

ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

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THERE are few things more remarkable in the present aspect of the world than the existence of two such nations as England and America. Separated by the great Atlantic, which for some thousands of miles rolls its waves between them, they claim the same origin, speak the same language, have the same literature, down to a recent period, the same

historical recollections, and generally the same habits. And yet with much that is similar there are many striking points of diversity. England has the strength of maturity, America the vigor of youth. One is decidedly monarchical, the other as firmly republican. In the old country there is a caution, we may say, a dread of change; the new country, by one mighty effort, started into a position which astonished the world, and made one of the most splendid experiments which the annals of the human race record. England, very confined in her own insular domains, throws out her colonies over every part of the globe; America, with a continental amplitude, which ages of multiplying population will not fill, neither has, nor needs, any distant possessions. England has, perhaps, reached the maximum of her greatness; America has before her prospects indefinitely great of enlargement and prosperity.

America and England must ever exercise a

reciprocal influence on each other. By their constant and increasing intercourse, their mutual commercial dependence, and the exchange of their literature, there is unavoidably a reciprocal action, which, notwithstanding occasional collisions of interests and opinions, must prove beneficial to both.

But, perhaps the most important view, which we can take of these two countries, is the influence which they now exert, and which, to a still greater degree, they are apparently destined to exert, on the condition of the whole globe: There are three things which give power to this influence. First, the extent of their connexion and intercourse with other nations. This spreads over a large part of the world. The sea is covered with their ships, their flags are flying in almost every port, they have dealings with men of all colors, and all climes. Secondly, the character of both nations is eminently influential. They are not either of them a timid, re-

served, and quiescent people; they tell what they know, they speak what they think, and they ask for all that others know and think. They do not shrink from collisions of opinion, nor dread contradiction, nor fear discussion; they do not hesitate to apply the flint to the steel if but a spark may be elicited. They are essentially active and enterprising, and must ever be doing something both at home and abroad. Difficulties do not discourage them, dangers only produce enthusiasm, and the greater the magnitude of any enterprise the more determined is the attempt to accomplish it. In addition to these, there is a third consideration to be taken into the account. These two countries largely possess all those elements of national happiness, the communication of which is highly adapted to benefit the world. Here knowledge, civilization, religion, exist to a greater extent, and with more diffusive power than in any other nation. In some few branches

of speculative knowledge, and in artificial refinements, they may perhaps be surpassed ; and they may not vie with some nations in the pompous splendor of religious rites ; but in all practical knowledge, in the application of the arts to the great purposes of life, in the science of government, in civil institutions, and especially in enlightened, vital, influential piety, they pre-eminently excel. Amidst all the noise and strife of political parties, they are working out for the benefit of mankind two great problems ; — how far popular liberty can be preserved with the distinction of ranks, and an hereditary monarchy, — and to what extent the authority of law can be maintained, and order and general safety secured, in a pure democracy. And notwithstanding the activity of vice and a large amount of crime in both nations, benevolence the most disinterested, and charity the most expansive, associated with the fervor of enlightened piety, are ever creating and working mul-

tiplied institutions which bear on the temporal and spiritual well-being of their fellow-creatures, and which regard not only their own countrymen, but the world at large.

Placed then on so commanding a position, possessing such resources, distinguished by such a character, and comprising to such an extent all the elements of social happiness, who can contemplate the existence of two such nations at this period of the world, without considering them as special instruments in the hand of Divine Providence, designed to benefit and bless the human race.

But in order to give full efficiency to their salutary influence, in order to qualify them to discharge their high functions as benefactors of mankind, how important it is that those defects and abuses, which exist in each nation respectively should be removed, that their light may shine out with clearness, and the benefit of their example have nothing to weaken its force.

How desirable it is, that those inconsistencies should cease, behind which despotism and infidelity shelter themselves, and which the enemies of truth and freedom employ as their strongest weapons both of attack and defence.

In England much has been done towards this object during the last fifty years especially. Knowledge has been widely diffused, education has been greatly extended, the boundaries of civil and religious liberty have been widened, and a spirit of enlarged philanthropy, embracing a world's happiness, has been called into exercise. Her statutes are no longer disgraced by the Test and Corporation Acts; the Roman Catholic has been recognised as a citizen; the augean stable of borough-mongering iniquity has been cleansed; twenty years of hard and unremitting labor effected the abolition of the slave-trade, and after an armed truce of some time, a most arduous struggle of ten years more freed England from the crime and the disgrace

of Negro slavery. During the last half century some important truths have been gaining ground and gradually establishing themselves in public opinion. Among these may be reckoned the following ; that coercion in religion is as unwise and unjust as it is unscriptural ; — that the only legitimate object of all government is the benefit of the community ; — that “for the soul to be without knowledge is not good ;” — that the free interchange, among different nations, of the products of their soil and industry, is beneficial to all ; — that human life is sacred, and capital punishments the worst expedients for the prevention of crime ; — that war is madness ; — and that slavery is sin. These are great principles, with the full recognition and practical operation of which the happiness of the world is intimately connected. But even in England, all these are not equally or generally understood, much less brought into action ; much, very much remains to be done, by the

lovers of justice, the friends of humanity, and the followers of the Saviour, before this great nation shall be free from the reproach of inconsistency, and be qualified for her apostolic functions, as the messenger of mercy to the human race.

During the same period America has been proceeding with unparalleled rapidity in her career of prosperity, and her march of general benevolence. Her efforts to spread the benefits of education, and the blessings of religion have been prodigious. The immense sums raised and expended to meet the wants of her multiplying population, and to send the knowledge of divine truth abroad, have justly excited the admiration of all who are acquainted with the facts.

But there is one enormous delinquency, one great national disgrace, which mars her beauty and paralyzes her moral influence. **AMERICA IS THE LAND OF SLAVES!!** The very

soil on which her Capitol stands is moistened with the tears and the blood of the slave. The wailings of the broken-hearted captive, the shrieks of the bereaved slave-mother, the clank of the chain, the sounding of the lash, mingled with the curses of the slave-dealer, resound without the walls of that very senate-house, which within is ringing with the loud panegyric of universal freedom. The world stands aghast to hear that every sixth man, woman, and child, in the United States is a slave ! that a thriving trade in human flesh and blood is carried on, that fortunes are realized by breeding slaves, and livings obtained by their prostitution ! — and this in America, the enlightened, the free, the brave, who crushes beneath her feet in hopeless and bitter bondage, three millions of human beings !

America cannot possibly appreciate the effects of this enormous inconsistency on the freedom and happiness of the world in general. If the

expressions " American liberty " are pronounced in the ears of a despot, with a sardonic grin he replies, " American *slavery* ! " The enemies of America always select this as a means of depreciating both her and her institutions. There is, say they, more despotism in this boasted land of freedom, than in the most despotic government in Europe ; the only difference is this, in the arbitrary governments of the old world that portion of liberty which is enjoyed is more equally diffused ; in America some have all and others none. If we point to the Western world, to the great experiment of a people's competency to govern themselves, they tell us it has failed eminently in the production of general happiness, and affirm, that in the worst governed state of the old world, the average amount of happiness is greater than where so large a proportion of the population are slaves. If we venture to speak of that manly spirit, and the noble independence which the freedom of a

republic generates, we are told that is only a selfish and haughty pride, which while glorying in its own liberty, can ruthlessly trample under foot the rights of those who are weak enough, and unfortunate enough to fall within their power.

When the friends of America speak of the active piety which prevails, and the vitality and power with which Christianity operates in the United States, we are again reminded of slave-breeding professors, and slave-holding ministers, and elders, deacons, and class leaders, who are equally expert at flogging and praying ; we are told that all, or nearly all the religious denominations, who patronize home and foreign missions, and bible societies, are tainted with the crime of buying and selling their fellow creatures, or retaining in bondage those who have been thus cruelly deprived of their rights ; — a crime from which the most flagitious among us would start, and to be charged with which the

infidel would deem it a deep disgrace. When the generous liberality with which America supports every benevolent institution is mentioned, it is again retorted on us, yes, even the treasury of the Lord is defiled with the price of blood. O America, of all nations of the earth beyond our sea-girt isle, the best beloved, and the dearest to English hearts, how deeply do we mourn the dishonor which slavery entails on thee; how bitter is our mortification when thy inconsistencies shut those mouths which would proclaim thy varied excellencies, and how incessant are our regrets, that the liberty which is thy boast, and the piety which is thy honor, should not only be neutralized in their influence, but that the curse and contamination of slavery should even bring on sacred liberty and Christian piety a foul reproach!

There is, however, hope that this plague spot will disappear. No American of noble mind and human feelings can approve the system.

In the solitude of retirement, and the silence of night, there is a small still voice which must be heard in condemnation of it. Long habit and the strength of prejudice may struggle hard, but truth, and justice, and humanity must finally prevail. Let then the friends of equal liberty to all, let those high-principled republicans, who wish fully to carry out the noble and the incontrovertible principle on which their own independence is based, pour the light of day on these enormities and inconsistencies, which are emphatically "the works of darkness." Let them with all the ardor of zeal, and mildness of charity, and steadiness of principle, address themselves to the great work to which they are called by the voice of suffering humanity, by the voice of honor and justice, by the voice of the world, by the voice of God. Let them bring to bear on this monstrous evil all the combined strength of public opinion, and individual effort, and fervent prayer, and success must finally crown their labors.

Many are the agencies which are at work in both countries, producing, in various ways, beneficial results. The scholar, the philosopher, the manufacturer, the merchant, the jurist, the statesman, all in their several vocations may contribute to their country's welfare and to the general benefit of man ; but no labors are more highly beneficial, or more truly patriotic, than those which tend to promote the interests of truth and virtue, and to free a beloved country from the stain of injustice and the charge of oppression. In this great and glorious work, then, let friends of God and man on both sides the Atlantic cordially unite and zealously persevere. There is much in the past to encourage them, and everything in the future to cheer them. The time is coming when " nation shall not lift up the sword against nation," when " they shall learn the art of war no more ;" when the weak, the innocent, and the unsuspecting shall no more fear the power of oppression or the wiles of

treachery; when, "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And in bringing about this glorious consummation, will not England, with her possessions in every part of the globe, and America, stretching out to the shores of the Pacific, bear a prominent part. O, I think I see in the future, and my heart warms while the vision brightens on me, the kindred nations, having thrown off every incubus that presses on them, purified from all that

corrupts and degrades them, by their united efforts, and by the medium of their common language, spreading the illuminations of truth over every part of the globe, and communicating to a grateful world all the literature and the science, all the freedom and the piety, all the happiness and prosperity of England and America.

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