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A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

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JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
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SECRETARY: E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

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1915.

560TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

HELD IN THE CONFERENCE HALL, 1, CENTRAL BUILDINGS
WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 14TH, 1914,
AT 4.30 P.M.

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF HALSBURY, F.R.S., PRESIDENT
OF THE INSTITUTE, OCCUPIED THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding Meeting were read and signed and the SECRETARY announced that Mrs. WYNNE, Lt.-Col. HENRY SMITH, M.D., M.Ch., Mrs. HESTER SMITH, M.D., B.Ch., Col. A. F. LAUGHTON, C.B., THOS. FITZGERALD, Esq., Miss ETHEL JAMES, B.A., W. H. ASH, Esq., J.P., Rev. W. E. GLANVILLE, Ph.D., LL.B., JOHN C. DICK, Esq., M.A., and HAROLD W. BROWNE, Esq., had been elected Associates of the Institute.

THE PRESIDENT welcomed the Victoria Institute to its new premises. He congratulated the members in that they no longer had to climb up two flights of stairs to their Meeting-room. He knew from his own experience that the Council and Officers had taken a great deal of trouble in their selection of their new quarters, and he thought that all present would feel that their efforts had been most successful; the more so that they had secured this more comfortable home for a somewhat smaller sum than they had been paying previously. The PRESIDENT then called upon the Secretary, Mr. E. Walter Maunder, to read his paper on "The Principles of World Empire."

THE PRINCIPLES OF WORLD-EMPIRE. By E.
WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

THREE years ago, the Victoria Institute enjoyed the high privilege of listening to the Annual Address, delivered by Sir Charles Bruce, on "The True Temper of Empire." Empire he defined as "An aggregate of administrative units, of diverse constituent elements, professing allegiance to a central sovereign authority"; and adopting from him this definition, I wish to enquire into a special case of Empire; that of Empire co-extensive with human population; empire over the entire world; universal Empire.

The phrase "the true temper of Empire" is due to Bacon, who considered that it "is exhibited in the state of things which exists when the two contraries, sovereignty and liberty, are

mingled in fit proportions." In his Address, Sir Charles was necessarily most concerned with the "*mingling*"; with the practical question how best to preserve their "fit proportions." My purpose is rather to examine into the basic principles themselves; to deal with "sovereignty and liberty" in their application to the problem of Empire, not confined to some particular "aggregate of administrative units," but extending over the entire world.

The struggle in which to-day we have found ourselves involved is one for World-Empire. Since we are in the struggle, it follows inevitably that the details of the struggle occupy our thoughts to the exclusion of almost every other consideration. Yet the struggle is one of principles, more than of armies, and will eventually be decided by principles, not by artillery. It may, therefore, well repay us if for a few minutes we try to remove ourselves far from the actual material conflict, and examine the principles.

THE GREAT RIVER VALLEY STATES.

World-Empire, sovereignty extending over the whole known habitable world, is an ancient ideal.

The earliest great states of the ancient world arose in approximately the same period and in analogous geographical conditions. They were the states of the great river valleys. Egypt was "the gift of the Nile"; Mesopotamia of the twin rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates; China of the Hoang-Ho. In these regions, blessed with plenteous sunshine and a warm climate, abundance of water, but little rain, life was easy of support and the cereals could be cultivated with great success. Egypt is, of course, the typical instance of a river-valley state, but all three countries resembled each other in this, that their suitability for the maintenance of a great population depended upon the river being brought under subjection. It was necessary to embank it and to arrange for reservoirs of its surplus waters, which had to be distributed over the land by irrigation canals. Until the river had been thus controlled, it was a hindrance rather than an aid to human settlement; its annual inundations rendered the land impassable for months together, and swept away any frail habitations that the hand of man might have reared.

The conquest of the river was thus, in each case, a prime necessity, and this could only be accomplished by concerted human effort on a very large scale. Here then, therefore, the first great states arose. With the embankment of the river and

the control and distribution of its waters, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and China became countries of enormous productiveness; Egypt in particular supported not only an immense resident population, but had food enough to spare for barter with its neighbours.

These river valleys became the sites of the chief primitive states. The government was simple and necessarily despotic, for otherwise the great engineering works upon which they depended could not have been carried out. These states were populous, because food was abundant; they were wealthy, because the type of food which they produced was capable of storage, so that the abundant harvest of one year could be laid up for the future and drawn upon at pleasure. Further, in general the supply of food exceeded the requirements of the country itself. "The economy of ancient Egypt may be summed up in two words: forced-labour and subsistence-wages."*

The type of population composing such a state must necessarily be submissive, patient, industrious, and therefore neither warlike nor aggressive, but on the borders of Egypt and much more on those of Mesopotamia, there were races of a very different type: desert wanderers, moving rapidly from place to place; mountaineers, living by raids upon their richer neighbours. Such tribes were accustomed to war and danger, and loved change and excitement rather than monotonous industry, and to them the dwellers in the river valley appeared to invite attack. So from one quarter or another, the river civilizations, and especially those of the country of the Euphrates and Tigris, were continually exposed to invasion, and frequently passed into the hands of new lords. The tide of war was ever ebbing and flowing over it, and the periodic inundations of the rivers became, as it were, types of the succession of its political changes.

The defence of the river states must therefore have early become an urgent problem for their rulers, whether those rulers were natives or foreign conquerors, and it was found necessary to establish a regular army in order to keep raiders at a distance. The best defence was seen to lie in the counter attack, and in the subjugation of the regions from which the invaders came. Here, then, in essence, we find the explanation of the first effort to establish world-empire—an authority which should extend over the whole of the inhabited earth as it was then known.

There was something not quite ignoble or unreasonable in these efforts to bring the whole world under a single authority.

* Simcox, *Primitive Civilizations*, vol. i, p. 67.

No doubt, baser motives were at work with the first would-be conquerors, such as ambition, greed, the love of power and display, and, above all, the intense excitement of successful warfare. But, beyond these, there was the prompting of what appeared to be political necessity; the civilization of the river valley had to be protected from the ruder tribes without. And world-empire, could it be established, seemed to offer three great boons. First, peace, by the subjugation of all possible invaders; next, plenty, by the more complete organization of agriculture; and, thirdly, the accomplishment of great public works, such as embankments, canals, and the building of cities, towers and temples, or, as in Egypt, of tombs like the pyramids, which, if of little usefulness, were supremely impressive.

We know that this idea of world conquest did present itself to rulers in the valley of the twin rivers, for we find that they often assumed to themselves the title of "kings of the four regions of the world," or, more simply, "kings of the world." Nor was this title in all cases merely a piece of grandiloquence. Some 5,000 years ago, Sargon of Agadé, and his successor, Naram Sin, actually achieved this conquest, and pushed their victories to the five seas—the Caspian, the Euxine, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. Sargon even claims to have crossed the sea, and established his dominion beyond it. And in the eighth century B.C.—that is to say, roughly half-way from the time of the first Sargon to our own day—a second conqueror, who assumed to himself the same name, Sargon, repeated his conquest, and pushed the arms of Assyria almost to the same limits. Under Sargon of Assyria and his son, Sennacherib, Assyria became an armed camp; the nation was drained into the army; the kingdom lived only for war. The monuments of this time are concerned solely with the military life: the army on the march, the army in battle, the army besieging the cities, the army slaying or torturing captives, the army laying waste an enemy's country. We have not yet discovered and deciphered all the tablets and inscriptions that relate to this period, and we may yet learn how the heart of Sennacherib bled when he learnt of the destruction of some Kirjath-Sepher ("book-city") and the library for which it was famed. But the principle of "frightfulness" was well understood by the Assyrian kings, and wholesale massacres, mutilations, outrages and tortures, freely chronicled by the Assyrian kings themselves, might almost pass for a description of devastated Belgium in the autumn of the year of grace 1914.

But the world-empire of Sargon and Sennacherib passed quickly, and for two causes, both inseparable from their methods. First, Assyria was drained of its manhood to fill the ranks of the army. Next, the policy of "frightfulness" filled the surrounding nations with such a deep hatred against Assyria that they all combined against her. Of the Assyrian armies it had been true

"A fire devoureth before them ;
And behind them a flame burneth ;
The land is as the Garden of Eden before them,
And behind them a desolate wilderness ;
Yea, and nothing shall escape them."

But the day came when judgment was poured out upon the city of blood, and Nineveh was laid waste : so utterly waste, that in comparatively few years its very site had been forgotten.

"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be ;
And that which is done is that which shall be done ;
And there is no new thing under the sun."

The house of Sargon, the city of Nineveh, and the Assyrian nation perished.

World-empire fell to another king, to another nation, and became centred in another city. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, succeeded to the power and to much of the dominions of Sargon. He and his kingdom passed away in turn, but still the Empire remained : first under the rule of the Medes, then under Cyrus and his Persians ; and it was yet further extended under Darius, the son of Hystaspes. Then, a century and a half later, the Empire was wrested from the feeble hands of a later Darius by Alexander the Macedonian. Thus the World-Empire which had once been Assyrian, and had become in succession Babylonian, Median, Persian, became nominally Greek.

There is a legend of the temple raised to Diana in the grove of Aricia that the priest who served in it and who reigned as king over its sanctuary, won his right to that twofold office by the murder of his predecessor ; and he himself kept it only till he fell under the dagger of the murderer who should succeed him. So these old-world conquerors succeeded each other by the claim that consecrated "the ghastly priest" of the Arician grove :—

"The priest that slew the slayer,
And must himself be slain."

And such, sooner or later, must be the fate of any attempt to found world-empire by the power of the sword. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

THE SMALL SEABOARD STATES.

The great river valley communities of the ancient world do not afford the only type of the civilization of that time. There was another type, strongly contrasted with them in almost every particular.

“The mountains look on Marathon,
And Marathon looks on the sea.”

All along the indented coast of Asia Minor, on the islands of the Ægean, in the creeks and harbours of Greece, cities had sprung up, each more or less isolated. All were on the seaboard, and on the landward side were generally closed in by mountains, so that the geography of the region led inevitably to the formation of little states, each complete in its isolation. One thing linked them together; it was indeed the sea which divided them, but the sea also united.

To these little maritime communities commerce was a necessity. The small land area commanded by each could not produce all that was needed, so that intercourse and exchange with other states were vital to them. Their populations, therefore, were obliged to be adventurous and resourceful. The sailor is the typical “handyman,” and must always be on the alert. Further, in the community of ship life the personality of every man counts, and tends to become accentuated. Every ship, too, is a community complete in itself; sea life, therefore, was a training in the recognition of the corporate character of the home city, and the devotion to the welfare of that home city was increased with every return to it.

The river valley empire and the secluded seaport city were therefore the very antitheses, the one of the other. The first was a despotism, at the absolute disposal of a single man; the second tended to become a republic, governed in accordance with the wishes of the majority of its citizens. The two civilizations therefore stood for the two principles which Bacon has named “sovereignty” and “liberty.” The principles were there embodied, there took concrete form.

Here is the interest which attaches to Marathon, and has made it famous through four and twenty centuries; for it was at Marathon that the first “decisive battle of the world” recorded in authentic history took place. Two world principles strove there.

Darius Hystaspis, the Napoleon of his day, both in military genius and able administration, had conquered practically the whole world known to him, except the little country of Greece;

and his conquests included the Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor. Athens, which was closely connected with these Ionian cities by the ties of race, had just expelled its tyrant, Hippias, who sought the assistance of Darius. This would, no doubt, have been readily given in any case, but, as the Athenians helped in a revolt of the Ionian cities, Darius became greatly incensed against them, and determined upon their conquest. He despatched a powerful expedition which landed on the east coast of Attica, on a barren plain some twenty-five miles from Athens, and a revolution was also planned within the city itself. The Athenians marched out to the attack, and, though much outnumbered, fell upon the Persians with such swiftness and vigour that they drove them back to their ships with great slaughter, and succeeded in taking or destroying seven of the vessels. The rising in the city found no opportunity, and the Persian generals, feeling that their expedition had failed, returned home with the remnant of their forces.

The Battle of Marathon was only the first stage in the war between Persia and Greece; it was renewed again ten years later by the mighty expedition under Xerxes. But Marathon for the time was decisive, for if the Persian had succeeded there, the subjugation of the rest of Greece could hardly have been avoided, and, so far as we can see, the greater part of what we now owe to Greek intellect and achievement would have been lost to later ages.

Just as Athens did not hesitate to stand alone against the Persian invasion at Marathon, so she again bore the brunt of the attack in the greater war ten years later. Attica was overrun by the Persians, the Athenians went into exile and abandoned their city, which was burnt; of all the Greek states, they alone rose to this height of self-abnegation.

The spirit of liberty is not of itself a civic virtue. The unwillingness to accept authority, to obey orders, to restrain one's own self-will, is no virtue at all, but the reverse.

“He don't obey no orders except they be his own”

does not describe a man of high character, but a man without character, and it was when Israel had reached the lowest depths of national disintegration that it was written, “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” But self-sacrifice, self-sacrifice to the uttermost for the sake of the liberty of others, this is the foundation-stone of all civic virtue, and the proud distinction of Athens was this—that she first recognized

that Greek liberty was worth sacrificing existence for, even her own existence as a city and state.

The fact that Athens stood alone in her appreciation of the meaning of the struggle, and in her readiness to sacrifice everything shows that, had she been overcome, there was no moral force elsewhere in Greece sufficient to have carried on the struggle. Greece would have ceased to be.

THE VALUE OF SMALL STATES.

And what would the world have lost ?

We should have lost the results of that free play of human individuality and genius which grew out of the freedom of Athens, and of the other cities of Greece. In drama, Athens gave us Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides; in history, Thucydides; in philosophy, Plato. In Athens the fine arts, and especially sculpture, reached their highest development. In Athens was trained Aristotle, the father of the sciences. Not all the empires of Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, Macedon have contributed so much to intellectual progress as this one little Greek state, not so large as the county of Surrey.

We have been told of late by Treitzschke, the historian-prophet of Germany, that the small state, by reason of its smallness, must necessarily be petty, confined, unambitious in its thoughts and life. Great events, enacted upon a broad stage, are necessary, in his belief, to raise men's thoughts and actions to the heroic scale. The instance of Athens, if it stood alone, would be sufficient to refute the argument. But Athens, though the most brilliant, was but the exemplar of many Greek city states, and the phenomenon of Athens was closely reproduced 1,500 years later in the achievements of Florence and other great Italian cities. All these shone in the very particulars of heroic and martial patriotism, of civic pride and political sagacity, which Treitzschke would claim as the monopoly of vast empires. The same virtues were also shown in pre-eminent degree by the free cities of the Netherlands, and another little state, one of the smallest of all, the inland city of Geneva, has had an influence on religious and political thought that has been world wide.

The principle of sovereignty has again and again sought to establish itself in world power, and it has as often failed, and failed because the military strength upon which it had relied to establish and maintain its dominance, has ebbed away, and because of the righteous hatred which its tyranny has always evoked.

Can world-empire then be based on liberty? Is it possible that an Athenian empire would fare better than a Persian? The case was put to the test, for just as Athens is the typical instance of a free state successfully resisting the principle of empire, so Athens in turn became the typical instance of the failure of a free state to establish empire.

The failure of Athens was most significant. The numerous little Greek city states had much in common. They recognized their kinship in blood, they spoke the same language, they had the same religion, they shared in the same public celebrations, their civilizations were of the same type, they followed the same intellectual ideals. Yet it proved impossible to weld them together into a political unity; each city clung to its right to differ from the others; each proved in the outcome as jealous of Greek encroachment upon its individuality as of barbarian aggression. And the bitterness of Greek towards Greek was often deadly. Two great political crimes disfigure the history of this period, and illustrate the incompetence of the Greek to construct empire, even within the limits of the Greek-speaking world itself—the destruction of Plataea by the Thebans, and the failure on the part of Athens to support Olynthus until it was too late to save it.

IS "EMPIRE" DESIRABLE?

But if it be the case that small states are of such high importance to humanity, and if the attempt to establish Empire on an individualistic basis has failed as conspicuously as the attempt to found it on armed compulsion, does not the question arise, "Is Empire itself desirable?"

But whether we like it or not, the fact is that human history flows in that direction. We have seen that Greece affords numerous examples of the small city state. It was indeed a fundamental principle to Aristotle that a city too large for its citizens to hear the voice of a single town-crier had passed the limits of wholesome growth. But in the later Middle Ages, when this idea of the free city state was producing some of its most splendid examples, another force was again making itself felt—the idea of nationhood, as something higher, fuller, nobler than cityhood. Community of race, of religion, of language, were each felt to be reasons for striving for unity of government and law. So, through the long centuries, England, France, Spain, Italy, Germany have struggled, hoped and worked for this ideal. So, to-day, Greece, Roumania, Serbia, Bulgaria,

Poland are in their turn struggling, hoping, working. A striking illustration of the power of this instinct was afforded us six years ago when the Convention of the South African States met together to consider the question of union. I was in South Africa at the time, and it struck me as one of the most significant events of history. For this projected union was not a union of a single race, but of two, speaking different languages, having different traditions; two which had been in armed conflict less than seven years before. The attitudes of Natal and of the Orange River States were particularly interesting; Natal was almost purely British, the Orange River almost purely Boer. Both States were proud of their independence; both States were small, and must necessarily have a subordinate representation in the united government; both at the first blush of the new proposal were opposed to it, but after due deliberation both gave it their adhesion.

But the idea of nationhood suffered expansion in its turn. Some 400 years ago Columbus discovered America, and as a consequence Europe, which had hitherto looked eastward, now faced westward. Commercial supremacy had belonged to the great seaports of the Mediterranean; the merchants of Venice and Genoa had been the great men of the earth. But now the states bordering on the Atlantic: Spain, Portugal, France, England, and Holland, were better placed than Italy for the new adventure, and the Italian seaports declined in importance.

A DIGRESSION.

It is permitted to the cobbler to say, "There is nothing like leather"; and it may be likewise permitted to an astronomer to point out that a not unimportant part in the decision as to which nation should reap the greatest fruits of the new discovery was played by Greenwich Observatory. The navigation of the ocean raised problems of a different order from those involved in the navigation of the Midland Sea; problems which could only be solved practically by a great advance in astronomical science. The Observatory at Greenwich was founded for this purpose. The problem was worked out there, under Maskelyne, the fifth Astronomer Royal. One of the earliest and most skilful masters of the new method of navigation, Capt. James Cook, assisted General Wolfe (whose home lay within a stone's throw of the Observatory) in the operations preceding the taking of Quebec, surveyed the St.

Lawrence and Newfoundland, and later surveyed the east coast of Australia and discovered much of New Zealand, of the islands of the Pacific, and the coast of British Columbia. The superb hydrographic work carried out by Capt. Cook, largely aided by a member of the Greenwich staff, Charles Green, laid the foundation of the complete series of hydrographic charts prepared by the British Admiralty. And because nine out of every ten sea charts were thus British, and took the Greenwich meridian as their basis, the International Conference at Washington, in 1884, adopted Greenwich as the prime meridian of the world, and Greenwich time as the basis upon which to found a world-wide system of standard times.

Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands were in turn defeated in the struggle for the Empire over seas. France and England contested the prize for a hundred and twenty years, and the final decision was reached at the Battle of Trafalgar. Sea power decided the event, but sea power was not merely a question of armaments and valour: it was to no small degree a question of the skill of the navigator, and the greater experience which our sailors had had in exploration and discovery.

I must apologize for this digression, but I have been moved to it, partly by what I hope is the innocent pride that Greenwich Observatory bore so practical a part in the building of the British Empire, and partly because I must confess to impatience with the slander so often repeated, even by Englishmen, that the British Empire has been built up by robbery. It is not so. The great British Dominions: Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, have been built by British effort and British brains. True we won Quebec by the sword, but it was in the course of repelling a French invasion, nor was the country taken from its inhabitants. The French were left undisturbed in the enjoyment of their fields, their language and their faith; and today, on the one hand, they are masters in their own house, and, on the other, they are most desirous to show their loyalty to the British Crown. West of Quebec we found the country a desolate wilderness, almost without inhabitant; and now it is the granary of the world.

EMPIRE-STATES

But to return. In the years following the discovery of America, both Portugal and Spain acquired large over-seas possessions, of which now Portugal retains little, and Spain almost nothing. Holland also established a colonial Empire which is

still considerable. France, in her great struggle with England, lost almost all her acquisitions beyond the sea, but has since started on a new course of colonial expansions, and now comes high in order among the great Empire-States. Britain wrested India, Canada, and South Africa from France, but lost on the other hand the Colonies she had planted along the Atlantic coast of North America. Of the five nations that entered into competition for Empire beyond the seas, she has been far the most successful. Of Empire-States, now existing, four stand out pre-eminent. First, China, oldest of all : older than history : the embodiment in living form to-day of civilization reaching back to the founding of the primeval states of the river-valleys, China includes within its borders one-fourth of the human race. Another fourth is included in the British Empire, which differs from China in almost every characteristic, but notably in these two ; that, instead of being homogeneous and compact, it is most widely scattered, and comprises amongst its peoples the most diverse elements. These two Empire-States thus contain between them half mankind.

The third Empire-State is Russia, with a population of about one-tenth the whole, and the United States of America, with a population of one-sixteenth, comes fourth. Strong indeed must be the forces tending towards aggregation when we find that two-thirds of the whole population of the planet are grouped under four sovereignties, and are satisfied to be so grouped ; sovereignties widely different in origin, development and present character.

Two-thirds of mankind are included in these four great Empire-States, and a large proportion of the remaining third is distributed among five or six smaller Empire-States. The only region where, as yet, no strong tendency in this direction has yet been seen, is in South America ; yet even here there would be nothing surprising if, within the next few years, this continent should become an Empire-State also ;—" an aggregate of administrative units of diverse constituent elements, professing allegiance to a central sovereign authority."

Have any of the four great Empire-States been built upon a great principle, a principle which might, by its working out in the future, transform the Empire-State into World-Empire ?

The answer is obvious. These four States are growths ; they have not developed by the conscious purpose and design of men. Wars indeed had some influence in their shaping, but in the case of all, the real motive power has been the search for food. China, Russia and Siberia, the United States, Canada, Australia,

South Africa, New Zealand are substantially the result of obedience to the first command of all :—

“ Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it.”

Britain has been differentiated from the three other Empire-States in that, being an island, her expansion has necessarily been across the ocean. She has been a merchant state as well as an agricultural one ; and manufacture and trade are largely the means of her support.

But because these Empires are growths, are in fact living organisms, it follows that they may die ; must die indeed, unless they derive their life from something imperishable. And it is noteworthy that all the four are face to face with problems that threaten their existence.

China, that old, old bottle, has had poured into it the new wine of modern democratic ideas. Russia is in a like case. The United States stand to all appearance as much the most favoured nation, and we all remember with pleasure the bright optimism and charming lucidity of Chancellor McCormick's paper last session on “ The Composite of Races and Religions in America.” But we also remember that the most difficult and serious questions that American statesmen have to face were confessedly left out of account ; such as the relation of the coloured races, black and yellow, to the white, and the concentration of wealth and of the means of supply and transport in the hands of a few individuals.

Britain is confronted by problems more numerous and more complex than those with which the United States have to deal. The great Republic established definite organic relations between the Union and the individual States comprising it at the very beginning of its career, and the great question as to where sovereignty was lodged was fought out to a conclusion half a century ago. For Britain the whole question of organic relations between her Dominions and herself, and these again with each other, with the Crown Colonies and with India, has never been so much as stated for solution. “ Time and patient neglect ” are the two chief factors upon which Britain has most relied in the past, and still relies ; but these will not suffice to conjure away the causes of difference and difficulty which are now making themselves manifest.

And beside the many difficulties attaching to any scheme for federating the self-governing English-speaking Dominions with the Mother Country, the British Empire presents a series of problems arising from differences of colour, race, religion,

civilization and custom to which the experience of the United States can furnish no analogy.

Whatever their drawbacks, it must be admitted that the Empire-States have on the whole been beneficial to their populations. Yet no one of them, in itself, affords the assurance of permanence ; still less is there evidence of such overmastering vitality as would enable one of the four to annex or assimilate the others.

But if none of the four great Empire-States is either desirous or capable of extending its sovereignty over the others, is there any claimant to World-Empire to be found elsewhere ?

A MODERN CLAIMANT FOR WORLD-EMPIRE.

A great nation, which has achieved nationhood within the last half century, is making, not merely a bid for empirehood, but seeks to extend that to an hegemony of the planet, so that in the words of its ruler, "Nothing shall happen anywhere without Germany having its say in it." The method of Germany, or rather Prussia, has been, in time of peace to make the most sedulous and detailed preparation for war, and then suddenly to attack an unprepared opponent. Thus Prussia aggrandized herself under Frederick the Great ; thus in our own days it drove Austria out of the Germanic Confederation and secured the hegemony to itself ; thus it overthrew France in 1870, and consolidated the German Empire ; thus it has been working and preparing for 43 years in order, by the crushing of France, the defeat of Russia, and the conquest of England, to establish itself master of Europe. It was doubtless intended that the three tasks should be undertaken in succession, and but for one unforeseen obstacle, it might have been effected. Even as Athens threw itself in the road of the Persians, so the Belgians closed their country to the Germans, and accepted for the sake of Europe, nay of the world, the desolation of their land and their own exile from it.

What principle has inspired Prussia and Germany to this adventure ? For though Germany is not a free nation, yet that which is seen here is undoubtedly a national movement, and multitudes of men are only moved to unanimous action on this scale by the stirring of a principle.

The principle is not a new one ; it is as old as Cain. Might is Right ; Cain slew Abel and therefore was the better man. In ancient Athens there were those who held the same doctrine :—

“Those who make the laws are the weak and the many: they therefore make laws with a view to themselves and their own interests, and with the same purpose they bestow praise and impute blame; and to terrify such men as are stronger than themselves and are able to acquire more . . . they say it is base and unjust to obtain a superiority . . . But Nature herself, I think, convinces us on the contrary that it is right that the better man should have more than the worse, and the more powerful than the weaker . . . This it is that is seemly and just according to nature . . . that a man who lives rightly should permit his desires to be as great as possible, and should not restrain them . . . for to those whom it has befallen from the first either to be the sons of kings, or who are able, by nature, to procure for themselves a government, a tyranny or dynasty, what can be more disgraceful and base than temperance? Who when it is in their power to enjoy the good things of this life, and no one hinders them, impose a master on themselves—the law, discourse and censure of the multitude . . . Luxury, intemperance and liberty . . . these are virtue and happiness, but all those other fine things, those compacts contrary to nature, are extravagances of men, and are of no value.”*

Briefly summarized, the position of Callicles in this discussion with Socrates was: “There is no law for the man who is strong enough to break the law. Self-restraint, self-control, not from external compulsion, but from ethical principle, is folly; indeed a sin against the law of strength.” This principle inculcated by Nietzsche as holding for the individual, Germany has applied to herself as a nation amongst nations, and is putting it to the supreme test to-day. Yet after all it is but the test of the “ghastly priest.” If Germany should succeed, it will only succeed as a murderer, and sooner or later must suffer murder in its turn.

IMMATERIAL FORCES IN WORLD-EMPIRE.

Empire, enduring Empire, must be based on something less tangible and therefore less transitory than violence. Military courage and skill did indeed contribute to the building of the greatest and most enduring Empire of history, but Rome would never have reached empirehood if it had possessed no higher qualities than these. In its origin, and for long centuries of its history, Rome was only a small self-contained city state, with no advantages of geographical position. Its growth was

* Callicles in the *Gorgias* of Plato, 85-103.

partly due to the law-abiding instinct of its citizens, even during the heat of their fiercest mutual dissensions, and partly to the broadmindedness in their external relations which led them to associate their enemies with themselves in partnership. So Rome expanded into Latium, and Latium into Italy, and the new factors became organically united with Rome. It was the wise toleration that Rome showed for other races, other nations, other customs and ideals, which rendered the Roman Empire possible, and secured it so long a continuance. This toleration which the Germans of to-day would consider treason to the doctrine of "*Germany over all the World*," and a slur upon its military supremacy, Rome, though no other state ever had better right to glory in military pre-eminence, yet found to be the more effective means for the diffusion of the Roman authority, and the cementing of the Roman Empire.

The example of Rome teaches us that, even where military force attains its highest development, the strongest sanction of Empire is to be found, not in material forces, but in immaterial.

We have seen how in early times two types of civilization sprang up—the great agricultural states of the river valleys, the little commercial states of the seaboard cities—and that the one type favoured the development of the principle of sovereignty, and the other of the principle of liberty. We have seen that neither principle succeeded in accomplishing world-empire, yet that there is a tendency in the direction of world-empire is indubitable. The little city-state has gone; the nation-state has arrived, but has already passed in many cases into the empire-state. None of these great empire-states is as yet assured of permanence; certainly none appears qualified for universal rule.

The city-state was opposed to the principle of the nation-state, but the higher principle prevailed, and the city-state had to give way. The nation-state in turn is opposed to the principle of the empire-state, but the higher principle again is prevailing, and the lower appears to be yielding to it. Is there a principle so potent that it shall override that of the empire-state and establish the world-empire?

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

Let history answer. Thirteen hundred years ago a great movement arose, which made one of the most formidable bids for world-empire that has yet been seen.

We are often told that the Mohammedan religion was propagated by the sword. True undoubtedly ; but the explanation leaves unexplained all that requires explanation. The Arabs had been wielders of the sword, and for that matter successful wielders, since we first hear of their existence ; both Egypt and Babylonia had known them and experienced their prowess.

But it was their religion which gave these desert tribes coherence, which welded them into a nation, and enabled them to incorporate races of widely different origin. So one doctrine, one sense of unity, spread from the Ganges to the Atlas, and from the Altaï to Khartoum.

The doctrine which gave so striking a power of cohesion to such incoherent material was that of the Sovereignty of God. And this doctrine was held as a faith, for a man's faith is not the doctrine that he may chance to profess, but that which he practises. It is a common and a cheap thing to profess belief in God,—as common as conceit, and as cheap as cant,—when the god in which we believe is simply the deification of our own supposed merits, and his chief function is to gratify our vanity and accomplish our desires. Many conquerors, many nations, have professed to believe in God: even Sennacherib could worship in "the house of Nisroch," and Nebuchadnezzar return thanks to Marduk for victories, and so on throughout history. But it is a different thing indeed to recognize the Presence of One infinitely exalted above us, One Who cannot be the creature of our petty whims and self-worship, but before Whom our wills, ambitions and purposes, must learn to abase themselves.

It is a deep and true distinction that Abraham Lincoln made, when an eager supporter asked him, " You do think, Mr. Lincoln, do you not, that God is on our side ? " " That, madam, is not a point about which I am anxious ; what I am anxious about is that we should be on God's side." He apprehended, that is to say, something of the reality of God's rule over all the earth, and of His infinite supremacy ; and longed, not so much for the success of his own schemes, and of his own party, as for the fulfilment of the Will of God. So, too, the religion of Islam impressed upon its faithful adherents something of the same insight, and the Mohammedan not only entreated God for success, and thanked Him for victory, but in loss, in suffering and defeat, he worshipped Him still, and said, " It is the will of Allah." To him the sovereignty of God was a reality ever present, and it had this immense political effect that when an

enemy accepted Islam, he forthwith became an equal and a brother.

“Only God is Great,” and before Him the differences between man and man became as naught. If one man or one nation claims authority over others on the ground of self-asserted superiority it is but natural, nay it may be a bounden duty, to contest that claim and put it to the proof. But when we realize that all power and authority come from God; that He alone is Sovereign; then submission to sovereignty is compatible with dignity and self-respect, for man becomes God’s servant. And dignity and self-respect mark the devout Mohammedan to-day.

“God is Great,” He alone is Sovereign; what is it to Him whether a nation counts its armies by the man or by the million? But that the material accidents and equipments of a nation are not essential to nationhood, history teaches us; the spiritual ideal can be sufficient in itself.

There is a nation, without king or priest, without city or country, without nobles or parliament, without army or navy, without revenue or exchequer. Its ambassadors are not found at the courts of the nations; treaties are not made with it; yet it lives a nation still. And, seeing that it is thus disembodied and yet lives, no Kaiser can send an ultimatum to it, or overrun its land, or burn its cities; he cannot lead its armies into captivity or force the surrender of its fleet.

Yet it is a nation, and of all the nations of the earth is there another so invulnerable? Once Sennacherib sent to it the challenge:—

“Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena and Ivah?”

But to-day we ask, “Where are Nineveh and the Assyrian kings?” and many another nation has gone down to the sides of the pit since then. “There is Elam and all her multitude,” “there is Edom, her kings and all her princes,” but Judah remains, bereft of everything, but living still.

And this it is which has made her immortal: the truth which she learnt two thousand years before Mohammed spoke, “The Lord is King over all the earth,” and though disinherited and dispersed these many centuries, Judah still acknowledges the Holy One of Israel as her King.

DIVINE FREEDOM.

The Sovereignty of God ; Sovereignty is the first principle of Empire, but Liberty is not less a principle ; and Liberty has Divine sanction, for man is made in the image of God, and ought to show the image of Divine Freedom. The Sovereignty of God and the freedom of man received their supreme expression in Christ, and therefore should be shown forth in Christianity.

The Divine Freedom is manifested to men in the freedom with which God bestows His gifts. He is not only the rightful Recipient of all worship, thanks and praise, but the Giver of all gifts, whether for body, mind or spirit. Therefore man, in turn, must show his freedom by that which he gives to God and to his fellow-men. True Liberty manifests itself in sacrifice and service.

Our subject is Empire, not Religion ; therefore the sacrifice and service with which we are here concerned is self-sacrifice on behalf of our fellow-men, and service rendered to them. These are true principles of Empire ; principles that bind men together, and build them in organic unity, and yet leave freest play to individual qualities and powers.

Is it a new thought that liberty and self-sacrifice are co-extensive ? But history shows that it is so. Athens sacrificed herself because she was free, and she was free because she had the spirit of self-sacrifice. And the same holds good to-day : Belgium, like Athens, sacrificed herself because she too was free ; and having thus sacrificed herself, she has secured her liberty ; all the power of Germany cannot enslave her. So with the self-governing Dominions of our Empire ; they are free, and because they are free they have freely put all they possess for the help of the Mother-land. Similarly with our own young men who have offered themselves by the hundred thousand for the war : theirs was the self-sacrifice because theirs was the freedom—to offer or to refrain from offering.

And Liberty is service. The true symbol of Liberty in Empire is not the blood-red Phrygian cap, but the towel girt round the loins for the washing of the feet. No nation has surpassed the British in valour and military skill, but however we obtained dominion over India, it is not by the power of the sword that we retain it to-day ; it is by the power of service :

service in her administration, service in her schools, service in her hospitals, service during her famines and plagues. Despotism, that is to say rule by force, degrades both the master and the slave, and the master more than the slave; rule by service leaves both him who serves and him who is served free, and it exalts both.

Sovereignty and Liberty. God alone is Great; God alone is Sovereign. All authority and sovereignty therefore come from Him, and can only be rightly exercised as stewardships from Him; with a deep sense of responsibility towards Him, and in accordance with His mind and will. The claim of one man—or of one nation—to dominion over others, because of some superiority, real or imagined, in strength or wisdom, or some other personal quality, has no foundation. The differences between man and man are not of the order to warrant it, and authority is not inherent in man, but in God alone.

It is generally admitted to-day that authority is not inherent in some one man, or in some few men; but it is widely assumed that it is necessarily inherent in a great multitude of men. It is true that authority may be exercised by a multitude, but by whomsoever exercised it is inherent only in God, and can only be rightly administered in the spirit of His government; that is to say, for the welfare and freedom of the governed. All legitimate government is for the protection of those under its rule, and especially of those who have no other defence but that which it affords; the minority under a democracy has therefore a peculiar claim to consideration and care, for it is the defenceless portion of the State. The forgetfulness of this fact is the evil to which democracies are especially exposed, for while "Might is Right" is the doctrine that distinguishes the tyranny of despotism, "Minorities must suffer" is the doctrine, equally false, cruel and deadly, of the tyranny of democracy. Where the rule is that of the majority the responsibility rests upon it to see that the rights of the minority are not invaded, or its members wronged; in a word, to secure that minorities shall not suffer.

Sovereignty must be exercised in full acknowledgment of God's sovereignty, and shaped after its image; as pure, as just, as merciful, and as beneficent. And Liberty stands upon the same sanction, for God alone is Free, and true Liberty comes from Him alone, and must be shaped after His image. As already said, our knowledge of the Divine Freedom is in the freedom of his gifts; so the freedom of man is shown by the willingness and abundance of his gifts of service to others. And

in such service, his own nobility and his powers of mind and body are far more surely built up than by any despotic repression of his fellow-man.

Sovereignty is of God and from God, and must be administered as from Him. Not less, therefore, must it be revered and obeyed as such. Liberty is of God and from God; human personality is the highest gift of God, the quality in which our likeness to Him chiefly stands, upon which all our relationship to Him is based. Therefore our own liberty is to be used in the likeness of the Divine beneficence, and not less is the liberty of others to be revered by us as the supreme Divine gift to them.

The "true temper," the right adjustment, of sovereignty and liberty, how is it to be attained, and once attained, how can it be preserved? Can anything be more difficult for the governor than to maintain due authority, and yet never trench upon liberty? Or for the governed to secure respect for his individual freedom, and yet never fail in rendering due obedience?

It is most difficult; how should it be otherwise? The problem is with each one of us daily, and is perpetually changing its form. To reach in every case an immediate and right solution means the highest discernment, wisdom and self-control. The training and shaping of but a single man to be perfect in all his relations with other men; neither overbearing nor servile, but unfailingly considerate, and at the same time independent, how great a task it is; so great a task that if there had not been One Perfect Example, we should say that it could not be accomplished.

There has been One Perfect Example; not without cost has it been presented to us; for of Him it is written—"yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."

The "true temper" of sovereignty and of liberty for the individual man can only be found where the One Example presented it—in Character. And that Character rested not in any bodily strength, not in any intellectual acuteness, but in that continual fashioning of the spirit which resulted from unbroken communion with God.

When we come to consider World-Empire—that is, the uniting together of all men, whatever their race and nation, in one corporate organization, in which each unit shall nevertheless possess room for full development and growth—we see that it is only in the Christ-like spirit that it can find its fulfilment. For the differences between man and man, between nation and nation, even between multitudes of men as compared with the

few, are insignificant in face of the difference between God and man. Therefore it is in God, and in the following of that Man Who lived "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" that we can, alone, find the sanction for World-Empire.

World-Empire, founded upon and exercised in the spirit of these principles would be indeed desirable, and in it the cities and nations of the earth would find unity; and because unity, therefore peace, plenty, and the power of mighty achievement. And such World-Empire is that

One far-off Divine event,
To which the whole Creation moves.

These, then, are the principles of World-Empire: the principle of Sovereignty, the principle of Liberty; both Divine.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. M. L. ROUSE, while agreeing with the Lecturer that the Roman State showed a certain liberality of spirit towards its subject peoples, thought that it could not be credited with liberality in general; the strength of the Roman sway lay in its system of colonies, but its general character was well described by Daniel's vision of the fourth beast—"dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it."

Col. MACKINLAY proposed a vote of thanks to the Lecturer, and thought that the Institute was to be heartily congratulated upon this excellent paper, which was at once the inaugural lecture in their new premises and opened the new session. The Lecturer had laid down sound reasons for the growth and decay of mighty empires in the past, and had enumerated the four greatest empires existing at the present day, but he had not forecasted their future. But, applying the principles which the Lecturer had enunciated, might we not look forward hopefully to the continued prosperity of the British Empire? It looked as if our line of progress lay in the development of our own sparsely occupied but vigorous colonies, not in the acquisition of fresh territories. Aggressive wars had no attractions for us; we sought for peaceful growth. It must be remembered that a war could last only for a time; it was therefore wise so to wage it that when it was over peace and confidence might

be re-established as soon as possible. This had resulted between the Boers and ourselves to a surprising extent. It was not only just and right to avoid "frightfulness" and cruelty in war: it was also politic and wise. He hoped the time would never come when our rulers, swollen with pride, should treat the nations associated with us under our flag with aught but justice, sympathy and honour. He hoped that one result of this present struggle would be a greater simplicity of living and a much better preparedness should war be again forced upon us in the future. Above all, let us, as a nation, give honour to God and obey His Word. So doing we might reasonably hope that our Empire might continue to prosper in the future, not to the exclusion or suppression of others, but as the leader in good government and freedom.

Prof. LANGHORNE ORCHARD desired heartily to second the vote of thanks to the Lecturer. The Roman Empire had been the best of the ancient world, and he thought the British was the best Empire of the modern world. The Germans had been led astray by their military caste, and by philosophers and historians like Nietzsche and Treitzschke, into thinking that there was something noble in the enslavement and oppression of other nations. There was something far higher and nobler than that, namely, to help and uplift them. According to Plato's definition, the aim of right government must be the advantage of the governed. The laws were to be obeyed, but the essence of right law was that it must be for the good of those who were subject to it. God Himself was the Governor of the universe, and His rule manifested itself in authority, in wisdom, and in love. Would there ever be a World-Empire? Yes, most assuredly. The nation of Israel shall be restored to its own land, and the Son of David shall be its King. Of his Government there shall be no end, and his Empire will be the perfect World-Empire, for the three great principles of authority, wisdom and love will there be seen in exercise; and the subjects of that kingdom will gladly render the obedience of free will.

Dr. PINCHES thought the references of the Lecturer to the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires were in the main correct, but doubted whether their kings had consciously entertained the idea of setting up World-Empire. Probably the chief motives of their wars were the desire for plunder and the wish to create a dread of their prowess in the neighbouring states.

The discussion was then continued by Dr. W. WOODS SMYTH and the Rev. J. J. B. COLES, and the PRESIDENT summed it up by remarking that they had had presented to them a very able epitome of the world's history. With regard to the attempts which had been made by would-be world conquerors to impose their authority by force of arms on the whole known world, he said :—

“The eighth commandment is, to my mind, of universal obligation. I protest against blasphemous cant. I wish to denounce any man who thinks himself appointed by God to take possession of somebody else's property. It seems to me to be a very bad principle indeed, and I cannot allow the discussion to pass without raising my voice in opposition to the notion that because a very big crime is committed it is to be treated as though it were a little crime. Any emperor who wants to take somebody else's land is a dirty thief, and I do not approve of the sort of delicacy which would prevent our expressing ourselves plainly as to actions of that sort. They are actions of which any man should be ashamed. What is the notion of world-conquest? There is something which you don't possess yourself and which you are going to make your own. By such means you are to carry your grandeur and your glory to the uttermost parts of the earth, and whether the offender be Napoleon or Sennacherib, he ought to be hanged. The principle of world conquest means that by violence and force you are to take that which belongs to another, and in doing so you are to inflict suffering upon your fellow-men. I trust that one of these days we shall arrive at a general concession amongst mankind that all people who are established in the country of their own shall remain in possession of it, not to be disturbed unless such interference shall be fully justified. It might sometimes, perhaps, be justified for one nation to interfere with another, but to dispossess a nation of its country or its liberty should never be allowed as a principle of Empire. The one principle we have to establish is, ‘Thou shalt not steal.’”

After the LECTURER had replied briefly to the vote of thanks, Mr. E. J. SEWELL proposed, and the Venerable Archdeacon BERESFORD POTTER seconded, a vote of thanks to their President, the Earl of Halsbury, for his presence with them that afternoon in the chair, and the vote was passed by acclamation. The Meeting adjourned at 6.20 p.m.