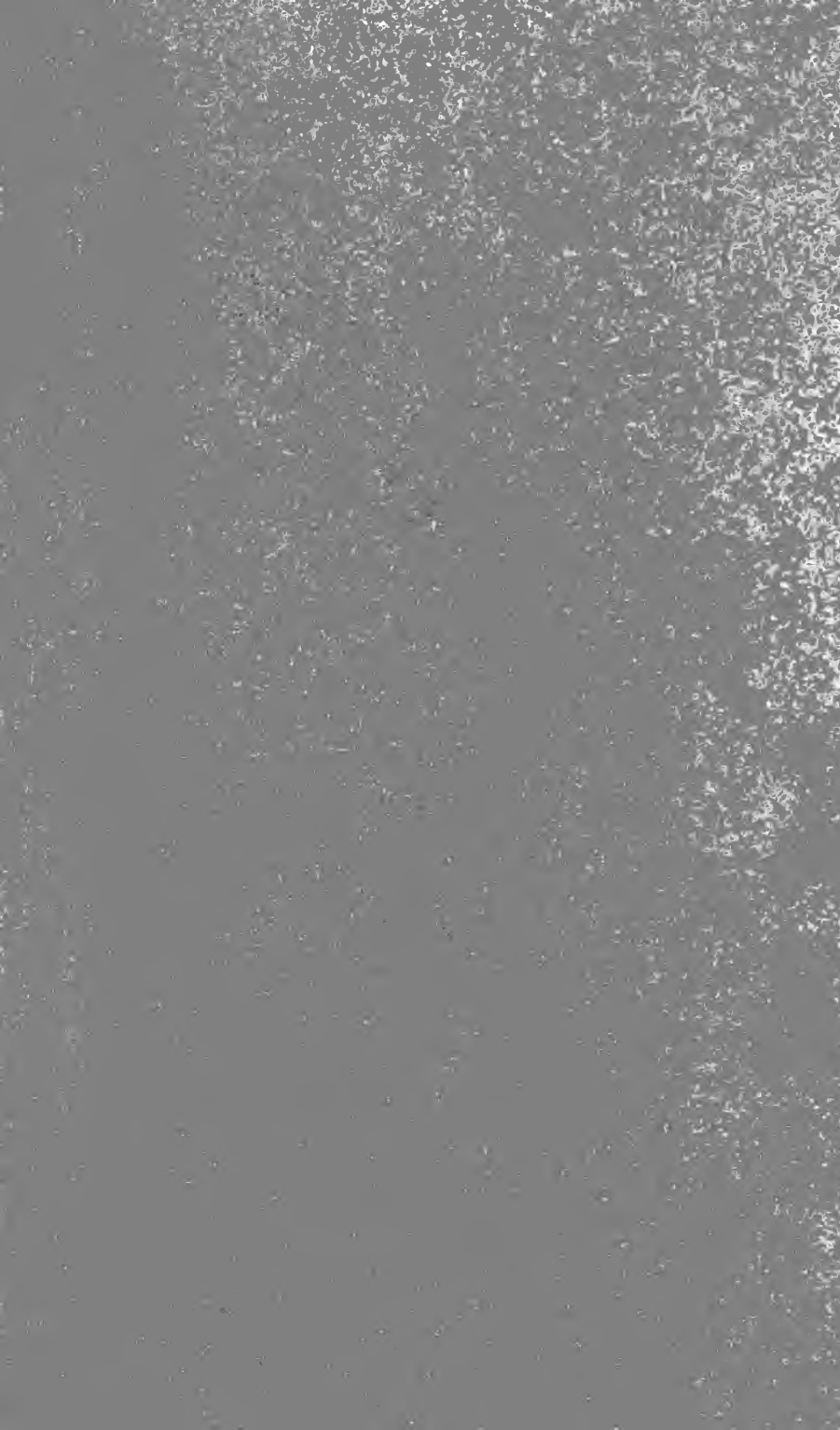


JV
1062
C65

Leol Office
ing
H. Eng



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



HBE
C2109

THE COLONIES

OF

GREAT BRITAIN:

THEIR

GOVERNMENT AND PROGRESS.

London :

PUBLISHED AT THE "MINING JOURNAL" OFFICE,
26, FLEET STREET.

1850.

JV
1062
C65

LONDON: PRINTED AT THE "MINING JOURNAL" OFFICE,
26, FLEET-STREET.

8251
7111190
.6

TO

SIR WILLIAM MOLESWORTH, BART., M.P.,

THESE FEW OBSERVATIONS

ON THE COLONIES OF GREAT BRITAIN

ARE HUMBLY DEDICATED,

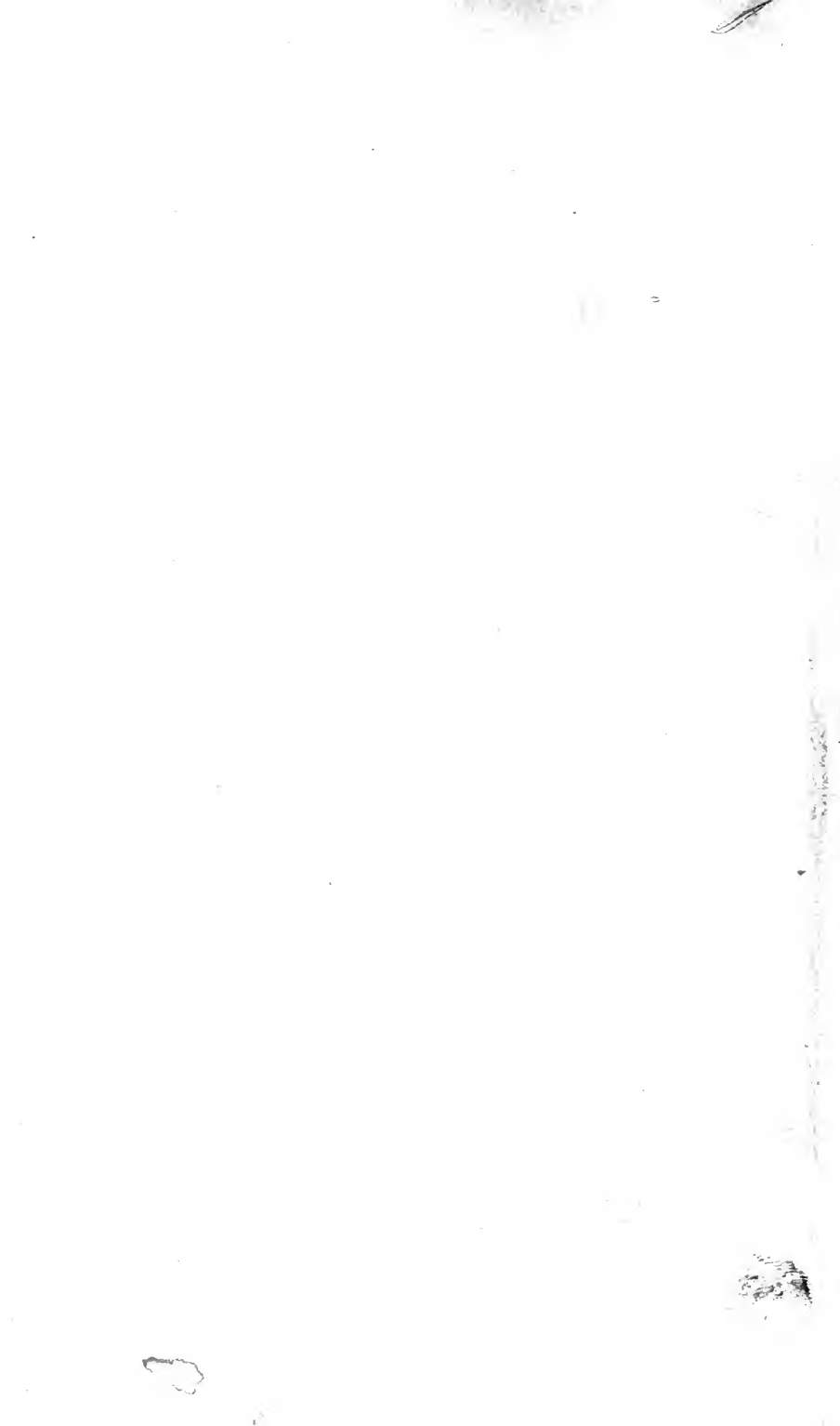
BY ONE OF THE OUT-OF-DOOR PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

WHO, AS A BODY, DOUBT THE ACCURACY OF YOUR

PREMISES, AND DENY THE JUSTNESS OF

YOUR REASONINGS,

ON THE SUBJECT UNDER CONSIDERATION.



THE
COLONIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

~~~~~  
“They who to states and governors of the commonwealth direct their speech, or, wanting such access in a private condition, write that which they foresee may advance the public good, I suppose them as at the beginning of no mean nor inglorious endeavour.”  
~~~~~

1. The vast area occupied by the Colonies of Great Britain, together with their rapid growth both in wealth and population, are circumstances rendering their good government in some senses more difficult, and, in every view of its results, of the most vital importance to the strength, and also to the reputation, of this United Empire. To review, as far as the present occasion may justify, firstly, the purpose and spirit in which the affairs of these magnificent dependencies have been administered; secondly, to recapitulate the leading results of that government; and thirdly, to inquire whether by any rational contingency an equal sum of benefits could have descended on the Colonies from that course of policy which, it is alleged, ought to have superseded that which has actually obtained, are the tasks which it is intended to accomplish in these pages. Not that it is meant for one moment, or in the least measure, to interfere with such minds as are filled with a foregone conclusion. It is infinitely better to leave such individuals to the lessons which will be inevitably deduced from the ripening of events, and gathered up in a field of more extended experience.

To discuss the policy of the Colonial administration with this class of persons, is, it is much to be feared, about equal in hopefulness to an attempt to argue with the winds, or to reason down the waves. It is not purposed in this place to climb any such series of Alps, or to surmount those other forms of resistance which an ingenious and a perverse opposition may interpose to a just and discriminating inquiry; but rather, taking an accessible path to an accessible object, to lay in order such considerations on this subject as may peradventure contribute to the contentment of our brethren in the Colonies, and the satisfaction of all good men elsewhere.

2. It is no ninth-rate fact to be remembered that these Colonies, whose administration has been so searched into and inquisitorially sifted, are scattered up and down all the parallels north and south, all the meridians east and west, of the habitable globe. They reach from Labrador to the Falkland Islands; from the Yellow Sea to the shores washed by the last waves of the Pacific; and beyond their extraordinary extent—which must, in the nature of things, be one element of difficulty in their government—they contain a population far more various than the zones throughout which they are distributed; every variety of the *genus homo*; not only the primary generic classes, but all the subordinate modifications, with their habits, instincts, traditions, laws, and religion, comprehending all the peculiarities in either of their kinds which have sprung up in the progress of society, from the building of Babel to the dispersion yesterday of the Borneo pirates, make up the many-coloured mass, the heterogenous whole, into which the firm and plastic hand of government is to infuse the principles of unity and subordination. The measured superficies of these lands amount to about six millions of square miles, and their

population to about nine millions of souls—a Colonial dominion comparable to which, History nowhere in her vast and open volume, nor Tradition with her thousand echoes, has sent down to these times the slightest memorial or the faintest intimation.

3. Notwithstanding the elaboration and intricacy of this great trust, notwithstanding the passions, the settled prejudices, and the active tendencies to resistance exhibited in some portions of this distant empire, there exists such an amount of sound and satisfactory government, such a sum of material wealth and comfort, realised and in certain course of realisation, as is utterly incompatible with anything short of good government. If a man is placed within a congeries of vineyards and olive groves, filled with the fruits proper to their season, or a circle of corn-fields, overflowing with the golden gifts of Ceres, the inference and the argument forcing itself to the lips is, that there has been good husbandry exercised somehow,—a contrary inference would be the most illogical and the most unauthorised which, under any possible political hallucination, he could have adopted.

4. Still, exercising so wide a sway, and encompassed by such a cloud of responsibilities, if the whole went on from year to year as smoothly and as silently as the planetary motions go on, the public would think that the evenness and harmony of such an administration was attributable, possibly, to some celestial influence, to a ministry of angels, and not to the limitable activity of men, however consummate their skill, or unwearied their diligence. And they would be perfectly justified in the maintenance of that opinion. But the multitude and the complexity of these trusts is set out in this place—or rather incidentally referred to—solely for the purpose of raising this point—namely, that in so vast a circle of administrative

acts as the government of the Colonies of Great Britain comprehends, *lâches* of a certain gravity, and to a certain extent are to be calculated upon, which nevertheless would be both inadmissible and inexcusable in a more narrow and limited dominion.

5. In the first place, beyond all doubt it has been a leading feature in the policy of the present, and perhaps of all preceding administrations, to leave—as to their internal government—the Colonies as much as possible to themselves. The flag and the reputation of this country have been enough to secure them from external annoyance; and having guarded them at that point, they have, as far as practicable, been entrusted with and encouraged to undertake the management of their own affairs. All local and municipal business, wherever they were competent to administer those secondary but most important trusts, have been committed to their own hands. We have not carried beyond the seas the unwieldy principle of centralisation, unless we took it there as a last resource, waiting the hoped maturity of their own powers. But having legal possession of a country, we could neither so far stand aloof from the course of its internal affairs as to admit, as a contingent result, the growth and perpetuation of anarchy, nor limit ourselves to merely an imperial supervision of their social progress, when the circumstances called for our more direct and constant interference in detail. But the rule has been largely and almost universally the other way; and where we were not under terms to a commanding necessity, local affairs have been administered by a local agency, and the really requisite amount of protection and superintendence which no governing state can with impunity blot out of the catalogue of its duties has formed the sum of our imperial tasks.

6. Secondly, in the early life of a colony, however, there are numerous wants to which the few first families usually laying the foundation of the youthful state cannot help themselves, but which are nevertheless absolutely essential, if they are to make any calculable progress towards vigour and maturity of existence. However diligently sought or ingeniously contrived, it is not in the power of a metropolitan state to confer on her outlying dependencies any donative so rare and precious as the gift of her industrious citizens. Gold, silver, and precious stones have no comparable value when set against this richest and most right-handed of all public gifts. The laws, the literature, the public history of a great people may be carried to other lands, and planted there for the refreshment and instruction of a new community; and to these the parent state may superadd a portion of her wealth, and the reflected glory of her arms. But separate from the skilled labour and the diligent industry of her sons, the whole group of gifts which had been poured into the lap of the Colonies was but a light and insufficient counterpoise to that which had been withheld. Still it is possible—nay, there is a pressing danger—that benefits of this high and distinguished character may be conferred with too early and too liberal a hand, and what was meant for the advancement of the state made contributory to its depression.

7. If Government, by fixing a cheap, or a merely nominal upset price of lands, by offering generally a free passage outwards, or by stipulations for certain immunities when the emigrants had taken up their stations in the settlements which they had chosen as their residences, had attracted across the seas that miscellaneous and adventurous host upon whom such a class of inducements would have operated most powerfully, without first of all

providing those elements of occupation and of profitable industry in which it was their sole object to be engaged,—in that case, the Government would in all human probability be an accessory to an amount of misery and misfortune irremediable in the lifetime of a generation. That fatal error has not been committed; and yet it is notorious that, with transient and unimportant exceptions here and there, the labour-market of the Colonies has been adequately fed, and its wants in this respect more advantageously satisfied than if the Government had intrusively thrust in its hand, and disturbed the law of population which prevails equally in a colony as in a ruling state. If those best portions of a nation's strength, our labourers, mechanics, and artisans generally, had gone out in large numbers, and to an extent exceeding the necessities of the case, these two evils must inevitably have ensued: first that the value of labour would have materially risen in this country, enhancing proportionately in their infinite variety of forms the price of the manufactured and agricultural produce of the United Kingdom; and secondly, you would have so lowered, disturbed, and deteriorated the value of that most popular and most essential commodity, labour, in the Colonial markets, as to have thrown back anything like a hopeful, a healthful, or a useful stream of emigration for an unknown and an indefinite period. A more moderate and wiser course than this has happily been adopted, and the result is, that the Colonies at large are the best market for the surplus labour of these islands.

8. But the advantages arising out of the more deliberate and cautious policy of the Government in this particular instance are possibly less obvious now than in a few years they needs must be, when the auspicious results of it have taken a more distinct and concrete form than for the pre-

sent they are capable of assuming. The gravity of those evils which have been averted, as well as of those benefits which have been secured, by giving neither countenance nor encouragement to those projects through which the shores of our infant Colonies would have been flooded with an inopportune tide of emigration, and these home islands emptied in part of their valuable elements of profitable and reproductive industry, will, if we mistake not, be appreciated and confessed both at home and abroad. There is, in fact, no part of our public policy calling for a more patient and delicate manipulation at the hands of Government than this. In the progress of society, as in the progress of the seasons, it is infinitely better to accept and to be satisfied with the natural order of things than to arrange them in a new and, as we ignorantly think, an improved series; and moreover, if we desire the just and genuine gratification arising from either, we must go out of our way a very little indeed to alter their growth, or to accelerate their maturity.

9. Thirdly, time out of mind the subject of convict labour in the Colonies has been, more or less, a vexed question and a rock of offence both to them and to us; but it would be speaking in the teeth of a large and conclusive circle of facts if it is affirmed that, as a whole, this species of labour has not been advantageous to the Colonies. There is upon the face of the subject no assignable reason why the labour of this class of persons should not be made more extensively beneficial than hitherto it ever has been. As a matter of course, all the Colonies are not equally in want of cheap labour, nor equally disposed, were their wants ever so great, to accept it in this particular form; but that there are parts of the vast transmarine possessions of Great Britain where this species of reinforcement would increase the material wealth, and

facilitate the general progress of our settlements, all probability and all experience concur in testifying. At this moment, in some parts of the great Australian group, this description of auxiliaries is being asked for, and others are on the point of receiving them. With the concurring and co-operating activity of the Colonies there is no just reason to doubt that the perfect isolation—as perfect, at least, as in the floating prisons of this kingdom—the reformation and the useful employment of British convicts could be fully and permanently secured. But if the Colonists will imagine a foe where they cannot find one—if they will turn from the green hill side which is actually before them, and believe they see a mountain covered with clouds and filled with horsemen and chariots,—then they must be left to that atmosphere of visions and voices which is inappreciable by any senses but theirs.

10. So much in passing. Some recent events in a small and distant Colony may have created a doubt as to the legal competency of the Crown, by an order in council, to appoint any part of its Colonial territory as a rendezvous for British convicts. Of the policy of making such an appointment—considering that the public is never fully in possession of the reasons rendering it, as in a recent instance, perfectly expedient, and that the Government uniformly is—there may be some colourable pretext for a doubt; but of the legal right of the Crown in council to locate convicts in any part of its Colonial possessions which it is instructed is become desirable, there is not, it is believed, among lawyers any two opinions. It is one of the rights which the Crown invariably reserves to itself; and to call it in question, or in any sense by force to resist it, is such a public outrage as involves the heaviest penal consequences. It is hoped that the Colony in question will take immediate steps to purge itself of the rebel

marks with which it is at present spotted, and make some compensation for the mischievous work it sought to do, and for the mischievous example it has set, by entering with increased earnestness and perseverance on the paths of constitutional obedience and prosperous virtue, which it had so wantonly and so disloyally abandoned.

11. Fourthly, it is one of the weightiest imputations cast upon the existing Government, that the Colonies cost us too much; that the expenditure for their military occupation, and for the administration of justice within their limits, exceeds the necessities of the case,—the clear duty and indisputable policy of Government being, as it is alleged, either to make them self-sustaining settlements or to prepare for their abandonment. To all appearances these are hard and impracticable terms for the Colonies to comply with, and certainly most dishonourable for a metropolitan state, except in case of its rapid decay or its impending bankruptcy, to think of officially propounding. It is substantially this, that if the Colonies can liquidate the entire expenses of their military and civil service—if they can, that is, pay for the protection and guardianship of Great Britain—then they may continue in connexion with her, and take such chances as wait on her perilous but ascending course; but if they touch, however lightly, the imperial exchequer, they are to be cut adrift, and left to take just such a direction as the currents of the political ocean may set them forward in. This, however, it may be most confidently stated, is not the recipe patronised by the Government or people of England; nor ought it to be the alternative set before the Colonies, not to say by any statesman, for it never was, but by any political speech-maker who ever sat in the clubs, or spoke in the British Parliament. If a great empire was descending into the grave, such conduct might be excusable enough;

she might then be pardoned for making a hasty disposition of her jewels and her estates; but for one still feeling the vigorous glow of her young and pregnant faculties, one who is at this moment poising her elastic pinions for a farther and a loftier flight than any she has yet soared, such conduct would be, beyond all things, most suicidal and most absurd.

12. Those who criticise a large expenditure, whether of a company of merchants or of ministers of state, before they decide that either have run through too much will carefully inquire into the amount of work done and of services performed. With the money spent in this instance the Colonial Minister has manned a catenary chain of forts and garrisons girdling the entire globe. It has been happily said that the sun follows from east to west, daily throughout the year, the roll of our morning drum. It is impossible, with our small force, really to *hold* such colonies: to do so, in a direct sense, we must have thrice the number of troops at present stationed in them. The few service companies which, at the proper relief periods, take their solitary way eastward, where first the sun gilds Indian mountains, or westward, where his setting beams flame o'er the Atlantic isles—could never adequately recruit the decimated and fragmentary battalions doing duty in the Colonies, worn down and wasted as European constitutions needs must be by the torrid, and then by the contrary severities of the climates through which they pass, and in which so large a portion of their lives is spent. The costliness of an occupation in such force as, nevertheless, the temper and circumstances of some of the Colonies would justify, is, as a matter both of duty and of necessity, avoided. Are the private soldiers paid, do the economists think, a farthing a day too much? Are their rations a shade too full or

too luxurious? Or do the officers of the regiments on foreign service hoard up fortunes out of the stipends they receive at the hands of Government? Not so; for they are rather spending fortunes, and, in the vast majority of cases, paying in health consumed, and in property put to the worst account, an enormous fine for the honour of wearing the Queen's uniform. To withdraw the troops, or even to reduce the military occupation of the Colonies at present, would be the most inconsiderate and perilous resolution that could be come to by a Government charged with their preservation and improvement; or to occupy them as at present, and to fix the Colonies with the expenditure necessarily accompanying that occupation, would be as great a piece of mere power and imprudence as could be wrought out by the iron hand of an insensible and an infatuated administration. It was the weight of the last feather that broke the camel's back; and although this laying on of a new burthen might not wholly break the spirits of the Colonists, it would undoubtedly break the growth of that contentment which it is the chief aim and object of the Colonial Government to encourage and to secure. What may be done a few years hence, when the greater strength and maturity of the Colonies shall make them able to bear their own burthens, is another consideration; but at present either to withdraw or to reduce the occupation, or to impose, in either case, the expense on the Colonies, would be both unsound in policy and unjust in principle.

13. Nor does the expense incurred in the administration of civil justice in the Colonies afford in any sense a set of more tangible points for the obstructive alertness of her Majesty's Colonial opposition than the military service, as it was seen a moment since, afforded. The maintenance of courts of law for the settlement and adjudication

of contested rights, and for the preservation of society from that most miserable of results, the solution of its primary elements, is not only of high, but of the very highest importance in the progress of a Colonial state towards either wealth or civilisation. The efficiency of courts of law in all countries depends more than anything else on the learning and respectability of its presiding officers. The bar of England is of course culled, and its choicest fruits taken to adorn Westminster Hall, and to fill the highest home situations at the disposal of the Crown. But the second crop, we take leave to say, comprises a class of men not exceeded in knowledge of their profession nor in unsullied probity by any connate class of lawyers living within the two poles. It would surely be the unwisest and the meanest course that could be followed to fill these foreign situations with either needy or ignorant men; unless, indeed, we wished to have the ark of British law and its ermined representatives blasphemed in the Colonies daily.

14. The Government has from the first taken this bull by the horns; and the stream of pure justice has flowed on in the Colonies unfouled and unperverted. If to any, it will be left to our new teachers in Colonial government, to the candle-end economists—should they ever sit at the council-table—to cut down the soldiers' pay, to send a smaller number of men to do a greater work. Or looking a little more mischievously into the progress of the Colonies, to make Justice stand up before an astonished public in rags, withholding that which would clothe and dignify her. This may, for all we can tell, be the work of the new association; but the nation may be indubitably confident that no such scattering of blossoms, no such stifling the incense of the breathing spring will be concurred in by either of the two great administrative parties who

sit on either side the chairs in our two chambers of legislation.

15. Fifthly, the reformation of the laws affecting our mercantile intercourse with the Colonies, and their's with us, is another salient feature in the policy of the existing ministry. As was said a short time since, we cannot in general profitably pursue a hot-house treatment to quicken the growth of political, any more than of natural fruits. We must be content to wait in a great measure on the passage of time and the progress of the seasons. The rain, and the wind, and the sun of heaven must come down and charm into vigorous life the seed upon which we have exercised our humble industry. They are doing so—if not in their prodigality, at least with a highly-favourable fulness, upon this branch of the administration of the Colonies. No change so organic and so extensive as that which was completed on the 1st of January, 1850, has borne so unambiguous a testimony to the solidity of the principles it embodied as the returns of the last few months have attested the soundness of the great navigation statute, under whose broad wing the foreign and colonial commerce of the empire is now happily placed. This point is not pressed, however, as against the members of the new association; for possibly if by any miracle they were entrusted with administrative powers, they would have attempted something much in the same way. It is perfectly level with their political instincts that they should do so. But it is not on that account one whit the less a monumental work personal to those who have actually accomplished it; nor can it lessen their garland by a single leaf, that others would have made the attempt in which they have so illustriously succeeded.

16. We would not make any gentleman's half hour too

long by setting out in this place a prolix and tedious enumeration of the points on which the policy of the Colonial administration seems to rest, and by which it will be judged ; but we are bound to say, sixthly, that the scheme of Government recently sketched by the first minister of the Crown for the future government of the Colonies is the one specific measure which, for its magnitude and its beneficence, forms a fitting inscription for the entablature of their Colonial temple. Taken as a whole, as all the world knows, this superb legislative proposition is an enlargement of that which a few years since was received so cordially, and has wrought so happily in the great province of which Sydney is the thriving and the handsome capital. Having said thus much as to this particular enactment, we may be permitted to say further, that, judging from almost all probability and experience, the actual advantages arising out of this large legislative boon to the Colonies will be less numerous and less important than they will appear to be when we come to count their numbers and to estimate their actual value. Without travelling back into the heroic or the classic ages, or fishing up in that dead sea some historical fragment for our instruction, it may be sufficient to inquire, “ What tangible, what appreciable benefits has the investiture with representative government brought to the surface of public affairs in Canada, Jamaica, or the Ionian Islands ? ”

17. In the West India Colony a fencing and a drawing of swords has grown into a chronic habit between the Legislative Assembly and her Majesty’s representative ; and though both parties practise with muffled points, such altercations have a natural tendency to interrupt the course of business, and to lessen both the peace and the prosperity of the island.

18. In the Ionian Islands we have recently had a la-

mentable proof that the course of Government is not much smoother. That a half-civilised race should make light of that apparatus of civilisation for which no training, no apprenticeship to forms had prepared them, was according to probability, and quite in order. They were called up into the class of representative states at least a generation too soon; being prematurely there, they misunderstood their position and their duties; and for the course of rebellious errors which unhappily ensued, the bosoms of good men will not be wholly unsuggestive of palliatives; but undoubtedly the franchises with which they were invested neither taught them lessons of peace nor supplied them with any motive for contentment.

19. The normal state of that great North American province, Canada, has been perhaps somewhat more feverish and inflammatory since we hoped to pour oil and wine into her imputed wounds, by the new constitution sketched for her by the lamented Lord Durham, than it was before that promising and hopeful period. We do not say there is general complaint in Canada, but there is loud complaint. General we are able, from inquiry and careful observation, to say it is not, except in the sense in which the chirping of Mr. Burke's grasshoppers might have been general. The Canadian people, taken collectively, are satisfied with the administration of their affairs, and cherish a strong instinctive partiality for their connexion with Great Britain. But there is an active and a turbulent party among them which is not so minded, and they have recently been giving us a taste of their quality by burning the two houses of the legislature at Montreal, and by setting up and sustaining an outcry for annexation to the United States.

20. In these three instances,—and there are more that might be drawn out to the same end—the concession of

free institutions, and the putting into their hands the privileges of representative government, have done less than they might be expected to do for the organisation of their political elements; and if, as to that far greater measure upon the consideration of which the Parliament of Great Britain will shortly re-enter, an equal scarcity of fruits and a deficiency of the appropriate produce should appear to the eyes of succeeding statesmen, it will be ascribed, we believe, not to any insufficiency of the provisions made, but to those casualties which have ever been found to mix with, and to get woven into, the texture of all human affairs.

21. It has been the object of the framers of the new measure to do no more than lay down the fundamental principles, to arrange the political ground-plot upon which the Colonists may subsequently build according to their judgment of the existing necessities and convenience of the case; so long, that is, as they do not invade the rule nor violate the spirit prevailing in the original institution. They may have two representative chambers or one; they may enlarge or restrict the franchise to such an extent as may seem to them advisable, for the imperial Parliament will not in this bill fix the Colonists with a statutable obligation one way or the other whenever they can be prudently left to a choice of alternatives. There is but one representative chamber in New South Wales; and in that Colony, up to a late date, they preferred to have no alteration made in that respect. Having now, as it is thought, materials for a second chamber, they judge it desirable to have one; and by this bill they will obtain powers for its creation. And so also of the other Colonies; although the positive enactments of this statute limit them generally to a single representative chamber, powers are conveyed to all of them to form a second chamber when-

ever in council they may consider such an addition advantageous and expedient. There are few of those who are fighting with the provisions of the new measure who do not know that the theoretical perfection of an enactment is often its practical defect. This is no new discovery in the philosophy of politics. By endeavouring to encompass all wants, and to satisfy all tastes, the fear is of a failure in the great circle of our objects. The difference between the two is just the difference between the atmosphere of a cloudy optimism and the region of the tangible and the useful. If your strainers are of a texture too close and compact, your vintage will not permeate them; and if you widen the threads, or relax the tissue too freely, your wines will rush down, carrying their feculences with them. If two purely elective chambers are provided, or rather imposed on the Colonies by this bill, it will be equivalent to a double House of Commons, with a double elaboration of measures, and a double probability of failure; your strainers are, in fact, too open, and your bills, local or general, are likely to come out of committee as unrectified, as rough-hewn as they went in. The single chamber, with the elective element predominating, seems the simpler and more concise method of satisfying the general round of wants prevailing in a youthful Colony; the nomination part of such chamber being the best available substitution for the great property and territorial qualification, supporting with us the hereditary branch of the legislature.

22. But there are two great points in the body of the bill, or rather arising out of it, which are likely to be as beneficial as any of its positive enactments—first, the pledge therein given to the Colonies that the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain are jointly disposed to concur fully in the wishes of the Colonists, and to concede whatever

political rights may promote their contentment, and consolidate their internal prosperity; and secondly,—considering the large and general powers for the administration of Colonial affairs which will pass to the Colonists under this bill, the sum of relief to the Colonial Office at home, from a class of duties at once numerous and perplexing, will be so valuable and advantageous as amply to compensate the labours of the imperial legislature. Such has been hitherto, and the legislature of the empire concurring, such will be, the government of the Colonies.

23. We are now come, by no very long or elaborate route, to that anticipated hill-top from which we can look out and around on the panorama of the Colonies in all its amplitude and beauty. In every direction the plough and the pastoral crook are seen doing their appointed work. Wherever you turn, the tramp of new feet and the sound of new voices are beating with their ten thousand echoes on the ear. Towns and cities filled with the arts of life, and glowing with the prolific embers of an advanced civilisation, are become permanent tenants where the jungle and the forest had an immemorial occupancy. The air of the ports and havens which fringe their almost boundless sea-board is brilliant with the glitter of unaccustomed flags; and religion, that ornate key-stone of the social arch in all lands, is heard in all the diligence of Christian teaching, and in all the earnestness of Christian supplication.

24. In the midst of this easy flowing of the Colonial tides, an admission of existing difficulties is in no sense a confession of incompetency to surmount them; nor are occasional failures in so wide a circle of duties as the government of an empire otherwise than perfectly consistent with general and prevailing success. Looking only at the lapse of ten short years, taking up the returns merely of the last decade, the population, the agriculture, the com-

merce, the accumulated capital of Canada and of the great Australian group have been doubled in their aggregated sums within that brief period. The exceptions to this auspicious course of things have been partial in their extent, and transient in their duration. There needs must be disturbances and exceptions affecting the progress of human affairs. It is contrary to all reason and probability that the course of government, in any hands, should be smoother than the course of nature.

25. The case of the West India Islands will probably be pointed out as a large and a permanent exception; but they scarcely are so, for the peculiarity of their case arises less out of the policy of Government to those islands separately than from the necessity which existed, and exists still, of framing commercial regulations, not for this or for that particular class of interests, but for the benefit of that great family of nations of which the empire is composed. The people of these home islands have, for a series of years, it is hard to say been pillaged, but at least have had the black mail of the West India planters pretty liberally levied upon them. Everything must have an end—even the bad passions and the selfish propensities of men; and the end of this impoverishing monopoly has come in its season. The timely renunciation of these and of another class of spoils has postponed, if it has not permanently saved, the exactors from that reckoning and retribution which would have been more fatal to them than a re-modelling of the British tariff. These Colonies have been enduring now, for some years, the tediousness of a transition process. Up to the commencement of that probationary period they had been kept on their legs with springs and bolsters, and the other apparatus of an unjust monopoly; and now when the day has dawned upon them in which they must walk by their own strength, and

run with their own sinews the open race of commerce, they find it a more onerous task than it would have been if they had not continued so long encumbered with that false clothing which has permitted their natural strength to remain latent and untested; but let them now, at the eleventh hour, gird up their loins, and resolutely set their shoulders to lift the wheels of their island commerce out of the old ruts, and they will see the width of the margin which at present separates them from the more prosperous Colonies diminishing day by day, and find that their case is in no sense a permanent exception to the rule, but is hourly hastening into a more perfect harmony and agreement with it.

26. It is again repeated, therefore, that the Colonies of England, upon the whole, are in a state of decided prosperity. In them the social, the civil, the political elements are every day acquiring greater strength and a more perfect organisation. They buy and sell in a larger circle of markets than ever before since their foundation; and a direct consequence of these more extended operations is their redoubled wealth and respectability. Such has been the happy progress of the Colonies. If it is a careless, an incompetent, a repressive government from which these results have flowed as from a fountain, then, as a logical necessity, from a vigilant, an attentive, and a so-called better government, a contrary series of results must have arisen. And it is infinitely better to pursue that course of administration—call it by what opprobrious terms you will—which sends us fruits of this blooming and gratifying kind, than to pursue that contrary course which, if there be anything in government answerable to the law of cause and effect in physics, must have proved its utter want of merit and utility by enfeebling the bonds of society in the Colonies, and which,

if it did not force into actual retrogression the commerce and wealth of those districts, must have contributed all that government can contribute to make them tame and stationary; but the thing any otherwise secured is an impossibility. The neat and productive condition of the great farm is a double demonstration that the chief bailiff and the husbandmen have skilfully and diligently done their work. As surely as we know a tree by its fruits, so surely and safely may we ascend from these experienced benefits up to the efficiently beneficial cause; and there the inquiry reasonably ends, and we rest in good government.

27. But then it is said there is not a wind blows out of heaven which brings not home some embodied grievance, which is not winged with some complaint from the Colonies. No doubt they who say so draw very freely on their imagination for a large part of their statement; still that is a happy spot on the surface of our planet—more happy, we dare affirm, than the famed Hesperides, of which the elder poets sang—where complaints and grievances are unknown. It is not, wherever it is alleged to be, a state to be realised, but an Utopia to be imagined; and that, be assured, is the finest essence and utmost privilege of a free state where complaints are promptly heard, and when proved as promptly redressed,—and that just remedy the uniform law and practice of this monarchy gives to every man covered by its broad wing, without impediment or intermission. But in all fairness deducting those grievances which it is legally in the power of the Colonies themselves to remove, those which have no just foundation, and those which, in the nature of things, are irremediable, how large a per-centage, think you, will remain for the rectifying hand of the most vigorous and the most attentive Government?

28. There is yet another large branch of reduction upon which there is a just right to insist. To the concoction of how many complaints does the mere existence of the Colonial Association practically offer a premium and a bounty? If the Colonists did not know that a great sewer was in course of building, and is now in working order, for the express purpose of receiving the entire political drainage of their districts, would they be as careful as now of course they will be, to prevent any part of their exuvia from stagnating near them, when to their knowledge a capacious conduit is prepared to carry it off, and convey the whole mass to its legitimate outfall on the shores of this island? As to the legality of there being such an association as this—we speak of the confederation of lords and gentlemen recently formed to receive the complaints of the Colonies, and to give them a parliamentary momentum—we are infinitely less competent to speak than the gentlemen of the inns of court; but we do think the question of its legality a point for the consideration of her Majesty's Attorney-General. It has hitherto been thought that a secret society for political purposes, doing its work in the dark, and insisting, when questioned, on its irresponsibility to any of the recognised tribunals of the state, was a combination so equivocal and so dangerous as to make its proceedings a just subject of legal investigation. An occult confederacy of parties, by which the course and action of responsible government might be foiled, interrupted, and undermined, and by whose council—ignorantly given, because unofficially instructed—the Colonists themselves might be most injuriously affected; an *imperium in imperio*; an emanation from the clubs of Paris—the spawn and concomitants of a servile revolution; a company of plotters, sitting with close-drawn curtains, and contriving the erection at every turn of

barricades against the progress of Colonial government, and maiming it as frequently as possible with unexpected weapons,—if an association having these qualities and objects, and accomplishing as far as opportunity may enable it these evil works, is not in its structure and its operation an offence at common law, it would seem to a lay spectator to require that it should be immediately made so.

29. The public will earnestly hope that the unexpected bursting into life of this association is not a presage of some approaching calamity; that it is not, like the pricking of the weird sisters' thumbs, an omen of some evil thing fermenting on the near horizon, or that of the Colonies at farthest. But it will be in the recollection of many who stand on the watch-towers of the kingdom, and who mark the movements of its foes, open or in ambush, that just before the armed outbreak in Canada some years since, the parliament and people of England were startled at the discovery that some members of the then House of Commons held a direct agency, and were invested with full powers to negotiate with the home Government the terms on which the Canadians would continue their allegiance or renounce it; and this intimate understanding between the disturbers of that Colony and the disturbers of the British House of Commons forewent by a few weeks only that notorious revolt to stay and to extinguish which we sent the Guards and other first-class troops across the stormy Atlantic. The public will cast out of its mind the idea that the thought of such a criminal and absurd movement is anywhere entertained at present, or that the association would for one moment sanction it; but the public will also determine that neither history, nor experience, nor probability have hitherto taught them any true lesson, if the ascendancy of this association in

the Colonies does not outweigh and overbalance any contingent good which in prudent hands it might accomplish, by the feuds, the altercations, and the discontents which it will make it its office and function to increase and to perpetuate. It is confidently rumoured that the womb of the association is gravid with some great conception, which, when the nurses have tossed and dandled into a little additional strength, will be competent to rule the Colonies without a murmur, and to renew to human eyes the visions of the golden age. We trust these remarkable hens are not sitting on pebbles; nor is it likely they are, for in the tents of the association the members are already heard singing the advent of a second Pollio. But why is the birth so long delayed? Is there no political doctor in all their dwelling-places who can facilitate the parturition?

“Oh! spring to light, auspicious babe, be born!”

30. But there are other cavillers at the government of the Colonies besides the association; that body may perhaps be safely left to the gathering in of the empty harvest, which will ultimately be laid on its own threshing-floors. Two gentlemen stand out in tolerable relief from their competitors, who have each their nostrum for the amelioration of all diseases, and the removal of all complaints in the Colonies. These gentlemen are entitled to be spoken of with the respect due to their good intentions, and with the indulgence which, as a Christian duty, should be extended to their errors. The first of these Colonial reformers is the gentleman who had so large a hand in the original settlement of New Zealand, which nevertheless resulted in the sad unsettling of that colony. He has had considerable Colonial experience, having gone out in the prime of life, and returned in its high meridian, but it

is to be feared as great a theorist in his mature years as in the verdure of his youth. His writings on Colonial subjects are clear, natural, and unostentatious, but his knowledge does not appear to be at all on a level either with his pretensions or his opportunities. His most prominent objections against the present course of administration are—first, that the Colonies are as a whole too distant to be efficiently governed by a cabinet, or a piece of a cabinet, sitting in London; and, second, what he considers the personal misdeportment of her Majesty's chosen servants officiating at the Colonial Office. It is not intended to say that these are the only objections enumerated, but they are the two most frequently repeated, and therefore it is presumed most confidently relied upon. Other and more subordinate complaints are unfolded in their due order, but we cannot in this place distribute them into classes and *genera*—

“The work were vain to number one the best,
And stand like Adam naming every beast;”

and it is quite enough for the occasion if we pick off the units which march at the head of his attacking columns.

31. Under favour, however, distance is no part of the question with which we have to deal, but subordination and peace in the Colonies are the questions to be elucidated; for as these prevail or do not prevail, just as they are consolidated or are insecure, just so are the conditions in existence by which the government of the Colonies will be made efficient or inefficient. The majority of the Colonies of England are not more distant than India, with her population which counts by tens of millions; and yet the whole of that rich eastern clime is governed as successfully by a few gentlemen wearing round hats, in Cannon-row and Leadenhall-street, as it could be by a council of

native princes, or even a coterie of Westminster reformers, assembling daily in a floating palace, on the Indus or the Hooghly. The arm of England—they may absolutely settle it in their minds—is strong, and long enough to reach the Colonies, if they were all clustered together at the Antipodes; and this gentleman may be perfectly certain that if he will work out his colonial sum accurately, he will find that distance is not so much as an appreciable quantity in his quotient.

32. The second objection hurled by the same hands against the Government is of so personal a description that a third party cannot with much propriety express an opinion either way. Still if it is well remembered that a minister of state is not *ex officio* a master of the ceremonies; that like other men he was created a little lower than the angels, and has, as a concomitant of his origin, the taint of a terrestrial pedigree; and that if men in these high and giddy stations do not at all times treat all persons with a flowing courtesy, it may be attributable partly to the instability of human passions, to the pressure of public business, and to the care of those perplexing interests which come upon them daily. But gentlemen are gentlemen under all circumstances; and although some political amateurs and Colonial theorists may obtrude their suggestions too freely on the Government, and multiply their inquiries too perseveringly, yet the world will not doubt that the same conciliatory and accessible deportment which is generally adopted in the public offices of the Government was followed in this particular case also, unless there were particular reasons justifying a departure from the prevalent rule.

33. The second of these Colonial objectors is the honourable gentleman, better known as the ex-member for Bath than as one of the sitting members for Sheffield.

In Parliament he is a perfectly independent man—so independent that he thinks with nobody, and, by a moral reciprocation, nobody thinks with him; he is the Ishmael of the House of Commons—an archer, whose arrows in turn vibrate in the flesh of all parties, and who is retributively pierced throughout the session by the weapons of those whose hostility he has evoked. He also has his palliatives and his remedial plans for the better government of the Colonies; and principally has thrust forward the scheme of Henry IV. for a confederation of European States, for mutual defence and the preservation of peace. Mutilated and maimed as the project is, disfigured and distorted as the gipsies are said to make the faces of the children they steal, the ideas of the great king scarcely peep out from the gloom of the new canvass on which they are misrepresented. However, there, in the pages of the ex-member for Bath, is the skeleton of that mammoth figure, but it is dead and motionless, and utterly incapable of useful resuscitation. Nevertheless, by the hands of this gentleman it is disinterred and spread out in colours a little new, but neither to the instruction or the amusement of any who may chance to gaze upon it. That the states of Europe in the time of Henry the Great should have eagerly concurred in a scheme which the oppression of the wars which had so recently wasted them had made so desirable, was to be expected, and in the natural order of things. In the hands, however, of Henry of Navarre, and in his times, it came to nothing; to how much less than nothing is it likely to come in the hands of this new manipulator of constitutions, and in times rendering it as inappropriate to any existing wants in the Colonies as the parade-boots of a dragoon are an inappropriate covering for the legs of an infant born yesterday? Henry's scheme was for the more secure government of a community of

nations, whose numbers, wealth, and close neighbourhood were likely to suggest, though they could not justify, motives for the interruption and invasion of independent rights; but in this case our reformer would impose a magnificent and operose set of preventives where there are the fewest motives prompting to transgression. The measure, whipped into shape in the former case, had a colourable adaptation to the existing necessities of Europe; but by carrying such an apparatus to the western hemisphere, where as yet there are neither interests, nor tendencies, nor a people needing it, is like building a Temple of Diana for worshippers who are yet to be born. All honour, however, to the learned ex-member for Bath. He is a jewel in his way; and though he chooses, like some stars, to dwell apart, it gives his contemporaries a better opportunity of estimating the brilliancy and the purity of his light.

33. From this brief statement, and from the tenor of their public discourses, it is clear to a demonstration that the whole brood of Colonial croakers does not differ more from the Government and policy which is assailed than they differ from each other as to the remedies suited to the symptoms and the circumstances of the case. Left to themselves, they would be shortly in the temper of tearing each other to pieces, if, indeed, that unhappy result was not averted by their succeeding to the better fortunes of that ancient huntsman who was only eaten up by his own hounds. The scarcely colourable pretext with them ever is, not to thwart, but to assist the administration:—

“Reason’s the card, but passion is the gale.”

They are much in the case of that sanctimonious pirate who went to sea truly with the Ten Commandments in

his pocket, but erased "Thou shalt not steal" as soon as he had got well into the offing.

34. If the world might believe them, the Colonies are a great prize thrown away, a superb dominion which, on account of our supineness or our ignorance, is in danger of preter-lapsing over into the limbo of lost nations. But depend upon it, a far different destiny awaits them. They have been trained to the difficulties, and are on the point of being endowed with honours and responsibilities of self-government. We are multiplying their population and purifying the tone of their public sentiments. We are promoting, as far as secondary means can promote, their acquisition of material wealth, and securing its enjoyment to them when won. We are deepening the foundations of their peace within, and of their power without, by removing all ascertained causes of irritation in the one case, and holding up the sword of England against all interruption in the other. These things we are doing, and shall continue to do; not with uninterrupted success, but with occasional failures, still sowing on at all seasons and beside all waters; and the Government may be permitted to say that it has fallen to its lot to distribute throughout the Colonies as rich and as extensive a shower, as large and as transforming a baptism of social and material benefits, as ever, in the history of a miscellaneous and secondary empire, human hands have been the honoured instruments of conferring.

35. There is no injustice much greater than that of judging the acts of a great administrative department by the rare and singular exceptions to, rather than by the prevailing and almost uniform rule of success which has attended its operations. Nothing can be more contrary to reason or to nature. Storms occasionally break out over the quiet lagoons of Italy; but should we say therefore

that the climate of the lakes is habitually tempestuous? Quite within living memory we have had riots and incendiarism pervading the urban districts of the kingdom, and breaking forth with concentrated violence at Monmouth and at Bristol. We have been visited, too, both in the capital and in the provinces, with the feverish excitement caused by the undulating motions of that great land serpent, the Charter; and even in the metropolis the military and civil resources of the Crown were brigaded for a season, and kept under arms to repress an expected outbreak of force by force. But what man wearing his head between his shoulders, what class of men—except, peradventure, the political monomaniacs themselves—ever purposed on that account to change the elements of our constitutional polity, or to re-model so much as the ink-stands in the Home Office? To what just purpose, then, with how little consistency, and with how much less conscience, can it be purposed to re-construct the powers and re-organise the functions of the Colonial Office simply because, sweeping the whole horizon with the false optics embodied in their telescope, they think they can discover here and there in the vast circumference of the Colonies a blemish or an abuse?

36. A few moments might not be mis-spent in considering the sum of their discoveries, taking the circuit of the globe as the theatre of their investigation. In Ceylon a series of false evidence and forged documents, as it now appears, had deceived the lynx-eyed searchers in the imperial Parliament. The first act in this small drama was the levying of arms against the authority of the Crown in that Colony; and the first necessity which in such a state of things would press itself on the mind of the local Government must have been to put down force by force, and to pull up drowned order by the locks. In the

presence of arms from time immemorial all laws have been silent. When the torrent has left its natural bed, when the inundation has broken in upon the cultivated lands and the dwelling-places of men, they resort to any means, they erect any barriers which promise to stop the evil and to restore the disturbed parts to their natural course and operation. Throughout the world, and in all the phases of human society arms have been repelled by arms. In this case, as was almost a matter of course, the advantage was with those who stood for the restoration and maintenance of law and order; and when these first elements of society were again in the ascendant, those persons who had abused their station and their opportunities by contributing to suspend them, were dealt with according to their culpability and their offences. Was there anything criminal, impeachable, blamable in all this on the part of the Government of Ceylon?—or was there not rather, as far as the outbreak and its prompt and effectual suppression is concerned, a just ground laid for a vote of thanks, much more than for a committee of inquiry?

37. The Cape of Good Hope is the next point where, from an exceedingly complex mixture of races, there has been a little morbid fermentation. The Government, tendering the general well being of the empire, wished to do a thing in that Colony which, by all the law and precedent referable to the case, it had a perfect right to do,—the residents, however, resisted; and deprecating so unequal and so unseemly a contest as that to which the firebrands of the Cape invited us, we cancelled our original purpose, and retired. It was the case of the mouse which impertinently obtruded itself upon the path of the elephant—the next step of the half reasoning animal would have annihilated its vivacious opponent; but, disdaining to crush so obscure a foe, the great quad-

ruped wheeled round and re-entered its seat in the copse and brushwood of the hill-side. Was that a quarrelsome or an unconciliatory course for the greater and the stronger of the two parties to adopt towards the lesser and the weaker? Was it not rather a fresh proof that a Government which would travel through a large circle of duties smoothly and prosperously will not have its temper disturbed, nor its magnanimity lowered, either by the perversity or the meanness of some of the elements with which, in dealing with the mixed affairs of men and of nations, it must be brought into occasional collision?

38. The next point at which the active fires of a miniature volcano have recently called for suppression at our hands, is in the jewelled region of the Ionian sea. No one throughout the little republic situated there pretends that its government by Great Britain is not incomparably better than any which had ever preceded it. With either Musulman or Greek rule, the comparison would be perfectly odious and perfectly absurd. But there are always individuals, even in so small and so insular a community as that of the Seven Islands, who will be dissatisfied with such ameliorations as are practical, and are discontented with their political progress, though peradventure the wheels of their system were to take fire by the mere phrenzy of their course. The antecedents of this island population do not furnish many assurances of their veneration for property or order. The Levant has a world-wide reputation as being a sort of pirate race-course, and too many of its ports as the training places of a pirate population. This species of sea-going brigandage, and a strong instinct against all government, either honest or orderly, are too strongly the leading characteristics of the Ionian mind. It is not, however, presumed to say that these tendencies are so deeply rooted as to be ineradicable; or, much

more, that if they were so branded into the social system of the Ionians, that two blacks were equivalent to one white—so equivalent that their intractability as a people would justify our tyranny as a government, if we had ever been guilty enough to exercise it. This only is meant: that the Ionian, like the Cingalese population, is hardly able to appreciate the merit and value of that government which regulates and raises the tone of their affairs; and that the insurrections to which they committed themselves must necessarily have had as their sequel the bitter draining of that cup which they had wantonly and knowingly filled for themselves.

39. There is a fourth and final instance in which peace truly has not been so profound, nor contentment so universal, as the Government and people of England, from the pains taken and the sacrifices made, had a just reason to expect would have rewarded their diligence and their exertions. Canada is doing the most she can to renew and to answer the riddle of the Sphynx, and she must beware of the fate of him who originally solved it. It would be a task for another *Cædipus* to unravel the thread of her involved prejudices, or to explain the course of her irregular passions. It is but too plain that, in the great province before us, they have preyed too extensively on garbage, have eaten too freely of "the insane root, which takes the reason prisoner." For what less than hallucination bordering on lunacy could so far abuse the Canadian mind as to lead it to the conclusion that incorporation with the United States could lighten any of the burdens, or rectify any of the complaints actually experienced in Canada? The whole course of British legislation with respect to that province has for a series of years been characterised by a relinquishment of power on

our part, and an accession of power on theirs; so that at this moment Canada is by far a freer and a less taxed state than any within the chain of the great North American Confederation. If Canada thinks it is better to be towed at the stern of the states, though haply they sail into the high latitudes of anarchy and dissolution, or, if she judge it happier to be swallowed up in that maelstrom than to stand on with a clean flag at the mast-head, in preference to one sullied with the brand of slavery stamped in at its four corners; if so, the world would be curious to know what compensation she will receive for the place and privileges she is relinquishing. She has herself recently published it, and a blush will suffuse every Englishman's cheek at hearing the confession. It is the improvement of a few cents per barrel on the price of Canadian flour!!!

40. To this conclusion we have done nothing to bring the population of the Canadas; nor can we really do them the injustice to suppose that, as a community, they have so deplorably reasoned downwards. It is the disloyal and the idle, rather than the industrious and the steadfast, who have kindled this transient meteor, whose light could neither help nor guide, but was a thousand times likelier to mislead and ruin, those who trusted to its ephemeral radiance. But how much public freedom, how much personal ease and reputation, would the Canadian people have thrown away, if this fatal gift, the right of annexation, had been conceded to them? They would have exchanged the mild and pacific sway of a popular monarchy, where, by a vigilant and judicious balancing and adjustment of all interests, no single one can materially predominate or inconveniently assail the other; this they would have left for the fierce dominion

and the fluctuating passions of a democracy which has already proved itself too strong for the limitations of government, and too selfish for the maintenance of justice.

41. If they will not hear us, will they condescend to hear the great teachers of civilised mankind? "Of this I am sure: that in a democracy the majority of the citizens is capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority, whenever strong divisions prevail in that kind of polity, as they often must; and that oppression of the minority will extend to far greater numbers, and will be carried on with much greater fury than can ever be apprehended from the dominion of a single sceptre. In such a popular persecution individual sufferers are in as much more deplorable condition than in any other. Under a cruel prince, they have the balmy compassion of mankind to assuage the smart of their wounds—they have the plaudits of the people to animate their generous constancy under their sufferings; but those who are subjected to wrong under multitudes are deprived of all external consolation; they seem deserted by mankind, and overpowered by a conspiracy of their whole species." This is the language of no less a man than Burke, and has upon it the stamp of his wisdom and discrimination. And to the same effect are the words of that great master in the political schools of the ancient world—

*"Τὸ ἦθος τὸ αὐτὸ, καὶ ἄμφω δεσποτικὰ τῶν βελτιόνων, καὶ τὰ ψηφίσματα, ὡσπερ ἐκεῖ τὰ ἐπιταλματα· καὶ ὁ δημαγωγὸς καὶ ὁ κολαζὸς οἱ ἀντοὶ καὶ ἀνάλογον· καὶ μάλιστα ἑκάτεροι παρ' ἑκατέροις ἰσχύουσιν, οἱ μὲν κόλακες παρὰ τυράννοις, οἱ δὲ δημαγωγοὶ παρὰ τοῖς δήμοις τοῖς τοιούτοις."**

* "In each the moral and the political character is the same, for each exercises a sharp authority over the better class of citizens, and decrees are in the one case what votes and ordinances are in the other; the demagogue and the court favourite is, in fact, the same essential character, modified only by their different circumstances and their position. In their hands is the principal power, each in their respective forms of government; for a demagogue will do the work of the court favourite, and the court favourite that of the demagogue, from the prevalent similarity of their characters."

The great lesson which Canada needs to have taught her, and which she must learn and practise also, before she can fully realise the class benefits she seeks, is to look less to legislation, and more to her own diligence and activity for that improvement in material things which she covets so heartily, and clamours for so vehemently. To clear her unpierced and unpruned forests, to lay a greater breadth of her teeming soil beneath the enriching furrows of the plough, is a thousand times more to her purpose and for her happiness than whether she continues subject to the sceptre of Great Britain, or is swallowed up in the syrtis of the American Union.

42. This, then, is the sum of the discoveries made by these Chaldean shepherds—namely, that in about fifty colonies, lying beneath all the signs of the Zodiac, they have found some of the sequelæ of a political fever existing in less than five of them; and we venture to say that though they have sought so diligently, and travelled so far, they might have found a larger and a more prolific mare's nest much nearer to their own doors. We have now passed in quick review the prominent features which have characterised the Colonial administration of her Majesty's present ministry; we have enumerated some of its happy and distinguishing fruits, and have further brought into lateral perspective some points of the scheme of Government with which the Colonial theorists would have supplanted that promising and well-ordered growth of social benefits, by the wild and weedy vegetation of their undigested and inappropriate measures.

43. There is, perhaps, not one of the expedients suggested by the cavillers at the policy by which the Colonies have been governed, which is not disowned by the open declaration of the Parliament and people of England. Repudiated and disowned, also, by the Colonies themselves,

who send home thanks and congratulations to the Government for the measures already completed, and for those also which are presently in progress—disowned, too, by what is greater than either, or the whole put together—by all the principles of reason and of truth which are in any sense applicable to the question—what greater concurrence of dissent would the most stiff-necked and unconvertible have, than that which speaks to them out of the mouths of these numerous and unimpeachable witnesses? Truly, if they will not believe the solemn declarations of the imperial Parliament, embodied in its acts and ordinances; nor the deliberate sentiments of the inquiring and investigating population of England; nor yet that of the Colonies themselves, so far as that is deducible from the evidence of the best and most upright portions of their press and literature; no, nor even of Truth herself, though she comes to them clothed with the garments she wore in heaven, and by which she is known and acknowledged throughout the whole earth,—if they will not believe this accumulation and concurrence of testimony as to the unseasonable and inappropriate character of those measures they would adopt, and also to the judicious adaptation and success of those now in operation, as well as those which are about to reinforce the contentment and to fortify the liberties of the Colonies, then neither would they believe, though one should rise from the dead to sanction and to seal the almost universal declaration.

44. Looking back upon the general tenor and effect of the doctrines of those who say they have a sort of apostolical authority to reform the government of the Colonies, it will be found that their tendency leans rather to the degradation and dismemberment of an empire than to its unity and exaltation. Even since the primitive lapse of our species, and men began to dedicate themselves to

some settled occupation, a lower class of faculties has been found sufficient to pull down than to build up. And this is equally true whether their mischievous diligence affected the safety of a wayside dwelling-place or the stability of an outstretched empire. How unhappy and how destitute of all public utility are the tasks they have set themselves. Our forefathers through a course of ages took pains past all computation, and struggled through a thousand unrecorded labours, to commit to us the empire, colonial and imperial, as we now behold it. And we should be most unworthy of being their heirs and of enjoying the inheritance, if we permitted during the period of our occupation the slightest alienation or the smallest waste of any of its well-won parts.

45. Depend upon it, we shall have more Colonies before we have less. And it is well for the world and for the progress of society in many of its finest districts that it should be so. We shall not, it is believed, relinquish any part of them until their right hand is sufficiently armed for their own defence; we shall not impoverish the fountains of civil justice which we have opened in them; we shall not hold them in pupilage politically or commercially, but confer upon them in both kinds the utmost freedom consistent with their subordination and allegiance; we shall not estimate them as we are asked to do—that is, as a merchant estimates his stock in trade, nor count their value by his scale of profit and loss. Freedom and prosperity to the Colonies themselves, and authority and dominion to the parent state, are a class of honours, by whatever government secured, all price beyond, and cheap at almost any expenditure. They came to us, some of them by discovery and plantation, some by treaty, and some as the *spoila opima* of wars in which, being provoked, we fought and conquered. They are to

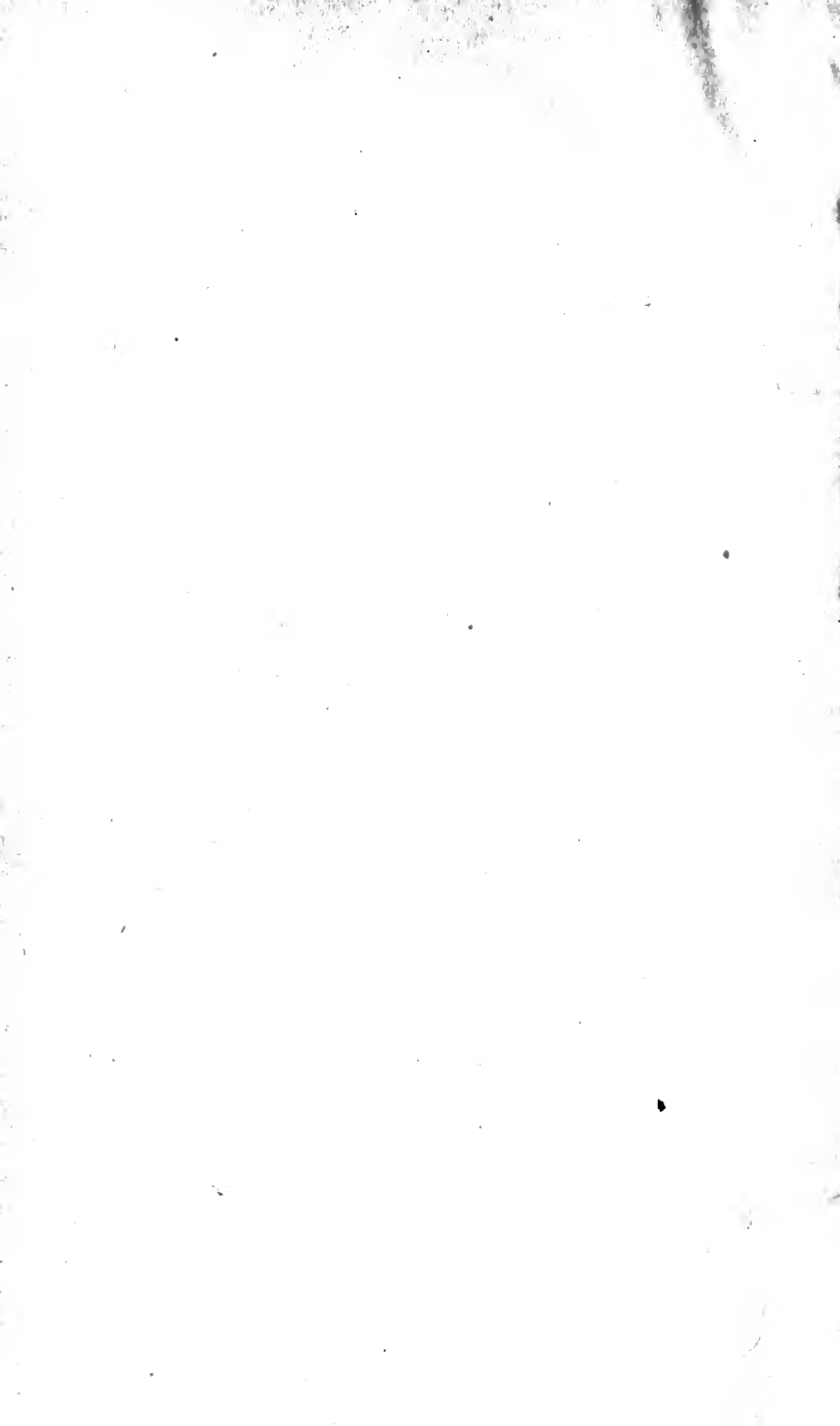
us the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which has rolled on and nearly filled the whole earth.

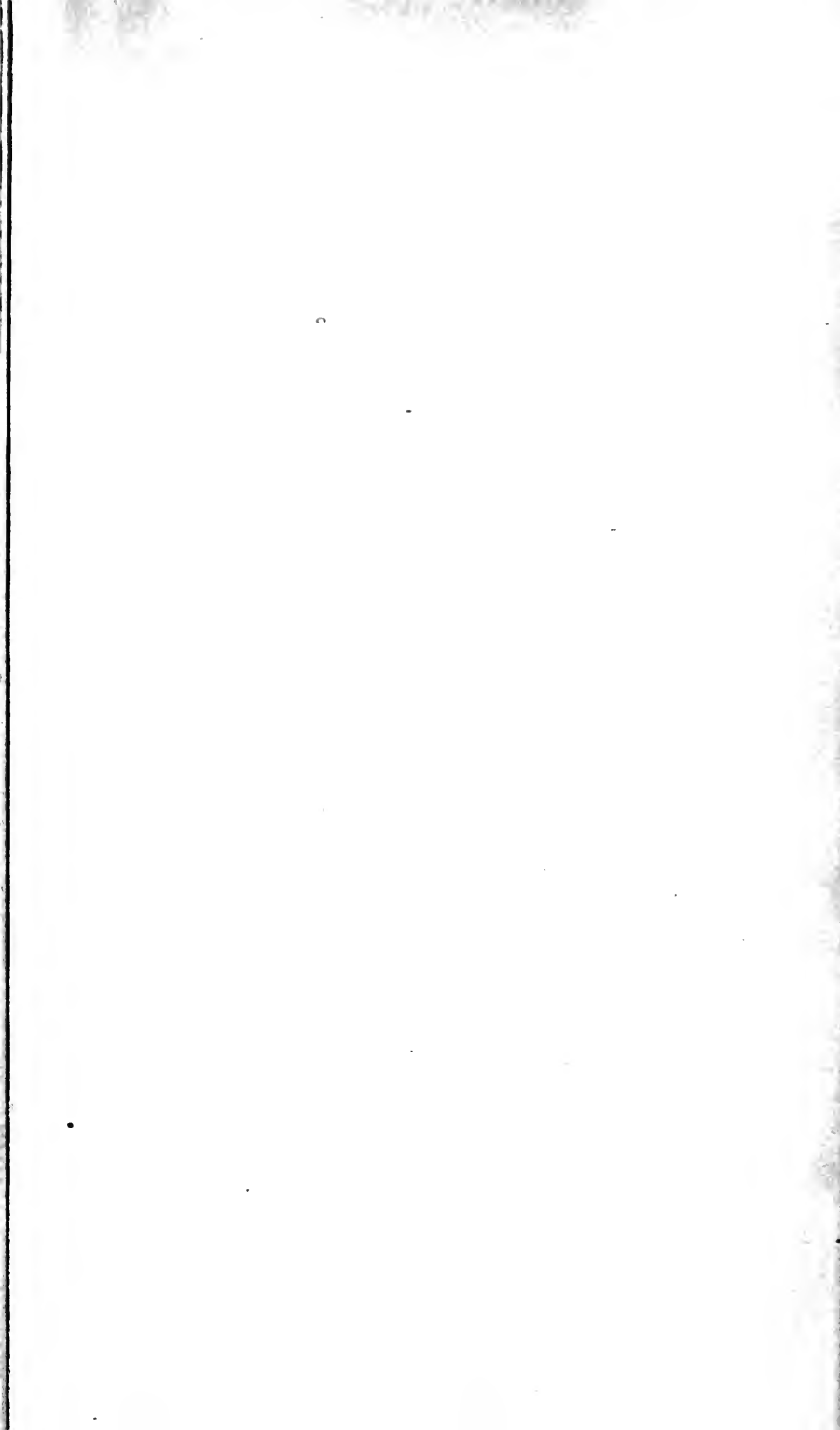
46. It would be an easy affair, no doubt, if we made up our minds to relinquish island after island, and to strike our flag upon shore after shore, to lessen the cost of Colonial government, and of Colonial protection; for by that process Colonies we should very shortly have none. These jewels would be pulled out of the crown, and escape from the custody of Britain to enrich the diadem of a power who could better appreciate their value. We could certainly in that manner draw in our imperial proportions, and gather up our giant limbs into a nutshell. But we should thereby hand back those interesting districts to the anarchy in which we found some of them, and out of which by our fostering government they were fast emerging; and others which are not yet sufficiently strong nor sufficiently trained for self defence we should surrender to the subjugation and the sway of a master less magnanimous, less conscientious, less scrupulous far than in any section of our acquired or our entailed inheritance we have ever proved ourselves to be.

47. Chronologically considered, we are not a young people. Eight centuries since the last conquest are stamping their lines deeply on our forehead. Since then we have passed through the æra of the Crusades, and the days of our plumed chivalry. Thence we have come down through the wars of the Roses, and alighting upon the epoch of the Revolution, we drew again our not unlaureled sword, and used it for the liberties of this rising people—the world very well knows how. We came last into that crisis of European affairs which shook the Continent to its foundations at the close of the last century. We shall not recount the episodes and the vicissitudes of

that great epic contest, but we emerged from it a conquering people. During these periods we won some of the most valuable Colonies, "*Senatus populusque Romanorum*;" or what is better, for the senate and people of Britain; and surely what in our comparative youth and inexperience we accumulated and secured, we shall not now in our strength and maturity cast away at the suggestion of the fearful and the unbelieving.

THE END.





JV
1062
C65

The Colonies of Great Britain

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

COLONIAL OFFICE