

part of those intrusted with the management of our jails, be reminded of the birth of Him who died forgiving a felon; let us give liberally at the offertory; let such as cannot give silver or gold, give smiles and sympathy where such bright gifts are needed (? where are they not); let us all unite to make our Christmas a merry Christmas indeed.

#### THE PRESENT CONDITION OF ENGLAND.

Our readers will be glad to learn that the prosperity of Great Britain is at present greater than at any former period, and we feel assured that a brief account of things as they are in the mother country will interest Nova Scotians, as part and parcel of the Empire. We learn from an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, that during the administration of the existing Premier, "the financial position of England has been converted from one of embarrassment, not to say distress, into one of high prosperity. A trade has been created with France, Belgium, and Italy, which has almost countervailed the loss of our American commerce. During an era of frenzy in Europe and America, we have, notwithstanding our multiplied relations and intimate connexion with foreign nations, preserved peace with all. We have maintained our treaty rights in the East, developed our commerce with China, and established intercourse with Japan. India, so recently a source of political danger and financial difficulty, is secure and prosperous. \* \* \* In 1859 the income tax was 9d, it is now 6d in the pound: the commodities subject to Customs' duties in 1859 were 419 in number; the Customs' duties are now substantially confined to 14 articles, upon all the most important of which the charges have been largely reduced. The income tax has been reduced by nearly £5,000,000. At the same time, the national debt, funded and unfunded, has been diminished by between £16,000,000, and £17,000,000. The commercial benefits of the treaty with France are directly perceived, and admit of being arithmetically stated. In four years the value of our imports from France has increased by one half, the value of British and Irish produce exported to France has doubled. During the three years preceding the treaty the average annual value of the commerce between the two countries was £24,000,000; for the three following years it was £42,000,000. For our woollen manufactures alone a market has been opened which has counterbalanced the loss to our trade in that staple, great as it was, to America. Incredible as it may seem, although our trade with America has, since Secession, decreased by £28,000,000, yet the total annual value of the trade of the United Kingdom, which in 1858 was £300,000,000, rose in 1863 to little short of £450,000,000."

"We believe it was the Emperor of the French who once observed 'that the moral influence of a country always stood in direct proportion to the number of bullets she could send amongst her enemies.' If this be so, the forbearance of England (as regards the Polish and Danish questions) cannot, even for a moment, have impaired her moral influence. It is the all but unanimous opinion of those who are most interested in the suppression of the Slave Trade, that the time is come for the repeal of the Brazilian Act of 1845. We are paying the penalty of that unwonted interference with the rights of a foreign nation; but armed with that concession, (arbitration) we have no doubt that a competent British minister, despatched to Rio Janeiro, would speedily restore the relations of the two Empires to their proper footing. Strict neutrality has been observed towards both the

contending parties in North America in novel circumstances which render neutrality singularly difficult. On the one hand, we have resisted solicitations prematurely to recognise the South, and withstood temptations to break the blockade; we have refused to permit this country or Canada to be made a basis for the equipment of hostile expeditions. On the other, we have declined to consider the South as other than belligerents, or to treat their cruisers as pirates and prohibit them from entering our ports. Every month that has elapsed since the commencement of that war has raised delicate questions in the application of international or municipal law. The escape of the Florida and Alabama, the detention of the Alexandria and of the Confederate Rams, are in the recollection of all. The enlistment or kidnapping of men for the ships of the one party and the armies of the other are notorious; but besides these, questions concerning contraband of war, the destination of cargoes, the treatment of prizes, and numberless other points, all complicated by the mode and materials of war, have called for the continual exercise of temper and of judgment. That we have hitherto escaped being dragged into hostilities is only due to the firmness and forbearance of Parliament and of the Government which it has supported."

"It speaks well for the past, and bodes well for the future, that, notwithstanding the devastation of whole provinces by the locust flights of the Taepings, and by the imperial, hordes, the value of our trade with China, which in 1858 was under £10,000,000, has since risen to £17,000,000. The supply to this country, principally from China, of the single article tea, now almost a necessary of English life, increased by nearly £4,000,000, in the space of three years."

"Since England gave to her colonies the right of internal self government, and waived all claims to subordinate their commerce to her supposed interests, their affairs occupy far less than formerly the time and attention of Parliament. The control of the foreign policy of the dependencies being, however, reserved to the mother-country, has raised the new and perplexing question how far she is bound to provide for their military and naval defence. The House of Commons, in 1862, affirmed that the colonies, in their altered position, had claims to Imperial aid against perils arising through Imperial policy; but that they should mainly provide for their own internal defence, and ought to assist in their own internal defence. The principle is obvious in the case of such colonies as the majority of those in Australia, but it is difficult of application to all the various communities composing the British Colonial Empire. \* \* \* Canada, a purely European community in contact with a powerful neighbour, pleads that since we direct her foreign policy, she has a right to look to us for protection. On the other hand, the reply is ready that the connexion between this country and Canada subsists mainly at the wish and for the benefit of the latter, and that she may, therefore, be fairly expected to undertake the part, not of an auxiliary, but of a principal, in a war on her own frontiers; The subject has hitherto been more theoretically discussed than is usual in the House of Commons, but the heavy expenditure for colonial defences, the premium given to wars in which the dependencies tax the mother-country and profit by her loss, call for a termination of the present anomalous state of things." (Canada offers a quarter of a million, sterling,—how far would this go?)

"Since the election of the present House of Commons our steam-navy afloat has been increased by fifty vessels. \* \* \* We have now fourteen iron-clads in commission, or

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