

to provide cheap and efficient labour for any tropical possession. For the present her eyes are turned westward towards China, but it is impossible not to feel that if she ever becomes persuaded that colonies in the Pacific are necessary for her growing population, she may become a strong competitor. Changes move so rapidly in Japan that it is quite possible that the quasi-military oligarchy by which she is now controlled may give place to a democracy ; there are already whispers of a socialist movement, but the government of the day looks far beyond the shores of Japan for its destiny.

The immediate future of the islands south of the Equator is quite obvious. On the one hand we have all the important groups, with the exception of the French colonies of Tahiti, the Marquesas and New Caledonia, under the British flag : on the other hand we have Australia and New Zealand awakened to their interest in taking over and administering the islands : and, though there has in the past been a disposition to place the administration in the hands of unsuitable persons because they have rendered political services, latterly the choice of administrators has been wise. Fiji is still a Crown Colony, and some of the groups and smaller islands are still under the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, but it is only a question of time when the natives of Fiji, who might justly claim that under the Deed of Cession they were promised direct administration from England, will desire to come under the same form of colonial government that they see working in the other groups. It is even possible that the next generation may live to see a federation of the islands with a separate legislature under the British flag.