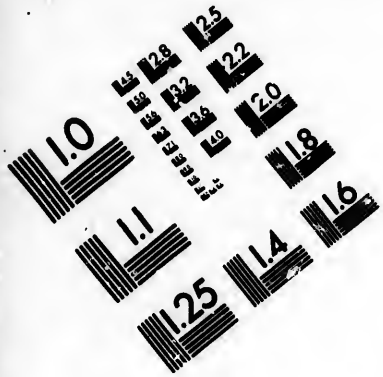

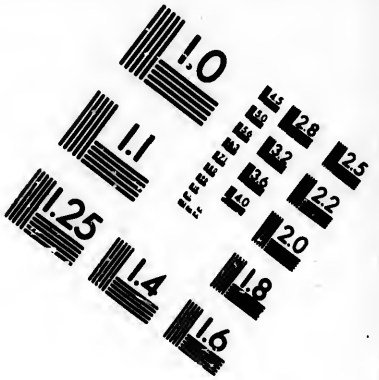

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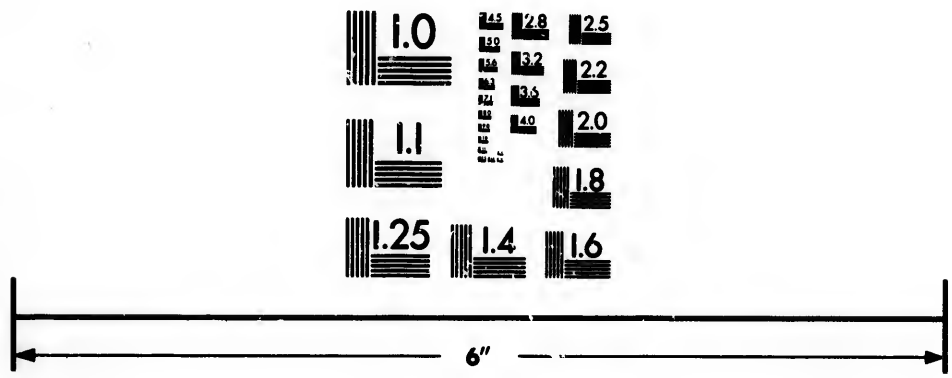

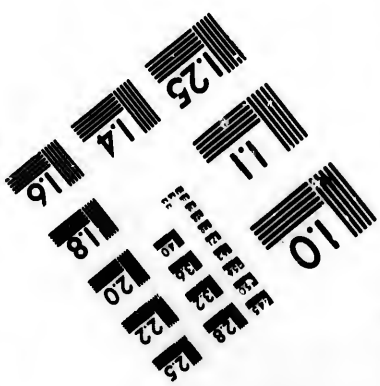

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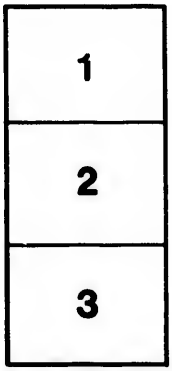

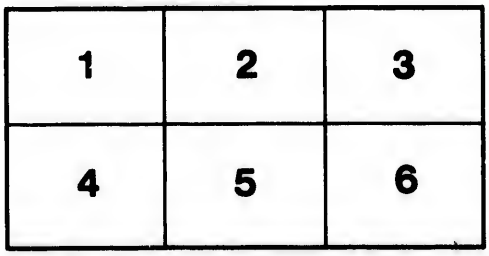

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ART. IV.—*Colonial Constitutions: an Outline of the Constitutional History and Existing Government of the British Dependencies, with Schedules of the Orders in Council, Statutes and Parliamentary Documents, relating to each Dependency.* By ARTHUR MILLS, Esq., of the Inner Temple, Barrister at Law. London, 1856.

2. *The Reports made for the year* 1857 *to the Secretary of State having the Department of the Colonies, in Continuation of the Reports annually made by the Governors of the British Colonies, with a view to exhibit generally the Past and Present State of her Majesty's Colonial Possessions.* Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of her Majesty, 9th August, 1859.
3. *Canada*—1849 *to* 1859. By the Hon. A. T. GALT, Finance Minister of Canada. London, 1860.
4. *The New Zealand Constitution Act; together with Correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor-in-Chief of New Zealand, in explanation thereof.* Wellington, New Zealand, 1853.
5. *Copy of Report of the Committee on Expense of Military Defences in the Colonies.* Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 4th May 1860.

OUR Colonial System may be said to be composed of a number of political bodies, revolving round Great Britain as a centre planet, partaking of her progress, yet with motions peculiarly their own. The phases which they present, and the phenomena which they exhibit, cannot be objects of indifference to the inhabitants of that central orb, in the destinies of which they must in a great degree participate, and to which they are linked not less by moral affinities than by material relations; for there is a principle of political gravitation which binds them together, regulates their movements, keeps them steady in their orbits, and to which even any irregularities in their apparent course are subordinate, and can be made accountable.

It cannot, however, be denied that much apathy has long existed in considerable portions of the community in regard to our colonial possessions. It does not, happily, characterise the governing classes; nor is it found in that section of our people which originates and organizes philanthropic schemes, and which aspires to extend the blessings of civilization and of a pure religion to the benighted regions of the earth. Colonies have ever been regarded by these zealous labourers as advanced outposts, from which they may send forth their missions to subdue the vast outlying regions of heathanism. The indifference to which we have referred, has, however, of late years considerably diminished; and the more frequent discussion of colonial subjects, the progress of emigration, but more especially the wonderful development of the great Australian dependencies, have resulted in creating a general interest in these distant possessions of the Crown, which at an earlier period of their career, it seems difficult to believe that they would ever possess. Regarded simply in a commercial sense, there is now a disposition to attach that value to our colonies that was long denied them by some eminent political economists. It was frequently affirmed by the professors of this school, that the colonies would still send their productions to this country, and in return consume its manufactures, whether they continued to be British dependencies or not. But the problem ought never to have been regarded in the light of an abstract speculation, in which facts were assumed for the mere purpose of philosophical investigation. Our colonies are, in fact dependencies of the crown; and they cannot cease to be so prematurely without Great Britain suffering an enormous loss of prestige and power: and who can measure the influence of such events on her trade and commerce? Nor is it an answer to say that the colonies may now buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest, and that they resort to Great Britain as to the most advantageous market. The inhabitants of the British colonies are British subjects; they carry with them, or adopt English manners, English tastes, and English sympathies; they imitate English habits, and they like English things; their correspondents are generally in England; hence the demand is almost necessarily for English manufactured goods. Even if these should be a little dearer than foreign articles, they would still be bought; and the taste for these things yearly extends into new and more distant countries as the English race spreads over the world, keeping British commerce in the channels it has already entered, and constantly pouring it into new. It would be a bold assertion, and one very difficult to support, that if the colonies now occupied by people of the British race were occupied by another people, they would be the consumers of British commodities to the same extent as at present; and that those who would otherwise occupy them would not prefer the articles of that country of which they might be citizens, to those of another to which they were no way related. These

propositions may be illustrated by a reference to figures:—

Population of the undermentioned Countries, and Exports to them from the United Kingdom, in the year 1857.

	Population.	Imports from Great Britain.
British America, .	3,014,051	L 4,668,860
Australia . . .	1,107,537	18,175,125
United States, . .	27,797,498	20,076,595

Here the United States exhibits a return in proportion to its vast population, which contrasts most unfavourably with the two colonies above specified; and it is impossible to doubt that the independence of the country has had much influence in restricting its trade with Great Britain, large as it is, and that it might, and probably would, have been a much greater consumer of British commodities had it remained an integral part of our colonial empire. Nor is there any ground for supposing that its wonderful material development would not have proceeded at an equally rapid rate if it had not separated itself from the parent state.

But the retention of the dependencies of the British Crown is sometimes objected, for special reasons, not without a certain degree of plausibility. An extensive colonial empire, it is said, is a source rather of weakness than of strength; the cost is considerable, and the profit at least problematical. Those countries it is moreover affirmed, which, in ancient or modern times, have indulged the vanity or ambition of acquiring distant and extensive settlements, derived neither wealth in the days of their prosperity, nor assistance in those of adversity, from their thankless and indifferent offspring. The Greek colonies were peculiar to their age and race. Groups of emigrants, driven by necessity or impelled by the love of adventure left their homes and renounced their allegiance, fixed their new domicile where they pleased, were bound to the parent state by no political tie, and were indeed wholly unconnected with it except by moral sympathies and traditionary associations. The colonial system of Carthage was founded on a strict monopoly, resembling in many respects that of England in an early stage of her commercial career; and she fell without having experienced, in the hour of her extremity, either aid or sympathy. Roman settlements were merely distant garrisons. Spain and Portugal, in recent times, justly forfeited the allegiance of their colonists, and lost their extended empires, by a combined policy of selfishness and ignorance; and the magnificent countries which they misgoverned took the earliest opportunity of trampling the symbols of their subjection in the dust and proclaiming their independence.

Great Britain alone among modern states has retained a large portion of her colonial empire. The policy on which it was originally founded differed, as we have remarked, but little from that of other countries; but the enlightened liberality of her leading politicians, has given a totally different development to the system from any that had been conceived possible to the less advanced states which have aspired to distant dominion. The rise and progress of the colonial empire of Great Britain, from the first attempt to plant settlements in North America to the last "annexation" in India, embraces only a period of three centuries, during which a political fabric has been erected, composed of fragments of almost every extinct and every existing nation of the habitable world; and a power has been created to which, in the words of an eminent American statesman, "Rome in the height of her glory was not to be compared—a power which has dotted over the whole surface of the globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth daily with one continuous and unbroken strain of martial music."

Whatever objects may have been contemplated in her first settlements, Great Britain has not, certainly, since the unhappy quarrel with her North American colonists in the last century, attempted to obtain a tribute for her support in peace, nor does she hope to enlist troops for her defence in war,* nor to increase her ordinary revenue from any of the natural resources or productions of the colonies; for even the untold wealth of the Australian gold-field, the indisputable property of the Crown, was abandoned with scarcely an effort for its retention, nor does she now seek in them an exclusive market for her goods, or any longer make them receptacles for her delinquent population. In truth, the colonial empire of England costs the Imperial Government and the British people rather more than L.3,000,000 sterling per annum. For what purpose, then, is it maintained? To those who look wholly to material results and a pecuniary balance, the question itself involves a paradox; but to those who regard a vast empire as founded for some higher purpose than the creation and development of wealth, the wilful dismemberment of such an empire seems nothing less than the breaking up of some vast

* The regiment recently raised in Canada is an exception, but the experiment is not likely to be repeated; in fact, the cost was far greater than that of a regiment of the line at home. During the last Russian war, Great Britain, as is well known, had recourse to German mercenaries.

and complex machinery for the progressive civilization of the human race, and an impious rejection of an instrument put into our hands by Providence for working out some great purpose of His government.

Even the most material of our political economists, Mr. Mill, while not overlooking inferior objects, recognises colonization, although originating in the enterprise of individuals, as involving consequences extending indefinitely beyond the present. "The question of Government intervention in the work of colonization," he says, "involves the future and permanent interests of civilization itself, and far outstretches the comparatively narrow limits of purely economical considerations. To appreciate the benefits of colonization, it should be considered in its relation, not to a single country, but to the collective economical interests of the human race. It is also a question of production, and of the most efficient application of the resources of the world. The exportation of labourers and capital from old to new countries, from a place where their productive power is less to a place where it is greater, increases by so much the aggregate produce of the labour and capital of the world. It adds to the joint wealth of the old and the new countries what amounts, in a short period, to many times the mere cost of effecting the transport. There needs be no hesitation in affirming that colonization, in the present state of the world, is the very best affair of business in which the capital of an old and wealthy country can possibly engage."*

Colonial self-government is only another term for an extension of the principle of freedom and the blessing of liberty over vast areas of the civilized world. This we believe to be the noble "mission" of Great Britain; and her colonies are nobly fulfilling the great purpose for which they were called into political existence. It has been well to rule them with firmness during their infancy, and to control their inexperienced youth; but the highest duty is to teach them how to rule themselves. Emancipation from a wholesome restraint may undoubtedly be conferred too soon; for these young communities ought not to be left to themselves until they acquire a maturity at which the capacity of self-government may be legitimately and safely presumed. Mistakes have undoubtedly been made both as to the moral fitness of some of our dependencies for the freedom conferred, as in the institutions which have been framed for them. These we shall have occasion to point out as we pass in review the various colonies of the British Empire, which we shall now proceed to do; taking, in the first place, as the most ancient and not the least interesting of our possessions, those noble North American provinces whose loyalty to the British Crown is only exceeded by the rapid development of their wonderful resources, and the space that they must occupy in the history of the British Empire, and of the great American continent, the civilization of which is scarcely now more than two centuries old.

The possession of CANADA by the Crown of England dates from 1759, when it was conquered from the French by General Wolfe. It was ceded to Great Britain by the treaty of Paris in 1763. In 1791, Upper and Lower Canada were divided, and constituted two provinces. Houses of Assembly were at the same time formed, consisting of 50 members in Lower and 16 in Upper Canada. In 1840, Upper and Lower Canada were reunited, and a Legislative Council formed for the two provinces. This Council was to consist of not less than 20 members, but as many as 45 were appointed for life by the Crown. The Legislative Assembly consisted of 84 members. Municipal institutions were established in 1840. The present constitution of Canada is the result of a Reform Act passed in 1853, enlarging and reconstructing the constituency, the result of which was the return of 130 members to the Legislative Assembly.

In Canada the attempt was first made to place the Executive Council on the same footing of responsibility to the Representative Assembly as the British Ministry stands in reference to the House of Commons—removable, that is to say, by a vote of censure or want of confidence. It is curious and instructive to observe how reluctantly this undoubted constitutional right, as it is understood in the mother country, was conceded to the colonies. Even the most advanced of our constitutional statesmen, Lord John Russell, resolutely set his face at first against the concession. In a despatch addressed to Lord Sydenham in 1839, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, he thus expressed himself:—

"It appears from Sir George Arthur's despatches, that you may encounter much difficulty in subduing the excitement which prevails on the question of what is called 'responsible government.' I have to instruct you, however, to refuse any explanation which may be construed to imply an acquiescence in the petitions and addresses on this subject. The power for which a Minister is responsible in England is not his own power, but that of the Crown, of which he

* Principles of Political Economy, Book 5, chapter 11.

is, for the time, the organ. It is obvious that the executive councillor of a colony is in a situation totally different. The Governor under whom he serves receives his orders from the Crown of England. But can the Colonial Council be the advisers of the Crown of England? Evidently not; for the Crown has other advisers for the same functions, and with superior authority. It may happen, therefore, that the Governor receives, at one and the same time, instructions from the Queen and advice from his Executive Council totally at variance with each other. If he is to obey his instructions from England, the parallel of constitutional responsibility entirely fails; if, on the other hand, he is to follow the advice of his Council, he is no longer a subordinate officer, but an independent sovereign."

This despatch, however was almost immediately followed by another, in which the Secretary of State instructs the Governor-General of Canada, that hereafter the tenure of certain enumerated colonial functionaries, being members of Council and heads of administrative departments, holding office during her Majesty's pleasure, would not be regarded as equivalent to a tenure during good behaviour, but that such officers would be called upon to retire from the public service "as often as any sufficient motives of public policy might suggest the expediency of that measure." This despatch has been regarded as the charter of "responsible government," which, only a few days before, Lord John Russell had peremptorily forbidden the Governor-General to grant.

Next to the great principle of ministerial responsibility, without which representative institutions would have been a delusion, the composition of the Legislative Council was a most important consideration for the people of Canada. In most of the colonies this Council was nominated by the Crown, and consisted of a certain number of civil functionaries and private colonists—called respectively the official and non-official members; and it formed the "second estate" in our colonial constitutions—and was intended, in theory and practice, to exercise functions analogous to those of the House of Lords. No greater mistake has been committed by the mother country, in her dealings with her dependencies, than in thus attempting to invest with legislative power a few individuals who can never bear the faintest resemblance to our hereditary peers. The elements of such an institution do not exist in the colonies; and the abortive attempt to plant a species of artificial aristocracy in a soil entirely uncongenial to its production, is a remarkable illustration of the force of inveterate prejudice, and of the predominance of theory over practical wisdom. A time-honoured institution like our House of Lords can only exist in a country where the aristocratic element is highly developed, and interwoven with the whole of our social and political life. The high education and intelligence of our peerage reconciles the country to the existence of a legislative power not immediately responsible to the people; and the conviction is universal, that it cannot be extensively abused, and will only be exercised in conformity with public opinion, and for the general good. But if there is any one institution which, more than another, tends to bring the Home Government into disrepute, to disturb the action of the constitutional system, to throw discredit upon public men, and to introduce discord into the colonial councils, it is the institution of Crown nominees. Legislative Councils composed of members appointed by the Crown have, in general, very little influence over public opinion; while, where they have been introduced, they have made the General Assembly less efficient, by withdrawing from it individuals whose services would have been more valuable in the popular branch of the Legislature. The number of men in a small colonial society qualified to discharge with ability the duties of a legislator is necessarily limited; and it must be, therefore, impolitic to take them away from that Assembly which must always exercise the greatest influence and possess the largest share of power. Thus, it has sometimes been suggested that a single Legislative Chamber is best adapted for a colony; but experience has shown, particularly in New South Wales, that a second Chamber, composed partly of elected members and partly of Crown nominees, although it cannot defeat measures strongly supported by public opinion, can insure their being fully discussed, and not passed without a previous consideration of just objections to what may be the mistaken demands of an excited and ill-informed popular feeling.

The fallacy of expecting an independent and influential second Assembly, composed solely of Crown nominees, has been so admirably exposed by a gentlemen who possesses a large colonial experience, together with great administrative ability—we allude to Mr. Lowe—that we gladly quote his authority. "These members," he says, "represent nobody; they have not the slightest affinity to an aristocratic institution; they are the scapegoats of the constitution, the target for every attack, the butt of every jest. Ignominy and obloquy rain thick upon them; and when it is asked whether the colonies

have materials for a second Chamber, the question may, I think, with more propriety be put, can they have materials for nominees? can they have people so paramount in talent, so independent in property, so conciliatory in manner, so combining all sorts of contradictory attributes, that they can hold this invidious office without exposing themselves to the sort of treatment to which I have alluded? That is, I think, impossible; and it is not my opinion alone, but that of almost every person throughout the colonies."*

An elective Senate is not without its disadvantages; but no rank or dignity emanating from the Crown can possibly compensate for the deficiencies of a parliamentary body that does not enjoy the confidence of the colonial population. The Provincial Legislature of Canada was empowered by an Act of the Imperial Legislature, passed in 1854, to constitute the Legislative Council an elective body, the existing nominated members retaining their seats for life. The province has been divided into 48 electoral divisions, each returning one member. Twelve are elected every two years, and they go out of office after eight years' service. The House is not subject to dissolution; and in the opinion of Mr. Galt, the able Finance Minister of Canada, "the result will be to establish a body in a great degree secured from the ordinary excitement of politics, and able to take a calm and dispassionate review of the acts of the Lower House, which is elected for four years, and may be dissolved by the Governor-General."

Canada has passed through several severe commercial and financial crises; but the progress that she has recently made, morally, socially, and financially, are directly due to the perfect liberty of action which has been given her in the management of her own affairs, and to the ability of the public men whom her free institutions have called forth.

Following the guidance of Mr. Galt, one of the ablest of her ministers, we shall notice a few of the most prominent internal improvements which place Canada high among the dependencies of Great Britain, and have made her an example worthy of being followed by those that have not yet attained her political maturity.

Municipal institutions are justly held to be valuable accessories of every free constitution. The Supreme Legislature can never deal in a satisfactory way with subjects devoid of general interest, however locally important; and their introduction into the national Senate tends only to divert it from its special duties, impair its dignity, and diminish its usefulness. All the laws relating to municipalities in Upper Canada were revised and consolidated into one statute in 1858, and a similar measure is in preparation for Lower Canada. The inhabitants of every county, city, town and township are constituted corporations on an elective principle; and the powers of these provincial bodies embrace everything of a local nature, including schools, courts of justice, gaols, with rates for their support, licenses, local improvements, the care of public morals, police, together with a great number of minor matters essential to the welfare of small communities. Generally, the institutions of England have been taken as a guide; and the result has been to secure to each local district the most complete management of its own affairs, the evils of improper centralization have been avoided, and every citizen finds a centre of interest and a sphere of exertion in his own immediate neighbourhood.

In one most important department of public economy the people of Canada have advanced far beyond that of the mother country. In the provision of schools for general instruction of the population, Canada ranks conspicuously high. The Government has solved a problem which still perplexes and divides England. In Canada the principle is established, that every child in the country is entitled to education; and a rate for that purpose is struck by each municipality, in addition to a grant of L.90,000 from the public exchequer. Each school district is under the management of local trustees chosen by the people. A Superintendent of Education is established for each county, and he is assisted by a Council of Instruction chosen from among the leading men of the province. The school-books are selected by the Council and Superintendent. The result of the system is, that in Upper Canada alone there were, in 1858, 3866 schools and 263,683 scholars. It has been found to work satisfactorily; and even in Lower Canada, where, until recently, education had been totally neglected, the schools number 2800, and the scholars 130,940.

Another problem presenting great difficulties has also been solved in Canada. The feudal tenures, which operated as a great obstruction to progress and material improvement of any kind in Lower Canada, have been recently extinguished by a plan of compensation to the lords and others interested in, and affected by, the change, and

* Speech of Mr. Lowe, at a meeting of the Society for the Reform of Colonial Government, held June 1, 1850.

an indemnity from the province of L.650,000. A complete social revolution has thus been effected at a cost trifling as compared with its importance; and it has been accomplished quietly, without giving rise to any violence or producing even excitement, and in a manner which satisfies all parties by its justice and liberality.

In legal reform, again, Canada has outstripped her parent state in the race of improvement. The whole statute law of the country has been consolidated into three volumes; and a commission is now sitting, charged with the duty of codification, in Lower Canada, after the manner of the Code Napoleon.

Unfortunately, the finances of the years 1857, 1858, and 1859 show marks of a temporary embarrassment. The diminution of revenue from various causes, together with very large undertakings in public works, to which, at the time they were commenced, Canada was financially unequal, will tax the energies of the country severely to meet the crisis and its consequences. But of the result there can be no doubt; and the development of a vast system of internal communication, together with the inexhaustible resources of the land, all point to a very brilliant future. In a despatch from the Governor-General, Sir Edmund Head, to the Secretary of State in 1858, he states, both as his own conviction and that of subjects of the United States settled in those districts, that the whole of the trade of the north-western regions of America must ultimately look to Montreal as its port, and the St. Lawrence as its highway to the ocean; and he adds, "I believe that no man can at present estimate the volume of the tide of commerce which, twenty years hence, will pour down this channel."

The river St. Lawrence drains a vast extent of the great continent, and forms the natural channel to the ocean not merely for Canada, but also for the states of Western New York, Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana. This great district is that wherein the principal cereal crop of America is produced—bulky in its nature, comparatively low in its value, and requiring therefore the cheapest transport. Canada now possesses the most magnificent canals in the world, but without, at the present time, any trade to support them except her own; but she has now combined with her unrivalled inland navigation a railroad system, the most extensive in America. The Grand Trunk Railway, with its marvellous engineering work, the Victoria tubular bridge, has a length of 1112 miles, and is designed to provide for the winter trade of the province, and of the great district before described, by the transport of goods to the city and harbour of Portland, U.S., being the port nearest to the river St. Lawrence. It is to be regretted that the point of departure and arrival for shipping should be in a foreign territory; but great efforts were made, as well by Canada as by New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, to induce the Imperial Government to promote the extension of the Grand Trunk Railway to some colonial winter port, but without success. The American cities on the great lakes are now, it is said, opening a direct trade through the Canadian waters with Europe; and the time is believed to be not far distant when the full advantages of the St. Lawrence, as the great route from the interior of the continent to the ocean, will be fully recognised.

In connection with this grand scheme of international communication, a proposition of a very startling character has recently been submitted by a committee of the Legislative Assembly of Canada, and most favourably received in England, for the establishment of a *daily line* of screw steamers, of not less than 2000 tons burthen, with a speed of from ten to twelve miles per hour, between Liverpool and Quebec, to be connected with another line of steamers of 1000 tons burthen, of the same speed, to the Welland Canal and Railway, Toronto, or Hamilton, intersecting a line of similar steamers on Lakes Erie or Huron to Chicago. By this connection it is calculated that first-class passengers could reach Chicago, from Liverpool over the Grand Trunk Railway by Quebec, in twelve days. To those who are not familiar with the magnitude of the trade of the Western States of America, the idea of a daily line of steamers to England may appear preposterous; but the scheme is founded on the soundest data, and has been considered in all its bearings; and, by creating an identity of feeling and interests between the people of Canada and the citizens of the Western States of the Union, cannot fail to produce the most important commercial and political results, and may be truly considered to be one of national importance.

In Canada, we seem to have solved the problem, so long deemed insoluble, how to retain a colonial dependency under the dominion of the mother country without violence and without coercion, by the mere strength of mutual interests and mutual benefits. That a country of such magnitude, with a population augmented, as it must be in no great length of time, to an equality with that of the parent state, can remain

a permanent dependency of the Crown, is scarcely to be supposed; but whatever may be its destiny, its people will always value as their most precious inheritance the free institutions they enjoy, and cherish an attachment to the country from which they received them. "The future," says Mr. Galt, "may change our political relations; but I feel sure the day will never arrive when Canada will withhold her support, however feeble it may be, from Great Britain, in any contest for the maintenance of her own position, as the foremost champion of civil and religious liberty." In the meantime, that a perfectly free community, with institutions far more democratic than our own, and conscious that it requires only an expression of its will to effect a separation, should cling closely to our side, rival us in loyalty to our common Sovereign, and anticipate with enthusiasm the advent of the heir apparent of the British Empire, is a spectacle so impressive and so gratifying, that the heart of England may well beat with emotion and swell with justifiable pride. Can the Canada of to-day be really the same Canada, the land of endless discontents and miseries, that, a quarter of a century since, broke out into armed rebellion, and was prevented only by the presence of an overwhelming military force from following the example of America in 1776? Can the progressive Canada of to-day be the Canada of 1830,—poor, desert, and neglected, without capital and without credit, but with a population so hostile, it required an army to coerce it? The land is the same, and the race is the same; but Canada has acquired the conviction, that England has at length learned how to deal justly with her colonies; that she has cast away the illiberal and antiquated theories that formerly guided her conduct; that she will abstain even from interference; and that the only sentiment she feels is that of an attached parent, rejoicing in the approaching maturity of her political offspring.

The other North American dependencies of the Crown will not occupy much of our space. They are all in a state of progressive prosperity, and entire contentment both with their institutions and the mother country. The system of responsible government was fully recognised in Nova Scotia by the resignation of the Executive Council, in pursuance of a vote of the Provincial Parliament in January 1848. The public statutes have been revised and consolidated, and now form the code of the province. The value of the exports and imports is steadily rising, and the revenue of the province increasing. Agriculture was long almost entirely neglected in this colony, as other pursuits afforded a more immediate return. The cultivation of the soil was looked upon rather as a degrading employment, and ranked below that of a petty shopkeeper or intinerant pedlar. A Board of Agriculture was established in 1817, which gave to this department of industry its just value; and the progress of improvement has since been rapid and satisfactory, and it has been found that all the agricultural productions of England ripen in great perfection. The great article of trade is fish, which has given a great development to the shipping interests of the colony. In the year 1807 the shipping of Nova Scotia amounted to only 25,000 tons; in 1857 it had risen to 183,697 tons; the number of vessels owned in the colony was, in that year, 1994, and their estimated value L.1,041,772.

New Brunswick and Prince Edward's Island, although distinct dependencies, with separate Legislatures, possess interests in common. The first of these two colonies was severed from Nova Scotia in 1784, and the constitution which it now enjoys was granted. It consists of a Lieutenant-Governor, aided by an Executive Council of 8 members, a Legislative Council of 17 members, and a House of Assembly of 39 representatives. The system of "responsible government" was formally recognised by a vote of the Provincial Legislature in 1848. In Prince Edward's Island the breadth of land under cultivation is gradually on the increase; but a desire to emigrate to New Zealand has been for some time prevalent in this island, which has kept the population stationary as to number. Immigrants arrived from Scotland in the course of the year 1858 to the number of 300, chiefly composed of the friends and relatives of old settlers, and they are likely, it is said, permanently to remain; but emigration from this island to other colonies, and to the United States, fully equals, if it does not exceed, any immigration which has yet taken place. In this dependency, also, the system of responsible government was introduced in 1851. In Prince Edward's Island the remarkable peculiarity is found, that the system of education adopted by the State, and which has been in operation for some years, is supported at a cost of nearly one-third of the whole revenue of the colony, and it gives such general satisfaction, that no disposition has been evinced to economise in that direction, notwithstanding the disproportion which so heavy a charge bears to the resources of the island.

In Newfoundland the Legislative and

Executive Councils were separated in 1854; and in the same year the system of responsible government was established, the displaced public officers being compensated for the loss of their official incomes.

We turn now to the WEST INDIES, where we are compelled to admit representative government has signally failed. It has certainly not produced those results of which free institutions in other parts of the world have hitherto been abundantly prolific. The West Indies have palpably and notoriously retrograded, both in prosperity and civilization, since the passing of the great act of justice, the emancipation of the negro slave. In Jamaica especially, where self government has been in existence more than two centuries, the constitutional system of England is not popular with the white aristocracy, who would infinitely prefer being governed from Downing Street, notwithstanding all the losses they accuse the mother country of having inflicted upon them. They are willing to confide in the justice and wisdom of the statesmen of England, but they are most unwilling to trust the Creole statesmen of Jamaica with protection of their interests and the expenditure of the public funds. The coloured people of Jamaica are now the governing class; and that class is equally unpopular with the white man and the negro. The one looks upon them as having supplanted the old governing caste; the other, as a *parvenu* aristocracy, without the intelligence, dignity, or generosity of their old masters. The public debt of this colony has been greatly increased by the Assembly, and now stands at the large sum, for so small a dependency, of L.852,808. And when we consider the state of the population, it is difficult to conceive how the elements of a good constitutional government can be found in so circumscribed a community. At the last census the population amounted to 377,433, of whom only 15,776 were Europeans, the remainder being of the African or Creole races. It is, we fear, a fact incapable of being denied, that this, the oldest colony of England, is considerably misgoverned, as it has confessedly fallen into a state of almost helpless moral and political prostration. However it may be regretted by the economist and philanthropist, the broad fact stands out plainly to the world, that the African will not labour. He never promised that he would. He declared on the contrary, that he would be idle as often and as long as he could. Nor have we any right to blame him, however we may deplore the consequences to himself and his employers. He can live with little labour, and he has no ambition to do more than live,

> "With that majestic indolence so dear
> To native man,"

he prefers eating his banana under the shade of the tree which grows beside his cottage, and moistening it with the juice of the milky nut which hangs from its bough, to toiling in the sugar-fields of a master, whatever remuneration may be offered him. He enjoys existence in his own way; and he has a right so to enjoy it. He even hails the arrival of the Bengal Coolie with satisfaction, and regards him, not as a competitor in the labour-market, but as the instrument destined to relieve him eventually altogether from the necessity of toil. Even in the least fertile parts of the island he can exist almost entirely without labouring for hire; and he is satisfied with this almost aboriginal condition, so long as he can remain in his hereditary haunts. There is, therefore, no reason to expect, notwithstanding the favourable condition of soil and climate, that the colonists of the West Indies will ever regain the commercial position they once held.

There is a difficulty in the working of free constitutions in small dependencies which does not exist, at least not in the same degree, in the larger,—namely, the absence of a class willing to devote their time to the discharge of those duties which are most erroneously regarded as secondary or inferior. Those who are in the pursuit of wealth are too busy; those who are not, have neither the capacity nor the information requisite for taking a useful part in public life; and in a country where money-making is the absorbing pursuit, all are generally immersed in their private affairs. Misgovernment is the natural result of ignorance, indifference, or neglect. "It is with the greatest difficulty," writes the Governor of Grenada to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, "that the members of the several committees can be brought together when their services are required. They are scattered over the island in all directions, and, with few exceptions, do not consider themselves bound to give up their time, and to sacrifice their convenience, to perform public duties for which they receive no remuneration. The inevitable consequence is, that the business of the colony is retarded, the public accounts remain unaudited, and the credit of the colony falls in proportion to the delay which takes place in liquidating its liabilities." On the House of Assembly the Governor is even more severe. "A considerable portion," he adds, "of what I have said with reference to the joint committees, applies also to the House of Assembly. It is composed principally of planters, who will not absent themselves from their houses

for more than two days at a time to attend to their legislative duties. The business of the House generally commences late on the first day, and by two or three o'clock on the following day most of the country members are anxious to return home; and little time being left for the consideration of important measures, they are either hurried through, or unavoidably postponed until another session of similar duration." In fact, there is no class in these dependencies sufficiently exempted from the cares and struggles of life to devote itself to the discharge of public duties.

The comparative progress which one or two of these islands have made, notwithstanding the severe blow which the planters and capitalists sustained in their material interests by the abolition of slavery, is attributable, in a great measure, to the steadiness with which certain principles have been adhered to, and which their form of government enabled them consistently to carry out. In Trinidad, for example, which possesses no representative institutions, there has been exhibited a unity of purpose and action which has told with remarkable effect upon the prosperity of the island. While in most of the other West India islands the exports have either retrograded, remained at a stationary point, or very slightly increased, in Trinidad they have increased from the year 1855, when they were valued at L.387,999, to L.1,013,414 in 1859. The policy of the Government has been to congregate population round certain centres of civilization, and to check, as far as moral compulsion could do it, its spread into distant and unsettled districts by territorial and administrative arrangements having for their object the instruction and well-being of the people generally, and their frequent communication with each other.

But it is not our intention to discuss the condition of those British dependencies that have not yet reached the stage of development which is thought by the Imperial Government to qualify them for free institutions. We shall therefore pass them over, and proceed to the important and highly interesting colony of the CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, and its kindred settlement, NATAL, in South Africa.

Here we are again able to indulge the feeling, so gratifying to British pride, of admiration for a people cautiously, but firmly and securely, treading in the footsteps of their forefathers, working out for themselves the problem of representative government in the most satisfactory manner, and deriving from it, year after year, increasing wealth, importance, and respectability. The colony of the Cape stands in a peculiarly interesting relation, not only to Great Britain but to the continent of Africa; and it would be difficult to estimate the importance of its political position, and the influence it may ultimately have over the future of the African race. It is therefore with peculiar gratification that we find ourselves able to dwell upon its moral, political, and financial well-being. Few colonies have had to struggle with greater difficulties, and none have more successfully surmounted them. There was, in the first place, a population alien in race, and differing in language and in manners from the British settlers, with which they could not readily amalgamate. The old Dutch colonists were not soon reconciled to a change of masters; and many years elapsed before they acquiesced, with sullen submission, in a change of dominion, and transferred their allegiance to the Crown of England. Numbers, in fact, threw off the nominal allegiance they professed, and, under a sense of real or imaginary wrongs, crossed the colonial frontier and erected an independent government for themselves, in a country where they determined to be free from British interference. This Dutch republic of the southern hemisphere is now a thriving state; but, situated on the confines of barbarism, it is believed to be not very scrupulous in its transactions with its neighbours, or to have made much progress in the arts of social life. The colony of the Cape has undergone several extensions within the last quarter of a century, in consequence of the Kaffir wars, and the necessity of advancing its military frontier for the purpose of self-defence. It now possesses 269,000 inhabitants. A constitution was conferred on it in 1850. The Government is composed of two elective Chambers, a Legislative Council, and a House of Assembly. The electoral qualification is the possession of a house or land of the annual value of L.25, or the receipt of a salary of L.50 per annum. A most remarkable development of prosperity commenced with the introduction of free institutions. Before that period the public revenue was declining; since representative government and ministerial responsibility have been introduced, it has increased from L.247,369, in 1849, to L.469,075, in 1859,—a remarkable proof of the influence of a constitutional government in stimulating commercial activity, and increasing both public and private wealth, in a colony morally fitted for it, and with a population sufficiently numerous to supply good legislators and an efficient executive. It must be added, that one of the effects of a liberal government is to attach permanently to a colony many of those merchants and

speculators who would otherwise have only regarded it as a place of business, looking forward to a return to England, at the end of their temporary expatriation, to enjoy the fruits of their success. The gentlemen of the Cape now find a career of public usefulness and importance opened for them in the colony; they make it the land of their adoption, regard it as their ultimate home, and bestow upon its political interests that time and those exertions which in England would probably be absorbed by the details of a parish, or, as the object of supreme ambition, perhaps the judicial business of the Petty Sessions.

The governors of our dependencies have often found themselves in a state of antagonism to the local Parliaments. It required no slight degree of discretion and forbearance on the part of the Queen's representative, in those colonies that have been entrusted with the duties of self-government, to avoid, at first, sharp collisions with Legislatures just brought into existence, and with, perhaps, somewhat exaggerated ideas of their importance, and inclined to carry their pretensions to the extreme limits of discretion. It was some time before a statesman of ability, and with, perhaps, a policy of his own, could realize the true character of his position, and be impressed with a conviction, that, while he was deputed by his Sovereign to "govern" her dependency, he was in effect only a passive instrument for carrying out the ideas of a local Senate, without reference to his individual convictions or his views of Imperial interests. Such, nevertheless, was ultimately found to be the necessity of his position. A struggle was at first made by several vigorous governors to emancipate themselves from what they thought an unconstitutional thraldom to a colonial Parliament. Lord Metcalfe, in Canada, firmly resisted the pressure put upon him by the Legislature, but he was obliged to succumb. The power of the purse was there found, as in the British constitution, to be the real power of the State; and it has now become a settled maxim, that the ministry selected for carrying on the business of the colonial government must possess the confidence of the Legislature, and be chosen from the majority of the Assembly. As in the Imperial Government, the Sovereign is merely an impersonation of the State, and may be said to reign, but not to govern; so, in a free colony, the Governor may be said to preside over, but not control, the body politic of which he is the honorary head. In the early stage of a colony, the government is an absolute monarchy, and such is alone adapted to its infant state; but when it has attained manhood, and received a constitution, it possesses not only the power of making the laws, but the equally indispensable one to a free government, of watching over their administration.

At the Cape, the unusual spectacle has been exhibited, of a colonial Parliament continuing undissolved for the whole period of its legal existence; and Sir George Grey, who from the first has recognised his true constitutional position, bestowed upon it, at its expiration, the following well-deserved eulogy:—"The wisdom and moderation evinced by the members of this Parliament have conclusively shown that the people of this colony were in every way fitted to use well and wisely the liberal constitution which her Majesty, in her gracious care for the advancement of themselves and their descendants, was pleased to bestow on them."

The highly promising colony of Natal, next to the Cape the most advanced of our African possessions, has, although comparatively in its infancy, received a constitution somewhat similar to that of the Cape, and also municipal institutions. It is a favourable feature in this new and rising colony, that, although the European population is small, a Superintendent of Education has been appointed, and a sum of L.2022 voted by the Legislature for educational purposes for the year 1860. But there is another feature in this colony on which we are unable to comment so favourably. The charter conferring the constitution makes no exception of the natives as to electoral rights, if otherwise qualified by property. The present population of the colony consists of about 4000 Europeans, 4000 Dutch boers, and 130,000 Kaffirs;—the latter have not yet learned the value of landed property, and therefore few are qualified to vote. Hitherto their great ambition has been to possess herds of cattle; but the most active and prominent of the natives are gradually becoming sensible of the importance of other descriptions of property. As a race of people, they are intelligent, great observers, and keen politicians in connection with their own customs and form of government. A very small advance in the present social position of the native population would give them a numerical superiority of votes over the white inhabitants. At no distant day, therefore, a question, involving most important considerations, is not unlikely to arise in Natal. "*The mass of the white population*," writes the Lieutenant-Governor, "*will probably seek its solution in an arbitrary prohibition of electoral rights to the native; and already the expediency of such a measure is not unmooted.*"

We are thus brought to the consideration of a very serious and perplexing question, the solution of which must greatly affect, not only the colony of Natal, but another more interesting dependency in the southern hemisphere,—New Zealand, to the political and social condition of which we shall shortly advert,—namely, how far the grant of constitutional governments may be reconcilable with the natural rights and personal welfare of the aborigines in those countries where they exist in a state of temporary social inferiority, but with the germs of a higher civilization implanted in their nature, and with aspirations and a probable future that may bring them into a state of moral antagonism, and possibly of political collision, with the Europeans settled in their country, and who arrogate to themselves, and are prepared to contend for and assert, a superiority of caste, and an unmitigated political predominancy.

We may assume, as an incontrovertible axiom, that one of the most important objects of all free governments is political content; but if any constitution should be found, on experience, irreconcilable with the happiness and social progress of the governed, that form of polity, in whatever part of the world it may exist, fails in the most essential of its conditions. Applying this principle to the constitutional system of some of our dependencies, we fear there is much reason to apprehend that there is an imminent danger of their transformation into oppressive oligarchies in relation to the aboriginal populations. But nothing can be clearer than the course of the Imperial Government under such circumstances. It would forfeit its character as a moral state if it did not interpose to correct injustice, which it could neither have contemplated nor foreseen. It would be its paramount duty to crush with the strong hand of power institutions which have been perverted and misused, and to resume its direct sway over a colony which has thus abused its freedom, and made it an instrument for the subjugation of a native race.

The grand group of colonies which has acquired such extraordinary importance, and recently burst into a sudden blaze of splendour and prosperity, is the last which will occupy our attention. The Australian dependencies constitute one of the wonders of modern civilization. In them some of the great questions of modern politics are being worked out on a colossal scale, and the magnitude of the interests involved is only equalled by their complexity. We shall consider New Zealand first, together with the workings of its constitution, inasmuch as it contains a large aboriginal population nominally invested with the political franchise. The natives of these fine islands are quite capable of understanding their own interests, and, by their own energy, of making their opinions known and respected. The Act for conferring a constitutional government on New Zealand, passed the British Legislature during the short administration of Lord Derby in 1853. The constitution consists of a Governor, a nominated Legislative Council composed of fifteen members, and a House of Representatives consisting of thirty-six members elected every five years. The franchise is conferred upon every adult colonist or native owner of a freehold worth L.50, or leaseholder of an estate of L.10 a-year, or county tenant householder of L.5 a-year. An attempt had been made a few years previously to erect New Zealand into a constitutional government; but it was successfully opposed by Sir George Grey, the then Governor, as premature and unfair to the native inhabitants. In an energetic and eloquent protest he declared that the Crown, by its charter, would be conferring not, as was intended, a free government on the country, but, in reality, giving to a portion of the people, and that exclusively European, the power of governing according to its pleasure the people of another race, and of appropriating at its discretion the whole of a large revenue raised indiscriminately from both. The constitution, moreover, as defined by the charter, virtually excluded the native population from the franchise by conferring it upon those only who could read and write the English language, while the great mass of the native population could read and write their own language. Although the objectionable feature does not appear in the existing constitution, the share which the natives possess in the government of their country is altogether an illusory one. They cannot generally acquire the necessary qualification by reason of their peculiar customs in reference to property. The land which the native proprietors possess forms a tribal domain, is held in common, and therefore individual rights are incapable of being defined so as to be made a qualification for the elective franchise. Nor, if they could, are the native inhabitants of New Zealand yet sufficiently advanced in civilization to avail themselves of it for acquiring political weight. As it affects the native race, the constitution has undoubtedly, so far from conciliating, given rise to a great amount of distrust and discontent. They are, as is well known, an exceedingly intelligent people; and their sagacity, combined with

great boldness and determination of character, makes them the least likely people in the world to sit down quietly under a sense of injustice. "If," they have been heard to say, "our affairs are to be put into the hands of any assembly, let them be placed in the hands of an assembly of our own race." They feel that the general animus of the colonists is not favourable to them, and they would prefer being under the direct authority of a Governor representing the Sovereign to whom they first yielded their allegiance. In their treaty with the British Government they looked to the Crown or its representative as their ruler; and little could they have supposed that, within a period of twenty years from the surrender of their independence as a people, the practical government of their country would pass from the crown into the hands of a popular assembly, representing, and responsible to, only a few thousand Englishmen who have settled in their native land. They are beginning to understand the full consequences of this change, and an amount of discontent has been engendered which it may now be very difficult to appease. The disturbances which have recently broken out in the country, the details of which reach us while we write, although ostensibly arising from a question relating to land, have, we are persuaded, a deeper source than territorial disputes, and originate in a firmly rooted conviction that they are now practically governed by an alien race, to which they consider themselves in no respect inferior, but from which they have reason to apprehend oppression, and by which they have been but too often treated with a disregard of feeling which must be peculiarly galling to a proud and sensitive people. Under the peculiar circumstances of that country, perhaps the wisest course that the Imperial Government could pursue, would be to annul the constitution of New Zealand, with a view to restoring it at a future day. A deadly and inveterate feud between the two races might be thus avoided, and possibly a war, opposed to the moral sense of the British nation, which could stop short only of the complete subjection or extermination of the native race. Under the direct government of the Crown, we believe the Maories would be contented and loyal, and time would certainly bring about the fusion of the two peoples. A practical remedy is about to be applied which may give them temporary satisfaction. A separate department for the regulation of native affairs, consisting of members *nominated by the Crown*, and presided over by the Governor, is to be established; and it may avert for a time any evil consequences arising from their present anomalous political position. In the peculiar state of New Zealand, it was, we apprehend, a mistake to establish a constitutional government there. The gift should have been deferred until the two races had made a nearer approach towards amalgamation, and the natives had advanced in knowledge and civilization so far as to be able to appreciate and take their fair share in the working of free institutions.

The great Australian Continent, with its neighbouring island, Tasmania, is now the seat of six popular governments, in several of which the democratic principle has been carried almost to its extreme limits. It is impossible not to regard with the utmost anxiety and interest the working of these institutions in a country so peculiarly circumstanced as Australia. In one important respect it is free from the difficulties that beset the governments of some of our other dependencies in the Southern hemisphere. The aboriginal inhabitants are so feeble and degenerate a branch of the human family, that they may be altogether excluded from political consideration. They are not susceptible of improvement beyond a very limited degree, and there is no probability that they will ever be further raised in the scale of existence. In fact, they are rather retrograding than advancing in the presence of the white settler; and are probably destined, like the North American Indians (a far higher race), to disappear with the advance of civilisation. The great continent, therefore, may be considered, for all practical purposes, as an indefinite field, not only for material progress, but for practical politics, and the development of popular institutions. In Australia, however, there has been presented one of the most remarkable and sudden developments of society that ever before occurred in the world. For more than half a century the great continent manifested only a torpid social life, and was little regarded in England except as a convenient receptacle for convicts, and as a country from which a large quantity of tallow and wool was annually exported. On the brilliant discoveries of gold in New South Wales and Victoria, the attention of the whole civilised world was fixed on the Australian continent, and, in the course of a few months, it received from England, from several of the European states, and from America, not only a vast addition to its labouring population, but representatives of almost every order of society except the highest. All the elements of an old and settled country were transferred at once to a new one. In the year 1851 the province

of Victoria possessed a population of only 77,345 persons; it now numbers considerably more than 500,000, and contains 211 post towns.

The effect of this vast influx of a population, carrying with it the habits, knowledge, experience, developed intellect, and, we may add, the vices of an old society, necessarily was to cause a very rapid political growth in the country to which it rushed, in the expectation of boundless wealth. Politics as well as other passions of human nature soon acquired a fever heat; and it was found that institutions which had satisfied the country during its dull and monotonous existence, were quite unsuited to the new society which had sprung up, with its vast commercial interests and vehement excitements. In 1850, the province of Victoria had been separated from New South Wales, and a power was granted by the charter to alter and modify the constitution, and enlarge its basis. In 1857, accordingly, the Prime Minister of the day carried through the local Parliament a Reform Bill, the essence of which was manhood suffrage. The new law placed not less than 160,000 names on the register, —an enormous number in proportion to the adult population. Property qualification was at the same time abolished; but the wise restriction was admitted, that no person should be registered as an elector unless he was able to read and write.

It will be extremely interesting to watch the working of this extremely democratic government in Victoria, where an aristocracy of the landed interest has grown up with the earlier progress of the colony, with which the new political element which has been introduced will with difficulty combine. The land question is likely to test not only the character of parties, but the very stability of the Australian institutions. The great national domain, extensive enough to satisfy the wants of all classes, is now being fought and scrambled for, by parties representing supposed conflicting interests; and is made a cause of contention and nucleus of faction, that is shaking these young governments to their foundations. An Executive, possessing a longer duration than a few weeks, has become almost a political impossibility. A vote of want of confidence immediately follows the inauguration of a new ministry; another is formed from the opposition, and is immediately ejected by a similar vote, in which two sections of the House of Representatives are always ready to combine against a third. The machinery of government arrives at a dead lock,—legislation is suspended, and the Governor is obliged to extricate the country from the embarrassments created by hostile factions as he best can, and to resort to temporary expedients for carrying on the government. A democratic government that renders the existence of a durable ministry impossible, is one that cannot long endure without some material modification. In New South Wales the same irreconcilable factions agitate the Legislature. "Amid the discordant opinions and confused clamour of a general election," recently wrote an able correspondent from Sydney, "it is impossible to foresee what sort of land law will pass; it is even doubtful whether any will be passed, and whether public opinion is yet sufficiently matured, and whether any possible ministry can propose any bill that shall enlist the support of a majority of both Houses."* In South Australia, three consecutive administrations were overthrown in two months. Western Australia is not yet sufficiently advanced for a representative government. The new colony of Queensland, formerly Moreton Bay, is only in its infancy as an offset from its parent state, Sydney; but it has carried with it the institutions of the first planted of the Australian settlements. Tasmania was declared by proclamation independent of New South Wales in 1825, and in 1854 an elective Legislative Council and House of Assembly were constituted. The country is peaceable and orderly; and its Legislature is free from the disquieting factions of the larger Australian states, and is successfully directing its attention to the great resources and capabilities of the island, and the adoption of the improvements essential to social progress. There is a great probability that this fertile and beautiful island will eventually become the most attractive of the Australian settlements. The time must, however, necessarily arrive, when these great colonies, rich in all the elements of wealth, and filled with industrious and energetic populations, will cease to be dependencies of England. Of the time of their separation from the parent state they will judge for themselves, as well as of the institutions which may supersede the mixed government under which they have grown to maturity. We trust that their political education will have so prepared them for independence, that the sagacity and moderation which distinguish the Anglo-Saxon race will so guide their counsels, that their future career will not disgrace the people from which they sprung, and that some form of federation will bind them together in a generous alliance, and give them a political unity and a national history worthy of the

* Letter from the *Times'* Correspondent.

country from which they sprung, and of the empire of which they once formed such an important and valuable part.

In the preceding sketch of our numerous dependencies and their constitutions, no notice has been taken of those colonies which do not possess a representative form of government, are not yet masters of their own destiny, and do not possess any effective control over their own affairs. It has been our purpose to exhibit the present state of such of our possessions as enjoy free institutions, and to show the use they have made and are making of their practical independence. That in some cases the capability of a colony for self-government has been miscalculated, is, we think, but too clear; in some the mixed character of the population rendered the experiment hazardous or unjust;—in others, where the territory is too limited for the satisfactory development of the system, the forms of government present but a poor parody of their great prototype, the British Constitution. In others, again, we recognize the true spirit of liberty combined with that steadiness of principle and vigour of administration which distinguishes states essentially free,—free not only from arbitrary and irresponsible power, but from the dominion of those passions and prejudices that are not only irreconcilable with self-government but constitute in themselves the most servile and degrading of yokes. Of our great North American dependencies the fairest hopes may be entertained. They are doubtless destined to run a course of great material prosperity, and to attain a very high degree of political importance. Under the guidance of the able public men whom the institutions of the country are producing, and by the patriotism of the people, a power may be created in America, not only capable of maintaining its independence, but possibly of balancing the great neighbouring democratic republic, and checking its tendency to a dangerous predominance. Africa can hardly fail to receive great benefits from the prosperous colony at its southern extremity, which seems destined to give a civilising impulse to the countries which border on it, and in time to impart to the benighted millions of a great continent the blessings of a regenerating faith. New Zealand, with its noble native race, civilized and Christianized, and gradually prepared for self-government, will impart to the multitudinous islands of the Pacific a renovated existence; and the colonies of the Australian continent will, it is to be hoped, eventually work their way, through many trials, perhaps, and after much perplexity, to the dignity of a great and enlightened confederation; and Great Britain, in the day of her decrepitude, whenever it shall arrive, may have the satisfaction of seeing her political offspring at the antipodes emulating her virtues, and animated by her noble example and history; perhaps rivalling her great historic actions, and eclipsing her ancient splendour and renown.

Of the fifty British dependencies, constituting the empire "on which the sun never sets," there are many, by reason of minuteness, and there is one by reason of its vast proportions and peculiar social condition, manifestly unfitted for the reception of constitutional government. The case of India is peculiar and exceptional, and no change that we can reasonably imagine, as within the bounds of probability, is likely to affect the people of Hindostan, so far as to bring them into the category of those populations qualified to exercise political rights. But while we cannot concede the privileges of freedom to a people so manifestly unqualified for their enjoyment, neither can we ever justly delegate the power of ruling them to the British residents in India. An agitation, it may be remembered, was commenced in Calcutta, and in one or both of the other presidencies, a few years since, for obtaining from the Imperial Government a constitution for India, somewhat similar to those which had been granted to other dependencies; and a demand was made for an elective legislature, open discussion, and "ministerial responsibility." The plan of these gentlemen for the future government of India appeared to be based on this assumption, namely, that they and the other British inhabitants who had resorted thither for the improvement of their fortunes and the exercise of their professions, should be invested with the power, not merely of governing themselves, but with dominion over one hundred and fifty millions of Asiatics, including tributary and protected sovereigns, a proud nobility, ancient priesthoods, and populations arrived at a high degree of civilisation, with laws of an antiquity which no European nation can claim, and customs to which none of the usages of our modern civilization bear the slightest resemblance. This unparalleled demand involved the right of taxation, and the exercise of all the civil and military functions that are now possessed by the Governor-General in Council under direct responsibility to the Crown. The policy of investing a body of Englishmen, even in a comparatively limited territory, where there exists a large native population, with irresponsible power, may, as we have before suggested, be very

strongly objected to; but to entrust the future of India and the interests of its people to a few thousand British subjects, with strong European prejudices and manifold temptations to abuse their delegated trust, would be a policy so preposterous, that we can only wonder at the folly of the men who could publicly meet to discuss such a proposition, and embody the demand in a petition addressed to the Legislature of Great Britain.

In one very important respect the colonial system of Great Britain differs from any now existing in Europe, and it may be said has no parallel in history. Our dependencies have been, generally speaking, free from the obligation of contributing, either by personal service or by money payment, towards their own defence. As a contrast to the extreme liberality with which this country treats her colonies, it may be stated that the only two European nations which, in addition to England, possess colonies of any importance, derive considerable revenues from their dependencies. In 1857 the surplus revenue paid by the Dutch colonies into the metropolitan exchequer, after defraying all their military and naval expenses, was 31,858,421 florins, or about L.2,600,000; and the estimated surplus revenue from the Spanish colonies for the last year was 115,000,000 reals, or about L.1,150,000. The dependencies of England, on the other hand, are maintained at a cost which very seriously taxes the purses of our people. That there may be considerable indirect pecuniary advantages resulting from our extended colonial possessions we have, in a previous part of this essay, endeavoured to demonstrate; nor is it any answer to that economical view of the question, to say that the trade would exist independently of the relation. The exports received from Great Britain by Australia are, as compared with its population, at the rate of twelve pounds per head, while the exports received by the United States are at the rate of less than one; and these figures show conclusively how much larger is the commerce with countries which remain part of the empire, than with those which have separated from it. The pecuniary relations of the colonies to the mother country, in the matter of their military defence, cannot nevertheless be regarded otherwise than as a gigantic anomaly, which it is incumbent upon us to take the earliest opportunity to remove, and to place the numerous dependencies of the country upon that just footing, in regard to cost of their protection, which policy points out, and public opinion now appears imperatively to demand.

In reference to this important question, the report, the title of which we have prefixed to this article, supplies many valuable details and suggestions, which, as embodying the opinions of several individuals of great official and colonial experience, are well worthy of attention. To this document we shall advert in some detail, presenting in the first instance a statement of the nature and amount of the liabilities incurred by Great Britain in providing for the defence of her colonies.

Including, then, the cost of the German Legion established at the Cape of Good Hope, the whole military expenditure connected with the colonies amounted, for the year 1858, to L.3,968,599, of which sum only L.378,253 was contributed by the colonies, being one-tenth only of the whole; and of that contribution two-thirds were paid by Victoria and Ceylon; and it is remarkable that no other colony but Canada, and, to a small extent, Victoria, the Cape, New Zealand, and one or two of the West India colonies, have even organized a militia, or established a volunteer force for their protection. "We consider," justly say the the Commissioners in their report, "that this immunity, throwing as it does the defence of the colonies almost entirely on the mother country, is open to two main objections. In the first place, it imposes an enormous burden and inconvenience on the people of England, not only by the addition it makes to their taxes, but by calling off to remote stations a large proportion of their troops and ships, and thereby weakens their means of defence at home. But a still more important objection is the tendency which this system must necessarily have, to prevent the development of a proper spirit of self-reliance among our colonists, and to enfeeble their national character. By the gift of political self-government, we have bestowed upon our colonies a most important element of national education; but the habit of self-defence constitutes a part hardly less important of the training of a free people, and it will never be acquired by our colonists if we assume exclusively the task of defending them."

The number of British troops of all arms and ranks stationed in the colonies during the year 1858, was 47,251. Now, the first impression suggested by this return is the enormous waste of force which the dispersion of such an army over a considerable portion of the globe implies. To scatter the land forces of the empire over the outlying possessions of a great maritime state, such as Great Britain, is rather to court disaster than to ensure security. The colonial

dominion of Great Britain rests entirely on her naval supremacy. "The mistress of the seas," in the emphatic language of the report to which we have referred, "is the mistress of whatever colonies she pleases to hold or to take; and if ever she ceases to be mistress of the seas, it is not ports or garrisons that will save her colonies." All history proves that the maintenance of dominion over scattered and distant territories depends either upon the character and power of the countries themselves and their populations, or upon the command of the sea. Colonial garrisons, when not very large, and in first-class fortresses, such as Malta and Gibraltar (exceptional cases, where large garrisons are maintained exclusively for imperial interests), have, as is most justly said, always found themselves in traps, and at the mercy of naval expeditions; and we should infallibly lose all our colonies, which do not possess natural and efficient internal means of defence, if we had for our antagonist a power, or a combination of powers, able to command the sea, and desirous of taking them.

"Deducting the garrisons of the Mediterranean stations, and the other colonial possessions, which are simply military ports; in 1858 about 27,000 regular troops were employed, and more than £2,000,000 of money was spent on the military defence of the rest of the colonies; and we cannot but feel convinced that these troops and that money might be much more usefully employed—indeed more usefully for the colonies themselves, because in a manner more conducive to the general welfare and security of the empire. There are four or five thousand men, for example, scattered in detachments of a few companies each in the West Indies; and yet there is not a port in the whole command which they could hold for a week against a hostile expedition. It seems to us clear, that the same number of soldiers would be far more serviceable to the empire if stationed in England; and that the cost of them spent on our fleet would contribute more effectually to the protection of the West Indies themselves, than the present arrangement."

Such is the decisive opinion of two of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the subject. The question is undoubtedly beset with difficulties, which have indeed caused some difference of opinion between the three members of the commission. There is, however, one plain indisputable ground on which Great Britain ought to contribute liberally towards the defence of her colonies; and that is, that the Imperial Government has the absolute control of peace and war, and is therefore bound, on the ordinary principles of justice, to defend them against the consequences of its foreign policy. It would be to evade one of the highest of its obligations, and to ignore one of the first of its duties, were it to omit to protect its dependencies from the consequences of any war in which it might be involved. This security, to which the colonists have a moral claim, can, as we have seen, be only obtained by such a maritime preponderance as shall put even the possibility of any hostile attack altogether out of the question. The maintenance of a navy sufficiently numerous and powerful to command *at all times* the dominion of the seas, is therefore not only a matter of ordinary self-preservation, but a positive duty which this country owes to its colonies while they continue in a state of dependence. Regarded in this point of view, the attempt of any European power to bring British naval preponderance into question, by systematically increasing its maritime force, involves questions of the most serious international importance. The hostile mind implied in any such attempted competition cannot and ought not to be ignored. The peace and prosperity of our numerous dependencies are at stake; and however we may affect to overlook or slight dangers remotely threatening ourselves, there is an obligation which the state cannot in honour evade. There was a time when any unusual activity in the ports and arsenals of France would have been held to justify an energetic remonstrance; and the preparation of vast armaments without any plausible pretext or legitimate aim, constitutes in itself a ground for categorical demands. It was an evil omen for England and her colonies, when her Foreign Minister recently rose in his place in the House of Commons, and, "with bated breath and whispering humbleness," said that it was *natural* that France should desire to possess a strong navy; and that *he* saw no ground for complaint on the part of Great Britain if our "ally" chose to augment his fleets in any proportion he might think fit. England once possessed ministers who would have spoken in tones of thunder, followed by swift and corresponding action, on the first indication of such a portentous naval development as that which has recently manifested itself within sixty miles of our shores.*

* Thomson, who was as good a patriot as poet, has some noble lines in his "Britannia" on the importance of maintaining an indisputable naval pre-eminence:—

"For, oh! it much imports you, 'tis your all,
To keep your trade entire, entire the force

While protecting the colonies, as we are bound to do, from any possible consequences of a rupture with a maritime power, it is but just that the whole of their internal police, and, as far as possible, the force requisite for controlling warlike neighbours or savage or semi-civilised tribes, should be provided exclusively by themselves. The Cape of Good Hope, in consequence of its scanty population in proportion to its extent, must be a temporary exception to this rule. It admits unhappily of no doubt, that the Cape colony, which absorbs almost an army for its defence, is quite incapable of keeping in check the vast hordes of barbarians that are constantly pressing on the colonial frontier; and that without an imposing force of British troops it would probably be speedily overrun by the Kaffir race, and every vestige of civilisation effaced in a few months of exterminating warfare. With this exception, the colonies should be left to provide for their internal defences, and every effort should be used to promote the growth of their military strength and the cultivation of that martial spirit which is the characteristic of their race.

But to measure the importance of our colonies merely by the standard of finance, would be to form a very false estimate of their value. The time has long passed when these magnificent possessions were regarded chiefly as the convenient but costly appurtenances of a corrupt government, supplying the means for rewarding political services, and buying off troublesome opposition. They are now the homes of virtuous and happy but once depressed and suffering multitudes, who fled to them as a refuge from distress, and found in the fertile regions beyond the seas a comfort and an independence they had sought in vain amidst the crowd and competition of their native land. They still present boundless fields for the employment of our redundant population. Nor can there be a doubt that the world at large has greatly benefited by the activity of British emigration. The colonists carried the arts, sciences, language, and religion of the old world to lands previously occupied only by a few miserable savages; the empire of civilization has been immeasurably enlarged; England has been enriched by a vast variety of new products, and by a commerce which overwhelms the imagination by its immensity; and her numerous settlements have served to stimulate the inventive powers of genius, and to call forth some of the highest qualities of human nature, while they have abundantly rewarded, and will long continue to reward, the patient industry of man.

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* And honour of your fleets; o'er that to watch,
Even with a hand severe, and jealous eye.
In intercourse be gentle, generous, just,
By wisdom polished, and of manners fair;
But on the sea be terrible, untamed,
Unconquerable still: let none escape,
Who shall but aim to touch your glory there."