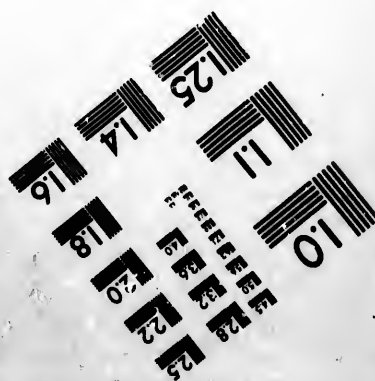
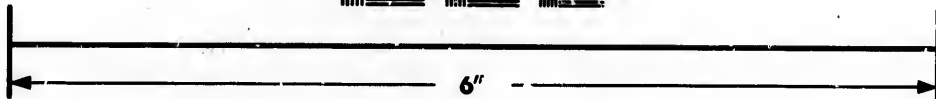
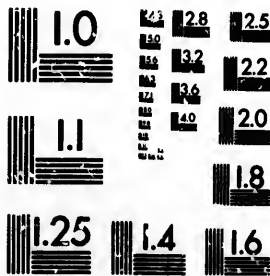


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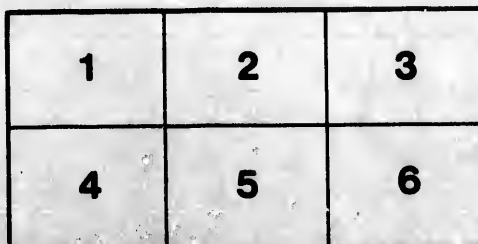
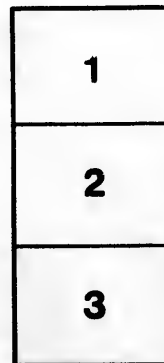
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Edw. W. W. W.

THE COLONIAL QUESTION.

THE FOLLOWING LETTERS, WHICH RECENTLY APPEARED IN THE "TIMES," ARE
REPRINTED AT THE REQUEST OF GENTLEMEN CONNECTED WITH THE
COLONIES, WHO THINK THEIR PUBLICATION IN THE PRESENT
FORM MAY BE ATTENDED WITH SOME ADVANTAGE.

FEBRUARY, 1870.

LONDON:
WATERLOW AND SONS, PRINTERS, CARPENTERS' HALL,
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1870.

6577

THE COLONIAL QUESTION.

I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,—I venture to ask your insertion of some observations on the policy of England in regard to her colonial possessions.

I propose to consider the question wholly irrespectively of the recent correspondence between Earl Granville and the Committee, and to dissociate the special case of New Zealand from the general subject of the colonial relation. Public opinion, both here and in the Colonies, as I gather it, may be ranged under three heads: first, those who desire to get rid of the Colonies, either on the ground that they bring no profit to, but are, on the contrary, a burden upon, and a source of danger to, Great Britain, or that their own interests would be promoted by separation; second, those who, while they desire on the whole to continue the connection, think that essential changes are needed, either by giving the colonies a representation of some sort in Great Britain, or, like Lord Grey, that the change must take the form of a surrender by the colonies of their present power of self-government, and the devolution of those powers on the Colonial Secretary; and that it is necessary to determine *now* what the exact

nature of the changes shall be ; and third, those who, impressed with the advantage of the connection to both, regard its perpetuation as a paramount consideration ; who believe that on the whole the existing relations do not work badly, but who are ready to consider in what respect they may be shown to operate unfairly, and are equally prepared to revise them and to remedy whatever is inequitable ; who deprecate the attempt now made to apportion with sharpness and precision, and by one general rule, the exact rights and duties of each in the future, and to supersede a system which answers all present ends by one which is wholly experimental ;—but who, seeing in the present unsettled aspect of the question many elements of danger, consider that some authoritative expression of opinion or other form of action is called for, affirming the supreme condition of maintaining the integrity of the empire.

The merits of these various views can hardly fail to undergo discussion during the coming Session. Indeed, it would be most undesirable that discussion should be postponed, for, although I fail to perceive the existence of any tangible colonial grievance calling for relief by Parliament at present, it cannot be denied that the leaven of uncertainty and apprehension is doing its work in the colonies, from Canada to Australia ; and the consequences of allowing the question to drift on without some guidance cannot be other than pernicious. Continued speculation and doubts as to the probable immediate future is not a condition calculated to further contentment or the progress of a community. Men are distracted by the discussion of theories from the practical duty of the day ; good administration and the adoption of sound views of policy are all subordinate ; and becoming aspirations, either as Englishmen or as men founding a new nationality of their own, worthy of their race, are for the time wholly repressed.

Nor is this all. Colonists abroad are, to say the least, as high-spirited as if they had remained at home. They are sensitive to the charge of leaning in helpless dependence on the mother country, of clinging like frightened children to the skirts of the Old World, of adding to the burden of her already overtaxed population; of being slack to assume the functions of political maturity, and of being, in short, unworthy of Imperial protection. Would the English people desire to see their brethren abroad devoid of this susceptibility, or less ready than they are to resent the imputation of selfish and unmanly dependence?

The present danger lies in the continuance of misunderstanding on these points, and in discussing them in a captious spirit of recrimination. Separation in any case would be a national calamity; separation now, under emotions engendered by such imputations, doubly so. It would serve no good purpose to inquire whether such feelings are warranted by anything that has occurred here. I believe that if danger from without actually menaced any part of the empire, however remote, England would as promptly, in the future as in the past, throw aside all calculations of expediency, and that the whole power of the nation would be unhesitatingly put forth for its protection; but events have done a good deal to weaken that conviction in the minds of many in the remote portions of the empire. True, the words of no responsible Minister can be appealed to in advocacy of separation, still less words which would warrant the impression that the protection of England would be withdrawn, and it may be that Colonial sensibility attaches undue importance to the apparent leaning of influential organs of public opinion on this question; but still the fact as it is has to be dealt with, and we cannot long postpone the practical consideration of the question whether the policy of England is to be one of abandoning or of drawing the colonial family closer to her.

It would, however, be unfair to impute to the Colonial Office the responsibility for any feeling that may now exist in the Colonies. It is but simple justice to say, as I can do, after an experience of many years, that, whichever of the great parties in the State controlled it, I am aware of no instance in which representations on any important question were treated with indifference, or in which a full measure of consideration for the concerns and interests of any colony, or towards any colonist personally, was wanting.

The discussion of the subject itself will, I trust, for the present be elevated above the arena of party; at all events, until a distinct separation of party opinion arises on the question whether it is not desirable to cement the connexion rather than destroy it, assuming always that the relation shall be subject to such practical revision as time and altered conditions may fairly call for.

Let me, then, proceed to sift the causes of misunderstanding here, and in the first instance to test the soundness of the separatist argument by considering in what respect the Colonies are either a source of danger, burdensome, or profitless. If public opinion can be put right in this respect, as I believe it will be by an impartial consideration of the facts, and terms of appreciation in future supersede those of complaint in discussions respecting the Colonies, and a readiness to adjust present difficulties be shown on both sides, we shall have reached the turning point of better relations. My previous habits of thought may cause me to lean to the Colonial side, and therefore my arguments may be taken with some qualification; but I will endeavour to state them as impartially as I can.

In considering the supreme question of the alleged danger to both, which results from the present connexion, I will take the case of Canada, confessedly, by reason of its geographical position, the strongest illustration against me, and because I am most familiar with it.

It is urged that, in case of a war with the United States, Canada must either be abandoned, or, if defended, must be overrun, and that in either case national disaster would ensue. This argument, if well founded, ought, I admit, to have great weight, and it therefore demands more than superficial examination. The question, however, has two sides. The consequence of abandonment now has to be considered as well as that of defending, and this, not only as respects Canada and her defence alone, but as the policy of abandonment may influence the other colonial possessions of England in deciding them to make common cause with her, or stand neutral in her quarrels. On a mere calculation of relative strength, the chances of war may appear to be against a successful defence of Canada, which is a narrow strip of land, some 3,000 miles distant from England, with a population of 4,000,000, conterminous for more than 1,000 miles to the United States, with a population of nearly 40,000,000. But as regards Canada, very exceptional considerations exist. A war between England and the United States will be a war of exhaustion; both nations may be fairly looked on as equal in courage and appliances. The United States will never, as any one who understands the public feeling on that subject must admit, go to war for the sake of conquering Canada. An attack on her will only be an incident in the war, never the object of it. Now Canada possesses some of the strongest positions known—Halifax, Quebec, St. John, and, if properly covered, Montreal and Kingston, and other places in the Peninsula between Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron. These positions are all remote from each other, St. John being 250 miles from Halifax, that fortress in its turn being 600 miles from Quebec; Montreal being nearly 200 miles still more remote, and Kingston lying 180 miles yet further to the west. To reduce even these positions, separate armies and fleets would be required. In the greater part of Canada no

army could keep the field in winter, and unless the works were taken in one season, the siege must be raised and operations begun afresh in the spring. True, the two countries are in some places contiguous; but in the parts where this contiguity exists, the country is wild, the climate is most severe, and winter operations wholly impossible. In other places where it might be possible for an army to exist in huts, it is all important to bear in mind that for many hundred miles the invader would have broad lakes in his rear. Admitting, for argument sake, that the enemy had command of *them* they are impassable in winter, whether for ship or sleigh. The supplies for a large force and all munitions of war would have to be drawn beyond them, and the winter's supply must be transported in summer, and stored in a hostile country. I do not believe that the elements of climate and distance and inaccessibility have ever had their due weight in considering the question of the defence of Canada.

I have supposed, for the sake of argument, that the enemy obtained a superiority on the absolute command of all the lakes. But as regards Lake Ontario, the conditions are all on the side of Canada, if the advantage be properly seized at the outset. The American tonnage on it is not greatly superior to the Colonial. True, on Lakes Erie, Huron, and Superior, the United States have nearly three times the tonnage; but three-fourths of that tonnage cannot pass into Lake Ontario, and the remaining fourth only through the Welland Canal, a work on British soil which could be destroyed in a day. Canada has also a strong fortress and dockyard, and there are numerous harbours on the north shore of Ontario, where vessels could be built. Above all she commands the only navigable means of access to it, whether from the sea or westward.* On the south

* There are three inlets by water to Lake Ontario, through British Ter-

shore there are but four or five harbours, and having no access by water through American territory, except by one small canal, all the offensive power must be created in its basin, and the points of construction being few, the progress might be seriously impeded. Let me pause to ask, then, whether due weight has ever been given to the drain on the enemy's resources, which the reduction of Canada would entail? What force both of men and ships would be required for a successful attack on Halifax? What for Quebec? What for St. John, either in New Brunswick or Newfoundland? For Kingston or Montreal? The difficulties attending the expeditionary operations against Charleston, New Orleans, Fort Fisher and Mobile, which occupied so many years and where the naval supremacy was wholly with the invaders, were as nothing to what would have to be overcome in attacking these northern positions.

If the present feeling of devotion to England continue, there are no sacrifices the Canadian people would not willingly endure to resist the attempt at conquest, or to make common cause with England in the struggle. *The population of Canada comprehends nearly as many fighting men as the Southern States ever brought into the field.* She has now 40,000 of an active militia, well trained and armed, and in case of need it is computed that she could supply at least 500,000 men capable of bearing arms, leaving still a reasonable proportion of her population for the indispensable work of life.* The returns of 1867 showed a registered

territory, one by the River St. Lawrence direct from Quebec, another by the Ottawa River and Rideau Canal, the mouth of which is covered by the Fortress at Kingston, and the third from Lake Erie, by the Welland Canal.

* The official report of the enrolment for 1869 showed a total of all classes of 656,066, viz.—

Ontario	..	..	..	..	..	315,352
Quebec	..	..	..	..	..	215,216
New Brunswick	..	..	..	..	..	55,622
Nova Scotia	..	..	..	..	..	69,876

exclusive of Newfoundland and Prince Edward's Island.

tonnage (not computing Newfoundland or Prince Edward's Island, and exclusive of fishing craft) of about 6,000 vessels, employing some 40,000 seamen; and those engaged in the fisheries, including Newfoundland, are computed at 30,000 more. The South had no England at her back; she had no seamen, no ships of war worth the name, however destructive to unresisting merchantmen her cruisers may have been.

I appreciate sensibly the great advantage which superiority in numbers, proximity, and unlimited resources would give over Canada in such a war. In courage, endurance, and discipline, I assume an equality. But knowing as an eye witness the difficulties and losses to which every mile of advance subjects an invading force, in a country far less wild, and offering infinitely fewer obstacles to the progress of an army, than Canada, I assert that conditions wholly novel, all to the disadvantage of the offensive, and favouring defensive operations, exist in her case. Military occupation of parts of the country might be held, but considerations of policy as well as of what was due to the rules of civilized warfare (and no one will deny but that in the past these have been chivalrously observed by the only possible enemy) would prevent such an occupation being accompanied by any acts which the people of Canada would not for the time endure as the price of their loyalty. I leave those who are more competent to form an estimate of the difficulties attending expeditions on a large scale, to say how serious would be the exhaustion to any nation, and how severely these expeditions would impair the powers whether of offence or of defence elsewhere.

Let the men who commanded at Bull's Run, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, or Fredericksburg say whether the subjugation of Canada is an operation they would covet, without armies as numerous and efficient

as ever taxed the power of the United States to bring them into the field.

I must defer reference to the alternative of abandonment, based on the hopelessness of defence until to-morrow.

I have the honor to remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A COLONIST.

II.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,—In my last letter I contended that the colony which is most exposed of all was defensible in case of war, and that on grounds of military expediency it would be more to the advantage of England to defend than to retire from Canada. Let me now look at the alternative of the case: that Canada is given up and that the whole Confederation in any future struggle is neutral. This, it is to be kept in mind, involves the consequence that on no part of the Atlantic coast north of Bermuda, nor on the American side of the Pacific Ocean, would England possess a single harbour where she could coal, or refit a vessel, or obtain supplies. To repair damages a ship must return to England, and if the United States were left free to operate with all their power against Bermuda, how long could that island be held? Being within easy access of the United States, it must, at all events, however guarded against reduction or actual capture, be closely blockaded, and, for all practical purposes, would be useless. If Bermuda fell, how long would the West Indies remain British? And might not the contagion of dissolution extend to Australia and the other colonies of the empire? If Canada were abandoned on the ground that she was difficult to

defend, would the Pacific or Australian Colonies not claim the right to be neutral? In the language of Lord Grey, "the policy of abandoning a part of our colonial empire could scarcely be adopted without giving so great a shock to the feeling of confidence and security in the remainder as greatly to increase the difficulty of maintaining it." England would thus be deprived of active allies, numbering nearly seven millions of people, all over the globe, and her enemy would gain immensely in the means of inflicting injury on her commerce in every sea. And what of the fact that Newfoundland is within six days steaming of Ireland? If all the ships of England are to be withdrawn from the American possessions, that island at once becomes a safe base of operations against Ireland, whence men and munitions of war could and would be despatched as opportunity or the chances of success warranted.

To sum up, therefore, in such a war, if the policy of abandonment is to be followed, England loses whatever advantage is to be found in the alliance and active support, derived from Canada alone, of half a million of fighting men, of whom 70,000 are as hardy seamen as the world can produce; in the employment of a very large share of the enemy's resources and men in difficult and exhausting expeditions; in having harbours to repair and coal her ships and to fit out expeditions within easy access of the enemy's country, and of so being able to harass a coasting trade which extends from Maine to Cape Horn, and from Cape Horn to the Columbia River. She relinquishes, besides, all hope of executing what some regard as a strategic operation possessing elements of probable success—a descent on California by a force drawn from India and collected at Vancouver's Island; above all, she risks alienating the active support of every other possession, and turning them, if no worse befalls, into the condition of neutrals; and she furnishes a safe

footing to a hostile force on an island less than six days' sail from Ireland.

It is true that by the course of abandonment she would avoid some strain on her own resources, but as the men for defensive operations and the transport and commissariat would be mainly found by Canada, whose power to supply them is increasing every year in an enormous ratio, England's contribution would be chiefly in those things of which she would have a superabundance, and could not employ elsewhere—viz., munitions of war, ships, experienced officers and a sufficient contingent of regular troops and disciplined seamen to support the Militia and naval reserves of the country. If the policy were to limit the war to the defence of England itself, the protection of the commerce of England at sea, and the inflicting loss on that of the enemy, the area must necessarily be confined to those parts of the world where England possessed harbours for refitting and stations for coal.

But it may be said.—granted that a war may be carried on so as to inflict heavy loss on both, and that the absolute conquest of Canada by the United States might be resisted, yet that a war at all with such a nation is an evil so mighty as to call for the removal of all possible occasion for it; that the existence of Canada as British territory is a source of danger both to herself and the empire, and that apprehensions of the consequences to Canada prevent England from taking ground on issues with America becoming her national dignity and honour!

Let us try the fairness of this argument by the test of history. Have any of the causes which have threatened war in the past been attributable, either to the position, the acts, or the policy of Canada? The Oregon boundary dispute, the San Juan affair, the Trent affair, the enlistment question, the difficulty respecting the Island of Ruatan,

the "Alabama" depredations, would all have occurred and possibly been followed by less pacific solutions if Canada had never existed.

It is true that during the Confederate war difficulties of a serious character occurred almost daily, which called for the exercise of the utmost vigilance on the part of the Colonial Government, and which, if that Government had erred, might have involved England in the alternative of a war or the humiliation of an apology. Bodies of men in the interest of the Southern Confederation endeavoured to make British America the basis of hostile operations against a friendly Power, and though many in Canada, exercising the undoubted right of individual opinion, sympathized with the one side or the other, the action of her Government under these trying events was such as to call forth the repeated and grateful acknowledgments of the United States for the faithful performance of her international duties.

Thus far, therefore, and that, too, under circumstances of such delicacy as are not likely to recur for many years, the position and acts of Canada have not proved in themselves a source of danger. . May it not be asserted that the policy of training the larger colonies to assume the functions of nationality has not been unwise, and that those functions—even when the independent exercise of them is devolved on the colony—may be discharged in entire harmony with the general interests of the empire?

Is it in her existence there? The answer may fairly be found in the facts that the United States are conscious they have territory enough and more in actual possession on the continent than they can consolidate during the life of this generation; that future accretion would be an evil, even if entailed on them in the course of nature; doubly an evil at the price of any war, and an immeasurable one at the price of a war with England.

I believe I am justified in saying that while the American Republic, at least the statesmen of the present day, would not object to receive Canada if in process of time she were, with the assent of England, to negotiate for admission, yet they are too sensible of the hazard, of the character of the resistance that would be offered, and of the certain calamities, even if ultimately successful, which a war with England would entail, to encounter them for the sake of the acquisition of Canada. In the interests of peace these statesmen desire to have the means of proving to the American people that an attack on Canada is an operation so hazardous as not to be undertaken but on motives so cogent as to warrant their encountering the whole power of Great Britain, and that, in short, the attempted subjugation of Canada means war with England.

If there be truth in these views, and that the possession of Canada will be but a subsidiary incident, if an incident at all, in any future strife, may we not hesitate in giving credence to the oft-repeated idea that to her position is attributable, what some call the spiritless policy of England in reference to the "Alabama" dispute?

May we not rather appreciate any state of things which induces either party to pause before entering on a strife which, if ever it does arise, will be one of which none can tell the end nor foresee the consequences? It cannot be said that in reference to any one of these past disputes the honour of England so far has been tarnished. The elements of time and friendly discussion are often more potent than the sword.

If such arguments, bearing on the supreme consideration of common peril, have any force as respects Canada, they hold doubly true in regard to all the other colonies, because none are exposed to the special danger to which that dominion is subject. Hostile operations against any of the

group of Australian Colonies, New Zealand, or the Cape of Good Hope, could not be attempted with any hope of success. A few monitors in their harbours would prove more than a match for any expeditionary force that could reach them in a condition to attempt a landing.

We have now to consider the future objections of the dis-severance party embodied in the words *profitless and burdensome*.

Let us take the case of Canada, again, as the one against which this charge has been most frequently made. It is said that the amount expended on the military and naval establishments there is a heavy charge on the English taxpayer; that Canada will not raise its revenue by direct taxation, but imposes high duties on English manufactures, and gives them no advantage in its markets over those of any foreign nation; that it even asserts the right of negotiating with the United States as an independent Power, in relation to their mutual commercial intercourse; and that so little is England disposed to interfere with what Canada thinks best for its interest, that she is prepared to stand by and let it make such treaties, to the partial exclusion of her own products; that it obtains guarantees for objects in which it alone has an interest, and that, in fact, tested by the balance-sheet, it is of no advantage whatever, but, on the contrary, is a source of recurring expense to the Mother Country.

How far are these charges true? The last occasion on which I am aware that the colonial expenditure was investigated was by the Parliamentary Committee of 1859. According to Mr. Merivale, who analysed the items of expenditure enumerated in their report, the net outlay of Great Britain in time of peace, deducting imperial expenditure, for military purposes on such fortified posts as Malta, Gibraltar, &c., was about two millions, of which one-fourth might be

apportioned to the North American colonies—the most exposed of all.

On reference to the army estimates for last year, I cannot make out that the expenditure specially chargeable to Canada being a military station, such as for barracks, works, transport, &c., exceeds £100,000 beyond the ordinary vote for regimental and other charges, which would be incurred no matter where the army was. And in Nova Scotia, even including £70,000 charged for works, such outlay would appear to be about the same figure, making £200,000 for all British North America.

These items, of course, admit of discussion, but it is well known that a great reduction in the national outlay for such purposes has been made, and a Parliamentary enquiry would tend to allay impressions unfavourable to the colonial aspect of the case.

I am not aware that, as regards the great colonies of Australia, any complaint on the score of military expenditure can be advanced. On the contrary, it seems to be admitted that the establishments are placed on the most moderate footing possible, and that the colonial contribution towards them is liberal and ungrudging. The reductions effected at the Cape, those actually taking place over all British America, and that proposed in New Zealand, removes the last objection which the most rigid economist could advance.

Let me, however, recall some facts that have recently occurred, as bearing on this charge of a selfish desire for military expenditure and of a dependence on Imperial strength, which is doing so much to wound the sensibilities of these vigorous offshoots of the empire, and to create prejudice and false impressions at home.

From what causes did the danger to Canada spring which Imperial troops were sent to meet? Not internal commotion;

not difficulties with natives; no complications with the United States of Canada's creation. They were the "Trent" affair, the threats and actuality of Fenian invasions, which were only directed against Canada as a stab at England, and which had the elements of a revolutionary movement against Great Britain rather than the character of internal disturbance. Canada cannot be said to have hesitated in assuming her share of duty in either case. The Fenian invasion and the necessity for continual vigilance have involved an outlay of many millions of dollars. It raised her militia estimates from less than £80,000 sterling in 1857 to about £400,000 sterling in 1867,—an expenditure which represents but a small fraction of the real cost to her. The direct vote of Parliament was supplemented by municipal, local, and personal subscriptions, by the individual and ready sacrifice of the men who went to the field, and untold losses were incurred by the stoppage of all industrial and commercial pursuits, the harvest even in many cases being neglected for the more pressing duty of the hour.

She provides barracks at a heavy expense for Imperial troops; she pays for the use of arms lent by the Imperial Government, even when those arms are intended for and used in the defence of Imperial interests. She equips gunboats to resist attacks avowedly aimed, not against Canada, but English supremacy, and with the view of complicating English relations with a Power a war with which both acknowledge to be one of the greatest calamities to which they are exposed.

All this, and more, she has done without a murmur, because the one impulse from Halifax to Lake Superior was to make common cause with the empire. She has arrogated no special credit to herself for these sacrifices, because her feeling, her duty, and her interest alike impelled her to them; because she was fully sensible of the many advantages she

derived from being a part of the English nation--of the consideration and security it gave her; and, above all, because when a common danger threatened, there was no hesitancy or demur on the part of England^d to shield her from it.

If we refer to arrangements of a more pacific nature, it will be found that Canada, though occasionally with a murmur, has been left greatly to her own unaided efforts. Witness the existing postal conventions. England has for many years subsidized lines of steamers to the United States, and by heavy payments sends the whole mail matter of Canada past her to a foreign country, compelling her, at a serious charge to her people, and with equivalent advantage to the American Exchequer, to pay the inland postage to the United States on bringing that mail matter back to Canada. Matters went on contrary to her remonstrances until she was actually forced to create a line of steamers of her own in partial competition with those sustained by England, and to pay a subsidy varying from £40,000 to £80,000 a year to maintain them, to no portion of which England makes any contribution.

As respects her trade relations with the United States, and the charge that she would be ready to admit American products on terms more favourable than English, and that she might do so without any interference by the Home Government, very great misapprehension has prevailed. In all her negotiations with that people Canada has steadfastly adhered to the fundamental condition that there must and could be no discrimination against England or English products, and I may doubt, judging from what has recently occurred, whether any Colonial Minister would consider Canada so completely emancipated from Imperial control as to justify him in abstaining from interference were she to have taken a different course.

I am far from wishing it to be inferred that free com-

mercial intercourse would not be mutually advantageous to both countries. Canada could, if she had been disposed to set the principle of not discriminating against England at naught, and to listen to those who held the commercial advantage in higher estimation than patriotism or the practice of sound principles of economy, have made satisfactory arrangements for reciprocal exchange of products with the United States; but she preferred in the past, as she prefers now, to submit to minor drawbacks of this character rather than adopt a policy which would be in direct hostility to English interests, and have a tendency to weaken a relation which she prefers to maintain, even at a tenfold greater sacrifice.

The course she did take has not, it is true, been wholly fruitless of good. The geographical position of Canada towards the manufacturing States of the Union must always give her such an advantage over the more distant places of production in the Western States as nothing short of prohibitory duties will counterbalance; hence her export of timber to that country has increased since the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty by nearly three-quarters of a million sterling, or 44 per cent. on the total. In the articles of wheat, coarse grain, and in most others, except coal, flour, and agricultural products, there has been no falling-off of export.

The heavy duties levied on Canadian staples on entering the United States have stimulated the exportation of these staples to other foreign markets, and Canada is rapidly developing a trade with the West Indies and Central America, which was formerly done through United States channels. It is a mistake, then, to suppose that Canada is dependent on the markets of the United States, or that her exclusion from those markets can exercise any serious influence over her political future. The period of trial has

passed, and, whatever fiscal policy the United States may hereafter pursue, Canada will find profitable outlets enough for her surplus products.

One word with reference to the charge, so repeatedly made against her, of raising her revenue by the imposition of Customs' duties and not by direct taxation. In a new country direct taxation as a means of State revenue is simply impossible. Few men go to a colony who can exist at home, and for one or two generations it is with most colonists a struggle for existence. There are no realised fortunes from which an income-tax could be levied, no great successions in respect of which legacy duty could attach; the transactions, whether of commerce or of daily life, are too limited to yield any substantial return upon stamps; but many of the colonies, where circumstances admit of it, are reducing their import duties, as they can find new sources of revenue from internal taxation—for example, in Canada, the revenue from Excise in 1857 was little over £25,000 sterling, or less than 2 per cent. of the total revenue; it is now over £600,000 sterling, or nearly one-fourth of the total revenue.

Having already extended this letter unduly, I reserve my closing observations, bearing on objections which apply to all colonies, until to-morrow.

I have the honour to be, your obedient servant,

A COLONIST.

III.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,—I now advert, in conclusion, to some points untouched in my former letters, which bear on the existing conditions of the present connection, and suggest the measure of duty which the circumstances seem to call for.

It is true that up to this time there has been no contribution by the colonies to the general expenses of the empire, and that British subjects going there are exempt from most of the burdens, while they continue to possess all the advantage, of the connection; but the period may not be distant when the circumstances of the colonies, or some of them at least, may warrant some revision of their relations. Any one who knows the struggle which an emigrant has, on settling in a remote colony, for mere existence, will admit that to attempt to burden him with any other taxation than that which the circumstances of the country itself demand would not only be unwise, but be wholly fruitless. It would check its growth and development, the influx of population, and postpone for years the time when it might with some probability be in possession of sufficient means to assume a share of the expenditure for national services which all interests, not in England only, but in the outlying portions of the empire, have a common advantage in sustaining.

Surely there ought to be no insuperable difficulty in the way of distinguishing the class of expenditure which may be said to belong to England proper, and to result from the social features of her insular condition, from that in which the whole empire (the colonies included) have a common interest; and next in devising some equitable apportionment of the latter, having regard to considerations of advantage, obligations already performed, and ability to assume it.

Having already endeavoured to prove how groundless the argument is that the supreme consideration of common safety points to separation in the case of any colony,—that the colonies are not a burden to the English taxpayer,—and that they are, judging them by the light of past experience, not unwilling to revise their relations so as to mitigate any burdens which may actually be found to exist, let me now say a word with reference to their utility. To those who, in

the admitted absence of real grievances on either side, would settle this question solely by the test of the immediate profit or loss which the balance-sheet might show, I have not a word to say. I would not accord undue importance to sentimental attachment in the presence of pressing grievances of a practical kind; but national unity is a principle the influence of which I trust will never cease to be felt in the direction of English affairs. Self-interest is becoming a powerful rule of action; but have love, the associations connected with home or country, ambition, pride, national susceptibilities, honour, or patriotism, become wholly extinct or powerless emotions either with individuals or communities?

England would have lost nothing if Consul Cameron had still languished in Abyssinia; she would have been none the poorer if Mason and Slidell had remained in Fort Warren; yet, in both cases, the universal impulse took a higher view of national duty. And so it will be again. May we not take example from the United States in their efforts to maintain their national unity, and receive some teaching from the result? Public opinion in England at one time favoured the idea that the interests of the South were so wholly separated from those of the North, and that the obstacles arising from social and economic causes were so great, as to interpose a permanent barrier to their wellbeing as one people. But, in the face of these admitted elements of future difficulty, far more appalling than any which spring from the Imperial and colonial relations, a struggle such as England is not asked to engage in to maintain her colonial autonomy went on. On its termination people then predicted that, though military occupation of the South as a conquered country might be held, there never could be anything like harmony in the relations of the two. And yet reconstruction proceeds. State after State accepts the new Consti-

tution, and the Union now stands on a more stable basis than it ever did. May we, in adhering to the principle of union, but not circumscribing it within insular limits, not trust to the influence of time and the irresistible force of events for adjusting the future relations between all the outlying portions of the empire towards their common centre?

No one who desires to promote this national unity, and to make the relations just to both sides, can disapprove the efforts which have been made of late years to make the colonies self-reliant—to give them entire freedom of local self-government, and, as far as they have the attributes of independence, to impose on them when they are at all able to bear them the corresponding burdens; and to reduce the expenditure, whether military, naval, executive, or otherwise, to a point which shall be justifiable by considerations of necessity only.

I am sure there is no desire on the part of the large colonies, nor, so far as I am aware, of any of them, to ask for any expenditure which the English taxpayer may justly point at as unnecessary. If that be the case, does it not seem a rash experiment, even to those who would act solely from utilitarian motives, to renounce an estate merely because it yields at the moment no direct return? No man can withhold his sympathies from those who appeal to the ten millions a year paid for poor-rates; to the fact that one in every 30 men of the population of London lives on charity; and to the other onerous charges of which the industrious middle-classes complain. But may not these colonial possessions be turned to some account? Might not a portion of the ten millions now paid to keep so many thousands of able-bodied men and women in degrading idleness be usefully employed in transplanting them to our outlying fields? To almost every colony nature has supplied a healthy, if to some a rigorous, climate, and free grants of land are to be had for the asking.

But, it is argued, our manufactures and exports are steadily increasing. Let us retain our people here and make England the workshop of the world. Let me ask, however, is the superiority formerly possessed by England over all other nations with reference to manufactures likely to be perpetual? Have not foreign skill, mechanical science, and trade unions at home done something already to produce conditions of equality between England and other nations, unknown before? Under the existing social conditions here, will it pay to keep a larger operative class within this island, either with the aim of making labour cheaper, or insuring a steadier supply? Is there no danger of increased poor-rates or of a popular demand for the distribution of land? Assuming, however, it to be admitted that emigration is desirable, it may be said that the facilities for emigration would be equal if the colonies were independent, or in the case of Canada if allied to the United States, and that then the emigrant would be as valuable a consumer of English manufactures as if he remained a British subject. There is a class, I know, who sneer at a reference to any other principle of national action than this, as mere sentimentalism. But to those who have other aspirations for England's future than to see the coming generation a community of peaceful artisans, I would ask, is there no prospective national advantage in having communities all over the earth in friendly alliance rather than in enmity? Take the Irish exodus to the United States and to Canada. In the former, the emigrant finds himself surrounded by influences hostile to England, his old antipathies are not only perpetuated, but intensified, and without almost any exception every Irishman there becomes a Fenian, his powers of mischief increasing with his wealth; in the latter, he finds himself without a wrong, no dominant Church, no land grievance, no exclusion from his fair share of influence in the direction of public affairs; his surroundings and the

example of his countrymen all tend to make him a loyal subject, and there is not one in a thousand who would not meet in deadly enmity a Fenian invasion at the Canadian frontier.

Are, then, the symbol of English sovereignty, the influence of English associations, and that wholesome retention of a feeling of reverence, without which a community must deteriorate, of no account in these outlying portions of the empire, even as respects the future of Great Britain? I hesitate alluding to the passionate sentiment of loyalty to the person and family of the Sovereign no less than to the Constitution existing in the hearts of the great body of colonists. No one can understand who did not witness the almost idolatrous devotion extended to Prince Arthur in his recent visit to the rural districts of Canada, simply because he was the son of their Sovereign. It was not mere curiosity or a senseless ambition to be presented, no gaping desire for sight-seeing, but a profound and respectful homage coming from the hearts of a loyal people. Is this all to be thrown aside, and are these communities to be turned into soured and resentful outcasts? But it will be said, no one dreams of abandoning the colonies against their inclination. True; but the revulsion of feeling which may spring from a mistaken notion of the views held here is what I would guard against, and this brings me, in conclusion, to consider what should now be practically done.

I have said that the case of New Zealand is a special one with respect to the shades of right or wrong, of which there may be an honest difference of opinion. I deprecate, therefore, approaching the consideration of the more general question in the light or under the instigation of that supposed wrong. I do not think that any attempt now to introduce radical changes into the relations between England and her colonies is needed, or that it would be likely to improve them. Over zeal in the promotion of reform may

strengthen the hands of the party of separation. Has there been any such grave instance of misgovernment or any withholding of a proper measure of power from any colony, or the exercise over it or on any of its people of undue authority on the part of the Colonial-office, as to call for a fundamental reconstruction of their relations? Is not the complaint, on the contrary, rather that they have been left too much to themselves? It is surely premature, in the absence of any overruling and immediate necessity, to ask for the overthrow of the existing system, not in view of grievances to be redressed, but merely as an experiment, with no abuse calling for reform.

Our duty now I conceive to be to assert more emphatically than we have been doing of late, the principle of maintaining inviolate the unity of the empire—to discountenance opposite views, and to mould all our policy in accordance with that conception; to remove any fears which exist in England with reference to the danger resulting from the possession of any colony; to ascertain with as much precision as possible the real extent of burdens they severally entail; to get rid of the idea of the supposed readiness of the colonies to palm these burdens on England, and of their unwillingness from time to time to revise the relations or place them on a footing which shall be just to both; and to dispel the idea that Colonial Governments are ready to enter into commercial treaties with foreign Powers adverse to English interests. There is need that the colonists should be disabused of the impression that there exists on the part of England a desire to throw them off. The appearance of unrequited love, with communities as with individuals, sometimes leads to unreasonable resentment. I say unreasonable resentment, because it is not fitting that the popular discussions of the colonial relations at the present day should, in the minds of colonists, efface the declarations of men who were, and some

of whom are now, responsible to the English nation for their opinions. Lord Grey has emphatically declared :—

“That by the acquisition of its colonial dominions the nation has incurred a responsibility of the highest kind, which it is not at liberty to throw off I have thought it necessary to state thus strongly my dissent from the views of those who wish to dismember the British Empire by abandoning the colonies, because it is impossible not to observe that this policy, unworthy of a great nation, and unwise as I consider it to be, is not only openly advocated by one active party in the country, but is also hardly less effectually supported by persons occupying an important position in Parliament, and who, while they hesitate to avow their adherence to it, hold language which obviously leads in the same direction, and advocate measures the adoption of which would inevitably bring about this result.”

The late Duke of Newcastle avowed it to be his opinion “that it is the duty of this country to protect her colonial possessions at all hazard and at all expense.” And one, who in his lifetime was the idol of the nation, declared, “To abandon possessions gained at the cost of so much blood and treasure—many of them important outposts for the protection of our commerce and the security of our dominion—would be a violation of public faith and a forfeiture of national honour.”

If we refer to the more recent speeches and letters of his great rival—Lord Derby—or to the words of Sir Stafford Northcote at the recent Social Science Congress, or the declarations of Mr. Cardwell at Oxford, we find no warrant for the opinion that their views with reference to the maintenance of the connection are less uncertain than those I have quoted.* Lord Granville’s meaning and words at the

* Since the above lines were written Mr. Forster, in his speech at Bradford, January 17th, referring to the Colonial question, said: “I cannot sit down without stating that, whilst I disagree with much that has been said by representatives of the Colonies lately, yet I rejoice that the question has been brought forward, as it has made it clear to me that neither in England nor in the Colonies do we intend that the empire should be broken up. It may be a

recent interview appear to have been very greatly misinterpreted by those who assert that they evinced an indifference to the connection. The occasion and circumstances were not such as to call forth expressions of a more emphatic kind, his object being chiefly to disclaim the idea of exercising force for the retention of an unwilling dependency.

I have no panacea, either in the shape of a Colonial Council or modified colonial representation in the House of Commons, or recognised colonial representatives in England, for the removal of the alleged causes of dissatisfaction. The Colonial office may, with great propriety, be left to deal with all matters of administration and with such modification in the relations of any colony to the empire as its changed condition may call for. In any such modification it is obvious that the protective character of existing relations must be superseded by one possessing more the elements of a Federative Union. I am not aware that the colonies have any reason to complain of the reluctance of the Colonial department in the past to consider or give effect to any changes which any colony thought it for its interest to propose.

But fundamental changes with reference to the entire system are surely premature. The colonial life is but little more than in its infancy. It is only 30 years since Canada possessed the stimulus of responsible government. The great experiment of consolidating British power in North America through her instrumentality has had less than three years' trial. The vast Colonial Empire of Australia is still in its minority, and there is surely no reason to believe that any other system would have made its prosperity more rapid. But admitting all this, an enquiry with the sanction of

dream, but I still believe in its fulfilment. I believe that the time will come when, by some means or another, statesmen will be able to weld a bond together which will unite the English-speaking people in our colonies at present—unite them with the mother country in one great confederation."

Parliament into the features which are assigned on either side as unsatisfactory might profitably be made, and would tend to promote a better understanding in the future. If it should be found on enquiry in this spirit that any colony, according to the extent of advantage it is deriving, ought to assume an enlarged measure of obligation, I venture to assert that the practical fulfilment on its part will not be demurred to.

I have the honour to remain,
Your obedient servant,

A COLONIST.

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