

courts. Of course the reader will be careful to observe that the act complained of need not be justified by *statute* or Act of Parliament ; because a good deal of English law is not contained in statutes. But it is important to observe, that this Rule of Law, though it originated in England, has passed automatically, not only to Scotland and Ireland, but to all the British possessions which have adopted English law, and that, in some others, the remedy of Habeas Corpus has been guaranteed by statute.

COLONIAL INDEPENDENCE

One other cause, too often forgotten, for the growth of constitutional liberty in the British Empire, is, unquestionably, the expansion of the United Kingdom into that wider scattered group of communities which we call the British Empire. As was, perhaps, natural, in the earlier stages of this expansion, the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain tried to keep the control of distant colonies in their own hands. But, in days when the means of communication were slow and costly, this attempt, as might have been expected, was ineffectual ; and, as a matter of fact, the earlier colonies exercised a good deal of practical self-government, under more or less popular constitutions. As is well known, however, a foolish and disastrous attempt to tighten the control of the central government led to the separation of the thirteen colonies of the American coast towards the end of the eighteenth century ; and, though we may rejoice that that step gave rise to the mighty Republic of the United States, we cannot but regret that it had to be taken in circumstances which long left bitter feelings in the minds of both nations. Warned, however, by this event, the British statesmen of the nineteenth century encouraged the growth of self-government freely in the colonies founded by English settlers ; and Canada, Australia,