may affect the relations of a colony with any great nation with whom it comes in contact; while, on the other hand, the colonies are not in a position to demand such rigorous action as they may desire, because they contribute not one iota to the general defence of the empire—except in certain cases—and cannot ask as a right what may only be given as a favour, and the cost of the citizen within the British Isles.

These considerations must prove the unsatisfactory nature of the existing Imperial system, and to Great Britain itself the anomalies of the present relationship with great countries like Canada and Australia must be evident. Of course, while the mother country has all the responsibility and cost of controlling the foreign affairs of the empire, she must have the sole executive authority; but it is becoming necessary to consider whether the surrender of a certain portion of that power to the self-governing states of the realm in return for a corresponding assumption of responsibility on their part is not rapidly assuming the proportions of a great national problem which must be solved. The other alternative of permitting future separation is one which could never commend itself to the approval of any sensible or patriotic Briton. With the loss of Canada and Australia would go the control of the seas in time of war. The laws of neutrality would prevent the use of the coaling stations on the Atlantic and Pacific, and the great harbours on the coasts of Canada and Australasia which now enable the British fleets to sweep the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The loss of the Canadian Pacific Railway would throw England back upon the precarious route through the Suez Canal for transporting troops to India in time of war—if, indeed, that country, in case of such a consummation, remained under the British flag, which is, at least, doubtful.

The issue, then, is clear, and I cannot but believe that it is evidently in the best interests of Great Britain to adopt a plan of closer union with the colonies, which will systematize the defence of the Empire and make it primarily, a great oceanic power, with the seas for streets, and ships in place of railways. As Sir Charles Dilke so well observes in his most recent work: "The danger in our path is that the enormous forces of European militarism may crush the old country and destroy the integrity of our Empire before the growth of the newer communities has made it too strong for attack," and he goes on to say that Great Britain "imports half her food and the immense masses of raw material which are essential to her industries."

These two last considerations bring us naturally to the great question of trade relations, and how the Mother Country would be benefited by the adoption of some system of Imperial consolidation.

The magnitude of the question may be grasped from the fact that the total trade of the British Empire for 1885 amounted to £1,046,000,000 sterling, contributed as follows:

United Kingdom.....	£642,372,000
British Possessions.....	403,968,000

The tendency of late years has been in the direction of an increased trade between Great Britain and the colonies and a decreasing trade with foreign countries on the part of the United Kingdom, as the following table will show:

Exports to foreign countries..	1870. £147,772,599	1885. £135,114,875
Decrease.....	£ 12,657,725	

Exports to British possessions. £	1870. 51,814,223	1885. 77,929,626
Increase.....	£ 26,115,403	

There can be no doubt that when Great Britain, forty years ago, adopted free trade, it was in the national interest to do so. With a production largely in excess of her consumption and almost a monopoly of the markets of the world; with the discoveries of gold and steam immensely increasing the demands and purchasing power of the world at large, it was little wonder that British prosperity advanced by leaps and bounds, and that her people laughed at the thought of successful competition.

But times soon changed. Nation after nation adopted protection as its platform and proceeded to manufacture in large measure for itself, the result being that in the last two decades British trade has not advanced proportionately to that of its foreign rivals, as the following table will show:

Exports of the Produce and Manufactures of	1870	1885	Increase
United States.....	78,462,000	151,392,000	72,930,000
Holland.....	31,831,000	74,106,000	42,275,000
Germany (1872).....	116,031,000	143,015,000	26,984,000
Belgium.....	27,604,000	48,000,000	20,396,000
Austria-Hungary.....	39,541,000	56,007,000	16,466,000
Great Britain.....	199,586,000	213,044,000	13,458,000
France.....	112,084,000	123,524,000	11,440,000

Not only is this the case, but we see that competition from abroad by means of the admission of goods of every kind into the United Kingdom under the free import system is undermining the prosperity of the manufacturing interests and taking away their own home market, which is one of the most important in the world, from an industrial standpoint, if from no other.

The following analysis of the import trade of the United Kingdom, for which I am indebted to a most valuable address by Mr. H. T. Hibbert, F.S.S., before the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, will throw some light upon this branch of the question:

	1870.	1885.
Raw material.....	£158,104,673	£157,470,521
Agricultural products.....	69,960,054	103,970,016
Manufactures.....	42,278,232	67,352,588
Chemical products.....	13,800,442	13,281,535
Subject to duty.....	29,114,092	28,893,295

From these figures it will be seen that Great Britain imported £44,000,000 sterling more of agricultural products and £25,000,000 more of manufactured articles in 1885 than she did in 1870. The result of this competition in the home market, coupled with the closing of foreign markets by protective duties, has been the emigration of operatives by thousands, the investment of capital in foreign enterprises, the transfer of manufacturing establishments to protected countries, the fluctuation of prices and wages, with a distinct diminution in the prosperity of the farmer and a migration of the farm labour to the already overcrowded cities.

What then, is the remedy? I venture to say that it will be found in reciprocal arrangement with the colonies and the consequent use by Great Britain of that magnificent weapon of power in international negotiations—the ability to retaliate. When we consider the very large percentage which the colonies take per head from the mother country in proportion to what foreign countries do, we can easily realize what a great trade may arise in the future if Great Britain develops her Colonial Empire and protects herself, by the adoption of such a policy. The placing of a small duty by the Mother Country upon foreign food and industrial imports, admitting strictly raw material free, and giving the masses an untaxed breakfast table by the removal of the duty upon tea, coffee, etc., could not but be beneficial. Nor would it necessarily raise the price of bread, as the United States must send its wheat somewhere, and the exporters would have to pay part, if not all, of the duty, while the enhancement of colonial production would soon raise the competition to its normal figure, at the same time providing the British people with an absolutely safe supply of food from within the bounds of their own vast Empire, and enabling them to become independent of foreign powers in the event of war or international complications.

The machinery necessary for all this should be very simple, and might consist of little more than the appointment of an Imperial Council, to be composed, ex-officio, of all the Premiers of the self-governing portions of the Empire and such other members as might be elected by a majority vote of the two Houses of the various Parliaments. The details could be arranged and modified from time to time by conferences meeting in London or elsewhere—such council to have the final decision in matters of war, the majority to rule; to control the expenditure upon an Imperial navy, and to facilitate the encouragement of trade between the various parts of the Empire, and the ultimate solution of the many difficulties which now threaten the Imperial structure.

I have attempted, at too great length, I fear, to show that, powerful and wealthy as Great Britain is, a change in the constitutional structure of her Empire is necessary; that it would be in her interest to effect a re-organization of her system of Imperial defence by the introduction of her colonies as partners, and that her commercial welfare is equally bound up in the maintenance and consolidation of existing relations. With the political phase, I have been unable to deal at this time, and cannot do better in concluding than by quoting these lines of the poet:

"The wisdom, the glory, the might of that nation,
Which rose like the sun from the breast of the sea,
And first 'mongst the powers of earth took her station,
'The land of the brave and the home of the free.'
The cradle of genius, the birthplace of freedom,
The soil whence wealth, honour and chivalry sprung
Are ours; all brighter than artist e'er painted,
All nobler than poet or minstrel e'er sung."
Toronto. J. CASTELL HOPKINS.

THE ELGIN PERIOD IN CANADA.

The Marquis of Lorne has paid a graceful compliment to a deserving Canadian *littérateur* in having forwarded copies of Mr. Henry Morgan's ("Mufti's") recent interesting monograph on the Elgin period in Canadian history to the Queen and the Prince of Wales. It will be remembered that the article in question, which first appeared in the *Citizen*, in addition to sketching the life of a prominent and estimable lady of the Queen's household, the late Hon. Mrs. Robert Bruce, gave some interesting details of her brother-in-law's (Lord Elgin's) eventful political career in Canada and India. Lord Lorne was well pleased with the article, which he describes as excellently executed. Several members of the Bruce family have also written to Mr. Morgan thanking him for his interesting and sympathetic sketch. "That a time now so long ago," says Lady Thurlow, "should still be remembered in Canada, is a thing which touches us deeply, and for which we are glad to express our gratitude."—*Ottawa Citizen*.

GRIM TRUTH.

This is the title of a short story written by Miss Alexia Agnes Vail, a lady of considerable literary ability, whom we were proud, some months ago, to have the privilege of placing on our roll of contributors. The tale or sketch, though brief, is pregnant with thought, and shows a good deal of constructive skill. Nor is it destitute of moral purpose, as those who read it will quickly discover. The epidemic that, for a season, overtook the country town of Edgevale, a locality which hundreds of readers, living far apart from each other, will probably recognize as drawn from nature, is a sort of visitation from which, in the main, our own Dominion, like other parts of the world, has been wonderfully free. The symptoms which accompanied the exhibition of the disease, are described very clearly. The effects were different in different cases, notwithstanding a general sameness in the mode of attack. Few, indeed, were proof against its discomforts, though it may be said that those who had been previously inoculated suffered less than their neighbours. The condition of some of the patients was extremely pitiable, though their deplorable plight was the result of their previous mode of life. The lesson which the story inculcates (and essentially it is a true story) is one that none can afford to despise. It deals with a social disorder, with which our political economists and social reformers have troubled themselves too little. Some of them, indeed, are in a sad way themselves. But our readers will understand the question only after studying Miss Vail's little book, which we cordially commend to their attention, assured that no disappointment awaits them. The publishers are Messrs. John Lovell & Son, who have presented the story to us in a tasteful form. Miss Vail dedicates "Grim Truth" to Dr. Williams, Bishop of Quebec.

God's greatness
Flows around our incompleteness;
Round our restlessness, his rest.