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EXPANSION AND LIBERTY.

A fine illustration of the folly of forming theories before collating facts is given in an address just delivered by John Morley, the well-known British statesman, in which he deplored the present tendency to expansion which is seen in the policy of England and the United States. Speaking for England he said that "the prevailing spirit of imperialism must inevitably bring militarism, a gigantic and daily growing expenditure, increased power to aristocrats and privileged classes, and war." Mr. Morley is one of the best informed on matters of history of all the statesmen now at the front in England. He is a typical scholar in politics. Moreover, he has been in public for about a quarter of a century, and has thus had an incentive to study public questions on their practical side. He is a radical, too, and must be supposed on that account to be familiar with the differences in the political conditions in England between the present time and the recent and the remote past. He has overlooked those differences in this exigency, however, for the history of his country in the past three quarters of a century proves that there is no such relation between imperialism and prerogative as that which he tells.

What Mr. Morley calls imperialism has found its most conspicuous assertion as a settled policy in England within the past sixty or seventy years, and yet no country in the world has made such advances in liberalism as England has in that time. When England in 1783 lost all her American colonies except Canada the world for a time supposed that her power was ended, and that the fate of Athens, Rome, Venice and other states which had once been great, but which had vanished from the map of the world, would soon be hers. But in the wars with Bonaparte shortly afterward she revealed a power and a persistency which she had not shown before, and immediately afterward she began a career of expansion which has no parallel in history. With this territorial expansion an expansion in the rights and privileges of her people have gone hand in hand. The franchise act of 1832 added 500,000 voters to the British electorate. The act of 1867 increased the list by about 1,100,000. The act of 1884 added more than 2,000,000 to the roll. Shortly before Mr. Morley was born, or before 1832, only 400,000 persons in England were permitted to vote for members of the house of commons. The number which voted in the last general election was about 6,000,000. Previous to 1832 only one in fifty of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom were electors. One in six have that status today.

The period of England's greatest expansion, that is to say, is coincident with an extension of popular rights and a diffusion of liberty in that country such as the world never saw in any great nation before, for the basis of the franchise in the United States, notwithstanding the property qualifications in many of the states at the outset, was broad from the beginning. England, during the period in which she has extended her rule over Asia, Africa and the islands of the sea, has progressed nearer to Democracy than any other great nation of ancient or modern times except the United States. Lord Derby a little over forty years ago advocated the raising of a "barrier against the current of that continually increasing and encroaching Democratic influence in this nation which is beat on throwing the whole power and authority of the government nominally into the

hands of the masses, but practically and really into those of demagogues and Republicans." The "Democratic influence" which the great Tory chieftain deplored has come in England, and Derby himself was obliged to help to extend it by the franchise bill which he and Disraeli were forced to put through parliament a few years after he made this outburst—the franchise act of 1867. The peril which England's radical leader imagines he sees in imperialism does not exist. Nowhere in the world's history has the power of the "aristocrats and privileged classes" diminished in such a degree and that of the masses increased as it has in England in the period in which its expansion in territorial area and political prestige has been greatest. —Globe-Democrat.

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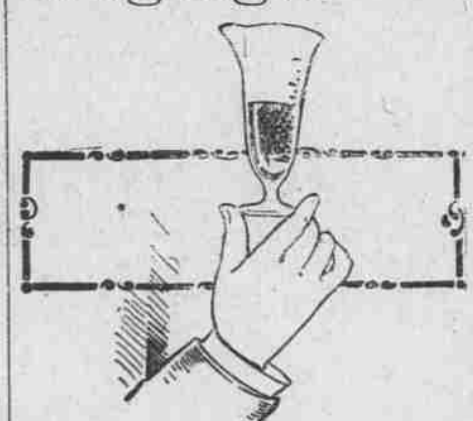
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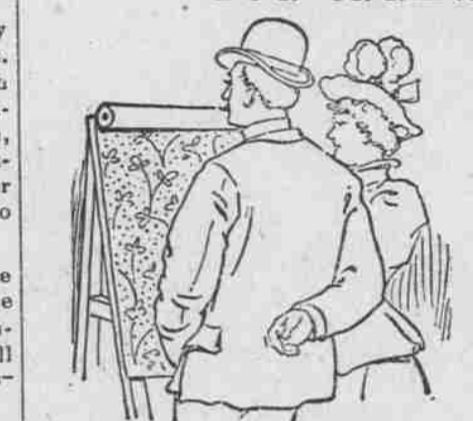


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