

THE PARADOX OF IMPERIALISM

IN a recent study of the "Psychology of the French Boerophiles and Anglophiles" M. Yves Guyot observes that even the best Parisian newspapers talk of British Imperialism as intemperately as the *Intransigeant* and the *Libre Parole*.

The word [he says] stands for everything. They use it without discrimination; they exaggerate it; in the first place because, thinking they have made a discovery, they want to make it out to be an important one. Besides, many people want to create a bogey in order to enjoy the satisfaction of being afraid of it, and getting other people to share their terror. Frenchmen who think themselves clear-headed make their bogey of British Imperialism.

From so indulgent a critic as M. Guyot it is always easier for an Englishman to draw comfort than correction, but in this case his words suggest a lesson he did not intend. By a simple change of nominative we have it. Some Liberals who think themselves clear-headed—nay, some who have proved themselves clear-headed on other themes—make their bogey of "Imperialism." The word stands for everything—everything they honestly abhor. The result is extremely curious. Indeed, to the political philosopher of the next age no phenomenon will seem more irrational than that at the end of the nineteenth century Liberalism, in any of its forms, can have displayed itself in antipathy to the idea of an expanding British Empire. The fact will be undeniable. The student will even find it emphasised by the discovery that it is precisely in those forms