

coast, and the completion of the railway from sea to sea is fusing the country together under the auspices of the successful Federal Government of the Dominion. The federal process is being repeated in the creation of the Australian Commonwealth, and Fiji, with some of the other Pacific stations occupied at later periods in the Queen's reign, will probably end by coming within the orbit of Australia or of New Zealand. In South Africa great annexation of territory took place about the time of the Bechuanaland expedition, despatched by Mr. Gladstone's Second Administration to keep the Boers within the limits of the Transvaal or South African Republic, and a district to which peculiar boundaries have been assigned by the singular arrangements of Lord Salisbury, but which stretches in the centre of the continent far towards the north, is being gradually brought under direct British authority.

The largest recent territorial annexation, accompanied by considerable increase of population of the Empire, which has occurred, is on the west coast of Africa, where, after allowing our old Crown colonies to be surrounded by French dominions, we have, under the auspices of a chartered company, now bought out by the Crown, brought, in the Niger districts, a vast Mohammedan population more or less effectively under our control.

One of the most interesting expansions of the Empire in the Queen's reign is one which is geographically about the slightest, namely, the occupation of the rocky island of Hong Kong, which received afterwards a small development, by a private lease, ultimately turned into annexation, of a little strip on the opposite mainland, which has now recently been enlarged. The trade of Hong Kong, like that of Singapore, cannot be measured by the size or even by the population or wealth of the territory at the spot. Hong Kong, even more than Singapore, has become a vast distributing centre for our China trade, and has shown how completely British interests are suited by good means of distribution, unaccompanied by large territorial concessions, but accompanied by open door or equal opportunity for trade in countries under a foreign flag. If our trade in China could be secured for ever under existing conditions, no annexation would be needed; and our gigantic trade in South America is a proof that no hoisting of the flag is necessary to secure the predominance of British trade