

House has been made elective; the franchise has been extended; the period required by law for the naturalization of aliens has been reduced to three years; the public lands have ceased to be crown lands; the public departments have been all transferred from imperial to provincial control. Many of these reforms, or all of them, are or may be real improvements; they are only here referred to in evidence of the assertion that year by year, and step by step, we are advancing towards an unrecognized Americanism, which must have its perils and risks as well as its attractions.

The only great question that remains in common between us and the rest of the Empire, is the question of Colonial defence. On every other, England has given in; on this alone has she made a stand, and in this, it is not too much to say, is involved the final decision of the future destiny of British America.

One postulate is quite certain on this subject, that we cannot go back to the state of unguarded security in which we reposed before the outbreak of the civil war; a second is equally certain, that the internal revolution within the dis-United States, points to permanent military establishments among our neighbours on a scale hitherto unknown. From both there is but one reasonable inference to draw, that we also have entered on a new condition of existence, in which we are called upon to exchange our *quasi*-independence of Great Britain on the one hand, and the neighbouring States on the other, for one of three future relations—that is, either for a closer connexion, offensive and defensive, with the rest of the Empire; for annexation, or for a guaranteed neutrality, like that of Belgium, under the joint protection of the greater powers. If neutrality be impracticable, if annexation be objectionable, then how are we so to identify ourselves with Great Britain without surrendering our local self-government, as to be entitled to claim her protection, and to convert the claim into a compact, to the full extent of all her martial resources?

Being *British* America in name rather than in fact, does not certainly produce that identity of interest or of feeling which can make the British taxpayer content to man a navy, and contribute troops and munitions for our defence. Of our trade, the mother country gets no more than she would probably do if we were entirely separated from her politically. Of our revenue, she fingers not a penny towards her army and navy estimates. In all substantial relations, we stand no nearer to her than New York or New England, except that her flag flies here, and that she is compelled, in honour and in self-defence, to be where her flag is. This, however, is a relation of responsibility wholly without recompense, except such as is derived from the additional *eclat* and *prestige* of the titular sovereignty. Let us set the Imperial case clearly before our