

Arnold considered that Parliament suffered its greatest loss by his absence from it.

In earlier times it would not have been easy to apply the Burckian philosophy to colonial policy. For the colonies had formerly been valued as privileged sources of raw materials, protected markets for British manufactures, and exclusive preserves for English shipping. They had been hedged round with a mass of laws and regulations, imposed in the interests of Great Britain. But the Victorians completed the destruction of these mercantilist controls, which had begun before their time (mid-Victorian Britain could buy or sell where it would) and the colonies could go their own way. As Goldwin Smith wrote: "The time was when the universal prevalence of commercial monopoly made it well worth our while to hold colonies in dependence for the sake of commanding their trade. But that time has gone. Trade is everywhere free, or becoming free. . . ."

With the fall of mercantilism, the state itself began to seem less important. In relation to empire, the Victorians were concerned with the spread of English civilisation, rather than with the extension of political control. This was the idea behind the theory of Wakefield and the colonial reformers of the 1830's and 40's. They believed in "systematic colonisation," by which they meant the creation of new societies abroad reproducing, so far as possible, the characteristics of England. This was what interested Goldwin Smith and Dilke, too. It was at the root of their affection for the United States; for there millions of immigrants—not only from Great Britain, but from all Europe—were becoming assimilated to English civilisation.

Gristle Into Bone

If Canada, Australia and New Zealand were to emulate the United States, they must be given a fair chance. Political dependence made colonists irresponsible; it prevented the full use of their energies. "We are keeping the colonies in a perpetual state of political infancy, and preventing the gristle of their frames from being matured and hardened into bone." Goldwin Smith wrote that sentence in 1863. He was scarcely just to Durham and Wakefield and their friends, for their work had made the idea of responsible government a form of political orthodoxy. The powers which were retained over the major colonies were fairly narrowly restricted. But even this was not enough; responsible government, as it was then conceived, was still a form of dependency. If the colonies were to become new nations they must be completely free; they must be given their independence.

To men like Goldwin Smith and Dilke a belief in colonial separation did not mean a dislike of colonies as such. As Goldwin Smith wrote: "I am no more against colonies than I am against the solar system. I am against dependencies, when nations are fit to be independent." Nor, as we have seen, was independence a purely negative conception. It would enable the former colonies to develop, and at the same time it would ensure the preservation of friendly relations with England, on a basis of common interests and sympathies. There was everything to gain and nothing, really, to lose. "After all," to quote Dilke, "the strongest of the arguments

in favour of separation is the somewhat paradoxical one that it would bring us a step nearer to the virtual confederation of the English race." The colonial separatists were the first to foresee the modern Commonwealth.

Non-European Dependencies

For the colonies of European settlement the future seemed clear. But what of the dependencies with a non-European population—India, Ceylon, the West Indies, the settlements in West Africa? Ultimately, they too would become free nations, when their people had adjusted themselves to Western civilisation and learnt how to work a modern constitutional system. But in the meantime they needed active help. The Victorians had, indeed, inherited a strong sense of obligation towards backward peoples. Missionary expansion and the long struggle against slavery had produced a conviction that it was our duty to convey the benefits of our civilisation to those who did not possess it. David Livingstone, for example, in his lectures at Oxford and Cambridge in 1857, pressed upon his hearers the duty of spreading among the Africans "those two pioneers of civilisation—Christianity and commerce." Such an extension of trade and missions did not necessarily, of course, involve the acquisition of territory and the setting up of a colonial government. In fact, it was best if this step could be avoided; for then native society could adapt itself gradually to the changing needs of a new age. But sometimes annexation became unavoidable; native rulers ceased to be able to maintain law and order in the face of growing European activity. It was so in regard to New Zealand in 1840, to Lagos in 1861, and to Fiji in 1874.

But if non-European people came under British rule, how were they to be governed? Obviously it was not sufficient either to transfer British representative institutions or to establish some form of despotism. Both methods had been adopted in practice, but they could not satisfy an intelligent observer. Charles Dilke was greatly troubled by the problem after travelling in India; but, like most writers on the empire, he had not the experience to attempt a solution. It was left largely to men who had actually served as colonial administrators to work out this part of our imperial creed.

Pioneer in Fiji

We may take as one of the most distinguished examples the contribution of Sir Arthur Gordon. He had gone to Fiji in 1875 as the first Governor of that new colony. His ideas were already formed by experience in previous governorships. In Fiji he had the task of creating a whole system of government. When he was in England on leave in 1879 he explained and justified what he had done in an address to the Royal Colonial Institute. He pointed out how rule by even the best-intentioned of outsiders was often characterised by a "want of imagination on the part of the dominant race which prevents any conception by them of matters from the native point of view." This lack of imagination produced friction, which in its turn often led on to actual injustice. "Indeed it is probable," he said, "that as much real wrong has been inflicted

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