

the growth has been to a great extent willed, and even involuntary, though we persist in ascribing to deliberate and far-reaching ambition on the part of Russia that which we know, on our own part, is to be ascribed to nothing of the kind. That either England or Russia, having reached the foot of the Himalayas by extending her empire over regions unoccupied by any civilized nation, will proceed to scale the Himalayas for the purpose of attacking another great European power, is as little to be presumed as it is to be presumed that the tide will scale the cliff because it has raced in over a sandy flat. The movements of Russia farther west are assignable to an obvious cause, and one totally unconnected with any imaginable designs on India. Every great and growing power is led by a natural impulse to make its way to an open sea. England would hardly submit to being corked up in the Dardanelles in order to gratify the jealous apprehensions of Russia, and she cannot expect that Russia will complacently submit to being corked up in order to gratify hers. Suppose Russia, like ourselves, obtains the full freedom of the Mediterranean. All diplomatists and Russophobists hold up their hands in horror at the thought. But what is the specific evil which would ensue? Why is Sebastopol, or, if it came to that, Constantinople, so much more likely to be dangerous than Brest? If Russia is provoked, she will very likely give us trouble in India; but why should she be provoked?

It is assumed that the Suez Canal would be available in time of war. This is a point on which, of course, we cannot presume to form an opinion; but it lies so near the root of the whole question that it is to be hoped a deliberate opinion will be formed. To occupy Egypt in defiance of the wrath and future hostility of France, to go to the expense of creating armaments powerful enough to command the eastern Mediterranean, and then to see the object for which all this had been done practically annihilated by a few shillings' worth of dynamite or the scuttling of an old ship, would be mortifying in the extreme.

Already our nervous anxiety about the canal has brought an avalanche of calamity on the world. To avoid this war with all its horrors, and the danger of further conflagration which it involves, it was necessary that from the outset separate interests should be suppressed, and that the crisis should be treated as a European one, to be dealt with by the common councils of Europe. But hardly had it arrived when England avowed her intention of separately securing her own in-

terests, and pounced upon the Suez Canal. This was the signal that a wreck had commenced, and that everybody must look out for himself. Everybody did look out for himself; everybody made his own game. Cordial coöperation thenceforth was impossible, and the inevitable result was this war—a war which puts back civilization. Lord Derby has said that of British interests the greatest is peace, and what Lord Derby says is always wise. If we ask why Lord Derby did not make a sincere and resolute effort to preserve the greatest of British interests by enforcing in common with Russia and the other powers the reforms to which Turkey was pledged, and which, if vigorously pressed, she would most certainly have conceded, the answer will partly be that this obvious line of policy was crossed by the alarm about the Suez Canal and the interests of England in the East.

Egypt no doubt differs greatly in some respects from India. But in Egypt, as in India, you would have a dominant and a subject race. You would have a foreign government ruling, on arbitrary principles, over people divided from the officials by a wide social gulf. The reflex action on the character of the imperial country would probably be much the same.

In the course of empire, one act of aggrandizement leads to another. The conquest of a small territory round the British factories in India has led to the conquest of the whole country. This, again, leads to the occupation of Egypt. India being in the hands of England, no one will deny that the occupation of Egypt, in case of a break-up of the Turkish Empire, presents itself as a natural question for consideration. But the advocates of the measure must allow it to be fairly discussed, and not think to settle it by impugning the patriotism of their opponents, though, as we have already admitted, the nation is just now in a mood in which such appeals are likely to tell. If the party of moderation is inferior to the party of aggrandizement in anything, it is not in love of the country, but in power of discerning her true interests. It does not seem to itself to be advocating a policy of weakness. It holds that, as we said before, the strength of England is in herself, and that she derives more real strength from one of her own counties than she does from all her foreign dependencies put together. It holds, in fact, that acquisition of territory which is not self-defending is extension, not of strength, but of weakness; and in proof of the fact it may cite, among other things, the perpetual complaints of its opponents that the em-