

ships unless the same belonged to the country of which the goods were the produce, and from which they were imported; nor could goods the produce of America be imported into the United Kingdom to be used therein in foreign ships unless they were ships belonging to the country of which the goods were the produce or from which they were imported. To obtain the repeal of these restrictions was the object of the petitions to which I refer, and their repeal naturally followed upon the triumph of the Free Trade movement. And so the dates of the events marking that triumph coincide with the dates of the concession of responsible government to the British colonies. The year 1846 which witnessed the abolition of the Corn Laws in England witnessed also the passing of the Imperial Act(s) authorizing the British colonies in America to reduce or repeal by their own legislation the duties imposed by the Imperial Acts to which I have referred upon foreign goods imported from foreign countries into the colonies in question. The Imperial Act of 1849(*t*) repealed the navigation laws and allowed the River St. Lawrence to be used by vessels of all nations; while the year 1854 saw in the reciprocity treaty between Canada and the United States the first instance of a trade treaty being negotiated between a foreign power and a British colony as distinct from the Mother Country. And six years from 1846 to 1852 witnessed the transition of the power of government over colonial internal affairs from Downing Street to the great colonies. By his celebrated report of 1839, Lord Durham had recommended a federal union of the provinces of Lower and Upper Canada, and an executive council responsible to the Assembly. The first was carried into effect by the Union Act of 1840(*u*), the second was definitely established by the royal instructions to Lord Elgin in 1847, and by 1848 the provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick were in the full enjoyment of a system of self-government.

Thus we have passed from the time when Lord Chatham

(*s*) Imp. 9-10 Vict. c. 94.

(*t*) Imp. 12-13 Vict. c. 29.

(*u*) Imp. 3-4 Vict. c. 35.