

COMMONWEALTH OR EMPIRE

WHATEVER may be for Americans the main issue in the Presidential campaign, for the world at large it is that between Imperialist Plutocracy, and the American Commonwealth. Shall the American Commonwealth remain what it is, follow its own destiny, and do what it can to fulfil the special hopes which humanity has founded on it, or shall it be turned into an imitation of European Imperialism and drawn, with the great military powers of Europe, into a career of conquest and domination, impairing at the same time its own democratic character, as all experience tells us that it must? Shall it be ruled by the spirit and in the interest of the American people, or in those of the Europeanized plutocracy which has its commercial centre in the financial offices of the East and its social centre in the drawing-rooms of New York? This is the main issue for humanity.

Puritan New England could not last, though it served as the foundation, and left strong traces on national character. America was bound to undergo the general influences of the world's progress and to be embraced by the world-unifying agencies of electricity and steam. The original elements had been largely diluted by foreign inflow, which, however, had been assimilated in a wonderful degree. Still, the American Republic was the home of democracy and the hope of labor. It promised to do something more than the Old World communities towards rectifying the injustice of nature and equalizing the human lot. The eyes of the masses everywhere were turned to it. To the enemies of equality and freedom everywhere it was an object of aversion and alarm. Loud was the shout of exultation