

# PRACTICAL IMPERIALISM

AN EXTRACT FROM AN ARTICLE BY

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One of the most remarkable phenomena of modern times is the rise and growth of Imperialist feeling throughout the United Kingdom and the British Dominions.

History runs in cycles. The glorious period of the Napoleonic wars was not unnaturally followed by a great reaction. After the tremendous warlike exertions which had cost Great Britain approximately £1,000,000,000 the nation required peace and rest. The great influence which the landowning aristocracy used to exercise declined owing to the growth of the manufacturing industries and the manufacturing towns. Through the Reform Bill the middle class, composed of merchants, manufacturers, shipowners, etc., became the controlling element in the Legislature, and these hastened to make the best use of their opportunities. The utilitarian era began. Henceforth national policy was to be subservient to individual advantage, to commercial considerations. The people were told that the Colonies were unprofitable, that they were an encumbrance and a burden to the Motherland. The planful development of the Empire which former generations had pursued was discontinued. A sentiment frankly hostile to the Empire arose. Free Trade was introduced. Its essence was, in the words of Cobden: "Buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market." The trading interest was enthusiastically in favour of Free Trade in the expectation that it would be extremely beneficial to the manufacturing industries of the country. Incidentally it was hoped that Free Trade would break up the Empire and rid Great Britain of her Colonies. Cobden prophesied that Free Trade would gradually and imperceptibly loosen the bonds between Motherland and Colonies, and looked forward to their amicable separation.

The rule of the middle class has come to an end. Democracy has arrived. A democratic national policy has taken the place of the ancient utilitarianism, and Imperialism is merely the latest, and I think the highest, incarnation of our democratic nationalism. It is a conscious manifestation of the solidarity of the race. British Imperialism is not, as its opponents assert, an empty, vain-glorious, and aggressive policy advocated by "Jingoes," by the aristocracy, the leisured classes, and the army. It is a thoroughly democratic policy. This can be seen by the fact that it is strongest not in these islands, but in our most democratic possessions. Imperialism, contrary to widely held opinion, is democratic, peaceful, and utilitarian in the best sense of the word, for it is useful and necessary.

It is a trite but true saying that peace is the greatest interest of Great and Greater Britain. Only in peace can we develop our magnificent resources. But our peace is threatened.

The British Empire extends over 11,447,954 square miles. It is