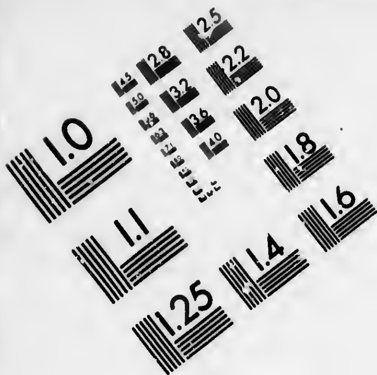

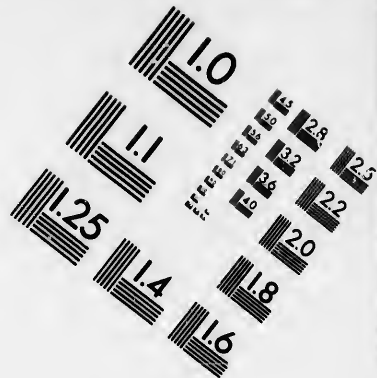

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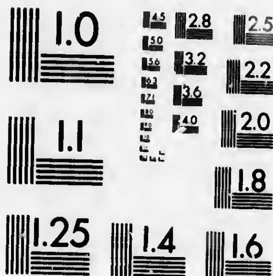

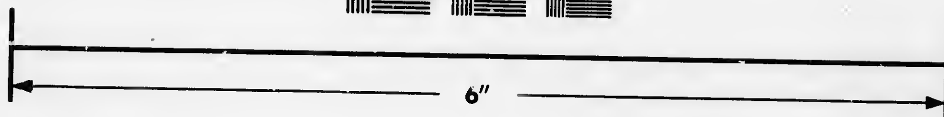

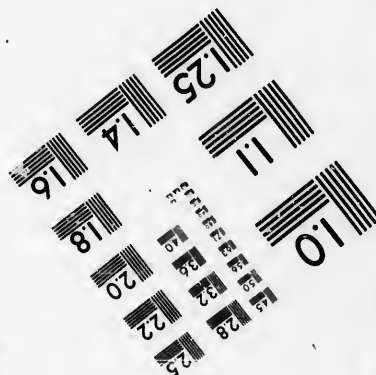

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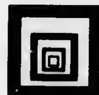

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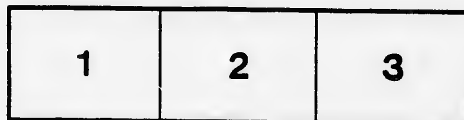

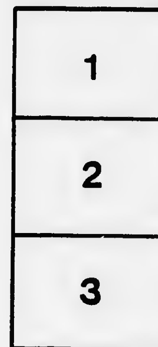

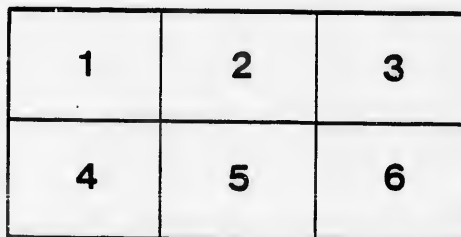

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Vol. 150

"OUR COLONIES."

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED

To the Members of the Mechanics' Institute,

CHESTER,

ON MONDAY, THE 12TH NOVEMBER, 1855,

BY THE

RIGHT HONORABLE W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.,

LATE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

Reported by Justin M'Carthy and Geo. Callaghan, "Northern Daily Times."

REVISED BY THE RT. HON. MR. GLADSTONE,

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ADDRESS, &c.

THE greatest difficulty which besets me in complying with the request you have done me the honour to make to me, is, that I scarcely know how to select such an amount of material as time would permit me to lay before you, from the vast redundance which the subject offers. I believe you are aware that the request which was presented to me was, that I should address you upon the same subject, and to the same effect as I have already addressed your friends and neighbours at Hawarden, namely, the subject of our Colonies. Now, that little word includes in itself ample matter of the most interesting discussion; so vast, that even the minor branches of it have given occasion for the most important and most interesting treatises in their distinct and separate forms. If, for example, I name such a question as the discovery of gold in Australia—such a question as the laws which govern and regulate emigration—such a question as the history of Negro slavery, and the means through which it has been brought to an end—such a question, again, as the treatment of the aboriginal tribes inhabiting and bordering upon the various settlements of this great empire—or, to name only one more, such a question as the great subject of the transportation of British criminals to distant British possessions—each one of these, apart from every other, is not only sufficient to occupy the utmost period which I could possibly ask this night from your indulgence, but has been found sufficient to occupy nights upon nights, weeks upon weeks, and months upon months, of the thoughts of the ablest writers, and the discussions of both your legislative houses. You will, therefore, I am sure, excuse me, if I at once announce that I can lay before you nothing but the rudest and the very slightest sketch of a subject so vast in its range, and you will also, I am certain, grant to me the indulgence which I have occasion to ask, when I observe that such a sketch, necessarily passing by and omitting much that is important, is liable to doubtful and unfavourable interpretation through its scantiness of exposition. I am sure that you will allow me to request your favour and indulgence if I seem to you to give rise to inferences which perhaps a fuller explanation might tend very much to obviate, while upon my part it will be most agreeable to offer to any gentleman who may ask for it any explanation which it may be in my power to give, without proceeding to such a length as to inflict upon the meeting a second dissertation.

But when I speak of the magnitude and importance of the question, it is true that after all it is not every extended or every important question which is of legitimate interest to a British audience. Nothing, however, can be easier than to show in detail that the great subject of the Colonies of the British empire has now come to constitute a question of the most just and legitimate interest to every Englishman, and does amply justify the zeal and favour which you testify to the discussion by your crowded attendance here to-night. Let me only, for one moment, advert to what is sufficient, although it be slight in its bulk, to establish what I say.

In the middle of the last century the American colonial empire of England was, to use a hacknied phrase, but yet one which in this instance is the simple and literal truth, the envy and the admiration of the world. It was then thought that nothing had been seen for centuries upon centuries at all to compare with that empire. And yet the American population at the time of the outbreak of the war of independence, (it was not known with precision, but as it was believed) amounted to nearly or about two millions of souls. And what is the state of things now? Why the single colony of Canada, not to say the whole colonial empire of Great Britain, not to say even the whole of British America, but the single colony of Canada contains a population nearly equal to the whole of the thirteen American colonies of that time. Such is the magnitude and importance to which that empire has swelled

Look again at the question from this point of view: There is scarcely any European language of note or importance which is not spoken in our colonies. I do not mean merely spoken by families, or by the inhabitants of a particular village or district here or there, but by the great masses of the population. The subjects of the Queen in Malta, and those whom she protects in the Ionian Islands, speak the beautiful languages of Italy and Greece. A considerable portion of the Canadians, the people of the populous Island of the Mauritius, the people of St. Lucia, and other of the West Indian Islands, speak the language of the great French nation. In British Guiana and at the Cape of Good Hope Dutch is spoken. In the important colony of Trinidad Spanish is the vernacular tongue. And thus the Queen of England, of an island which once was looked upon as a separated and remote extremity of the habitable globe, possesses an empire under which are arrayed not only the barbarous tribes who speak tongues almost innumerable, but those who speak all the most cultivated, and all the most distinguished and famous languages of highly civilized Europe.

Look at the question for a moment from another point of view: Consider the great subject of emigration. That which was formerly a matter of remote knowledge and concern—that which even twenty or thirty years ago was regarded only as a means of getting rid of the offscourings of our population—has now become, on the contrary, a matter of close and domestic interest to many of the most intelligent, and many of the best-conditioned and most respected, families in this country. In the year 1815, the whole number of emigrants who left the shores of England was 2,000. The average emigration of England in the fifteen years, from 1815 to 1830, was 20,000. The average for the years between 1830 and 1844 rose from 20,000 to 80,000. Between 1844 and 1854, the average rose to 267,000, and in the year 1852, the sum total reached no less a number than 368,000 people, over 1,000 persons thus quitting the shores of this country every day, to find a home in the British colonial empire. You thus see that the increase in the quantity of the emigration was of a most remarkable character. The change in the quality is still more worthy of your notice. Because, for a long time, emigration was nothing but the resort of the most necessitous; but now, on the contrary, in a great many cases—I dare say there may be those here who would be able to bear testimony to it in instances within their own domestic sphere, or their own private knowledge—in a great many cases, indeed, it is not the needy and the necessitous, but it is the most adventurous, the most enterprising, the most intelligent man, the most valuable member of society in the sphere in which he moves, who goes to seek his fortune in those distant lands. This great change in the character of our emigration is capable of being brought in some degree to the test of figures, because we all know that the greater part, or nearly the whole emigration, while it was only made up of our pauperism, was not only a pauper but likewise an Irish emigration. Consequently, in former years, out of the gross total which I have read to you an immense proportion consisted of the natives of Ireland. Necessity has now ceased to press upon the natives of that country as it formerly pressed upon them. The Irish emigration also

has changed its quality; but while the Irish emigration has changed, the English and Scotch emigration, which formerly was quite inconsiderable, and which is by no means and has never been merely or mainly an emigration of paupers and necessitous persons, has gained enormously upon the Irish emigration; and in the first nine months of the present year, closing with the 30th of last September, while the Irish who left this country were 67,000, of English and Scotch about 70,000 appear to have proceeded to the colonies. Thus I have given, I will not say even an outline, but at least a faint indication of the title which this great question may perhaps have to your attention.

Now, this is the shape in which it presents itself to my mind. I ask myself these two questions, both of them of the deepest interest to our country,—In the first place, why is it desirable that England, or that any other country, should possess colonies at all? and, in the second place, if it is desirable that they should be possessed, in what manner ought these colonies to be founded, and to be governed? When we entered upon this question at Hawarden, I confined myself almost wholly to the former of these subjects, the comparatively abstract argument, whether it be desirable that a country should possess colonies, and for what reason it is to be desired? With your permission, I will now endeavour to vary a little the form of our discussion, or rather, I should say, of my statement. I will endeavour to touch but lightly and summarily upon that more abstract part of the question, and will enter more at large upon the branch of the subject which will naturally assume an historical form—that which relates to the answer to be given to the second of the questions that I have described, namely, how should colonies be founded and governed? because that is a question which stands in more immediate relation with our own country, with our past, with our present, and with our future colonial policy. And I do not scruple to introduce it here, because I am happy to think that though it may justly be called a political question, and a question of the highest politics, yet it is in no sense a question of party. The time has been when these matters were so treated. I am bound to say I trust and believe that that time has passed away; that the truths relating to this great subject are beginning to be generally acknowledged, and the English people to be thoroughly united as to the mode of fulfilling one of the highest functions which Providence appears to have committed to its hands, namely, that of conducting the work of colonisation, that is to say, the peopling of a great portion of the habitable globe. I will then, in the first place, run very lightly over various notions that have at different times prevailed—notions which I think we ought now to note only for the purpose of letting it be observed that we do not embrace them, but which have an historical importance, on account of their having prevailed and having influenced in various degrees the actions of men and of states in former times. It is asked, why should we possess colonies at all? and the great bulk of the people, perhaps even to this day, have a strong impression that it is a very good thing that we do possess colonies, but it has not been their vocation or their special duty, though entertaining that opinion, to consider the special reasons for which it is desirable that we should possess them. Now, I will state in a summary manner here what I dwelt upon at more length upon a former occasion, because I think it is a fact that deserves to be recorded in the history not only of colonies, but of mankind, and one which teaches us an admirable moral and political lesson. The vast colonisation of modern times, which took its course from the eastward to the westward, across the Atlantic, must have been prompted by some powerful motive. What was that motive? It was the love of gold; it was the love and desire of gold that drew forth from Italy, from Spain, from France, from England, and from Portugal, those men whose bold and adventurous spirit tracked the stormy Atlantic, and founded successively, amidst dangers and difficulties indescribable, those colonies which have now grown into the great states of Northern and Southern America. They went to America in search of gold. They found no gold; but observe how, in this

instance, by the wise dispensation of Providence, the very delusions of mankind were made to serve their great interests. They found no gold, or little gold—gold was found in South America; but, after all, the colonisation of South America is not to be named for its importance in the same day or the same year with that of North America. In North America there was no discovery of precious metals at all worth naming, but there was a discovery of a great and powerful country, teeming with all the resources of nature, offering a home to mankind, and offering to them also the opportunity and the most extended field for the development of human energy and industry in every branch. They went in search of gold—they found no gold when they got there; but observe, there is about the idea of obtaining gold a certain fascination so that even in these days, when the principles of political economy come to be better understood, and when we begin at last to know that a pound's worth of gold is of no greater value than a pound's worth of anything else—there is even in these days a fascination in the prospect of obtaining gold that excites and so to speak tickles the imagination, and practically acts upon man with a violence that nothing can equal. Much more so was it in those times when, according to the crude economical ideas which prevailed, it was believed, in many cases, that gold constituted the only true wealth of mankind. Therefore, this false idea, that gold was to be found in immense quantities in North America, did a work which the true idea never could have done; for depend upon it, those who went to North America never would have gone there if they had known that when they got there they would have nothing to do except to use the hatchet, the plough, and the spade, and pursue the works of industry in the same way as they had been used to do in Europe. So that their very delusion was made an instrument in the hands of Providence for forwarding the peopling of those vast countries of the earth. Gold then was the great mainspring of that immense movement; still, along with the idea that gold was to be obtained in immense quantities on the other side of the Atlantic was certainly mingled, in some minds at least, the desire for the propagation of the gospel. Yet it does not appear that these notions were very happily associated, for certainly, as far as we can see, the temporal and secular motive obtained an immense preponderance over the higher and spiritual motive, and the history of European civilisation in the West is a history of anything rather than a history of the propagation of the gospel. I do not intend now to enter upon that great question. I only mention it as one that would amply reward inquiry, especially in the relation it bears to another extended and painful subject, that of an institution which has left a deep stain upon, I will not say the name of Christianity but upon the history of its professors, the institution, if so it is to be called, of negro slavery. That, of course, would open a very wide field, distinct from that upon which we are now engaged; but I pass on to lay before you the other motives which have either led in a great degree to the promotion of colonisation across the Atlantic, or which have been alleged as reasons why colonisation is a task fit to be pursued.

Some have said, and more have thought, that colonies were to be founded for the sake of increasing and improving, by their direct contributions, the revenue of the mother country; and of this idea you have instances even to this day in the colonies of Spain and perhaps also in some of the colonial possessions of Holland. But that has never been the view with which the work of British colonisation has been carried on, and the unfortunate attempt which was made to derive a revenue from the colonies in the case of America, in the middle of the last century, will demand our notice at a later period of my statement. Others again have thought that it must be desirable to possess colonies, because colonies constitute a large addition to the territory of the country. Undoubtedly the possession of territory is valuable, provided you know how to make use of it, but it is not desirable for this nation, or for any nation, to possess an extent of territory without bounds and without reference

to your power of turning it to account. On the contrary, according to the territory you possess is necessarily the expense that you must undertake for the purpose of defending that territory. The lust and the love of territory have been among the greatest curses of mankind. The territory of colonies, rightly used, undoubtedly is of the utmost value, but it is a vain and mischievous idea to suppose that because you can acquire a certain portion of the space which the surface of the globe offers to man, you are, therefore, without reference to your power of using it, acquiring something that is valuable to possess. Then, again, people have a notion that for the reputation of this country it is desirable to possess colonies. I do not at all deny that the possession of colonies does contribute to the just reputation of this country, and does add to its moral influence, power, and grandeur; but if it is meant by this doctrine that it is desirable to have colonies in order that we may make a show in the world with which we have no substance to correspond, that I think you will agree with me is not a good reason for desiring an extension of a colonial empire. It never can be the interest of this country, or any country in the world, to be taken for more than it is worth. What we should desire is to be valued at what we are worth—not at less and not at more. There has, again, been a notion more vulgar, I must say, than any of these, that it was desirable to possess colonies in order that the executive government of this country might have that patronage at its command which was thought necessary to its being carried on, and which the public appointments and places in those colonies placed at its disposal. Many of us may be old enough to recollect occasions when persons whom it was not convenient or not decorous to provide for at home, have received appointments in the colonies. But of such cases there will I trust be no recurrence. Patronage in some form and degree may be inseparable from the institutions of civilised life: but I do not envy that man who hopes that in times like these—perhaps in any times, but certainly who hopes that in times like these—government can be carried on through the influence of patronage. It is a wretched instrument; it is a feeble instrument on which to rely; and it is also an instrument very apt to lower the moral tone of those who rely upon it. But, be that as it may, it is not the question before you, inasmuch as it would be impossible to induce any free colony of England in the present day to submit to that exercise of patronage for the purposes of the mother country. Therefore we must entirely dismiss from our consideration the idea that the colonial empire of this country is to be maintained for the sake of increasing the quantity of patronage at the command of the government at home.

But an idea far more important and effective to a far greater extent has been the idea that the colonies ought to be maintained for the purpose of establishing an exclusive trade, the whole profit of which should be confined to the mother country, and should be enjoyed by the mother country. This was in fact the basis of the modern colonial system of Europe. I do not speak now of the political system, but it was the basis of the commercial laws of the countries which had colonies: that the industry of the colonists, instead of having a fair field and equal favour given to it, was attempted to be made entirely subservient to the interests and the profit of the mother country. It was placed in an unfair position. People were told in fact that they might go to the colonies, but that whatever they produced in the colonies must be sent to the British market—nay, that it must be sent in British vessels to the British market—nay, that whatever was produced must be sent to the British market in British vessels and in the state of raw produce, because if sent in other vessels, although it were sent better and cheaper, it would not be for the interest of the British shipowner, and if sent in a manufactured state it would not be for the interest of the British manufacturer. It is not now the question to be discussed whether it might have been desirable to establish a trading monopoly with your colonies at the time that you founded them, for some short period, in order to apply a strong temporary stimulus, and to induce the people to enter upon enter-

prises which, at their commencement, are most difficult, and might be said, therefore, with some plausibility, to have required a special inducement. That is not the question. A trading monopoly to a country for a strictly limited time is rather in the nature of a patent, with respect to which, whether the principle be on the whole expedient for the community, or be not, we cannot say that the patent involves any very offensive or unjust principle of restriction. But the idea of the commercial relation with colonies was founded on this—and after the expectations of great treasures of gold were dissipated the colonial system was mainly maintained for this by the powers which were interested in it—that it might be the basis of exclusive trade between the mother country and the colonies, by which the colonies were to derive just so much profit as would enable them to carry on their affairs, and the mother country was to appropriate all the rest. Now, look at the effect of an idea of such a nature. When colonies were founded upon a principle of this sort, the government at home proceeded as if the colony could only benefit one other country by its trade. It proceeded upon the false notion which was at the bottom of our own commercial laws some time ago, and which still is at the bottom of the commercial laws of many other nations of the globe, the notion that there can be any other basis whatever for trade except the benefit of both parties concerned; the idea that any trade is possible where all the gains are at one side; the idea above all that whatever was gained by one was taken from the other. That is the great fallacy of the protective system, the system which prevails still in many countries of Europe. The truth, on the contrary, with respect to trade being, that not only what one man gains another does not lose, but that when one man gains, the other man must gain also. There is no possible mainspring of trade, except the benefit of both the parties who are engaged in carrying it on. But the vain and false notion that the greatest benefit was to be obtained from the trade of a colony by keeping it all to yourself, and that if you allowed a foreign country to come in and get a share of that trade it would be something taken away from you without a compensation, completely perverted the colonial, and in no small degree the political, system of Europe. Because the immediate consequence of it was this—the patriotism of Europe took a most mischievous direction. It never had been supposed that there could be a general commerce between Europe and America, or between Europe and the tropics. The statesmen and the people of each country, immediately set about to consider how each of them could get hold of the greatest portion of its neighbour's colonial possesions. England, I am sorry to say, was not the most backward in the race. England had the character, during the last century, of being, perhaps, the most rapacious, certainly the most successful in rapacity, of all the European powers. The colours now drawn on the map, if only they are compared with the history of the different colonies, will show you that she possesses a vast number of colonies which she did not found, but that nobody else possesses any colony which she did found. Undoubtedly, we were not able to keep the North American colonies which we founded ourselves, but that was owing to our faults of policy, and was not a question of possession between us and any foreign power. But as regards the question between England and the other powers of Europe, the other great colonising states, I have already referred to the very inspiring consideration, that almost all the languages of Europe are spoken in the different colonies of the Queen of England, and the origin and explanation of that fact is to be found in this, that at different times we appropriated by force of arms what had belonged to other people. Not alone in our own case, however, but generally, the doctrine of a permanent trading monopoly with the colonies was not merely false as a system of political economy, but it was, likewise, most mischievous in a political point of view, partly because these restraints were offensive to colonists, but yet more because it became the foundation of intrigue and of war among the different European countries, it led to many of the wars, and some of the most important wars, which desolated Europe and America during the last century, and although it ended

in a very considerable acquisition of territory by us, yet it brought an acquisition of another kind, namely, an acquisition of debt, which, I think, it is very doubtful whether we should not have done well to dispense with, at the cost of foregoing the advantage of the territories we obtained These, then, roughly stated, are all reasons which have prevailed at different times, and have been the basis, in a great degree, of the colonial policy of different statesmen, in different ages, and different countries

Now, as I repudiate any and all of these reasons for desiring the possession of colonies, it is but fair that I should endeavour to state why I think colonies are desirable for a country circumstanced as England is I have stated, that I do not think them desirable simply to puff up our reputation, apart from the basis and substance on which it rests. It is plain that they are not to be desired for revenue, because they do not yield it. It is plain that they are not to be desired for trading monopoly, because that we have entirely abandoned. It is plain they are not to be desired for patronage, properly so called, within their limits, because they will not allow us to exercise patronage, and I am bound to say, I do not think the public men of this country have any desire so to exercise it. With respect to territory it is perfectly plain that mere extension of territory is not a legitimate object of ambition, unless you can show that you are qualified to make use of that territory for the purposes for which God gave the earth to man. Why then are colonies desirable? In my opinion, and I submit it to you with great respect, they are desirable both for the material and for the moral and social results which a wise system of colonisation is calculated to produce. As to the first, the effect of colonisation undoubtedly is to increase the trade and employment of the mother country. Take the case of the emigrant going across the Atlantic. Why does he go across the Atlantic? Because he expects—and in general he is the best judge of his own interests—to get better wages across the Atlantic than he can get at home. If he goes across the Atlantic to get better wages, he leaves in the labour market at home fewer persons than before, and consequently raises the rate of wages at home by carrying himself away from the competition with his fellows. By going to the colony and supplying it with labour, he likewise creates a demand for capital there, and by this means he creates a trade between the colony and the mother country. The capital and labour thus employed in the colony raise and export productions, for which commodities are wanted in return. Of these commodities a very large proportion is usually sought from the parent country; you will almost always find that a colony is founded under circumstances where the country to which the settlers go, produces the very commodities which are wanted in the country which they left. Therefore, so far as trade, and the gain connected with trade, are concerned, it is perfectly obvious that the foundation of a colony, where it is the natural result of the circumstances of the country—for I am no advocate for the arbitrary foundation by an artificial effort of government, irrespective of all circumstances—but where it is the natural and spontaneous result of the circumstances in which the country is placed—is simply a great enlargement of the material resources of that country. Trade and employment may be increased by any one of three ways. They may be increased by the opening of new fields in foreign countries; they may be increased by the opening of such fields in your own country; or they may be increased by the opening of them in your colonies. If employment and trade with foreign countries are increased, you get the profit of the trade. But then you are undoubtedly liable to the disadvantage that the passing of unwise and bad laws in these foreign countries may greatly restrict and hamper the extension of your trade. Thus you are exposed to the utmost disadvantage, not because a proceeding of this kind makes the trade with foreign countries less lucrative than the trade with the colonies; there never can exist permanently or for any length of time two trades lucrative in different degrees, for if the trade with the colony is more lucrative than the trade with a foreign country, it is quite plain that the balance will soon be restored, because those who carry on the worst trade with the foreign

country will go into the better trade with the colony until the gain of the two are equalised. But the difference is this, in the case of a foreign country your trade often may be injuriously crippled and kept down so as to suffer by the bad laws of the country with which you are trading, while with respect to the colony you have no such danger, both because the sentiment of rivalry usually does not prevail, and because the commercial laws are under the control of the mother country; so that when you found colonies, and trade with them, you are practically sure that that trade will have fair play, and that the natural field which is open for its extension will not be narrowed by the unwise proceedings of men. That is the great advantage of colonial trade. An immense advantage it is. The consequence of it has been that your colonies, although they contain but a very small proportion of the inhabitants of the countries with which you trade, yet, notwithstanding, furnish you with a very considerable proportion of that trade. If, upon the other hand, you open new fields of employment at home, such as the creating of a new trade—suppose, for example, we take such a case as happened in Scotland not so many years ago, when the ironstone of the great district which surrounds Glasgow was discovered, an event which has happened within the memory of man, it was the opening of an immense field of new employment, and the creation of an immense new trade. When, therefore, you open a new field of employment at home you get the profit to trade, you give a security to the trade that it will not be interrupted or hemmed in by bad laws; and likewise, when you have got that increase of population to which increase of trade cannot fail to lead, you also get the additional advantage that those who carry it on become part and parcel of the same community with yourselves, and directly contribute towards bearing the burthens necessary for the support of the country. Thus, the material advantages of colonial enterprise and trade, though inferior to those of extended trade at home, present some recommendations that foreign trade does not possess. But these are incidental differences. Every legitimate, that is unforced, extension of trade is beneficial; and there is no doubt that as regards the trade and employment of the people, the possession of colonies like those of England, which are peopled by the spontaneous operation of natural causes—that is to say, by the free judgment of the people, each man carrying his labour or his capital to the market where he thinks he may get the best price for either —there is no doubt that, in a material point of view, the possession of such colonies is eminently beneficial, not because it creates a more profitable trade than other trades, but because it creates a perfectly new trade, and a trade which would not otherwise exist.

But I do not concede that the material benefit of colonies is the only consideration which we are able to plead. Their moral and social advantage is a very great one. If we are asked why, on these grounds, it is desirable that colonies should be founded and possessed, I answer by asking another question —why is it desirable that your population at home should increase? Why is it that you rejoice, always presuming that the increase of population goes hand in hand with equally favourable or more favourable conditions of existence for the mass of the people—why is it that you rejoice in an increase of population at home? Because an increase of population is an increase of power, an increase of strength and stability to the state, and because it multiplies the number of people who, as we hope, are living under good laws, and belong to a country to which it is an honour and an advantage to belong. That is the great moral benefit that attends the foundation of British colonies. We think that our country is a country blessed with laws and a constitution that are eminently beneficial to mankind, and if so, what can be more to be desired than that we should have the means of reproducing in different portions of the globe something as like as may be to that country which we honour and revere? I think it is in a work by Mr. Roebuck that the expression is used, "that the object of colonisation is the creation of so many happy Englands." It is the reproduction of the image and likeness of England—the reproduction of a country in which liberty is reconciled with

order, in which ancient institutions stand in harmony with popular freedom, and a full recognition of popular rights, and in which religion and law have found one of their most favoured homes. Well, as it is the destiny of man to live in society, under laws and institutions, it is desirable that he should live under good laws and institutions; but if we suppose the case of a country with very bad institutions, colonisation by such a country would be a curse to mankind instead of a blessing, and the reproduction of its tyranny on other shores would not be a cause, in a social and moral point of view, for satisfaction. It is because we feel convinced that our constitution is a blessing to us, and will be a blessing to our posterity, as it has been to our forefathers, that we are desirous of extending its influence, and that it should not be confined within the narrow borders of this little island; but that if it please Providence to create openings for us upon the broad fields of distant continents, we should avail ourselves in reason and moderation of those openings to reproduce the copy of those laws and institutions, those habits and national characteristics, which have made England so famous as she is. But it is quite time that I should pass on to the second of the two questions I proposed.

If it be desirable, upon the grounds I have stated, that a country circumstanced as England is should be possessed of colonies, or should enter upon the work of colonisation and pursue it with all the vigour at her command—in what manner ought those colonies to be founded, and in what manner ought they to be governed? Now, I think that this question will be examined in the form most interesting and instructive if I try it by reference to the standards which history affords; and there is one people famous in ancient times, a people too, that may possibly have future fame in store for it—I mean that Greek race, to which we all of us owe infinitely more than we are really aware of. That Greek race so celebrated and renowned in history was nowhere more remarkable than it was in the work of colonisation. This deserves your attention especially, because the Greek idea of colonisation appears to have been lost with the Greeks themselves. At any rate, no country known to us appears so fully to have realised or to have given such remarkable effect to that idea. But while I think that we have much to learn from it, I do not pretend to say that it is a perfect idea for the times in which we live; but I think it was as perfect an idea as the nature of things admitted in the times of the glory and prosperity of Greece. Now, the Greeks were originally a people that lay in a nutshell; their proper and prevailing name—the word "Greek" being comparatively a modern one—in the earliest times, is the Hellenic race. The Hellenic race originally were a tribe utterly insignificant in numbers, and inhabiting a part of the mountainous regions or of the plains of Thessaly; but by their indomitable energy they spread themselves over the whole country lying to the south between themselves and the southern point of the Peloponnesus, from thence into the Greek islands, again into Asia Minor, where they founded states not inferior to those of Greece herself, and then again, in immense numbers, to the westward, where (in Sicily) they became masters of the country, and founded states, having a population which now is hardly possible for us to credit, for it is actually stated that Sicily, at the time of the Greek colonisation, contained eight millions of inhabitants. But, at any rate, they peopled Sicily, and brought it to a point of prosperity that it is very far from having maintained for many generations; and they likewise peopled the south of Italy in such strength that the south of Italy acquired the name of Great Greece. And what was the principle of Greek colonisation? It may be summed up in one word—it was perfect freedom and perfect self-government. Colonies were founded from Greece, not by the action of government, not by the meeting of cabinets or by the acts of ministers, but by the spontaneous energy of the members of the community themselves, who went forth to those spots in the globe where they thought they could do better for themselves than they found they could do at home; and rude and simple as that course of proceeding was, yet, when you compare it with the laboured and artificial appliances of modern times, undoubtedly its results were wonderful.

For these men who went forth across the sea over to Asia, Thrace, Sicily, and Italy, carried with them the recollection and the love of the country from which they came; they carried with them its laws, its religion, its manners, its language, its institutions. They reflected its manners and its image. It was the creation of so many mirrors in which the parent Greece was thrown back upon herself, and the whole of that result, and the immense prosperity of those states was due to this—that these colonies were founded in perfect freedom. The notion of interference by the mother country, the notion of the mother country undertaking to show to those colonies how they should regulate their own affairs—those notions which have been so pernicious to us, and of which we are only now and by slow degrees getting rid—were totally unknown to that remarkable people. The consequence was this—that although there was no direct political connection, no direct administrative connection, yet there was always to be found union in heart and character. The country founded in freedom, by virtue of that freedom developed itself with the utmost rapidity to strength, and a harmony of feeling and of affection always remained between it and the city from which its founders came. That was the principle of the Greek colonisation, and, as I have stated, its results were astonishing. Take the case of Sicily. It is difficult undoubtedly to give entire and implicit credence to the reports as they are told, but it is stated, as I have mentioned, that Sicily was inhabited by 8,000,000 of inhabitants after the Greek colonisation, and that the city of Syracuse was inhabited by no less than 1,200,000 persons, a greater number of persons than at present compose the population of the magnificent capital of France. That town of Syracuse at the present day has dwindled down comparatively to a village. It is far less than half the size of Chester, but at that time it was a city of the first order; and I only quote it, first of all, to show the immense material results that followed upon the principle of free colonisation; and secondly, to show that it was not only material results but moral results which were also secured, and that the unity of action and affection, and the great increase of influence and of power which followed upon the extension of their race, was best obtained by abstaining from any attempt at interference with them, and by allowing the colony to grow and thrive under the light and warmth of the sun of heaven.

Such was the Greek colonisation. It was impossible that at that time a political connexion between the mother country and the colony could be maintained, for two reasons. In the first place, a line of communication was very difficult to carry on. The art of navigation was in its infancy; and so rude were the notions and the practice of it, that for ages the habit of those who were at sea was to creep along the coasts from point to point, to haul up their vessels on the shore at night, and launch them again in the morning, that they might continue their voyage. Of course we may judge that, under those circumstances, periodical or even regular communication was a thing almost impossible. Such were the hazards of it—such was the fear of the horrors of the sea—that the condition of the ancients in that respect was not for a moment to be compared with that of the age in which we live, or with that of those who preceded us by 200 or 300 years. There is one remarkable passage in Homer, which will give an idea of the way in which these things presented themselves; speaking of the distance of Egypt from Greece, he says, "It is so far off that not even the birds could in their flight get there within a year." And you may well judge that when such notions prevailed, or a state of society which rendered such notions possible—because undoubtedly this is figurative or exaggerated language, inasmuch as Egypt was known to and sometimes visited by the Greeks in the days of Homer—you may well conceive what would be the difficulty of such communications between the mother country and its colonies, as are needed in order to carry on the functions of government. It is, therefore not surprising that they did not attempt to maintain a regular communication. Another reason why it could not be done was this, that the development of political institutions at home was not sufficiently advanced for the purpose. Government was so much of a

makeshift; it was so difficult for it to fulfil its purposes, even with regard to the community at its own doors; it was usually so narrow in its basis, and so perplexed and weakened by the miserable institution of slavery which prevailed throughout those heathen times; so that the government being unable to discharge its own domestic functions with any great degree of stability and regularity, it was, of course, much more difficult for it to exercise power over the people of cities and states at a distance, and with whom regular communication was almost impossible. It was, therefore, impossible for the Greeks to maintain a system of colonisation and colonial connexion such as undoubtedly it is in our power to maintain. The physical difficulties that beset infant colonies from the want of material support were, in consequence, very great; many perished in the cradle; multitudes also survived, and through freedom became great and glorious.

But let us now consider modern colonisation. I will here—for it is absolutely necessary to reject much matter which presents itself upon every side—confine myself to the case of England; again I will confine myself mainly to what may be called the free colonies of England, and will call upon you simply to notice some of the broadest and most palpable distinctions between the policy of this country at different times, and the main and fundamental features which mark the difference of that policy at one time from what it was at another. And here it is very singular that until within the last five-and-twenty years, I should have to say, things have been regularly going down. You remember the fable of the poets which described the early ages of the world as being four in number—of which the first was the golden; the second, the silver; the third, the brazen; and the fourth, the iron age. Well, I should say, that our colonisation—not speaking of our commercial system, but of the political system—our colonisation and the right relation between the mother country and the colony began with the golden age; it then came to its silver age; and from its silver age it came to its brazen age. We have now entered into its fourth age, and I am happy to say I am very confident that that will not be an iron age, but that if it is not a golden one, it will, at all events, exhibit a considerable reaction, and return towards the better system which distinguished our early colonial history. I take for the golden age the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth centuries. Our colonisation may be said, practically to have begun with the former—in the end of the reign of Elizabeth and the beginning of the reign of James the First; and the reason why I venture to dignify this period with the epithet of the golden age is this, that the colonial connection at that time was conceived in the true spirit of British freedom. The idea of a colony, as it was entertained, was the idea of a subaltern corporation, comprehended within the great incorporation of the nation or state. As you are all aware, the municipal body—take the municipality of Chester, or any other, as an instance—is not interfered with by Parliament so long as its action is confined to concerns properly local, but is permitted to exercise a discretion, and to manage those things according to the sense of the local community. Even so the idea of the statesmen of the 17th century appears to have been that a colony was essentially a municipal corporation, and as a municipal corporation ought to be allowed the management of its own affairs. So it was in a great degree with the colonies that were founded under the elder Stuarts. This idea and this disposition to be most liberal in the grant of constitutions to our colonies rose to their very highest point at the period, or shortly after the period, of the restoration of Charles the Second, when the constitution of Rhode Island was given by the Crown. The reign of Charles the Second is a period upon which, for some reasons, we must look back with great pain and shame. It is hardly possible to find a more discreditable sovereign in the long list of British monarchs than Charles the Second. The position of subserviency to Louis the Fourteenth, in which, through his foreign policy, he placed this country, must make his name ever raise a blush upon the face of an Englishman. But it was a great epoch in legislation, and it certainly was remarkable for this, that there appears never

to have been a time when the principle of colonial government was better understood in this country than in the early part, at least, of the reign of Charles the Second. Now, I will describe the spirit of the British policy of that period in words which require to be introduced with no apology, for they are the words of Edmund Burke. He described the colonial policy which presided over the foundation and government of the American states in these few words. He said—"Through a wise and salutary neglect, a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection." Of course you will readily understand the meaning of that refined expression of Mr. Burke. By a wise and salutary neglect he meant an omission to meddle, connected, no doubt more or less, with the conviction that meddling was mischievous, and that the colonists themselves were the best judges of their own affairs. It is very remarkable that at the time when the liberties of the English people at home were in a critical and hazardous condition—during the very century in which they received their development, through the midst of a disastrous and blood-stained struggle—at that very time the principles of colonial government should have been better understood than at a later day. At the same time the secret of that fact is not very difficult to penetrate. If we are asked why the governments of James the First, Charles the First, and Charles the Second, did not meddle so much as has been done in later times with the affairs of the colonies, I believe the answer may be readily given. No doubt there was at that time, as at all times, a strong vigorous spirit of English good sense, which kept the country out of scrapes, as it has done upon many occasions; but I believe a main reason was that those governments had quite enough to do at home. They found it difficult enough to govern the country, and to solve the problems which presented themselves for solution at home; and perhaps their conduct towards the colonies was the consequence quite as much of their necessities as of their superior wisdom. But, whatever the cause may have been, the result undoubtedly was that the colonies at that period were left practically in the enjoyment of a freedom almost as complete, for every practical purpose, as that which the Greek colonies formerly enjoyed. The political connexion continued. The colony had the honour and the advantage of belonging to the British empire—it had the advantage of British laws, wherever the colonists did not themselves seek to modify them in conformity with local circumstances—it had the right of calling upon England to defend it in case of need, and to recognize it as her offspring entitled to her protection. These were advantages attaching to our colonial system which, as I said before, it was impossible for the Greek system to attain. The great point, however, was, that under both systems the colonies had freedom, and that freedom produced its effects—first, a wonderfully rapid growth of greatness and prosperity; and second, the utmost warmth of attachment and affection to the mother country.

I now come to consider the silver age, which undoubtedly presents a very great decline as compared with the golden age. I call that period the silver age which immediately precedes the American war. At that period the notion of commercial monopoly, as constituting the whole value of colonies, had caused much squabbling, so to speak, amongst the various nations for the possession of each other's colonies; and the expenses of the transatlantic war having become heavy, the people of England thought it only fair that their fellow-countrymen in America should contribute something towards the expenses of the struggle. The period of that war is one of the most remarkable in our history, and one, in my opinion, of the most useful for us to contemplate, for it is full of salutary lessons. In general, people conceive of the American war as a thing gone by. They know we inherit from it a considerable debt—I think it left us saddled with something like 160 or 180 millions of permanent debt at the end of the war more than when it began—but the debt is not all it has left us, it has left us also great lessons. We use that war now chiefly as a means of glorifying ourselves at the expense of our fathers. We think to ourselves that we never would have committed such folly had we lived in

those times. I am doubtful about that. However, though it was not so easy to discern then, as many suppose, we can now plainly enough see that the American war was a gross folly—a grievous folly: we have paid for it most severely—we have paid for it in an enormous amount of debt—we have paid for it in an amount of military and political disgrace greater than England had for many centuries been called upon to undergo, in the abandonment of America under the pressure of American and French arms—we paid for it most of all in the loss of the hearts of the Americans. Before we began the system of meddling and peddling in her affairs, the attachment of the colony was strong to this country; but when they saw a disposition to deprive them of their time-honoured hereditary privileges—when they saw that Englishmen, so jealous of their own liberties at home, were disposed to stint and narrow the enjoyment of such liberties by their brethren who had crossed the Atlantic, indeed, but yet were still thoroughly Englishmen in their hearts and feelings, no doubt a bitterness of sentiment sprang up, and that bitterness was not the fault of the Americans, it was the unhappy result of our errors and of the circumstances of the time. The unhappy consequences of this feeling, aggravated in the course of that long, bloody, and obstinate struggle, were that at the time when American independence was acknowledged the affections of the country towards us had received a desperate blow. For a long time the name of Englishman was odious, and naturally odious in America. The name of England was associated with oppression, and those among the Americans who were known to entertain a strong feeling of affection towards her were odious in the eyes of their fellow-countrymen. That temporary estrangement of feeling, which was almost total, and which even now, notwithstanding the healing influence of time, has necessarily left some traces behind, was a part of the mighty price we have paid for the error involved in a misconception of the right manner of governing our colonies.

I want here to press yet further that which I have already said, that the true value of colonies, for all moral and social purposes, arises in their unity of character and affection with the mother country. There are 30,000,000 of people, or near that number, now constituting the great American republic; and it is really very doubtful whether the influence of England in Europe and the world at large is greater because there are 30,000,000 men in America, the great bulk of whom sprang from the loins of England. It is hard to say whether the existence of America takes from or adds to the weight of England as a member of the great family of nations. In some respects it takes from it, in others it adds to it. But suppose that, instead of mutual curses and disagreements—suppose that, instead of that bloody struggle—suppose that, instead of a violent laceration of the ties that bound the colony to the mother country, America had continued to grow and prosper as a colony, under the beneficent influence of England, or even that America had separated from England as friend from friend, breaking only the link of administrative connexion, but retaining the same feeling as of old in her heart, and carrying with her, into a state of freedom, nothing but a recollection of benefits received in the laws and institutions she had inherited, do you not think that the existence of America, even in this state of independence, yet allied to us by language and by laws, would have immensely increased the influence of England in the world? It was a sad loss, I think, we underwent in consequence of that error. If this be so, it is important to us to know, if it is to be a lesson to us, how the error arose, and whose the error was. The error was the attempt by England to levy taxes upon the people of America—not certainly for purposes exclusively English, but for the purpose of defraying part of the expense of wars into which England had entered for the benefit, so she believed, of America, as well as of herself. But some people think that that was not the error of the English people. Let there be no mistake on this: if there is one thing in history more clear than another, it is that the English nation, at the beginning of the American war, were united almost to a man in favour of the prosecution of the war. All wars, almost without an exception,

have been popular in this country during the first year—or even during the second and third; but the American war was especially popular in its earlier stages; and of that I will give you a most conclusive proof from the history of Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke was elected for Bristol in 1774; he was rejected in 1780, when next he presented himself to the constituency; and in his speech in 1780, explaining his conduct, he stated, among other reasons for not visiting them more frequently, or as often as they thought he ought to have done, that his main reason was the state of feeling in Bristol with respect to the American war. Before people knew how the fortune of arms would turn, there was a difference of opinion in Bristol; naturally enough; Bristol carried on a great trade with America, and there were parties there opposed to hostilities; but when, shortly after war had broken out, the English became successful in the field, that party was entirely put down. And you should know that the English were usually successful over the Americans in the field. It is not necessary to go into the causes—the fact implies no reproach to American bravery, because America had none of the advantages at that time of a military system. The military organisation was all on the side of England. But it was not the want of success in the field that defeated us in the American war; it was this—that though we most commonly beat America in the field, we were no nearer than before to the subjugation of the country. We possessed the ground where the camps were pitched, but we possessed nothing else. The enemy was in the heart of every man, woman, and child; and driving their soldiery out of the field, did not establish our power in the hearts of a people who were fighting for their freedom. Thus, the struggle was wound up, naturally enough, by foreign intervention on behalf of America. But let us see, was the error the error of the Government, or was it the error of the people? Listen to Mr. Burke, speaking in 1780:—

"To open my whole heart to you on this subject, I do confess, however, "that there were other times besides the two years in which I did visit you "when I was not wholly without leisure for repeating that mark of my respect. "But I could not bring my mind to see you. You remember, that in the be- "ginning of this American war (that era of calamity, disgrace, and downfall— "an era which no feeling mind will ever mention without a tear for England) "you were greatly divided, and a very strong body, if not the strongest, "opposed itself to the madness which every art and every power were employed "to render popular, in order that the errors of the rulers might be lost in the "general blindness of the nation. This opposition continued until after our "great but most unfortunate victory at Long Island. Then all the mounds "and banks of our constancy were borne down at once, and the frenzy of the "American war broke in upon us like a deluge. This victory, which seemed "to put an immediate end to all difficulties, perfected us in that spirit of domi- "nation which our unparalleled prosperity had but too long nurtured. We "had been so very powerful and so very prosperous that even the humblest of "us were degraded into the vices and follies of kings. We lost all measure "between means and ends, and our headlong desires became our politics and "our morals. All men who wished for peace, or retained any sentiments of "moderation, were overborne or silenced."

And again, a little further on—

"A representative worthy of you ought to be a person of stability. I am "to look, indeed, to your opinions; but to such opinions as you and I must "have five years hence. I was not to look to the flash of the day. I knew that "you chose me, in my place, along with others, to be a pillar of the state, not "a weathercock on the top of the edifice, exalted for my levity and versatility, "and of no use but to indicate the shiftings of every fashionable gale. Would "to God, the value of my sentiments on Ireland and on America had been at "this day a subject of doubt and discussion! No matter what my sufferings "had been, so that this kingdom had kept the authority I wished it to maintain,

"by a grave foresight, and by an equitable temperance in the use of its power."

Here you have the unquestionable testimony of that remarkable man to the state of feeling that prevailed even in Bristol—in a city so dependent upon its trade with America—in reference to the error of that unhappy, that miserable war. So long as success continued to gild it, the war was popular; but when difficulties came to present themselves—when misfortunes thickened on the country—when France took up arms—when Spain followed the example—when Russia and the other powers of Europe, though they did not take up arms, yet sufficiently indicated by their measures their adverse disposition, then the popular mind recovered its balance, and in 1780 Mr. Burke found the people of Bristol not so disinclined to hear the accents of his wisdom on the subject of the American war as they had been but a short time before. Nor is this a mere tale of the past. The case of this American war—considering how universally it is now admitted that a great error was committed in beginning and in continuing it—is one upon which we can all look back with great advantage, for all generations and all times, as a most emphatic lesson of caution, of circumspection, and of moderation.

But we must pass on from that age in which the American war took place, and which I call the "Silver Age," because at that time the error of interfering with colonial affairs appears only to have been partial, occasional, and for special reasons; and I come to the "Brazen Age," commencing (to take it roughly) about the year 1783, and ending about the year 1840, when we began to have a dawn of better things And as in the first period of English colonisation the principle was that "through a wise and salutary neglect a generous nature should be suffered to find her own way to perfection," so now the principle was rather conceived to be that through incessant interference a generous nature should be prevented from taking her own way to perfection. The idea now came to be entertained that it was absolutely necessary that from a certain spot in the city of London the local affairs of the colonies should be directed. It is difficult to believe to what an extent we carried this interference with the affairs of our colonial fellow-subjects. But some of the principal particulars may be cursorily enumerated. In the first place, it was thought that we in England should retain in our own hands, and on no account give the colonists, a disposal of the unoccupied lands of the colonies. Then it was thought, that besides the taxes raised by the colonists themselves to support the colonial government, we must have another set of revenues, called crown revenues, that is to say, to provide for the contingency that the people of the colony might be so ignorant and barbarous as to make no provision for the very first necessities of their own government. The next step was to keep standing armies to discharge the functions of police, the consequence of which was enormous expense to this country, in the first place, and the greatest mischief to the discipline of the army, in the next. They were parcelled out here, there, and everywhere, in such small bodies that they lost the unity of action which an army acquires by being trained and disciplined in masses, and the consequence has been that the army of England, which on the peace establishment is, as compared with other armies, but small in number, has never been able to make an appearance in the field, proportionate even to that reduced number. That was one of the consequences of our mistaken notions on colonial policy. Another mistake in practice was that of requiring the people of the colonies to establish a civil list—to establish a certain range of salaries for their governors, and judges, and secretaries, and other officers for public purposes. Why was it necessary that these things should be required of them? Did the government at home suppose that the colonists themselves did not recognise the necessity of law and order? If they recognised these, they were sure of themselves to provide judges and other officers necessary for their enforcement; and if they did not, the way taken was not the way to make them understand their interest in

having them. Another faulty rule was the establishment for each colony of a certain tariff of differential duties, dictating by means of our commercial laws what price should be paid for commodities coming to our colonies from any quarter of the globe. We compelled the North American to pay an extra price for West India sugar; and then we compensated him by making the West Indian pay an additional price for North American wood; so that instead of the commercial interchange being made a blessing or a benefit, we made it an interchange of evils and reciprocal inflictions. Lastly, we used to exercise patronage for our own purposes in the colonies as far as we could venture; and whenever there were a set of people who were not quite presentable at home, whom the English would not quietly endure to see appointed to office in this country, it was commonly thought they were quite good enough to hold office, often with a handsome salary, in some remote colony.

That was the colonial policy of modern times. But it is well worth while to inquire how it came into operation. Consider how the colonies were composed during the time after we conceded American independence. We had three classes of colonies in which the application of free institutions was not very easy. One class was that of the slaveholding colonies, and there it was impossible that institutions of a free character could apply. Another class consisted of conquered colonies; and of course in the case of a conquered colony, where, according to the very meaning of the words, you had just subdued the population, who could not be for a moment supposed to be over well affected to your government, it was not likely that free institutions could easily be planted there, or take root kindly under British authority. The third class consisted of penal colonies. There, again, the mass of the population being composed of convicts transported for offences against the laws, were not very hopeful subjects for the exercise of political privileges. The free colonies at this time had almost all disappeared. Therefore, I am very far from calling upon you to censure the statesmen of the period when this bad system came gradually into vogue. I think it was mainly the misfortune of the American War, and our having lost our free colonies, and there remaining to us little or nothing except colonies undoubtedly little fit for freedom, which brought us, almost unawares, into that bad system. I am sure there was no man more likely than Mr. Pitt to extend a wise, enlightened, and liberal system of government to our colonies, if the circumstances had been favourable to such a system But they were unfavourable—first, for the reasons I have already mentioned; and secondly, because the effect of the great war in which England and all Europe became engaged, necessarily was to absorb the whole of the public mind and of the time and thoughts of public men, and to compel them in a great degree to neglect almost everything connected with the objects and the arts of peace. But at last the day of reckoning, which is usually also the day of awakening, came. The rebellion of Canada in the year 1837-8 was a cause in which the colonists took up arms to enforce a number of demands, few or none of which we should ever have thought of refusing two or three hundred years before. If all the demands of the Canadian colonists had been conceded, they would not have possessed so much liberty as we ourselves voluntarily gave the people of the American settlements in what we now think the unenlightened time of Charles the Second. It would be very easy to illustrate this subject at greater length, but the lapse of time has been so rapid and I have already detained you at such length, that I shall only enter into it generally and slightly. I shall just mention this, because it is short and intelligible, that the Canadian rebellion cost us, to say nothing of the strife, nothing of the bitterness, nothing of the shedding of human blood, four or five millions of money—and that almost immediately after the rebellion was put down we began to concede all the demands which had been made by the colony, one after another, as fast as we could. We conceded them not from terror, but because, on seriously looking at the case, it really was found that, after all, we had no possible interest in withholding

them. You have no cross interest with your colonies. It is hardly possible, in any instance, for their interests to come across yours. What is best for them is best for you. Your great interest is in their prosperity, and the best way to win their affections is to do that which promotes their prosperity. There is, however, one very curious case, and only one, which I shall mention, as illustrating the consequences of the system which prevailed, and the embarrassments which originated in our intermeddling with colonial affairs. The Assembly of Lower Canada, composed chiefly of Frenchmen, resisted us. A large portion of the population took up arms, and were put down by the exercise of British power. After it was put down, we made all the concessions which we might have made without bloodshed, or strife, or heartburning. Sometime after that date, namely, in 1848, a bill was introduced in Canada, called the Canada Rebellion Losses Bill. The purpose of that bill was understood to be to give compensation at the expense of the public to some of those who had suffered losses in the rebellion in resisting the Queen's troops. You will admit that this was a very bad and dangerous precedent. What effect must it have upon the authority of the law—what effect must it have upon the discipline of the army, if, after rebels against the authority of law have been put down, you introduce an Act of Parliament to compensate the rebels for their losses in and by rebelling? And yet let us look at the case for a moment from the rebels' point of view. The rebels were entitled to say —"why did we rebel? We rebelled because you refused to concede what you have since admitted to be a just demand." Now observe the painful dilemma in which we were placed. Either, upon the one hand, after having virtually admitted that we were wrong in resisting the demands of the rebels, we were to insist upon their suffering for our stupidity and folly—or upon the other hand we were to set an abominable precedent by admitting and recognizing the fact that men who with arms in their hands had resisted the law and the ministers of the law, and the troops called out in support of the law, were to be authorised by that same law to receive compensation for the losses which their conduct had brought upon them. It was a difficult question. I for one felt the pressure of the difficulty. I thought the Rebellion Losses Bill ought not to pass, but the case was hardly one which, either way, admitted of any satisfactory solution. Many wiser men than I thought that, grievous as the evil was, the bill should pass; and it did pass, and we were obliged to put our dignity in our pockets upon that occasion. I hope no such occasion will recur, because I hope the conduct which brought it about will never be repeated.

I have only now to call your attention to the general effect of the system. Our scheme of governing the colonies from Downing-street completely alienated —no, I will not say completely alienated, but it decidedly tended to alienate —the hearts of the people from this country. It led to a system in each colony by which a knot of people combined together and called themselves the British party. A knot of people set themselves about the men who held leading offices in the colony, they professed great zeal in supporting the executive, and called themselves the British party. They were always extremely loud in their professions of zeal, and generally had one or more newspapers to support them. In the meantime where were all the rest of the community? Unfortunately all the rest of the community were deemed anti-British; and the name that ought to be dearest of all names to every colonist became the arbitrary distinction of a few, as opposed to the mass of the community. Now, it is a positive fact that this was invariably, or with very rare exceptions indeed, the way in which the affairs of the colonies were administered. On the one side was the governor, with a little body of official persons, and another little body of individuals picke[illegible]t of the community, a good many of them having relatives in these offices. These were tugging one way, supported by the power of the British government—and on the other side was tugging the whole mass of the colonial population. That is the system upon which we managed our colonial affairs. This now is all changed.

The principle is recognised, and fully recognised, that the local affairs of free colonies—for I do not enter into the question of colonies disabled by any peculiar or temporary cause for full freedom—shall be fully managed by the colonies themselves. And now I wish to discharge a debt of justice. There were some men in this country who had undoubtedly proceeded far in advance of their fellow-legislators with regard to colonial affairs. I mention them, because, for the most part, they were men with whose political opinions it was my fate commonly or very frequently to differ. Moreover, I think that as the time of the greatest colonial freedom I have mentioned—namely, the reign of Charles the Second—was eminently a Tory time, it is but fair, and in the spirit of equal justice, that we should now render their due to men of quite a different political connexion—namely, some of the Radical members of the British Parliament. Mr. Hume, Mr. Roebuck, who is still amongst us, and a gentleman whose name has only within the last few weeks been added to the list of the departed—Sir William Molesworth; these were all of them, in my opinion, great benefactors to their country, by telling the truth upon the right method of colonial government, and that at a time when the truth was exceedingly unpopular. They showed great resolution in saying things for which they were looked upon at the time as little better than either traitors or madmen; but either they were not traitors and madmen then, or we are all traitors and madmen now, because what they then scarcely ventured to utter amid universal disapprobation, no man in his senses would, in the British Parliament, now dare—I speak not without exceptions, but generally—or if he dared would desire to contradict. Of Sir William Molesworth let me say, on account of the circumstances which will justify a special reference to him, that I have the greatest satisfaction in owning the benefit and instruction which, during many years, I derived from communication with him on colonial questions, and in acknowledging how much I have learned from the speeches which he delivered on the subject of colonial policy, from time to time, in the House of Commons. He was a man of clear and comprehensive mind, of singular diligence and industry, well grounded in the principles of colonial policy and in the history of our colonies, and full of resolution and determination in making his opinions known, while at the same time he promulgated those opinions in a manner entirely free from the taint of party spirit, and not arousing against him a hostile sentiment, greatly increased the benefits which his large research enabled him to confer upon the country. And I feel perfectly satisfied that the speeches which he delivered will—though he is dead and gone—long continue to be consulted, and his name to be had in honour on account of the valuable matter they contain—not only with reference to facts on almost all colonial questions, of which he was a perfect master, but likewise with reference to the principles upon which the colonial empire of this great country ought to be governed. To him I wish to pay that debt of justice, and also to others, some departed and some still alive, who have also led us on in this work.

It is now, then, coming to be understood that the affairs of the colonies are best transacted and provided for by the colonists themselves, as the affairs of England are best transacted by Englishmen. And upon this understanding we act more and more, and with still increasing advantage. We do not attempt to force English institutions on the colonies. But then it will be asked, "do you not intend to have English institutions in the colonies?" Certainly, by all means let us have English institutions in the colonies to the utmost extent to which their circumstances render possible. The main question is, who is to be the judge of that extension? Now, I say we are not good judges whether laws useful and convenient to this country ought to prevail in the colonies or not; we are not such good judges of this as the colonies themselves. But more, I say this—experience has proved that if you want to strengthen the connexion between the colonies and this country—if you want to increase the resemblance between the colonies and this country—if you want to see British law held in respect and British institutions adopted

and beloved in the colonies, never associate with them the hated name of force and coercion exercised by us, at a distance, over their rising fortunes. Govern them upon a principle of freedom—let them not feel any yoke upon their necks—let them understand that the relations between you and them are relations of affection; even in the matter of continuing the connexion, let the colonists be the judges, for they are the best judges as to whether they ought to continue to be with you or not, and rely upon it you will reap a rich reward in the possession of that affection unbroken and unbounded in all the influence which the possession of such colonies will give you, and in all the grandeur which it will add to your renown. Defend them against aggression from without—regulate their foreign relations (these things belong to the colonial connexion, but of the duration of that connexion let them be the judges)—and I predict that if you leave them that freedom of judgment it is hard to say when the day will come when they will wish to separate from the great name of England. Depend upon it they covet a share in that name. You will find in that feeling of theirs the greatest security for the connexion. You may learn from the London booksellers that the greatest purchasers of books relating to old English history now are the Americans. The Americans who come over to this country seek out and visit the scenes where the most remarkable events in British history have occurred; they cannot forget that they are the descendants of the men who have made that history just as much as you are. Make the name of England yet more and more an object of desire to the colonies. Their natural disposition is to love and revere it, and that reverence is by far the best security you can have for their continuing not only to be subjects of the crown—not only to render it allegiance, but to render it that allegiance which is the most precious of all—the allegiance which proceeds from the depths of the heart of man. You have experienced some proof of that in the occurrences of the present and past year. You have seen various colonies, some of them lying at the Antipodes, offering to you their contributions to assist in supporting the wives and families of your soldiers, the heroes that have fallen in the war. This I venture to say may be said, without exaggeration, to be among the first fruits of that system upon which within the last twelve or fifteen years you have founded a rational mode of administering the affairs of your colonies without gratuitous interference. You have every encouragement for the extension of that system. There is so much union of feeling among the public, in Parliament, and throughout the country upon it, that now, I trust, we may look forward with the utmost confidence to its prevalence and its progress; and, for my part, I shall ever thankfully rejoice to have lived in a period when so blessed a change in our colonial policy was brought about; a change which, I think, is full of promise, and profit to a country having such claims on mankind as England, but also a change of system, let me add, in which we have done no more than make a transition from misfortune and from evil, almost in some cases one would say from madness and from crime, back to the rules of justice, of reason, of nature, and of common sense.

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