

'Americans' mean for us Federals and Confederates. For the moment, the vast map of North America is the map of the United States, with a huge border of wilderness, 'Indian countries'—ancient civilisation reverting to still more pristine solitudes as in the forest-covered cities of Honduras and Yucatan, or solitudes but slowly emerging into civilisation, as throughout the Valley of the Ottawa and the 'Territories' of the Far West. The future fate of Washington's great Republic has become the American problem of the day; and, vast as are the regions outside its boundaries, it is scarcely surprising that they should be less regarded at present than the more exciting events happening within the Union. To some such cause we must attribute the slight attention which recent changes on its northern frontiers have received. There, we have founded two new Pacific colonies. There, the land of the beaver and the Blackfoot has become the land of gold and gold-miners. There, the transfer of the property and rights of the Hudson's Bay Company to a new and more numerous body of shareholders, has increased the public importance of their future operations. These are interesting events. Seen in the lurid glare from the vast conflagration now raging throughout the Union—like one of its own prairie-fires—we can at once perceive their importance and the great responsibilities which they entail upon us. Nor, indeed, is the one element of interest which is now uppermost in our minds altogether wanting. At the present moment, our troops, and those of the United States, stand face to face on the island of San Juan to support the claims of their respective Governments. These are, indeed, but miniature armies of occupation, yet who can say of what forces they might prove the pioneers, if the settlement of this dispute be indefinitely protracted? The British Government has forborne to urge a settlement of its claims on the Northern States during their hour of trial: and the Northern States are loud in their promises of a settlement hereafter. We shall see before we conclude that this is no idle controversy, and that it ought speedily to be brought to a definite issue.

Great Britain is still by far the largest of American landowners. In temperate regions alone—or, at least, in regions within the temperate zone—the British possessions considerably exceed the whole area of the United States. Events—in a great measure beyond control—have hastened the occupation of large portions of these districts. It might, indeed, have been possible to define more satisfactorily the precise powers and possessions which the progress of events was leaving to the Hudson's Bay Company.