

are without the path of active colonization. All these circumstances favour the rapid occupation, in the near future, of Britain's inviting possessions.

In the contest for commercial pre-eminence which the different nations of the globe are waging, the question, as far as concerns Britain's interests, of preferential trade within the Empire will likely thrust itself prominently upon her statesmen at no very distant date. Canada has led the way in this respect. Already has she given the preference in trade to the mother country, and to the sister colonies of the West Indies. Australia is now in a position to take concerted action. It remains to be seen what course the Imperial Government will pursue in the matter.

Consider the tremendous advantages which the American Republic, in common with other countries, has had in enjoying the freedom of the markets of the United Kingdom in past years, while on the other hand British goods have been subjected to the most hostile foreign tariffs. Political economists are asking themselves if this state of affairs can much longer continue. Free trade is doubtless an excellent theory, but in view of modern environments is it practicable? Last year the imports of the United Kingdom totalled £523,633,486, of which sum manufactured articles covered £93,216,298. It is this latter item over which the protectionist inclines to shake the head. Col. Geo. T. Denison, President of the British Empire League, in discussing the problem a few weeks ago at Ottawa, said:

"Britain has now the chance, by establishing mutual preferences, of developing the great territories under her flag, not only making them stronger and more prosperous, but binding them together by self-interest as well as by sentiment and political ties. She should seize the opportunity at once and endeavour to secure the markets of her Empire, as also

its political unity. . . . It stands to reason that, as nearly all nations are shutting us out of their markets and are competing with us in ours, in self-defence the Empire with its 11,000,000 square miles and 375,000,000 people should preserve its trade for building up its own resources rather than those of possible enemies."

There is little doubt that the whole question has an important bearing on the commercial situation of to-day, and those countries—notably the United States—which have developed an export trade largely from free access to England's ports, may rightly await the issue with deep anxiety.

There are those who profess to descry signs of Britain's decadence, and papers and publicists speak of the twentieth century as destined to witness the decline and fall of her greatness. These prophets would seem to be strikingly lacking in perspective. One must acknowledge that the marks of decay are not apparent. Splendid opportunities lie before her. That she still holds in her hands the secret of success may well be believed. All that is required is that the administration of Britain's Imperial affairs shall equal the superior resources at her command.

Even if the Motherland should in the coming years fail to maintain her relative importance in the Empire, she can rest assured that the magic wand of power will not pass beyond it. The British Empire will continue to exercise its commanding influence in the world's future. It has, first of all, the territory with which to do it—a territory "bounded by no continent, circumscribed by no sphere," but reaching to the confines of civilization itself; and, secondly, the genius of colonization implanted within it from distant ages to organize that territory and weave it into one harmonious whole.

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