

IS THE BRITISH EMPIRE THE RESULT OF WHOLESALE ROBBERY?

AMONG the charges which the peace-loving and humanitarian Teuton hurls against his backsliding British cousin is the assertion that Great Britain has owed its empire to the practise of the most wholesale robbery, the suggestion being that a Power whose hands are so foul can hardly pose as the champion of public rights or of the sanctity of treaties. It has, therefore, seemed worth while to devote a few pages to the actual historical facts with regard to the growth of the British Empire.

The subject is a complex one, and does not readily lend itself to facile generalization; but from a close inspection certain general conclusions seem to emerge. If we were German philosophers we might say with Herr Neuman, a Radical, according to *The Times*, of high character and repute, that wars in the past, no less than to-day, involved 'changes of organization in the process of human evolution', and that the British Empire was the outcome of such a change; but, being mere empiricists, we prefer to deal with the facts of the case.

It is impossible, however, to ignore certain broad principles underlying the facts. It seems a law of life that, when a nation has reached a certain stage of internal development, it finds in overseas expansion