

THE GROWTH OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

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The beginning of the century is not a marking date in the growth of the British Empire. Before the Great War we had established the commencements of our Empire in India, and had settled down in North America to the loss of the United States and the gain of Canada. The Great War led to the Colonial dominions of Holland, Spain and France passing to some extent within our rule, although in South America we suffered grave defeat at the hands of Spaniards and Indians led by Frenchmen. At the close of the Great War, however, the theory that we had been fighting for the restoration of legitimate kings, which had been maintained by Pitt and the Tories against Fox and a section of the Whigs, prevailed, and we restored to France, and in a measure to the other powers, the territories which we had taken from them. Java, for example, one of the most fertile and easily governed of all tropical islands, was restored after a period of exceptional prosperity it had enjoyed under Sir Stamford Raffles, whose portrait figures at Batavia in the great series of the Dutch 'Governors-General of India.'

While, however, this was, as a general principle, the case, our South African dominions date from the Great War, and it was the Great War which enabled us to substitute ourselves there, politically speaking, for the Dutch, although we have not yet succeeded—probably by our own fault—in making the Cape Dutch as thoroughly contented citizens of the Empire as are the Canadian French.

Our expansion in India has been steady. The great growth of our dominion in the present century has occurred through our conquests of Scinde and of the Punjab, but it has been continuous, and the peaceful absorption of the whole of Baluchistan (which even now is not yet colored red upon our maps) has been the latest successful example of advance. Australia was dotted with a few convict settlements early in the century, but our practical annexation of the whole of Australia, and the covering of that great continent by our self-governing colonies, has been mainly the business of the Queen's reign. In Canada we have during the century stretched forward with actual power, as against a mere disputed paper control, to the Pacific