

over a feeling of despondency prevailed as to the possibility of retaining the colonies if they were allowed to control their own affairs under a system of responsible government. The Quarterly Review for March, 1849, referring to Lord Durham's report declared that if that "frank and infectious report did not receive the high, marked, and energetic discountenance and indignation of the Imperial Crown and Parliament, British America was lost"(g); while in Bowyer's Constitutional Law published in 1846, we find the author saying that under a system of responsible government "the colonies would be, in fact, perfectly independent of the Mother Country," and that their continued nominal allegiance would in a short time become almost ridiculous(h). Lord Elgin, however, here again displayed the political foresight for which he was so conspicuous. "When you concede to the colonists constitutional government, in its integrity," we find him writing in a letter to Lord Grey, of December 17, 1850, "you are reproached with leading them to Republicanism and the American Union. . . . I believe, on the contrary, that it may be demonstrated that the concession of constitutional government has a tendency to draw the colonists the other way; firstly, because it slakes the thirst for self government which seizes on all British communities when they approach maturity; and secondly, because it habituates the colonists to the working of a political mechanism which is both intrinsically superior to that of the Americans, and more unlike it than our old colonial system"(i).

But I need not dwell upon the period of doubt and distrust as to the possibility on the one hand, or the advisability on the other, of the maintenance of a united empire; a phase of feeling which we may surely hope has now passed away never to return. There is not the slightest ground for thinking that the great heart of the English people was ever anything else but staunch and loyal to the Imperial union, notwithstanding the temporary

(g) Quoted Greswell's British Colonies, p. 163.

(h) (London, 1846), pp. 55-6.

(i) Walrond's Letters and Journals, pp. 122-3.