

The Westminster Hall luncheon was the act of the representatives of a people desirous of maintaining a prosperous Empire with the minimum of work, the maximum of sport, and of escaping compulsory military obligations altogether. Friendship with France and alliance with Japan are precisely the policy for an empire bent on ease and amusements without paying the price asked for its retention.

The Puritan spirit that is the strongest strand in the rope of our complex national life does not concern itself with the Japanese Alliance, racial rivalries, or ethnological problems it has created. The Puritan spirit no longer thinks of Empire or of duty to the State. It is busy with passive resistance. Various causes have led to the recent change in the English character. The first is the new and incalculable influence of Americans upon the ruling classes, the legislature, the organs of public opinion, the Court, and the democratic outlook on life generally. Inter-marriage with wealthy American families and the cumulative effect of American immigration and sojourners in this country have Americanised thought and created a new point of view in which cash and sport are more prominent features than patriotism and principle. Men under sixty may recall the tone prevalent in English society forty years ago on the outbreak of the Civil War. At that time no more effective gibe could be cast by a statesman at a political opponent than to charge him with "Americanising our institutions." Mr. Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke, employed this American bogey with tremendous effect in his memorable anti-reform speeches in 1866-67. In the mid-Victorian era American manners and American ways of thought were regarded by a caste, in which every one was prejudiced, as synonymous with vulgarity. After forty years what a change; Americans are supreme in society, in diplomacy, in finance, in India, and at Court! Americans occupy the town mansions and the historic country seats of the great families. They have not only impregnated the dukeries with Transatlantic hustle and vigour, but American beauty and American dollars