

most friendly foreign nation. Our great colonies have readily undertaken the responsibility of providing for their own defence by land, and even in some degree by sea. If the protection of their coast in time of war might become a great strain upon our Navy, this disadvantage is largely balanced by the importance of distant maritime possessions to every nation that desires to maintain an efficient fleet; by the immense advantage to a great commercial power of secure harbours and coaling stations scattered over the world. It is not difficult to conceive circumstances in which the destruction of some of our main industries, occurring perhaps in the midst of a great war, might make it utterly impossible for our present population to live upon British soil, and when the possession of vast undeveloped territories under the British flag and in the hands of the British race might become a matter of transcendent importance. Think for a moment of the colossal and indeed appalling proportions which our great towns are assuming; think of all the vice and ignorance and disease, of all the sordid abject misery, of all the lawless passions that are festering within them, and then consider how precarious are many of the conditions of our industrial prosperity, how grave and how numerous are the dangers that threaten it, both from within and from without.

Who can reflect seriously on these things without feeling that the day may come, perhaps at no distant date, when the question of emigration may overshadow all others? To many of us, indeed, it seems one of the greatest errors of modern English statesmanship that when the great exodus from Ireland took place after the famine, Government took no step to aid it, or to direct it to quarters where it would have been of real benefit to the empire. Many good judges think

that the advantages of such an interference in allaying bitter feeling, in softening a disastrous crisis, and in permanently strengthening the empire, would have been well purchased if it cost half or even two-thirds of the sum which has been lost in England within the last four months by our disastrous strike. In dealing with this question of emigration in the future colonial assistance may be of supreme importance. And those who have understood the significance of that memorable incident in our recent history, the despatch of Australian troops to fight our battles in the Soudan, may perceive that there is at least a possibility of a still closer and more beneficent union between England and her colonies—a union that would vastly increase the strength of both, and by doing so become a great guarantee of peace in the world. It would be a calumny to suppose that the change of feeling I have described was solely a calculation of interests. Patriotism cannot be reduced to a mere question of money, and a nation which has grown tired of the responsibilities of empire and careless of the acquisitions of its past and of its greatness in the future would, indeed, have entered into a period of inevitable decadence. Happily we have not yet come to this. I believe the overwhelming majority of the people of these islands are convinced that an England reduced to the limits which the Manchester school would assign to it would be an England shorn of the chief elements of its dignity in the world, and that no greater disgrace could befall them than to have sacrificed through indifference, or negligence, or faintheartedness an empire which has been built up by so much genius and so much heroism in the past. Railways and telegraphs and newspapers have brought us into closer touch with our distant posses-