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THE VALUE OF COLONIES TO THE MOTHER COUNTRY.

LONDRA ESTELLE STILLMAN.

CLASS OF 1900.

THE VALUE OF COLONIES TO THE MOTHER COUNTRY.

The word colony implies a company of people who leave their native land and form a settlement in some other place. But if the settlement is to become part of any existing nation other than the mother-country, as when a company of Germans settle in the United States, it is not a colony in the strictest meaning of the term. A colony means either an addition to the empire of the mother-country or the formation of a new state. Not all nations have colonized. The natural energy of a people, their political organization, the situation and physical character of their country, the disposition of neighboring peoples, determine whether they shall plant colonies or not. All of the colonizing peoples have been maritime nations, but all maritime nations have not colonized. The Chinese have a long line of sea-coast and their country is crowded to overflowing; yet they have not been colonizers. They seem to lack natural energy.

The Phoenicians were the first great colonizing nation. Their country was shut in by mountains and the sea, and its maximum width was only about thirty-five miles. The mountains, which prevented them from extending their boundaries inland and protected them from their warlike neighbors, furnished them with an abundance of

timber. The hilly region between the mountains and the sea was well adapted to agriculture. The sea gave them fish and two species of shellfish from which they obtained rich dyes. The great variety of the natural products of the different sections of their little country must have fostered a spirit of trade among them. The fishermen of the coast needed the timber of the mountains to build themselves boats. The agriculturists and foresters, no doubt, were eager to exchange their products for dyes and sea-foods. As their cedars and dyes were desired by the luxury-loving nations around them, and they were an energetic people, they came to export their surplus products in their ships, taking the wealth of other lands in exchange. In this way they built up and controlled the carrying trade of the Mediterranean. Their first colonies were probably established as trading posts. They had a number of such colonies in the islands of the Mediterranean and Aegean seas and on the coasts of Greece and North Africa. As their commercial enterprise grew, they discovered undeveloped regions rich in useful metals, and planted colonies for the purpose of developing these mines.

After the Greeks had cut them off from their supplies of tin on the shores of the Euxine, they established mining colonies in Spain in order to develop the tin mines there. When these mines

could no longer supply them with the quantity of metal which they desired, they pushed their way to the British coast and planted the colony of Cassiterides, where they opened new tin mines and also obtained lead.

It is difficult to find the truth in a legend like that of the founding of Carthage; but if, as some scholars think, the myth was built on a foundation of fact, then at least one Phoenician colony was planted because of political discontent at home.

Some of the Greek colonies were founded for a similar reason. A change in popular sentiment in one of the Greek cities would sometimes cause a class of citizens to leave it and found a new city. Many Greek colonies owed their establishment to the overcrowding of the mother city or to the adventurous spirit of their founders for whom life at home was too tame. Some of them, like the colonies of Miletus on the Euxine, were probably planted for commercial purposes. None of the Greek colonies remained in political connection with the parent states. They were of more value to the mother cities as independent self-governing communities than they would have been as their dependencies. The same is probably true of the Phoenician colonies.

Rome was a military nation, and her first colonies were military colonies, established for the purpose of holding and Romanizing conquered territory. Later when the wealthy families of Rome had got possession of most of the lands of the poor, and, as they cultivated their large estates by slave labor, poor freemen could not get employment in the agricultural line, and trade also was carried on by slave labor, Rome became crowded with men who had no other means of subsistence than the bounty of politicians. Then Gaius Gracchus proposed that the surplus population should be settled in colonies in the provinces where there would be abundant opportunities for all. He was unable to push these plans very far, unfortunately for Rome. Augustus established colonies for the soldiers of his disbanded armies, giving them homes and lands where they could support themselves, and might be of great service to him in case of insurrection in the provinces or of barbaric invasion. Thus he prevented them from remaining unemployed at Rome, where they would have been a public expense and a continual menace to the government.

The facilitation of trade has been a leading motive in the colonizing movement in modern Europe. At the opening of the sixteenth century, there was an active rivalry among the commercial nations of

Southern Europe for the control of the trade with the East. The Portuguese, having found a way to India by sailing around Africa, lost no time in establishing trading-posts in India. More easily to keep up communication with these, they made settlements on the south-eastern coast of Africa. Their zeal for trade led them further; and they established factories in China and Japan. Trade was not the only object of the Portuguese. They hoped to convert the natives of the East to Christianity, and their missionaries were prominent in their centers of trade. But these settlements never became important colonies. The climate of India was unfavorable to the Portuguese, and Brazil received the stream of Portuguese emigration. At first the government looked on Brazil only as a place to which criminals might be transported. A few private individuals went there, wishing to avail themselves of its superior agricultural advantages. Later many emigrants sought Brazil because the introduction of slave labor into Portugal had thrown them out of employment at home; a number of well-to-do citizens came in order to escape religious persecution; after gold and silver had been discovered there, many emigrants sought to develop the mines.

Greed of gain and a zeal for the Roman Catholic religion

characterized the Spaniards of the sixteenth century. Whenever Spain planted a colony, she had two ends in view - to enrich herself and to spread her religion. It was believed that very rich deposits of gold and silver existed in the new world, and the Spanish made settlements there for the purpose of developing the mines, the government demanding a large percentage of all the precious metals obtained. Many of the colonists, finding that mining did not pay, turned their attention to agriculture. Spain's American possessions might have become prosperous colonies, had the Spanish laws favored their development. But Spain thought only of present gain, and, in trying to get the most possible from the new lands in the least possible time, passed laws very unfavorable to her colonists, discouraging her citizens from making permanent homes in the new world. Weakening her colonies, she has weakened herself.

The colonies of Holland have been trade colonies. By the opening of the seventeenth century, Holland had become a commercial nation. Her soil, as it was then cultivated, supported only a fraction of her population, and many of her citizens were dependant on commerce as a means of livelihood. Her colonies in the East Indies were founded by the Dutch East India Company with a view to monopo-

lizing the spice trade. New Netherlands was founded by the Dutch West India Company for the purpose of carrying on the North American fur-trade.

The colonies of France are closely connected with her mercantile marine and with her military aspirations. Colbert, who has been called the father of French colonization, said; "Commerce begets wealth, and wealth furnishes the sinews of war." France thinks of her colonies not as mere trading posts and ports of call for her fleet, but also as military settlements which may be of great value to her in case of war, and more than this as a part of herself, offering new fields of enterprise to her children. Valuing her colonies so highly, she is very generous in her policy toward them.

Algeria is considered the most important of the colonies of France. It is a commercial colony. Martinique and Guadeloupe are agricultural colonies; New Caledonia and French Guiana are penal settlements. In connection with the settlements in North America, French fishermen found great wealth on the banks of Newfoundland. It was for the sake of saving this industry that France retained the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon when she

lost her North American possessions. Besides being necessary to the fishing industry on the banks of Newfoundland, these islands are used as a sanatorium by the French vessels of war stationed in the West Indies, which "run northwards during the hot season."

The colonies of England always interest us because our own ancestors were English colonists. Virginia may be called a trade colony, since trade was the principal object of its founders. Massachusetts and Maryland were religious colonies. Georgia was founded for two reasons- one, philanthropic; the other, military. The founder of Pennsylvania had a benevolent purpose in view, his object being to establish a community which should be governed by justice and kindness, and thus to give his colonists an opportunity to develop what was best in them.

Of England's present colonial possessions, the Cape of Good Hope, "the key of the maritime route to the East," is important from a commercial point of view. Gibraltar and Berberda are naval stations. Malta is valuable for military purposes. New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land were originally convict colonies. They had existed as penal settlements for about thirty years, when a respectable class of emigrants began to resort there. In course

of time, the Australian colonies became independent and self-respecting enough to refuse to take any more convicts.

England's colonies as a whole, are of great value to her. Her soil cannot begin to raise food enough for her children. The colonies are, almost without exception, agricultural communities which give the products of their soil in exchange for her manufactures. England's population is large and is rapidly increasing. The colonies offer new homes to those for whom the mother country seems to have no room. In these regions where the natural resources are as yet but partially developed and labor is well compensated, there is every incentive to work and conditions are favorable to physical, mental, and moral development. The colonies of England are capable of increasing her greatness and renewing her glory, of giving her new life.

Colonization, in general, relieves overcrowding of the home land. It did this for many of the Greek cities, and might have done it for Rome, if the Roman people had been more ambitious to better their condition in this way. Phoenicia could hardly have become the mother of so many flourishing cities, if her population had not been very dense. Holland, at the time when she commenced

colonizing, was thickly peopled. Colonization, by facilitating trade, encourages industry. A writer on French colonies says that the people of France believe that "the regeneration of the country is possible only through an extension of her colonial system."

A nation's conception of the value of her colonies largely determines her principles in governing them; and the treatment which they receive from her greatly influences their value to her. It was because Spain did not realize the true worth of her colonial possessions that she has pursued a policy so unfavorable to them, and because of her severe treatment of them, her colonies have not been of permanent value to her. England's selfish policy toward our forefathers caused them to separate from her. Some statesmen think that the United States is to-day as valuable to England as any of her colonial possessions. It gives homes to many emigrants from the British Isles, and is a market for English manufactures. Others argue that the colonies are of much greater value to England than the United States can be. For, English citizens, who emigrate to the United States cease to be Englishmen, and, tho they may continue to be consumers of English goods, they no longer belong to the British empire, but to a rival state, while those who settle in the colonies

retain their nationality, and their children are as loyal to the the empire as those born in the British Isles. In the words of an English writer, the "movement of capital and labor from the mother-country to the colonies has its reaction..... and the colonies may be regarded as 'branches', in the commercial sense, to which her surplus capital circulates, and whose capital is ever tending to return to her." England's present colonial policy is to give each individual colony the government which seems best suited to her. The policy of France is to govern her colonies as far as practicable as a part of France itself. England allows her principal colonies home rule. France gives hers representation in Chambers of Deputies. Both the French and English systems seem to work well. Beneath them both is the principle that if the mother-country would have her colonies worth anything to her, she must make herself valuable to them.