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SOCIAL EFFECT OF COLONIES ON ENGLAND.

COLONIES in a social point of view * are of vast importance ; but., unfortunately, it is difficult to make the full value of principles apparent, although their effects may be constantly felt. Objects of supposed remote benefit are less easily explained than those which present themselves to daily observation. Thus the comprehension of the laws and operations of the physical world is within the scope of an ordinary understanding : we can readily trace the relation of cause and effect in mechanism, and accurately describe the beauties of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, because these objects are within the cognizance of one or all of the senses ; but when we proceed to examine the mental and moral world, and trace the workings of social polity in all its complexity, we are left without any thing tangible ; the eye, the ear, and the hand are no longer available for examination and comparison ; and judgment, therefore, must be based on a connected series of results—the links of which are distant, and their consequences often feebly or imperfectly developed. Hence arises the great difficulty of explaining the effect of colonies on the character of a nation—on its laws and usages—on the existence of **society**—and on the duration of an empire.

Political power, maritime strength, commercial opulence, mental activity, internal security, and general prosperity and happiness—all

* In the two preceding numbers we demonstrated, first, the extent and nature of ancient and modern colonization ; and, second, the political and commercial relations of colonies to the parent state.

spring from the possession of colonies wisely chosen, generously fostered, and justly governed. The hope of obtaining these and other advantages, has prompted every great nation that has yet existed (see No. 1, Art. II.) to aim at the possession of territorial or marine colonies ; and although some may not have obtained all these advantages, and others but few of them, yet this has resulted from the operation of various causes, and does not militate against the doctrine we have advanced. The Egyptians were prevented obtaining the full benefit of their colonies by reason of the sacerdotal character of an idolatrous government—the Greeks, by a defective connexion between the settlements formed in the Ionian and Mediterranean seas, and the oligarchical republics whence they sprung—the Carthaginians, by the exclusive system adopted by that selfish mercantile people, whereby they deprived their transmarine possessions of all communication with foreign nations—the Romans, by their lust of conquest, and the military tenure of their settlements—the Spaniards, by their blood-stained avarice, and despotic government—the Portuguese, by the fanatic spirit of proseytism, originating in an imperfect conception and developement of Christianity—the Dutch, by their mercenary principles and trading monopolies, by which they allowed their officials to enrich themselves, while they plundered and oppressed the colonists—and the French, by extreme pride, a defective social polity, and an inability to carry out doctrines, plausible in appearance, but impracticable in their attempted operation.

That England has not derived from her colonies the full measure of benefits which might naturally have been expected, has been mainly owing to her total want of any fixed principles of government, at home or abroad, as regards her colonies ; and from her commercial jealousy and fiscal exactions ; acting, as she has too generally done, on the short-sighted maxims of a petty shopkeeper, rather than on the views which should influence a great empire. By her insane attempts to prevent the progress of manufactures* in her former North American colonies, and to possess a paltry revenue without consulting the wishes or inclinations of those whose industry, capital, and skill was to furnish it, she drove a gallant and then loyal people into a painful struggle for their independence from a tyrannical domination, which was not resigned so long as there was a shadow of hope that it could be retained, Grown somewhat wiser by experience, the revenues (so far and even further than they ought to be conceded), are now in general consigned

* Even the making of a hat, or a horse-shoe nail, was prohibited.

to the management and distribution of the people who furnish them ; but the defective system of home and foreign government for the colonies remains, and the commercial injustice is but slightly mitigated : heavy duties are imposed on the produce of the colonies, and they are kept in a state of fluctuation and embarrassment whenever there is any approach to mercantile justice in the duties levied in the mother country, by the unwearied efforts made to place foreign nations on the same footing in English markets as if they were colonists, (or as if the colonists were foreigners) ; thus impeding the steady growth of that prosperity which they would otherwise attain, and preventing their being an effective assistance to the treasury of the mother country.

But, notwithstanding the manifold defects in the colonial system of nations which have just been mentioned, yet that great benefits accrued to them from the possession of colonies can scarcely be denied, since it is an historical fact, that the power of each of these nations is to be dated from the acquisition, and its decline from the loss, of its colonies.* It is, no doubt, true that the possession of colonies did not save ancient or modern nations from ruin ; but it should be remembered, that objects, however good in themselves, may be, and too often are, perverted into evil. In the nations before mentioned, the acquisition of colonies begat an intense desire for increased power—a cursed thirst for government : their power was used for the extension of tyranny and slavery—their wealth was employed in ministering to every degrading and disgusting passion, and every fresh vice thus called into activity, became in its turn the parent of other vices and hitherto unheard of crimes, until (as explained in our first number, Art. I.) the cycle of sin and misery was complete, and the destruction of those nations became a blessing from on high to all mankind. This doctrine does not in the slightest degree invalidate, on the contrary, it strengthens the statement put forth in our opening number, as to the want of analogy between the growth and decay of an individual of a species, and the origin and destruction of a nation,

The hypothesis of the necessary decline of kingdoms, whether possessed of colonies or otherwise, however righteously they may act,

* On the declaration of independence of the United States, the downfall of British power was loudly proclaimed abroad, and even at home ; but the genius of Chatham and Pitt directed the attention of the nation to other possessions, and to the Eastern Hemisphere, to balance the loss we had sustained in the West. On the breaking out of the war with France, &c., we stripped every European nation of its maritime acquisitions, and thus re-established, and indeed augmented, our power and prosperity.

however usefully they may fulfil the great duties of social life, however widely they may extend the blessings of Christianity, appears to us to be the doctrine of the materialist, or of the atheist, who denies the existence of a superintending power, general and special in all things appertaining to creation ; whose attributes are infinite knowledge, wisdom, and love, and who, in the exercise of those attributes, founded this world for the purpose of promoting the immediate and permanent happiness of mankind. No one can admit the truth of the too popular doctrine, as to the *necessary* decline and destruction of a nation, without striking at the root of all human responsibility, and keeping man in a perpetually recurring circle of power and weakness, of happiness and wretchedness. If kingdom after kingdom were to be destroyed as soon as it had attained a certain number of colonies, and a given height of civilization, then would this world never emerge from barbarism : there might be in one age more intellectual light than in another, but there would be perpetual alternations of darkness ; men would have to begin anew the studies which former ages had taken so much pains to perfect ; and the unceasing struggle for existence, the contests of the passions, and the desire for power, would prevent a nation ever rising to a true understanding and appreciation of the nature of a Christian kingdom.

Viewing nations in this light, we shall repudiate the idea that colonies are to a kingdom what stimulating nourishment is to an animal or plant, namely, an acceleration of its growth, but a rapid hastening of its decay. Let us hope, however, that this paralyzing doctrine, which has been received from the heathen, and adopted too generally by the unreflecting Christian, is now being exploded ; and while we remember that former nations possessed colonies, maritime strength, military power, commercial opulence, and intellectual skill, let us not forget also, that, being devoid of true religion, their power but ungenerated pride -their strength oppression -their wealth vice ; — that a stronger community coveted their riches, and dispossessed them of their country, - and that they perished -most justly perished ; -they were removed -whole races extinguished -to give place to others ; who will also, in their turn, be destroyed, if they refuse to -take warning by the examples which the hand of Providence has traced in indelible characters over the earth.

Let us now proceed to examine some of the social effects of colonies, and inquire how a nation can be injured by the possession of colonies, or how an emigration to them can injure the producing or consuming power of the parent state. The migration of individuals *from one*

part Of a Kingdom or empire, to another part of the same kingdom or empire, is decidedly beneficial ;-existing deficiencies are supplied ; the condition of the migrators improved, (or else they would not have migrated,) and knowledge is extended and increased by promoting facility of intercourse between distant communities, for an incalculable benefit is derived from the interchange of mind, as well as from the transfer of merchandise. It is those generally who are strong of heart, and in full bodily health, who migrate ; and if the migrators do not quit the island, kingdom, or empire, the general weal is not diminished, as the improvement of the condition of the migrators benefits the whole community, (on the principles expounded in our previous number, on the commerce of England with her colonies and a foreign state,) but if they quit their native country to reside in a foreign land, the strength of those who remain is diminished, while the young and the aged, the feeble and the indigent, are thrown for support on the reduced resources and increasing care of those who have not migrated. Moreover, it never can be the true policy of a nation to strengthen a neighbouring or rival state by the addition of skilful artisans, while the nation is becoming daily weaker from the additions thus made to the power of its neighbour. It is one of the first duties of a wise statesman to encourage the increase of population. Paley correctly states some of the advantages possessed by a populous empire in these words.—“ Happiness is made up by the number of individuals who enjoy it : one hundred persons are capable of producing a greater degree of individual happiness, than one person is : whatever, therefore, augments population, (*cæteris paribus*) is the great desideratum of a state ; and the destruction of population by famine, pestilence, the sword, &c., is one of the greatest evils to a country, and a serious drawback on the happiness of each remaining individual.”*

* The assertion which has been made that Spain was materially weakened by the emigration of her subjects to the colonies is quite unsupported by facts. In the course of three centuries not more than half a million of people emigrated from Spain to her possessions in the new world : and of these many returned to the mother-country. One of the main causes of the weakening of Spain were the unceasing persecutions, massacres, and, finally, the expulsion of the Moors and Jews. In 1492, A.D., there were 800,000 Jews (or, according to some, *families* of Jews) murdered or driven out of Spain; and by an edict of 1609, one million of Moors were expelled from the Spanish soil. In the course of a few years between two and three millions of the most valuable part of the population (including *artisans*, merchants, and bankers,) were lost to Spain. But besides these pro-

The United Kingdom has now 28,000,000 of inhabitants, and in some parts (Ireland) the number of mouths to the square mile is about 300, which is an exceedingly dense population. If the kingdom were cut off from all communication with other parts of the world, there would either be an immense augmentation of the inhabitants (the present rate of increase of births over deaths is estimated at one thousand a day !) or there would be convulsive movements in the body politic—civil wars, diseases, physical as well as moral, would ensue—the frame-work of the social edifice would be quickly annihilated, and anarchy, misery, and total destruction would be the certain result. To an insulated kingdom like England emigration is now as indispensable as air was to the number of individuals who were crowded in the “black hole of Calcutta ;” and as we have previously demonstrated, it is evidently for the advantage of those who **Zeave** the island, as well as for those who **remain** in the island, that the migration should only be from one part of the empire to another, and not to a foreign state, for every increase in the rate of wages, and in the profits arising from industry, skill, and capital, enables the emigrant to become a purchaser of the manufactures of the mother-country, increases his prosperity, and adds to the wealth and happiness of the whole community in the empire. Thus, by the judicious regulation of the stream of emigration, we preserve one of the main elements of a nation’s strength, and provide for its extension and perpetuity. This is beautifully exemplified by Wordsworth, who in the following expressive lines, has commended the establishment of colonies on the principle of the bees sending off their annual swarms from the overthronged hive,

ceedings, shameful and ruinous as they were, (and by their intolerance totally opposed to that mild spirit of Christianity which a bigoted papacy could not comprehend,) we must not forget the other causes of Spanish decay ;—heavy and iniquitous taxes — a cruel inquisition under the sanction of a superstitious mockery, disgracing the name of Christianity—the *mæsta* of privileges for distinct classes ; vast tracts of country vested in certain towns and villages ; no representative power ; all authority clothed with despotism ; an hereditary magistracy, who fixed the price of all produce of labour ; and in the year 1768, it was computed that Spain contained 1,200,000 idle gentlemen, nobles, and religious persons, with their domestics, with only 2,200,000 of labourers, artists, and manufacturers. The colonies were of immense utility to Spain, if wisely used, but the power and wealth they conferred served but to heighten the ambition of Charles V. and to render fiercer the bigotry of Philip II. The result is, that Spain does not now possess a foot of land of the continent of South America !

while predicting the beneficial results attendant on the extension of
 “ Britain’s swarms over the smallest habitable rock : ”—

“ As the element of air affords
 An easy passage to the industrious bees,
 Fraught with their burthens ; and a way as smooth,
 For those ordained to take their sounding flight
 From the thronged hive, and settle where they list—
 In fresh abodes, their labour to renew : —
 So the wide waters open to the power,
 The will, the interests, and appointed needs
 Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
 Her swarms ; and in succession send them forth
 Bound to establish new communities
 On every shore whose aspect favours hope,
 Or bold adventure ; promising, to skill
 And perseverance, their deserved reward.
 Change, wide and deep, and silently performed,
 This land shall witness ; and as days roll on,
 Earth’s universal frame shall feel the effect,
 Even till the smallest habitable rock,
 Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
 Of harmonized society, and bloom
 With civil arts, that send their fragrance forth,
 A grateful tribute to all-ruling heaven.” *

Wordsworth has well observed in the foregoing, that “ change wide and deep, and silently performed, this land shall witness.” That change is now in progress, owing to the very nature of our colonial empire, and we shall endeavour to illustrate the observation with reference to the remarks with which we commenced this article, as to the difficulty attendant on an explication of the causes which influence silently, secretly, but powerfully, the character, views, feelings, and strength of a nation. First, with regard to the material structure of a people. That the *corpus sanum* is accompanied by the *mens sana* is generally true ; the preservation of a fine, bold, hardy race of men has ever been considered an object worthy of serious consideration. Heretofore luxuries have, by a mistaken and undue use, tended much to the deterioration of physical strength. It is not sufficient for man that he should possess abundance of food and raiment ; the body, to be retained in health, must be kept in constant use, and the mind in interesting congenial pursuits. Maritime colonies are, therefore, valuable in the highest degree by furnishing a hardy and lucrative employment for

* Book IX. Excursions.

those residing near a sea-coast frontier. The very terrors of the sea become a delight to those who have loved the ocean from boyhood, and **who** have been borne on its billows ; corporeal strength, quickness of thought, promptitude of action, invincible courage, and contempt of death, are among the attributes of a maritime people-

“ That for itself can woo the approaching fight,
 And turn what some deem danger to delight;
 That seek what cravens shun with more than zeal,
 And where the feebler faint-can only feel,—
 Feel-to the rising bosom’s inmost core,
 Its hope awaken and its spirits soar.”

Nor is the mental or moral character of a maritime people less marked than their physical : to great strength is generally added an aptitude for knowledge, and a benevolence of heart which renders a true seaman the pride and honour of England. But if these advantages are manifested at home, they are not less perceptible in the more distant parts of the empire. The agricultural or piscatory pursuits of colonists tend to the preservation of a vigorous race, who, by their intermarriages with the people of the mother-country, maintain a continually renovating stock, free from the diseases to which long-established societies are so liable. The animal strength, courage, and acuteness of the Americans, Australians, **Africans**, &c. is in proof of the assertion, and the intercourse which has subsisted for several centuries between different parts of the British empire has efficiently aided in the perpetuation of a fine race of men. Nor should we omit to observe the effects of those intermarriages and relationships between the colonists and the inhabitants of the mother-country : a solicitude arises for each other’s welfare ; the distant parts of the globe become an unceasing object of anxious examination, and a neighbourly love arises of a more widely extended sphere than that which is confined to the same street, village, town, or island.

Thus kindly feelings beget kindly feelings ; the spread of the social affections is repaid by enhanced enjoyment ; we learn to look upon the inhabitants of the Canadas, of the West or East Indies, of **Australasia**, **Africa**, &c., as a part of the same community ; their joy becomes our joy-their injury ours ; the good which we confer on them, the happiness they may possess, is not confined to their own race-it extends to all around them in eddying circles, widening as they roll.

How important, then, that the nucleus whence all this good is to flow should be a Christian kingdom ; otherwise, every extension of colonies would but lead to the propagation of vice, the expansion of

crime, and the speedier dissolution of the parent who originated the winged seeds of disease which are scattered so abundantly, and with such velocity, and which, wherever they may fall, produce a fatally abundant crop of the elements of national decay.

In reference to the social effects of colonies, we would next refer to personal freedom, which is an object of anxious solicitude to every well-regulated mind. That our personal freedom should remain unmolested by foreign powers must be owing, in the present age, to a sense of our physical strength and political energy, and, in another age, it is to be expected, a due appreciation of Christian principles, which lead every man to respect the rights of others. But as mankind now think and act, our defence of personal freedom must, under Providence, depend on our own strength, rather than on the forbearance of others.

Where personal freedom is dependent on the form of government, and uninfluenced by foreign domination, it is materially aided and strengthened by wisely formed colonial possessions. So long as England retains her colonies, she cannot be under the despotism of a single ruler: she may become more democratical or more oligarchical, but with so many distant dependencies, each more or less a nucleus for freedom, no absolutism could long exist.—This remark peculiarly applies to the period of Charles I. and Cromwell; the partisans of each spread themselves abroad in the colonies, and those who fled from arbitrary power preserved the feelings of constitutional liberty.

If, on the one hand, municipal institutions have been found advantageous for the security of social rights at a distance from the seat of government, so, on the other hand, colonies enjoying local freedom and privileges are advantageous to the maintenance of political freedom at home; the battles for constitutional liberty (as also the battles of the state) are often fought on colonial ground,* and the independence evinced by the British North American colonists in the last century was one of the remote causes of the general freedom which Europe and South America have since possessed,

Moral responsibility is the last topic on which it is intended to offer any remarks. Most persons are aware of its force in an individual sense, but few have considered it in a national view. It is true that a nation is an aggregate of individuals, and that if each individual acts with a deep sense of moral responsibility, general good must ensue, But under the present very imperfect application of Christian prin-

* This was written previous to the recent debates and proceedings in Jamaica.

ciples to the duties of life, how few look beyond the duties of their **own** family? Family duties are of high importance, and their fulfilment is a benefit to society, as well as to the persons included within the immediate sphere of their operation; but they are not the sole duties, and some moralists have contended that they are and ought to be subordinate to the duty we owe to our country; while Christianity, in its strict interpretation, would lead a believer to consider his duty towards his children and his country secondary in relation to the whole family of man.

But assigning to family duties all the importance they merit, a wider expansion, as regards the condition of the posterity of any parent, would lead to the contemplation of future events, and induce him not merely to provide for his immediate offspring, but also to aid in promoting the welfare of the hundreds or thousands who are to spring from his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He must have a circumscribed mind—little indeed raised above the instinct of the animal—who only looks to his immediate descendants, and disregards what may be the position, centuries hence, of those human beings whose earthly parent he may be considered. A wise and a **just man** will not only be sedulous for the happiness of the offspring that he sees, but for those whom he cannot see; and it is in proportion as he acts on such principles, that he rises above the condition of the brute. Thus it may be seen how the duties of man widen from the family dwelling under the same roof, to the nation of which he constitutes a part—and to all mankind, of whom he forms a unit. It is this responsibility which it is so desirable to impress on the mind, for in England it has yet scarcely risen above the family circle, and very many think they have fulfilled all the duties of existence, if they have left their offspring in competence. Some go farther, **and** deem it well that every effort should be made for the perpetuation of the British empire, but few consider that the British empire is but a link in the great chain of events; that if its continuance be an advantage to mankind, it will be maintained in all its strength and glory, but if otherwise, it will pass away, and its place nowhere be found.

Power was never yet permitted to an individual or to a nation, but for some good purpose; and the abuse of that power most certainly is **followed by** its abstraction, and a punishment for the perversion of **good** into evil. A vast power it has pleased almighty Providence to bestow on Britain: no nation, of which we have any record in sacred or profane history, ever enjoyed the advantages and blessings of this