

encies, but integral and inseparable parts of an Empire owning a naval force so irresistible as to practically afford to its outlying portions full and ample security from the effects of any wars of other nations.

Still, I have not been able to disguise from myself, that were New Zealand independent, she would not have stayed her hand from attempting to civilize, and to attach to her in peaceful connection, the islands of the Pacific.

New Zealand's natural relations to the islands may to some extent be gauged from the fact that the country was peopled from the islands adjacent to Australia; whilst, so far as I am aware, there is no trace of the islanders having established themselves in any part of the island continent.

It is remarkable how the prevailing winds make New Zealand and the islands mutually accessible. They proclaim New Zealand as the natural head-quarters of Polynesia.

It is singular how Polynesia is being divided. It would seem to those who think of the enterprise of Great Britain in earlier days, when colonization, in the absence of modern facilities, was infinitely more difficult than at present, that the country which 270 years ago acquired Barbadoes would not suffer the fertile islands of the Pacific to escape her. The late Admiral Washington, in a letter to the Colonial Office, in 1859, wrote:—"I have been much struck by the entire want, by Great Britain, of any advanced position in the Pacific Ocean. We have valuable possessions on either side, as at Vancouvers and Sydney, but not an islet or a rock in the 7,000 miles of ocean that separate them. The Panama and Sydney mail communication is likely to be established, yet we have no island on which to place a coaling station and where we could insure fresh supplies * * * *; and it may hereafter be found very inconvenient that England should be shut out from any station in the Pacific, and that an enemy should have possession of Tongatabu, where there is a good harbour, within a few hundred miles of the track of our homeward-bound gold ships from Sydney and Melbourne. Neither forts nor batteries would be necessary to hold the ground. A single cruising ship would suffice for all the wants of the islands. Coral reefs and the hearty good-will of the natives would do the rest."

Meanwhile, the islands of the Pacific have been objects of attraction to other countries. Holland, Spain, and France, and recently the United States and Germany, have not disguised their interest in them. To these nations they have been attractive chiefly as convict and naval stations, excepting to Holland, which apparently regards them from a commercial point of view. Great Britain, which might look upon them from four stand points,—

- 1st. As naval stations;
- 2nd. As important to the preservation and safety of her Australian possessions;
- 3rd. In order to preserve them from becoming convict stations;
- 4th. On account of their commercial importance—

has stood aloof.

She is now, probably, on the point of taking some responsibility in respect to Fiji; but it has, in many ways, been almost forced upon her. She is indifferent to the Navigator or Samoan Islands becoming an American dependency, although she knows they are being so constituted because of the excellent harbour they possess, their commanding position, and their splendid capabilities.

On the other hand, Great Britain has entered on a herculean task, in undertaking the repression of slavery in the southern seas. This is a work which, under present conditions, will not grow less. The expense is not temporary. Let the islands continue as at present, and the repression of slavery in the south seas means such an inducement to those who are successful in the trade as to couple with the efforts to check slavery an encouragement to promote it, and make necessary larger means of repression.

It is hopeless, however, to expect Great Britain to take possession of all unoccupied Polynesia; and the problem which I have considered is—Can New Zealand do anything? Politically, she cannot: but she can do much if it be conceded that to such countries as these islands, the influences of civilization and commerce will stand as substitutes, if not ultimately lead to the flag and the dominion. In fine, it seems to me that New Zealand may earn for reluctant Great Britain—without committing her to responsibilities she fears—a grand Island Dominion; may, in the meanwhile, save the mother country much trouble, and danger, and risk. I speak, of course, of the danger and risk of expenditure, which weigh so much with the rulers of Great Britain; and when the result is secured, and the commerce established, it may be recognized that New Zealand, the Colony, has done a useful work for Great Britain, the Empire.

In this work, all aid and countenance, or even tacit permission, have been denied to New Zealand.

The plan which I am about to develop, arose in my mind in this way:—

Mr. Coleman Phillips, who had aided in arranging for the establishment of a bank in Fiji, addressed to me a communication, in which he suggested the establishment of a company, which, like the East India Company, should endeavour politically and commercially to gain ascendancy in the Pacific Islands. I was much struck with the idea; but when Mr. Phillips asked me if I would advise him to go home to endeavour to float the Company, I felt that he would have great difficulty in raising the capital. It then occurred to me, from the New Zealand point of view, from which I felt bound to look at it, that Mr. Phillips's project, supposing it matured, might or might not be worked in a manner calculated to be of much benefit to New Zealand.