

The Empire and Colonies.

The British Empire is the most wonderful political structure that the world has ever known; and no part of it more strikingly illustrates the genius of the English race for administrative organization than the success with which it has dealt with two such diverse elements as the Colonies and India. The divergences and contrasts of these two vast social organizations are as strongly marked as they possibly can be; yet in each case the exact political constitution has been that which the nature of the case admitted, and a most durable institution of government has been founded. Other nations have found it hard to provide for each of these two relations—the Colonial and the subject dependency—separately. Yet England has triumphantly succeeded in the management of both. Rome had an enormous agglomeration of subject people under her rule; she embraced the whole civilized world within the arms of her Imperial power; and England spreads the same majestic sway over India. But the difference of the results is wide as the poles asunder. Depression and decay marked the course of Roman sovereignty; the nations were involved in lingering imbecility and moral and social stupor. It was deliberately designed that their political faculties should have no exercise: they received commands from a central despotism; they were stripped of all responsibility for their political life; and by the irresistible law of human nature, the faculties which were never used, whether of body or mind, pine away and shrivelled into nothing. There was no moral life in the countries governed by the Romish despotism.

It is wholly otherwise with India. True, India is the result of conquest, as were the Roman provinces. There is no identification of the conquering with the conquered race, any more than in the Roman Empire, but then in India the peculiarities of the subjugated people and of their religion did not admit of fusion. Nevertheless, between Roman and English rule, the contrast is most vivid. Selfishness and delay marked the Italian rule; England governs India with the strictest regard for her improvement; all the great interests of her life are studied and promoted; not only trade and order are developed, but still more institutions are made to expand which train up Indians to progressive participation in the administration of their country life, not decay, characterize that vast region under English ascendancy. We have only to turn our eyes to French rule in Africa to understand the difficulty of the task and to appreciate the ability with which it has been overcome.

Still more wonderful are the skill and fast with which the British Colonial Empire has been developed; it is unique in the history of mankind. Englishmen have yet to learn the greatness of the work which they have achieved. The materials required the most delicate manipulation; so strong was the energy of the British colonist, so national and so deeply rooted the independence of his feeling, so ever present and so ever imminent the danger of the separation of the child from the parent, so social and yet so refined was the political organization required. All these conditions have been victoriously fulfilled—even amidst a widely spread scepticism in England, which pronounced the obstacles to success insurmountable. The day is not long gone by when English Colonial Ministers, and the Government to which they belonged, had no faith in the possibility of a

British Empire; and their administration naturally breathed an apathy, an acceptance of separation, which spoke little for the elevation of their views or the loftiness of their spirit. But the Empire has emerged into safe waters, and the result is due as much to the colonists themselves as to the force of public opinion at home. It is impossible to praise too highly the frankness with which the Colonies clung to the idea that the union with England was their true destiny, and the remarkable political skill with which they adapted themselves to the conditions involved in the realization of this idea. No decrees, after the French fashion full of high sounding phrases and ostentatious *plediscites*, were seen; the thought of separation was simply absent, and then each colony for itself worked its way to the place which naturally belonged to the Imperial edifice. And that is the reason why the structure is so stable and so abiding; it is a natural growth, firm as a mighty tree which stands on a foundation made by adding rootlet to rootlet. The Empire was more the work of the colonists themselves than of England; the part that England took and it was most meritorious and most political in a governing country—was to let the Colonies solve the problem for themselves.

It has always seemed to us that the accomplishment of this settlement was largely facilitated by a modern fact—modern, we mean, in the sense that it scarcely existed before the disruption between England and her American colonies—of great influence, namely, the number of Englishmen settled in the Colonies, but intending to return to England when their fortunes were made. This has been an invaluable link between the two countries. It created powerful interests in each country in the same individuals; they left their capital behind them in the Colony, whilst their presence in the old country explained many a matter, and kindled a large amount of every growing sympathy. Many a political hitch has been got over by the intervention of old colonists resident in London. The Colonial office has obtained more accurate acquaintance with colonial feeling, and when the Colonists urged a policy founded on the knowledge of their needs it was an immense gain that policy concerned closely important men who had returned to the land of their birth, but whose fortunes were identified with those of the Colony. This class of persons has been largely on the increase, with great advantage to both sides. The deputation which waited on Lord Carnarvon on the Fiji Islands question is an instance of such benefit. It was large and influential; it displayed thorough mastery of the subject, and explained it to the Colonial Secretary with as much ability and force as were shown by any deputation. The money interest, too, produces a very weighty effect. Immense districts in Australia are owned in England or by English settlers who intend to return home, and who probably have obtained large advances of English capital. The power in this connection to bind and attach is obvious. It renders many people here thoroughly alive to the welfare of the Colonies, and very prompt in counteracting any policy or acts which tend to severance. Their attention is ever kept upon Colonial affairs; they watch what is going on, they master details, and thus become a very important part of public opinion in both countries. The time will come, no doubt, when this class of semi-colonists will diminish; it has done so in Canada, and at a later period will do so in Australia. This is as it should be. As the Colony acquires a denser popu-

lation, the number of temporary settler will naturally bear a smaller proportion to the remaining mass; but they will have rendered one most valuable service. They will have carried the Colony and the Mother Country through the critical time of what may be called political incubation. They will have defined the mutual relation; in other words, they will have established membership of one common nation; they will have built up the British Empire. It may be said that when they disappear from the scene, Colonial nationality will assume an intenser form, and independent peoples will come into being. It may be so; and if such should be the desire of the Colonies, England will offer no opposition to it. But our faith in the continuity in the British Empire is more robust; we see no signs whatever of its end at the present hour; there is nothing in the way of fact to shake our confidence; and that is enough for us.

Trial of Palliser Guns.

One of the naval rifled 64-pounder Palliser guns was fired at Shoeburyness on Friday last week, by desire of the Admiralty, for the purpose of ascertaining the value of these guns for bombarding a fort or arsenal from distances at which the ships carrying the guns would be comparatively safe. The gun was laid by Captain Ellis, Royal Artillery, who recently pointed all the guns at the Eastbourne experiments, and excellent practice was made at various ranges up to 7000 yards distance. The projectiles employed were common shell, which contained bursting charges of 7lb. of power, and they were fired with the ordinary service charge of 8lb. of powder. It has been erroneously urged against these guns that they are deficient in range and accuracy, but this trial has now completely disposed of the objection. As a popular illustration we may state that at the range of four miles every shell would have struck the cupola of St. Paul's, while at three miles distance every shell would have hit the ball of the cross on the summit. We understand that some further trials will shortly be made with elongated shells, termed double shells, and carrying about 13lb. of powder.

The Lords of Committee of Privy Council for the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to a decree recently issued by the President of the French Republic, assimilating the rules for the "Steering of Merchant Vessels to those observed on board French Ships of War." In accordance with this decree the orders or "Starboard" or "Port," as well as the signs and signals used to confirm or repeat such orders, will indicate, not that the helm is to be put over to "Starboard" or "Port," but that the wheel is to be so placed that the ship's head may go to "Starboard" or "Port." An Admiralty Circular on the subject, suggest that "This change in the French regulations should be borne in mind, with a view to avoiding collisions, on occasions when French pilots are employed on board Her Majesty's ships."—*Broad Arrow*, 5th Dec.

Some young men in Vienna have formed a matrimonial league. Every member of the league must be the son of a man of property and must pledge himself to marry a poor girl, one who was neither dowry nor expectation, and must forfeit 10,000 florins if he violates this pledge.

MARRIED.

At York Church, on the 30th ult., by the Rev. J. Leroyd, Geo. C. Holland, Esq., Editor, Ottawa Citizen, to Allison H. Robinson, of Downsview Ontario.