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[FOR THE CRITIC.]

HOWE ON IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

(Continued.)

"The crown colonies and foreign populations are not included in this scheme. Her Majesty's ministers may devise some mode by which they can be provided for. I pass them by, because I do not see the way clear to admit them, until they have achieved the status of self-governing provinces with responsible Ministers to send; but, if they were made to feel that, by qualifying themselves for rational self-government, they might ultimately enjoy the full privileges of British citizenship, the effect even upon those portions of the Empire, still treated as territories are treated in the United States, might not be without its value in exciting to emulation and improvement.

Having made this step in advance, I would proceed to treat the whole Empire as the British Islands are treated, holding every man liable to serve the Queen in war and making every pound's worth of property responsible for the national defence."

Mr. Howe next proposes that a decennial census in all parts of the Empire should be provided for, to embrace certain specified details. Then, after sketching the outline of a bill for the organization of the imperial defences, he goes on:—

"By another Bill, to operate uniformly over the whole Empire, (India being excluded as she provides for her own army,) the funds should be raised for the national defence. This measure, like the other, should be submitted for the sanction of the Colonial Governments and Legislatures. This tax should be distinguished from all other imposts, that the amount collected could be seen at a glance, and that every portion of the whole people might see what they paid and what every other portion had to pay.

This fund could either be raised as head-money over the whole population, in the form of a property or income tax, or by a certain per-centage upon imports (~~which last method Mr. Howe preferred~~), constituting, next to existing liabilities, a first charge upon the Colonial revenues, and being paid into the military chest, to the credit of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury.

As the great arsenals, dockyards, depôts and elaborate fortifications, are in these islands, as the bulk of the naval and military expenditure for arms, munitions and provisions, occurs here, where are the great fleets and camps, the people of Great Britain and Ireland ought to be prepared to pay, and I have no doubt would, a much larger proportion towards this fund than it would be fair to exact from the outlying provinces, where, in time of peace, there is but little of naval or military expenditure.

In another respect a wise discrimination should be exercised. Within the British Islands are stored up the fruits of eighteen centuries of profitable industry. All that generations of men toiled for, and have bequeathed, is now in possession of the resident population here, including all that was created and left by the forefathers of those by whom the British Colonies have been founded. Taking into view, then, the comparison which these wealthy and densely peopled Islands bear to the sparsely populated Colonies beyond the sea, it would seem but fair that they should assume, in proportion to numbers, a much larger share of the burthens of national defence.

If the general principle be admitted, we need not waste time with the details, which actuaries and accountants can adjust. Fair allowance being made, under these two heads, I can see no reason why the Colonies should not contribute in peace and war their fair quotas towards the defence of the Empire.

But the question may now be asked, and everything turns upon the answer that may be given to it, will the colonies consent to pay this tax, or to make any provision at all for the defence of the Empire? It must be apparent that no individual can give an answer to this question: that the Cabinet, were they to propound this policy, even after the most anxious enquiry and full deliberation, could only wait in hope and confidence for the response to be given by so many communities, so widely dispersed, and affected by so many currents of thought. There is enough of doubt to perplex and almost to deter them from trying the experiment, yet it is so hopeful, there is so little to be lost by failure, and so much to be gained by success, that, with all respect, I would urge Her Majesty's Government to give the question their grave consideration.

That it is the duty, and would be for the interest, of all Her Majesty's subjects in the outlying provinces, fairly admitted to the enjoyment of the privileges indicated, to make this contribution, I have not a shadow of doubt. Without the protection of the fleets and armies of England, they are all defenceless. Without efficient organization, they cannot lean upon and strengthen each other, or give the Mother Country that moral support which in peace makes diplomacy effective, and in war would make the contest short, sharp and decisive. Besides, the overflow of labor and of capital into the Colonies is to some extent checked by doubts as to the security of their future. If once organized and consolidated, under a system mutually advantageous and universal, known, there would be an end of all jealousies between the taxpayers at home and abroad. We should no longer be weakened by discussions about defence or propositions for dismemberment, and the irritation which is now kept up by shallow thinkers and mischievous politicians, would give place to a general feeling of brotherhood, of confidence, of mutual exertion, dependence, and security. The great powers of Europe and America would at once recognize the wisdom and forethought out of which had sprung this national combination, and they would be slow to test its strength. We should secure peace on every side by the notoriety given to the fact, that on every side we were prepared for war.