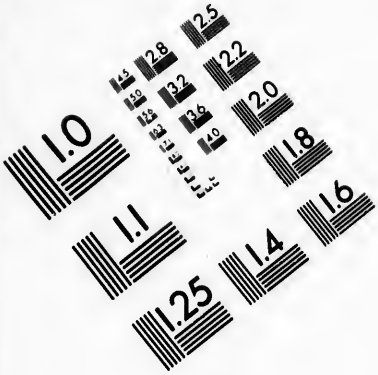

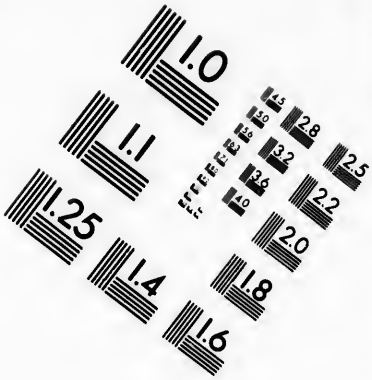

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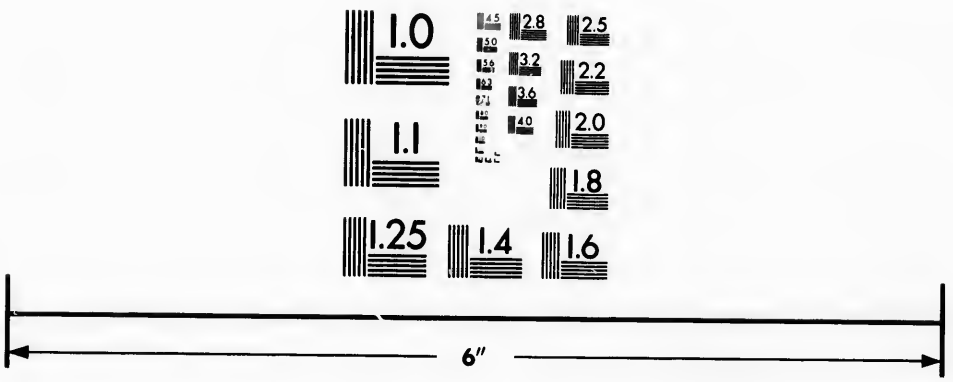

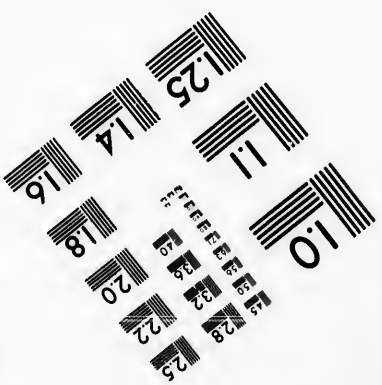

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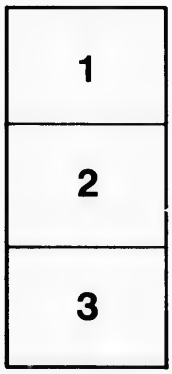

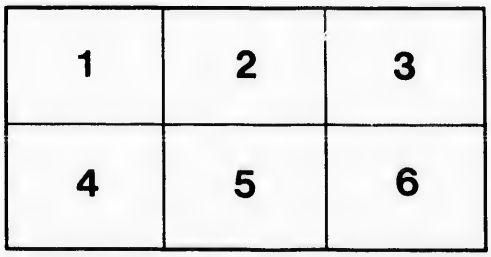

BRITAIN

AMONG THE NATIONS:

A LECTURE,

BY REV. ROBERT WILSON.

SAINT JOHN, N. B.:
PRINTED BY GEO. W. DAY, 46 CHARLOTTE STREET.
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BRITAIN AMONG THE NATIONS.

While others descant in glowing terms upon the history, institutions, position, and prospects of the lands to which they owe allegiance, or to which they wish their allegiance to be transferred, be it ours, on this occasion, to tell of the greatness and the glory of that nation, of which we form no inconsiderable part, and to which we are united by the affinities and sympathies of race, language, literature, religion, interest, and rule. "Britain among the Nations" is a theme upon which any one might grow eloquent, and give utterance to "thoughts that breathe, and to words that burn." For standing beneath that honoured flag that has braved "for a thousand years the battle and the breeze;" surrounded by the splendid memorials of Britain's glorious past, and still more glorious present, and assured of our exalted, unequalled, and inalienable privileges—social, civil, and religious—we are justly proud of our nationality, and feel that if to be a citizen of Rome, was once the synonym for honour and dignity, to be a British subject is a much more exalted privilege—an honour of a far higher order.

But while Britain occupies to day a proudly pre-eminent position among the nations of the earth, and is the greatest, the strongest, the freest, the most enlightened, and Christian nation in the wide, wide world; and while her fleets ride triumphant in every sea, her Colonies girdle the earth, her literature is read by the learned in all lands, and her political institutions are admired by the friends of freedom everywhere; it ought never to be forgotten that there was a time when she was weak, ignorant, and degraded—her princes tyrants, and her people slaves.

To contrast her present with her past, to compare her position with that of surrounding nations, and to note some few of the many causes that have contributed to her elevation, is our self imposed but delightful task. And whatever may be the defectiveness of our address, the infelicity of our style, the poverty of our ideas, or the weakness of our arguments, the subject cannot fail to commend itself to the consideration and sympathy of every enlightened and patriotic Briton,—however situated, and wherever found.

We have called Britain the greatest nation in the world, and as we have no wish to make statements that cannot be sustained by the strongest evidence, or to take positions that are untenable, we proceed to adduce the necessary proof. By her *greatness* we wish to be understood, in this connection, as simply referring to her territory, population, and material resources. Of that territory but a very small portion thereof is comprehended and included within the narrow limits of the British Isles. But what the heart is to the body, the Mother Country is to the rest of the empire—the seat of life and vitality, the great central heart, from whence emanate those mighty influences and pulsations, which mould the opinions and control the conduct of the British race the wide, wide world over.

In looking over a map of Europe, how diminutive appear those "isles in the ocean." Placed alongside the Russian, French, or Austrian empires, they dwindle into insignificance, and were they drowned in the depths of the broad Atlantic, they would scarcely be missed. But leaving the lands of the Rose, the Thistle, and the Shamrock, we are astonished to find, that, go where we please in any direction, there the British flag waves proudly in the breeze, and British rule is recognized. In Europe we find Gibraltar, Malta, Gozo, Cumino, and Heligoland, acknowledging the sway of Britain's Queen. Passing down the African coast, the royal standard waves us welcome to Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Lazos, Ascension, St. Helena, and the Cape of Good Hope. Doubling the Cape, and ascending the Mozambique Channel, we see the colonies of Port Natal, Caffraria, and the Mauritius peacefully reposing beneath the long-waving folds of the Cross of St. George, and giving evidence of future greatness. Crossing the Indian Ocean, leaving upon our left the important Anglo-Arabian town of Aden, we reach Hindostan; a region of vast extent, amazing fertility, and a population that is numbered by millions. Rounding Cape Comorin we pass the large and lovely island of Ceylon, so touchingly described in Heber's immortal verse. Then we have the Burmese Provinces, the Straits Settlements, and the important islands of Hong Kong and Labua, where Nature has lavished her gifts unsparingly, and her richest products luxuriate in wild profusion.

Turning to the South we meet with the rapidly rising colonies of South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania, destined, at no very distant day, to become the Britain of the Southern world, and to be "the powerful and fortunate agent of liberating the splendid chain of the Indian isles from the superstitions, miseries, and tyrannies, that have for so many ages defeated the

unparalleled bounty of nature." Next we have the New Zealand and other groups of islands, which "possess all the advantages of a rich soil and a genial atmosphere, displaying at once the full beauty of Spring combined with the luxuriance of autumn. Tufted groves mingle their foliage with the brilliant enamel of the meadows, while a perfume of exquisite sweetness embalms the air. The spontaneous productions of the earth exempt the inhabitants from all painful labour," and comfort and competency are within the reach of all. What the future of those lovely regions may be, time alone will tell, but as far as we can determine the future by the present, we feel warranted in saying, that unless some unforeseen and calamitous events transpire, there is before them a career of unprecedented greatness and unimaginable renown.

Ascending the eastern shores of America, we come to Guiana, not like its French sister, Cayenne,—a penal settlement—but a thriving colony, and the home of the industrious emigrant. Entering the Caribbean Sea, our eyes rest on those lovely islands—once our disgrace, but now our glory—where every sable son of Ham we meet is a monumental evidence of England's large-hearted liberality and love of right. Of their fertility, productions, and commercial importance, we can scarcely speak in exaggerated terms. Such has been the estimate placed upon them, that nearly every European power has, or had, one or more of them; that Spain is so unwilling to surrender Cuba, and that the United States is so anxious to secure a foothold there. Crossing the Isthmus of Panama, leaving upon our right the colony of Honduras, and the protected regions of the Musquito Coast, and continuing our course along the western shores of America, we meet England again at British Columbia and Vancouver's Island—those lands of rich and golden promise. And last, but not least, we reach our own rapidly rising Dominion, with its varied productions of river, forest, field, and mine, and embracing about one-sixteenth of the whole world. With the magnificent North-West coming into our possession; with a grand Inter-Colonial Railway connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific; with enlightened legislation upon the various industrial interests of the country; and with the moral and intellectual elevation of our people; the "Dominion of Canada" must speedily become rich, strong, and respectable, the rival of Republican America, and the most favoured child of "The Mother of Nations."

What an Empire? What vast and extensive regions have become the heritage of the British race? The mighty empires of antiquity—Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria—were mere garden spots compared with this one. Greece nor Rome, in their palmiest periods, never swayed their

sceptres over regions half as extensive. The lands conquered by Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, or Napoleon are unworthy of being compared with it. Within its limits all climates are included, all races are represented, and untold and unimaginable wealth is contained. The waters of the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Indian, and the Arctic Oceans wash its coasts, while some of earth's noblest streams meander through it, and enrich and gladden its various sections. Our morning gun awakens to activity a slumbering world, while the sublime strains of our noble National Anthem, floating out upon the evening air, lulls the nations to rest. Over every seventh acre of earth's wide surface our flag is flying, and upon our empire the sun never sets. And beneath the benign influence of British rule, liberty has been established, tyranny has ceased to exist, the moral, social, and intellectual condition of the people has been promoted, and the desert has been made to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

But while Britain is great in territory, she is still greater in population, for if over every seventh acre of the earth our flag is flying, every fifth individual in the world is a British subject. And, however, strangely it may sound, it is nevertheless true, that while Victoria is Queen of the first Protestant power, she reigns over more Catholics than the Pope of Rome does, more Mahometans than the Sultan of Turkey, more Jews than are to be found in all Judea, and more Pagans than the united numbers of her Christian, Mahometan, and Jewish subjects.

Unequalled as she is in territory and population, she is equally so in the possession of those material resources, which constitute the bone and sinew—the life-blood of a nation. Visit her manufacturing districts, and behold the facilities she possesses to enable her to outdistance every competitor in the extent and variety of her productions. Go to her harbours, and estimate if you can, the value and importance of her commercial marine—the greatest in the world. Traverse the United Kingdom, and at every step you will meet with evidences of thrift, energy, wealth, and greatness—with minds to plan and hands to labour. And did the necessity exist, she could produce upon her own soil, at home or abroad; all that would be required to sustain her in her present proud position.

To a manufacturing country, coal is of far greater importance than gold, and this she possesses in inexhaustible quantities. Without this, she never could have attained to mercantile greatness, her trade must have languished, and her power declined. Fears have been entertained, that the time might come, when this source of the national wealth would be dried up. But although the annual consumption of English coal is

valued at upwards of $100,000,000, recent scientific investigations have already demonstrated that the supply is practically inexhaustible. Sir William Armstrong tells us, that it will take upwards of nine hundred years, at the present rate of consumption, to use up the coal that is now known to exist, while another and a more recent authority, believes there can be no scarcity before the year A.D. 4000. Those, therefore, that look for Britain's decadence from this cause, we are glad to know, will have to "wait a little longer."

Next in importance to coal is iron, the parent of agriculture and the useful arts This is, emphatically, the age of iron, for it is made use of in every imaginable manner from needles to needle guns, from crinoline to Crystal Palaces, and from the steel pen to the ocean steamer. This, too, she possesses in rich abundance, giving work to her people, and wealth to the nation, and another $100,000,000 may be regarded as an under-estimate of the annual value of her trade in iron. Besides this her copper, lead, tin, and salt are very important, and largely contribute to the national wealth.

The cotton manufacture is the most important and prosperous of all her great industrial departments. The extension of this business during the last hundred years, has been truly amazing. In 1760 the returns for materials and labour was not quite $1,000,000, while at the present time, the estimate is about $330,000,000. She now employs 36,000,000 of spindles, while every minute there is spun a length of cotton which would wind four times round the earth, and every day 10,000,000 yards of cotton fabrics are manufactured in her looms. In addition to this, she carries on an extensive and valuable trade in woollen, linen, and silk fabrics, the whole giving employment to about two millions of her people.

Her agricultural capabilities are very great, and beneath the hand of a skilful industry yields abundantly. But if ever she requires more bread than she can raise at home, with which to feed her artizan population, who, that is at all acquainted with the bread-producing regions of our Dominion, can doubt the possibility of being amply provided for here. During the "Trent agitation" an American gentleman assured us that England would never demand the surrender of the Confederate envoys, for, knowing that such a demand would not be complied with, her honour would require a declaration of war, and American breadstuffs excluded from British ports, a famine would ensue, and untold horrors would be the result. If the South gloried in cotton, the West did, and does, in corn; but we have lived without the one, and we could without the other. If India, Australia, and the West Indies, have begun to send their cotton

home, we can send our corn. And we are inclined to think, that the Repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty will be found to have materially contributed to, and hastened such a very desirable consummation.

From other portions of the empire she gets, or could get, those various commodities that are supposed to be necessary to an advanced civilization. Tea could be produced in India more cheaply than in China, were it not for certain exclusive privileges enjoyed by the Chinese Company. Tobacco, sugar, rice, fruits and spices, luxuriate and grow to perfection in various localities. Indian flax and hemp, and Australian wools, supply her markets, while the precious metals abound in the far west and the distant east.

In a word, in the vastness of her territory, in the multitudes of her population, in the amount of her revenue, the wealth of her commerce, the activity and productiveness of her manufactures, the number and excellence of the ships that crowd her harbours, or bear her flag to the remotest regions, and in various other elements of greatness which cannot be reduced to statistic calculation, we have no hesitation in claiming, without fear of successful contradiction, for "Britain among the Nations," a position of unrivalled greatness.

Our next position is, that Britain has no equal in strength. Many doubt this, and suppose that Russia, Prussia, France, and the United States are superior to her in this respect. But how any unprejudiced individual can think so, we are at a loss to determine. The evidences of her power are so numerous and convincing, that our very enemies have again and again acknowledged the fact, while the prestige of her name is a tower of strength, and possesses a talismanic influence in every land, and amongst every people. But what is the secret of her strength, and to what does she owe her elevation. Waiving all reference, at this moment, to the intelligence and Christianity of her people, and the liberality of her laws, we may say that she owes much to the insularity of her position. Proudly reigning upon her island throne, the waters of the ocean have ever presented a formidable barrier to the approach of every invader, while her hardy sons, trained to maritime occupations, have ever been ready to give the foe a warm reception. On more than one occasion, the angry deep has rendered her essential service, in the hour of her greatest peril. The Spanish Armada felt its power, for the very elements, espousing her cause, sent the proud fleet of Philip to the bottom. Napoleon the Great would gladly have led his legions thither, but the murmur of the waves deterred him, while they lovingly embraced "the tight little island." And, thus, while other nations have frequently

been invaded, and their very capitals have fallen into the hands of the enemy, for seven hundred years no foreign flag has waved on England's soil, no hostile foot has trodden the streets of England's cities.

"Britannia needs no bulwark,
No tower along the steep;
Her march is on the ocean wave,
Her strength is on the deep."

The character of the races from which her present population has sprung must not be overlooked. In their veins flow the blood of the Briton, Roman, Saxon, Dane and Norman, the blending of whose varied physical and intellectual qualities, has given strength and solidity to the Anglo-Saxon character. The Briton was considered honest, brave, and hospitable: temperate, truthful, and generous. The rich, rough gem of the British heart was there, only requiring some artistic skill to render it beautiful and attractive. Then came the Roman, civilized and refined, blending the soft luxuriousness of the Italian character, with the sterner qualities of the soldier. Next came the Saxon, with his love of liberty, bold and manly independence, irresistible energy and steady courage. After him came the Dane, honest, brave, and enterprising—fearless in fight, heedless of danger, noble and magnanimous. And, lastly, came the Norman, lively and energetic, full of wit and humour, brilliant, dashing, enthusiastic, and glory-loving. No wonder, then, that the intermingling of the peculiarities of these vigorous tribes, should have constituted the British race the finest in the world, and that in the Briton you find a combination of all those noble powers and capabilities which have placed him in the most commanding position in the van of civilization, of science, and of freedom.

Another important element of Britain's strength lies in the union of the three Kingdoms into one great empire. Never has the common, but expressive proverb, that "Union is strength," received a more striking verification than in this case. As three separate and distinct nationalities, they could never have become more than third rate powers. National prejudices and conflicting interests would have occasioned wars between them, and foreigners would have aided the one against the other. As a consequence, weak and feeble, they would have fallen an easy prey to any invader, and instead of being to-day,

"The first on the blazing scroll of fame,"

would, in all probability, have been the dependencies of imperial France. By this union, England's brave and powerful rivals have become her

firmest friends and most gallant defenders. And now English, Scotch, and Irish, rallying round a common flag, owing allegiance to a common throne, and sharing the common heritage of glory and responsibility, won by each and borne by all, may gracefully drop their distinctive designations, and rejoice in the nobler name of Britons.

We are well aware that many Irishmen consider that union a great calamity, but with the great O'Connell, we are fully persuaded that Nature had clearly indicated such an issue, and that England ought to be the head of the united empire. No sane man will deny but that Ireland has been badly used, but it must be admitted, that for many years, British statesmen have manifested a sincere desire to atone for the wrongs of the past, and that, to day, she has no great cause for complaint. Did not a Protestant Parliament pass the "Catholic Emancipation Bill," which placed Catholics and Protestants upon a footing of perfect equality? Has it not endowed her colleges, educated her priesthood, protected her people in the enjoyment of their religious privileges, made her sons Governors, Generals, Judges, Ambassadors, and officers of the Crown, and levelled national distinctions in the dust? And has it not, quite recently, given the most convincing proof of its determination to act in the most conciliatory and equitable manner by the "Disestablishment of the Irish Church," and the promised legislation upon the Land question.

The importance of her colonies can hardly be over estimated. In some quarters it has become fashionable to deny them, to esteem them very lightly, and to advocate the dismemberment of the empire. The wily republican recommends it, and the smooth-tongued annexationist descants upon the expense of keeping up such an establishment, and the danger to all parties of maintaining the colonial connection. With such views we have no sympathy whatever, and believe that severance would be injurious to the colonies, and calamitous to the Mother Country. What she was before she had colonies, she might be again after she has lost them—a third rate power. The benefits she has derived from them defy all calculation, and are strangely overlooked by many in the discussion of this subject. Before colonization commenced, cotton, tobacco, sugar, and many other things now classed among the necessaries of life, were all but unkown; but with the planting of different settlements, they were discovered, cultivated, and sent home in exchange for the products of her industry. The new desires thus created led to a sudden and rapid developement of the useful arts, and a new era in her commercial history was inaugurated. Manufactures sprung up in every direction.

Agriculture flourished. The seaports were crowded with ships. Insignificant villages became important cities. Society was profoundly agitated, the middle classes became wealthy, influential, and predominant. The feudal aristocracy disappeared; the power of the crown was diminished; and liberty was established upon a rational and solid basis. Remote regions were peopled with her children, with similar wants, habits, and inclinations, able and willing to purchase her goods, and opening to her new and remunerative markets. And it is a fact, and one that we would commend to the consideration of politicians of the anti-colonial school, that Britain finds her heaviest purchasers, to-day, according to population, in her American and Australian possessions.

But are they not a source of weakness to her, and do they not expose her to humiliation and defeat? Instead of this, they are her strength, and she cannot, dare not surrender them without imperilling her own existence. Without them she would be weak as others, but with them she can act as the policeman of the world. From Gibraltar she vigilantly guards the mouth of the Mediterranean, and watches, with a jealous eye, every movement upon the continent of Europe. From Malta she could, at any moment, strike a blow that would create the most profound sensation. Out in the North Sea, at the feet of Holland and Denmark, and commanding the mouths of the Elbe and the Weser, stands Heligoland, from which she keeps a watchful eye on all that is passing in the north of Germany, and from which she sends her cruisers to wander and her scouts to spy. From St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope she can sweep the Southern Ocean, while Aden and Ceylon stand as outposts, guarding the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. From Hong Kong she keeps John Chinaman in check, while in the Southern Hemisphere she holds undisputed sway. From her West India throne she compels the South American Republics to keep the peace, while from the Bermudas and Halifax, she reminds brother Jonathan that much as she loves him, and strong as she believes him to be, she is in no degree afraid of him.

But this enumeration would be incomplete without some notice of her army and navy Compared with that of several of the great powers, her army is quite small. That of Russia numbers 850,000 men, Prussia 720,000, of France 626,000, while that of Britain, including the East India force, is only 530,000. But to these must be added some 300,000, well officered and disciplined volunteers at home, and 100,000 abroad, so that a million of men may be said to be ready to take the field at any moment. And that number, large though it is, might be immeasurably augmented, did necessity require it. Of course they are widely distri-

buted, but this objection is met by a reference to the rapidity of modern travel. If she threw 100,000 troops into India within three months, and effectually quelled the most terrible rebellion of modern times in a very brief period, she need not doubt her ability to maintain her supremacy against any foe, foreign or domestic.

And to know what that army is capable of doing we have only to consult the page of history. The record is a brilliant one, and one to which we refer with honest pride. The heroism of the British soldier has been the theme of national and patriotic songs from the days of Queen Boadicea to the present time. Around the neck of the British Lion hangs a laurel wreath, gathered from the fields of a thousand brilliant victories. Her gallant sons have performed prodigies of valour, equalled by few, and surpassed by none; and the memorials of their daring and endurance are worthy of being written in letters of gold, and hung in pictures of silver. Trace the splendid career of the immortal Marlborough, who humbled the pride of Louis XIV. of France. Follow the footsteps of Clive in India and Wolfe in America, and admire the prowess of the British soldier. Go to Badajos, Vittoria, and Waterloo, where Napoleon, the hero of a hundred fights, before whose power all the kingdoms of Europe had gone down in succession, was compelled to succumb to the superior strength of Wellington and his invincible legions. Read Havelock's advance to Lucknow, and learn what Britons are capable of accomplishing. In a word, in the jungles of India, on the plains of Burmah, in China, in Persia, in the gorges of Affghanistan, on the rocky slopes of Abyssinia, in, perhaps, every European land, and throughout North and South America, the bones of her heroes are sleeping. And long as the brave and noble in human action will be admired, so long will the heroic achievements of our countrymen blaze upon the historic page, and be had in glad and grateful remembrance.

From the army we turn to the navy. Of this we may be justly proud, for, for two hundred years it has swept the sea, unconquered, the admiration and the terror of the world. A recent writer, in comparing the American and British navies, gives the following particulars. The former is made up of 5 sailing ships of the line, 6 frigates, 17 paddle-wheel vessels, 51 iron clads, 12 sloops, 6 storeships, 1 yacht, and 1 torpedo boat—in all 188 vessels. Many of these are out of commission, several are being repaired, and some are for sale. On the other hand, Britain has 549 steamships and vessels in commission, of which 44 are iron-clads, 7 Indian troop-ships, 4 on special colonial service,—62 gunboats, 30 sailing vessels, and 111 for harbour service,—in all 752. These carry

some 16,000 guns, many of them of the latest construction and the heaviest calibre, and it is farther asserted that the combined navies of France and America do not equal in strength and efficiency that of our country. The memories of the Nile, Camperdown, and Trafalgar, are still fresh in the nation's hearts, and the never-to-be-forgotten words of Nelson, "England expects that every man this day will do his duty," would meet with as warm a response and as hearty a cheer to-day, if there were need, as when they first floated from the masthead of the "Victory."

To talk of conquering Britain while she has such an army and navy is the wildest folly,—the greatest imaginable nonsense. This is the nation that is going to be whipped some day, "in a quarter less than no time," whose colonies are to be "gobbled up," and whose power is said to have passed away. A writer in *Harper's Weekly* for May, 1862, told the world that the battle between the Merrimac and the Monitor, had sounded the death knell of the British navy, and that until we built a new one we would not dare to go to war. We have heard of timid boys, while passing graveyards after night, "whistling to keep their courage up," and we fancy that all this talk about humbling England can be similarly accounted for.

But while Britain is strong she is also magnanimous. Never has the glory of a victory been tarnished by the murder of prisoners, or the wreaking of vengeance on the weak and the defenceless. Never has the sanctity of home, or the purity of woman been violated by the command or with the connivance of British officers. And never can we forget the calm self possession and humane behaviour of Havelock's soldiers at the bloody well of Cawnpore. As they gazed upon the slaughtered forms of the wives and children of their companions-in-arms, with the big tears rolling down their sunburnt cheeks, and deep emotion choking their utterance, to their honour be it spoken, under that terrible provocation, not a hand was lifted against the inhabitants of that guilty town, nor a single British bayonet stained with their blood. We are proud of such men, and feel that in their hands our lives and liberties are safe.

Footsore they were, and weary,
And the day's grim work was o'er,
The hot pursuit and the dying yell,
And the strife was heard no more.
When they came to their night encampment
As the tropic evening fell,
They staid their steps for a little space
By that thrice accursed well.

Their's were no fresh quick feelings,
Few but had bravely stood,
On battle fields where the soil was slaked
Till each footprint was filled with blood.
Well did they know the horrors
Of war's unpitying face,
Yet they sobbed, as with one great anguish,
As they stood by that fatal place.

Still was the eve around them,
But they knew that that sultry air
Had thrilled to the cry of murderous rage,
And the wild shriek of despair.
They saw in the chasm before them,
The bloody and self-sought grave
Of many a heart that had cried in vain
On Heaven and earth to save.

Mother and child were lying
Locked in a last embrace,
And death had printed the frenzied look
Of the ghastly murderer's face.
One of the slaughtered victims
They raised with a reverent care,
And shred from her fair and girlish head,
The tresses of tangled hair.

They parted locks between them,
And, with a low, quick breathing, swore
That a life of the cruel foe should fall
For every slender hair.
"Leave to the cowards wailing,
Let women weep woman's fate,
Our swords shall reap red tears of blood
For hearts made desolate."

Her conduct in dealing with the Fenians has been severely criticised, and her leniency attributed to cowardice. But powerful as she is, she can afford to despise such adversaries, as foemen not worthy of her steel. A story is told of Queen Elizabeth which strikingly illustrates and explains Britain's conduct towards the misguided brotherhood. It seems that during the reign of her sister Mary, a certain nobleman had grossly insulted her, and for which he had been sent to the tower. Upon her accession, he sought and obtained an interview, when he begged for life in the most abject terms. Elizabeth, with flashing eye and haughty mien, thoroughly despising the craven-hearted creature, replied in a tone of withering contempt, "Do you not know that we are descended from

the Lion, and do not prey upon rats, mice and such small vermin? Begone!"

That the British is the freest nation in the world, is too plain to require any lengthened proof. This is to be traced to forms of government and modes of society which prevailed in primitive and mediæval times, and which flowed from British, Roman, and German sources. Love of liberty has ever been a prominent feature in our national character. Even in the days of Druidical darkness and superstition, we find them valiantly defending themselves against the Roman invaders, preferring freedom, rude and wild as they were, to civilization with its loss. And to their honour be it spoken, that such was the undaunted heroism and liberty-loving spirit of these savage tribes, that Rome, whose legions were the terror of the world, found it no easy matter to subdue them. This spirit continued to be cherished by the people, both under the Romans and Saxons, for in the days of Alfred the Great, popular rights were so far respected that trial by jury, courts of law, and a kind of parliamentary representation were established by royal authority. These rights were more or less respected by both the Danish and Saxon sovereigns, until the arrival of William the Conqueror. Under the Normans, English liberty was laid in the dust, the people were deprived of every privilege, and no native was permitted to hold any office in church or state. "Englishman" at that time was as contemptible a term as "Nigger" is now in the Southern States. But deep down in the British heart there lives a spirit that all the waters of the ocean cannot drown; that all the fetters forged upon the anvils of tyranny cannot bind; and that all the laws that despots may enact cannot frighten; and rising in all the might and majesty of an injured and outraged people, they burst the bonds that bound them, and trampled their oppressors in the dust.

The great battle for English liberty was fought at Runnymede, between the cowardly King John and the common people, led by the sturdy barons. There was won the most influential of all victories, and there was obtained that most important of political documents—"Magna Charta, or the Great Charter of the Common Liberties." But our Constitution was not created by a single act, nor embodied in a single document; and while it has been the work of ages, and by piecemeal has been brought to its present form, its completeness would lead the stranger to regard it as the production of a single mind. In it are found all the great principles of all good governments,—the independent, supreme authority of law, and the inalienable rights of a social, rational freedom.

The extreme Tory will not find the absolute divine rights of the Monarch, as a person, but he will find the sacred, irreversible sovereignty of right. The ultra Whig will find no "metaphysical rights of men," or republican clap trap about "the sovereignty of the people," but he will find the sacred irreversible rights of free action, subject only to those laws, in the enactment of which he has a voice. With its sacred and hereditary monarchy; its Judges alike independent of both the crown and people; its juries and senatorial assemblies; it presents the most perfect form of government the world has ever beheld. It teaches the great doctrine that law emanates from a higher source than the human will, and exists independently of it, and that to every man is entrusted the right to do all that he can for his comfort, security, and improvement, without infringing upon the rights of others. Take either of these alone, and their influence would be ruinous, for the first would lead to vassalage and slavery, the second to licentiousness and anarchy. But Rights and Privileges, Duties and Obligations, in opposition to Despotism and Anarchy, are alike and fully recognized in and by the British Constitution.

Dr. Lardner compares this Constitution to a tender but beautiful flower, raising its head amid the chilly blasts of spring. At first it is but little noticed, and its matured beauties are not anticipated. But as the days lengthen, and the genial breath of summer warms the soil, and the fertilizing rains and dews moisten its leaves and refresh its roots, it expands and grows, and exhales its fragrance and perfumes the air. So the British Constitution, little known and appreciated at first, has, beneath the benign influences of religion and education, grown into a goodly tree, which has budded, blossomed, and borne the richest fruit. As a system, it has no equal, and has come to be regarded as the only really safe, strong, and beneficent form of government at all compatible with extended dominion.

Different sovereigns have tried to govern independent of, or in violation of, the "Great Charter;" but it has ever been a dangerous game to play, for the trial cost Charles I. his head, and James II. his crown. While we have little sympathy with the unfortunate Stuarts, and believe their exclusion from the British throne a blessing to the nation, we have ever regarded the execution of Charles I. as a most wicked and unwarrantable offence. But it was overruled for good, for after trying their hand at republicanism, and not finding it what political demagogues had represented it to be, they unanimously abandoned it,

and re-erected the throne amid the most loyal and enthusiastic demonstrations.

Let us compare the British and American Constitutions, and see the practical working of each. We have heard so much of the superiority of the latter, that many mistaking assertion for argument have been led to believe much that has no foundation in fact. The points of similarity between the systems are numerous, and clearly speak of an identity of origin, but there are points of dissimilarity, which we think are not improvements. If it is necessary for the right administration of justice, that our Judges should be independent of all political parties, and unaffected by electioneering influences; then the fountain of justice—the head of the nation—should be the common friend of all. With us, the Sovereign is alike respected by Whig and Tory; with them, the President is necessarily a party man, loved by one party, but cordially hated by the other; and with the very best intentions, it would be extremely difficult to deal justly with those who had done their utmost to prevent his election. With us the Executive is chosen from the floors of Parliament, and is simply the custodian of the national will, and is liable to be dimissed from office at any hour. To the people they are directly responsible, and by the will of the people they stand or fall. This facility to change is the safety valve of our system, and to it we owe, very largely, the stability of our institutions. With them the Cabinet is chosen from the private walks of life, and are responsible to the President. See how it operated in the case of Buchanan. During the whole term of his administration he was in league with rebels, was laying the foundations of a formidable insurrection, furnished the South with arms and munitions of war, placed the strongholds of the nation in the hands of its enemies, and was, in our opinion, a greater traitor than Jefferson Davis himself. All this was known, published in the papers, and proclaimed from Maine to California, but there was no redress, and nothing could be done until the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln. It is true, a "Tenure of Office Bill" was passed in Mr. Johnson's time for the purpose of limiting his power, but we believe it has been repealed under Gen. Grant, as opposed to the spirit of the Constitution. From this it is plain that, notwithstanding all that can be said to the contrary, the President of Republican America has a power of playing the tyrant, that the Sovereign of monarchical Britain can lay no claim to.

Besides all this, both slavery and the slave trade was legalized and upheld by their boasted Constitution. If we rightly read Part I., Section 9, Article 1, of that celebrated document, we learn that slaves might be

imported for a term of years, provided the importer paid for them at the rate of ten dollars per head; which money went to pay the debt that was contracted in fighting to maintain the doctrine, that "All men are born free and equal." And domestic slavery continued to be a great national institution until our own times. We rejoice that that blot has been wiped off the "Star Spangled Banner," and that slavery has been swept from their country; that the negro has become a citizen, and has his representative in the National Legislature; but it is well to remember that emancipation was brought about, neither by the spirit nor letter of the Constitution, but by an overriding of the same, in an hour of agony and distress.

Under the British flag slavery has indeed been tolerated, but always in opposition to the spirit and genius of our laws. "Parliament," says Mr. Stephens in "Slavery in the British West Indies Delineated," has certainly permitted the bringing in of negroes from Africa, but that they should, on their arrival in a British colony, be sold into, and retained perpetually in slavery, has never been enacted by Parliament, and our Statutes will be found guiltless of such a thing." In the words of the immortal Curran, we can proudly say, "No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced; no matter in what diastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down; no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of slavery: the moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain, the altar and the god sink together in the dust; his soul walks abroad in her own majesty; his body swells beyond the measure of his chains, and he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled, by the irresistible genius of Universal Emancipation."

"Slaves cannot breathe in England;
Their lungs receive our air; their shackles fall;
That moment they are free."

With our system of Government we have good reason to be quite well satisfied. Our political institutions have been well tested, and in them we have the fullest confidence. Beneath their benign and elevating influence we have reached our present proud position, and our future promises to grow brighter and grander still. While others talk about liberty, it is our happy privilege to enjoy it, and the glory of our system is, that it can readily adapt itself to the ever-varying conditions of society. Words change their meaning, but principles live for ever; hence the superiority of an unwritten to a written Constitution. Improvements in the latter must be brought about by amendments, which

like a codicil to a will, may invalidate the authority of the original document; while the changes in the latter are simply the developement of its ideas, and the outgrowth of the germs embedded therein. Under such circumstances, whatever is defective can easily be remedied, grievances can be readily redressed, and important revolutions can be safely passed through, without either endangering the liberty of the subject, or the security of the crown.

But if, "the mind's the measure of the man," it is equally so of the nation, and, in this respect, Britain acknowledges no superior. Dr. Rigg, in a recent address upon the Educational Question, now agitating the public mind of the Mother country, stated that France, Prussia, and the United States were the only nations at all worthy of being compared with her. Of the two former we shall not now speak, but confine our attention to the claim of superiority put forth by the latter. That our cousins have manifested a praiseworthy desire to educate the masses is an undoubted fact, and for this they are entitled to very great credit. But this was no more than the world had a right to expect from a people in every respect so favourably situated. America can hardly be called a new country. More than two centuries have elapsed since the foundations of the Great Republic were laid, and that, too, by men whose intelligence was in advance of the times, placed remote from the scenes of European troubles, and comparatively unaffected by them, they were enabled to make the very best of their circumstances. That period has been the most important in British history, and the greatest and most wonderful changes have taken place. Speaking the same language, and so long acknowledging the same authority, whatever political reforms were made, whatever social abuses were removed, whatever improvement in literature or progress in science took place, the advantages were theirs, without the attendant toil. Their country, too, was rich in its varied resources, labour was amply remunerated, and competency was within the reach of all. While ignorance, under such circumstances, would have been inexcusable, great improvement excites no wonder. Yet, notwithstanding these rare and unequalled advantages, an impartial consideration of the subject may moderate the pretensions of our highly privileged cousins.

Commencing with the Common Schools, we are much gratified to learn, that in the public schools of Ireland there were in A.D. 1868, 1,100,000 scholars, or about one-fifth of the whole population, there being an increase of 34,000 over the previous year. In Scotland the subject of education has ever been deemed of the utmost importance, and as

deserving of every possible encouragement. The Presbyterian Church—to which the great mass of Scotchmen belong—has always occupied advanced ground upon this question, and two hundred years ago declared in favour of "a school in every parish, so far supported by the public funds, as to render education accessible to even the poorest in the land." Her efforts have been eminently successful, the happiest results have followed, and Scotchmen, wherever found, have been proverbial for their intelligence and practical sagacity. In England and Wales nearly two and a half millions of pupils are enrolled on the registers of the different schools. Compared with the past, this is decidedly encouraging, and warrants the confident expectation that, at no very distant day, an unlettered Englishman will be rarely met with. Difficulties of a very formidable character have had to be encountered, and others are still to be disposed of, but the British people have proved their unwillingness to be satisfied with anything short of the education of the whole population. And we have great hope that the present progressive Parliament will inaugurate a new era in the educational history of the country, by originating some comprehensive system, which will secure the support of all classes. Taking then the three Kingdoms as they were two or three years ago, the aggregate school attendance was about one seventh of the whole population.

Turning to the United States, we find that with about the same population, the proportion attending school is not as large as is generally supposed. While some of the States may be in advance of Britain, others are yet farther behind. Massachusetts, pronounced by Dr. Ryerson "the freest, wealthiest, and mast advanced in Science and Literature" of all the States, does not send one-fifth of her population to school. New York sends one-fifth, Ohio one-fourth, Pennsylvania one-sixth, Connecticut one-fourth, New Jersey one-sixth. None other of the States can compare with these, and these, in the aggregate, only give a school attendance of about one-fifth of the whole population. Statistics of the other States we have not been able to lay our hand upon, but a writer in a late issue of the New York "Methodist" gives us the following startling information: "The proportion to every thousand who could neither read nor write (i. e. at the close of the war) were,—in South Carolina, 594, more than one-half; Mississippi, 571; Alabama, 490; Louisiana, 485; Florida, 480; Georgia, 479; North Carolina, 408; Virginia, 351; Texas, 335; Tennessee, 313: Arkansas, 309; Kentucky, 253; Maryland, 181; Delaware, 133; and Missouri, 148." Assuming then, the correctness of the above figures, we find that 37 per cent. of the

population of the above fifteen States were, "in a condition of deplorable ignorance." If, then, the North can give us nothing better than the foregoing, and the South is in such a sad state, the statistics of the West, if we had them, would scarcely make such a difference as to give to the whole Union any superiority over the Mother Country in the number of school going youth.

Of the higher educational institutions--the Grammar and Model Schools, the Academies, Colleges, and Universities of the respective countries we cannot speak particularly. While America has more in number, as might be readily supposed, it will not be pretended that they rank as high. Graduates of British Universities, as a class, are believed to be superior to transatlantics wearing the same honours. Their training is believed to be more thorough, their education more complete, and the public estimates of their relative standing is much higher. This feeling is not confined to Provincialists, but exhibits itself from time to time among our cousins themselves. Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, Edinburgh, &c., are great educational centres, of which the nation is justly proud. To these institutions Britain owes much, and from them for generations past, men have gone forth who have increased the wealth of every department of science and literature, have adorned every profession, added greatly to the glory of the Empire, and conferred upon the race incalculable and imperishable benefits.

In the number and variety of her newspaper productions, America stands unequalled. Ten years ago the issues were at the enormous rate of thirty-five for every white man, woman, and child in the country, and costing in the aggregate about $40,000,000. Of the power of this vast intellectual agency, it is difficult to conceive any idea. If every leaf of the forest were a sybilline record, and every month of the year should bring round the deciduous influences of autumn, the leaves that would then strew the land, would, perhaps, give the best idea of the immense shower of printed leaves that daily fall into the hands of the American people. The periodical press is a tremendous intellectual engine, radiating the light of knowledge in every direction, and exercising almost supreme control over the sentiments of all within its reach, by keeping them well informed upon all questions of moment in religion, literature, and art.

But while a smaller number of periodicals may be issued from the British press, we believe that that deficiency is more than compensated by the marked superiority of their contents. Perhaps it is not saying too much, that the London "Times" wields a greater influence in the world

to-day than all the papers published on this side of the Atlantic. While we would hesitate to believe many of its doctrines, or always to follow its leading, we admire its ability, and regard it a power in the earth. Its leaders are characterized by ripe thought and scholarly research, and far as civilization extends—yes, and beyond it—the voice of the "Thunderer" is heard. Every subject is discussed in its columns, for besides questions relating to material interests and ordinary business, it appeals to the intellect and enters the domain of art, literature, science, philosophy, politics, morality, and all the higher interests of mankind, and its pages sparkle with a beauty and a brilliancy, a freshness and a vigour, peculiarly its own. Its circulation is very large. Seven tons of printing paper have been used in one issue, or what would cover an extent of thirty acres of ground, and the wonderful enterprise of the establishment has been exhibited by running the whole through the press in some six hours.

If we pass from the dailies and weeklies to the monthlies and quarterlies, we find the mother far in advance of the daughter. Blackwood and the London, Westminster, Edinburgh, and North British Reviews are regarded by all as the great exponents of Anglo-Saxon thought throughout the world, and so important are they deemed in America, that not only is "Littel's Living Age," and similar magazines, largely filled with articles taken from them, but they are wholly reprinted in New York. And here an interesting question arises, and that is, "Why is America thus dependent upon Britain for literature of this peculiar character?" One of two answers must be given: either that talent of that higher order is not sufficiently remunerated, or that it does not exist. We are inclined to adopt the former, and assign as the reason that writers find it more profitable to contribute to such papers and magazines as the Ledger, Harper, and the Atlantic, than for the more solid and substantial, though less attractive, periodicals of the above class. And hence, since some must have such reading matter, it is cheaper to import it when ready for the press, than to produce it at home.

These remarks are equally applicable to the book publications of the United States. Native productions are readily recognized by their raciness of style, independent outspokenness, and the attractiveness of their mechanical finish, but they lack the depth, solidity, and intellectual grasp of Old World thought. A very large proportion of the books in circulation in America are of British origin, while a large majority of Standard Works in the various departments of literature are the same; of

some 400 volumes on the "Catalogue for a Pastor's Library, prepared by Professors of Andover, New Haven, and Chicago," about 300 are British books. One third of all the publications of "Harper and Brothers," and of the "Methodist Book Concern" of New York, have a similar authorship. And were the catalogues of all America's publishing houses carefully examined, we would find that the works of enduring greatness, that will be read and studied by posterity, when the popular literature of the day will be forgotten, have been chiefly produced by the thinkers of Britannia's sea-girt isle—the land of literary renown.

And then, think on the names that are famous in story, that have flourished beneath the Red Cross flag. No nation on the face of the earth, not all the nations united are able to produce such a brilliant array of noble and distinguished individuals. Pitt, Canning, Palmerston, Gladstone, Chatham, Fox, Burke, Brougham, Curran; Marlborough, Wellington, Nelson, Shakespeare, Milton, Watts, Wesley, Cowper, Montgomery; Robertson, Ferguson, Keightley, Macaulay; Arkwright, Symington, Watt, Stephenson; Franklin, Livingston, Bruce, Park; Newton, Dick, Miller; Lowth, Henry, Owen, Clarke; Whitfield, Chalmers, Spurgeon, Punshon, and James. Here are Statesmen of the first rank, Orators of unrivalled ability, Warriors before whom the world has trembled, Poets who are unapproachable, Historians who have never been equalled, Inventors at whose shrine the world does homage, Travellers whose discoveries have astonished mankind, Philosophers who have cast all others into the shade, and Theologians and Preachers who have dwarfed all others by their greatness. In a word—

"The deathless one that shine and live, in arms, in arts, in song,
The brightest the whole wide world can give, to that little land belong."

But while we believe Britain to be "the greatest, the strongest, the freest, and the most enlightened," of the great family of nations, we also believe her to be "the most Christian." Reverently believing that "righteousness exalteth a nation," its Christian character is necessarily determined by the character and influence of its religious opinions, institutions, and literature. If these are distinguished by an intelligent appreciation of sterling worth, by an unfaltering advocacy of good morals, and by an untiring inculcation of sound religious truth, the standing of the masses will be correspondingly exalted. Judged by these, the British people will bear comparison with any. While we sincerely regret the existence of much evil; while we deeply deplore the prevalence of many vices; while we frankly acknowledge that mitred infidels, reverend

unbelievers, and rationalistic philosophers, would remove the ancient landmarks of her faith and give her in lieu thereof a soulless latitudinarianism; we are nevertheless persuaded that the law abiding character of her people, the humanity of her laws, the liberality of her political system, the healthful spirit of her literature, and the widespread respect that is entertained for things sacred, conclusively prove that Britain is possessed of the most pure and effective Christianity in the world.

Of the planting of Christianity in Britain, we need not now speak particularly, suffice it to say that it is generally conceded that it took place at a very early period. Indeed some are of opinion that Saint Paul was the honoured agent in the hands of God, first to tell the story of the Cross, to the rude barbarians of the Mother Land. The evidence in favour of this theory is obtained in the writings of several of the Primitive Fathers, who assert that he preached in "the western isles" and "the isles of the ocean," between his first and second imprisonment in Rome. It appears that the Romans called Britain "the end of the world," and St. Paul tells us that "their (i. e. the Apostles) sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." But whether he did or did not bring Christianity thither, it was most assuredly done by some one about that time, and its early introduction and establishment has proved exceeding ly beneficial to the civilization of the country.

From that time to the present Britain has never been without true and genuine Christians. True, clouds and darkness have frequently overhung her pathway, and her spirituality has often sadly declined, but again and and again has the Great Head of the Church raised up brave reforming spirits to arouse and quicken her into life. During the gloomy period of the middle ages, Christianity was the main-stay of social order, and wrought out beautiful results in individual character. In its reformed developements it has mainly contributed to the best and most valued of her social improvements. Her noblest heroes have been inspired by its celestial spirit; her most precious institutions have felt the shapening touch of its divine hand; the best portions of her literature reflect the refulgence of its light; and the virtue, integrity, honour, benevolence, and piety of the land, are traceable to, have sprung from, and are strengthened by its benign and elevating influence. If Christianity has not been the only cause of her greatness, without it she could never have attained her present pre-eminence. As a beautiful illustration of the transforming power of the Gospel, we give the following: In working the electric telegraph, it has been found that when a piece of

paper has been dipped in a certain chemical solution, a stream of electricity passed over it will imprint the paper with beautiful tints and dyes. So, if other things have been like the chemical solution to the paper, preparing her for some high destiny, the introduction and establishment of Christianity has been like the electric stream passing over the nation, covering it with the fair and beautiful colours, which render her the admiration of the world. And while there is still room for improvement; while she is still very far from being what we think she ought to be, and what we hope soon to see her, yet nowhere in the wide, wide world, is Protestant Christianity so influential for good, so free from doctrinal error, so deeply implanted in the people's heart, or so loyally defended, as beneath the Red Cross flag of England. To the various races that acknowledge her authority, she guarantees political equality, religious liberty, a free press, and an open Bible, while they, in their turn, appreciating the benefits of British rule, are wont to regard her as "The model nation of the world."

We may be regarded as conservative and old fogyish in our views, but we rejoice in a national recognition of the Christian religion. While the framers of the American Constitution studiously avoided all reference to the Deity, or to the authority of the Bible,—an omission which has occasioned great grief to many, and which has called forth many an editorial essay under the heading of, "Is this a Christian Nation?" We acknowledge him in public documents and official phrase as the fountain of all authority, and his word as the highest source of appeal. Into that grandest of all ceremonies—the coronation—religion largely enters. The Sovereign goes to the House of God to receive the Crown. The service commences with a solemn act of worship. The Deity is acknowledged, praised, and invoked. The inspiration and authority of the Bible is proclaimed, by the reading of the Scripture lessons. The divine character of the Christian ministry is shown by the important fact, that a sermon suited to the occasion is preached. The oath is administered by the highest ecclesiastic in the realm, from whose hands the crown is received. A Bible is next presented by the same; the gift of God to prince, peer, and peasant, by which the Sovereign is taught so to rule, and the subject so to obey, that His blessing may be secured, and His name glorified in the widespread and permanent prosperity of the land. And in various other ways is it declared that the people put themselves and their Sovereign under the rule and protection of the Almighty, acknowledging his law and revelation, and professing themselves to be his subjects.

We are willing to admit that much of this may be mere formality, and that many of the British Sovereigns have been anything but good men. This, however, only proves them to have been the unworthy representatives of a religiously disposed people. But we rejoice to know that that illustrious lady who now sways the British sceptre, and upon whose royal brow sits so gracefully the richest earthly crown, is, to use the words of a distinguished American lady, "a model of womanly excellence." In the various relations of daughter, wife, mother, Queen, and Christian, her example is worthy of imitation. Her praises are sung at every Court, her virtues are admired throughout the civilized world, and her name is the synonym for public and domestic worth in all lands.

Although a Dissenter from principle, and consider the church to which we belong as good, as intelligent, and as respectable as any, we honour the Church of England, and can never forget the important service she has rendered to Protestant Christianity. With many of her forms we have little sympathy, and to her Colensoes, her Puseys, her High and Broad Church advocates we are conscientiously opposed; but, notwithstanding all, she is "a praise in the earth." We believe her doctrines, rejoice in her success, remember, with a Briton's pride, her glorious career, have read with profit her richly evangelical literature, have studied the character of her intellectual giants, and would consider that man a foe to the best interests of the empire that would harm her. Many reforms are doubtless necessary, as reform is the order of the day. Her bishops ought not to sit in the halls of legislation, the national seats of learning should be thrown open to all, church rates abolished, and the clergy supported by the voluntary contributions of her friends. And this we believe would strengthen her position, and immeasurably add to her influence and efficiency.

To the Established Churches—Episcopal and Presbyterian—Britain is deeply indebted. Much of the nation's piety is to be found within their pale, and much of her greatness is to be credited to their account. If their advantages are superior, their resources richer, and their opportunities for doing good more general, than those enjoyed by other communions, the influence they wield is much greater. To them principally belong the upper classes, with all the moral weight of wealth, rank, and social position: and to them chiefly belong the lower classes also. And we rejoice to know that in the ranks of each, we may find many who are nowhere excelled for saintliness of character, and nobleness of soul. Coronets have been laid at the Master's feet, and the wearers of

the proudest earthly titles have felt themselves ennobled by becoming Christian, while multitudes of the humbler have been benefitted, in body, mind, and estate, by the elevating power of that gospel, to which they have listened in the parish churches, or the healthful influence exercised over them by the ministers of their respective communions.

What Britain owes to Dissenters cannot be estimated. After all that had been done by the Establishments, much, very much remained to be done. For reasons that need not now be explained, large portions of the population appeared to be beyond their reach, and consequently derived no appreciable benefit from them. As long as men will think differently, various organizations are indispensable to the efficient promotion of Christianity, and could we, with a large-hearted charity, but agree to differ, a much greater amount of good would be accomplished. There is room for each, there is work for all. While the upper and lower orders are largely under the influence of the Establishments, to the Non conforming denominations the spiritual interests of the middle classes have been chiefly entrusted. And well and faithfully have they performed the duty, for, from the mechanical, manufacturing, and mercantile classes have come some of the brightest lights in literature, the greatest apostles in science, the most distinguished masters in art, and the most profound philosophers. And better still, many a moral desert, both at home and abroad, has become a fruitful field, and made to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Their works praise them, their power is felt in every department, they have a strong hold of the national heart, and they have built for themselves a memorial of enduring greatness.

If a tree is known by its fruits, and its character determined accordingly, we can best estimate the worth of our national piety, by what it has done, or attempted to do, in promoting the interests of the kingdom of God. To speak of the various agencies that have originated in the Christian benevolence of our people for the mental, moral, and religious improvement of mankind, would be a pleasing, but practically an endless task. Their name is legion, their labour love, and their reward the gratitude of man and the blessing of God. But from the multitude we select two as sufficient for our present purpose—her Bible and Missionary Societies.

For a long time, Britain has been regarded as the stronghold of Protestant Christianity, and the great champion of the Word of God. Believing the Bible to be the keystone of all national greatness and true civilization—that where it has been suppressed, religion has degenerated into priestcraft, superstition has been rife, and moral and intellectual

life has withered—and that wherever it has been freely circulated, it has proved the Divinity of its origin, and the blessedness of its power, in the elevation of the people, the prosperity of the nation, the purity of the priesthood, the stability of the Church, and in everything that makes a nation great and free; she has bravely defended the right of every man to possess and read the Bible in his mother tongue. And of its influence upon the hearts and lives of the people, we know of nothing more true and beautiful, than the following from the "Dublin Roman Catholic Review": "Who will not say that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible is one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten; like the sound of the church bell, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things, rather than mere words. It is a part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness. The power of all the gifts and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments; and all that there has been about him of soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good, speaks to him for ever out of the English Bible. It is his sacred thing, which doubt has never dimmed, and controversy never soiled. In the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant with one spark of righteousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible."

To give this Book to every man, woman, and child, not only at home, but also abroad, was the object of the founders of the "British and Foreign Bible Society." To describe the operations of, or to estimate the good done by this Society, is utterly beyond our power; suffice it to say, that while the "American Bible Society" has issued from 1816 to 1867, 22,940,404 copies of the Bible, the "British and Foreign Bible Society" has issued from 1803 to 1867, 52,669,089 copies. And in the last named year, the issues of the latter exceeded those of the former by 1,134,062 copies.

Of her Missionary operations we cannot now speak particularly. Not only under her own flag, but under those also of almost all other nations, her Bible is being circulated, and her children are telling the "Old, old story." Recognizing her own indebtedness to the Gospel, and believing that what it has done for her, it is able to do for others, she has availed herself of every opportunity to give it to the world. Through every conquered province liberty of conscience has been proclaimed, and in every treaty it has been expressly stipulated that the Gospel should be untrammelled. And so well and widely known has she become for her

championship of the South, that the Missionaries of all lands and churches, feel perfectly safe under the shadow of her flag, and regard it as the symbol of security, civilization, and social elevation.

To carry on this great work, immense sums of money are required, and the appeals that are made, from time to time, to British Christians, are usually responded to in a spirit of the largest liberality. Six millions of dollars are annually laid upon the altar of Christianity, principally for the purpose of furthering the objects of the Bible, Tract, and Missionary Societies, and this sum, large though it is, is being greatly increased every year.

From the past and present, we naturally turn to the future, and anxiously enquire, What will Britain's future be? Like the mighty nations of antiquity, will she only live in history, the records of her glory being read to fire the heart of some new and rising nationality, or will her power be perpetuated, and her career be one of undiminished and increasing greatness? Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Athens, Rome and Jerusalem, with their artists, orators, heroes, philosophers, and poets, have all passed away, and little remains but the name, and is there, or is there not, reason to fear that Britain's career may similarly close. The dream of Lord Macaulay and others, that the time might come when London Bridge will have crumbled away, the waters idly rolling on, no richly freighted ships coming or going, her Parliament House a mighty ruin, and the stranger, standing upon the site of the Royal Exchange or the Crystal Palace, will muse upon the departed glories of Great Britain, has far less of probability than of poetry in it. She may fall, her people may become vicious, lawless, and corrupt, her flag may be trailed in the dust, and her name be a byeword, a hissing, and a reproach.

But we think not. We have good reason to believe that a far different fate awaits her. In the virtue and intelligence of her people we see hopeful indications of a bright and brilliant future. The signs of the times are encouraging. The national credit was never better, her moral influence never greater, and her statesmanship never wiser and more progressive than at present. Never was the people more loyal, the government more liberal, or the throne more stable than now. Never was there a better state of feeling between the Mother Country and the Colonies, and never was that connection more highly valued than at present. Disaffection is unknown, dismemberment is not to be entertained, and the reconstruction of the empire is to be the overshadowing question of the not very distant future. And our hope and prayer is, that such measures will be adopted, as will not only render separation

undesirable, but will gather around the Red Cross flag, in the bonds of a more intimate relationship, every English speaking and British governed dependency in both hemispheres. Yes, the prospect is bright, and well calculated to thrill the heart of every patriot; and to lead him to strive to perpetuate and strengthen institutions that have been so eminently successful in the past, and to expect for his country a career of ever-brightening prospects. And in conclusion we would say: "Frown down disloyalty; Heed not those who lightly estimate your glorious heritage; Turn away from the advocates of Independence, for if they are sincere, their judgment is defective, and if they are not, they are unworthy of confidence. Rally round the grand old flag, raise it higher and yet higher, and let this be our common cry: 'It fluttered over my cradle; may it float over my grave?'"

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