

and maintain intimate relations with politicians of all shades of opinion : the writer had thus an opportunity of watching closely the working of our colonial system in the most important of our provinces. Since then, circumstances have made him acquainted with most of the leading public men in our other North American colonies, and with many in both the Northern and Southern States of America.

For some years past it has been evident, that the relations between England and her dependencies are on anything but a permanent basis. Authorities differ widely as to the course which ought to be pursued ; nor can any just conclusion be arrived at without understanding the manner in which our colonial system was gradually formed. The object aimed at in these pages is, to give an account of the successive changes which took place in the spirit of our policy ; and, by comparing the system thus built up, with the course pursued by other nations, to appreciate at their just value maxims which now guide the English Colonial Office.

The conclusions arrived at appear to be the logical result of an inquiry conducted with every desire to be impartial : indeed, far from supporting a preconceived theory, they differ entirely from the opinions