

**IMPERIALISM. ITS
PRICES;
ITS VOCATION**

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Imperialism. Its prices; its vocation by Emil Reich

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IMPERIALISM

ITS PRICES; ITS VOCATION

By

EMIL REICH

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Author of "Success among Nations," "Atlas of English
History," "Foundations of Modern Europe"
Etc. Etc.

Πάραφρον μὲν, ἀκούσον δέ.—THEMISTOCLES

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TO
THE BRITISH NATION

A GRATEFUL HUNGARIAN

PREFACE

IN publishing the present small work on the greatest political question of the day, the author feels that he must, first of all, apologise to the great Nation to whom he has ventured to dedicate it. The British Nation, it is true, is singularly tolerant and affable to foreigners, and has more than once listened with attention to the opinions of men who have dwelt amongst Britons as their guests. Nor will it be, we may hope, considered presumptuous in a Hungarian to assume that, being a Hungarian, he is not quite an alien in England, nor unfamiliar with English political sentiment. Yet it is certain that the question here treated, and the way in which it is led to touch upon subjects of delicate national interests, may expose the author to the appearance of an unwelcome intruder. For this, should it be the case, he here offers his humble apology. He begs to say, with Themistocles, "Strike me, but

listen to me!" It is not from a love of notoriety; it is from a love of England that the author has thought it his duty to put before the British public his views on Imperialism.

It appeared to him that Imperialism, having so far been approached from every conceivable point of view of home politics, might with advantage be studied from two other and very instructive points of view: from that of General History, and from that of personal experience of the working of types of Imperialism other than British.

There have been various Empires in history. The author is not aware that there exists a comprehensive study of Imperialism as a problem of history; and yet it is in every question of that kind a matter of no mean importance to try to derive from history such "working hypotheses" as may serve as safe guides in the maze of politics. The author has devoted his life to the study of General History—that is, to the study of those vast Alps among the innumerable mountains and hills of history which determined the minor events of the past. He is convinced that, as the Alps or the Cordilleras were not made by the slow cumulation of countless small heavings of the earth; even so the leading facts of history, and amongst

them Imperialism, were not produced by "many, many" little causes, but by a few great causes. Broad facts have broad, that is, few, causes. By persistent study of every aspect of the historical phenomenon one may very well arrive at a clear insight into *the* causes of vast facts, such as Imperialism in Rome, in the Catholic Church, in Russia, in America, or in Great Britain.

In the present work the author has essayed to formulate briefly the results of his life-long study of the dominant events and institutions of General History as bearing on the question of Imperialism. He has, as in all his works, laid the greatest stress not on the reading of documents and books, but on his personal acquaintance with the political and social institutions of the different types of Imperialism in Europe and America.

It is with reluctance that the author feels himself compelled to add one more remark. In this country there is a more or less general tendency to depreciate small books on great questions. To but too many people it seems incongruous when questions like Imperialism are treated with what is, in point of size and bulk of letter-press, an appearance of levity and superficiality.

We beg the reader to pause before making inferences from the thinness of the letter-press to

the thinness of the arguments contained in it. We beg him to consider that the more ripely a man has thought over a subject; the more elaborately he has studied every possible phase and stage thereof; the more likely he is, provided he is honest and no erudite *poseur*, to formulate his results in the simplest and briefest of language. Bulky books on subjects such as Imperialism are, unless they are meant to be mere reference-books of data, a sure sign and proof of the unreadiness and incapacity of their authors. One will never be in a position to write a complete history of Bristol in less than three or four bulky volumes; but in a hundred years or so, history proper will be advanced enough to enable some one to write a satisfactory history of England in one moderate volume.

May I take this opportunity to thank the ladies and gentlemen who have in the last two years attended my lectures, for their goodness and fairness to a student of history who is frequently of an opinion not agreeable to their views?

EMIL REICH.

LONDON, 33, ST. LUKE'S ROAD, W.

February 22, 1905.