

If we wish to retain our own with certainty, and not subject only to the forbearance or goodwill of others, we must look to material as well as to moral power. We may be just and good, we must also be great and strong.

Now Professor SEELEY in his admirable work, "The Expansion of England," which I strongly commend to your notice, points out that England's rank amongst nations is dependant on the retention, in some form or another, of her connection with the colonies, without them she may manage to hold a place in Europe, barely equal to Germany or France, but in any dispute, where might is right, she must some day succumb to the United States, to Russia, and probably in the more distant future to China, and to her own late Australian possessions.

With them, firmly bound up with her by ties of interest and affection, she must rank, certainly not last among the four (admitting China) Great States of the future, here in another form we have St. Chrysostom's "natural temptation."

Bigness, as Professor SEELEY says, may not be greatness, and we may hold the first rank morally and intellectually, though materially but a second or third rate Power, but as neither greatness nor moral and intellectual excellence are incompatible with bigness, and as that alone can enable us to protect our own with certainty, I do not see why we should not endeavour to retain the colonies as a whole, alike by the continued assertion of our authority over the Crown Colonies and India, and by a closer combination with the self-governing ones.

Nor must we forget that our colonial Empire once lost can never be replaced.

Through the folly and obstinacy of our rulers and the political ignorance of the people we lost our first colonies and the United States, though still bound closer to us by ties of blood and language than any other country, is nevertheless a separate and sometimes a hostile nation.

I know that there are many who believe that this separation must have happened in any event, but even if it was so, it would have been much better that it should have happened by mutual consent and in a friendly spirit, as well might have been, had the wishes and feelings of the Americans been better understood by the English people or their rulers, and it is for more consideration of colonial questions that I am about to contend generally to-night.