

THE BRITANNIC EMPIRE.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESTINY OF ITS VARIOUS STATES—IMPERIAL EXPANSION.

I.

The history of the nineteenth century will be memorable in the annals of the world for many great events. The rise and fall of dynasties and nations; the struggles of ambitious states; the growth of military power upon the European continent; the peaceful development of science and the extension of knowledge, all form vivid landmarks in the record of the century; but the one event, that in importance and far-reaching consequences overshadows all others, is undoubtedly the territorial extension and political development of the Empire of Britain.

The close of the eighteenth century saw Great Britain involved in a desperate struggle with the brilliant genius and immense military power of Napoleon; smarting under the loss of the principal part of her Colonial Empire, and making ceaseless efforts to retrieve her failures, and rebuild her colonial edifice by the victories of her fleet and armies. Australia was newly explored and entirely unsettled; French Canada only was in the possession of Britain and was but sparsely populated; the conquest of India was progressing, but by slow degrees, and the Cape of Good Hope had but recently been taken from the Dutch. But with the close of the Napoleonic wars and the growth of England's naval supremacy commenced a new era—a period of emigration and colonial growth. In 1815 scarcely two thousand persons emigrated from the United Kingdom. But, in 1819, the number of emigrants had increased to thirty-five thousand, and in 1882 it exceeded four hundred thousand. This was the period of the development of population in the West and the growth of British power in the East. The stream of emigration from the Mother Country was continuous, and though many settlers went to the United States, enough made their homes in the colonies of Canada, Australasia and South Africa, to bring us in the middle of the century to the second stage of Imperial expansion—the political period. Between 1850 and 1860 the Australasian colonies and the Cape had reached the age of colonial maturity, and demanded and received from the Home Government the right to govern themselves in all domestic and internal concerns. Constitutions were granted these dependencies, and in 1867 the Dominion of Canada was formed and the same privileges conferred upon it. With the end of the century the self-governing colonies would seem to be entering upon a third stage of political growth. It remains to be seen whether the result will be separation from the Empire or consolidation of the existing union, and what the causes and apparent effects are of the present trend of public opinion in the Mother Country and the colonies. Such is a very slight sketch of the gradual growth of British power during the present century, and it will now be my privilege to glance at the present proud position of the great Imperial realm of England, to see what has been the material expansion of that commercial and political entity called the British Empire. Three hundred years ago it comprised an area of 40,000 square miles, and—out of the British Isles—a population of savages. It culminates to-day in an area of 9,000,000 of square miles and a population of 315,000,000, comprising one-seventh of the land surface of the globe, one-sixth of its inhabitants, and possessing the sovereignty of the seas. Greater in extent and population, in resources and wealth, than any power of the present day, the great empires of other ages pale into almost insignificance before the superior power and greater material strength of the British Empire. With the fisheries, timber lands and wheat fields of Canada; the pasture grounds, gold fields and diamond mines of Australia and Cape Colony; the undeveloped wealth and agricultural resources of India—the gem of the Orient; the tropic wealth of Ceylon and the West Indies; the beautiful isles of New Zealand; with the mighty fortresses of Gibraltar and Malta; the string of fortifications girdling the world for the

protection of British commerce and the extension of British trade; with the hives of English and Scotch industry, the fertile soil of the Emerald Isle, and the commercial metropolis of the world as our Imperial capital. We may well feel proud of the dominions that our fathers have reared in every part of the globe, and realize that it is indeed a proud privilege to be a British subject as well as a Canadian citizen. Well may Mr. Gladstone say with the eloquence so natural to him: "We of this generation and nation occupy the Gibraltar of the ages, which commands the world's future;" and of the truth of these words as applied to the whole empire, there can be no doubt if its various members remain united.

In material wealth and commercial expansion, the British Empire as a whole exceeds that of any other nation or union of states upon the surface of the globe. Sir Richard Temple, in a paper read before the British Association in 1884, puts the total wealth of the Empire at the truly grand figures of £12,640,000,000 sterling, or \$63,200,000,000—an estimate which includes land, cattle, railways and public works, houses and furniture, merchandise, bullion and shipping.

A comparison of the population, trade and revenue of the Empire at the Queen's ascension in 1837 and at the present time will prove the wonderful expansion that has been taking place in a more vivid manner than it could otherwise be conveyed. The statistics as compiled from the best authorities are given for convenience in round numbers and in our own currency.

In 1837 the population of the Empire is estimated to have been 126,000,000; in 1887, 315,000,000. Total trade, 1837, \$1,045,000,000; 1887, \$5,395,000,000; and the total revenue of the United Kingdom, the Colonies and Dependencies, which, in 1837, was \$389,000,000, had increased in 1887 to \$1,037,000,000, while the inter-imperial commerce or trade between the different sections of the Empire has yearly increased, until now it amounts to the enormous sum of \$1,450,000,000, and seems to be capable of almost indefinite expansion.

The merchant navy of the British Empire numbers 30,000 ships, manned by 270,000 seamen, with a tonnage of 8,112,000,000 as compared with 12,000,000 for all the rest of the world. It has nearly half of the steam tonnage, of the carrying power, and of the freight earnings of all the nations together. The ratio of sea-borne commerce per inhabitant, yearly, is—\$100 in the United Kingdom, \$155 in Australia, and \$45 in Canada, as compared with the United States, which comes next with a ratio of \$30.

The men trained to arms in the Empire, including the regular British troops at home and abroad, the militia and volunteers in the Mother Country and the colonies, and the native troops in India and elsewhere, are estimated at 850,000 men. The number in comparison with those of European powers seems very small, but taken in connection with a navy supposed to be kept strong enough to command the seas, is probably sufficient for defensive purposes.

This is surely a great record of progress and increase of power to have been achieved by a handful of colonists and the people of those little islands in the northern seas in the course of two or three generations, and naturally creates a desire to know what the prospects are of this vast Imperial power holding together in the future, and suggests an enquiry as to the aspirations which are at work among the growing nations that comprise its principal portions, with a wish in the heart of every loyal British subject that some means may be found of combining these various states upon a basis of political equality, commercial unity and military power, which may be as enduring as the expansion of the Empire has been great.

We have in this Britannic Empire the extraordinary spectacle of democratic government in the West and despotic administration in the East, of a nation which is at once the head of the greatest Christian and civilizing power of the West, and the ruler of the most populous Musselman power of the East. Within its confines are to be found the extremest limits of Christian toleration and

Musselman bigotry, of political freedom to the verge of national independence and centralization verging upon despotism. In Australia and Canada are populations rapidly assuming the rank of nations, with all the impetuous desires and hasty ambitions natural to young and growing communities, while in India and South Africa are small numbers of Englishmen in the midst of millions of natives, utterly unable to hold their own for one moment without the power of the Empire behind them, and still another string of minor possessions and dependencies in every part of the world looking to the Mother Country for protection and development. The question of the day is, how these apparently conflicting interests are to be harmoniously united? And it is for the purpose of showing that there are many elements within the confines of the British Empire tending to unity and not disintegration, and that these elements are sufficiently stormy to make it a matter both of choice and necessity for us to consolidate that union and harmonize those interests that this series of articles will be written. It is intended to draw attention to each of the principal countries of the Empire, show the policy which appears to guide them, and the unity of interests which should really control them, and to attempt to point out that it is in the best interests of Canada to remain a portion of the British Empire and take an increasingly active part in its affairs, rather than accept an isolated and feeble independence, or a policy of ignoble subjection to the United States.

Toronto.

J. CASTELL HOPKINS.

"A VOICE IN THE NIGHT."

Out of the past a pained spirit rises,
With pale, pure face, with sad, reproachful eyes
And questions me; my mirth no more disguises
My heavy heart, my midnight miseries;
Those true eyes sift my soul and make me know
How much was mine before I let it go.

'I plead its pity, beg that it will haste,
And leave me in my loneliness; the hour
Is mixed with madness, the wide world a waste,
—The painful past still holds me in its power—
Ah! this is madness! leave me in my pain,
No hope, no peace, may light my life again.

"I may not leave thee—thrust me not aside,"
The spirit murmurs, but I turn away;
Why thus torment me, by thy glance deride?
But here the sad-voiced spirit answers: "Nay!
"Knowest thou not 'tis God who holds the past—
"That pain accepted giveth peace at last."

Montreal.

MAY AUSTIN.

DR. S. E. DAWSON.

La Minerve cordially congratulates Mr. S. E. Dawson on the honour conferred on him by Laval University. It is, indeed, a somewhat noteworthy coincidence that, while some English-speaking Canadians have been waging war on the mother-tongue of their French-Canadian fellow citizens, the highest representative of the French language and its manifold culture should have chosen an English *littérateur* for special distinction. The act is worthy of Laval, and the new Docteur ès Lettres will assuredly do that great institution no discredit. In learning that is by no means common—in constitutional knowledge, in the higher provinces of literary criticism, in thorough mastery of the principles of finance and commerce—he has no superior in Canada. He has the advantage, moreover, of a style that is at once lucid, vigorous and graceful, and can touch the keys both of pathos and humour. For many years Dr. Dawson has been a contributor to the press, daily and periodical. An article of his on "Old Colonial Currencies" was reproduced in the *Banker's Magazine*. His lecture on Copyright before the Law Faculty of Bishop's College, was most favourably reviewed by writers of authority. His study of "The Princess" had a special and laudatory review in *Macmillan* from the pen of one of the first critics of the day, and evoked a grateful letter from Lord Tennyson, which appears in the second edition. The Guide Book of the Dominion, which Dr. Dawson prepared in view of the meeting of the British Association, is just a model of what such a work should be. Dr. Dawson always writes from a richly stored and well ordered mind. He has the fine faculty of seeing both sides of a question and likes rather to dispense justice than to plead a case. We would greatly like to see some of his more elaborate essays and articles collected into a volume. Meanwhile we join our esteemed confrère, *La Minerve*, in heartily congratulating Dr. Dawson on an honour of which only few are deemed worthy.