

World, and that it is for want of perceiving this that most of us find that century of English history uninteresting.

The great central fact in this chapter of history is that we have had at different times two such Empires. So decided is the drift of our destiny towards the occupation of the New World that after we had created one Empire and lost it, a second grew up almost in our own despite. The figures I gave you refer exclusively to our second Empire, to that which we still possess. When I spoke of the ten millions of English subjects who live beyond the sea, I did not pause to mention that a hundred years ago we had another set of colonies which had already a population of three millions, that these colonies broke off from us and formed a federal state, of which the population has in a century multiplied more than sixteenfold, and is now equal to that of the mother country and its colonies taken together. It is an event of prodigious magnitude, not only that this Empire should have been lost to us, but that a new state, English in race and character, should have sprung up, and that this state should have grown in a century to be greater in population than every European state except Russia. But the loss we suffered in the secession of the American colonies has left in the English mind a doubt, a misgiving, which affects our whole forecast of the future of England.

For if this English Exodus has been the greatest English event of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the greatest English question of the future must be, what is to become of our second Empire, and whether or no it may be expected to go the way of the first. In the solution of this question lies that moral which I said ought to result from the study of English history.