

of science upon many important points. He foresaw the greatness of America, and his Essay is so striking that I have extracted the following passages as specimens of his political reasoning :—
 ‘Men are apt to measure national prosperity by riches. It would be righter (*sic*) to measure it by the use that is made of them. Where they promote an honest commerce among men, and are motives to industry and virtue, they are, without doubt, of great advantage ; but where they are made (as too often happens) an instrument to luxury, they enervate and dispirit the bravest people.
 The truth is, our symptoms are so bad that, notwithstanding all the care and vigilance of the legislature, it is to be feared the final period of our State approaches. . . . whether it be in the order of things, that civil States should have, like natural products, their periods of growth, perfection, and decay ; or whether it be an effect, as seems more probable, of human folly that, as industry produces wealth, so wealth should produce vice, and vice ruin. God grant the time be not near when men shall say : “This island was once inhabited by a religious, brave, sincere people, of plain, uncorrupt manners, respecting inbred worth rather than titles and appearances, assertors of liberty, lovers of their country, jealous of their own rights, and unwilling to infringe the rights of others ; improvers of learning and useful arts, enemies of luxury, tender of other men’s lives, and prodigal of their own. Such were our ancestors during their rise and greatness ; but they degenerated, grew servile flatterers of men in power, adopted epicurean notions, became venal, corrupt, injurious, which drew upon them the hatred of God and man, and occasioned their final ruin.”’

Whatever may be England’s future as a nation, her historical position was secured long ago, by the extent of her colonies, and by the fact that the English language is spoken not only by

Scotland, but by a vast proportion of those upon whom presumably depends the world’s future. And with the extension of England’s sway over different parts of the globe has been intimately connected her commercial greatness. We have seen that Bacon associates commerce with the decline of a nation, a view to which he was probably led by analogies derived from the past. England, as the herald of the future, was drawn from the earliest times to take a leading part in trade. There are indeed two ideals that have been present to the minds of the English, at different times. There is the ideal of a nation meddling as little as possible in continental affairs but turning her energies to internal reform and to trade—the ideal of Edward I, of Henry VII, of Elizabeth in her earlier days, of James I, of Walpole, of Peel, and of Gladstone. Or again, there has been the ideal of a nation, the umpire of the world, the arbiter of continental disputes, yet ever ready to fight in everybody else’s quarrel—the ideal of Edward III, of Henry V, of Wolsey, of the later Elizabeth, of Cromwell, of Chatham, of Palmerston, and of Beaconsfield. While England was united and others disunited, while she was strong and they weak ; while she was a trading nation and they careless of trade, it was possible for her to adopt the latter policy for a time, and then again to retire with dignity to the former policy until her strength was restored for another fight. It is now possible no longer. ‘Our special work in Europe,’ writes Mr. W. R. Greg,* ‘is nearly done,—quite perhaps, so far as we could act in it with efficacy. . . . It may be questioned, whether our interposition in continental affairs is any longer needed. It may be questioned, also, whether, if needed, it could be rendered with effect.’ And he accordingly counsels retirement from

* ‘Political Problems for Our Age and Country.’