

It has been said, and with some justice, that a democracy, and especially a republican democracy, is not fitted to administer a widely scattered empire over coloured races. It may not be the soil best suited to the growth of such an empire, but the belief is one of those philosophic generalities which warp political judgment. Everything depends upon the genius of the people who compose the democracy. It is quite true that the full growth of the Roman Empire was not attained until Rome had passed from a democracy into a military dictatorship, but the foundations of the empire had been laid long before this, and in our own time the French have shown how, under entirely democratic institutions at home, the administration of coloured races may successfully be achieved. Our own institutions are democratic enough, and we see the Empire to-day composed of almost independent democracies, each grappling with the native problem within its frontiers with success, and welded together by sentiment and interest in a way which has been the astonishment of the common enemy and of the world. If there is the instinct of good order, sound and incorrupt administration, honesty and justice in the blood, then I say that a democracy need not fear to take up the burden of empire, nor will its enemies do wisely in counting upon any weakness in the form of government to serve their ends. Whether it is finally decided that the German colonies pass to the League of Nations with a mandate to Australia and New Zealand to administer them, or are incorporated in those colonial states, is a matter of small importance.