

peared. Great confederations of British colonies have been formed, and are assuming definite shape. Imperial interests, instead of remaining disjointed and broken, and threatened at any time with dissolution, are gradually being consolidated. A spirit of mutual trust and confidence, in the future of the empire, among its members is taking the place of a spirit of indifference. The people of all the outlying settlements of the British Empire are not actuated by any prodigal disposition to escape beyond the bounds of parental authority. During Her Majesty's reign the inhabitants of the empire have begun to realize that the empire has an important future before it; that it has an important mission to perform in the progress and civilization of the world; that it has important self-sacrifices to make in order to give security, unity and permanency to all the various parts; that the civilized world has during her late Majesty's reign undergone great political changes; that new states have arisen, of great power and distinction; and that new interests have sprung up, which make certain lines of action, that at one time might be regarded with indifference, of vital consequence in our day.

One peculiarity of the circumstances connected with the government of the United Kingdom, is the growth of royal influence. The influence of the sovereign in public affairs, which was marked by weakness at the accession of Queen Victoria, grew in political importance during the whole of Her Majesty's reign, and was never so great as in the closing years of her rule. Her Majesty's connection with the government was marked by great industry, great moderation, and great respect for the settled doctrines of the constitution. The British sovereign is always associated with the administrative government, and so the knowledge which the sovereign possesses of the conduct of public affairs, is not evanescent or imperfect, like that possessed by a public minister, but is continuous. The knowledge of the most industrious minister is, with regard to many important matters, fragmentary. But it is not so with the knowledge possessed by an industrious and painstaking sovereign. But beside that influence which close application and a thorough acquaintance with the affairs of state necessarily secures to a

British sovereign, there is a social influence which a wise and virtuous sovereign is capable of exercising, that is even greater, and which exerts a wide and beneficial influence in channels, into which ordinary law and legal authority, do not extend. The British sovereign, under the modern constitution, is wholly exempt from personal responsibility. The ministers are an efficient force in government. Upon them falls the praise or the blame necessarily associated with the direction of public affairs, and as long as they are sustained by the House of Commons, they must exercise paramount authority through the sovereign. The sovereign is, under the modern constitution, never personally identified with a party. She represents the embodiment of the whole state. She has constitutional duties to perform, which are discharged in conformity with settled principles and usages, and is capable, without in the slightest degree encroaching upon the constitutional rights of ministers, of exercising great and beneficial influence. She may discourage vice and encourage virtue. She may throw her influence in the scale in favour of truth and goodness. Her Majesty possessed close personal relations with other ruling families, and so had the power, unofficially and privately, to do much to allay irritation, to smooth down obstacles which might give rise to friction in international relations.

Under our beneficent constitutional system the sovereign is the formal source of power. Parliaments are called to aid her by their advice. Parliaments are constantly changing, with the changed circumstances of the population, and the varying conditions of public opinion. They are making and unmaking ministries whom the sovereign called to her aid, in conformity with the wishes of parliament, but the sovereign ever remains the head of the state, which, from one point of view, may be regarded as one great family. They take a special interest in her as their head, and out of this domestic idea there springs a strong feeling of personal attachment. As a great family, they share with her in her greatness, and they are proud of the lustre which she shed upon the nation. They rejoice at the success which attended her government, and they lament the misfortunes and failures which may have over-