Colonization and Colonial Government:

A LECTURE

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THE RIGHT HON. JAMES WHITESIDE, M.P.,

IN THE CHAIR.

COLONIZATION

AND

COLONIAL GOVERNMENT.

I PROPOSE to invite your attention this evening to the subject of colonization and colonies. I have selected this subject because it seems to me to offer, at the present time, some aspects of more than usual interest. It is no exaggeration, I think, to say that this country—indeed that the world—has arrived at a critical epoch in colonial affairs. In the progress of colonizing enterprise we have reached, or almost reached, a point at which further progress in the same pursuit must become impossible, for the sufficient reason that the field for its exercise will soon cease to exist. The earth, indeed, is still very far from being full; but glance over the map of the world, and outside tropical regions say where the country is to be found which has not already been occupied and settled by man—in which, at least, the germ of political society has not been planted. I think you will find that North-Western America is now about the only considerable space of which this description can, with approximate truth, be given, and already the work of colonization is busy there: "A region," says Mr. Merivale, in the last edition of his important work, "of no small interest to observers of our times, as affording the last open field for European emigration. The remainder

of the extra tropical world is now filled up [occupied?]. No other site is left for the foundation of future empires. Its occupiers will be the latest adventurers in that vast work of European colonization which began scarcely four centuries ago. The duty left for future time will be only to fill up the outlines already traced in days of more romantic adventure."*

But again, in a political point of view also, we have arrived at a critical stage in colonial history. You are probably aware that within the present year the British colony of Canada has taken a step which is virtually an act of sovereignty. It has undertaken, of its own motion, without consultation with the mother country, to reform, in the most radical and sweeping fashion, its political system, and, not content with this, it makes overtures to all the other American colonies to enter with it into a single grand federation—a federation, the mere magnitude of which, should the plan, as seems probable, take effect, must, one would think, effectually unfit the new state for the position of even nominal dependence.† Indeed, as regards this point, the promoters of the scheme—though they have quite recently somewhat changed their language‡—have made no secret of their

* "Colonization and the Colonies." By Herman Merivale, A.M., Professor of Political Economy. New Edition, 1861, p. 116.

† "British North America will become the fourth maritime power in the world. England, France, and the United States will alone have a marine superior to ours. Isolated from one another, we could claim only a very low place among nations; but bring us together, and there is no country, save England, to which we owe birth—save the United States, whose power is derived from the same parent source as our own—save France, from whom many of those here present have sprung, can take rank before us."—Colonel Grey at the Montreal dinner.

‡ See post, pp. 45, 46.

aspirations. "Whether the day for its accomplishment has yet arrived," said Mr. Brown, the minister who originated and has taken the most prominent part in bringing forward this grand scheme—"whether the day for its accomplishment has yet arrived is a fit subject of inquiry; but, assuredly, no Canadian has a claim to the name of statesman who has not looked forward to the day when all the British portion of this continent shall be gathered into one. . . . We must look forward to the day when the whole of British America shall stand together, and, in close alliance and heartiest sympathy with Great Britain, be prepared to assume the full duties and responsibilities of a great and powerful nation." Such are the plans now formally promulgated, and such is the language now publicly uttered by the leading men of Canada. The tone adopted towards Great Britain is indeed respectful, and even cordial. There is no formal defiance of her authority: there is only the quiet assumption that she will, as a matter of course, acquiesce in the nullity of her own supremacy. And Great Britain does acquiesce. From no British statesman of the least mark, from no political party here of the slightest weight, has any sign proceeded of opposition, or even of protest, against the impending revolution.

It seems, then, that, both as regards the external conditions of colonization and the political principles on which colonies are ruled, we have reached a critical stage in colonial history; and it has therefore occurred to me that a brief retrospect of the past course of colonial enterprise and government might, at the present time, possess some interest for this Society. Such a retrospect can, of course, only be—if for no other reason, because of the limitations in point of time which an address of this kind imposes—of the most imperfect and summary kind: still I venture to hope it may not prove altogether uninstructive. When a great and pregnant change

is approaching, there is an advantage in reverting our gaze from the present and future to the past, and in tracing the causes, many of them perhaps scarcely perceived at the time, which have at a distance prepared and led up to the catastrophe. The crisis, thus regarded, shapes itself before our mental eye in its true proportions. We can appreciate its meaning and drift, and are enabled to estimate at something like their real value the importance of the issues it involves.

And here, to mark in some degree the limits within which I propose to confine myself in this address, it may be well if I state at the outset the sense in which I use the word "colony." I take the definition given by Sir G. C. Lewis:—"A colony properly denotes a body of persons belonging to one country and political community, who, having abandoned that country and community, form a new and separate society, independent or dependent, in some district which is wholly or nearly uninhabited, or from which they expel the ancient inhabitants."*

You will observe that, according to this definition, wholesale migrations of entire peoples—such as took place on a great scale on the breaking up of the Roman Empire—do not constitute colonization; for here it is not a body of people belonging to a political community who abandon their original country, it is the community itself. Again, the definition excludes from the category of colonies such dependencies as British India, where the bulk of the inhabitants have never migrated from any given political community, but are a composite body, made up partly of the aboriginal people, and partly of immigrants who have reached the country at various times and from various quarters, the English forming quite an inconsiderable fraction of the whole. For the same

* "Essay on the Government of Dependencies." By G. C. Lewis, Esq, 1841, p. 170.

reason, all mere military stations, such as Malta and Gibraltar, must be excluded from the category of colonies proper. On the other hand, the definition does not exclude cases which some people might regard as inconsistent with the idea of a colony. The body of persons who migrate and form the new society may be either "independent or dependent." In modern times, indeed, the idea of political dependency has come to be very generally associated with the conception of a colony; but it is no necessary part of that conception; nor was the word so understood in ancient times. All the more celebrated colonies, for example, of the Greeks and Phœnicians, the two greatest colonizing nations of antiquity, were, in a political sense, absolutely independent of the mother state. In short, if you desire to form a true idea of a colony, you have only to follow the fortunes of a swarm of bees. The swarm leaves its parent hive—the original community—it coheres in a distinct society; it settles in a new locality, either previously unoccupied, or from which it has expelled the former inhabitants: what may be the nature of its further connexion with the mother hive it is not necessary to consider: whatever this be, the swarm is not the less a true image of a colony proper. Such were the colonies founded by the Greeks and Phœnicians in ancient times on the islands and along the shores of the Œgœan and Mediterranean Seas; such, in modern times, were those founded by Spain, France, and England in the New World; and such are those which we are even now building up in Australia and New Zealand.

Having thus determined the proper sense of the word "colony," we now proceed with our review, taking as its starting point what may be regarded as the opening of modern colonization, the discovery of America. That supreme event had no sooner happened than the leading nations of Europe—

Spain, Portugal, France, England, the Dutch Republic—hastened to the scene of action, eager to assert, each for itself, a right to a place in the greatest field ever thrown open to human energy and ambition. The numerous enterprises which followed are among the most striking and picturesque episodes in history, and are, doubtless, familiar to most of those whom I address, associated as they are with the well-known names of Cortez, Pizarro, Cabot, Drake, Raleigh, Gilbert, and, in later times, the Pilgrim Fathers, William Penn, and others. The movement, begun in the sixteenth century and continued to the present time, has now, as I have just remarked, all but completed its work of scattering the seeds of political society over the habitable globe.

The career of modern colonization has thus extended over nearly four centuries. We shall find it convenient to divide this term into three periods—the first extending from the conquest of the New World down to the American War of Independence; the second, from the date of that event to the year 1830; and the third, from the year 1830 to the present time.

Contemplating the first of these periods—that which extends from the conquest of the New World down to the American War of Independence—we are struck with the predominance of the purely commercial, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, the purely monetary, spirit of its colonization—a feature which distinguishes it alike from the present age and from the age of Grecian and Roman colonization which had preceded it. The spirit of that epoch is, I say, distinct from that of the present age; for, although doubtless commerce has not been absent from the aims of colonizing adventurers in recent times, and although, in the event, colonial enterprise has powerfully promoted commercial expansion, still if we look to the motives of the actual emigrants

—still more if we look to the legislation of Parliament—we shall find that commerce has occupied, in connexion with recent schemes of colonization, quite a secondary place. The true character of that movement, as I shall hereafter show, has been industrial and social—its chief aim being to provide an outlet for the surplus population and capital of the old country—a motive which, by a singular coincidence, it shares with the earliest historical colonization—that of Phœnicia and Greece. As for the colonization of Rome, it was, as is well known, essentially military and imperial; the colonies of Rome having little of the character of industrial and trading settlements, and being, in truth, mainly garrisons planted in the countries which she had conquered.

What, then, distinguishes the colonization of the first period of modern colonial history, is the intensely commercial, or, rather, as I have phrased it, monetary spirit in which it was conceived.* The impulse under which the discovery of the New World took place may typify for us the motives under the influence of which its subsequent colonization, for at all events two centuries, was carried on. That impulse had its source in an intense thirst for the precious metals; for, as you will remember, the voyage of Columbus was undertaken in the hope of finding a passage by a western route to the East Indies—then supposed to be of all the world the region richest in gold and silver. The desire for metallic wealth, strong at all times, seems at this particular epoch to have been exceptionally powerful. Not only did it inspire the adventure which resulted in the great discovery; it was among the principal causes which hurried

* It ought to be observed that there are to this statement some notable exceptions, more particnlarly in English colonization. With New Englanders, for example, it was always a boast that "they were originally a plantation religious, not a plantation of trade."

across the Atlantic the eager emigrant crowd who peopled the western world when it was found. And when at length settlements were established, and the business of colonial legislation began, we find the same passion governing with no less powerful sway the councils of statesmen and princes.

The passion for the precious metals was thus, at this period of the world, for whatever reason, driven to excess; and, as sometimes happens, the prevailing crave was exalted into a dogma. It was proclaimed on high authority, that all wealth, properly so called, consisted in gold and silver. The doctrine found a favourable audience; it was accepted; and for some two centuries held its ground—held its ground, not as the tenet of a sect, or as the belief of a particular people, but as a truth, adopted in good faith, and systematically acted on by all the leading nations of Europe.

Wealth was thus held to consist in the precious metals; and wealth was power. It followed that the great object of statesmanship should be to increase in the statesman's country the stock of gold and silver. Colonial policy was moulded under the influence of this view. Colonies were valued, not for their social advantages, as opening a new career to a superabundant population at home—indeed superabundance of population was, according to the notions of that time, an impossible contingency—not for the economic gain of supplying our wants at cheapened cost, not even for the imperial reason, as extending the range of national power,—but simply and solely as they could be made the means of increasing the nation's supply of gold and silver.*

* "The maintenance of the monopoly has hitherto been the principal, or, more properly, the sole end and purpose of the dominion which Great Britain assumes over her colonies."—*Wealth of Nations*, p. 277 (M'Culloch's Edition).

Let me here endeavour to convey, in as few words as I can, a general idea of the nature of the expedients by which it was attempted to give effect to this view. They would naturally vary according to circumstances. Where the colonies were themselves productive of the precious metals, the legislator would go direct to his object; on the one hand encouraging mining pursuits, on the other excluding foreign nations wholly from the colonial trade. In this way, while he developed the "wealth" of the colonies to the utmost, he, at the same time, secured to the mother country its entire appropriation. Where this was not the case—where the colonies did not yield gold or silver—then a more circuitous course would be necessary. Foreign trade would not here be proscribed (for it was only through foreign trade that colonies, which did not themselves contain the precious metals, could perform the function required of them): it would be "regulated"—exportation would be encouraged, importation controlled, so as on the whole to make debtors of foreign nations, and leave a "balance" of gold and silver, which might be directed to the home country.

But it will be well to observe somewhat more in detail the actual working of the system. And to this end we may take the cases of Spain and England. For the purpose of reaping the promise of the accepted creed the position of Spain was the most favourable which it is possible to conceive. The portion of the New World which fell to her lot was rich in the precious metals beyond former experience. It was also an advantage of her position, regarded from the same point of view, that her government was despotic, as thus no constitutional obstacle could stand in the way of her statesmen to hinder them from giving the fullest effect to their policy. They availed themselves of this liberty to the utmost. All intercourse of foreigners with the colonial subjects of Spain

was interdicted under capital penalties."* The intercolonial trade was placed under the severest restrictions. Not only was the industry of the colonies excluded from many branches of manufacture carried on in the mother country, but even the culture of the vine and the olive was prohibited under severe penalties; and in this way capital and industry were, from lack of other channels, forced into mining pursuits. Lastly, by a regulation, which, for its mischievous absurdity, has, I think, scarcely a parallel even in the history of commercial legislation, the whole colonial trade, the better to bring it under the eye of the Spanish Government, was required to pass through a single port in Old Spain. And what was the result of this thoroughgoing application of the principles of the commercial system to conditions so singularly favourable for the experiment? It is written in the early arrest of all healthy progress in the Spanish colonies, and in the rapid decline, so long as the system was persisted in, of the trade and power of Spain. "Sixty years after the discovery of the New World," says Robertson, "the number of Spaniards in all its provinces is computed not to have exceeded fifteen thousand." More than two hundred years afterwards—that is to say, about the middle of the seventeenth century, "when," according to the same authority, "the exclusive trade to America from Seville was at its height," the freight of the two united squadrons of "galleons" and "flota," as they were called—the sole medium by which the legal traffic of Spain with her colonies could be carried on—the freight, I say, of these united squadrons did not exceed 27,500 tons—less than a twentieth part of what England now sends to the single port of Melbourne—scarcely

* Subsequently commuted to imprisonment for life. "They even shunned the inspection of strangers," says Robertson," and endeavoured to keep them from their coasts."

more than the burden of a single vessel, the *Great Eastern*, now in the mercantile marine of England.

This was the extent of the legitimate trade of Spain with her colonies when the old colonial policy had reached its height: it by no means, however, represented the whole of her colonial trade. By much the most important portion was carried on by the smuggler. "The contraband trade of the Spanish colonies," says Mr. Merivale, "became in the early part of the last century [some fifty years previous to the culminating period of the exclusive system just referred to] the most regular and organized system of that kind which the world has ever witnessed. The English led the way in it. . . . . The Dutch, French, and other nations seized on their share of the spoil. Jamaica and St. Domingo became complete entrepôts for smuggled commodities, whence they were transported with ease to the continent. . . . . Buenos Ayres rose from an insignificant station to a considerable city, merely from being the centre of the contraband traffic between Europe and Peru. The Spaniards guarded their coasts with an expensive maritime force, while they resorted in the interior to the strange measure of making smuggling an offence cognizable by the Inquisition. But all such efforts were fruitless to check the force and violence of the ordinary trade. The flotas and galleons sank to insignificance; and their owners were glad to make these licensed squadrons serve for introducing the contraband commodities of other nations."*

Such was the apotheosis of the commercial system in the instance of a nation, fitted above all others, by extraordinary privileges of position, for realising in an eminent degree the benefits which that system promised, and which stopped at no interference with the industrial freedom of its subjects, however extravagant or however violent, which seemed adap-

* "Colonization and the Colonies." pp. 15, 16.

ted to give to it practical effect. Let us now turn to England, not less a stickler than Spain for exclusive principles in commercial policy, but differing from Spain in this respect, that she did not command the same advantages for their practical enforcement.

For, in the first place, there was this capital circumstance distinguishing the colonies of England from those of Spain: the English colonies were destitute alike of gold and silver mines. England, therefore, could only hope to accomplish the great end at which all colonial legislation then aimed—the augmentation of her stock of the precious metals, by indirect methods. The expedients which she actually adopted for this purpose may be summed up under the four following heads:—

First: She reserved to herself the monopoly of all those colonial staples which served as raw material for her manufactures. By this means she expected, in cheapening the cost of her manufactures, to undersell foreigners, to extend her exports, and thus to draw to herself gold and silver through the balance of trade.

Secondly: She excluded from the colonial markets all foreign manufactures and other products which came into competition with her own.

Thirdly: She prohibited the colonists from engaging in any manufacture which was carried on in the parent-state: according to the oft-quoted remark of Lord Chatham, the colonists had no right to make so much as a nail for a horse-shoe.

On the other hand, in compensation for these restrictions on the commercial liberty of the colonists, the mother country was content to impose some fetters on herself, giving to the colonists the monopoly of her markets as against foreigners for such commodities as she in her wisdom permitted them

to produce. By this means it was expected that mother country and colony would play into each others' hands, reciprocally support each other, and, at the expense of the foreigner, draw boundless wealth to themselves through the balance of trade.*

Such was the general scope of the English colonial system. The restrictions it embodied were indeed sufficiently vexatious and mischievous: nevertheless, if we look to the substance rather than to the form—to the practical effect rather than to the theoretic purpose, of her regulations, we shall be disposed to say that the colonies of England enjoyed—at all events by comparison—a very goodly amount of commercial freedom. No attempt, for example, was made by Great Britain to exclude her colonies from the trade with foreign nations; it was only sought to "regulate" that trade; nor did she forbid her colonies from trading freely with one another. Further, the absurd expedient adopted by Spain of requiring her whole colonial trade to pass through a single Spanish port, had no counterpart in the colonial system of England, which at least left open the trade, under whatever restrictions, to all British subjects upon equal terms. Besides, not a few of those restrictions, which looked harsh on paper, were found in practice to be sufficiently harmless, often prescribing to the colonists a course which would have been equally adopted without any such prescription. Of this character were the laws directed against colonial manufactures—laws which, of course, the colonists never thought of violating while they had more profitable means of employing their capital in other pursuits. "Such prohibitions," says Adam Smith, "without cramping their industry, or restraining it from any employment to which it would have gone of its own accord, are only impertinent badges of slavery, imposed

* "Wealth of Nations." Book IV, Chapter VII, Part III.

upon them without any sufficient reason by the groundless jealousy of the merchants and manufacturers of the mother country."*

But between the colonization of Spain and that of England there was a difference deeper and more radical than gold and silver mines, or any mere commercial legislation—powerful as no doubt these causes were—could bring to pass; a difference, which did far more than any incidents to which I have yet referred, to produce that broad contrast in the subsequent colonial careers of the two countries which is one of the most striking facts in the history of that time.

The government of Spain was a highly despotic and centralized system: the government of England was popular and free, and gave scope to local institutions; and these characteristic attributes of their respective governments were transferred, in even an exaggerated form, to the possessions of the two countries in the New World. The colonial government of Spain stands out a singular and portentous phenomenon in history. At its head the Royal Council of the Indies, an autocratic body in which the king presides, having its seat at Seville in Old Spain, exercises supreme control in the last resort over every department of colonial administration. Under the Royal Council come the Viceroys of Mexico and Peru, governing through a strongly organized bureaucracy nominated by themselves, and composed exclusively of natives of the mother state—within their own precincts, says Robertson, as despotic as the monarch of Spain himself. The government thus constituted, the Feudal System and the Romish Church take their place side by side in the full maturity of their mediæval pretensions—the Feudal system, with its narrow maxims, its strict entails, its various anti-commercial and anti-industrial incidents;—the Church, served by a

* "Wealth of Nations," p. 261.

hierarchy of numerous orders, the great majority of whom are, by a preposterous policy, consigned to spend their time in religious houses, consuming in celibacy and idleness the wealth of a country which calls aloud on all sides for population and the hand of labour. By a curious—I imagine a unique—act of condescension, the Church in the American possessions of Spain acknowledged the supremacy of the civil power;* but not the less is she impelled by her old instincts, and acts her old part. In fine, to complete the picture, the Inquisition is seen to rise, scowling, with ill-omened aspect, from its gloomy portals, over the nascent civilization of the New World.†

And now contrast with this the broad features of popular liberty disclosed in the early charters of the English colonies—meagre but unanambiguous witnesses of the genius which there presided. The first Charter of Massachusetts "gave power for ever to the freemen of the company to elect annually from their own number a Governor, Deputy-Governor, and eighteen Assistants, on the last Wednesday of Easter Term; and to make laws and ordinances—not repugnant to the laws of England—for their own benefit, and the government of persons inhabiting the territory."‡ The Connecticut Charter is drawn up upon the same model; its framer being charged to comprise in it "liberties and privileges not inferior or short to what is granted to the Massachusetts."§ In the southern colonies, though the form of government is different, the spirit which animates it is the same. Thus Lord Baltimore, the founder of Maryland, is authorized "by and with the advice, assent, and approbation

* "Robertson's History of America," vol. iv., pp. 45-46.

† "Robertson's History of America," book viii.

‡ Palfrey's "New England," vol. i, p. 291.

§ Ibid, vol. ii, p. 573.

of the freemen of Maryland, or the greater part of them, or their delegates and deputies, to enact any laws whatever, appertaining either unto the public state of the said province, or unto the private utility of particular persons,"* and so of the others. In not a few of those early charters, indeed, representative government is not expressly mentioned; but, as Mr. Merivale points out, only because this was "assumed by the colonists as a matter of right." In these cases, "houses of representatives" used—to borrow the quaint language of a historian of the time—to "break out" in the colonies on their settlement;† the doings of which houses, although without warrant in any written constitution, were, as a matter of course, recognised by the government at home. Political powers of the most extensive kind—often without any limit whatever, other than those implied limits which the fact of allegiance involved—were thus freely conferred on the early English colonists. Nor did they remain unexercised. Whether "breaking out," or established by formal authority, the colonial assemblies from the first assumed to themselves, in all that related to their internal interests, the most complete powers of government.

That this was so is indeed obvious on the most cursory reading of the colonial history of these times. The most striking fact connected with the early English colonies is, the extraordinary variety of political institutions which prevailed in them. Take, for example, the subject of religion—a subject in reference to which it was a grand object of the governments of England at this time to enforce uniformity.

* "The Art of Colonization." By Edward Gibbon Wakefield, p. 229.

† As, for example, in the settlement of Providence. See Palgrave's "New England," vol. i, pp. 423-25.

In the colonies there are as many religions predominant as there are religious denominations amongst the colonists. Thus, in the New England colonies, we find Puritanism in the ascendant; in Virginia and Carolina, the Church of England is established by law; in Pennsylvania, Quakerism prevails; while for Roman Catholics, Maryland is the land of promise. Whatever in effect was the religious belief prevailing in a colony, that was reflected in its legislative assembly, and embodied in its laws. And, as it was with religion, so it was with all other matters connected with the colony's internal concerns; for example, with the laws of inheritance, and with what has been made the subject of so much discussion in late times—the disposal of its waste lands, and the mode of dealing with native tribes. In the regulation of their external commerce, indeed, the colonies, as you will have gathered from what I have already said, were content to submit to the central government; but in all else they were their own masters. Like the Corcyræans of old, they could boast that they relinquished their country, "in order to be equal in right with those who remain, not to be their slaves."

It was these things still more than the discrepancies in the commercial codes of the two countries, which brought out the broad contrasts between English and Spanish colonization. From the first, the Spanish colonists fell under the blight of an all pervading despotism; while the colonists of England—whom the tyranny of Charles and Laud never reached—masters of their persons and property, thought and spoke, laboured and traded, under the inspiring consciousness of liberty. Hence it happened that, while the colonies of Spain, albeit embracing the richest portions of the New World—rich with the products of the tropics, as well as with that on which she set more store, the precious

metals—languished in the midst of their marvellous resources, and never prevented, or even for a moment retarded, her decline, the colonies of England, almost from their first establishment, steadily progressed, exhibiting at the close of their dependent career an example of rapid and brilliant progress, such as the world had not hitherto witnessed; and finally, on their severance from the mother country, taking rank among nations almost at once as a first-class power.

So far, then, as to the first period of colonial history which I proposed to examine. Henceforward I shall confine myself exclusively to the examples of colonization and colonial policy furnished by Great Britain. I have taken the American War of Independence as an epoch; because, while it terminates the political connexion of Great Britain with her most celebrated colonies, it also marks a change of vital moment in her colonial policy. Up to that time, the colonies of England, though controlled in their external commerce, yet as regarded their internal affairs—in all that related to their most intimate concerns—were emphatically self-governing. Thenceforward, until quite recent times, the government of the colonies was carried on in England through the Colonial Office, a department of State conducting its affairs through an organization analagous to that employed by the Royal Council of the Indies. A centralized bureaucracy thus took the place, in English colonial affairs, of the municipal system of the earlier period. It will be worth while to consider here what the causes were which led to this remarkable change.

In the first place, then, the War of Independence, and its unlooked-for issue, produced in England a feeling of profound mortification—an exacerbation of temper, which naturally lent itself to arbitrary measures. England—so the case

was put by her statesmen—had conceded to her North American colonies almost complete self-government. Under her liberal treatment and fostering care, those colonies had grown in population and wealth with unexampled rapidity—had in a century and a half attained to the stature of a nation. And what was the result? What was the return made to England for this liberal treatment? That the moment these dependencies were invited to contribute towards a revenue, from the expenditure of which they had profited scarcely less than the mother country herself—a revenue which had more than once been spent in wars waged for their defence, and which had resulted in their aggrandisement—that moment these favoured dependencies repudiated the just demand, rebelled against their indulgent protector, and asserted their independence. It was thus that the question of colonial government presented itself to the mortified spirit of Englishmen after the loss of a colonial empire, on the retention of which, it was at that time very generally thought, England's rank in the scale of nations depended. It was, then, not unnatural, that the resolve should be taken to tighten the bond of dependence in the case of such colonies as still remained; nor were other events wanting about this time to strengthen this disposition.

The French Revolution was, as you know, on the point of breaking out. The catastrophe no sooner came than a violent reaction in English political opinion set in—a reaction which has left deep traces on the political history of that time. The liberal party, as favourers of the French Revolution, were stricken with hopeless unpopularity. The Tories, led by Pitt, now scared from his liberal creed, were carried to power by immense majorities. The whole thought and passion of the nation were exhausted in antagonism to France and French principles, and whatever in any way

favoured popular right was looked on as infected with the fatal taint. Colonial Government could not but follow the general tendency. In the colonies, as elsewhere, liberal institutions fell under discredit, and the rights of the colonists receded before the pretensions of the central power.

But there was one cause more potent for this result than all the rest. It was about this time that England founded her first convict colony. The practice of transporting criminals to remote dependencies — a practice not unknown to antiquity—had indeed been adopted by Great Britain, in common with other European countries, in the times anterior to the American revolution; but it was then confined within narrow limits. In Maryland, for example, which in those times was one of the principal receptacles of this class of emigrants, the proportion of convicts to the whole population did not, in the middle of last century, exceed two per cent.* The practice, however, did exist. Now, by the result of the revolutionary struggle, this outlet for the criminals of England was suddenly cut off; and this at a time when, no doubt in consequence of the same event, the prisons of England were extraordinarily full. A pressing practical problem was thus presented to the statesmen of England—a question which, much as it has since been discussed, cannot yet be said to be fully solved—how is England to dispose of her criminals? In an evil hour the idea suggested itself of establishing a penal settlement. The connexion of the two events is sufficiently indicated by their chronological sequence. The peace of Paris, by which the independence of the United States was recognised, was signed in 1782. The first penal colony of England was founded in New South Wales in 1788. Ere many years had passed, there was witnessed, for the first time in history, the unedifying spectacle of a community in

* "Colonization and Colonies," p. 350, note.

which the bulk of the population were felons serving out the period of their punishment. From that time until quite recent years, the practice of penal colonization became a settled portion of the policy of Great Britain.

Now, I need not tell you that this use of colonization was quite incompatible with the idea of colonial self-government. Colonies in which the majority of the inhabitants were felons of the deepest dye clearly could not be trusted with political rights. And the precedent established in those cases, as you will readily understand, quickly reacted upon the general system of our colonial government.* The establishment of the Colonial Office, which took place in 1794, may be regarded as the external symbol of the change.†

The practice of penal colonization, concurring with the other influences I have mentioned, thus definitively determined the course of English colonial policy in the direction of centralization and absolutism; and this was about the least serious of the evils which that system entailed. It brought colonization itself into disrepute. It corrupted the whole tone of English thought on the subject. It may be doubted if even yet we have fully recovered from its effects.

* "It is a remarkable fact, that until we began to colonize with convicts towards the end of the last century, the imperial power of England never, I believe, in a single instance attempted to rule locally from a distance a body of its subjects who had gone forth from England and planted a colony."—Wakefield's "Art of Colonization," p. 228.

† Previous to this time the business connected with the colonies, which was almost exclusively commercial, had been assigned first to a Board, and afterwards to a permanent Committee of Privy Council, which had the management of "Trade and Plantations." For a short interval, indeed, during the American struggle—from 1768 to 1782—a Secretary of State for the American Department existed: it was the office of this functionary which Burke's Bill abolished. See Lewis's "Government of Dependencies," pp. 160–62.

The plan of penal colonization, it is true, presents certain obvious advantages of an economic kind: let us, by all means, recognize them. It secures to the colony an ample supply of that of which colonies have most need—labour; it secures to it also, besides this, cheap means of production—cheap to the colony, but very far from cheap to the taxpayers of the mother country, who bear the expense of transporting and guarding these promising emigrants—it secures, I say, to the colony, in addition to this cheap means of production, a market for its products in the large government expenditure which the military and police establishments, indispensable to such settlements, always entail. It confers these advantages, and by this means it galvanizes into a precocious prosperity the settlements which are the victims of the loathsome patronage. But what an idea must our statesmen have had of the art of colonization—of what Bacon calls "the heroic work" of building up new nations—when they turned for the materials of the structure to the hulk and gaol! "Imagine," said Dr. Hinds, "the case of a household most carefully made up of picked specimens from all the idle, mischievous, and notoriously bad characters in the country! Surely the man who should be mad or wicked enough to bring together this monstrous family, and to keep up its numbers and character by continual fresh supplies, would be scouted from the society he so outraged—would be denounced as the author of a diabolical nuisance to his neighbourhood and his country, and would be proclaimed infamous for setting at nought all morality and decency. What is it better, that, instead of a household, it is a whole people we have so brought together, and are so keeping up? —that it is the wide society of the whole world, and not of a single country, against which the nuisance is committed?"

But the evils of convict settlement did not end here. We

know that the existence of slavery in a country is able, by its vile associations, to degrade honest industry, and make men ashamed of useful occupations: in like manner, the practice of convict settlement brought discredit upon the whole art and business of colonization. That "heroic work" became associated in men's minds with ideas of infamy and crime. This aspect of the case is brought out, not less strongly than quaintly, by Charles Lamb, in a letter addressed to a friend in the "Hades of Thieves"—the upper world *alias* for New South Wales. He thus describes, in his grotesquest vein, the conditions of a society in which, not in theory but in fact, *la propriété est le vol.* "I see," he says, "Diogenes prying among you with his perpetual fruitless lantern. What must you be willing to give by this time for the sight of an honest man! You must have almost forgotten how *we* look. And tell me what your Sydneyites do? Are they th—v—ng all the day long? Merciful heaven! what property can stand against such depredations! The kangaroos—your aborigines—do they keep their primitive simplicity un-Europe-tainted, with those little short fore-puds, looking like a lesson framed by nature to the pickpocket. Marry, for diving into fobs, they are lamely provided *à priori*, but if the hue-and-cry were once up, they would show as fair a pair of hind-shifters as the expertest locomotor in the colony. We hear the most improbable tales at this distance. Pray, is it true that the young Spartans among you are born with six fingers, which spoils their scanning? It must look very odd, but use reconciles. For their scansion it is less to be regretted; for, if they take it into their heads to be poets, it is odds but they turn out, the greatest part of them, vile plagiarists. Is there any difference to see between the son of a th—f and the grandson? or where does the taint stop? Do you bleach in three or four generations? I have many questions to put,

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transportation pleaded that it conferred a double benefit—at once a relief to the mother country and a boon to the colony. Whately replied that it was doubly cursed, demoralizing mother country and colony together—the former by accustoming her to meet temporary exigencies by a recourse to radically vicious expedients—expedients which, opening to criminals an almost assured road to prosperity, involve a permanent encouragement to crime; and the latter, by corrupting their national life at its source. In the wide range of that great man's intellectual activity there is surely no topic on which his remarkable powers have been exerted with more signal success, or been productive of greater or more lasting utility.

Colonization had, as I have said, at this time reached the nadir of its decline. The colonial reformers proposed to rescue it from its degradation, and re-establish it in the grandeur of its true proportions before the English people. Since the subject had last seriously attracted the attention of political thinkers, Political Economy had taken rank among the sciences. The most eminent of those who took part in the new movement—Wakefield, Torrens, Charles Buller, Sir William Molesworth, Whately—had mastered the new knowledge, and approached the subject of colonization with all the advantage which this acquisition conferred. For the first time something like a sound and complete theory of colonization was put forth—sound at least, I do not hesitate to say, in all its essentials. The theory has now little more than an historic value: still the large space which it for many years filled in colonial politics, and the great practical results which have flowed from it, will perhaps justify an attempt to state briefly its leading principles.

The fundamental cause, and the justification of colonization are to be found in the laws of population and capital.

In old countries population and capital tend to become redundant. Of this there is abounding proof. The redundancy of capital in old countries is evinced by many obvious circumstances—for example, by the difficulty of employing advantageously—by the low rate of profit which it brings—by its constant exportation for investment to other lands. The redundancy of population is even a more patent fact. Which of us has not painful experience that "all the gates are thronged with suitors," that "all the markets overflow"? As to the facts, therefore, there can be no doubt. The cause has been traced by Political Economy to the limited quantity and capacity of that agent from which ultimately the elements of subsistence and the materials of wealth are drawn —the land of the country. Now, in new countries these conditions of production are exactly reversed. Fertile land exists there in abundance, while capital and labour are scarce. Seen in this light, the true remedy for our evils at once appears. It is, that what is in excess in each should be brought to supplement what is deficient in each; in a word—that we should colonize. "When I ask you," said Charles Buller, in that great speech which gave an earnest of future statesmanship which the gifted orator was never destined to fulfil, "when I ask you to colonize, what do I ask you to do, but to carry the superfluity of one part of our country to repair the deficiency of the other—to cultivate the desert by applying to it the means that lie idle at home; in one simple word, to convey the plough to the field, the workman to his work, the hungry to his food."

But at this point I fancy I hear the familiar ring of a well-known objection:—What! encourage the bone and sinew, and industrial enterprise, and accumulated wealth of the country, to leave it! Well, I will meet the objection frankly. I would by all means encourage the bone and sinew, and

industrial enterprise, and accumulated wealth, of old countries to leave them for the purpose of colonization; and I would do so in order to increase in those very countries, bone and sinew, and industrial enterprise, and accumulated wealth. If you think this paradoxical,* I will ask you to consider a familiar case. The United States are colonies of England, founded by the exportation thither, some two centuries ago, of those elements of material prosperity which I have named. Do you think that England is now the poorer for that exportation? Suppose this argument against exporting bone and sinew had prevailed in the seventeenth century, and that the British American Colonies had never been planted, do you think that the England of our day would support, in consequence, a larger population in greater affluence? It is surely unnecessary to remind you that the colonies of England—I mean the countries planted and peopled by England, whether now politically connected with her or not—are as necessary to the support of her people as the soil on which they tread. It is an obvious fact that England, from her own soil, is physically incapable of giving subsistence to the human beings who now cover her surface; and that if she has been rendered capable of supporting her present immense population, and supporting them in such comfort as they enjoy, this is due principally to the fact that she has for centuries been a colonizing country. She has sent abroad her sturdy and enterprising sons to countries abounding in all that she has needed; and the descendants of those emi-

* The paradox, still so mysterious to many people, was propounded and solved by Franklin a century ago. "There are supposed," he said, "to be now upwards of one million souls in North America; . . and yet, perhaps there is not one the fewer in Britain, but rather the more, on account," he adds, "of the employment the colonies afford to manufacturers at home;" on account, we should now prefer to say, of the cheapened subsistence with which they supply them.

grants are now at once the most constant customers for her products, and the surest caterers for her wants. She has parted with her bone and muscle, and industrial enterprise, and accumulated wealth, and the result is she has multiplied indefinitely all these elements of her greatness. Colonization thus confers a double benefit: it relieves the old country from the pressure of its superabundant population, and gives a field for its unemployed capital; while, at the same time, by opening up new lands, and placing their resources at her disposal, it widens indefinitely the limits which restrain her future growth.

Well, this point having been made good—a basis for their activity having been found in the nature of the case—the colonial reformers had next to deal with the practical question, How is colonization to be carried on? By what means are men and capital to be transferred from one end of the globe to the other—men, that is, of the right quality, in the right proportions, keeping in view always the great ultimate end—the founding of a new nation? The solution of this problem propounded by the reformers was as follows:—First, they maintained that the lands of a new colony, instead of being granted away gratuitously with lavish profusion, as had been the almost universal practice of the English governments up to that time, should be sold, and sold at a substantial and a uniform price.* Secondly, they insisted that the proceeds of the land sales should be employed as an emigration fund to assist the poorer classes in emigrating. Thirdly, they urged

* The reader, who desires to inform himself on the doctrine, once so warmly debated, of a "sufficient price" for colonial land, is referred to Wakefield's "Art of Colonization," Letters xlvii.–lii.; and, on the other hand, to Merivale's "Colonization and the Colonies," Lectures xiv.–xvi.; also to Mill's "Principles of Political Economy," book i., chap. viii.

that this assistance should be given with discrimination—that is to say, that the emigrants should be selected—the conditions of age, sex, health, respectability, &c., being taken account of with a view to the needs of new colonies. And, fourthly, they contended for the principle of colonial self-government. Thus, to recapitulate—the sale of wild land at a uniform price, the application of the proceeds to assist emigration, the selection of the emigrants, and self-government for the colonies—these may be taken as the cardinal points in the reformers' charter. They did not indeed comprise the whole programme of the reformers—at least of the more sanguine of the group, in whose fervid imaginations the art of colonization grew rapidly into a wonderfully elaborate and complete system. For these visionaries—as I think I may now venture to call them—the ideal of an English colony was England herself in little, transferred to the other side of the globe—an epitome, perfect in all its parts, of the society from which it issued—England, with its capitalists and labourers, its hierarchy of ranks, its hereditary aristocracy, its landed gentry, and, of course, its Established Church*—transferred complete, as by the enchanter's stroke, to the pastoral wilds of Australia! The idea was a taking, perhaps a noble one; unfortunately it has not proved practical. The progeny is, in fact, turning out something very different from the parent's image. In place of feudal subordination there is democracy; in place of a high electoral qualification, manhood suffrage; in place of primogeniture, equal

* This was, I believe, the original idea, which however in the end developed into something more reasonable as well as more liberal—"that of established churches." "As a colonizing body," says Mr Wakefield, "composed, like the legislature, of people differing in creed, we determined to assist all denominations of settlers alike, with respect to religious provisions. We have assisted Roman Catholics according to their numbers, and the Church of Scotland on the same

division of property; in place of state churches, voluntary religious associations. In fact, the ducklings are rapidly taking the water; but if they are, it is scarcely, methinks, for us to act the idle part of the nursing hen moralizing from the brink.*

principle." He adds the following creditable anecdote. "Among the first emigrants to New Zealand were some Jews, who asked as, 'with bated breath and whispering humbleness,' if a priest authorized to kill animals for meat according to Jewish custom, could have accommodation in the ships. We treated the inquiry as a request, and granted it with alacrity, taking care besides that every arrangement should be made to satisfy their religious scruples. The Jews of England have since done the New Zealand Company's settlements more than one service."—"Art of Colonization," pp. 56, 57.

* "And even supposing this aristocratic reverie capable of being accomplished, what interest have the English people in its accomplishment? Why should they desire to plant among the communities of the New World a hostile outpost of feudalism and privilege, the source of division, jealousy, and war? What reason have they to fear the sight of great commonwealths based on free reverence for equal laws, and prospering without lords or dependents? Why should they look with jealous malignity on the mighty development of the Anglo-Saxon race, emancipated from Norman bonds, over a continent which its energy and patience have made its own? Why should they desire to thwart the manifest designs of Providence, which has willed that a new order of things should commence with the peopling of the New World? . . . .

"By the issue of their enterprise, victorious though chequered, victorious though now wrapped in storm, man has undoubtedly been taught that he may not only exist, but prosper, without many things which it would be heresy and treason to think unnecessary to his existence here. It is a change, and a great change; one to be regarded neither with childish exultation nor with childish fear, but with manly reverence and solicitude, as the opening of a new page in the book of Providence, full of mighty import to mankind. But what, in the course of time, has not changed, except that essence of religion and morality for which all the rest was made? The grandest forms of history have waxed old and passed away. The English aristocracy has been grand

But leaving these refinements of political speculation, respecting which opinions will naturally differ, the four positions which I have stated furnished at least a sound basis for practical work. Sustained as these positions have since been by fuller discussion, as well as by the severer test of actual experiment, they may now be taken as the admitted and approved groundwork of the colonizing art.*

The colonial reformers of 1830, I have said, propounded a theory: they were, however, very far from being mere theorists: their aims were essentially practical; and they were eager to proceed from speculation to action.

and beneficent in its hour, but why should it think that it is the expiring effort of creative power, and the last birth of time? We bear, and may long bear, from motives higher perhaps than the public good, the endless decrepitude of feudalism here; but why are we bound, or how can we hope, to propagate it in a free world?"—"The Empire," by Goldwin Smith, pp. 142–145.

* "Let us divest it" [the modern scheme of systematic colonization] says Mr. Merivale, "of the too exact form in which it has been presented by some of its supporters; let us dismiss all idea of a precise proportion between land labour and capital, an exclusive employment of the land fund on emigration, and of a 'mathematically' sufficient price; let us consider its principles as confined to the sale of land at as high prices as can reasonably be obtained, and the strict devotion of the proceeds to a few essential purposes, among which the supply of labour holds the principal place; let us consider it, moreover, as chiefly applicable to colonies raising large quantities of exportable produce, and perhaps also to other colonies so distant from the mother country, that the stream of emigration needs to be artificially directed to them; let us, I say, subject the theory to all the qualifications I have suggested, although not all of them with equal confidence, and we cannot then fail of being struck with its simplicity, its facility of adaptation, its high practical utility. Never was there a more remarkable instance of the success of a principle against all manner of misapprehension—against the fear of innovation—against corrupt interests—against the inert resistance which all novelty is sure to encounter."—"Colonization and the Colonies," pp. 427, 428.

Among their first converts was Lord Howick, the present Earl Grey, who early in 1832, before he had been a year in office, took the first great step in the right direction, by promulgating regulations whereby, in the principal colonies of England, the sale of waste land was substituted for the irregular practice of gratuitous grants; and whereby further, in two important colonies—New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land—the purchase money thus obtained was directed to be used as a fund for assisting emigration. This was the first victory of the reformers; the second occurred some four years later. It consisted in the appointment—made while Earl, then Lord John, Russell held the seals of the Colonial Office—of the Land and Emigration Commissioners, as a machinery for superintending and generally promoting emigration.

These were important achievements; but the reformers naturally desired some fairer field for the trial of their principles than settlements already saturated with the dregs of a convict emigration. They aspired to be themselves the founders of colonies. The site which they selected for their first experiment was South Australia. In 1836, the Act of Parliament was passed by which that model colony* was founded.

* I say "model" colony; for, although it is true that the Wakefield School were far from satisfied with the degree of recognition obtained for their views in the original constitution, it is beyond question that it embodied the most important of their characteristic doctrines: on the whole, too, and notwithstanding the first break down, they have no reason to be dissatisfied with the result of the experiment. "Notwithstanding," says Mr. Wakefield, ("Art of Colonization," p. 50) "this grievous mistake, and the numerous mistakes into which the Commissioners fell, the plan worked even better than its authors now expected. A fine colony of people was sent out; and, for the first time, the disposal of waste land, and the emigration of shipfulls of labourers to the other side of the world, was managed with something like system and care." And see Merivale's "Colonization," &c. New edition, Lecture xvi. and Appendix.

From this point the new principles steadily gained ground. In 1837, the New Zealand Association, with Mr. Baring, afterwards Sir Francis, at its head, was formed for the purpose of colonizing New Zealand in conformity with the new doctrines. After a prolonged controversy with more than one government, it at length succeeded, in 1846, in obtaining from Parliament charters for the settlement of Wellington, Nelson, and New Plymouth. Within a few years Canterbury and Otago were added to the achievements of the Association in the same region. Meantime the principles of the reformers respecting the disposal of the public land and the transmission of emigrants, modified, it is true, to meet the views of successive Colonial Secretaries, were adopted for all the Australian colonies. Thus rapidly were the fortunes of English colonization retrieved. In 1830, the colonies were spoken of in leading reviews as "unfit abodes for any but convicts, paupers, and desperate and needy persons." Before five years had passed, the best minds in England had identified themselves with the cause of colonization; within twenty years a whole group of new colonies were founded, which are now amongst the most interesting and promising which own allegiance to the British Crown. The Colonization Society had done its work.*

It had, perhaps, done more than its work—more, at least, than many of those who took part in its early deliberations had consciously aimed at. Among the numerous

* "Like most projects based on theory," says Mr. Merivale, "however far-sighted and comprehensive, the so-called South Australian, or Wakefield scheme of colonization, took in practice a different course from what its inventors anticipated, and its results were in many respects curiously divergent from those with a view to which it was constructed. But it would be a great error to infer on that account that it was unsuccessful; on the contrary, there are in history very few instances to be found in which a system, devised in the closet by

reforms comprised in the programme of the colonial reformers, self-government for the colonies occupied a principal place. In this, too, the reformers have succeeded—succeeded beyond their hopes—succeeded, it may yet prove, beyond their wishes.

During that period in which the colonies were ruled through the Colonial Office—that is to say, from 1794 down to quite recent times—there was maintained in many of the colonies a make-believe of self-government. The colonies, many of them at least, received so-called "constitutions." These constitutions, however, notwithstanding that they in general comprised a representative assembly, in fact signified extremely little. The representative assemblies had no substantial functions. The real powers of government lay in an Executive Council—a council of which the members, nominated directly or indirectly by the Colonial Minister, and holding office during his pleasure, were entirely independent of the representative bodies, and might, and frequently did, set them at defiance, and govern in direct opposition to their views. This was the state of things which prevailed in the so-called "representative colonies" of England down to 1846. But in that year a change took place: the reformers were strong enough to carry a measure, by which representative government in Canada was converted from a sham into a reality. The principle, once made good, was rapidly extended; and I believe, at the present time, the Cape of Good Hope is the only considerable English colony

studious men, and put in execution in a new and distant world, which those men had never seen, has produced such extensive and beneficial results." . . . . . "It is not too much to say," he adds, "that the success of our Australian colonies is in a very great measure attributable to their lessons."—"Colonization and the Colonies." New edition, 1861, p. 470.

in which responsible government, in the fullest sense of the word, does not prevail.*

The mode in which this pregnant change was effected is deserving of attention, as illustrating the vast consequences which, in political affairs, sometimes depend upon apparently trivial circumstances. Formerly, on the nomination of members to the Executive Council, the appointment was made "during pleasure"—the pleasure, that is to say, of the Colonial Office; the practical effect being that the members held office during life. But from the time that the new measures came into force, the words "during pleasure" were omitted; and instead, the members were appointed on the understanding, that they should hold their posts only so long as they retained the confidence of the colonial assemblies. The change, almost infinitessimal in appearance, amounted in its consequences to a revolution; for it at once brought the executive into subordination to the legislature. Power and patronage passed in a moment from the Colonial Office to the the colonial assemblies. The Council might still be appointed by the Home Government; but it could only exercise its powers in conformity with the views of the local body. In this way, after the lapse of a century, has Great Britain come round in her colonial policy to the point from which she started. In early times self-government used, as we saw, to "break out" in the English colonies—the natural outcome where two or three Englishmen met together to build up society in a new land; and now, after much groping amongst other systems, the country has returned to its primitive faith. Reason and experience have set their seal on what was at first prompted by the instincts of free men.

* "Colonization and Colonies." Appendix to Lecture xxii.

And now, availing ourselves of the light which we derive from this rapid survey of the past, let us endeavour to appreciate the character of the crisis in our colonial history in the midst of which at the present moment we find ourselves. One inference forces itself upon us at the outset. Of the reasons which have in former times prevailed for holding colonies in subjection, not one can now be considered tenable. One after another, the objects for the sake of which our colonial empire was created have, with the progress of economic and political knowledge, been given up. Let us glance at these objects in succession; and first, tribute may receive a passing mention. Tribute—for which, with ancient statesmen, dependencies of all kinds were chiefly valued, and which has been enforced in modern times by some European nations—never filled a large place in the colonial programme of England. Once indeed she made the attempt to tax her colonies for her own benefit; but the result of that experiment has not tempted her to repeat it. At present it is scarcely necessary to say, that the idea of obtaining tribute from a British colony is one which has no place in the thoughts of any British statesman. So far from this, the tables have been turned: it is *we* who pay the tribute—a tribute amounting, in average years, to some £4,421,000 annually:* what it will reach this year, when the New Zealand war bill is paid, is what I will not venture to conjecture.

* "Having reference to the expenditure of 1857, which is the latest account in a complete form we have in our possession, we find the imperial cost to have been £4,115,757, and the average of five years previously £4,421,577; but we should not forget that this amount, large as it may appear, is only some important portion of the whole sum. The colonies have shared, in no inconsiderable measure, in the £12,608,000 we have expended on the navy, and one million on the packet service."—"Our Colonies, their Commerce and their Cost," by Henry Ashworth, p. 8.

On the other hand, *commercial monopoly* was long, as we have seen, a leading object with those who built up and maintained our colonial empire. "The only use," said Lord Sheffield, in a debate during the American War of Independence, "the only use of the American colonies is the market of their commodities and the carriage of their produce;" and on this basis was erected that complicated system of prohibitions bounties and differential duties, of which, in a former part of this address, I attempted to sketch the outline. But free trade has wholly and for ever removed the ground from this elaborate and time-honoured structure. We do not any longer ask—we certainly do not receive—from our colonies any commercial advantages which are not equally open to the whole world, which we should not equally command though the political connexion were severed to-morrow.* The commercial reason for holding colonies in subjection, therefore, like the financial one, has passed away.

But another use for colonies was in progress of time discovered: they might be turned to account as receptacles for the criminals of the mother country—convenient sewers for her moral and social offscourings. I have shown you what was the result of this elevated and hopeful view of the colonizing art. I will only now add, that penal colonization, long condemned by the best minds of the nation, as well as by a disastrous experience, has of late years—less, it is mortifying to think, from an enlightened policy than under stress of necessity—been in practice abandoned. One example, indeed, of a penal colony under British dominion still exists—Western Australia; but this remaining blot, thanks to the

* "No one now really doubts," says Mr. Merivale, "notwithstanding the hostile tariff of the States, that the separation of our North American colonies has been, in an economical sense, advantageous to us."

rough lesson we have just received from a precocious pupil in the art politic,* it seems probable will soon be removed.

Well, the object of *finance*, the object of *commercial monopoly*, the object of *gaol convenience*—all those objects, in short, which had served in former times as reasons for our colonial empire, had one after another been given up; yet the structure remained—remained, not only without support from any grounds of solid reason, but charged with an extraneous burthen of £4,500,000 sterling, spent annually in keeping it in repair. People began to ask *cui bono?* Various answers were returned. One writer said we took out the value in prestige.† According to another, the colonial empire was to be regarded as a great political gymnasium, in which the people of this country might practice the art of governing nations, and cultivate the "imperial sense"—an endowment, which, it was alleged, was worth the money.‡ Just two years ago, a high authority propounded a more tangible doctrine. The political connexion was justified by Mr. Merivale on the

* "A sinister system of education, under which the tutor tries to force upon the pupil moral and social poison, which the pupil struggles to reject."—Prof. G. Smith in *Daily News*.

† "The ablest of my critics tells me in good plain English that what he thinks so valuable and wishes so much to preserve is 'apparent power.' . . . When we see through the appearance of power, and coolly own to ourselves that we do see through it, will not our enemies have the sense to do the same? Wooden artillery has been useful as a stratagem in war; but I never heard that it was useful, or that anything was risked by a wise commander to preserve it, after the enemy had found out that it was wooden."—*The Empire*, p. 32.

‡ The following is, perhaps, the neatest statement of the imperial doctrine of noodledom. "There is not [in Canada] a grievance to be alleged or even whispered against the Imperial Government, *the purely nominal but beneficent suzerainty of which keeps the political machinery of the colonies in working order*."—*Times'* American Correspondent.—So much virtue, it seems, there is in a name.

ground that colonies are valuable as a field for emigration;* the implication, of course, being that the condition of dependency constitutes an attraction for emigrants. In the keenly felt need of a working theory of empire the idea was eagerly taken up. The *Times*, of course, welcomed the opportune discovery. Even the cautious *Economist* became enthusiastic in contemplating "the amount of vivifying hope inspired in our working classes here by the knowledge that they can at any moment take refuge in a world of comparative plenty within the limits of the British Empire." The theory wanted nothing but a basis, in fact: in this, however, it was deficient.

The emigration returns give no evidence of the alleged preference of our emigrating classes for countries which are still under British rule: on the contrary, the immense majority of those who emigrate from the British isles pass, by choice, *outside* the limits of the British empire. Even of those who emigrate, in the first instance, to British dependencies, a large proportion subsequently leave them, and pass into independent countries. The stream of emigration from Canada to the United States has lately become so large, that the Canadian people, like ourselves, have become apprehensive of depopulation, and only the other day† a select committee was appointed by the Canadian Legislative Council to report on the best means of at once attracting emigration and stopping this drain. Now, we may explain these facts as we please; but facts they are; and in the presence of such facts, it does seem somewhat preposterous to put forward the preference of our emigrating classes for British rule as a reason for maintaining our colonial empire. Would there

* Paper on "The Utility of Colonization," read before the British Association, 1862.

† 16th May, 1864.

not, in truth, be more colour of reason in the converse of the argument?

We have not yet exhausted the motives to imperial rule. The change in our commercial policy has, as we have seen, disposed of one—the principal—ground on which, in modern times, the theory of colonial empire has been sustained—the supposed advantages of commercial monopoly. But is it certain that this change, while removing one, has not furnished us with another and a more valid reason for maintaining our supremacy? If empire were justifiable on the principles of commercial monopoly, is it not, now that those principles are exploded, justifiable for the enforcement of free trade? Having adopted free trade for ourselves, have we not a right—is it not our duty as an imperial nation—to see to it that the same beneficent principle which we have established at home, shall also be the law throughout the widely scattered regions over which we have planted our race? There is no doubt that, some twenty years ago, as the approaching triumph of free trade menaced the foundations of the received colonial doctrines, this view presented itself to the minds of some of our most enlightened statesmen;* and eminently just and reasonable as the end aimed

* "This advantage," said Sir C. Lewis, writing in 1841, "is at present a substantial one; but it is an advantage which is founded exclusively on the perverse folly of independent states in imposing prohibitory and protective duties on one another's productions..... When civilization shall have made sufficient progress to diffuse generally a knowledge of the few and simple considerations which prove the expediency of the freedom of trade, and when consequently independent states shall have abandoned their present anti-commercial policy, the possession of dependencies will no longer produce the advantage in question. The advantage consists in possession of a specific against the evils arising from an erroneous system of policy. Whenever the errors of the policy shall be generally perceived, and the system shall be exploded, the specific against its evil effects will be valueless."—"Government of Dependencies," pp. 229-230.

at is, and holding out, as it does, the prospect of large blessings to the community of nations, such an object might seem not altogether unworthy of being made the logical basis of imperial rule. But here we are met by another principle equally reasonable, equally just, and far more imperative—a principle which also, after full consideration, we have deliberately adopted—the principle of colonial self-government. Are we prepared, frankly and in good faith, to give effect to this principle? If so, the question seems to be resolved. Self-government means government in accordance with the views of the persons governed. If the colonists, therefore, desire a free trade policy, under a règime of self-government, free trade will be adopted, whether they are nominally our subjects or not. If not, then, our imperial pretensions notwithstanding, free trade will be set at nought, and protection will be established. This is, in fact, what in some instances has happened. Canada has employed the legislative powers which she received from Great Britain to lay protective duties on British manufactures. Canada has led the way, and Australia bids fair to follow in her steps.

And now I think we may see where it is that the course of our colonial history has at length landed us. People are asking whether we are to retain or part with our colonies. It appears to me that to discuss this question now is much like discussing the propriety of locking the stable door after the steed has gone forth. No doubt, the British colonies still, in strict constitutional doctrine, owe allegiance to the British crown: to withhold this allegiance would be rebellion. But bring the question to any practical test, and let us see what the value of this much prized supremacy amounts to—in what tangible circumstances Great Britain impresses her will upon her colonies; and, on the other hand, what the attributes of sovereignty are which these communities do

not possess—which they do not at this moment actually exercise.

I have just adverted to our failure to maintain in them the principle of free trade—so just and reasonable a claim. Again: in conceding to them self-government, it was hoped that the mother country might yet reserve to herself the control of the colonial waste lands—"territories," said Mr. Wakefield, "which the nation had acquired by costly efforts, as a valuable national property, which we have every right in justice, and are bound by every consideration of prudence, to use for the greatest benefit of the people of this country." But one of the first uses which the emancipated legislatures made of their newly acquired power was to possess themselves of this national property—a possession in which they have not been since disturbed. Once more, it was thought not unreasonable that, having undertaken their defence, we should have a voice in determining the amount of military force they should maintain. But here too our expectations have been falsified. For the last two years the Home government, backed by the *Times*, have in vain employed alternate entreaties and threats to induce the Canadians to augment their military force. Thus in their commercial policy, in their territorial policy, in what we may call their foreign policy (since the view taken of their military requirements would depend upon their opinion as to external dangers) the colonists, in the teeth of example, advice, and remonstrance—remonstrance rising sometimes almost to menace—have deliberately pursued their own way.

And now look at what is going forward in British North America. Some half-dozen colonies have appointed deputies to meet and decide upon a constitution under which they propose to coalesce into a nation. That, in a word, is the scope of this movement; and if that be not an act of the

highest sovereignty, then it is difficult to imagine what sovereignty means. The Canadian leaders indeed assure us, as I observe from intelligence quite recently received, of their firm purpose that the North American colonies shall remain integral portions of the British Empire; but they do not tell us in what particulars they are prepared to defer to imperial authority. They will probably be content, as hitherto, to receive our advice, on the condition of being permitted to decline it when it happens not to coincide with their own views, and they will doubtless have no objection to receive our assistance in fighting their battles. On these or some tantamount terms, they are content to remain for ever loyal subjects of the British Crown. But what does a good cause gain by professions of "ironical allegiance?"* Disguise it as they will, under whatever constitutional figments and sounding phrases, the work on which they are engaged is the same work which some eighty years ago was consummated on no remote scene—when the thirteen united colonies, having achieved their independence, met together to do that which is now the business of Canadian statesmen—to make themselves a nation.

My case might seem here complete; but within the last week intelligence has reached this country which furnishes a fresh illustration of the nature of our imperial rule so apposite to my present theme, that, though at the risk of pro-

* How much more really dignified is language like the following:—"We have come to feel that we can no longer call upon the people of England to tax themselves for our benefit; we have arrived at that time of life when it is humiliating to have everything done for us, and when we ought to assume burdens and not shrink from responsibilities of a national character. Out of this Union a colossal power will arise on the American continent, with one foot on the Pacific, another on the Atlantic."—The Hon. Mr. Archibald, leader of the Opposition in Nova Scotia at the Montreal dinner.

longing unduly this address, I am unable to resist the temptation of bringing it before you.

I just now stated, as you will remember, that Western Australia formed at present the single instance among all our colonies of a convict settlement. For some years this circumstance has been a source of constant discussion between the Home government and the other—that is to say the Eastern—Australian colonies. As I have already remarked, transportation from a certain point of view has undoubtedly something to recommend it. The mother country by its means certainly gets rid of a very undesirable portion of her population; while for the emigrant, if his object be simply to make a fortune with all convenient speed, and return to his native country or migrate elsewhere, it is beyond doubt an advantage—more especially in a very sparsely peopled country—to be assured of a constant supply of able-bodied labour. On the other hand, if the colonist intends to make the colony his country and home, it seems equally natural that he should object to the practice of letting loose periodically upon the infant community gangs of the picked ruffians of the parent state. Whether the former considerations have influenced the Western Australians I do not undertake to say; but it is certain that a large number amongst them have welcomed this species of immigration. On the other hand, the Eastern colonies have long vehemently protested against transportation in every form. Now, here perhaps it will occur to you that, the case being so, there is no reason that both parties should not be satisfied; but at this point a hitch occurs. The Eastern colonies, two of which are the gold-producing districts of New South Wales and Victoria, offer far greater attractions to the convict class—as to other classes—than the bare and unpromising desert to which the convicts are sent; and, accordingly, so soon as the

term of their sentence is expired, large numbers migrate to the Eastern colonies. The colony which profits by their services is thus, so soon as those services cease to be profitable, relieved of their presence—a circumstance which we may well believe does not detract from the popularity of the system in this colony. It seems that, according to the evidence of Mr. Newlands and Mr. Torrens, both for a long time magistrates of Southern Australia, and the latter a member of the Legislative and Executive Councils, "within three years after the resumption of transportation to Western Australia, over one thousand conditionally pardoned and ticket-of-leave men found their way from that colony to Adelaide, and the result was a rapid increase of violent assaults, robberies, and burglarious crimes."* Now I think it must be confessed that such a state of things constitutes a very substantial grievance. But sentiment is also mixed up with the opposition of the Eastern Australians to the continuance of this system. "Generations," they say, "are springing up which will call Australia their birthplace, and will make it their home. To them it is fatherland, and they see clearly enough that a great career lies before it." "For this reason," adds an eloquent colonial writer, "we are jealous of the fair fame of the land; and we are unwilling that colonies which contain within themselves the seeds of great nations, should have their name and history associated with convictism in any form. We ask, and we have a right to ask, why should we in this colony, who from the first have strenuously resolved that the convict element should have no place here, have the scum of England's moral impurity thrown down at our next door?" The outside world will make no nice distinctions between Eastern and Western, free and penal, Australia. They will only know that convicts

* Letter of Mr. M'Arthur in the *Daily News*.

are deported to Australia, and the word for them will cover all the colonies. "Therefore," say the colonists, "we suffer in reputation by even the remotest contact with the evil thing."*

I confess it seems to me that language such as this does honour to the people from whom it proceeds, and expressing, as it does, the unanimous feeling of communities which do not number less than a million and a-half of people, ought to have weighed for something against the eager demand for convict labour of a few thousand Western Australians† hastening to be rich. But it seemed otherwise to the British Government. Last summer the determination was taken to continue transportation to Western Australia on the same scale as formerly. The Home Government and the people of the Eastern colonies have thus been brought into distinct collision; and now I beg you to observe the illustration this has furnished of the value of our imperial rule.

By the last Australian mail a minute has arrived from the Victorian Government, in which its Chief Secretary, after premising that it has been forced upon the attention of himself and his colleagues that further remonstrance is useless, goes on to say—"The time has arrived when it is incumbent upon us, in the exercise of our powers of self-government, to initiate legislation, in connexion with the colonies whose interests are alike affected, for our common protection." He then announces that the Victorian Government has invited the co-operation of each of the other colonies interested, with a view to framing a measure "prohibitive of all intercourse whatever with Western Australia," "in order that her position as the only convict colony may be distinctly marked;"

* *The South Australian Register*, 26th March, 1864.

† The number of inhabitants in Western Australia, excluding convicts and their families, is, according to Mr. Torrens' computation, six thousand.

further, he gives notice that the Victorian Government will, at the expiration of six months from the 1st November, cease to contribute to the annual mail packet subsidy, unless upon the condition that the packets shall not touch at any port in Western Australia.

Such is the point at which this painful controversy has arrived. And now, can any one doubt what will be its termination? Absolute unanimity, it seems, prevails on the subject in all the eastern colonies. Under these circumstances, is it conceivable that the Home Government should persist in forcing on a quarrel with our own kindred in such a cause—that they may have the privilege of discharging at their doors the scum of our criminal population? Of course no such fatuous act will be committed. Of course the Home Government will succumb. But what a comment does this supply on "the beneficent suzerainty"! In North America the British colonies have initiated action among themselves to form a new state. This may be an act of sovereignty, but it is, at all events, a neutral act; but how shall we characterize a proceeding in which colonies meet together to concert measures distinctly and avowedly to nullify the policy of the imperial state? Supposing these colonies were formally independent, what other course would they, in like circumstances, pursue than that which they are now actually pursuing—namely, look out for alliances amongst communities similarly affected to counteract a policy which aggrieved them?

Look, then, at the position in which we stand. We have abandoned all the objects for the sake of which our colonial empire was founded. We are unable to impress our will upon our colonies in any particular, however in itself reasonable, or just, or apparently necessary for their safety or ours.

Wholly irrespective of our wishes, they enter into alliances, unite and separate, dispose of their lands, recast their constitutions, and even combine for the avowed purpose of thwarting our designs. When things have reached this pass, it seems rather idle to ask—Are we to retain our colonies? Retain our colonies! What is there left to retain? Retain the privilege of spending yearly £4,500,000 sterling on their protection, and receive in requital prohibitive tariffs and "ironical allegiance"! But I shall not be guilty of the presumption of venturing further into an argument which has already been exhausted by the writer who has made this subject his own. Two years have just passed since Professor Goldwin Smith, in a series of letters, which in argumentative ability, masculine eloquence, and satiric *verve*, have rarely been equalled in the literature of politics, forced this subject on the attention of the people of this country—forced it on their attention, let me say, with true patriotic boldness, at a time when "leading" journalists thought only of tabooing it as an inconvenient topic, and judicious politicians gladly avoided a question from which, while no political capital was to be reaped, much unpopularity might easily be incurred. Professor Smith may congratulate himself upon a triumph speedier and more complete than often falls to the lot of political innovators. Before six months had passed, the Ionian Islands, if not in deference to his teaching, at all events in perfect conformity with the policy he had just propounded amid the all but universal protests of the Press, were conceded to Greece amid the not less general applause of the nation. This, it must be owned, is a singular testimony to political forecast; and the whole course of events in the two years that have since elapsed, has but served to strengthen it. Already some of our statesmen of greatest promise have

given in their adhesion to his views;* and the "leading journal," which attacked him with even more than its wonted insolence, now, with characteristic effrontery, adopts his opinions as those "which have constantly found utterance in the *Times*."†

* For example, Lord Stanley, in his recent speech at King's Lynn, thus expressed himself:—"In British North America there is a strong movement in progress in favour of federation, or rather of union in some shape. In Australia I believe the same feeling exists, but not so deeply, and though it has not assumed a practical form, I think that tendency ought to be encouraged in both one and the other case (hear, hear). *We know that those countries must before long be independent states.* We have no interest except in their strength and well being."—*Times*, 20th October, 1864.

† "The power we desire to exercise [over the North American colonies] is *entirely a moral one*, and, strong or weak, the dependency that wishes to quit us, *has only solemnly to make up its mind to this effect.* . . . The Admiral was severe on those who entertain the opinions which have constantly found utterance in the *Times*, that the colonies and the mother country will cease to be united when the *common interest* ceases."—*Times*, 15th October, 1864.

A union between political societies, based upon community of interest, to be dissolved at the wish of either party, and to be enforced exclusively by moral sanctions—this (by whatever name it may be called) constitutes in fact an alliance between independent nations, not the relation of an imperial to a dependent state. (See Austin's *Jurisprudence*, vol. i., pp. 208, 209, and Lewis's *Government of Dependencies*, pp. 2, 3). Such was the relation subsisting between the states of ancient Greece and their independent colonies; such is that into which any two sovereign states of Europe may at any time enter without derogation from the sovereignty of either; and such, in fine, has been that which has been contemplated and distinctly described by those who have advocated "colonial emancipation."

The form in which, two years ago, the above opinions "found utterance in the *Times*" was as follows:—"We may as well declare at once, for the benefit of Americans and Spaniards, Russians and Ionians, Sikhs and Sepoys, that England has no thought of abandoning her

The British Empire—let me here state for what it is worth the conclusion to which serious reflection has guided me—the British Empire, such as it has hitherto been known in the world, has reached its natural goal. That British power, or that the influence of British ideas, will in consequence suffer declension, is what at least I, for one, do not believe. Contemplating our career as a whole, it seems to me that we have out-grown the restraints and supports of our earlier state, and are now passing into a new phase of existence. Instead of a great political, we shall be a great moral, unity;* bound together no longer indeed by Imperial ligaments supplied from the Colonial Office, but by the stronger bonds of blood, language, and religion—by the common inheritance of laws fitted for free men, and of a literature rich in all that can keep alive the associations of our common glory in the past. Thus sustained and thus united, each member of the great whole will enter without hindrance the path to which

transmarine possessions;" and then, with a delicate allusion to the moral force doctrine, "So far from believing in her own decline, England believes that she was *never more powerful than now, or more capable of holding what she has won.*"—(*Times*, 4th Feb., 1862). It is true the writer, at the conclusion of a long tirade conceived in this spirit, adds the remark:—"No one, we believe, in this country desires to keep them against their will." But this is merely a specimen of the self-stultification into which writers fall, who, without any clear and self-consistent view, charge themselves with the task of finding arguments in defence of prevailing prejudices.

* "If people want a grand moral unity, they must seek it in the moral and intellectual sphere. Religion knows no impediment of distance. The dominions of science are divided by no sea. To restore, or pave the way for restoring, the unity of long-divided Christendom, may seem the most chimerical of all aspirations, yet perhaps it may be less chimerical than the project of founding a world-wide state."—*The Empire*, page 86.

its position and opportunities invite it; while all will co-operate in the same work of industrial, social, and moral progress; exchanging freely—let us hope, in spite of some present indications to the contrary—exchanging freely our products and our ideas—in peace good friends and customers, and firm allies in war.